En/Countering Resistance to Gender Equity Policy in Educational Organizations

by

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This study explores the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity policy in the implementation process as it is experienced by gender equity agents within three Ontario boards of education. Using a critical hermeneutic conceptual framework, which is informed by feminist post-structural policy analysis, I draw connections between “ideologies, everyday practices, and official policies” (Reynolds, 1995, pp. 13-14) in the lived experience of three employment equity agents who work for boards of education in Ontario.

First, three cumulative interviews were conducted with each equity agent as well as follow-up interviews with school board personnel who were identified by the equity workers as having a strong influence on the implementation process of gender equity employment policy. Second, an analysis of policy statements and minutes of stakeholder meetings that focused on the development and implementation of gender equity policy was conducted for each of the school boards. Third, after all the data were collected and themes for analysis were identified, a focus group was conducted with the equity workers in order to provide a collective forum for discussing experiences of resistance to gender equity that they had en countered.

During the data gathering for and writing of this dissertation, the formal responsibilities of each equity agent underwent considerable change as education policy
in general and employment equity policy in particular was altered by changing political ideologies. The tapestry of discourses that emerges is woven by the movement of official and unofficial resistance and counter-resistance at locations of power between and among social actors in the governance structures of educational organizations in Ontario. The resulting narrative provides a re/presentation of the ways in which both individual and systemic resistance to gender equity employment policy may be expressed and the ways in which those who are seeking social change may en/counter resistance.
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DEDICATION

To those who have gone before . . .

My mother and father, Keith and Janet Turnbull who always believed in me and taught me to believe in myself.

My aunt, Beatrice Patrick, who was a teacher by profession and my teacher in so many ways.

My sister, Carol Ferguson, whose laughter and compassion I still draw from daily.

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CHAPTER ONE

Gender Equity Employment Policy: Weaving a Text of Resistance

_Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy._

Michel Foucault, _Power as Knowledge_, 1982

A colleague at another faculty of education tells the story of accompanying some of his students on a visit to the school where they would be doing their first practicum placement. As he and his eager student cohort walked down the school hallway behind some primary children, two little boys were rather nervously glancing over their shoulders at this large group of adults. Finally, one little boy whispered to his friend, “What are they doing here in our school?” to which the other little boy responded, “The girls are here to learn how to be teachers and the boys are here to learn how to be principals.”

This story is instructive in several respects. First it points to the ways in which educational hierarchies have been organized in congruence with gendered “scripts”. That is, as I will argue later, educational hierarchies are organized around normative roles for males and females and, as this young child’s response demonstrates, social actors construct meaning based on those normative expectations. Gadamer (1975) refers to the normative expectations, beliefs, and values that inform human action as pre-judgements or prejudices which he defines as “a judgement that is given before all elements that determine a situation have been finally examined” (p. 240).

Second, as Gadamer suggests, this young child’s pre-judgements about the meaning of gender in educational settings have emerged from within social regularities that render some elements of the social phenomena he is attempting to interpret visible, while other elements remain invisible. Scheurich (1994) explains that, “social regularities are ‘productive’ and ‘reproductive’ in the sense that social regularities constitute what is socially visible or credible, but the regularities do not literally create material reality. Instead they constitute what is socially selected and verified as ‘real’” (p. 302). This young child has already formed his pre-judgements about what is “real” for men and women.
based on the social regularities that produce and reinscribe gendered roles in educational organizations within his life experience.

Third, if one views pre-judgements based on normative interpretations of social phenomena as a kind of narrative frame in which "reality" is constructed through discourse, then post-structuralists would argue that dominant or meta-narratives (Lyotard, 1984) are never totalizing because they are embedded in language and are, therefore, indeterminate, contextual, and open to reconstruction. Thus, in the immediate context of the narrative described by my colleague, he has an opportunity to put forward an alternative discursive position that resists the unproblematic acceptance of a "reality" which enhances male access to positions of privilege in educational organizations. However, even though he may act to transform gendered social regularities from the relatively secure position of a tenured faculty of education professor, he can expect that his authority [will be] negotiated and contested. . . .[S]ocieties contain a plurality of discourses and discursive sites, a plurality of positions and perspectives from which to speak. Of course, not all of these have equal authority. Yet conflict and contestation are part of the story. (Fraser, 1992, p. 179)

In essence, the narrative microcosm provided by the retelling of my colleague's story is suggestive of the major themes which weave their way through the story I will tell in this dissertation about the lived experience of employment equity agents working to implement gender equity employment policy. That is, education is a feminized occupation (Prentice, 1996) that has been organized in congruence with gendered scripts that have served to privilege male access to positions of prestige and power in educational organizations. In addition, these gendered discourses which shape the ways in which power relations are lived and given meaning by women and men, girls and boys, in educational organizations continue to reproduce normative gendered roles in quite powerful ways - but they can be disrupted.

Not surprisingly, employment equity policy that attempts to resist perceptions of "reality" based on unproblematized gendered social regularities will itself be resisted by those whose position of privilege has been challenged. This study demonstrates the depth of
resistance to gender equity employment policy in Ontario's educational system for over twenty years, and yet gender equity in employment practices has continued to be the desired goal of many advocacy groups. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, at the heart of reform efforts around gender fair employment practices has been a fundamental belief that schooling cannot demonstrate equity in pedagogical practices if it does not also do so in its patterns of governance. That is, educators cannot tell students to "do as I say" if the roles students see replicated in schools simply mirror the gender inequities of their larger social context. Therefore, since Ontario has taken up gender fairness in classroom practices in its official educational policy for over thirty years, advocacy groups, such as the Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontario, have argued that employment policy must reflect the Ministry of Education's pedagogical goals. As gender equity employment policy slowly evolved in Ontario's educational system, many boards initiated a formal role for employment equity advocates. I will be considering the resistance experienced by three employment equity advocates who have been positioned in educational organizations to enable the implementation of gender equity employment policy. Before turning to their lived experience of resistance within educational organizations, I will examine several of the persistent conceptual strands that weave their way through the text that follows. The first thread I pick up is the central concept of resistance as a social and political phenomenon.

Theorizing Resistance

"Every resistance to power is an exciting counter-exercise of power" (Bersani, 1977, cited in Bartkowski, 1988, p. 50); without the exercise of power, resistance could not exist. Thus, theorizing resistance presupposes theorizing power. An etymological study of the word resistance implies this connection between resistance and an opposing force since its Latin roots mean "to stand against." In 1782, Priestley wrote, "The cause of all resistance is repulsive power." Hobbes, wrote in his Elementary Philosophy in 1839, "I define resistance to be the endeavour of one moved body . . . contrary to the endeavour of another moved
body” (OED). Roget’s Thesaurus (1996) offers further insight with the following list of synonyms for resistance: defence mechanism, dissuasion, disinclination, opposition, obstinacy, disobedience, defense, revolution, refusal, opposing force, force, electrical power, endurance, hardness, toughness, friction, deflection, and hindrance. In other words, resistance is difficult work that requires much physical, mental, and emotional energy. A student of Patti Lather’s speaks to the affective burden of resistance to reconstructing prejudgements in the following definition:

\[
\text{[R]esistance is a word for the fear, dislike, hesitance most people have for turning their lives upside down and watching everything they have learned disintegrate into lies. “Empowerment” may be liberating, but it is also a lot of hard work and new responsibility to sort through one’s life and rebuild according to one’s values and choices. (cited by Lather, 1991, p. 76)}
\]

Her definition points to resistance as the provision of an oppositional force against political or psychological oppression. That is, resistance may manifest itself in material and/or psychic forms; it may occur in courageous collectives of political resistance or in small individual acts of rebellion; it may be active, passive, overt, or covert. For example, the French underground during World War II offered active, covert, political resistance to the Nazis. Overt, but passive, political resistance was exercised by Martin Luther King as a means to gain enfranchisement and end segregation for African-Americans during the 1960s. Each of these social movements represents collective action; however, individuals may counter oppression with acts of resistance which are just as powerful within a more limited scope of social action. For example, in her novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, Ann Michaels provides an unforgettable description of Old Martin, a grocer in a tiny Greek town during World War II, who displayed a few scarce cherries “like rubies on ivory paper. During the occupations Old Martin tried to satisfy the cravings of his patrons. *This was his private resistance*. He bartered secretly with ship captains for a delicacy he knew a customer pined for. Thus, cunningly, he bolstered spirits . . . . The Patron Saint of Groceries” (1996, p. 47, italics added). The impulse for each of these acts of resistance was to stand against oppression, but resistance can also stand against those who are attempting to challenge
oppression. For example, in an “emancipatory classroom” – that is, a classroom which encourages students to vigorously interrogate taken-for-granted social arrangements around issues of race, gender, and so on – Lather quotes a student who says, “I feel like they were telling me I’m wrong to feel the way I feel” (1991, p. 140). One can almost feel the student’s psychic heels digging into more comfortable social regularities. This example also suggests that resistance is more complex than simply standing against dominant forms of power.

Instead, as Bartkowski (1988) writes, understanding oppositional discourses within their historical and political constructions, “renders circular and complex the discourse that produces its own object – power, always there and always resistant” (p. 50). Each example of resistance described above has emerged as a counter-exercise of power to the forms of power expressed in discourses which, while powerful, are contingent and held in place by underlying ideologies that are open to examination and transformation. Drawing on Gramsci (1971) and Althusser (1971), Lather conceives of ideology as “the medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate in everyday life which privilege dominant norms in particular social contexts . . . the stories a culture tells itself about itself” (1991, p. 2). Commenting on Marx’s notions of ideology, Corson (1995) writes that,

For him, ideology has two manifestations, and each is inseparable from language and meaning: In the one, ideology is a system of ideas that distorts reality in order to serve the interests of the dominant group. . . ;in the other, ideology is a means of penetrating the consciousness of human actors and uncovering the foundations of activities. (p. 5)

That is, ideology shapes the expression of power in ways that privilege dominant interests, but it can also act as an instrument of resistance that counters the exercise of power by making social actors conscious of that which ideology has kept hidden in defining social reality. What emerges is a dialectical conception of resistance that circulates between competing discourses and offers a more complex and satisfying notion of both power and resistance in the arena of public policy around equitable employment practices.

Later in this chapter I will begin to trace the competing discourses which have
circulated in the formal and informal texts of gender equity employment policy. First, however, I will pick up another discursive thread which is intertwined with conceptions of resistance: differing notions of power and their potential in theorizing resistance.

**Resisting Texts**

Competing theories of power shape varying conceptions of resistance. For example, Foster (1996) writes that traditional notions of power (e.g., French & Raven, 1959) tend to look at "how power can be attained, at how power is a 'good' to be used, and at how power can itself reflect other dimensions of social life (such as status, control, achievement, and so on)” (p. 21). Within this framework, power operates from “the top down” and is “an uncontested notion that plays a particularly important role in reaffirming social structures” (p. 21). On the other hand, Foucault suggests that power operates within a web of competing discourses in a capillary way. Thus, “power's diverse and pervasive character dictates that it operates in anything but a linear or uniform manner” (Ryan, 1996, p. 11), but “from the bottom up” as forms of knowledge are contested at discursive nodes within the web.

Traditional “top down” notions of power, not surprisingly, often lead to notions of resistance that operate in a similarly stratified way. That is, systems of power are countered by systems of resistance in the form of some degree of coercive formal measures within existing hierarchical social structures. By coercion, I mean “the application of force to control the action of a voluntary agent” (OED). The word “force” may be taken to mean the direct application of physical power as well as the more indirect symbolic restraint imposed by policy, social norms, cultural values and so on. Corson (1993), citing Bourdieu (1966), calls the latter form of coercion, “symbolic power” – the power to constitute the given simply by stating it – by dominant social groups who in this way inflict ‘symbolic violence’ upon non-dominant groups” (p. 11). Equity seeking strategists who wish to resist the expression of “symbolic violence” – or coercion – by dominant social actors often seek to implement policy which counters oppressive social practices with a view to achieving an ideal state constructed from their own counternarrative of what is “good”. Sometimes, then,
just as Foucault's analysis of power would suggest, employment equity policy that resists discriminatory practices in educational organizations is accused of simply mirroring the coercion which holds hegemony in place.

While the debate about the efficacy and fairness of equity policy continues, the experience of many equity workers that I have talked to, including the participants in this study, suggests that such policy may inadvertently reinscribe social regularities in surprising ways which are always tenuous, even dangerous, when there is unequal access to formal and informal coercive power in organizations. Lorde argues that, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (1984). If her position is correct, then policy that uses patriarchal forms of discourse cannot dismantle the structures in educational organizations that privilege male access to positions of prestige and power. In fact, resistance to such policy often creates backlash which may be dangerous for women. For example, a female colleague who held a senior position in the human resources department of a large Ontario board told me about persistent verbal threats and physical harassment she and other female supervisors in her department experienced when equity employment practices based on newly introduced provincial legislation were implemented. The invective she and her colleagues endured, in her view, had as much to do with the increasing number of female administrators at the senior levels of her department as it did with questions raised by the content of the equity employment policy itself. That is, coercive force was directed at the policy these women embodied because employment equity policy was perceived to be a coercive measure that deprived these men of their traditional access to privilege.

Grosz (1989), however, counters Lorde's position that patriarchal forms of power cannot be dismantled by mirroring its strategies with the argument that "women must become familiar with the patriarchal discourses, knowledges and social practices which define and constrain them: these provide the only sources and tools against patriarchy. Only through its own techniques can patriarchy be challenged and displaced" (p. 133). In this view, women are encouraged to beat men at their own logocentric game and to reject the "separate but equal" stance of radical feminism, suggested by Lorde's position. Instead,
Grosz suggests a position which rejects victimization and seeks legitimacy within dominant discourses.

Lather, who describes a more flexible discursive site for thinking about power and resistance, provides a third possibility. After reflecting on criticism directed at her for her use of patriarchal language in a paper she presented at an academic conference, she writes,

While my desire may be “to speak with meanings that resonate, that are tactile and corporeal as well as conceptual, that reverberate in their plurality and polyvocity” (Grosz, 1989, p. 132), such commentary indicates that my discourse is very much inside logocentrism. I take such concerns to heart, playing with possibilities for future writing, forms less alienated to lived experience. But something there is in me that sees, also, the need to take on male discourse at its own site and to attempt to “speak otherwise” within its parameters. (1991, p. 158)

Lather’s position, I would argue, offers the greatest potential for theorizing resistance to gender equity employment policy, since the policy itself is framed in male discourse which is often coercive while its impetus is an attempt to “speak otherwise” – i.e., transform opportunities for women in educational organizations. Her struggle is also instructive since it opens up possibilities for a more complex notion of power and resistance centred in what Foucault (1973) referred to as discursive formations. That is, what can be talked about is shaped by regimes of truth in which “‘truth’ is understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (Rabinow, 1984, p. 74). In the case of gender equity employment policy in educational organizations – a public statement of “truth” which regulates and redistributes who gets what benefits – many argue (Loney, 1998) that one regime of truth which privileges males in educational hierarchies is simply replaced with another which privileges females. However, such a reading does not take account of the ways in which traditional social arrangements are reinscribed by powerful mechanisms such as the media and educational systems to perpetuate the *status quo*. Furthermore, Foucault’s notion of power
resists the idea that an enduring transcendental subject will prevail in seeking an ultimate "good". Instead, he writes that.

Liberty is a practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men [sic] is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around. (1984, p. 245)

Within this conception of circulating discourses, formal policy that provides for loosening the constraints of discriminatory employment practices simply provides fodder for a new struggle. Thus, if liberty is a practice, then resistance might be better conceptualized as an active, ongoing, and dialectical "way of approaching and eventually modifying oppressive practices" (Ryan, 1996, p. 15).

Kenway, Willis, Blackmore & Rennie (1994) take up this position and provide a strong rationale for using feminist poststructuralist theories to understand gender reform efforts as "constantly contested, negotiated and appropriated" (p. 193). As reform "texts" are produced, they become the "raw materials for fresh cultural productions' or movements of meaning. The "text as produced is different from the text as read"' (p. 193, citing Johnson, 1983). This phenomenon of textual transformation occurs because of its inevitable intersection with social, political, and cultural influences from the moment of production. Mapping these intersections in the lived experience of gender equity employment workers who work within the context of the formal expressions of prevailing ideologies as expressed in public policy requires complex theories of power and resistance. Such theories are able to "place human action and consciousness in an historical and social context . . . [that] encompass[es] both individual consciousness and the ideological and material forces that limit and shape human action" (Weiler, 1988, p. 3).
I will turn now to the roots of gender equity employment policy in Ontario, as a location for the complexity Weiler describes, and, in the process, pick up some of the threads already introduced in exploring power and resistance in this chapter.

**Weaving a Text of Discourses**

The concept of employment equity is relatively new in Canadian policy (Abella, 1984). However, advocacy for employment equity initiatives around issues of gender have a longer history of political action, academic theorizing, and policy initiatives in educational organizations in Ontario. As early as 1885, Ontario’s first organized group of female teachers was formed in Toronto and they were motivated to organize in order to resist the same practices that gender equity employment policy still attempts to redress. Staton and Light (1987) report that

The 1885 minutes of the Toronto Public School Board record that all male elementary teachers held the rank of at least principal’s assistant with individual salaries equal to a female principal, of which there were only six. Of the two hundred and two women teachers in that year, one hundred and ninety-six taught the lower (and hence lower paid) grades. This situation was more noticeable in the larger multiple roomed urban schools, and remedies were not available because the route through senior grades to principal was blocked by a specific prohibition. Women could not teach the senior grades (p. 38).

Responding to these workplace inequities, early women teachers’ associations established links with women’s suffrage, social welfare, and temperance associations, and lobbied for increases in salaries and better working conditions. In 1918, women teachers’ associations scattered across Ontario amalgamated into the Federation of Women Teachers’ Association of Ontario (FWTAO). This organization represented the interests of women elementary teachers across Ontario and remained the sole female-only union of teachers in
the world until its reluctant amalgamation with the men's federation in 1997. Mary Labbatt (1993) notes in her history of the FWTAO that

The concerns of FWTAO's predecessors in 1892 resemble the modern concerns of women teachers in 1993. Only the context differs, not the deepest principle. In 1993 there are still fewer women than men in positions of added responsibility. Women are still clustered in the lower grades. Women continue to identify and struggle with issues which affect them and their students such as violence, sexism in advertising, demeaning images of women in the media and sex stereotyping in readers (p. 19).

Thus, Ontario has a long history of women teachers acting on and advocating around issues which affect women's and girls' lives in educational organizations. Drawing on their roots in early feminist resistance to gendered scripts which limited women's options and opportunities in the public sphere, the FWTAO continued to resist inequitable employment practices for over one hundred years.

Policy as Text

In the broader context of Canada's social systems, equity employment policy can be viewed as a discursive "point of resistance" to the dominant philosophical and political texts of western democracies and organizational theory. The etymological roots of the word "text" reveal that it originally meant a pattern of weaving. In current academic theorizing, the word "text" has come to be associated with patterns of discourses, both written and spoken, which are woven into historically constructed social regularities (Scheurich, 1994, p. 302) and attempt to convince us of their rightness (Foster, 1996, p. 19). Policy represents a particular kind of "text" that provides public expression of the political process in which dominant discourses (social regularities) intersect with counter-discourses (resistances) in a web of social relationships over time. Scheurich (1994) suggests that,

for the policy maker or policy analyst . . . these social regularities exist as a kind of positivist unconscious . . . a level [within the individual but shared across individuals] that eluded the consciousness of the scientist [policy
maker and policy analyst) and yet is part of the scientific [or policy] discourse' (Foucault 1973:xii). Social regularities, then constitute both categories of thought and ways of thinking. . . . In the case of social problems and policy solutions, the network of regularities constitutes what is socially legitimized (constructed) as a social problem and what is socially legitimized as the proper range of policy solutions (p. 302).

Because social regularities are historically contingent, over time there may be "shifts in the grid of regularities that shape the emergence or visibility of particular social problems and policy solutions" (Scheurich, 1994, p. 303). For example, I remember being amazed when I discovered that my aunt, who began her teaching career in the mid 1930s, was expected to give up her teaching job when soldiers returned at the end of World War II. The logic of such an expectation would escape most young teachers today, both male and female, but in the mid 1940s, married women who were employed outside their homes were perceived to be taking jobs from men who were expected to be the primary wage earners. However, even though women were "allowed" to return to their teaching jobs by the 1950s, more subtle forms of exclusion for married women persisted for several decades after the war based on the perception that a married woman's right to pursue a career was not legitimate. Even when married women were hired as teachers, they were often given temporary contracts that were renewed only when all permanent teachers were placed in schools in September. Labatt writes that

As late as 1978, FWTAO Executive Assistant Mary Pattinson discovered women teachers (mostly married) working on term contracts that terminated automatically at the end of the school year. . . . FWTAO launched a full-scale investigation in several southwestern Ontario boards and was successful in having this unlawful practice stopped. Forcing married women into a temporary pool of labour was an old habit and it died hard. (1993, p. 180)

Over time, the interlocking social regularities around gender and marital status began to shift, which made fuller career options possible for women in educational organizations, but
not without resistance from both those advocating on women's behalf, and those who sought to maintain the status quo.

Gender equity employment policy, then, is a text in which both policy problems and solutions have been redefined over time as new designs for social interaction have interrupted the "grid of regularities" for men and women in public and private arenas of social action. The interaction and tension between dominant and resistant discourses is an embodied process that creates a tapestry of lived experience. Foucault (1996) describes the process in the following way:

[T]he points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour. Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities (in Lemert, 1993, p. 520).

Both political theory and organizational theory are discursive sites that have shaped emancipatory struggles between and among men and women at points of institutional power over time. Chapter 2 will explore the tensions between dominant masculinist constructions of both political and organizational theory within western liberal democracies and the resistant discourses of feminism. Subsequent chapters will take up both the potential dilemmas raised by those tensions in the lived experience of the three employment equity workers in this study as well as the resistance they en/counter in educational organizations.
However, before turning to a fuller exploration of these discursive sites, one more conceptual thread needs to be drawn out in greater detail: the meaning of gender equity in the context of public policy around issues of employment.

**Discursive Intersections of Gender Equity**

"That's not fair!" is a familiar childhood lament, but the provision of fairness in the distribution of material benefits defies simplistic responses. As Lasswell (1936) succinctly puts it, "who gets what, when, and how?" (cited in Stone, 1988, p. 30) remains the thorniest of public policy controversies. Rawls (1971) extends the notion of material benefits to what he calls "primary goods", which include the accrued benefits of access to income, inherited wealth, opportunities, and the social bases of self-respect (cited in Sen, 1992, p. 8). Much like Bourdieu's (1977) concept of "cultural capital", Rawls' notion of "primary goods" captures the essence of the phenomenon of according or limiting privilege, both material and social, based on social regularities which are more or less valued. These social benefits are the individual embodiment of collective privileges and limitations, based on culturally ascribed affiliations, which remain relatively stable throughout several generations, and which engender inequitable access to the benefits that society has to offer. In the context of employment equity policy, social benefits include both actual achievements in organizational settings as well as the freedom to achieve (Sen, 1992, p. 31). That is, social benefits include not only being chosen for a job, which produces material benefits, but also having access to the informal networks of association which engender power and social access within organizations as well as the broader social environment.

Social benefits are embodied unequally and lived within the material arrangements of organizational hierarchies that are held in place by discourse, conceptualized here as "the framework in which human perception is shaped by everyday language within a culture" (English, 1994, p. 8). One blatant example of exclusion from social benefits was (and, in some cases, still is) the limiting of membership in golf and service clubs. Women, Blacks, and Jews were often explicitly excluded from the informal, but powerful, social and
business connections that were forged between club members on the golf links and in the club rooms. As a result, white Christian males retained privileged access to positive material and social consequences for themselves while limiting access to social benefits for those they considered to be less desirable because of gender, race, class, and so on. As these restrictions were challenged, and clubs opened up membership to groups who were formerly excluded, many women who are seeking administrative positions in educational organizations that I know personally are taking golf lessons and joining service clubs for the single purpose of accessing these informal networks of power.

However, as many of these women are finding out, access to these enclaves does not presuppose access to power. Exclusion just becomes more subtle. In fact, discriminatory social practices are often invisible, especially to those who benefit from that exclusion, because privilege has been naturalized as "the way it is" or "common sense" (e.g., Rorty, 1989; McIntosh, 1990). For example, the organizational "in-group" not only decides which social/cultural characteristics have more value, but also have privileged access to acquiring those characteristics because of their race, class, gender, etc. The "in-group" may then engage in a form of language (standard English is "in"; accents are "out"), mode of dress (suits are "in"; dashikis are "out"), and informal social activities (going to the bar after work is "in"; going home to feed the family is "out") that act, often without conscious intent, to limit the opportunities of those who belong to groups who have historically had less access to the social processes by which they can acquire valued characteristics. Even more troubling, since those characteristics which reflect the lived experience of the "out-group" are not included or valued as social benefits, members of the out-group often feel that they must subvert their own cultural/sexual identity and adopt the characteristics valued by the "in-group" in order to have access to social benefits. The effect is devastating to the career aspirations of women and minorities, but difficult to protest since the intent to exclude is embedded in the social regularities that are woven like invisible threads through everyday actions and interactions in organizations.

Gender, in particular, \(^3\) shapes the fundamental ways in which we have organized both formal and informal social interactions and benefits (Bem, 1995), yet it has only
recently been taken up as a theoretical position for reconsidering the masculinist hegemony embedded in how we think about "who gets what, when, and how." Feminist critics (e.g., Pateman, 1983; MacKinnon, 1987; Biklen, 1988) argue that the questions raised by Lasswell and other political theorists do not adequately account for women's historical exclusion from social benefits because they assume a universalist position which masks male privilege. In other words, political theorists have not asked: Why is it that white males most often decide what is fair for all? How do the criteria which they use in their decision-making work to extend their privilege? Upon what taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions are their decisions based? By asking questions about the effects of gender on the possibilities for women in organizations, tensions emerge that are embedded in ideologically constructed notions of equality and the structural and cultural roots of inequality.

Varpolatai (1995, p. 247) suggests that equality can be examined along two axes – opportunities (access and treatment) and outcomes (results) – which are consistent with the concept of social benefits I have already described in this chapter. However, attempts to take up these dimensions of equality by political theorists exploring the liberal roots of Western capitalist democracies reveal that they are premised on two potentially conflicting claims which mirror Aristotle's elegantly simple dimensions of equality of treatment. In his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle proposes that equality requires that we treat equals equally (equality) and unequalsv unequally (equity) (Aristotle, 1925). Certainly the history of Canadian employment equity policy, which will be explored in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, reveals that determining the dimensions upon which equality and inequality may be determined has proven complex in practice. Consider, for example, an individual who may have privileged access to social benefits on the basis of some individual or collective dimensions (e.g., white and able-bodied), but unequal access based on other dimensions (e.g., female). Since Ontario's employment equity policy sought to ameliorate unequal access to job opportunities based on the historical exclusion of Native-Canadians, visible
minorities, the disabled, and women from the work force through mandating pro-active hiring practices for these groups, should the policy assist a white, able-bodied woman who qualifies on only one of three dimensions of workplace exclusion?

Further complicating the determination of those dimensions that require similar or differential treatment in employment equity policy are the political, historical, cultural, and social contingencies that are constantly in process. Abella (1984), commenting on society's evolving consciousness of equality, writes that

Equality is, at the very least, freedom from adverse discrimination. But what constitutes adverse discrimination changes with time, with information, with experience, and with insight. What we tolerated as a society 100, 50, or even 10 years ago is no longer necessarily tolerable. Equality is thus a process – a process of constant and flexible examination, of vigilant introspection, and of aggressive open-mindedness. (p. 1)

However, while the complexity of the issues around determining adverse discrimination have changed over time, one persistent question remains: Why has resistance to "aggressive open-mindedness" about employment equity initiatives for women in educational organizations proven to be so intractable a phenomenon? The answer to this question, which is central to my research, resides, at least in part, in the epistemological roots of Western political thought (Okin, 1992).

Men, Women and the State

Macpherson (1989) suggests that Western liberal democracies are premised on two maximizing claims: "the claim to maximize individual utilities [satisfactions] and the claim to maximize individual powers" (p. 4). Furthermore, these claims presuppose a particular notion of rationality which emerged during the Enlightenment – scientific rationality.
Although these claims are articulated differently by 17th century political philosophers Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, each focuses on the potentially conflicting notions that:

1) citizens of nation states are essentially bundles of appetite demanding satisfaction, and
2) citizens are doers with attributes which

- include the capacity for rational understanding, for moral judgement and action, for aesthetic creation or contemplation, for the emotional activities of friendship and love . . . . Man is not a bundle of appetites seeking satisfaction but a bundle of conscious energies seeking to be exerted.

(Macpherson, 1989, p. 4)

While these maximizing claims mirror the axes of equality – opportunities and outcomes – the demands of capitalist market economies overarch both claims because they require the transfer of individual power from the many (the workers) to the few (the owners). Thus capitalism has the effect of distributing the ability to maximize individual utilities (outcomes) and individual powers (opportunities) unequally. As a result, capitalistic, market-driven western societies are increasingly characterized by inequity, competitiveness, and a kind of radical individualism (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1986; Rifkin, 1996; Blackmore, 1989), all of which are unchallenged by the value-free discourse of scientific rationality. Such a society yields little room for public debate around issues of equity which are premised on the communitarian values of shared responsibility for the benefit of individuals and groups with unequal access to social benefits.

Ospina (1996) argues, further, that in Western democracies tensions were and continue to be inherent in the competing ideologies of “particularism” (i.e., freedom of access to social benefits based on family or group affiliation) and “universalism” (i.e., the notion that all are equally free, or constrained, to maximize individual social benefits). These tensions, which emerged with the ascendancy of industrialization, present paradoxical challenges for policy makers around issues of equity because there were
two distinct sets of value systems about the rights and obligations of individuals. Consistent with this were the distinctions between ascription and achievement. The emergent value system rejected particularism and ascription while embracing universalism and achievement, under the distributive slogan "to each according to his or her merit (contribution)" (Deutsch. 1985). (Ospina, 1996, p. 15)

That is, the dominant discourse was premised on the notion that individuals have a right to expect that their contribution to society will result in individual access to social rewards based on individual merit rather than ascribed social position. However, the notion that liberal democracies consist of equally free citizens who will, therefore, have equal access to social benefits based on individual merit exists as an ahistorical and apolitical concept premised on a presumption of the universal equality of each individual no matter what their historical/political access to social benefits has been within society.

Thus, employment equity policy that seeks to distribute social benefits to particular groups (particularism) unequally, based on their unequal access to those benefits, resists the hegemony of the concept of individual merit (universalism) in the discourse of Western capitalist democracies. In fact, employment equity policy disrupts the ideological position which presumes fair distribution of social benefits along the very fault lines upon which it is constructed in Western capitalist democracies: an ahistorical belief in universal equality of opportunities and outcomes based on objective measures of individual merit. Instead, employment equity policy works to redress unequal opportunities and outcomes of individuals who belong to particular groups which have been denied access to their fair share of social benefits, not based on lack of individual merit, but because of their affiliation with historically excluded groups.

Yet, as I have already suggested, employment equity policy is critiqued because it is unable to evade universalism entirely since it is premised on a liberal belief that universal equality can and should be attained. However, the intersection of gender with the tensions
inherent to notions of the individual in liberal conceptions of equity has emerged in feminist critiques of liberal political theory and is particularly instructive in attempting to map locations of resistance to gender equity employment policy. I will return to these themes in subsequent chapters.

Summary

In order to understand the lived experience of resistance for the three gender equity workers in this study who are attempting to implement gender equity employment policy, one must first understand resistance as a social phenomenon. In this chapter, resistance has been theorized as an action, physical and/or psychological, which stands against the imposition of an opposing ideological position. Ideologies are contingent and language bound and circulate through discourses that constitute what is perceived to be “real”, “true”, and valued in social systems. As a result, resistance may emerge at any point in a social system where social actors are contending for ideological ascendancy. The grand narratives shaped by dominant ideologies that attempt to construct reality in ways which maintain existing systems of privilege and power for men are inscribed in the daily actions and “relations of ruling” (Smith, 1987) in educational organizations. Therefore, as Reynolds (1995) notes, “[R]econstructing the discourse of educational administration and leadership [requires] understand[ing] relationships between such things as ideologies, everyday practices and official policies. We need to consider why people, both males and females, often “resist” reform efforts regarding gender equity” (p. 14).

As this chapter points out, the concept of equity resists the dominant narratives of individual merit that are deeply embedded in Western democracies. Gender equity strikes even deeper into the heart of constructions of individual identities (Eisenstein, 1991) and the ways in which women and men make meaning in their world. Therefore, resistance to
gender equity employment policy emerges from ideological positions which interpret the actions of social actors through “the lenses of gender.” As Bem (1993) argues, “hidden assumptions about sex and gender remain embedded in cultural discourses, social institutions, and individual psyches that invisibly and systemically reproduce male power generation after generation” (p. 2). In order to understand the lived experience of those who embody resistance to gender equity employment policy, one must understand that resistance disrupts the discourses of privilege in three interwoven layers: ideology, the practices of social systems shaped by those ideologies, and the personal embodiment of discursive positions around gender equity policy within educational organizations.

In the following chapter I will discuss how the “social regularities” concerning women in the public sphere, to which Bem refers, have been theorized in both political and organizational inquiry and lived in the public sphere of social activity. I will then explore how feminist scholarship resists these dominant texts by foregrounding the particular perspective of women’s experience and calls into question the privilege that men have traditionally enjoyed in organizations, including educational organizations. My purpose in doing so is to trace the ideologies, everyday practices, and official policies en countered by women seeking positions of public authority and those equity workers in educational organizations who are advocating on their behalf.

Endnotes

1. The Federation of Women Teachers’ Association of Ontario (women elementary teachers) and the Ontario Public School Teachers’ Federation (elementary men teachers) were de facto forced to amalgamate after a lengthy court battle in which OPSTF sought to have sex-segregated federations declared a breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the case of Margaret Tomen. Although this court action was vigorously contested by FWTAO, by the time the judgement against them was made, both federations were seeking mutual support in a joint political fight against the sweeping education policy changes
being swiftly implemented by the Harris Conservative government. The comment that I heard over and over again from FWTAO members and officers was that there was a bigger battle to be fought against Harris than the one they had waged against one another. Whether history will support this judgement is, of course, moot at this point.

2. Throughout my dissertation, I will write the word "en/counter" when I wish to denote the circularity of resistance in the lived experience of equity workers. That is, they both “encounter” resistance to their work, and they also “counter” resistance to gender equity with their own counter-exercise of power. I suppose “en/counter” might be read as a kind of postmodern affectation, but it seems to me to be a useful way to express a complex idea that, once explained, will prevent the need for revisiting explanations over and over again.

3. The effects of social class, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc., on access to social benefits intersect with gender in important ways. Although I will be concentrating on gender in this dissertation, acknowledgment of those intersections will be explored explicitly as they emerge theoretically and from the data. Otherwise, they will be implicit in references to gender within the dissertation.

4. As the ensuing discussion will make clear, the use of the word “man” in the context of MacPherson’s discussion is congruent with the context, although I am not certain that this was MacPherson’s conscious intent.
CHAPTER TWO
The Stories That We Tell Ourselves: Resisting Gendered Texts

Masculine ideologies are the creation of masculine subjectivity; they are neither objective, nor value-free, nor inclusively “human.” Feminism implies that we recognize fully the inadequacy for [women], the distortion of male-created ideologies, and that we proceed to think, and act, out of that recognition. Adrienne Rich. 1979

In the long battle to create more equitable access for women to positions of authority in educational organizations, one thing is clear: the presence of women disrupts a male dominated public sphere of activity and is resisted. The story of such resistance remains hidden, however, because political and organizational theorizing universalizes male experience in the public sphere as though life experience is the same for men and women. The result has been a masking of the process of exclusion, based on women’s particularity, from normative practices in organizations. In this chapter I will examine the history of theorizing women out of the stories of accepted knowledge of and practice in the polis – the social structures by which “society is ruled and social relations are governed” (Pal, 1993, p. 38) – as well as organizational systems within the state. I will then offer resistant feminist discourses which rewrite the gendered texts of theory and practice. The impact of masculinist exclusions of women’s experience, and feminist reconstructions of what is “real,” have important implications for understanding the roots of resistance to gender equity employment policy en countered by equity workers in educational organizations that are funded by public money in liberal democratic states.

Universal Men: Particular Women

Rousseau’s claim that “man is born free, and everywhere is in chains” (1982), succinctly expresses a universalist notion of equality which, as I have pointed out in Chapter 1, is premised on the concept of individual merit as an ahistorical, apolitical notion of universal access/limitations to social benefits. However, Okin’s critique of Western political thought, as exemplified in the canon of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Mill, points out that the “universal man,” which is generalized to theories
about both men and women in contemporary political theory, was, in fact, a very particular kind of male who occupied a unique theoretical standpoint. Her analysis strongly supports the notion that the basic unit of discussion by each political philosopher was "the [patriarchal] family, and not the adult human individual" (Okin, 1992, p. 282).

In early liberal political thought, the "universal man," as the male head of a family, embodied the family unit. He was perceived to act and speak on behalf of the family and represented each family member's subordinated interests in the wider society. For example, Okin cites the following passage from Mill's essay in support of women's suffrage entitled "Government":

One thing is pretty clear, that all those individuals whose interests are indisputably included in those of other individuals, may be struck off without inconvenience. In this light may be viewed all children up to a certain age, whose interests are involved in those of their parents. In this light also, women may be regarded, the interest of almost all of whom is involved either in that of their fathers or in that of their husbands. (1992, p. 201)

Clearly, the taken-for-granted social arrangements between men and women, which Mills describes are patriarchal. That is, the rule of the fathers prevailed in both public and private spheres of human activity – but it was a patriarchy which assumed what Pateman (1988) calls a hidden sexual contract. Pateman suggests that this sexual contract had always been embedded in patriarchy since the authority of the father over his sons and the rights to which those sons were entitled based on his procreative power was based fundamentally on the right of this father over a woman, without whom there could . . . have been no sons. The foundation stone of classical and feudal patriarchy, therefore, ignored by liberal theorists, was conjugal right. (Cockburn, 1991, p. 20, citing Pateman, italics in the original)

Thus, while the end of feudal rule and the emergence of the new relations between owners and workers in an industrialized nation-state was envisioned by Hobbes, Locke,
Rousseau, and other liberal political theorists as an anti- or post-patriarchal social contract (Cockburn, 1991, p. 20), Pateman argues that the social contract merely replaced traditional patriarchal arrangements and reaffirmed patriarchy in the emerging social forms of industrialized nation-states. Cockburn, commenting on Pateman’s argument, explains that

the contract was between men only. And it was predicated on, as it were, a hidden sexual contract, unacknowledged by contract theory, assuring the ‘brothers’ of modern society equal access to women and rights over them, a share in the father’s former privilege. The new order, just as the old, was to be based on male sex-right. A man was now constituted in law as a free and equal citizen, yet a wife was technically a non-being... The social contract of Western capitalist ‘democracies’, then, is by no means incompatible with patriarchy. Indeed it is the means through which the male dominance system has adapted to an other-wise much-changed world. Pateman calls it ‘fraternal patriarchy’. (p. 21)

Fraternal-patriarchal social structures, based on a hidden sexual contract, had the effect of naturalizing distinct sex roles which separated women into the private realm and men into the public realm of human activity. This division was then used “throughout history and into the present to justify keeping the female sex in a position of political, social, and economic inequality” (p. 297).

Bem (1993) uses the metaphor of “the lenses of gender” to explore the pervasive, but largely invisible way in which these naturalized and distinct sex roles have acted historically to set aside women as a “particular” case in the realm of public activity. The first lens is biological essentialism which emphasizes biological differences between males and females. She argues that first religion and then science acted to naturalize, justify, and perpetuate social and economic inequalities based on the notion that “biology is destiny” (de Beauvoir, 1952). The second lens is that of androcentrism which moves beyond who is in power to how male power is culturally and psychologically reproduced. Viewed through an androcentric lens, males and male experience are perceived to provide
a neutral, normative, objective, and rational standard against which female experience is a
sex-specific deviation. The third lens, gender polarization, is the naturalized expression
in the social world between men who are the objective standard for measuring experience
and women whose experience is “other” and confined in important ways by their biology.
That is, perceived difference between the sexes is used as an organizing principle which
provides mutually exclusive “scripts” for both men and women which privileges men in
the public realm of social activity, and seeks to limit women to the private world.

This socially constructed “universal” man dominates political, philosophical,
psychological, and sociological domains of inquiry in Western democracies. His ethical
position, cognitive skills, and social interactions became a normative standard against
which all else has been measured. In political and organizational theory, he continues to
be portrayed as a rational, objective, dynamic social actor in the public realm, while
women are constructed as “particular” deviations from the male norm. In the literary and
academic narratives which shape one’s understanding of social phenomena, women are
portrayed as irrational, subjective, dependent social actors whose social action is largely
confined to the private realm. This view of men’s and women’s lives provided through
lenses of gender that are grounded by culture and history, acts to preserve male power by
excluding “particular” and deviant women theoretically and in practice from the
“universal” normative male world of public social engagement. In fact, Okin argues.

The exclusion from “politics” [i.e., the public sphere of social
engagement] of all that is domestic, familial, private, personal, and sexual clearly depends on the exclusion of women and cannot be sustained once
women are included as full and equal partners in either political theory or
political practice (1979, p. 314).

Extending Okin’s thesis, then, the presence of women in the public sphere is a significant
act of resistance to the normative male status quo, and the tensions around equity in
Western capitalist democracies, which I have already described in Chapter 1, become
even more complex around gender.
Stories of Resistance in Gendered Bureaucracies

Just as the division between the public and private realms of influence was deepened by industrialization in the 18th century, it was widened by the emergence of technical-rational bureaucracies in the 19th century. The hegemony of the unspoken sexual contract that reinscribed patriarchy in fraternal-patriarchal bureaucracies meant that, even if adult women had aspirations in the public realm, those hopes and dreams were most often sublimated in the private realm of family responsibilities. As a result, in Western liberal democracies, women’s access to social benefits was usually dependent on their relationships within fraternal-patriarchal family units. The expectation was that men would go to work and women would stay at home—except those women who, because of class, race, or marital status, became the expendable, poorly paid, highly overworked clerical workers who kept the bureaucracy going (Lowe, 1987, p. 17). The prevailing narrative, then, in both the private and public realm was that men would control and women would be controlled either by permission or coercion.

With the ascendancy of rational scientific thought as a theoretical metanarrative, the dichotomy deepened even further as the male “script” became the subject of inquiry in the field of scientific management and organizational theory. Not surprisingly, theories about administrators in organizations bore a remarkable resemblance to stereotypic male norms, while the female “script” was naturalized and, therefore, remained undertheorized and undervalued. The male “script” was characterized as instrumental, rational, objective, value-free, public, and heroic (English, 1994; Biklen, 1995) while the female “script” was conceptualized as nurturing, affective, subjective, moral, private (Reiger, 1993) and expendable (Biklen, 1995). Bearing children, nurturing young children, and attending to the physical and emotional needs of family members became the double-edged sword that established both women’s value to society and excluded women from full engagement in society. A man’s value was largely established in the public sphere where bureaucratic structures increasingly separated him from the private sphere of home and family.
Although in some respects it might surprise him, Weber's observations about the effects of the advent of modernization and bureaucratization on a gender split between the public and private worlds of social influence echo feminist deconstructions of androcentric political and organizational theorizing. He writes,

In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official, and, in general, bureaucracy segregates official activity as something distinct from the sphere of private life . . . In principle, the executive office is separated from the household, business from private correspondence, and the business assets from private fortunes. The more consistently the modern type of business management has been carried through, the more are these separations the case. (1993, p. 115)

Weber notes further that a modern bureaucracy created an “iron cage” in which men were captive as “[s]pecialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved” (p. 113). Thus, both men and women were, in different ways, caught within the “iron cage” of bureaucracy. However, while men were seldom denied access to and, in fact, maintained power over the private sphere, women were excluded from the practices of power within the “textually mediated relations of ruling” (Smith, 1991, p. 4) in the public sphere.

**Rewriting the stories of gendered bureaucracies**

Theory, or the stories that we tell ourselves, about organizations shapes how we think about the possibilities for change in social systems of the state, like education. This linkage between theory and imagination – i.e., the imagining of possibilities that are “not yet” (Simon, 1987) – are explicitly drawn by Perrow. He theorizes that modern organizations, characterized by Weber’s ideal-type of the bureaucratic “iron cage” of technical efficiency and stratified hierarchical power, are

a social tool that legitimizes control of the many by the few, *despite the formal apparatus of democracy*, and this control has generated unregulated and unperceived
social power. . . . As bureaucracies satisfy, delight, pollute, and satiate us with their output of goods and services, they also shape our ideas, our way of conceiving ourselves, control of our life chances, and even define our humanity. (1986, p. 5, italics added)

Therefore, beyond linking gender and politics in considering gender equity employment policy, Perrow’s analysis suggests that it is essential to link gender and bureaucratic organizations in reconstructing social regularities that shape women’s life chances. Indeed, this is the challenge at the heart of gender equity employment policy. A feminist reading of Greenfield’s (1993, p. 1) argument that the concept of “organization” is an inaccurate reification of a socially constructed set of formal and informal actions and intentions of social actors, each of whom hold a particular set of beliefs and values, provides a theoretical space for expanding on Perrow’s analysis of equity in organizations. When the intentions and actions of “the few” impose their values and beliefs on “the many” within organizations (the public domain), they wield awesome power in distributing social benefits and, historically, “those few” have been male and their privilege has been reproduced through the discursive practices which constitute organizations.

While Weber provided an essentially definitional discussion of organizations, which has been interpreted prescriptively in structural organizational theory (Mills & Tancred. 1992, p. 2), Giddens (1984) conceptualized organizations as “the rules and resources recursively involved in institutions” (p. 24). That is, organizations exist insofar as their structures can be linked with specific institutional and organizational practices, and, in turn, those practices are shaped by organizational structures. Language is the symbolic medium which links institutional structures and practices. Foucault (1972) further suggests that power operates in organizational settings through knowledge/power: i.e., language which coheres into sets of discourses that are privileged, or not, within particular organizational contexts. Taken together, then, these theories allow for conceptualizing Weber’s ideal-type bureaucracy as a privileged, but historically contingent, discourse that organizes the behaviour of social actors within a particular set
of rules and regulations which are, in turn, resisted and reshaped through language by those same social actors over time. Thus, power relations are continually being negotiated by social agents through language at various nodes of interaction within the organization in a constant dialectic with organizational practices.

Viewed in this way, bureaucracies differ from one another at the same moment in time, even as continue to change over time. Clegg (1990) suggests, for example, that postmodern organizations are becoming less rigidly hierarchical and more multi-skilled. Although Clegg does not explicitly explore the effects of gender in shaping organizational structures, his analysis suggests that the technologies of inequity in traditional bureaucracies are breaking down, thus raising the possibility that more equitable theories and practices around gender might emerge. Witz and Savage (1990), however, raise questions about the possibilities for decentring gendered relations in organizations, even postmodern ones, as long as hierarchical bureaucracies remain intact (albeit reconstructed). They write that

the classic Weberian bureaucracy has a specific historical location – in the late 19th and early to mid 20th centuries – and that its heyday has now passed. What Clegg does not examine is whether it can be argued that the modernist bureaucracy rests upon a special configuration of gender relations which are indeed their crucial foundation. Growing research has indeed begun to throw important light on this question. At one level the very development of the hierarchical structures which Weber saw as typical of the modern bureaucracy took place along gendered lines (1992, p. 10).

**Gender relations in educational organizations**

Typical of the gendered lines upon which modern bureaucracies were formed are educational organizations. In fact, because of the nature of educational work which mirrors patriarchal gender roles, educational organizations have been feminized more than most (e.g., Acker, 1989; Biklen, 1995; Prentice, 1977).³ Witz and Savage's (1990)
analysis, for example, suggests that organizations that depend on cheap female labour (unequal outcomes) while actively working to subordinate women to men within their hierarchies (unequal opportunities) are based on the same fraternal-patriarchal presumptions as liberal political theory. For example, they describe the case of 19th century reform of the British Civil Service where gender worked to exclude women from social benefits in the organization by drawing a hierarchical distinction between mechanical and intellectual labour. Almost immediately women were employed in large numbers to do the less valued mechanical work, while men took on the role of supervisory control of women. Hartman’s (1979) definition of patriarchy as “a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them, which enables them to control women,” is most instructive here. Her definition points to the notion that, although men are unequal to one another in bureaucratic hierarchies, they continue to act in solidarity with one another to ensure that women remain in organizational positions where they can be controlled.

This gendered pattern emerges in Ontario’s 19th century educational system in the words of the Superintendent of Education in Upper Canada who wrote that “female teachers were not only as good as male teachers, but could be had ‘at a saving of 50 per cent’” (Prentice, 1977, p. 52). Furthermore, even accounting for the grammatical conventions of the times, the grudging inclusion of women in the teaching profession is clear in the rhetoric of official reports that referred to members of a predominantly female teaching force as “he”, and repeated statements about fears that the presence of women teachers in the higher grades would emasculate young males. Indeed, the relocation of women from the private world to the public realm of educational organizations was allowed grudgingly and only within fraternal-patriarchal limits. As one superintendent put it,

“Both by the law of nature and revelation,” there was “a position of subordination and of dependence” assigned to women, and that thus there ought to be “situations in educational establishments better adapted to the one than the other.” Accordingly, it was generally admitted that the infant
and primary departments were “best fitted for the female,” while “the head
masterships, and the more advanced sections” ought to be reserved for the
male teachers in schools. (Prentice, 1977, p. 61)

The same gendered bifurcation of roles, which limited women’s access to
positions set aside by men for men in the 19th century, continues to limit women’s
opportunities and outcomes in today’s educational organizations. This is evident in the
bar graphs provided in the Ontario School Board Reports (1993), once provided by the
Ministry of Education and Training in Ontario. The statistical analysis of participation by
position and gender in Ontario’s educational system is arranged hierarchically and those
positions more closely aligned with stereotypical female gender roles (clerks, teacher
aides, elementary teachers) are over represented by women at the bottom of the hierarchy.
Not surprisingly, positions more closely aligned with stereotypical male gender roles
(secondary school department heads, principals, superintendents) are positioned at the top
of the hierarchy and are over represented by men.

Furthermore, even though a survey of the reports provided by the Minister of
Education in Ontario to the legislature on The Status of Women and Affirmative
Action/Employment Equity on Ontario School Boards over time (1987-1993), as well as a
large statistical survey conducted by Scanlon, Rees, and Padro (1993) indicates that
women hold positions at all levels of educational hierarchies, the movement of women
into administrative positions has been far more dramatic at the elementary level than at
the secondary or senior administrative level. This phenomenon suggests a kind of
gendered inflation of access to social benefits in which the positions to which women
have access may have moved up the educational hierarchy, but the gendered organization
of that access retains the same fraternal-patriarchal bias. In other words, while the glass
ceiling may be slightly higher, it still exists. At the very least, then, current statistical
evidence suggests that hierarchical educational bureaucracies both mirror and reproduce a
gendered differentiation of roles which privileges male access to social benefits.

Still, women have not all been willing objects of the discursive forces which limit
their opportunities in educational organizations. In fact, women are entering the
workforce in general, and educational organizations in particular, in increasing numbers. Their reasons for doing so are for legitimate financial and personal satisfaction rather than acting in opposition to masculinist norms, yet their very presence in organizations, especially at higher levels of the hierarchy, is often perceived to be an act of resistance to gendered norms. Moreover, as feminist theorists have noted (Blackmore, 1993, Gilligan, 1982, Beck, 1992, etc.), the values which undergird women's ascribed role in fraternal-patriarchal and capitalist democracies are the same ones which are undervalued and viewed as counterproductive within traditional organizational systems. The sexual contract, however, "allows" women into organizations largely based on their willingness to conform by position and/or demeanor to a female script which, in turn, creates some uncomfortable incongruities for many women. For example, a female principal is expected to successfully manage her private responsibilities, but she must accomplish it outside the demands of her public role (Hajnal, 1995). In addition, it is difficult for her to advance within the hierarchy unless she is willing to move towards normative male values and behaviour (Worrall, 1995). Yet, if she conforms too closely to a male norm, she is suspect, but if she conforms too closely to the female norm, she is marginalized. Blackmore addresses this uncomfortable impasse while pointing to the hegemony of scientific discourse in keeping women "in their place." She writes,

When women's subjective experience does not fit this "reality" of scientific management, it is treated as an aberration, non-relevant and deviant. Jan Grant suggests that women's incorporation into masculine domains in organizations has been at a cost. It often requires women publicly to reject and submerge their definition of self as women (Grant, 1985). Such co-option is because women's subjugated knowledge or subjective experience is not valued as a resource or valid alternative worldview. Conversely, it means that radical action or opposition by women in organizations such as teachers (predominantly female) to employers has been interpreted . . . primarily as a search for professional status rather than a
female rejection of the values implicit in a systematic and dehumanizing control by men of women. (1989, p. 113)

Women have hardly been helpless dupes. Such a view would badly misrepresent the degree of agency appropriated by women despite male domination in both the public and, arguably, private realm. In fact, the story of feminism is the story of active resistance in small and large ways to masculinist constructions of social regularities which privilege men in subtle, and not so subtle, ways. Various feminist reconceptualizations of scientific discourses around relations within bureaucratic organizations have required deconstructing the gendered assumptions of capitalism and patriarchy, as well as the bureaucratic forms which hold inequitable gendered power relations in place. While these different feminisms often contradict one another in terms of their theoretical emphases, they all work towards creating more equitable access to social benefits for women and men (Connell, 1995) in a reconstructed public/private sphere of social interaction.

The parameters of resistance which are embedded in gender equity employment policy are drawn by Cockburn who writes that “the struggle for sex equality, however innocently it may present itself, is an attempt to contradict, to undo patriarchy” (1991, p. 18). Feminist theorizing about the effects of gender on access to social benefits has evolved into several theoretical positions. All, however, stand in opposition to patriarchal discourse at those locations of resistance which emerge in the dominant narratives of Western thought we have already explored – individualism vs. collectivism, public vs. private, male vs. female, universalism vs. particularism, equality vs. equity, and so on. Gender equity employment policy is negotiated between these contesting discourses, and equity workers en/counter the complexity of this encounter in their daily work of resisting resistance. Before turning to the explicit exploration of that lived experience, however, another discursive strand must be introduced to the narrative background I am weaving in this chapter: feminist theory.
Women's Stories About Themselves

There are many feminisms. For example, some of the more dominant theoretical positions include liberal feminism, difference feminism, existential feminism, poststructural feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, Marxist feminism, lesbian feminism, cultural feminism, and so on. Each one emerges from particular intellectual traditions and the lived experience of women which is "constantly shifting and expanding" (Adamson, Briskin, & McPhail, 1988, p. 9). Still, even though there may be clear theoretical differentiations between them, there is often more difficulty separating them in practice. In terms of political action, "all [feminists] believe in equal rights and opportunities for women; all recognize that women are oppressed and exploited by virtue of being women; and all feminists organize to make change" (Adamson, et al., 1988, p. 9). Cockburn suggests, moreover, that "a study of equality strategies in organizations calls for a feminist approach that does not reject out of hand as heretical any of the three significant tendencies of feminism" (1991, p. 10). Cockburn identifies the major feminist approaches as liberal feminism, socialist-feminism, and radical feminism. However, because of the recent ascendancy of cultural and postmodern theory, Cockburn's categories need broadening.

Perhaps the most useful way to think about the various feminisms for the purpose of considering gender equity employment policy has been provided by Catherine Marshall (1994). She suggests that there are three main strands of feminism: liberal feminism, difference feminism, and what she calls power and politics feminism. Each one contains distinguishing theoretical positions within its own category, but a fundamental differentiation can be drawn between categories. The resulting tensions and debate between positions has provided for healthy and ongoing critique between and among feminisms, but, in practice, they are "deeply intertwined and each critique of male-dominated society has some legitimacy and a valid purpose" (Cockburn, 1991, p. 10). What follows is an exploration of the historical roots of each major feminist position as well as examples of its use as a resistant discourse in political and organizational theory.
In exploring these roots, I will pick up some of the conceptual threads already discussed as well as introduce new strands to which I will return in telling the stories of equity workers in later chapters.

**Liberal “rights” feminism**

First wave feminism was largely influenced by the Enlightenment thinking (Donovan, 1996, pp. 1-30) which shaped liberal democracies. As I have already suggested, the rights of women in 17th and 18th century liberal democracies were subsumed within patriarchy for, as Mary Wollstonecraft pointed out in 1792, the rights of liberty, equality, and fraternity were available only to the fraternity of men because women had no rights at all. Thus, early feminist battles centred on enshrining women’s rights of personhood in both the public and private realm through the authority of the state. In what has become known as liberal feminism, women sought the right to vote, to hold public office, to train for a profession, to be included in laws affecting marriage and divorce, property rights, and the guardianship of children. In 1848, resolutions in support of these objectives were brought forward at the Seneca Falls convention in Seneca Falls, New York which were premised on two underlying presumptions of early liberal feminists. First, the resolutions centre on natural rights philosophy which assumes that citizens in liberal democracies have a “‘natural right’ to pursue one’s ‘own true and substantial happiness’” (cited in Donovan, 1996, p. 7). Second, as influential 18th century feminist writer Elizabeth Cady Stanton put it, “‘The essence of the resolutions was simply ‘that woman was man’s equal. . . .’” (cited in Donovan, 1996, p. 7).

Thus early liberal feminists focussed on removing or reworking laws which interfered with women’s equal access to their natural rights to maximize their individual utilities (outcomes), and individual powers (opportunities). Grant & Tancred (1992) make the observation that,

> From liberalism, feminists derive the argument that the state should be a neutral arbiter in a field of competing interests, but they underline that the state has not shown such neutrality in its treatment of women. . . . Instead
of placing patriarchy at the center of this analysis, the liberal feminist view contains an implicit sex role theory which suggests that changing the attitudes and behavior of men and women will lead to the redress of state-sponsored oppression (H. Eisenstein, 1985) (p. 115).

Furthermore, as Cockburn argues, within liberal democracies characterized by patriarchy, since there was no place for women as women in men’s social contract, for women to seek “equal rights” with men is to seek to be surrogate men. If women are to be fully present in their specificity as women, the social contract has to be rewritten. The hidden sexual contract on which it is founded has to be exposed and annulled. This implies a feminist struggle wider and deeper than a “rights” movement. (Cockburn, 1991, p. 21)

That is, as Donovan (1996) points out, early liberal feminism ignored or undertheorized social regularities which shaped women’s lives. First, they left the private sphere untouched in the sense that, although they worked to improve women’s legal status within marriage, they failed to consider that the effects of dividing the world into public and private realms, and their assumption that women would be limited to and do the work of the home, would interfere with a woman’s ability to enjoy those legal rights being sought, even if they were conferred (Z. Eisenstein, 1981, p. 95). Second, they ignored, or relegated to temporary conditioning, significant ontological differences between women and men. Third, critics of liberal feminism argued that it did not problematize its Enlightenment roots which valorize a Machiavellian, mechanistic political world premised on a rationality that separates facts and values. In such a world, women were constructed as the irrational other who could not be equal to men as a woman in the public sphere, despite the passionate rhetoric of early liberal feminists, or the passage of laws declaring “equal” rights.

Liberal feminism, as it has emerged in second wave feminism, has been critiqued along the same dimensions as its predecessors. For example, in organizational analysis, Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s study of women in modern bureaucracies, Men and Women of the Corporation (1977), provided a very influential liberal feminist analysis of the effects
of gendered social conditioning on women's access to social benefits. However, her position that "power differences, not sex differences, explain the different corporate experiences and fortunes of men and women of the corporation" (Witz and Savage, 1992, p. 14) does not move the debate forward beyond "natural rights" within modern organizations. Kanter acknowledges, for example, that relations between bosses and secretaries represent an irrational "patrimonial relic" which is simply awaiting a rational impulse which she sees as inherent to bureaucracies. Thus, just as early liberal feminist theorists saw liberation for women in achieving power through the law, Kanter sees liberation for secretaries as achieving power through the assertion of rational organizational forms. Her analysis, however, does not question the split between public and private, nor the differential of power accorded each sphere based on gendered ontological differences. Just like early liberal feminists, she seems to see women's access to social benefits as tied to simply removing barriers to individually obtaining power, rather than questioning and reconstructing the gendered presumptions upon which bureaucracies are constructed which continue to act as a systemic barrier to women's access to social benefits.

Liberal feminists have often turned to the state to redress their concerns, but, in doing so, have either intentionally or unintentionally challenged its capitalist-patriarchal foundations. Therefore, as Zillah Eisenstein (1993) has argued, liberal feminism has a radical core because even its most innocuous reform goals have a way of unsettling established gender relations. Perhaps the most interesting example of this phenomenon is the story of the Australian femocrats who were a cohort of feminist women who became bureaucrats in a quest for social change. . . . They sought affordable child care, education and job training for women. They fought to end wife battering and child abuse. They campaigned against sexual violence and for woman-centered health care. They lobbied for antidiscrimination, affirmative action, and equal pay measures. All these efforts (and many others) were aimed at giving women a broader range of options and at lessening women's dependence —

Eisenstein’s account of these women, entitled *Inside Agitators: Australian Femocrats and the State*, makes clear that even though the goals of femocrats were, arguably, those of liberal feminism, an analysis of their role as appointed workers within a capitalist state necessarily included a Marxist analysis. Still, the constraints on feminists working within the organizational structures of the State shaped their resistance in particular ways which often led to a liberal feminist response.

Adamson, *et al.*, identify the two major currents in which feminist resistance was shaped in Canada as “institutionalized” feminism and “grass roots” feminism and suggest that the former emerged as “professional women who operated within traditional institutions and wanted more opportunities for women within them” (1988, p. 29), and began to organize for action from a liberal feminist position. These women “believed in the state as an agent of change” (Adamson, *et al.*, 1988, p. 51) and were able to mobilize more or less successfully, the media, etc., through their own network of influence. Arguably, the history of the women teachers’ federation in Ontario (FWTAO) follows this liberal feminist tradition.

However, the position of liberal feminists has been challenged by other feminists as “a politically naive stance” which “generate[s] liberal policies--laws that assume that simply eliminating barriers and placing women in positions will change institutional and cultural values” (Marshall, 1994, p. 171). In particular, Marshall points out that equity policies reflect this liberal naivete because they do not recognize “that the people with power in political, institutional, and professional cultures that created sexist and differential access are being relied on to create new power and access processes and to willingly and thoughtfully give up their power and privilege” (1994, p. 171). This point is one I will return to in my analysis of gender equity employment policy in subsequent chapters. However, I will next turn to another important strand of feminism: *difference* or *radical feminism*. 
**Difference/Radical feminism**

Difference feminists focus their analysis and action on “emphasizing and appreciating women’s perspectives and differences” (Marshall, 1994, p. 171). Early radical feminists pointed to limitations in liberal feminism as centred on, even when in opposition to, male norms. Instead, they argued that feminist theorizing must move beyond masculinist definitions of women’s roles in both public and private to reconceptualizations based on women’s embodied lives. That is, radical feminism moved beyond prescribing women’s equality with men and centred instead on describing women’s differences from men. In a sense, radical feminism was a natural extension of a growing ambivalence about the effects of expanding bureaucratization – the “iron cage” – in the modern world. In fact, Donovan (1996) describes Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s work, which was premised on the potentially ameliorative effects of maternal energy in the public realm, as a reconstruction of Social Darwinism in which society was evolving towards communitarian (female) values.

The continuum of radical feminism ranges from women’s difference as a rationale for liberal feminist policy reform to those radical feminists who advocate a totally separate female culture. Early difference feminists looked in particular at women’s role of mothering as one which encouraged the moral superiority of women and the impetus to create a better world. For example, Nellie McClung wrote:

> The woman movement...is a spiritual revival of the best instincts of womanhood – the instinct to serve and save the race...Women are naturally the guardians of the race, and every normal woman desires children...It is woman’s place to lift high the standard of morality.


While such a position did little to resist the stereotypes which had been used to exclude women as women in organizations, what radical feminism did do was retheorize women’s own experience.

Second wave radical feminists emerged in opposition to the sexist treatment they endured in “grass roots,” male-dominated, “New Left” organizations of the 1960s. They
argued that fundamental revision of social organization would emerge from woman-centred theoretical analysis which resists patriarchy. They were determined to organize themselves in non-hierarchical and democratic ways which remained, at heart, premised on women’s moral superiority. Adamson, et al. claim, for example, that radical-feminist writing, especially on issues of peace and violence against women, has in it the unarticulated assumption that men are inherently aggressive, violent, and self-serving. The other side of this assumption, also rarely stated explicitly, is that women are inherently different from men: women are not naturally aggressive, violent, individualistic, or self-serving. (1988, p. 32)

Carol Gilligan’s influential work, In a different voice: Psychological theory and women’s development, seems to provide some justification for this position when she argues that, because women occupy a different cultural space than men, they have developed an ethical frame for their moral judgements based on care and community. In contrast, men’s moral judgements are based on an ethic of justice. Beck (1993) has extrapolated the following synthesis of Gilligan’s analysis and points out that each set of values has strengths and weaknesses in the public and private sphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gendered Organizational Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(associated with male values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrowness and Inflexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition and Confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-emotionality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power/Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(associated with female values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation and Compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentleness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network of Relationships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Clearly, the values of an ethic of justice are reflective of those which characterize a rational bureaucracy and the leaders who serve it (Reiger, 1990). Thus, at the centre of a radical-feminist critique of organizational theory is the hegemony of hierarchical organizational forms that not only act to exclude the physical presence of women, but their moral presence as well. For example, using a radical feminist analysis, Harris refers to a “re-humanized bureaucracy” (1996), while Young, Staszenski, McIntyre and Joly (1993) talk about the need for both caring and justice as necessary ethics of educational leadership. Kathy Ferguson’s (1984) work, *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, is a thought-provoking exploration of grass-roots women’s organizations who have set aside the masculinist norms upon which bureaucracies have been constructed and rethought organizational forms based on their own values and experiences. The impulse of such studies in organizational theory seems to be similar to Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s work in first wave feminism – the revaluing of female characteristics which have been seen as valuable to the private sphere but disruptive to the public sphere in order to unlock “the iron cage” of modern organizations.

However, critics have pointed out that radical feminists often assume an essentialist stance, centred in women’s biology and differentiated socialization, which maintains the dichotomy between men and women. The danger, as Crawford points out, is that “Difference – even though originally conceptualized as female strength, superiority, or virtue – is almost always transformed into ‘deficiency’ for women” (1989, p.139). In addition, MacKinnon (1987) argues that the integration of stereotypical female values into new forms of leadership in restructured organizations does not necessarily mean that women will find themselves more welcome in positions of leadership unless the technologies of power become equally accessible to both sexes. Indeed, as Blackmore (1996) has pointed out, the discourse of women’s difference has been co-opted by “greedy” educational organizations to justify positioning women as “emotional labourers” for the purpose of ameliorating the effects of restructuring and will, in time, reposition those women at the margins of power in those same newly restructured educational organizations.
While these cautionary critiques are instructive, “difference” feminism has enabled women to more fully explore their own lived reality. Yet, how can women acknowledge their unique individual and collective experience as women without retreating from the world of men, while at the same time acknowledging the dominance of males in positions of power without submitting to marginalization? Blackmore (1989) takes a sensible position that begins to bridge this impasse when she writes,

I do not take the stance that women’s worldview or perspective is either biologically determined or premised on an essentialism which perceives female morality, interests or behaviours as being superior to those of males. Rather I adhere to the view that at a specific historical moment, traditional patterns of behaviours prescribe certain roles to which individuals, males and females, partially conform to differing degrees. . . Within this framework feminism would not expect that everyone be treated exactly the same, since responsibility and relationships have specific temporal and historical contexts. (p. 121)

However, Blackmore goes on to suggest that, if one accepts that difference is premised on specific cultural and historical contingencies, then difference is not a stable enough category to support acceptance of inequality based on that difference. Such a view of difference, she suggests, requires acknowledgement of differentials of power and the reconceptualizing of the public sphere as one characterized by equality, plurality, and democratic forms which “exclude no person, aspects of person’s lives or topics of discussion” (1989, p. 121, citing Young, 1987, p. 76). Reconstructing the public sphere, however, “goes nowhere until it presses on the political nature of the process by which men’s ways, socialization experiences, and needs become the mainstream legitimate ones, embedded in all institutions, especially in politics” (Marshall, 1994, p. 171). Marshall suggests that power and politics feminism is particularly useful in examining the processes by which the ways of men have become social regularities in the public sphere.
Power and politics feminism

The many strands of feminism which seek to restructure power relations in the public sphere include, according to Marshall, "cultural reproduction theorists, the radical critique, Marxist, socialist, existentialist, and postmodern strands of feminism. All identify the institutional, economic purposes and the political and cultural processes which create and maintain exclusion of females" (1994, p. 172). While all of these theoretical positions are important, two have particular relevance to analyzing gender equity employment policy: Marxist/Socialist feminism and postmodern feminism.

Marxist/Socialist feminism

Although equity for women was not the organizing impulse of Marxist theory, it has become an influential form of analysis for feminism. First, ignoring for the moment that Marxism is "a shifting and unstable consensus" (Bennington, 1987, p. 18), it offers a theoretical position which moves toward a "social and political emancipation" (Lather, 1991, p. 23 citing Benton, 1984). Second, it foregrounds the ideological underpinnings of capitalism in liberal democracies and provides for transforming what is constructed as "real" by replacing false consciousness with emancipatory narratives. Third, unlike liberal feminists, Marxists, like Lenin and Engels, saw women's emancipation tied to their entry into a productive labour force. Furthermore, as I have already suggested, capitalism does not create the conditions for equality. Instead women or men who sell their labour to the capitalists who control the means of production cannot help but be disadvantaged by the process. Marxist feminists, therefore, argue that class domination shapes social, economic, and political relations, so it is not so much men as men – i.e., fraternal-patriarchy – as it is capitalism that oppresses women and men.

Feminist critics of Marxism note, however, that it is difficult to maintain the position that capitalism is solely responsible for women's oppression when "[t]wentieth century experience shows...that although many more women now had an independent wage, their oppression as a sex continued" (Cockburn, 1991, p. 22). As Zillah Eisenstein
(1981) has pointed out, "patriarchal interests are represented by men of the capitalist class, who enforce the sexual class relations of patriarchy via the machinery of the state" (cited in Witz & Savage, 1992, p. 35). Dual systems or socialist feminist theory, by linking theory around both capitalism and patriarchy, are able to examine the complex ways in which these sometimes competing political forces (Walby, 1984, 1990) are co-implicated in privileging males in both the public and private realm. For example, Grant and Tancred, referring to the public sphere as *productive* and the private sphere as *reproductive*, use the latter term to refer not only to "biological or generational reproduction but also to the reproduction of labor power on a daily basis. . . [d]ivisions rooted in the productive and reproductive spheres are hierarchically and unequally represented within the bureaucracy of the state" (1993, p. 117).

As Grant and Tancred’s analysis illustrates, the power of a socialist feminist analysis to unmask discourses which hide the value of the labour of women in both the public and private domains of social action is compelling. Eisenstein notes (1982) that socialist feminism moves the discussion beyond the limits of liberal feminism because, "[f]eminist demands uncover the truth that capitalist patriarchal society cannot deliver on its ‘liberal’ promises of equality or even equal rights for women without destabilizing itself" (p. 569). Socialist feminist analysis, for example, not only makes visible the ways in which women’s labour at home subsidizes public production, but also how male solidarity works to limit women’s opportunities in organizations, as well as to construct the ways in which work is valued differently for men and women. They point out that neat divisions between the public and private realms of social action ignores the ways in which married women’s labour is most advantageous to capital because their work inside the home is not paid for and their work outside the home is usually underpaid based on their “temporary” movement into the paid labour force.

In Chapter 1, I described the historical exclusion of married women from full time employment right up until the 1980's in Ontario’s educational organizations. As Pattinson
notes, these “old habits died hard” (cited in Labatt, 1993, p. 180), but socialist feminism provides a theoretical position for understanding the ways in which the twin ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy hold these old habits in place. Pateman draws out this connection when she writes,

Women have not been incorporated into the patriarchal structure of capitalist employment as ‘workers’; they have been incorporated as women; and how can it be otherwise when women are not, and cannot be men? The sexual contract is an integral part of a civil society and of the employment contract; sexual domination structures the workplace as well as the conjugal home (Pateman, 1988, p. 142, cited in Cockburn, 1991, p. 23, Cockburn’s italics).

Dorothy Smith (1987b) explores the dichotomy described by Pateman and distinguishes between the materialist/concrete world of women and the conceptual/abstract world of men. Smith’s analysis suggests that these differentiated spheres of social activities are held in place through “relations of ruling,” the policies and practices of modern governance as well as the concepts and symbols of modern society, which depend on the sexual contract. She writes, “At almost every point women mediate for men the relation between the conceptual mode of action and the actual concrete forms in which it is and must be realized, and the actual material conditions upon which it depends” (cited in Witz & Savage, 1990, p. 90). Thus, in order for women to have equal access to social benefits in educational organizations, a socialist feminist analysis makes clear that women struggle against two resistances. Cockburn (1991) identifies them as, first, “a struggle against the terms of engagement between employer and employed” (p. 24), and, second, “a feminist struggle against the imposition of male sex-right by both employer and male colleagues” (p. 24).

Arguably, then, socialist feminist analysis is particularly useful in coming to an understanding of equity workers’ struggles against the forces of both capitalism and patriarchy. However, critics of Marxist/socialist feminism have charged that it simply replaces a capitalist patriarchal version of what is “real” with a “master discourse of the
left” (Patton, 1983, p. 53). If power resides in discourse which is constantly contested, many feminists argue that postmodernism offers a more productive site for analyzing power and resistance because, as Lather argues,

Rather than dismissing “the real,” postmodernism foregrounds how discourses shape our experience of “the real” in its proposal that the way we speak and write reflects the structures of power in our society. . . . To move from establishing the “real” to how what we see is constituted by our very pursuit of it is to move into a post-Marxist space where claims to totality and uncertainty, claims central to Marxist explanatory systems, are severely undercut. (1991, p. 25, Cockburn’s italics)

**Postmodern/Poststructural feminism**

The only statement one can make with any certainty about postmodernism and poststructuralism is that they occupy contested terrain. There are probably as many definitions and differentiations of and between postmodernism and poststructuralism as there are writers writing about them. In fact, they are terms which are often used interchangeably because each shares a common “resistance to any form of totalisation and closure. . . . [a] common emphasis on the constitutive effects of language and discourse and the consequent ‘decentring’ of the modernist subject” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 18). Some writers have approached postmodernism from the standpoint of what it is not: modernism. In this construction, the postmodern is not about reason, but it is about desire; it is not about a unifying truth but about plural, fragmented signifiers; it is not about identity but about multiple subjectivities. However, Suleiman comments that “the effort to define postmodernism chiefly as a formal. . . . category and to oppose it as such to modernism is, even when successful, of limited interest” (1992, p. 113). Instead she sees it as important because of what it “does” not because of what it “is” and the most interesting debates, especially for looking at employment equity policy, centre on the question: “Does it offer possibilities for opposition, critique, resistance to dominant ideologies?” The answer to this question is not completely clear, but arguably its
sometimes uneasy intersection with feminism has pushed the discussion towards “yes.”

While the alliance between postmodernism and feminism is an uneasy one, it is, in some ways, inevitable. As Lather suggests above, like feminism, postmodernism critiques and resists the grand texts of modernity – those texts that Lyotard calls the “grand narratives of legitimation” (1984), or metanarratives. Instead, postmodernists take up an anti-foundational position which allows for “local, ad hoc, and historically contextual truths and practices to emerge and be heard. Such truths – repressed and/or marginalized by metanarratives – provide new, if fragmentary, bases for legitimation” (Donovan, 1996, p. 201). Such a position has opened up feminism more fully to the experiences of women of colour, disabled women, and lesbians, etc., and has even called into question the grand narratives such as patriarchy (Pringle, 1995) and socially constructed categories of male and female (Riley, 1988) which are at the heart of the feminist critique. As Pringle (1995) explains, “The claim was that social reality is not a totality and that any theory necessarily provides only a partial account” (p. 205).

As a result of its anti-foundational stance, postmodernism has been critiqued for being atheoretical and particularist in the extreme (Eagleton, 1981, p. 138). Others challenge some postmodern position’s under theorizing of unequal power relations. For example, Harding points out that some of the particularities which appear to be unproblematic by postmodernism are “false and ‘interested’ beliefs. . .that are used to structure social relations for the rest of us. For subjugated groups, a relativist stance expresses a false consciousness” (1986, p. 657). That is, postmodernism seems not to provide a foundational ground upon which value judgements can be made. As a result, critics charge that “[postmodern] feminists are questioning the integrity of the notion of ‘female reality’ just as we begin to get a foothold in those professions which could be most radically transformed by our (historically developed) Otherness” (Bordo, 1987, p. 151). It would seem, then, that postmodernism offers little as an analytical position for gender equity employment policy.
Poststructuralism, while linked philosophically and politically with postmodernism, is differentiated by some theorists as a paradigm of study (Marshall, 1992) which may be applied in any field of inquiry. Like postmodernism, it foregrounds the importance of language as texts, but these texts are always mediated by the standpoint of the subject and can, therefore, never be known in a direct way. The importance of this concept will be taken up again in Chapter 3, where postmodernism’s and poststructuralism’s roots in hermeneutics (English, 1994, p. 125) will be explored more fully. For now, the term poststructuralism will be used to describe an approach for deconstructing the discursive threads of masculinist social regularities that trace their way invisibly through women’s lived experiences in organizations as well as actions of the state.

For example, Watson’s (1995) poststructural analysis of the discourse of “needs” in Australian social policy deconstructs the totalising discourses of socialist and liberal definitions which constitute “specific subjects: the single parent, the battered wife, the girl in moral danger” (p. 169) who are particularly vulnerable to policy discourses which construct them as deviant, lacking, or victims. Examples of this phenomenon are plentiful in Ontario’s welfare laws where, for example, welfare mothers are under particular scrutiny with regard to co-habiting with a partner who may contribute to her financial welfare. As female subjects are constructed within a highly normative social policy, they are constituted as somehow “marginal to the main game” (p. 168). Watson suggests that feminists have sometimes been unaware of the way in which these subjects are constituted as having built-in attributes and defects, and as requiring certain kinds of intervention or surveillance. The social practices which are directed at these subjects stem directly from the discourses which have created them in the first place. (p. 169)

Watson’s point seems to be similar to Lorde’s: the master’s tools (male-centred language) cannot dismantle the master’s house. Watson’s poststructural analysis suggests, then, that while social policy is necessary in meeting the needs of women, the discursive boundaries
for its construction need to be more fluid and complex so that the policy does not become another totalising force in women’s lives.

Her conclusion, however, is disquieting in practice, if not in theory. How does one construct policy, including gender equity employment policy, which resists definitions and closure? Pringle is helpful in negotiating this apparent difficulty when she states that “[social actors] may speak through a variety of discourses. None is intrinsically more liberating than any other (1987, pp. 231-232). It is always a question of the relation between discourses and the context in which they are invoked” (1995, p. 210). My reading of her comment is that poststructuralism allows for a more fluid reading of what “is” which then opens up more complex responses for what one “does.” From this standpoint, then, one can read the ambivalence of many women towards employment equity policy (Taylor, 1995, pp. 89-92) as a rejection of a reading of policy discourse, or text, which constructs them as less able than male candidates, rather than a rejection of the impetus for the policy itself. In effect, they are exercising a form of resistance rather than being complicit in their own oppression. From this standpoint, then, they can resist the ways in which their subjectivity is constructed by introducing their own counter-narratives.

As Watson’s analysis suggests, postmodernism and poststructuralism do not offer a coherent, fixed approach for examining social phenomena, but they do offer a “greater possibility for disruption of the ‘given’” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 31). In a sense, then, they occupy the theoretical location of resistance to the gendered “givens” of educational organizations embodied by Kate, Linda, and Marg in their work as equity policy advocates. This is a theme I will return to in Chapter 3.

Summary

The dominant narratives of political and organizational theory have established a male-centred normative script for social action which has marginalized women’s participation in the public sphere. In order to understand resistance to gender equity
employment policy, then, it is essential to locate its roots in the canon of political and organizational theory. As Chapter 1 points out, however, resistance is a circular discourse and the counter-narratives of various forms of feminist inquiry are just as essential to understanding the resistance en countered by the equity workers in this study. In this chapter, I have introduced each of these important threads that will continue to weave their way through the tapestry of discourses which will follow. In Chapter 3, I will offer a conceptual framework for weaving together the discourses of power and resistance as they are enacted in the implementation of gender equity employment policy. In doing so, I will be mindful of Pringle’s admonition that “it is the relationship between discourses and the contexts in which they are invoked” that is essential in understanding the lived experience of en/countering resistance.

Endnotes

1. The history of the sexual contract is rooted in Roman law which is a product of Roman history. The persistence of these roots is still evident in eleven South American countries which still allow rapists to avoid punishment if they agree to marry their victim – a provision that is virtually unchanged from Roman law. (Hallett & Skinner, 1997) Although most rape laws are less draconian, victims of rape are still revictimized in court proceedings which are implicitly informed by the presumptions about relations between men and women in the sexual contract described by Pateman.

2. Perrow does not in any way link gender and organizational theory as an important intersection of analysis. I am simply extrapolating from his work.

3. Medicine is another occupational area which demonstrates persistent gendered norms in the distribution of labour. Nurses (mostly female) are perceived as providing the affective nurturant care for patients at the bidding of doctors (mostly male) who provide rationalized scientific knowledge in defining and diagnosing patient illnesses. Furthermore, Pringle (1995) refers to her research (1993) in which she suggests “that the presence of women doctors challenges medical power and hierarchy regardless of the personal views of these women” (p. 209). This latter point supports the discussion in endnote 6 as well.
4. With the passage of Bill 8: *An Act to Repeal Job Quotas and to Restore Merit-Based Employment Practices in Ontario*, the very conservative Conservative government of Mike Harris ended the necessity for providing statistical studies of gender distribution by position in educational organizations. Statistical analysis of educational positions by gender is provided upon request from the Ministry of Education but it is no longer provided on a board by board basis.

5. Current statistics suggest that women and men are almost evenly represented at the elementary vice-principal level and there is slow improvement at the elementary principal and secondary vice-principal and principal level. However, statistics are not available for superintendents and directors of education. With significant amalgamation of boards and the downsizing of Ministry of Education positions, it is assumed that males dominate at these higher levels more than ever due to their greater numbers and higher levels of seniority, however there is no quantitative data at this point to support this perception.

6. An interesting recent example of women's particularity when they participate in the public sphere, especially if they are very successful, was the recent news coverage (e.g., *TIME*, August 2, 1999) of another "first" for women, the appointment of Carleton (Carly) Fiorina to the position of CEO of one of the top three Fortune 500 companies. Stories in various popular media were replete with discussions of not only her aberrant behaviour but her partner's who had chosen to stay home as a house-husband. The strong inference was that she would have been incapable of achieving her current success without her partner's "sacrifice."
CHAPTER THREE

Creating a Narrative Framework

The questions we can ask about the world are enabled, and other questions disabled, by the frame that orders the questioning. When we are busy arguing about the questions that appear within a certain frame, the frame itself becomes invisible.
Kathy Ferguson, *The man question: Visions of subjectivity in feminist theory*, 1993

Resistance is the work of the three gender equity agents who are the focus of this study and, as Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate, resistance is a complex location of competing discourses. For example, the equity workers in my study are hired to transform the gendered texts of educational organizations which means that they must resist the normative practices and policies of the organization for which they work as a condition of their employment. As a result, they will inevitably encounter resistance from co-workers in the organization who are unwilling to relinquish pre-judgements about what they believe is “true,” “good” and “just” for normative professional practices of men and women in the organization. In addition, the discursive space that these gender equity agents occupy is ambiguous because, as white females, they are both subjects and objects of gender equity employment policy – but privileged in comparison to visible minority women doing similar work for other boards of education. And finally, their resistance work occurs in a policy environment negotiated between gendered social actors within the everyday practices of hierarchical organizational structures that place them both inside and outside the organizational structures they are working to change, and at the centre of organizational power structures but with only tangential access to the symbols of institutional authority. In essence, then, the resistance they encounter is experienced in three interwoven discursive layers: ideological, structural, and personal.

Chapter 1 explored the ideological roots of resistance to gender equity employment policy and Chapter 2 traced the gendered pre-judgements that have shaped theories about social and political structures which impact on the everyday policies and practices in educational organizations. In this chapter I will introduce the gender equity workers whose work in the complex discursive location of gender equity employment
policy is the focus of this research. I will then describe the conceptual framework which will inform my analysis of their lived experience of en/countering resistance. I will conclude the chapter with a description of and rationale for the methodology employed in collecting the data upon which subsequent chapters are based.

Meeting the Players

Throughout the data collection phase of this study, like most education policy in Ontario, gender equity employment policy underwent dramatic change. I will explore these changes in more detail in Chapter 4, but the impact of rapid policy change affected the three participants in my study in several important ways. Marg, Sue, and Linda have been full-time resistance workers in three separate, and very different, boards of education in the province of Ontario, Canada. Following the provincial government’s rapid restructuring of a significant number of aspects of Ontario’s education system, Kate was relocated to the human resources department with no specific equity responsibilities and Linda returned to classroom teaching before assuming full-time federation responsibilities once again. Only Marg’s job description currently remains unchanged, although her job is threatened by amalgamation with several other boards who have not formally pursued gender equity initiatives since the Ontario government’s passage of Bill 8: A Bill to Repeal Job Quotas and to Restore Merit-based Employment Practices in Ontario.

Marg’s board, Board A, is a very large urban board that has enjoyed a significant tax base for funding a wide variety of educational programs to meet the complex social needs of a political constituency of great cultural and class diversity. Since amalgamation, however, the tax base is divided among less tax-rich constituencies that will significantly alter Board A’s ability to meet the diverse educational needs of its population. Kate’s board, Board B, serves a largely rural population which is racially homogeneous except for the children of Native Canadians who are bused off their reserve in grades 7 and 8. In addition, intermittent waves of immigrant children whose parents have temporarily settled
in rural communities provide sporadic racial diversity. Board B has been amalgamated with three other boards, two of which have similar demographics, while the third is more urban with greater class and race diversity. Linda’s board, Board C, is the only one of the three that has escaped amalgamation. It already provides educational services for a very large geographic area that encompasses rural communities, heavily industrialized areas, and suburban neighbourhoods which serve as “bedroom communities” for urban commuters.

After the voluntary approach to board implementation of gender equity employment policies had failed, incentive funding was provided by the Ministry of Education in 1985 (Taylor, 1995, p. 142). Both Kate’s and Linda’s predecessors were hired as a result of this funding. Kate had been a manager for an educational publisher prior to being hired as equity co-ordinator for Board B, while Linda was hired as gender equity facilitator following several years as an elementary classroom teacher and two years full-time involvement as president of her local women teachers’ federation affiliate. Marg’s board had already established a complex and sophisticated network of equity programs, which included gender equity initiatives in classroom programs as well as employment practices, prior to these funding initiatives, and she was hired after several others had already occupied her role in the organization. Marg was a board librarian and came to her position after acting as a union representative for her local as well as an active member of the board’s status of women committee. Her title is simply designated as “equal opportunity – women” in order to differentiate her role from those working on equity for visible minorities, and so on. Despite the differing historical and political positions of gender equity employment policy and practice in Marg’s, Kate’s, and Linda’s board, each one saw her work as en/countering resistance.

Setting the Stage

The question at the core of my research is: How is resistance to gender equity employment policy experienced by equity workers in its implementation process in
educational organizations. My interest in this question is not motivated by the desire to generalize their lived experience, nor am I attempting to predict or control. Rather, I am attempting to understand the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity employment policy in the lived experience of Marg, Kate, and Linda. That is, to rephrase Greenfield's question, I am asking, "Why do these equity workers en/counter resistance as they do in educational organizations?" In this sense, my research can be described as hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1992, p. 180) since it attempts to describe and interpret the phenomenon as it is lived in the everyday within the prejudices of each participants' lifeworld. However, I am also concerned with the ways in which their lived experience is situated in wider social discourses, shaped by historical and political forces which mould their experience of resistance. Scheurich (1994b) describes such a position as social or postmodern relativism in which the struggle over truth claims occurs at the nexus of oppositional historical and political locations. Chapter 2 has already outlined some of those locations in the challenge presented by various feminist theoretical positions to masculinist political and organizational theory.

Taking this position for my research, informed by hermeneutics and postmodenism/poststructuralism, goes to the heart of the current dilemma in the human sciences (Hekman, 1986). What we know about social phenomena and how we know it has been constructed within contested theoretical positions, or narrative frames (English, 1994), which posit epistemological, ontological, and methodological divisions between subject/object, structure/agency, explanation/understanding, and so on, that continue to be hotly contested philosophically and politically. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Giddens, 1979; Greenfield, 1993; Hekman, 1986; Hughes, 1990).

Framing Theory: Towards a Conceptual Framework

Traditional administrative and organizational notions of theory, represented in the academic discipline of educational administration by Hoy and Miskel's *Educational Administration: Theory, Research, Practice* (1991), describes theory as "a set of interrelated concepts, assumptions, and generalizations that systematically describes and
explains regularities in educational organizations. Moreover, hypotheses may be derived from the theory to predict additional relationships among the concepts in the system” (p. 2, emphasis added). This traditional notion of theory is predicated on the equally “standard view, [that] research tests the adequacy of theory. A well-accepted logic requires researchers first to have a theoretical view of the world and then to test it stringently against reality by collecting empirical data through operationally defined procedures” (Greenfield, 1993, p. 60). However, Greenfield continues, Kuhn and Feyerbrand have argued that research seldom disconfirms theory. Instead, data which challenges theory is either disbelieved or reworked until it “confirms” the theoretical assumptions of the researcher. “Or more commonly and subtly, the researchers’ theories and methodologies themselves ensure that the findings will be consistent with the researcher’s initial assumptions” (p. 60). In other words, theory is a lens through which we view social phenomena that is both shaped by and shapes conceptions of “truth.”

A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, lists the roots of the word “theory” as: spectacle, contemplation, consideration; to see, behold. It also notes theory’s shared etymological roots with the word theatre – a stage which acts as a narrative frame for the audience’s view of “truth” about individual and collective human phenomena that is first shaped by the playwright, then interpreted by the director, and finally embodied by the actors. The etymological roots of “theory” point to the notion of theories about social phenomena as narrative frames that shape our perceptions of “self,” as well as “self”-in-relation-to-“other,” which I will take up in this chapter.

English (1994) defines theory as “a story or narrative that tries to describe and explain, and on occasion predict” (p. 29) connections between and reactions to diverse social phenomena. As Hughes (1990) points out, however, knowing what we know about the social world is problematic because,

In an important practical sense, we learn [narrative] frameworks as we learn about the world. Philosophically, however, this really gets us nowhere because it is possible that what we learn may be wrong, and systematically so. We might be dreaming, deluded, blinded by personal
prejudice or have learned cultural practices and beliefs that are false. In other words, it is reasonably possible to be sceptical about whether what we learn about the world is, in fact, the way the world is. (p. 7)

Hughes’ comments point to two questions at the centre of whether it is possible to construct trustworthy knowledge about human activity. First, do the human sciences need a theoretical anchor, a foundational “truth”, in order to know what we know about social phenomena? Second, what should be done with pre-judgements – human values, beliefs, and intentions shaped by culture and history – which frame our understanding of social phenomena? That is, what kind of knowledge and what kind of truth is it important for us to acquire about human phenomena? And third, whose purposes do notions of truth serve?

The answers to these questions have material consequences in people’s lives because in fundamental ways, what counts as knowledge has the power to shape social reality in ways which privilege some and marginalize others. In this sense, then, privileged knowledge (discourse) is power (Foucault, 1977). As feminist critics have pointed out, if one’s knowledge of the world is shaped by gendered pre-judgements that universalize male experience (which has itself been essentialized), and those pre-judgements are not acknowledged, then women’s abilities, aspirations, voice, and history are negated, evaded, or marginalized. In other words, these critics point out that what we have learned about the world through an androcentric lens is not, in fact, the way the world is for women, and that we cannot acknowledge and analyse the lifeworld of women unless we acknowledge the particularity of the lens through which we construct knowledge of the world.

**Conceptualizing the Narratives of Resistance to Gender Equity Employment Policy**

In order to adequately describe and interpret the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity employment policy, it is essential to provide a conceptual framework that offers a clear view of the complex discursive patterns of values and intentions, resistance and agency, power and politics which are woven by language in the creation and
implementation of policy. The particular complexity of gender equity employment policy, already discussed, adds even further to the need for a “stage” that is able to accommodate a broad panorama of theories which frame contested actions and interactions based on social actors’ deeply entrenched gendered norms, values, beliefs, and expectations. The conceptual framework that follows provides three narrative frames through which the lived experience of gender equity employment policy may be understood. Each level of the framework positions the resistance encountered by the equity workers, introduced above, within three discursive spaces between theory and practice whose characteristics have material consequences not only in Marg’s, Kate’s, and Linda’s lived experience, but also in the efficacy of the policy they are working to implement. The levels of consciousness represent theoretical positions which Gadamer (1992) outlines in Truth and Method. His philosophical inquiry offers three differing modes, or theoretical lenses by which “I” or “self” comes to an understanding of human phenomena. Gadamer argues that understanding emanates from three levels of consciousness of “thou” or “other”– that which is not “I” – which to a lesser or greater degree “place human action and consciousness in an historical and social context . . . [and] encompass both individual consciousness and the ideological and material forces that limit and shape human action” (Weiler, 1988, p. 3). I will explore each level of consciousness and its relationship to human action later in this chapter.

I believe that Gadamer’s typology also provides a particularly rich resource for exploring the dialectical nature of power/resistance which I will explore in the chapters that follow. Watkins (1989), quoting from Giddens (1984, p. 16), describes such power/resistance as “the conception that people are active and knowledgeable. These agents create and transform processual power relations through the ongoing interplay which exists between the actions of people and social institutions’ structures of domination” (p. 25). Gadamer’s levels of consciousness between “I/thou” (also referred to by Gadamer as “self/other”) act as theoretical lenses which reveal the complex
relationships of power/resistance between subordinates and superordinates being acted out in educational organizations.

Drawing from Paquette's (1989) and Corson's (1993) interpretation of Churchill's (1986) continuum of language policy, I have drawn connections between levels of consciousness (individual understanding of and intent toward "other") and policy response and implementation (the formal expression of collective understanding of and intent toward "other"). The connection between them resides in the "linguistic turn" (Corson, 1995) of current academic inquiry which is the essence of Gadamer's hermeneutics. As Hekman (1986) succinctly suggests, "The study of hermeneutics is ... the study of Being, and ultimately, the study of language, because 'Being that can be understood is language' (Gadamer, 1975, xxii)" (p. 94). The conceptual framework, then, represents ways of being-in-the-world that generate differing modes of discourse, which I understand to mean language shaped by ideology within a cultural and historical context that plays itself out in the power relations of everyday practices.

A Critical Poststructuralist Hermeneutics

Rorty (1985) has charged that Gadamer's hermeneutics amounts to no more than "a kind of 'postmodern bourgeois liberalism'" (cited in Warnke, 1990, p. 137). Misgeld (1991). drawing on critical theory formulated by Habermas, has also argued that Gadamer is unwilling to recognize the depth of conflict and opposition which have formed modern societies. However, Nicholson counters their critiques by declaring that "Gadamer's replies to critical theory have carried the day decisively" (1991, p. 152). The scope of the philosophical debate between critical theory and what I have come to understand as the poststructuralist hermeneutics of Gadamer has been taken up more fully elsewhere (Hekman, 1990; Silverman, 1991; etc.). Within the limits of this study, however, the conceptual framework I am proposing foregrounds "I's" consciousness of "thou" by calling attention to the need for critical awareness of "I's" own prejudices and the prejudices of "thou" in coming to understand social phenomena. Each level of consciousness described by Gadamer implies "political arrangements and invariably
excludes some groups, some voices” (Scheurich, 1994b, p. 28), and calls attention to the ways in which discursive positions act to privilege some and marginalize others. It also provides space for the enactment of power/resistance which undermines unitary domination of any discursive position.

Gadamer speaks to the centrality of critique in hermeneutics when he writes that the person who believes he [sic] is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him. . . . A person who does not admit that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light. (cited in Kimball & Garrison, 1996, p. 53)

Gadamer’s typology represents differing levels of individual consciousness of prejudice which may enable or limit possibilities for one’s hermeneutic understanding of “other.” Put another way, theory – the narrative which constitutes and is constituted by our prejudices – “is always implicit in our activity and goes so deep as to include our understanding of reality . . . we can either accept the categories given us by a capitalist society or we can begin to develop a critical understanding of our world” (Hartsock, 1979, p. 57 cited in Blackmore, 1989, p. 97). The challenge, then, is to give critical attention to prejudices in human actions in ways which transform possibilities for those who are constrained by those prejudices.

Reflecting on the transformational possibilities of his notion of a hermeneutics which gives critical attention to historically embedded consciousness of human phenomena, Gadamer remarked near the end of his life that,

It is truly a tremendous task which faces every human every moment. His [sic] prejudices – his being saturated with wishes, drives, hopes, and interests – must be held under control to such an extent that the other is not made invisible or does not remain invisible. . . . To live with an other, to live as the other of the other, this basic task of human being applies in the smallest and in the larger contexts. How we learn to live as an individual with the other . . . is evidently also applicable to larger human
groups, for peoples and nations. (Misgeld & Nicholson, 1992, pp. 233, 234, italics added)

Gadamer’s remarks point to the transformational possibilities of critical attention to prejudices within both an individual’s and the state’s collective consciousness of “other” in order for other’s “wishes, drives, hopes, and interests” to be realized in an equitable way. However, the phenomenon of persistent resistance to gender equity employment policy suggests that creating a public space for coming to an understanding of collective prejudices about what is equitable for women and men in educational organizations is not an easy task. The space for resistance to dominant notions of what is possible for women is shaped by the truth claims of theory and their enactment in policy.

In the conceptual framework which follows, I have drawn a connection between the notion of an individual consciousness of prejudices and a collective consciousness of the prejudices of “larger human groups,” which is expressed in policy. A contested discursive space between individual and collective consciousness offers differing possibilities for en/countering resistance to rewriting the gendered texts of employment policies and practices in educational organizations. As Marshall & Anderson (1994) argue, and Marshall (1997) reiterates, traditional notions of policy analysis have provided a limited view of the policy arena by narrowing the focus to the dominant players and traditional relations of power. Instead, they suggest that alternative modes of inquiry such as critical, cultural and feminist theories will reshape the interpretation of interactions in the policy arena by using “lenses and tools for discovering and disrupting modes of oppression and reweaving, recreating relationships” (Marshall, 1997, p. 11). The discursive space within the conceptual framework is occupied by the interactions between social actors who have unequal access to organizational power. As dominant and counter-discourses are offered over time, patterns of social regularities evolve which are then embodied by participants in the organization. The conceptual framework, then offers an opportunity to view the tapestry of discourses that have shaped Kate’s, Linda’s, and Marg’s lived experience as advocates for gender fair employment practices in their educational organization.
Consciousness Level  
Between I/Thou——>

Contested Discursive Space:  
Some Possibilities

Policy Response

- "Other" is seen as a means for achieving one's goals, an object in one's field of experience.
- "Other" is understood in terms of universals.
- Understanding is thought to be achieved through "methods" and "objectivity".
- Subjective historical experience of "Other" is seen as separate from and unaffected by "us".

**Dominant narrative:**
Social regularities related to gender roles in organizations are naturalized as unproblematic reflections of culturally inscribed norms.

**Counter-narrative:** Individual and scattered resistance by questioning validity of gendered norms on a "case by case" basis.

- Compensatory programs are initiated which are intended to encourage conformity with dominant norms and values by removing perceived deficits and dysfunction in "Other".

- "I" knows "Other's" otherness and pastness only through reflection, not in relatedness to the universal, but rather in its particularity.
- "I" objectifies "Other's" history—that is sees it as "out there" and therefore destroys its real claim to meaningfulness.
- "I" is really claiming to be master.

**Dominant narrative:** Difference from unproblematized norm leads to differences in opportunities in public domain. Thus "other" needs to be taught strategies which enable conformity.

**Counter narrative:** Systemic hegemony directed at differentiated markers of "difference" enable discriminatory barriers. Therefore, systems must be held accountable for bias against women.

"Other's" perceived deficit and dysfunction are seen as the consequence of difference from a dominant norm. Policy attempts to provide remediation (a form of benign coercion) in order to enhance "Other's" self-esteem and eliminate stereotypes in the popular media and their effects in organizational practices.
"I" knows "Other" through authentic openness which "lets something be said," wills to hear rather than to master, and is willing to be modified by the other. Gadamer refers to this as "dialectical ethics" (1991, p. 15).

**Dominant Narrative:** There are inequities. I seem to benefit because of characteristics which are different from yours. I can't change those characteristics but I can change my attitudes. I need to listen and learn from your experience so that social benefits can be shared more equally.

**Counter-narrative:** You may be willing to listen but you may not like everything you hear. I'm willing to work on some strategies for change together if you are truly willing to learn.

It is at this stage that policy is provided which assumes that both the minority and the majority have equal rights in society but that government support is required in order for the minority to achieve social justice.

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Fig. 1—The synthesis of information in the conceptual framework above has been drawn from the following sources — Column 1: Gadamer, 1960/1997; Palmer, 1969 and Column 3: Paquette, 1989; Corson, 1993.

**Contested Discursive Space**

Since "theories represent systems of power because no knowledge is ever neutral" (English, 1994), the conceptual framework provides for a critical hermeneutics in that it makes visible the narrative frames which have shaped a collective knowledge of "other" "placed firmly within history" (Hekman, 1986, p. 136), and hold inequitable access to power in place. Each level of the framework acts as a mirror for reflecting the gendered prejudices of employment policies and practices in educational organizations as they are encountered in the work of resistance. Marg, Kate, and Linda occupy the discursive space between the levels of consciousness of the policymakers who legislate provincial policy around gender equity employment issues and the everyday practices of the organizations in which they are enacted. However, even though the neat linear configurations of the conceptual framework may suggest a predictable progression of consciousness and policy response, my research indicates that the discursive space is a contested space which defies predictability and control.
Instead, while the shape of the discursive space is constructed by the level of consciousness of policy makers and the policy implementation process of an organization, its boundaries are constantly shifting because the dialectical movement of social actors and their interactions is dynamic. For analytical purposes, I will somewhat artificially separate the layers of the conceptual framework created by the dialectical movement between the three levels of consciousness and the particular policy implementation responses they tend to precipitate in order to provide a clearer view of the social processes of resistance/power at work. Before turning to an exploration of the lived experience of resistance by gender equity workers in the discursive space between levels of consciousness and response in subsequent chapters, then, I will discuss each horizontal layer of discourse in the typology and its potential impact on coming to an understanding of policy enactment, particularly around issues of gender equity.

**Layer A: Normative Consciousness---->Conservation<---Coercive Response**

During premodern times, social interactions were gendered and complex (Bem, 1993), but lived within a cultural context that was coherent and singular. “The long march out of premodernity was a series of culture shocks -- another step taken each time somebody made an unsettling discovery that the world could contain multiple worldviews” (Anderson, 1995, p. 5). Thus, constructing knowledge of “other” whose worldview did not correspond to that which was considered culturally normative, required coming to understand a chaotic maelstrom of individual and collective human actions which are characterized by “Geist -- mind, thoughts, consciousness, values, feelings, emotions, actions, and purposes, which find their objectifications in languages, beliefs, arts, and institutions” (van Manen, 1990, p. 3). In pre-modern times, the church and feudal or state authority that was premised on a ruler’s divine right to rule brought order to the chaos by retaining strict control of notions of what was “truth.”

The convergence of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the ascendancy of a market economy broke apart traditional codifications of knowledge and forms of political
authority (Johnston, 1997, Lather, 1988). In the political realm, liberal democratic forms of governance began to replace feudal economies. The Enlightenment project challenged traditional philosophical and scientific knowledge that was centred in “divine truth” with “truth” derived from individual reason. Rationality would bring order to the chaos of Geist in a process which Bacon described as purging “the ‘idols’ that beset the human mind” (Hekman, 1986, p.4). Thus, the “idols”, which the French Enlightenment renamed “prejudices” (p. 17), of premodernity were to be replaced with the pure light of reason, which Kant perceived to be “beyond history and culture” (p.5). While the narrative frame of rationalism provided by the Enlightenment enacted “spectacular triumphs in the natural sciences” (p. 5), it cast an awesome shadow in the human sciences.

The methodological lesson that the natural sciences were teaching seemed to be very clear: if the methods of the natural sciences are strictly adhered to then the spectacular success of these sciences could be matched in the social sciences. The social sciences had only to await the arrival of their Newton. (p.5)

The “Newtons” of the social sciences were those who espoused positivism: the separation of universal and foundational truth based on empirically verifiable evidence from the particularities of historical/cultural (i.e., socially constructed) prejudices. In order for knowledge of the human sciences to be pure (objective and free from historical prejudices), the researcher must be able to identify and set aside impure knowledge (subjective and socially determined), and this became the task of positivist social sciences. Greenfield (1993) writes that, in the social sciences, positivism is both a philosophy of empiricism and a set of rules for determining what constitutes truth. The force of the assumptions of this method of enquiry dispenses with any knowledge not based upon objective and empirical observation. Such enquiry must therefore deny the world of value . . . . It reduces all internal states, all perceptions, feelings and values to epiphenomena, to an unspeakable affect, to an externality that, as Hodgkinson (1983, p. 43) points out, “one can only rebut . . . by referring
to one's own phenomenological and, therefore, unverifiable experience . . . 
and by taking a position outside the limits of positivist discourse ( pp. 137-138).

Ironically, given its value-free pretense, the epistemology of positivism is a 
profoundly a/moral position. In objectifying the social phenomenon under 
investigation, the researcher also separates herself or himself, as well as the social actors 
she or he is observing, from the beliefs, values, and intentions which motivate actions in 
social contexts. As Berger and Luckmann (1995) observe of positivism, "[T]he real 
relationship between man [sic] and his world is reversed in consciousness. Man, the 
producer of a world, is apprehended as its product, and human activity as an 
epiphenomenon of non-human processes . . . . That is, man is capable paradoxically of 
producing a reality that denies him" (p. 37). The resulting narrative became one of 
reifying human phenomena, generalizing a universal truth rather than understanding a 
particular phenomenon, predicting and controlling behaviour rather than understanding 
and transforming experience, and denying, or at least obfuscating, the values dilemmas at 
the centre of social interactions.

Within a normative consciousness informed by positivism, then, women are the 
reified "thou" of employment equity policy in that they are the object of the decision 
making subject, "I", who is predominantly a male policymaker and politician. As Greene 
(1988) notes, "There is a dialectical relation marking every human situation: the relation 
between subject and object, individual and environment, self and society, outsider and 
community, living consciousness and phenomenal world . . . . The person comes in touch 
with the object . . . through an act of consciousness" (p. 8). If a policymakers' normative 
act of consciousness objectifies women, holds them to masculinist norms, interprets their 
place in the world through gendered lenses (Bem, 1994), and denies them their own 
history and voice, then the "public space . . . where freedom could appear" (Arendt, 1961, 
p.5) for women is very limited indeed. Arguably, a positivist perspective creates such 
limits on the public sphere of social action. Greene (1988), commenting on Habermas' 
critique of positivism, writes,
our communication has become distorted. Our talk is like technical or expert talk, "context free." The important decisions are made today apart from the domains of ordinary understandings, shared values, "consensual norms," and certainly apart from the language of daily life. Positivism, or a separating off of fact from value, dominates much of our thinking. Systems are posited that are to be regulated, not by what an articulate public may conceive to be worthwhile, but by calculable results, by tests of efficiency and effectiveness. (p. 54)

Almost a decade later, Blackmore's (1995) observations about current policymaking are startlingly similar to Greene's. Blackmore writes that the current positivist view of policymaking sees education policy as "the result of a value neutral decision-making process" which is commonly perceived to be linear, where power moves from the top down, and "objectives, content, and method of implementation of the policy itself [are seen as] unproblematic, that they are appropriate for many contexts, and that the targets of particular policies are passively receptive" (pp. 293-94). The result, she argues, has been policy which is increasingly driven by technical expertise rather than democratic process and fiscal performativity measures rather than human need. Other critics of positivism argue that it "allows policy elites and technocrats to present analyses and plans as neutral and objective when they are actually tied to prevailing [fraternal-patriarchal] relations of power" (Schram's 1995 review of Forester's stance, p. 375, cited in Marshall, 1997). Thus, within a normative consciousness, positivist theories about fraternal-patriarchal bureaucracies, in which maleness is the universal normative standard against which women are measured, result in policies and practices that act to conserve a gendered status quo which holds women in a position of otherness - a reified "thou."

For example, the historical records, already discussed in chapter 2, reveal only grudging inclusion of women teachers in the higher grades because it was believed that their presence would have the effect of emasculating young males. Indeed the conservation of women in their traditional domain was considered necessary because, "both by the law of nature and revelation," there was "a position of subordination and of
dependence” assigned to women” (Prentice, 1977, p. 61). While these coercive policies and practices which centred on the intrusion of female “difference” in a male domain may seem to be arcane relics of the past, they have proven to be persistent. For example, not only did men have privileged access to positions of authority, but, because of their socially conferred position as primary breadwinner, they also enjoyed higher salaries for the same work and the same qualifications as their female peers until the early 1960's. While these coercive policies have largely disappeared, coercive practices have taken their place. For example, researchers in Alberta (Young, Gray, Alexander & Ansara, 1998) have demonstrated that, as educational bureaucracies restructure, part-time teaching employment has become far more common in the interests of fiscal efficiency and women are disproportionately disadvantaged by these practices. This current trend in a growing number of educational jurisdictions mirrors Prentice’s (1977) comments that using women’s devalued labour in the lower hierarchical positions of Ontario’s increasingly bureaucratized school system of the late nineteenth century “[meant that] relatively higher salaries could be more available for male superintendents, inspectors, principal teachers and head masters, yet money could be saved at the same time by engaging women at low salaries to teach the lower grades” (pp. 50-51).

Both in the late 1800s, and today, the dominant “I’s” normative consciousness of “Thou” allows for an a/moral and ahistorical policy stance in which “Thou” is judged by universalized male norms. “Thou” is objectified as a means to ends established by “I” through positivist methods that do not admit “Thou’s” voice to the public debate in any meaningful way. While policy which coercively suppresses women educators’ access to wages and career opportunities may be repugnant to some, Gadamer’s typology of consciousness suggests that a normative consciousness attempts to ignore, even subjugate, prejudices that are embedded in social actions just as positivism denies and attempts to subjugate the prejudices which weave gendered social regularities throughout the texts of women’s employment in educational systems.

Mediating the discourse between a normative consciousness and coercive response is the discursive space I have characterized as conservation. That is, the
dominant discourse of the universal male norm in the ideology which shapes the policies, organizational structures, and everyday practices of women and men in educational systems acts to limit the discursive space in which resistance work may be done by equity workers. These limits are imposed by dominant social actors in order to conserve the status quo which privileges their access to social benefits.

**Layer B: Prescriptive Consciousness—>Conciliation<—Remediation Response**

While a normative consciousness universalizes prejudices, a prescriptive consciousness particularizes them within an historical context in which the voice of "other" may be listened to, but often remains unheard. Even when "Thou" is heard, "I" is still master; his norms are still the standard for opening up opportunities for women and judging their effectiveness when they are "allowed" into educational organizations. Still, both "I" and "Thou," although differently located in the grids of power, are social agents who are able to enact political influence and resistance. Like positivist notions of policy, however, post-positivist approaches which are shaped by a prescriptive consciousness, such as interpretivist methods informed by liberal humanism, "presume a commitment to the larger liberal world-view in which they exist" (Scheurich, 1994, p. 299). Nevertheless, a prescriptive consciousness does open up a space in which policy may be contested from the bottom up as well as the top down (Ball, 1990). Therefore, even though social relations of power remain relatively stable over time (Tilly, 1998) the discursive space between a prescriptive consciousness and a remedial response creates a place for resistance so that coercive policy texts can be critically "read, interpreted and remade" (Blackmore, 1995, p. 309).

For example, the 1960s offer an example of the ways in which a prescriptive consciousness works from the bottom up as well as the top down. A spirit of individual rights and collective identity emerged which propelled powerful social movements. Groups that had been marginalized because of their race, class, or gender began to investigate the silences of the conservative discursive space which had prevailed and
publicly question dominant norms, values, and beliefs. The women's movement spawned several different forms of feminism, discussed in Chapter 2, which presented a powerful challenge to the masculinist norms of the period. The effects of first wave feminism as a public discourse had dissipated but second wave feminism during the 1960's created a kind of ideological pressure which began to move public perceptions of "other" beyond normative consciousness to a prescriptive level of consciousness. That is, women were perceived to be "particular cases" who were different from the male norm and, although the male voice was still perceived to speak authoritatively about organizations, there was a growing sense that women were experiencing discrimination and that their under-representation at the upper levels of educational hierarchies was difficult to justify.

The theoretical lenses through which these social arrangements were viewed included a Marxist critique that questioned fundamental economic relationships by which inequity was embedded within the material social arrangements of capitalism. However, as feminist scholars pointed out, patriarchy, which disadvantaged women, remained unchallenged. Furthermore, even as the epistemological and methodological view offered through the lens of positivism began to be challenged, feminist critics charged that the humanist or interpretivist (Hekman, 1986; Blackmore, 1995) position which took its place did little to dislodge the gendered dualisms of the Enlightenment that privilege stereotypical male norms. That is, "In each of the elements on which Enlightenment thought rests, rational/irrational, subject/object, and culture/nature, the male is associated with the first element, the female with the second. And in each case, the male element is privileged over the female" (Hekman, 1990, p. 5). As a result, policy which was largely framed by the theoretical narrative of liberal humanism during the 70s and 80s (Blackmore, 1998), put forward arguments for female inclusion in gender equity employment policy that was centred on questions of sameness with and difference from the male norm.

Shakeshaft refers to this "androcentric" phenomenon as "the practice of viewing the world and shaping reality through a male lens" (1989, p. 325). Women's particularities of beliefs, values, and norms were largely unknown except in comparison to those of
men. The response in policy and practice was to open the door to women in some male enclaves within educational organizations with the understanding -- either formal or informal -- that the women who gained admittance would conform, sometimes with assistance, to the male scripts that ordered organizational relations. The narrative accounts of women who found themselves in this conflicted position stand as a poignant testimony to the inadequacy of a prescriptive level of consciousness for women seeking equitable access to social benefits in educational organizations.

Alyson Worrall (1994), for example, writes of her experience of the selection process for vice-principal of a secondary school, a process "solidly based on male principles of competition and career advancement." Her narrative describes her differing conceptions of power and the dis/ease she experienced with the "male journey" she was expected to follow along a career track which would have made it difficult to maintain "relationships with family and friends" (p. 169). As the process dragged on and the ostensibly inclusive rhetoric became increasingly dissonant with her experience and worldview, Worrall notes, "I was silenced . . . . While I nodded my understanding, I worried I spoke too freely. I recognized my outburst as a political act which could provoke a negative response from those who decreed my silence" (1994, p. 174).

Because a prescriptive consciousness does not problematize the male universal norm, women, who were moving in ever-larger numbers into modern bureaucracies, found that their subjective experience and worldview were considered "an aberration, non-relevant and deviant [because] . . . women's subjugated knowledge or subjective experience is not valued as a resource or valid alternative worldview" (Blackmore 1989 p. 113). "Add-women-and-stir" forms of policy (Coulter, 1996, p. 434) and self-help programs attempted to remediate the perceived deficit which women carried with them, but in all of the self-help books, seminars, and magazine articles that encouraged women to "dress for success", "talk for success," the normative standard remained male. Women were encouraged to "be all we're meant to be" -- which was everything to everyone. Even television commercials began to reflect a remediation response by replacing the sexualized "Other" with the new super-everywoman. Remedial policy responses in
education included equal pay for equal work, the opening up of principals' courses to women, and even the hiring of some women to administrative positions. However, many women still felt silenced as their difference was tolerated in more or less benign ways within organizations whose practices remained essentially male-dominated.

Gadamer's analysis of a prescriptive consciousness sheds some light on why women may continue to feel this way despite apparently well-intentioned changes in policy and practice in educational organizations. He writes that

the dialectic of charitable or welfare work operates in this way, penetrating all relationships between men [sic] as a reflective form of the effort to dominate. The claim to understand the other person in advance functions to keep the other person's claim at a distance. . . . A person who reflects himself out of the mutuality of such a relation changes this relationship and destroys its moral bond. (1992, p. 360)

Within the context of this research, I take this to mean that, despite the best of intentions, when men reflectively constitute women's social reality by speaking for women, shaping traditional practices around employment policy according to universalized male understandings formed in advance of women's claims to be heard, and refusing to recognize the gendered prejudices which are embedded in their consciousness of normative social interactions, the results of gender equity employment policy remain largely unchanged.

The story of gender equity employment policy in Ontario that will be explored more fully in the narratives of the gender equity workers that follow in subsequent chapters suggests that merely acknowledging women's particularities of experience in policy does little to dislodge the prejudices which continue to devalue those particularities in the workplace. For example, acknowledging that women are under-represented in positions of added responsibility, then asking boards to work towards a more equitable distribution, does not interrogate nor transform the social forces holding gender polarization in place within educational organizations. As a result, even with gender
equity employment policy, prejudices have remained entrenched and so has the gendered distribution of labour.

Gendered bifurcation of educational organizations is hardly surprising, however, when the levels of consciousness which inform policy development provides for a limited discursive space because “dominant values shape problem definitions and determine which are the relevant, significant questions, issues and answers” (Marshall, 1997, p. 3 citing Scheurich, 1994). In other words, neither a normative nor a prescriptive consciousness dislodges the power of dominant narratives to name “who gets what, when, and how.” The interests of many women are dismissed as private, personal concerns rather than public issues meriting public attention and debate. As a result, the discursive space is opened up only slightly to admit a discourse of conciliation. The word conciliation has the same etymological roots as the word council – a call to come together, usually within hierarchical arrangements of power. Thus, neither a coercive nor a conciliatory discursive space calls for a rearrangement of gendered power relations, but simply provides for more humane forms of coercion that tolerate inclusion of a marginalized “other” within conditions defined by the dominant “I” – i.e., to use Gadamer’s already cited phrase, “welfare work.”

Lather speaks of a liberatory discursive space which offers more possibilities than the “welfare work” of a prescriptive consciousness by giving up one’s need to control and speak for the “other.” Accordingly, instead of women being objects of liberation, they can become subjects of their own emancipation. She writes that, whatever one’s theoretical position, those who are attempting to enact liberty for others need to

[ask] ourselves questions about how our interventionary moves render people passive, “positioned as potential recipients of predefined services rather than as agents involved in interpreting their needs and shaping their life-conditions (Fraser, 1989, p.19).” (Lather, 1991, p. 47)

Yet, “Other’s” liberation cannot be fully achieved in isolation from “I.” In the real world of educational organizations, women and men work together on behalf of educational opportunities for girls and boys who live in communities with various family
arrangements, usually between men and women. As a result, there is a need for an authentic openness to the submerged narratives of women from both men and women who are willing to be critically aware of their gendered pre-judgements. Women's voices have been heard in feminist scholarship which has brought a kind of "theoretical pragmatism" that

puts women at the centre, (not just in comparison to men), uncovers cultural and institutional sources and forces of oppression (rather than the blame-the-victim compensatory approach), thus moving beyond descriptions of women’s status and barrier’s to females’ equal access to educational opportunity. (Marshall, 1997, p. 12)

However, hearing "other's" voice in the collective expression of public intent – i.e., policy – requires a level of consciousness from the (usually) male dominant "I", individually and collectively, which moves beyond the liberal humanism inherent in a prescriptive consciousness. The result will be a wider, more transformative discursive space that has the potential to radically alter current narratives which shape social, political, and economic arrangements.

Layer C: Historically Effected → Conversation ← Transformative Consciousness Response

The narratives which emerge from a normative or prescriptive consciousness do not require "I" to alter his/her worldview, nor substantially transform dominant notions of power or normative gender roles because prejudices are subsumed within universalist conceptions of what is "true." Even a prescriptive consciousness only allows for particularities of "thou's" experience in comparison to a dominant and universal norm. Because neither substantially disrupts the status quo, these are the levels of consciousness that have largely informed theoretical positions, public policy, and social practices. However, the third level of consciousness, to which I will now turn, requires a significant reworking and rethinking of the foundational assumptions upon which traditional knowledge of social phenomena has been built and enacted.
Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein, the third type of hermeneutic experience described by Gadamer, has been variously labelled “effective historical consciousness” in earlier English versions of Truth and Method and “historically operative consciousness” by Palmer (1969) in his exploration of the history of hermeneutics. The 1997 translation of Truth and Method has chosen to use “historically effected consciousness”, which, according to the translator’s notes, is an attempt to capture Gadamer’s delineation of a consciousness that is doubly related to tradition, at once “affected” by history (Paul Ricoeur translated this term as “consciousness open to the effects of history”) and also itself brought into being –“effected” – by history, and conscious that it is so. (Gadamer, 1992, p. xv)

That is, “I” does not understand about other; rather, “I” comes to understanding with other within a consciousness of his/her prejudices. An historically effected consciousness, then, produces understanding – the task of hermeneutics and the goal of my research – and occurs in a dialogical process, through the symbolic medium of language, as “I” remains open to the voice of “thou,” to the point that “I” is willing to be changed, while being critically aware of the prejudices which call “I’s” and “thou’s” history into being. Gadamer calls this process the hermeneutic circle, “a fusion of horizons: a meeting of the contextual understandings of the interpreter with that of the interpreted” (Hekman, 1990, p. 14). Thus, Gadamer’s position is that coming to an understanding of social phenomena is situated, contextual, temporal, language-bound, historically grounded, and always in-process.

Taking up this position, then, requires foregoing “the possibility of an Archimedean point, an abstract, universal standpoint from which “objective knowledge can be achieved” (Hekman, 1990, p. 14) and “displace[s ] the hierarchical relationship between the natural and the social sciences that is characteristic of Enlightenment thought” (p. 14). Scientific knowledge, rather than being the only way to attain “truth,” becomes simply one of many experiences of “truth, all of which, including that of the natural sciences, are rooted in hermeneutic understanding” (p. 15). Clearly, Gadamer is
not replacing one hierarchy of knowledge with another, but displacing the hierarchy altogether with a non-foundational notion of "truth" that "eludes all attempts at totalisation" (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 36). This position, while not unique to Gadamer (e.g., Bhaskar's critical realism, ), is central to postmodernism and poststructuralism.

The effect of an historically effected consciousness, then, is to tear away the Enlightenment's foundational dualisms of rationality/irrationality, subjective/objective, nature/nurture that have privileged male "ways-of-being" in the public social sphere In its place is the complex process of arriving at a dialogically constructed "truth" through a process in which most of us engage every day: conversation. Not chit-chat, exchange of technical information, or formal pleasantries, but, as the word conversation's etymological roots suggest, a turning together toward a common phenomenon with a self-reflexive understanding of the power of prejudices. Gadamer is not suggesting some kind of relativistic love-fest where any "truth" is acceptable – particularly in the contested discursive space of public policy. Instead, the discursive space becomes one in which we Open up possibilities and keep them open. If a prejudice becomes questionable in view of what another person or text says to us, this does not mean that it is simply set aside and the text or the other person accepted as valid in its place. In fact, our own prejudice is properly brought into play by being put at risk. Only by being given full play is it able to experience the other's claim to truth and make it possible for him [sic] to have full play himself. (Gadamer, 1997, p. 299)

Clearly, this discursive space of which Gadamer speaks is one that will en/counter considerable resistance from those who have no intention of experiencing an/other's claim to truth by putting their prejudices at risk. Based on his reading of Foucault's analysis of knowledge/power (1980), Scheurich (1994b) argues that, "[t]ruth is a social, historical, and, therefore, political struggle. Truth is not power-free; it is power-laden" (p. 22). An historically effected consciousness, then, calls for critical attention to the prejudices which shape each player's naming of truth and the power/knowledge nexus that those prejudices occupy. In this sense, then, the application of an historically
effected consciousness in the arena of public policy would mean the bringing to consciousness and critical interrogation of the historically constituted prejudices of the players involved, thus making transformation possible.

I would be naive to believe that those who occupy positions of power that are held in place by historical privilege accorded their class, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc., are likely to open their prejudices up to critical attention in the public sphere. Thus, while Habermasian notions of communicative reason as an ideal of social action (Misgeld, 1991) are worthy goals of social action, Gadamer's historically effected consciousness arguably recognizes “what is possible in a given place at a given time” (Misgeld, 1991, p. 168). An historically effected consciousness is not an ideal of social action, so much as it is a recognition of the pragmatics of social change as authentic conversation takes place between social actors. As the discussion of resistance in chapter 1 suggests, the practice of liberty by and for women in educational organizations is rarely initiated on the broad stages of political action, although it sometimes finds its way there. For example, struggles for freedom of First Nations peoples in Canada, Blacks in South Africa and the southern United States, and colonialised peoples throughout the world were suppressed by oppressive policies and so resistance was dispersed. The struggles for more equitable employment practices have been similarly dispersed and, while they gained some temporary ascendancy in policy, have been suppressed once again. Therefore, transformative possibilities for gender equity in employment practices in Ontario's educational systems are more likely to occur in the small arenas of contestation within the discursive webs of power and resistance in organizations as policy is enacted -- or even when it is non-existent. The result is likely to be a dispersed discursive field between social actors who enact power/resistance in complex ways in multiple, and unpredictable, sites of interaction within organizations.

Such a view of social change is not inconsistent with current theorizing about policy since, even though policy is commonly perceived to be the result of a direct and coercive means/ends process, which Blackmore (1995) refers to as “technicist/positivist,” this view of policy analysis is flawed in several respects. First, as Geller and Johnson's
(1990) case studies make clear, policymaking is far from being a linear and predictable science. Instead, the process of policymaking is subject to the “irregular rather than the regular, the nonlinear rather than the linear, and a sense of a world in motion, sometimes turbulent, and exploding with uncertainty” (1990, p. 59). Second, the imposition of the state’s (or organization’s) will by direct control of its citizens through overt surveillance and coercive action is beyond the capability of even the most totalitarian state and certainly would not be tolerated in multivalent and culturally diverse democracies. However, even though direct coercive control may not be practical or tolerable, as Foucault points out, modern technologies of power have

no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he [sic] is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be at minimal cost. (Foucault, 1980, p. 155)

That is, policy, backed up by the bureaucratic forms of surveillance and coercive force of the state, does have the effect of the “inspecting gaze” which has turned out to be a remarkably effective, self-imposed disciplinary instrument, but only if the policy is perceived to be legitimate. However, Gramsci (1978) contends that hegemony does not have to resort to overt or covert coercion because it can also be achieved by conferring legitimacy on policy through moral and intellectual persuasion premised on “common sense,” embedded in “social regularities” (Scheurich, 1994), or what Gadamer calls prejudices. Yet, despite its ubiquity, “the gaze” of policy can also be subverted and resisted if its goals, the method for achieving them, or the rationale upon which it is based are perceived to be non-legitimate.

Third, a technicist/positivist conception of policy does not take into account the malleability and contingency of the language which expresses it, nor the contextuality and contestability of the discourses which shape it. However, an historically effected consciousness acknowledges both. Kenway et al. (1994) refer to the constant re-working,
re-naming, re-presentation of “policy-in-use” (Sergiovanni, 1992) as a “tapestry of discourses,” a weaving together of power and resistance in the mutual enactment of historically situated intentions between a collective “I” and “thou.” The policy text, as Gadamer asserts when describing an historically effected consciousness, is situated, contextual, temporal, language-bound, historically grounded, and always in-process. In practice, such a notion of policy opens up a discursive space that allows for the continuing dialogical exchange between political players and the text in a process of implementation that is always in process.

**Reading a Post-structuralist Feminist Text**

In essence, my analysis of the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity employment policy will use the conceptual framework as a map for positioning and drawing connections between the participants in my study within the discursive intersections of gender equity policy-in-process. In doing so, I am taking up the complex possibilities offered by feminist poststructuralist analysis. My research can be characterized as poststructural in that it rejects the dualisms and fixed standpoint of traditional structuralist social theory, and instead “acknowledges discourses and practices of struggle and resistance . . . recognizes the dynamic interplay of social forces, and which, therefore can readily be deployed as a theory of and for change” (Kenway et al., 1994, p. 188). Although poststructuralism without feminism has been described as nihilist and even reactionary in coming to an understanding of human phenomena, Grogan (1996) argues that a feminist consciousness of social inequality focuses the rich conceptual tools of poststructuralism in useful, even hopeful ways (Kenway et al., 1994). Post-structuralism is not necessarily a feminist standpoint for analysis, but, it converges with feminism on several points which are significant themes in my analysis of resistance to gender equity employment policy.

First, feminism challenges the androcentric prejudices which have shaped public policy and organizational practices by naming the positionality of the observer
(researcher)/actor (policymaker) on social phenomena. In other words, policy is attached to ideological positions within an historical and political context. A feminist poststructuralism names the oppositions between and among gendered social actors. Second, as Chapter 2 suggests, while not all feminists would be comfortable with an anti-foundationalist position, Hekman (1990) points out that binary oppositions which privilege those characteristics associated with social constructions of masculinity have maintained hierarchical arrangements of power based on gender. Yet it would be problematic to replace one privileged “truth” with another in the enactment of liberty. Instead, a feminist poststructuralism is mindful of the multiple positions of women and men as policy is enacted in the discursive webs of educational organizations. Third, Blackmore has argued that humanist principles based on a unified individual subject has served to privilege males as actors in the public arena of social action, particularly as neoliberal radical individualism gains ascendancy in public policy. A feminist poststructuralism attends to the embodiment of discursive positions in the lived experience of social actors.

**Research Design**

In the chapters which follow, as I explore the phenomenon of resistance to the implementation of gender equity employment policy in the lived experience of Marg, Sue and Linda, I will take up the philosophical position of the critical poststructural hermeneutic conceptual framework outlined in this chapter. That is, I will map the discourses of power/resistance in the interlocking layers of ideology, organizational policies and practices, and personal subjectivities of equity workers enacting gender equity employment policy in three boards of education in Ontario, which are revealed in the discursive space of the conceptual framework. Doing so requires exploring the dynamic environment of equity policy in provincial education policy during the last decade, its expression in the policies and practices at the board level, and the lived experience of those whose work is resistance to the gendered prejudices that act to
privilege male access to social benefits in educational organizations. In order to accomplish this task, most of my research data were gathered in a two year period between 1997 and 1999 in a decidedly non-linear process which was shaped by the dynamic education policy environment in which Ontario educators worked during this period. My research involved three main forms of information collection: interviews with the three equity workers and identified board personnel; documentary analyses of board policies and minutes of key meetings; and a focus group with the three equity workers at the conclusion of the data collection and theme analysis. In addition, I gathered information about provincial employment equity policy in education through government documents, federation publications, Internet searches, and continuing discussion with colleagues at the faculty of education at which I am employed who have policy expertise in various areas of education relevant to this study. I had planned to include two days of job-shadowing with each participant but was unable to do so because both Kate’s and Linda’s equity responsibilities were ended before I was able to do so.

**Context of Study**

When choosing the boards of education for my research, my goal was to ensure that the possibility of many discursive locations would emerge in my study in order to explore the complexities of implementing gender equity employment policy within my conceptual framework while at the same time limiting the scope of my investigation to a manageable amount of data for analysis. Since I am a long-time resident in Ontario and have lived in or travelled throughout most of south-western Ontario quite extensively, I have personal knowledge of the geographic areas served by many boards of education in the province. Based on personal knowledge, some formal investigation using library resources, and consultation with contacts working in the area of employment equity, I first identified several boards that not only represented diverse social contexts geographically and demographically, but also had varying reputations among educators and equity advocates as being more or less open to the implementation of gender equity
employment policy. In addition, I consulted the statistical data that had been gathered by
the Ministry over several years which described the gender distribution of roles for each
board in Ontario in order to confirm the degree to which each board had been able to
encourage gender equity in their employment practices. After discussing several boards
with administrative contacts and equity workers in the educational community as well as
faculty who are primarily interested in equity research at two faculties of education. I next
made inquiries of equity activists about the equity workers at each board and their
effectiveness in promoting gender equity. At the conclusion of this lengthy period of
consultation, the three boards and equity workers described at the beginning of this
chapter were chosen.

After contacting Marg, Kate, and Linda by phone to determine their interest in
participating in my research, I followed up with a written proposal (See Appendix A) and
a permission form which allowed me to audiotape and transcribe our interviews. Each
participant was advised that they could withdraw at any time from the study and that their
identity and the board’s would remain confidential. Concurrently, each board was
contacted to ensure that research permission was obtained and that access to board
documents and follow-up interviews with other board personnel would be approved. Each
board had a different protocol for approving research. Marg’s board, which was also the
largest board, required a formal written request which was approved by a committee of
teachers, administrators, and other board personnel. Neither of the other boards had a
formal protocol in place but I met with designated administrators to obtain verbal
permission for all aspects of my research. In all cases, anonymity of all participants and
the board was assured through the use of pseudonyms and deletion of any identifying
narrative in written work. Although I anticipated some resistance because of the
sensitivity of my research topic, none of the boards expressed any reluctance to fully co-
operate. In fact, the representatives I contacted to receive permission to proceed with my
research were very agreeable to all aspects of research I proposed and appeared to be
pleased to share the progress they perceived their board had made in implementing gender equity in employment and pedagogical practices.

**Interview Procedures**

Once permission protocols were in place, I scheduled the first round of interviews with each equity worker. Subsequent interviews were scheduled after transcripts were received by the participants following each interview. In all, I conducted three cumulative interviews of at least one hour in length with each equity worker. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. Guiding questions were prepared prior to the interviews (See Appendix B) but the conversation between us at each interview was informed by the emerging narrative in response to the guiding questions. In addition, emergent themes were identified after each tape was transcribed and these were provided to the participant along with the transcript prior to the next interview. The themes and any responses to, or clarifications of, the previous interview were attended to first in the subsequent interview before moving on with the guiding questions. My purpose in using this interview format was to expand the opportunities for those being interviewed to be meaning-makers in the research process as we came to a shared understanding of the social phenomenon under examination (Lather, 1986, 1991). In addition, I wished to call my own prejudices into question and expand the horizon of my own understanding even as each participant was invited to do so.

During the interviews with the equity workers, key board personnel were identified who had administrative responsibility for implementing gender equity employment policy and an elite interview (Anderson, 1990) was conducted. The human resources administrator in charge of overall employment equity policy in Board A was identified by Marg, because, while Marg attended to the advocacy role for employment equity with regard to gender, the human resources administrator was in charge of collecting statistics and formulating human resources policy around employment equity for all four designated groups. The Director of Education in Board B was identified by Kate as a senior administrator who was actively supportive of gender equity initiatives
and often acted as an advocate for change in an otherwise resistant organizational hierarchy. A senior human resources manager was identified by Linda as responsible to move forward initiatives begun during her tenure as employment equity co-ordinator in Board C. When I arrived for the interview, however, she and her immediate supervisor volunteered to participate jointly in the interview. In each case, a transcription of the interview was provided and comments and corrections were solicited, but none of those who participated in the elite interviews chose to respond.

**Board Documentation**

Each board was very co-operative in providing access to documentation such as board meeting minutes, equity committee minutes, board equity policies, statistical data with regard to gender distribution of teaching and administrative positions, and so on. The data collected under the provisions of Bill 79, *The Employment Equity Act*, which provided quantitative data by position correlated with the four identified categories of race, sex, handicap, or aboriginal ancestry, were destroyed by Board B under the provisions of Bill 8, *A Bill to Repeal Job Quotas and Restore Merit-based Employment in Ontario*, but both Board A and C still had this documentation available and offered it to me for photocopying and further analysis. In light of the ideological shifts in policy following the passage of Bill 8, I was interested in discovering how much of the gender equity discourse survived in board practices and policies. Some evidence of its presence or absence was apparent as I researched the document archives, and some emerged from my own observations in research notes as I worked at the board offices. This is a theme I will return to in subsequent chapters.

**Data Analysis/ Identifying Themes**

Given the theoretical position I am taking up in this research, the question of what is data is appropriate but complex. Scheurich (1994b) argues that the term draws its meaning from its epistemological context (p. 36). Within a postmodernist/poststructuralist epistemological context, Lather suggests that “Data might be better
conceived as the material for telling a story where the challenge becomes to generate a polyvalent data base that is used to *vivify* [her emphasis] interpretation as opposed to ‘support’ or ‘prove’” (1991b, p. 10). The challenge, then, in my research is to vivify the meaning(s) of the narrative(s) as they emerge from the various texts generated by my research design.

Throughout the study, themes emerged which seemed to enliven the meaning I was seeking in understanding the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity employment policy. As each round of interviews was completed and I worked on the transcripts, I began to identify themes of resistance that were either reinforced or called into question in the next set of interviews. Because I transcribed the tapes myself – and I am not a typist – I had to listen to segments of the tape-recorded interview several times as I typed, which led to an intimate knowledge of the tape contents. Potential themes of resistance often emerged during this slow, painstaking process that were identified by using colour-coded highlighting and cross-referenced between participant transcripts. These themes were also compared to those which emerged in the board documentation and elite interviews so that locations of resistance could be identified for further inquiry in subsequent interviews. Several robust themes emerged during this process which provided complex, yet worthwhile, potential for further analysis using the conceptual framework shaping my inquiry. For example, the theme of resistance to female-only equity initiatives emerged in all of the interviews and further evidence was clear in the document analysis of all three boards which demonstrated very interesting discursive positions between individual and organizational levels of consciousness and policy implementation and response.

During this process of data collection and theme identification, I continued to read and contemplate, and write reflections on my findings. As I worked on my research, I also continued my university teaching responsibilities and often found connections with my work in class discussions or teaching team meetings. One day, after most of my data were collected, and after months of reflection and analysis, I attended a colleague’s lecture on employment equity in Ontario’s educational system. Although the topic was obviously related to my research, I was not consciously thinking about it until something in the
context of that lecture caused me to experience a sudden clarification of the three broad themes which subsumed the more diverse themes I had already identified: en/countering ideological, structural, and personal resistance to gender equity employment policy. I can only explain the experience of coming to this moment of insight as the culmination of months of exploring many kinds of texts, including the text of lived experience, around notions of resistance to gender-based equity efforts in organizations.

Following this moment of insight, I set about recoding the transcripts based on these three themes so that quotes would be colour coded based on both the over-arching themes as well as relevant sub-themes. I then culled quotes that were codified by sub-themes into three files based on the over-arching themes using the cut and paste feature of my computer program. I also recoded information gathered from board documents using colour coding.

**Focus Group**

The final stage of my research was designed to ensure that my emerging understanding of identified sub-themes within the larger themes of ideological, structural, and personal resistance was consistent with the understanding of each equity worker’s en/counter with resistance to gender equity employment policy. The focus group proved to be a useful and interesting way for all of the equity workers and me, as the researcher, to reconsider the themes which had emerged, particularly in light of each participant’s changing role in her educational organization as the result of equity policy changes. Marg offered a meeting room at her board and we gathered for a two hour session loosely focussed on the questions (See Appendix C) I had prepared based on the emergent themes I had identified. As it turned out, although the content of each of the questions emerged in one form or another during our meeting, it evolved quite naturally in the flow of the discussion which was directed by the participants far more than the researcher.
I colour-coded the transcript based on the themes already identified, which revealed strong evidence that both the over-arching and sub-themes were central to each equity worker’s understanding of their lived experience of en/countering resistance. In addition, their lived experience of policy change and organizational restructuring, which they had experienced after I completed the individual interviews, proved very helpful in analyzing the resistance they had en/countered ideologically and structurally as the policies of Harris’s neo-conservative government became more firmly entrenched in the practices of their boards.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented a conceptual framework upon which a text of resistance may be woven from the narrative data I have collected. The “tapestry of discourses” (Kenway et al., 1994) which emerges in the following chapters will encompass three broad themes of the lived experience of en/countered resistance in the work of Marg, Kate, and Linda. The discursive space which this model provides between levels of consciousness and policy response represents the public context in which the meaning of gender equity employment policy is contested, altered, negotiated, and lived. That is, the theoretical model needs to be understood as a dynamic arena of human interaction.

In order to provide some analytical space, I have created discursive layers between levels of consciousness which are, in the end, somewhat arbitrary and artificial. In doing so, however, I believe that the conceptual framework offers a mirror that enables me to catch glimpses of and map the internal journey of policymakers/educators as well as the effects of their actions on another’s reality at the discursive nexus where possibilities for transforming inequities might occur. Like a crossroads, the model suggests movement along two axes: horizontally between levels of consciousness and response and vertically
as transformation occurs between levels of consciousness. Another axis is possible if time is conceptualized as forming a third dimension in which change occurs in the past, present, and future. There are, therefore, myriad and complex discursive spaces for interaction and it is to those spaces which I will now turn as I examine the lived experience of Kate, Marg, and Linda as they en/counter ideological resistance to gender equity employment policy.

Endnotes

1. I will use pseudonyms for all participants and boards of education in this study in order to protect their anonymity.

2. During this study, the number of boards in Ontario has been reduced significantly. Both Sue and Marg’s boards were amalgamated with several other boards under the conditions outlined in the Fewer Boards Act passed by the Ontario legislature in April 1997. Chapter 4 will deal with this and other legislative changes which are likely to have a significant impact on gender equity employment initiatives.

3. The overall effect of Bill 160’s complex changes to provincial funding mechanisms is that most boards have less money to spend — some substantially less — while the cost drivers are largely out of local control. Class size, instructional hours, prep time, all cost drivers, were previously negotiated in local contracts between boards and the bargaining agents from teacher federations. However, all of these, and the regulatory power to include more, are now entrenched in Ontario’s Education Act. The net effect is that trying to reconcile lower budgets with higher costs of conforming to the demands around teachers’ working conditions have been worked out in new contracts (because current contracts ceased to be in force and had to be renegotiated under the Labour Relations Act), which had to be in place by September 1998, largely on the backs of teachers. The concerns raised by Bill 160 for teachers and principals are enormously complex because the power relations between them have been altered by removing educational administrators out of the teachers’ bargaining units. In fact, relationships between educators at all levels of governance and provision of services, have been fundamentally altered. The result for teachers and students are slowly becoming apparent but the future is still difficult to predict precisely. It is safe to say, however, that the pressures of swift and radical change are having a deep effect on classrooms and on the teachers and administrators who work day after day in Ontario’s schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests as well that the resulting destabilization has had a significant effect on students that has been particularly negative for those students requiring assistance for special learning needs or second language instruction. In the midst of coping with the changes precipitated by Bill 160 and other significant policy changes, equity issues, particularly gender equity, have virtually disappeared from the public debate.

4. The title of each of these women is an interesting indicator of their position within each organization. I will take up this phenomenon in Chapter 5 when I discuss structural resistance.
5. Since the participants in this study were given various titles in their organizations, for the sake of simplicity, I will use the term equity worker or equity advocate to designate someone who holds a formal equity position in an educational organization when a generic title name is required.

6. Greenfield’s original question appears in his by now classic work entitled, *Organization Theory as Ideology*. In the divide between the dominant theoretical position of logico-positivists and an emerging alternative position provided by interpretivists in organizational theory, Greenfield (1993) posits a basic question: “Why do we behave as we do in social organizations?” (p. 78). He goes on to argue that answering this question requires that inquiry must “move from the conviction that there is only one social reality to a recognition of the possibility that many exist” (p. 88).

7. Max van Manen defines the term “being-in-the-world” in the following way: “Being-in-the-world is a Heideggerian phrase that refers to the way human beings exist, act, or are involved in the world – for example, as parent, as teacher, as man, as woman, as child” (1990, p. 175).

8. Nicholson’s paper uses various sources from Habermas and Gadamer to support his claim, but draws in particular on the interesting debate between them, which was initiated by Habermas in his essay, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences* (Habermas, 1967), and lasted for several years.

9. Scheurich (1994b) provides a very helpful critique of the ascendancy of positivism as an epistemological position that informs most education research. He argues that even as the key tenets of positivism have been refuted (Evers & Lakomski, 1991, p. viii), realism – both naive realists and scientific realists – which has attempted to replace positivism, has not been able to fully address the complexity of social reality nor extricate itself entirely from the political context in which it is embedded, contrary to its claims. Corson (1991) argues, however, that Bhaskar’s critical realism, which seeks emancipatory social practice and eschews a foundational “truth,” provides a more fruitful research approach than either naive or scientific realism for understanding “the present actuality of schools and schooling in the interests of bringing about an emancipatory future in and through education” (p. 110).

10. Although positivism was a philosophical position that attempted to asset an amoral stance which drove a wedge between facts and values, not only was it not able to do so (Hodgkinson, 1978; Greenfield, 1993; Hughes, 1990), but the attempt itself was a moral position with respect to “I’s” relationship to “other.”

11. A recent example of backlash to the relativist position in academia is the book, *higher superstition: The academic left and its quarrels with science*, by Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt (1994). The authors put forward not only a spirited (some would say vitriolic) defence of scientific rationality as “the” truth, but also specific strategies for reclaiming discursive space gained by critical and postmodern theorists – particularly feminists – who espouse (using various philosophical and theoretical names) an historically effected consciousness for understanding social phenomena.
CHAPTER FOUR

En/Countering Ideological Resistance

There is no social practice outside of ideology.
Hall, 1985, p. 113

In order to understand the phenomenon of resistance to gender equity employment policy en countered by Marg, Linda, and Kate, one must first understand that the root of resistance is ideology and the medium which shapes ideological resistance and gives it expression in the public sphere is language. As Lather (1991) comments, language has the power “to organize our thought and experience” (p. 111), thus language is both constitutive of and the medium for meaning-making. However, meaning-making does not occur “out there” in an ahistorical/apolitical vacuum. Instead it occurs at the cognitive and affective interface of internal and external processes called consciousness. The level of consciousness one brings to a phenomenon is shaped by historically constructed narratives that some have called ideology and Gadamer calls “prejudice.”

While the connections between these concepts may sound unnecessarily esoteric, they are part of day-to-day human action and interaction in schools, at bus stops, in office buildings, and in debates in legislatures. The question social actors in the public sphere seek to make meaning about, over and over again, is what will I do about the “other” – the person or natural resource or object – that is “not-I.” Clearly, such a question presupposes consciousness of the other. However, as the conceptual framework suggests, the answer emerges from one’s level of consciousness of “I/Thou” that is shaped by prejudice and is, therefore, always partial, contextual, historically effected, and open to transformation. In this chapter, I will use the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3 to examine the ways in which dominant political ideologies have shaped notions of and policies about employment equity policy in educational organizations at the macro-political level. I will also examine the ways in which ideological positions regarding gender have been taken up at the micro-political level as points of resistance en countered by Kate, Linda, and Marg in the enactment of employment policy which specifically
targets the gendered distribution of positions of added responsibility for women in educational organizations in Ontario.

Political Ideologies and Actions of the State

As I have already suggested in Chapter 3, prejudice has material consequences in both the public and private spheres of social interaction because, as critical theorists have pointed out, ideology is embedded in the enactment of power relations that Frazer and Lacey (1993, pp. 17-20) refer to as practices. Marxists have attached ideology to notions of "false consciousness" which serve dominant interests but can also be transformed by "penetrating the consciousness of human actors and uncovering the foundations of activities" (Corson, 1995, p. 5). However, poststructuralists have challenged this position as too reductionist because it implies the existence of "a true consciousness accessible via 'correct' theory and practice (Hall, 1985)" (cited in Lather, 1991, p. 112). Instead, postmodern feminist cultural critic, Teresa Ebert (1988), defines ideology as:

not false consciousness or distorted perception [but rather] the organization of material signifying practices that constitute subjectivities and produce lived relations by which subjects are connected – whether in hegemonic or oppositional ways – to the dominant relations of production and distribution of power . . . in a specific social formation at a given historical moment. (p. 23, cited in Lather, 1991, p. 112)

Within the context of this study, I take Ebert’s definition to mean that, like Gadamer’s conception of prejudice, ideological positions produce and reproduce discursive positions which are enacted in the lived experience of social subjects who are working within dominant historical arrangements of power that change over time.

Political ideologies inform a society’s collective response to the issue at the heart of my research: how should social benefits be distributed in a capitalist democratic society? However, the answer to this question requires a response to four questions:
(1) What is a good society?; (2) What is a good citizen?; (3) What should be the role of the state?; (4) And in a capitalist democracy, what should be the role of the state in the marketplace? In order to answer these questions and clarify political ideological positions that have informed the implementation of employment equity policy as succinctly as possible, the chart below traces political responses to these questions in western democracies. In addition, it picks up discursive strands of power and resistance introduced in previous chapters and introduces three continua which locate tentative ideological positions for: (1) the liberalism/communitarianism debate; (2) notions of negative and positive liberty; and (3) the three levels of consciousness, already outlined in the conceptual framework in Chapter 3.

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<th>Political Ideologies</th>
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<td><strong>Socialist Liberalism</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Distribution of Social Benefits</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Role of State</strong></td>
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<td><strong>View of Good Society/Good Person</strong></td>
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| Role of Market | capitalist market economy is source of class inequities, therefore state should assume control and apportion social benefits of capitalism equitably | abandonment of laissez faire economic policies | no regulation of private economic transactions of individuals | reform of market economy in order to enhance individual opportunities ad to improve collective (but unequal) good of society | markets serve the good of the community (premised on "natural" inequality) |

| Key Philosophical Position | collectivism | rationalism | rationalism | rationalism/traditionalism | traditionalism |

| Characteristics of Social Relationships | accept legitimacy of opposition and inevitability of pluralism | pluralism | limited tolerance of religious and moral difference | traditional social, moral, and religious beliefs are ascendent; some pluralism tolerated | little tolerance: traditional moral, social, and religious beliefs entrenched |

(1) Egalitarian /Inclusive < Individualism --> Inegalitarian/Exclusive Communitarianism
(2) Positive Liberty< Prescriptive Consciousness --> Normative Consciousness
(3) Historically Effected< Prescriptive Consciousness --> Normative Consciousness

Figure 2: Based on Johnston, L. (1997). Politics: An introduction to the modern democratic state. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Political Ideology and Employment Equity Policy
Employment equity policy requires the state’s acknowledgement that citizens, because of their group affiliation, have had unequal access to social benefits based on historical patterns of discrimination against their group which are ideologically motivated and systemically perpetuated. The state then acts to redress these inequities by implementing policy which treats unequals unequally. However, such actions by the state are antithetical to the ideological premises of liberalism that have dominated political theory and practice in the modern age (Phillips, 1993: Johnston, 1997) in at least three ways. First, liberal democracies are premised on a belief in society as a collection of individuals who are equally free moral agents. However, while each citizen is believed to be “naturally” free, citizens have relinquished some rights to the state in exchange for personal goods such as security. Second, within liberal ideology, the role of the state in effecting a common good is limited to what Isaiah Berlin characterizes as “negative liberty” (cited in Carr & Hartnett, 1996, p. 27). That is, liberty is conceived as “the freedom of individuals to pursue their own private interests with minimal interference from the state” (Carr & Hartnett, 1996, p. 27). Third, even though political actors informed by a liberal humanist ideology have accommodated the inequalities exacerbated by capitalism through the expansion of rights claims for individuals, they continue to embrace a belief in the distribution of social benefits based on individual merit. As a result, the accommodation of policy which seeks to redress systemic discrimination by treating unequals unequally based on group affiliation has proven to be an uncomfortable ideological fit in modern liberal democracies.

As Chapter 2 argues, however, feminist and critical analysis reveals that the “equally free” individual of both traditional liberalism and liberal humanism is based on universalized notions of property owning white males whose interests are arguably not advanced by an active, interventionist state that seeks to equitably distribute privilege. As Frazer and Lacey (1993) argue, “the political practice of negative liberty means the perpetuation of the status quo – the consolidation of the positive freedom, to act, to be sovereign over self, of those with power, in the name of freedom for all” (p.61). However, freedom is not equally available to all and so negative liberty enhances access
to social benefits for middle-class white males because they are given free reign to act on their privileged social position in a fraternal-patriarchal capitalist society.

Conversely, women and others whose interests have been submerged in the fraternal-patriarchal social, political and economic arrangements of capitalism require active state engagement in both the public and private sphere in order to disrupt an entrenched social order. As a result, women and other equity-seeking groups have organized collective action at the grass-roots level, in unions and other forms of populist collectivities, in order to encourage policy (i.e., state action) which assures equal access to social benefits despite the effects of capitalism (Johnston, 1997, p.75). The state has most often responded to these demands from a liberal humanist position of limited state intervention in order to ensure that presumed equals are treated equally (individual rights), however, activists organized around social collectivities have demanded legislation which assures treating unequals unequally based on group affiliation (collective rights).

The Liberal – Communitarian Debate

Each of the above points of resistance between employment equity policy and liberal ideology are represented in what Olssen (1998) characterizes as the “liberal – communitarian debate.” The communitarian challenge to liberalism occurs on a number of dimensions, but the two which are most important to understanding resistance to employment equity policy in general, apart from, but not unrelated to, gender analysis, are:“(1) social ontology: the priority of the collective good over individual rights or utilities; and (2) a recognition of the social nature of the self” (Olssen, 1998, p. 71). A communitarian ideological position gives priority to the “common good”, which is determined by shared community values. Selznick describes this view of the common good as profoundly systemic, not reducible to individual interests or attributes, yet testable by its contribution to personal well-being. The common good is served, for example, by institutions that provide collective goods, such as
education or public safety. The strength or weakness of these institutions is a communal attribute, not an individual one. (1992, p. 537, cited in Olssen, 1998, p. 72)

Second, communitarianism, unlike the liberal conception of the pre-social "natural" self (i.e., social action motivated by self interest), "maintains that the nature of the self is social in the sense of being ‘embedded in’, ‘constituted by’ and ‘dependent upon’ the community" (Olssen, 1998, p. 72). Thus, communitarians would argue that a concept of the good person is most richly conceived as embedded in differing conceptions of the good society. Policy, informed by a liberal utilitarian view of the common good, provides for limited intervention by the state in order to check the expression of unbridled self-interest, but only to the extent that individual citizens interfere with the rights of other individual citizens. However, such an approach to policy is seen by communitarians as an impoverished view of self and society. Instead, from a communitarian perspective, the common good includes policy which enables provision for

- physical and mental well-being, material sustenance, the exercise and realization of human capacities and potentialities, for individual development in accordance with choice and reason, for action in accord with virtue, for friendship (philia) and interpersonal relations, and for pleasure (p. 73).

The inter-subjectivity of communitarianism is attractive to many feminists. Frazer and Lacey (1993), for example, suggest that "feminist politics must be to some degree communitarian politics" (p. 118) because it opens up possibilities for transforming the political debate about the allocation of social benefits in more inclusive ways. They suggest that

- the logic of feminist demands entails the recognition of social groups, of socially constructed identities and structures which can be altered. This suggests the need for the further recognition that purely rational argument will be inadequate, on its own, to bring about political change.

Furthermore, in a society in which women do not enjoy fully fledged
citizenship status, successful feminist political action relies on community-based political organisation. (p.118)

Indeed, as previous chapters have suggested, and this one will continue to demonstrate, communitarianism is essential to moving equity efforts forward for women. However, communitarianism by itself will not serve the interests of women if "the common good" is arrived at by uncritical attention to tradition, or prejudices, and simply perpetuates notions of the good society which embrace normative gendered power relations. I have labelled this model *exclusive communitarianism* and it is characteristic of traditional conservatism. I will pick up this thread in more detail later in the chapter, but it is sufficient at this point to acknowledge that, from this perspective, traditional hierarchies of power are accepted as good because individuals within the community are sorted to serve the common good efficiently. As Chapter 2 points out, however, positions within the hierarchy are sorted according to a normative consciousness which accepts traditional power arrangements uncritically.

Another model of communitarianism is possible, which I have labelled *inclusive communitarianism*, and is associated with socialist liberalism. It makes room for – but may not necessarily provide – a more critical analysis of the prejudices which shape social relations and public policy. Inclusive communitarians would argue that liberals who see the state as a neutral arbiter of social benefits based on rational utilitarianism badly misrepresent the profoundly complex context of political action. Furthermore, as Marxist theory argues, if social forces, such as capitalism, interfere with the ability of some citizens to fully participate in a more broadly conceived common good, then the state has an obligation to intervene in order to ensure substantive equality for all citizens. Thus, unlike liberal notions of the "natural" rights of individual citizens which pre-exist state action and are to be interfered with only to the extent that citizens exchange those rights for individual benefits, from a communitarian perspective, individual rights exist "in relation to the [common] good and not prior to it" (p. 73) and can, thus, be altered in the give-and-take of social practices.
The Shape of the Polis and the Liberal – (Inclusive)Communitarian Debate

The debate between liberalism and inclusive communitarianism in the arena of public policy about employment equity occurs around differing notions of the role of the state, conceptions of the common good, and the context for access to social benefits. Although the range of positions is wide along each of these dimensions within as well as between liberalism and communitarianism, the following discussion attempts to capture the essence of each ideology. As I have already suggested, from a traditional liberal perspective, the state should interfere only to the extent that it is necessary in order for individuals to safely pursue their own interests. Early liberals, such as John Locke, believed that the common good was achieved when the greatest number of individuals possible were able to satisfy their individual appetites for the social benefits of a civil society. However, as capitalism flourished and disparities between the classes threatened the security of a civil state, modern liberal democracies have shifted from a “negative liberty” stance to a more activist humanitarian position, informed by a prescriptive consciousness, by instituting welfare measures and rights-based legislation to mitigate the effects of unequal access to social benefits. The institution of a welfare system represented a shift from the traditional liberal position of freedom from the state to a humanist liberal notion of the role of the state as providing “greater equality in the enjoyment of freedom” (Johnston, 1997, p. 132). However, liberalism in all of its guises has remained more or less committed to limited interference with a market economy and individual property ownership, a belief in the state as a rational and neutral arbiter of the allocation of social benefits, and merit-based employment practices except as they interfere with individual rights.¹

An inclusive communitarian position, on the other hand, is centred in a notion of the individual as essentially equal within a collective social experience. An understanding of the common good is arrived at in the complex give and take of differing positions of power and levels of consciousness within the polis. Inclusive communitarians advocate an active role for the state in order to ensure that its actions are based on a collective understanding of the common good which is premised on consultation with
representatives from a wide range of historically effected social and cultural positions, not just traditional positions of power and privilege. Thus, the polis is expanded and public discussion is premised on the need for transforming dominant understandings of “the other” in order to come to a more richly constructed and inclusive understanding of “the good society.” The state acts as a legitimate agent for transforming a collective understanding of the common good and ensuring equal access to social benefits when systemic social forces such as capitalism, racism, and sexism have acted to exploit and disadvantage some while privileging others. In contrast to liberalism, inclusive communitarianism proposes moving beyond individual notions of welfare and rights-based intervention to state-initiated reform and even replacement of the mechanisms of capitalism. However, in doing so, state actions which are informed by inclusive communitarianism require that political actors make a careful differentiation between using state power to transform or coerce as it attempts to move public debate and action away from traditional relations of power.

Back to the Future: The Shape of the Polis, Exclusive Communitarianism, and Post-modern Forces

During the last twenty years, a neo-liberal ideology has emerged which moves the debate away from inclusive communitarianism on the left of the political spectrum towards the exclusive communitarianism of traditional conservatism on the right. Conservatism, as the etymological roots of its name implies, is predisposed to preserve what exists, to resist change, and to support the traditional ways of a community or society. The community or society, from a conservative perspective, is viewed as “naturally” hierarchical in that individuals are seen as unequal by nature and, therefore, are sorted according to their abilities in ways which contribute to the harmonious whole. In this view, then, the good society is one in which individuals contribute to the common good, characterized by order and stability, by finding their place within hierarchically ordered relations of power. Duty to one’s social position in the maintenance of the community, rather than liberty to achieve one’s individual goals, is a predominant value
of traditional conservatism. Moreover, as society has moved away from feudal hierarchies where social position was based on strictly ordered class arrangements determined by birth to a capitalist society in which privilege has become tied to fraternal-patriarchal arrangements of power, a conservative view of communitarianism acts to enforce normative gender roles in communities and the workplace.

Somewhat paradoxically, because liberalism has been the dominant ideological position through much of modern political history, conservatism, in acting to maintain the status quo, may actually act to preserve classic liberalism. In recent years the result has been an increasingly pervasive political hybrid informing public policy comprised of neoliberalism which argues for a return to unfettered capitalism and neo-conservatism which touts the merits of exclusive communitarianism. For example, Stuart Hall (1988), commenting on the emergence of this phenomenon in England during Margaret Thatcher’s political leadership, suggests that Thatcherite populism “combines the resonant themes of organic Toryism[neo-conservatism] – nation, family, duty, authority, standards, traditionalism – with the aggressive themes of a revived neo-liberalism – self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism” (p. 48). These same themes have continued to reappear, with only slightly differing emphases, in the policies of Republican U.S. president Ronald Reagan, Democrat U.S. president Bill Clinton, Conservative Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and Liberal Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien. Even socialist leaders such as former Ontario Premier, Bob Rae, and the current Prime Minister of England, Tony Blair, adopted market-driven neo-liberal policy positions. Thus, parties which once held recognizably differing ideological views now hold positions that are increasingly indistinguishable from one another.

Popular commentary in the media refers to this phenomenon as “The Third Way” and academics have taken up this discussion as well. For example, Giddens’ “Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics”(1994) and Frazer and Lacey’s “The Politics of Community: A Feminist Critique of the Liberal-Communitarian Debate”(1993) take up the limitations of uncritical allegiance to political ideological positions of the left and the right in light of the challenges of postmodern social and
economic forces. These forces, which include globalization, computer technology, and the restructuring of wealth in the hands of a larger and more autonomous market economy have begun to blur not only the lines between political ideologies, but also existing nation states. As cultural communities (sometimes literally) fight to preserve their physical and ideological borders, and trans-national corporations fight to increase their market share by circumventing state interference, a post-modern Jihad vs. McWorld (Barber, 1992) emerges with unpredictable consequences for democracy.

Clearly, current political ideologies at the macro-political level that favour ahistorical/apolitical notions of merit-based employment based on individual competitive effort and increasingly unfettered capitalism can be expected to be resistant to employment equity initiatives. Furthermore, given that neo-liberal policies have reinforced fraternal-patriarchal relations of power (Cohen, 1996; Coulter, 1998), adding gender to already marginalized employment equity policy dramatically increases the probability of encountering resistance. I will now trace these patterns of power/resistance in the story of employment equity policy at the federal policy level as well as in Ontario’s educational system.

**Canadian Employment Equity Policy and Ideological Resistance**

Vestiges of the political struggle along the inclusive communitarian/liberal ideological continuum are entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which is enshrined in The Constitution Act of 1982. The Charter clearly reflects a liberal humanist ideological position and establishes the equality rights of every individual citizen against discriminatory acts of the state. These rights include each citizen’s equal freedom from discrimination based on “race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability [s.15(1)].” Furthermore, s.15(2) protects the right of “any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups (italics added) including those that are disadvantaged because of “the grounds listed in s.15(1). That is, Canadians, as
individuals, are all equal and have the legal right not to be discriminated against by the state because of their group affiliation.

Even before the Charter, however, minority workers and women who were entering the workforce in increasing numbers began advocating on their own behalf through grassroots political action for equal access to the social benefits of the workplace. In addition, *The Royal Commission on the Status of Women*, which brought down its report in 1970, had provided a powerful stimulus for formal action to address the concerns of women in many locations in society including the workplace. These forces provided enough political resistance to the status quo to motivate the federal government to initiate public enquiries and produce reports on equity policy initiatives (e.g., House of Commons, 1980; Employment and Immigration, 1981; House of Commons, 1981). Subsequent to the Constitution Act's passage in 1982, more reports were produced, including one by Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella (1984) which was very influential in shaping future employment equity policy. Each report expressed frustration with the ineffectiveness of anti-discrimination initiatives based on responses to individual cases. In addition, voluntary efforts to initiate anti-discrimination employment programs had been resoundingly unsuccessful (Agocs, Burr & Somerset, 1992, p. 18). As a result of the federal government’s liberal-humanist ideological position, discussion around anti-discrimination policy focused on prescriptive responses to the systemic barriers which identified groups experienced in achieving equality and substantial sanctions against those who resisted compliance with employment equity policy initiatives.

Abella's report best summarized the shape of future employment equity policy that emerged from a prescriptive consciousness of the political need to respond to discrimination in employment practices. Her attention to language signalled her anticipation of many themes of ideological resistance, which will be explored later in this chapter. Her policy recommendations advised the designation *employment equity* to differentiate Canada's anti-discrimination policy from some of the more negative connotations around the language of quotas associated with the *affirmative action* policies in the United States; she identified and provided a rationale for implementing
employment equity policy for four identified groups: women, visible minorities, the
disabled, and aboriginal persons; she argued that systemic discrimination required
systemic solutions; and she concurred with the courts that discrimination should be
adjudicated based on effect rather than intent.

Yet, while Abella's liberal-humanist democratic expectations for state action
found expression in subsequent policy, that policy's rhetoric masked a largely normative
consciousness which conserved privilege for those not within the identified groups who
have traditionally enjoyed more access to social benefits. A covert coercive response
asserted itself in acts of resistance within organizations as well as in public debate. For
example, federal employment equity policy seemed to offer a prescriptive response to
claims of employment discrimination by women, visible minorities, and aboriginals, but
its implementation reveals other discursive positions that were more resistant to these
groups achieving equity. Agôcs'(1989) study of federal equity policy is illustrative of this
phenomenon and provides an instructive foreshadowing of the story of ideological
resistance to employment equity policy in Ontario's educational system.

In 1986 the federal government enacted Bill C-62, the Legislated Employment
Equity Program (LEEP) which required federally regulated employers of 100 or more
employees to submit annual reports detailing workforce representation, salary ranges,
occupational groups, hirings, promotions, and firings for the four groups identified in
Abella's report as well as goals for improving representation of the identified groups and
a plan for achieving those goals. Company reports which detailed progress in meeting
their employment equity goals became public documents and fines of up to $50,000
could be levied for not filing a report. The Federal Contractor's Program (FCP), which
was also enacted in 1986, required that any organization (with the exception of those
already covered under LEEP) bidding for a Canadian government goods and services
contract worth $200,000 or more must have certain employment equity policies in place.
However, as Abella drolly observed, "equality is a [lengthy] process" (1984, p. 1), and
progress in achieving employment equity proved just as glacial.
Agös' (1989) study of 99 Ontario employers participating in the FCP program revealed that "six to eight months after the regulations were introduced,"

Only 17 of the 99 companies indicated that they had an employment equity program. Only 13 companies had started voluntary programs before the FCP took effect, despite almost ten years of federal efforts to encourage voluntary affirmative action . . . . 50 companies were starting or planning to start employment equity initiatives . . . . only one company had set goals and timetables, and eleven had employment equity committees (Agös, Burr & Somerset, 1992, p. 19).

Based on their research three years later, Agös et al. conclude that, "Given the low level of employment equity activity among employers it is not surprising that there has been little change in the representation of the four designated groups since 1987" (1992, p.19). Clearly, resistance to employment equity policy included many companies which simply did not comply with employment equity policy despite the threat of stiff sanctions.

However, it is worth noting that their non-compliance was possible only because of the government’s half-hearted commitment to enforcing their own policy. Thus, ideological resistance to employment equity from both the employers and the enforcers acted to conserve the status quo by evading the requirements of employment equity policy at the federal level. This same complicity between employers and enforcers is also evident in the narratives of employment equity policy at the provincial level in Ontario’s educational organizations.

**Employment Equity Policy and Ideological Resistance in Ontario’s Educational Organizations**

The legislative right to redress systemic discrimination is not only entrenched in Canada’s *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but also in provincial Human Rights Codes. In Ontario, s.4 of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* guarantees freedom from discrimination based on gender (as well as other prohibited grounds). Yet, evidence of
gender discrimination in educational organizations is clear. Statistics reveal that in most provinces in Canada, women educators teach and men lead in overwhelmingly disproportionate numbers when compared with their actual percentage participation in the educational workforce (Rees, 1990). For example, in the *Statistical Comparisons of Male-Female Ratios of Teachers in Ontario* (1995), produced by the Federation of Women Teachers’ Associations of Ontario, it is clear that administrative roles are occupied by women in inverse proportion to their position on the hierarchy. That is, the higher the level of a position in the hierarchy, the lower the number of women represented. On the other hand, the nurturant roles of teacher, para-professionals, teacher-aides, and clerical/secretary which are lower in the hierarchy are occupied by women in disproportionately large numbers compared to men. Not all provinces have acted to address these inequities, however, as far back as 1973, Ontario’s Minister of Education recommended an “equal opportunity” policy for women.

Gendered social regularities (prejudices), entrenched in bureaucratic forms that reinscribed male privilege at the higher levels of educational organizations’s hierarchies (Reynolds, 1995; Blackmore, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1987), were of particular concern to the Federation of Women Teachers’ Associations of Ontario (FWTAO), which historically was a strong advocate for employment issues affecting women educators in elementary schools since 1918 (Laban, 1993). In particular, the FWTAO formally advocated on behalf of mandatory affirmative action policies in every school board jurisdiction since 1980 (FWTAO, 1993). Yet, just like federal employment equity legislation, and despite supportive legislation and a powerful union lobby, specific employment equity policy designed to reshape the gendered distribution of positions within educational organizations encountered ideological resistance as well. The lived experience of Marg, Kate, and Linda who have en countered ideological resistance in their everyday practice demonstrates the power of ideological resistance to shape gender equity policy implementation at the micro-political level.
Creating a discursive space for gender equity

Given the patterns of ideological resistance to federal employment equity policy, it is not surprising that the Ontario government’s attempts to encourage boards to introduce voluntary initiatives to change these employment patterns proved unsatisfactory. After several years of insistent effort from the FWTAO, gender equity policy \(^5\) initiatives were put in place by the Ministry of Education in 1984 which requested that school boards develop plans to increase women’s representation in positions of added responsibility, but most did not. In 1985, “school boards were required to provide affirmative action data in their reports to the Ministry” (Taylor, 1995, p. 124). That is, boards were required to submit data differentiating each hierarchical position’s representation by sex. That same year provision for three year’s funding was available to boards of education through the Affirmative Action/Employment Equity (AA/EE) Incentive Fund to develop and implement employment equity policies and programs.

The initial expectation for the funding was that an AA/EE co-ordinator would be hired for one year to develop local policies and set up a program of data collection, and the remaining funds would finance clerical assistance in maintaining statistics, etc. In those boards who chose to take advantage of the incentive funding – and most did not – equity staff set to work on what Cockburn (1991) calls “the short agenda” of equity work: that is, putting policy in place which would encourage increased female representation in positions of added responsibility as well as in non-traditional positions such as janitorial work. However, there was no requirement for educational organizations to remove barriers to women seeking these positions. In essence, the province’s response to the collective action of women teachers was to move only slightly from the negative liberty position of traditional liberalism towards more state action.

As limited as it was, this state action did encourage some boards to move towards at least the appearance of embracing employment equity initiatives for women. For example, both Kate’s board, Board B, and Linda’s board, Board C, used the incentive funding provided in 1984 to hire an employment equity worker. Board A, unlike any other board in the province, already had a well-developed equity program and had hired
an affirmative action advisor in 1980. However, most boards continued to ignore the request of the Ministry for gender equity. Continued advocacy by grassroots organizations and teacher federations, a growing cohort of well qualified women, and a slowly changing public consciousness around the issues of gender equity resulted in increasingly prescriptive policy measures being introduced.

**Changing Political Ideologies**

In order to understand the ideological shifts in power and resistance which occurred next, it is important to understand the abrupt change in political ideology which occurred in 1985. For over forty years, the Conservative Party had held power in Ontario until the Liberal Party assumed power in the 1985 provincial election, but only after it had formed a coalition with the New Democratic Party (NDP). This coalition lasted only two years but during that time the Liberals had to move their political practices towards the social democratic end of the ideological spectrum in order to retain political power. However, the neo-liberal rhetoric of the Liberal leader, David Peterson, in support of business interests strongly suggested his preference for policy which advocated less state intervention, not more.

In 1986, the Minister of Education, although still only requesting compliance, began to use more insistent language with regard to women in educational organizations, which focussed on hiring goals. *Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum 92 (P/PM 92)* requested that boards adopt a minimum objective of 30% female representation in all positions by 2000. Again, there was little voluntary response from most boards despite the extension of incentive funding. The statistics which were compiled continued to demonstrate little movement toward the goals established by the Ministry but there was no legislative clout available to the Minister to require compliance. That is, under s.11 of the Ontario Education Act, the Minister could issue requests for compliance through Memoranda, such as P/PM 92, without debate in the legislature or caucus approval, but did not have the regulatory power to require that boards work towards meeting established goals. To obtain those regulatory privileges required that an amendment be
made to s. 8 of the Education Act itself, a process that requires assent of the full legislature under the scrutiny of the public and the media. Thus, the political will to act on employment equity, a contentious issue which received, at best, mixed constituency support, was premised on the assurance of support of politically powerful allies for such action.

The Liberals managed to win a majority government in 1987 and support for moving forward with amendments to s.8 of the Education Act languished for some time. However, by 1989, even though the political support for action in the wider public may have been limited, the relentless advocacy work of FWTAO in particular, as well as other teacher federations, prompted the Minister of Education to move forward with Bill 69: Amendment to the Education Act that resulted in s. 8 (1) (29) of the Education Act. It stated that “the Minister may . . . require boards to develop and implement employment equity for women and other groups . . . .” In addition, the Minister of Education at the time, Chris Ward, made a renewed commitment to an employment equity target of 50% females in positions of added responsibility (PAR) by 2000. All of the legislative pieces of the puzzle were now in place to enact positive liberty by requiring compliance to employment equity programs that specifically addressed women’s unequal representation in educational organizations.

In 1990, the Liberals called a surprise election, but the surprise turned out to be theirs when a mildly socialist NDP party was elected. Many political commentators interpreted this surprising outcome as reflecting the public’s perception that the Liberals call for a surprise election was a cynical and costly ploy to increase their representation in the legislature. Thus, the victory of the NDP may have signalled a fatigue with the dominant parties in Ontario, rather than an ideological shift of the voting constituency. Nevertheless, true to its social democratic ideological position, the new NDP government moved forward quickly with policy which reflected the notion of positive liberty, although it was also a logical outcome of the previous direction of policy. Ministry P/PM 111(1990) required mandatory employment equity programmes for women to be in place
by September 1990 with the goal of 50% supervisory officers, principals, and vice-principals by the year 2000

En/Countering Themes of Ideological Resistance

P/PM 111 is an interesting instance of Kenway et al.’s assertion that “As reform ‘texts’ are produced, they become the ‘raw materials for fresh cultural productions’ or movements of meaning” (1994, p. 193). As power and resistance reworked the meaning of policy-as-stated as it became policy-in-use (Sergiovanni 1992), it soon became clear that “the long agenda” work of systemic change was necessary in order to ensure equitable access to social benefits. As Phillips comments, “the moderate goals of equality before the law or equality of opportunity are said to carry with them considerable equality of condition. Equality is a slippery slope, and once on it, it is hard to get off” (1993, pp. 36-7). Her point is that working towards equality of access to social benefits for all citizens exposes the limits of liberalism for creating substantive change and sets in motion an enlarged vision for a communitarian notion of the common good. However, she cautions that, even though

[s]ocialists feel they have shown up the limits of liberalism times without number; liberals live on to tell their tale. Feminists feel they have completed both liberal and socialist projects; they find their arguments first welcomed and then mysteriously mislaid. This is not just the stubborn obstinacy of those who refuse to recognize reason, but testifies to genuine [ideological] disagreement over what equality should mean.

(Phillips, 1993, p. 37)

Evidence of this ideological disagreement became clear when, despite increasingly insistent policy, the Ministry's own publication declared that there had not been significant progress in meeting the established goals (MET, 1993, p. 7). Like Agôcs' research at the federal level, studies continued to demonstrate that resistance to gender equity policy exists in provincial educational organizations too. For example, Diubaldo's
(1992) study of the effects of a four year employment equity program in Windsor, Ontario concluded that the program's efficacy was minimal in achieving the board's gender equity employment goals. Furthermore, Gibling's (1992) research demonstrated that, despite financial incentives for developing and implementing gender equity policy, the requirement to do so, and penalties for non-compliance, half of the boards in Ontario continued to resist producing formal equity initiatives in compliance with the goals of P/PM 111.

As soon as policy required that boards meet targets for employment of women in positions of added responsibility, there was less room for evading evidence of the prejudices that had kept women out of these positions for so long in educational organizations. Ideological resistance to P/PM 111 emerged around two issues that were predicted in Abella’s report: 1) resistance to targets, which were interpreted as quotas, and 2) the legitimacy of a singular focus of employment equity policy on women.

Targets or Quotas?

Employment equity policy attempts to disrupt social regularities shaped by historically effected consciousness of “other”; however, a normative consciousness attempts to maintain the status quo of privilege, or lack of it. In educational organizations, men have enjoyed privileged access to positions of added responsibility. In fact, as I have already pointed out, the percentage representation of men in educational organizations is exactly congruent with the job’s hierarchical position: the higher the hierarchical position, the higher the percentage representation of men. As Marg commented, “Unless you’re very sexist, you can’t explain that type of data. You would have to be prepared to think that women have made choices that they don’t want these jobs. You would have to use that kind of reasoning to explain that they weren’t there.” As more and more women became qualified and competed for positions as vice-principals, principals, and supervisory officers, the normative consciousness of the men who formed the hiring committees or were now competing with women for the same job became more obvious.
For example, the Director of Board B struggled with explaining to male applicants for positions of added responsibility why they lost a job to a female applicant.

Director: When I had to debrief males who lost . . . they would come up with, well I have an MA and things like this. And I'd say, they [female candidates] have their MA. Then it got down to the one spot where they had to say, well she's a female and can't do the job that we [male candidates] can.

The perception that remained, even after debriefing, was the uncritical acceptance of the prejudgement that females are not able to lead effectively because they are female, not because they lack qualifications. As a result, the only explanation available to these men for women competitors’ success was that they were hired because of affirmative action quotas only because they were female, not because they were as well or better qualified. When critics of employment equity continue to hide behind the specious argument that such policy inevitably leads to hiring the less qualified, such a position is rationally acceptable only if one presumes that women, and other historically underrepresented groups, are a priori less qualified. As Charol Shakeshaft once wexyly observed, “In the end, all roads lead back to sexism” (1987, p.96).

Another explanation for the prejudices encountered by the Director of Board B is the pervasive existence of an uncritical belief in fraternal-patriarchal meritocracy. Within the political ideological spectrum outlined at the beginning of this chapter, meritocracy, the belief that objective criteria for selection of candidates for a job can be decided upon outside of historical patterns of privilege and power, falls within liberal humanism (individual rights based policy) and classic liberalism. However, as Pateman (1988), Okin (1992) and others have argued, both positions privilege the universal male and relegate women’s experience to the realm of the particular and aberrant. For all of these reasons, and more, proponents of employment equity for women in educational organizations have argued that meritocracy is a myth because there is no purely objective standard for measuring the “merit” of an individual candidate that is not attached in some way to historical patterns of privilege and power which are protected by fraternal-
patriarchal relations of capitalism. Targets, then, hold organizations accountable for confronting the sexism inherent in the myth of meritocracy.

Despite their belief in equity policy in theory, however, each of the equity workers expressed some measure of discomfort in practice with the notion of arbitrary targets, established without community consultation.

Linda: I was very uncomfortable explaining to people the difference between goals and quotas. People had trouble buying in that this was a goal and that the goals were reasonable, and attainable and established within an organization. Something like P/PM 111 was really a quota because it was imposed externally. I had discomfort getting that across. . . . So I mouthed the words, I talked the walk or whatever . . . but I had a problem within myself.

Linda was struggling with direct state intervention which set arbitrary policy goals – i.e., positive liberty. Instead, she would have been more comfortable with each community setting goals based on anticipated hiring needs.

Linda: [P/PM111] said nothing to you about how many men and women you might have in a board. It was by the year 2000, no matter what their training, no matter what their interests or levels or anything. Fifty percent of your people would be women. Whereas numerical goals that you set yourself would take into account the local situation. . . . But a quota imposed externally would not take that into account. You know, it would say you must do this come hell or high water.

Her position is an interesting one because it points to the difficulty of developing policy which is able to accommodate the complex social, political, and economic relations at various locations in society. It also points to the differing ideological positions taken up by equity workers themselves which were often in conflict with the positions they felt imposed upon them by their board. For example, Kate’s activist position with regard to employment equity was constantly challenged by a normative consciousness in Board B. She comments that her efforts to shift the status quo were not welcome. In fact, “there was definitely a sense that we would not be aggressive in terms of getting women into positions of added responsibility because that would . . . turn people off and give
equity a bad name and, you know, you have to be seen to be fair and reasonable when it comes to equity." Of course, to be fair and reasonable meant not challenging the normative prejudices which shape a gendered status quo.

"But what about the men?"

The second theme which emerged very strongly in both Boards B and C with the implementation of P/PM 111 was a concern around policy which exclusively addressed the equity concerns of women in educational organizations. For example, the minutes of the Personnel and Operations Committee of the Board of Trustees for Board C reveal deep resistance to developing employment equity policy, "either for women or for women and other designated groups providing that special measures for women are clearly specified" (FWTAO, 1992, p. 6). As Linda commented,

When our board had to put in place employment equity policy . . . and it should have special measures for women, they – that is, the trustees – were very uncomfortable with the whole idea. They wanted to have employment equity for everybody, that will help everybody . . . . So there were no special programs – employment equity programs – for women. The Minister of Education rejected the policy Board C submitted that used "inclusive" gender-neutral language which made no specific reference to women, and insisted on its resubmission in compliance with the legislation. Board C was so adamant about their position that they retained a lawyer to fight the requirement to designate special measures for women-only and approved a recommendation that the same committee send a letter to the Minister of Education and the Ontario Public School Boards Association with a view to having an amendment to the Education Act introduced in the legislature that would require the use of only "inclusionary language" in the Education Act.

Almost one year after the deadline for compliance, Board C's policy in response to P/PM 111 was finally approved by the Minister when policy was passed which grudgingly stated that "Board C supports employment equity and will ensure that female employees reach their potential"(Board document). Minutes of the equity committee of
Board B reveal that they also objected to policy which addressed only the issue of women in administration and moved that the language of board literature produced to encourage women to seek positions of added responsibility be amended to include not only women but other designated groups. Only Board A complied without hesitation and had already designated an equity worker who had specific responsibility for equity for women.

On the face of it, one might see such resistance as an effort to be more inclusive by encompassing other equity issues along with those which are specific to women. However, one could also interpret the efforts of Boards B and C as an attempt to defer the uncomfortable burden of accountability around gender in their employment equity policy which P/PM 111 created. As Frazer and Lacey suggest, “gender neutral language frequently hides or suppresses gender issues (1993, p. 71). Furthermore, by constructing discrimination based on difference as a generic phenomenon which can be “fixed” with a one-size-fits-all policy solution, the particular political and historical constructions of “other” embedded in a normative or prescriptive consciousness can be universalized as well. For example, in both Board B and C there was an equation of the underrepresentation of women in administration with underrepresentation of men in Primary/Junior grades. The inference was that, in order to be fair, as much attention needs to be given to one inequality as the other.

While there is a certain truth to this conception of fairness, it totally ignores the particular constructions of the prejudices which keep each phenomenon of inequality in place and the degree to which state intervention is required to create change. As Coulter and McNay (1995) point out, “‘Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander’ arguments over-simplify complex patterns of power and gender relations in school systems” (p. 14). Women, who represent 70% of the total population of educators and over 50% of the qualified and active candidates for positions of added responsibility are still not being hired in numbers which represent their level of participation or qualification. However, men, who generally have a wider range of job opportunities available to them, responded to the loss of job opportunities in education, which began in the 1970s, by pursuing other
career options. By the early 1980s, there was a general concern about the decreased numbers of men in education, but particularly at the Primary/Junior (P/J) grades, expressed by boards and federations that has continued to be reiterated. For example, in the June 1999 issue of the Ontario College of Teachers' professional journal. 

*Professionally Speaking,* Giguere writes that current data demonstrate, a steady decrease over all the age groups. Male teachers over 55 years old make up 39 per cent of the teacher population. Between 45 and 54, they make up 33 per cent of all teachers. In the 30 to 44 age group, they represent only 28 per cent, and in the under 30-years-old category, the percentage reaches a low of 22 per cent. Furthermore, male teachers of French and at the Primary-Junior level in the under-30 category represent only 15 per cent of qualified teachers. There was almost immediate attention to this phenomenon in both policy and changes in practice and yet the number of men seeking to qualify for these positions at faculties of education or to move into these positions during their careers has continued to decrease. Thus, while women have actively sought to move into positions traditionally occupied by men, which are perceived to have higher status, they have been resisted; conversely men have not sought to move into positions traditionally associated with women, which enjoy less status, even though they have been actively encouraged to do so. Both phenomena deserve attention and concern. but to equate them and insist that policy must treat them the same in order to be fair is to ignore their divergent historical roots in gendered social regularities and the disparate positions of power held by men and women in educational organizations.

**From Equity Boom to Equity Bust**

In 1994, the NDP government, which was by now mired deeply in the repercussions of a faltering economy and the Social Contract, passed Bill 79: *The Employment Equity Act.* All three boards in this study anticipated this legislation and had already implemented some of its measures. In particular, they had begun to look at employment patterns for not only women, but also the three other designated groups: aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, and the disabled. However, this was not policy
based on the same generic notions of diversity which were at the heart of Board B's objections to women-only employment policy. Instead, a policy process which sought community input on various levels was implemented. First, publicly funded and private organizations with more than fifty employees — including publicly funded school boards — were required to do a workforce survey in order to provide a statistical analysis of its employees. The survey determined how many members of each of the identified groups were in an employer's workforce and how that compared to the demographics of its community. Second, companies were required to examine their human resources policies and procedures in order to assess whether their employment practices unfairly discriminated against the identified groups. Third, public and private organizations were then required to form joint committees to develop a plan, which included numerical goals, for moving towards more inclusive practices and a more diverse workforce. An Employment Equity Commission would act as an arm's length educator as well as monitor for enacting the legislation and achieving established goals.

However, Ontario's Employment Equity Act was introduced while school boards and teacher unions were still reeling from tough negotiations over the "Social Contract" — an almost universally unpopular move by the NDP to share the burden of addressing Ontario's public debt load by forcing public institutions to cut two billion dollars from the public payroll through collective negotiation in order to avert job cuts. For many boards of education, this meant clawing back or freezing educators' salaries. Furthermore,hirings and promotions were already severely limited as boards attempted to respond to tightening fiscal restraints. As Sandra Martin writes in the Toronto Star's compilation of a series of newspaper articles based on her Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy study:

The reaction [to Bill 79] was mixed: Many advocacy groups felt it didn't go far enough, unions worried about safe-guarding seniority, and employers — large and small alike — were concerned about the logistics and expense of developing and implementing employment equity plans that would comply with the legislation (1995, p. 16).
In many ways, Bill 79 proved to be both the best and worst of times for employment equity policy. It was the best of times because it offered the opportunity to create a transformative discursive space in which a broad constituency of employee representatives could discuss differing notions of equality and jointly develop policy for enacting equity initiatives. It was the worst of times because all of the familiar battles which emerged around P/PM 111 were exacerbated by the requirements of Bill 79.

The Best of Times?

Kate’s board already had an equity committee in place, but the committee which was put in place following Bill 79 was supportive of equity in more hopeful ways. Kate remarks that, “while not every employee rep understood equity issues, there was a sense that there’s something good in here for employees period . . . like it felt good in lots of ways.” Linda comments further that, prior to Bill 79, the equity advisory committee depended on the equity co-ordinator to provide all of the agenda items, attended sporadically, and demonstrated minimal commitment to achieving equity goals. The committee formed under Bill 79, however, was “far more dedicated. Well, there was something to do, right? They saw something that needed to be done – a job to do – and they were released during work hours to do it.” It was as though Bill 79 provided a focus for action and a sense that progress in achieving employment equity would not only be measurable, but also achievable. It also provided for state resources to enable committee members to be released from work commitments in order to enact legislative goals.

Still, despite the hopefulness which Bill 79 inspired in employment equity proponents, it also brought to the surface resistance in factions of the federations and unions whose representatives sat on the implementation committees. While the equity workers often found this resistance discouraging, it also helped to make the locations of resistance visible. For example, Marg found gender reform was resisted by many of the federation and union representatives.

Marg: The secondary school teachers’ federation I would describe as resistant. They would disagree probably and tear my tongue out for saying
so, but they were resistant. Even the elementary teachers' federation was somewhat resistant. The blue collar, the trades people, the caretaking/custodial/maintenance people were resistant. . . . There were also some badly informed management people who were resistant. They asked some of the dumbest questions, in some cases, and said some quite reactionary things. 

And yet, as a result of resistance becoming more visible, counter-strategies were sometimes possible by establishing alliances with supportive groups. Marg, for example, states.

I encouraged some of those woman-dominated or pro-employment equity groups to use their own union structures to try to keep these guys in line. We did not have an official strategy at all, but an unofficial informal strategy of working with the president of, for example, the educational assistants.

Thus, the legislation offered an opportunity to not only expand the borders of the polis beyond the usual participants in the discussion about employment equity, but also extended the forums for the discussion beyond the formal networks of power.

**The Worst of Times?**

Even though Bill 79 set off a maelstrom of activity and reactions which uncovered ideological resistance to its broad mandate, the ascendancy of the discourse of competitive globalization and an unfettered marketplace throughout the world was in direct ideological opposition to Bill 79's socialist democratic impulses. In addition, the collapse of the manufacturing job sector produced daily media coverage of plant closings and job losses. As salaries fell or became nonexistent because of massive economic restructuring, an increasingly protective response from those who had traditionally enjoyed privileged access to social benefits became evident. Even the NDP's traditional
constituency based on solidarity with unions began to break down under the weight of increasing disparity between the rich and the poor – and newly poor.

Some themes began to emerge which impacted both the political fortunes of the NDP and its equity policy. First, the traditional conservative ideology of meritocracy was put forward in opposition to equity efforts. By separating the notion of excellence from equity, frightened white males who found themselves at the “sharp edge of affirmative action programmes” (Phillips, 1993, p. 19) were able to argue that one could exist only in the absence of the other. Second, working and middle class uncertainty found a comforting tonic in both the rhetoric of competitive individualism put forward by classic liberalism and the return to traditional community standards espoused by traditional conservativism. Third, business – particularly private business – chafed under the requirements of Bill 79 and fuelled uncertainty by claiming that such measures would limit their efficiency and competitiveness. Each of these themes emerges in the narratives of Marg, Kate, and Linda as well, and I will briefly deal with the first, but I will return to all three in the following two chapters.

Engendering Fear

Linda: I certainly got backlash from my newsletters when I talked about Bill 79. Very angry people wrote me some very angry responses unsigned. So there was certainly resistance out there from some people who . . . you know the fear of quotas, the fear of . . . whatever they were afraid of. People who were not believing that the best person would get the job, but that the person who met the quota criteria would get the job. That type of resistance.

Kate, and Marg also reported strong resistance to the process of implementing the required system survey. In each board, only the required information about each participant’s group identification was requested on the survey. Even Marg, whose board had been keeping this kind of information prior to Bill 79, reported that
reactionary forces wanted the minimum information on the census form that the legislation called for. The progressive elements, of course, wanted the census form to include optional questions... So we really had a lot of fights that went on for maybe three meetings before we finally approved the census form, and it ended up being a compromise. We ended up doing the minimum survey, but we also had an optional survey too. Then there was a lot of discussion about whether these two things should go out in one package or would we actually survey the staff twice.

By insisting that employees identify their group affiliation, the universalist/particularist debate discussed in Chapter 2 was given material substance and the very real fear that jobs were being lost in educational organizations as a result of fiscal restraint and restructuring ignited the debate into active resistance. The following two chapters will take up this phenomenon more fully in the context of structural and, in particular, personal resistance, but it is important to note here that both are embedded in political ideological positions described at the beginning of this chapter.

The End of Equity?

The sweeping majority won by the Conservatives in the election of 1995, based on Mike Harris's "common sense revolution" was a strong electoral endorsement of the party's neo-liberal/neo-conservative politics. Many of the positions taken by Harris already informed the neo-conservatism which had swept through the United States, England, New Zealand, and Australia and was the dominant ideological position of many other countries. After its election, Harris's majority Conservative government almost immediately tabled Bill 8: An Act to Repeal Job Quotas and to Restore Merit-Based Employment Practices in Ontario [emphasis added], a name which explicitly addresses the Conservative Party's ideological concerns with the employment equity discourse of the preceding ten years. Bill 8 was passed in the first months of the Conservative mandate and among its policy changes, Bill 8 rescinded The Employment Equity Act, s. 8(1) 29 of
Education Act and P/PM 111, required the destruction of all data collected for Employment Equity Act, and promised that its provisions would be replaced by The Equal Opportunity Plan which is voluntary, non-legislative, and, several years later, virtually non-existent.

Bill 8 signalled that a neo-conservative/neoliberal discourse centred in what Cohen (1997) calls economic fundamentalism – that is, what has come to be accepted unproblematically as "a sensible framework for understanding the changes which are occurring in the world" – was now ideologically ascendent. The underlying assumptions of economic fundamentalism are "based on a philosophy of individualism and the pursuit of self interest in which buying and selling on 'the market' regulates the ways in which human needs are met" (p. 97). Belief in the capitalist global marketplace as a kind of benign distributor of social benefits has become the accepted wisdom of the 90s in Ontario and much of the rest of the world, but its concomitant belief that people get what they deserve based on individual effort, as this study suggests, has proven to be remarkably stable over several decades (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Thus, even before the ascendancy of neo-liberalism/neo-conservatism in public discourse, the conflicting values of capitalism and a liberal democracy have "shaped ideological divisions and help explain swings in the national mood" (Ospina, 1996, p. 19) when answering the question "who gets what, when, and how?"

The dissonance between the equity workers' ideological position in support of employment equity policy and their organizations' resistance to it is clear in the almost universal and immediate compliance of most boards of education in Ontario to Bill 8. Every board I contacted in preparation for this study had terminated or reassigned the person who had specific responsibilities for gender equity employment policy almost immediately after the passage of Bill 8. In fact, those equity workers that I interviewed commented that their entire network of colleagues in equity work on other boards had virtually disappeared within a year of Bill 8's passage.
Summary

This chapter has explored how political ideologies shape public policy about employment equity policy and, in the process, alter the discursive space in which equity workers and supporters encounter resistance. The story of employment equity policy in Ontario demonstrates that the powerful discourses of traditional and humanistic liberalism have prevailed in valuing meritocratic individualism over communitarian state action in distributing social benefits in educational organizations. Although humanistic liberalism does open the polis to wider discussion and a recognition of an individual’s rights to protection from discriminatory actions by the state, it does not move beyond a prescriptive consciousness informing policy and practices which simply seek to ameliorate women’s rights to access to social benefits in educational systems organized around the male as normative.

A socialist liberal party in Ontario, the NDP, attempted to open up the debate even further around gender issues and other discriminatory categories by requiring collective decision-making that included the voices of all political stake-holders. However, even while the debate was enlarged and the points of resistance to employment equity became more visible for equity workers in this study, the polis was tightening with the growing ascendancy of a public normative consciousness which resulted in the election of a neo-conservative majority government. The Harris Conservatives acted immediately to remove employment equity policy specifically targeting discrimination against women and to limit equity policy for all other identified groups.

Clearly, the “tapestry of discourses” woven in this chapter from political ideologies, official policies, and the lived experience of the three equity workers in this study demonstrates a powerful ideological tug away from policies and political actions
that seek to alter the discursive spaces in which normative power relations around issues of gender in educational organizations are enacted. The next chapter will extend the exploration of ideological resistance to gender equity employment policy en countered by equity workers begun in this chapter to the structural resistance to change that is embedded in educational organizations.

Endnotes

1. See Frazer and Lacey (1993), pp. 41-53 for an interesting discussion of current political theories of liberalism. Their book draws out current debates in more detail than is possible for me in this chapter.

2. The legislation does not apply to Federal/Canadian government departments and agencies or provincially regulated employers. It does apply to employers like Bell Canada, CP Rail, Canadian Airlines, etc. (Agocs, 1992, p. 2).

3. Despite the best efforts of a graduate student working for a colleague, no cases in which fines were imposed because of non-compliance to FCP requirements have been found in public documentation.

4. FWTAO which represented the interests of female elementary teachers and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF) which represented male elementary educators have recently amalgamated into a new federation, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, which represents both male and female elementary teachers. Although OPSTF had been lobbying for years to amalgamate the two federations, FWTAO resisted those efforts until the Supreme Court's decision (1997) in the Tomen case which ruled that enforced membership in a teacher union that is based on gender is discriminatory.

5. Gender equity policy refers to a broad set of initiatives that address practices which exclude girls and women from participating in and benefitting from a full range of educational opportunities. Pedagogical practices, curriculum content, and employment equity for women in educational organizations are just some of the areas encompassed by gender equity policy. For purposes of my research, I will be focusing specifically on employment equity for women, although there is considerable theoretical and practical overlap with other effects of gender in educational organizations.

6. The language used to designate the position of employment equity worker was different between boards and even within the same board over time. I will use quotation marks (e.g., "equity officer") to denote the particular designation of the board being
referenced within the time frame being discussed.

7. Although all teacher federations took an official stand in support of equity measures to increase women’s representation in positions of added responsibility, it was the FWTAO which was most actively engaged in providing resources to boards, providing political advocacy, and supporting women seeking these positions at the elementary level in public schools.

8. Up until 1980, candidates for principals’ courses in Ontario had to be recommended by Board of Education administrators. Since most administrators were men and since their networks of influence were male dominated, it was very difficult for women to be nominated for these qualifying courses.

9. The three major political parties in Ontario are the Conservatives, Liberals and the New Democratic Party (NDP). The Conservatives have represented a range of political positions but, up until the mid 1980s, were generally positioned between liberal and traditional conservatism. The Liberals have ranged ideologically from liberal humanism to liberal conservatism – sometimes at the same time. The New Democratic Party has been seen as the party of the left and ideologically close to socialist liberalism. However, when in power for a brief time, the NDP tended towards liberal humanism.

11. The Social Contract was an attempt by the NDP government to draw together the public sector of employment to voluntarily and collectively give up negotiated benefits in order to address the deficit. These efforts proved almost universally unpopular and drew particular ire from the NDP’s traditional constituency: unions and teacher federations.

12. Although the elementary teachers’ unions were organized by sex (FWTAO for women and OPSTF for men) at the time in Ontario, in Board A they had an amalgamated organization which negotiated work conditions and acted on behalf of joint issues for both federations.
CHAPTER FIVE

En/countering Post/Structural Resistance

Organization is the essential process of effecting power. No individual, however, wealthy, however armed, can impose his will for long without organizing others to act in his interest. Without organization, he is a King Kong or a Rambo, reduced to mortal muscle. Organizations, then, are not just of casual interest to men as a sex. They are crucial to the production and reproduction of power. Men will not readily let women in.

Cynthia Cockburn, 1991, p. 221

Structure is a word that contains many meanings. In common usage, it often refers to a material architectural reality – the decaying grandeur of the Parthenon, the skeleton of steel beams which give shape and support to an office building, straws stuck together with glue and wire to build an experimental “bridge” in a science class. A thesaurus reveals that the word structure is associated with building and edifice, as well as design, formation, and pattern. That is, a structure is the orderly arrangement of objectified elements in order to achieve the utilitarian and aesthetic goals of its maker, the subject. The thesaurus also associates the word structure with organization: the orderly arrangement of social interactions which serve the goals of powerful subject(s) who benefit from the labour of less powerful object(s). As Weber (in Pusey, 1987, cited in Bates, p. 147) points out, the bureaucratic structures of organizations are most efficient in achieving their goals when those caught within “the iron cage” are most dehumanized: i.e., when they “succeed in eliminating from official business, love, hatred, and all personal, irrational and emotional elements [which are associated with the feminine] which escape calculation” (Bates, 1989, p. 147). That is, structural resistance to gender equity is en countered at the perceived ontological divide between the gendered scripts of an ethic of justice and an ethic of care in organizations.

If, as Perrow states, “Organizations generate power; . . . organizations are tools for shaping the world as one wishes it to be shaped” (1986, p. 11), then organizational structures emerge from the crucible of social regularities. Greenfield points out, however, that it is inaccurate to view organizations as a reified ontological reality which “generates power” or “shapes the world” from some Archimedean point. Instead, “Organizations
have reality only through human action” (1986, p. 71), and if human action flows from an historically effected consciousness, then how “one” wishes the world to be shaped is itself shaped by “one’s” prejudgements of how the world is. Critical and feminist theory, which I have already reviewed in previous chapters, makes clear that Perrow’s universal “one” is, in fact, a particular “one”: most often a white middle-class male whose wishes will be realized through organizational power. That is, power and resistance that is generated by social actors in organizations is produced within a consciousness of the “other”, which precipitates actions that have moral implications. Furthermore, Foucault’s analysis of power (1980) describes human action as organized around discourses of “truth” that constitute knowledge/power and are constantly contested.

Organizations, then, are complex matrices of discursive positions that constitute a gendered moral order. Indeed, Greenfield writes, “[T]his is how we should think of an organization: as a moral order in action” (1993, p. 222). Moral positions, however, are seldom, if ever, taken up by all participants in an organization with equal enthusiasm and acceptance and so, just as Foucault has suggested, the discursive space in organizations is constantly contested and reshaped. Watkins uses a helpful analogy when he writes that organizations should . . . be viewed as containers holding people in relations of power. In these containers power is continuously being exercised to shape the attention of participants, to channel information and selectively construct agendas. (1989, p. 26)

The metaphor of a container implies immutable organizational stability. While this image is not entirely accurate, it does suggest the ways in which elite discursive positions in organizations tend to demonstrate stability over time. That is, while discursive positions are inherently unstable, those who possess decision-making power attempt to maintain organizational stability by constraining the actions of those who work within organizations through rules and practices, both formal and informal, that limit access to resources — both material resources and discursive resources (knowledge/power).

However, even though power is unequally available in organizations, as Giddens’ (1979) theory of structuration points out, organizational structures (rules and
resources) have the potential to both enable and constrain social actors. In fact, as I have already argued in Chapter 3, the constant dialectic between social structures and human agency is what differentiates social from natural structures. Layder (1994) reiterates this point when he writes in *Understanding Social Theory*:

Social structures do not ‘act on’ people like forces of nature to compel them to behave in any particular way. In short, “structural constraints do not operate independently of the motives and reasons that agents have for what they do” (Giddens, 1984, p. 181). (p. 139)

That is, if organizational structures generate power, they also generate resistance and “the moral order in action” becomes a complex site of competing discourses in which power and resistance circulate between and among gendered social actors.

As I have already outlined in my conceptual framework, the level of consciousness decision makers individually and collectively bring to an understanding of social phenomena such as organizations is both shaped by and shapes decisions about how “one wishes the world to be.” Much of the literature about organizations and their administration is premised on management science which suggests that organizations and the people within them can and should be compelled, whether by force or more subtle manipulation, to behave in a particular way in order to achieve the goals of capitalism. The template of positivistic inquiry, formed by a normative consciousness, simply accepts that workers are objects to be acted upon in the service of a reified organization. “The result is the substitution of a rationalized world of coercion for the liberated world of individual action” (Bates, 1989, p. 150). For example, Taylor (1911) not only objectified but also dismembered into their constituent parts the objects of his studies as he attempted to find the most efficient way for managers to control the ways in which workers carried out their work. The fact that the organizational efficiencies discovered through rational scientific inquiry were often at the expense of the workers’ health and well-being were of no concern to Taylor except as they affected organizational productivity. Furthermore, the notion that these workers were organized around specific configurations of gender relations was seen as normative and never questioned.
Even early human relations theorists such as Barnard (1938) and Mayo (1945), informed by a prescriptive consciousness, simply proposed a more benign form of coercion that attempted to remediate workers into conformity with administrative goals. Current theory which follows on the human relations model, continues to objectify workers in the service of organizational goals. For example, contemporary organizational theories such as “transformational” models of leadership, total quality management, and “learning” organizations are critiqued for being more about achieving the goals of the powerful in organizations and less about “empowering” employees. As Foster points out, “transformational leaders are now those who can lead a company to greater profits, who can satisfy the material cravings of employees, who can achieve better performance through providing the illusion of power to subordinates” (1989, p. 45, emphasis added). In other words, a prescriptive consciousness neutralizes the possibility of transforming power relations, predicated on normative gendered relations, by placating the desire for change through remediating practices which continue to objectify workers and maintain power relations that benefit males disproportionately. As Savage concludes, “the fact that increasing numbers of women are employed in professional and managerial jobs does not mean that organizations are any less patriarchal than they used to be” (1992, p. 12)

On the other hand, Greenfield (1993), although certainly not taking up a feminist stance, proposes a very different position on inquiry into organizations – particularly educational organizations. Instead of reifying organizations and objectifying the workers within them, he argues that researchers will have a richer, more complex, and ultimately more transformative understanding if they

become aware of what Giddens calls “asymmetries in meaning” and morality and in the power of certain people to force their meanings and moralities on others. The study of organization should be directed at mapping these asymmetries and at understanding the meanings of people whose actions create the very entity that enables them to act. (p. 110)

Within this view of organizations, social actors with unequal access to power both contest and create meaning in the discursive spaces of organizations and language is the medium
for weaving texts of potential transformation in these spaces. For the women in this study who are positioned in opposition to male networks of power in educational organizations, Greenfield's view offers a way forward for examining how gender equity initiatives transform and are transformed by the contestation of meaning and values in educational organizations. This seems to me, then, to be a useful way to proceed with an examination of structural resistance to gender equity employment policy in educational organizations.

Beyond Structuralism

The collective meaning which is woven in the discursive spaces of educational organizations has particular significance because it speaks to the desires of not only policy makers and their constituents, but also the possibilities which will be available for future generations. These desires are often contested because systems of public schooling are uniquely situated within the tensions between liberal democracy and capitalism discussed in Chapter 2. This tension is reflected in the on-going debate between policy makers, educators, parents, private business interests, and academics about the central purposes of schooling (Labaree, 1997): i.e., whether the role of schooling is to reproduce the social and economic relations of capitalism or produce social change that will provide greater social and economic equality for all citizens. Gendered stereotypes which organized social interactions and educational opportunities were challenged by the women’s movement in the 60s, and the education system was seen as the primary vehicle for change. An expectation that schooling would produce social change was reflected in many of the 167 recommendations of *The Royal Commission on the Status of Women* in 1970.

Not only does the role which public education occupies in the public sphere open up potentially contentious discursive space but so does its organizational structure. Unlike the more arms-length relationship that private business organizations have with governmental agencies, public educational systems like those in my study are administered by a bureaucracy that is directly responsible to political bodies of governance under the legislative authority of the province. In Ontario, the formal political
and administrative structures are each organized hierarchically, but legislative and
governing power flows between them through permeable organizational boundaries as it
moves from the provincial to the municipal levels of governance and then to the local
school. At the provincial level, political power flows from the Minister of Education, an
elected member of the governing party in the provincial party and member of the
Premier’s Cabinet, to the administrative structure, the Ministry of Education,1 which is
staffed by non-elected civil servants. Municipalities elect trustees who form a board of
education and govern their local schools within the requirements of provincial legislation
using the skills and expertise of their local, non-elected administrative bureaucracy.
Schools model this duel-pronged governance model as well since they now have elected
parent councils who act as an advisory body for the principal and teachers.

As I interviewed the participants in this study, it became clear that the tension
between seeing schools as sites of social production or social reproduction as well as the
layering of political and administrative governance exacerbates the resistance
en countered by gender equity workers in educational organizations at the local level. For
example, the policy changes around gender equity, which I described in Chapter 4, were
enacted at the provincial level but had to be implemented at the local level. The senior
board administrators, whose support was important to Kate, Marg, and Linda, found
themselves caught between the demands of provincial legislation, trustees who were often
unsympathetic or downright resistant to gender equity employment policy, and school
administrators who demonstrated a wide range of attitudes towards gender equity
initiatives. Since senior administrative positions are dependent in many ways on the good
will of trustees and the political support of school administrators, it is not entirely
surprising that compliance to P/PM 111, for example, was reluctant, subtly diverted, and
very slow (Diabuldo, 1992). Thus, the work of gender equity workers within the
administrative layer of educational organizations at the local board level is influenced,
assisted, and/or resisted in significant ways by layers of political discourse as well as
organizational practices at the provincial, municipal and the local school level of policy
implementation.
As the title of this chapter already suggests, exploring structural resistance to gender equity employment policy in organizations that are as complex as public educational systems requires moving beyond structuralism, which has informed traditional organizational literature, to poststructuralism that centres its analysis in discourse (Usher & Edwards, 1994, pp. 17-19). That is, if educational organizations are understood to be webs of asymmetrical relations of power constituted by language, they can no longer be seen as enduring, fixed, rational, and objective but are instead contextual, contingent, ambiguous, and subjective. As Calás and Smircich (1992) write, poststructuralism points to the ways in which "subjects/individuals" are constructed through matrices of relationships between institutions and discourses. "The real human experience" becomes somewhat determined by historical, institutional arrangements and constantly reproduced by the linguistic forms that sustain them. (p. 226)

In this chapter, I will take up Greenfield’s challenge to map asymmetries of meaning by using the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 3 to trace the matrices of discourse around gender, and in particular, gender equity employment policy in the three educational organizations in this study. In doing so, I will be exploring the "real human experience" of Marg, Linda, and Kate as they en/counter resistance to their work within the enablements and constraints of the particular historical/institutional arrangements of each organization.

**Resisting Organizations**

Chapter 4 explored the ideological resistances within and to gender equity employment policy. While such policy offers a location for resisting gendered inequities in educational employment opportunities in Ontario, it also provides a focus for structural resistance to its goals in organizations. As a result, ideological resistance becomes increasingly evident in the practices of educational organizations as policy becomes more prescriptive in achieving its goals for greater gender equity in employment practices.
Zillah Eisenstein (1981) argues that this is hardly surprising since “equal rights feminism unmasksthe patriarchal underpinnings of the liberal democratic state” (cited in Witz & Savage, 1992, p. 39). As policy in Ontario sought to remediate gendered relations in the workplace in educational organizations from the mid-80s to the mid-90s, vestiges of a normative consciousness, informed by a traditional liberal fraternal-patriarchal ideology, continued to cling stubbornly to the actions of decision-makers in educational organizations. However, even though a normative consciousness is currently finding full expression in the withdrawal of any gender equity employment policy at the provincial level by Mike Harris’s neo-liberal/neo-conservative government, advocates continue to find ways to keep the discourse of equity alive.

**Institutionalized Resistance: A Conserving Discourse**

A normative consciousness leads to a conserving impulse which prompts those with decision-making power to act, coercively if necessary, in order to maintain the status quo. It is important to note that even though coercion may take quite benign forms, it is coercion nonetheless: that is, objectifying the “other” as a means for achieving one’s goals or using the “other” as an object in the field of one’s experience. Foucault (1980) points out, for example, that modern bureaucracies, with their increasingly sophisticated technologies of surveillance, have disciplined the less powerful more effectively and efficiently than the lash ever could in pre-modern societies, because modern rules, texts, and symbols that reify citizens into ciphers promote self-surveillance. Yet those very technologies have been used by liberal feminists as vehicles to move power relations based on the normative consciousness of decision-makers to a prescriptive policy stance. For example, P/PM 111 was a direct result of active resistance from the FWTAO which used statistical data as a powerful advocacy tool to lobby for policy to remediate the imbalance in representation between men’s and women’s roles in educational organizations.
Statistical evidence tied to policy which mandated accountability measures was a potential ally for promoting gender equity inside organizations as well. Marg described an incident where the power of numbers became evident to her.

We had a reporting period and that reporting period we didn’t do very well [promoting women to PARs], but very recently, in fact, a number of women had been promoted. So I had to do this interim report that caught up these additional women and made the stats look better, and then the next year we went back to our usual reporting. But it did bring home to me that . . . bringing light to bear on things like that has an impact.

However, the measure of that impact is related to the congruency between the levels of consciousness of policy makers who pass provincial equity legislation with the intent to remediate gender inequities and decision-makers within organizations who implement it at the local level.

For example, Marg’s educational organization, which has a long history of supporting gender equity policy at every level of the organization, including the trustees, was highly successful in increasing the number of women in administration both in schools and senior board positions. However, Kate’s organization, described by her Director of Education as “probably a little more conservative group, traditional, in certain respects” at all levels of the organization, particularly the trustees, although moderately successful in changing levels of female representation in school administration, was never successful in shifting its senior administration which remained entirely male right up until amalgamation with three other boards. Although the board had an action plan to encourage greater female participation at all levels of the organization in compliance with P/PM 111 which Kate was supposed to implement, she adds, there was never really the big thrust. I didn’t have the Director or my immediate supervisor who would come right out and say, are we making any progress here? It was more or less, well we got two hired into VPships this year and isn't that good and now we're that much closer to meeting our objectives.
The inaction that Kate describes fits Carol Agócs’ (1997) description of institutionalized resistance which “occurs through the exercise of power of organizational decision makers to bring about the consequences they desire,” (p. 4) or, as Perrow says, “shapes the world as they wish it to be.” If their consciousness of gender equity is shaped by unproblematized gender norms, then reform of those norms will be resisted. Agócs (1997) adds that the power of decision makers is embedded in and legitimated by the signifying systems of hierarchical bureaucracies “through which social control and compliance with that control are institutionalized within the organization (Pfeffer, 1981, pp. 5-6; Gamson, 1968)” (p. 5). A post-structural reading of Pfeffer and Gamson, however, would suggest that while hierarchical practices are held in place by a normative discourse, they can also be dislodged by resistant discourses. Yet, as Kate’s experience demonstrates, institutionalized resistance to organizational change with regard to gender equity follows a “pattern of organizational behaviour that decision makers in organizations employ to actively deny, reject, refuse to implement, repress, or even dismantle change proposals and initiatives” (Agócs, 1997, p. 2). Even when government policy has brought a prescriptive consciousness of gender equity to its policymaking, the patterns of fraternal-patriarchal organizational behaviour frequently resist remediation. Instead, the normative consciousness that often continues to inform the behaviour of decision-makers as they attempt to conserve the status quo has proven to be remarkably resistant to disruption.

Not surprisingly, then, the efficacy of equity workers to achieve their goals depends in many ways on their familiarity with and influence within their organization as well as coalitions with outside groups which can exert political pressure for change. Agócs (1997) contends that

the power of advocates for change arises from their expertise regarding the change issue, their knowledge of the organization, their personal and collective influence and political skills, their ability to mobilize support for their position within and outside the organization, their commitment and perseverance, and their personal courage. (p. 5)
If her claim is true, then, in the context of my study, it follows that the three educational organizations I have researched will act to limit advocates' access to power to the degree that they resist organizational change around gender equity issues. I believe that the data which I explore next supports both Agócs' analysis and my corollary claim.

Situating Gender Equity Within a Contested Discursive Space

As I argue in Chapter 2, the discourse of gender equity is an uncomfortable fit in educational organizations. Eisenstein's (1996) title for her book about Australian femocrats, Inside Agitators, captures perfectly the essence of the ambiguous, often uncomfortable, and highly vulnerable space which each equity worker I interviewed occupied in her organization. As Marg commented, "we are the enemy within, I think, in terms of the way a lot of people would regard us."

Marg: I mean, there are managers who feel we're here to serve them and we certainly are here to serve them but we're not here to cover up their mistakes. I mean, if something has not been properly handled, not been paid attention to, we may find ourselves critical of management. So people will then say - because you're not going to get sophisticated managers saying, "They're here to make us look good." - but they'll say things like, "The equal opportunities office needs to be a little more integrated into the system." You know, the words are different, but in my mind that means that we're supposed to go along and play ball . . . and basically we're management people so we should go along and play ball with management even though management may not be dealing adequately with the problem. So, you know, you can sort of see that being a constant in this job.

The ideological incongruity which often exists between equity workers and the organizations in which they work is evident in the history of gender equity policy and practices in the three organizations I studied. Of the three boards, only Board A had gender equity employment policy and an equity advocate hired before provincial policy encouraged boards of education to do both and provided incentive funding. Therefore,
only Board A had demonstrable evidence of its ideological commitment to providing gender equity in its formal statements about pedagogical and employment practices. Neither Board B or C chose to act on gender equity as an organization until policy required them to gather employment data differentiated by sex and provided incentive funding to cover the costs of doing so. Of course, ideological positions change as the discourses which hold them in place are contested, but at least initially, neither Board B or C demonstrated anything other than a normative consciousness towards gender equity in their organizational policies or practices.

A Matter of Priorities

The intertwining of ideological and structural resistance was clearly demonstrated in the narratives of Kate, Linda, and Marg as they described their boards’ responses to policy changes around gender equity employment policy. In most cases, boards who complied with P/PM 92 hired a person to compile statistics and assist in developing gender equity policy. However, even when a person was hired, their effectiveness was often limited by their ambiguous and tenuous placement within organizational structures. All the boards in this study first hired a seconded teacher to fulfill the voluntary requirements of P/PM 92 which was followed by a more prescriptive P/PM 111.

Even before the province required board-level gender equity employment policy, however, Board A realized that accomplishing gender-fair employment practices was far more complex than statistical analysis. As a result, they split the work of gender equity between curriculum and employment issues with each office providing policy assistance and advocacy as well as the practical strategies to effect structural change. Eventually, the board anticipated Bill 79 and provided full-time equity advocates for visible minorities, women, aboriginal peoples, and the disabled as well as an administrative office for statistical analysis and pay equity. Throughout this process, Marg emphasized that administrators at all levels of the organization understood and most supported systemic change, especially around gender equity issues. She comments,
Our associate director is extremely committed to women's issues in terms of her own career here, her public positions, I mean, she's extremely supportive. Our senior superintendent of human resources is another person that I've known for years . . . both of them were on the Status of Women Committee. I mean, they, like myself, were employees who saw inequities for women and wanted to do something about it . . . not just get a job for themselves, but try and make systemic changes. I could name . . . [a former female director] was very supportive when she was Director, and I think [the Director prior to amalgamation] is as well. Yet, despite support at every level of Board A, all forms of equity have become very vulnerable because of provincial policy mandating board amalgamation and a rapidly retiring cohort of senior administration who have been consciously committed to equity issues for many years.\(^4\) Marg explains that the senior administration of Board A tends to be so relatively supportive because they were all hired, promoted, had their careers advanced in a period of . . . the same period that I'm kind of talking about [which is a period of public advocacy for equity in employment practices]. And a lot of them were activists and still are. Like, maybe it comes out in a different way, but we're committed to seeing change around questions of racism, homophobia, all these things that we're concerned about.

However, even when there is demonstrable ideological congruity between the formal policies and structures of an organization and the work of the equity worker, the discourse of equity is still vulnerable as it is challenged by outside social forces. The discourse of equity which has prevailed in Board A, and is reflected in its organizational structures, despite sporadic resistance from trustees, is dissipating with the flood of baby-boomer retirements and being diluted by amalgamation with boards who have not demonstrated on-going ideological commitment to equity issues. In fact, most of the boards with whom Board A amalgamated relocated or terminated their gender equity employment workers immediately following the passage of Bill 8.
In addition, amalgamation spread Board A’s tax-rich funding base over several boards who already had fewer tax resources at the same time that the provincial government was making dramatic budget cuts in education and centralizing funding mechanisms. Boards with whom Board A amalgamated had already picked up on the discourse of fiscal restraint, which was the mantra of the Harris Conservatives in their first term of office, and used it along with the repeal of all gender equity employment policy to justify cuts in equity programs and personnel. Their response was not unusual since most other boards across the province did the same thing. For example, the two senior human relations administrators in Board C whom I interviewed, commenting on the closing of the gender equity position in their board, remarked:

Administrator A (female): I think when the legislation was pulled to do specifically with employment equity, and in consideration of our economic times, I think it was purely an economic decision. There wasn’t any compelling reason in that the legislation wasn’t requiring us to do equity “stuff” anymore and that position disappeared.

Administrator B (male): But, also, related to that is the perception that we were doing a reasonably good job in terms of gender equity anyway so there wasn’t a compelling need there regardless of the cost consideration. Whereas, in terms of the anti-racist work, we still have a way to go and it’s an ongoing issue. So a combination, I think, of dollars and politics if you want to call it that. . .

Their remarks point to themes that I will pick up later in this chapter: constructing gender equity employment policy as “no problem”, and the positioning of gender and race as competing equities. Primarily, however, administrators who saw the gains being made by women into PARs as “proof” that gender equity was a non-issue, or were ideologically opposed to gender equity employment policy, or both, pointed to the dismantling of gender equity programs as an “inevitable” consequence of fiscal restraints in public
budget discussions. The hierarchy of discourses was clear – “it’s the economy, stupid” triumphed over equity for women in educational organizations.

However, the hegemony of neo-liberalism can be displaced at the local level by what Foucault calls “the insurrection of subjugated knowledges” (1980, p. 81). Even when a normative consciousness prevails. On one occasion, I was at the Board B offices collecting data from public documents when Kate came into my office to describe an encounter she had just had with her Director. He was about to send out a newsletter to the community informing them how the board was dealing with stiff budget cuts and had listed equity programs along with other much more expensive programs which had been cut. However, Kate did some quick calculations and informed the Director that the “costs” of the equity programs were so small in relation to the entire budget that it was misleading to the public to infer that the “savings” gained by ending equity programs were on a par with other much more expensive programs which were also being cut. To his credit, the Director was quick to understand that this “news” item might have been taken up by anti-equity trustees, staff, and community members as official justification for their on-going resistance and so he withdrew equity from the list of cost-cutting measures. This incident is instructive in pointing to the ways in which prejudgements at various levels of governance affect policy implementation by justifying program priorities – “who gets what, when, and how” – according to the taken-for-granted assumptions of those who have the power to make decisions in organizations. It also suggests, as Agócs (1997) argues, that doing equity work requires being knowledgeable and having the courage to resist institutional resistance at any point within the hierarchy, and that doing so has the potential to transform some practices. However, it is also important to note that while this was one small victory, the equity programs were indeed cut and Kate’s equity responsibilities formally ended.
Finding a Place for Gender Equity

Although the place that gender equity has in the consciousness of senior administrators is significant in the efficacy of their work, Linda, Marg, and Kate also made it clear that the place that they occupied in the hierarchical structures of their organization was influential as well. Linda was seconded to her work as equity facilitator in Board C following her term as president of her local FWTAO chapter. Both her position in FWTAO and her previous long-time involvement as a teacher with her board provided legitimacy for her role as an advocate for gender equity and ensured that she knew very well those whose gendered practices she was to help change in her new work. Linda comments,

I think that's one of the advantages of being an insider coming into this position. I think the experience of others who have been outsiders to the board – outside of education to some degree – coming to this position . . . I mean, to this day, they have people who won't talk to them and who never will because of what they represented.

Linda’s experience suggests that an insider who is respected as an educator as well as an advocate within an educational organization’s structures may be able to speak about gender equity and know how to evade at least some of the direct personal backlash that her predecessors had experienced. However, if she is temporarily seconded and placed outside the formal lines of organizational authority, it is unclear whether an equity worker’s message is being heard in a transformative way or merely tolerated because of her reputation as a competent peer. Thus, while a secondment has access to knowledge about the organization which is essential to effect change around equity issues, Kate’s board, Board B, came to believe quite quickly that temporary secondments do not provide the kind of long-term stability that an equity position requires in order to create systemic change.

Kate was the first non-secondment to the position of equity co-ordinator in Board B and the first whose professional background was in human resources rather than
education, but it was apparent from the beginning that the board had no clear idea of what the work of "equity co-ordinator" should be.

Kate: When I joined the board, I was told that this job would become a significant job within the personnel department before long but that I would probably make the job my own and determine what my role was...which should have been my first hint that they really don't know what to do with an equity co-ordinator in this board of education. As it turned out, I never really had any overly clear direction from my immediate supervisor about what my role was.

Linda, too, felt that an overly narrow conception of her responsibilities as an "employment equity facilitator"—i.e., implementor of gender equity employment policy—linked with an unclear notion within the organization of what an equity worker should do made her position ambiguous and highly vulnerable to changes in provincial policy.

Linda: [My superintendent] was always there to support me... But I still believe that that very narrow view of what I should be doing [made my job more vulnerable when Bill 8 was passed]....and I said to you that I had to be a self starter... I don't mind being a self starter, but I also felt...I felt because I was left so much on my own, that that also indicated a level of support for the whole thing.

In contrast, Marg reported more structural support for her work from her board than either Kate or Linda. Marg's organization was openly supportive, had clear expectations, and conducted regular reviews to ensure that the goals for each equity office were being accomplished and were still appropriate. Yet these reviews also revealed that the discourse of equity was not an entirely comfortable fit within the overarching goals of a public education system. When I asked Marg about the significant number of reviews her office had undergone, she revealed that they had been reviewed more often than most other departments in the system and she adds,

But I still think when they continue to look at certain areas a lot, it's a sign that we're not really a neat fit. People are wondering...underneath it all there has to be the question, "Do we really need that?" I've never seen a school review— I mean, you don't review and ask whether a classroom teacher is necessary or not. But they
do when they ask, "Do we need an equal opportunity office, and if so, why and what?"

Reworking Organizational Boundaries

Not fitting neatly within the usual organizational structures might have the advantage of allowing equity workers to slip through the constraints of hierarchical lines of authority. In some ways this was true for both Kate and Marg in that they had direct access to the Director rather than having to go through their direct supervisor to deal with politically sensitive equity issues. In fact, Linda’s office and the ethno-cultural facilitator’s was situated within the Director’s suite of offices as a symbolic show of support for equity issues in Board C. Ironically, Linda was the only participant in this study who never once mentioned having direct conversations or contact with her Director, although she did feel that her previous Director, a woman, was supportive of gender equity in general. Although Linda’s physical location could be seen as a genuine effort to counter resistance to equity initiatives within schools and the community, it had the effect of increasing structural resistance to her work within the board’s offices.

Linda: Okay, I was physically placed in a position that I thought was very much a political move. I mean, this is a big building and I was placed, not with all of the other facilitators (like the French facilitator, and the English...the Music, all those other facilitators) in the team area on the third floor. I was placed on the first floor in the Director’s area. So right underneath where it says Director of Education, there is employment equity and ethno-cultural equity. And that was political, political, political. We are allied with equity and we are a non-racist board and it says so right down there on the first floor under the Director’s name. I mean, it was no accident that I ended up in the Director’s area. By the way, and this is an interesting point, far away from my facilitator colleagues who were planning programs for teachers and students, which is where I should have been to push the gender issues in the schools. I should have been right there with all those other forty facilitators who were working on curriculum and working directly with
teachers. And quite often, unless I reminded them and said, hey guys, I'm down here and if you're doing something, remember me because I can help you with it. I would be excluded. Not on purpose, but just because...and the superintendent didn't see this... So, there you have me and the ethno-cultural equity facilitator, and we were side by side in the Director's area, along with the communications manager and the Director's secretary and all these people who were very interesting to work with but they weren't doing any...they weren't doing the kind of work that we needed to be involved in.

One thing Linda's physical position at the board office building made clear was that she provided a discursive buffer for the administration as gender equity policy became an increasingly contested issue between changing government policies, schools, and the community. As Eisenstein comments about femocrats who were positioned in the same way in the Australian government bureaucracy, "They were used by other bureaucrats as a kind of legitimating sign: their presence signified that the interests of women were being considered" (1996, p. 138). However, legitimating signs are read in different ways, depending on the position of the viewer, so while some would see the official presence of advocates for women as supportive of women's interests, others could read their position as one which absorbed the blame from supporters and critics of how women's interests were being considered by the organization. Kate took up both positions when she commented,

I have to tell you that the more I'm at the board, the more [one of my professor's] analysis of what an equity co-ordinator is about makes a lot of sense...and that is, a buffer between the people in the system who are seeking equity and the administration. People barraging senior administrators with tales and concerns... about equity is likely to have more of an effect than if they come to me. Then [administrators] may come to me and say, well, so and so is saying that this is an issue. What do you think we should do about it?
Her remarks make clear the discursive ambiguity of her position since she could provide advice for strategizing change to equity advocates but did not have enough power in the organization to effect change herself.

Not only did Boards B and C not have a clearly articulated view of what an equity worker’s role should be, but reporting relationships in all three boards were somewhat ambiguous as well. This was a theme that centred around two questions: in which department should equity workers be placed and to whom should equity workers have to answer? Marg offers her opinion.

Marg: Well, one of the things that we have resisted has been to put us into human resources. I mean, an ongoing question in all of these reviews that have been done of the office is the issue of where should we be administratively placed?... and do we stay where we are, which is to report to the Director, or do we go to human resources? Pay equity was done in human resources, employment equity has been done as human resources, and there has been this real kind of tendency to want to position us as a human resources service. The problem there would be that we would lose the advocacy. I mean, we can actually get in to see the Director or the Associate Director right away. We do have access. We also can deal... although there is a culture in this board that you really shouldn't deal with the trustees directly when you're not at the top of the organization. But still, there is within this office quite a tradition because we staff [several employment related] board committees on a regular basis, so we do have access to the politicians. And if we were working in the human resources division, I think it would be much much harder for us to do the advocacy. I can actually phone up the Associate Director, and say, "We have a crisis here in a school and we're not getting the results that we figure we have to get," and get them to listen, you know. And they respond. They happen to be good people too, and that helps, but we can legitimately call and we're there as advisors to the senior administrators and we're a part of the Director's office establishment... And I think it means that the Board considers equity to be important enough that it should be a part of the Director's
establishment. And it allows us that kind of access, so I think that says something in and of itself.

It is instructive to contrast Linda's experience of being seen to have direct contact with the Director's sphere of influence and Marg's ability to advocate directly on behalf of equity initiatives with the expectation that the Director would act. Kate, on the other hand, was caught between her need to report directly to a generally supportive Director in order to resolve sensitive equity dilemmas and an unpredictable supervisory relationship with her Superintendent who was very concerned about ensuring that he was not implicated by information provided to the Director. In one case, for example, a superintendent made some offensive sexist remarks at his retirement dinner.

Kate: I had people come up to me after the dinner and say that they thought he was totally out of line. I had a couple of schools calling me the next week and saying the same thing. I went to the Director with this and apparently he reamed him out about it. But the outcome of that was the superintendent who retired, the superintendent of academic affairs, and my own boss -- well, not so much my own boss because he sort of had to tread carefully there -- were quite mad that I should do that. I had no right. So, a few months later at the Christmas thing, the retired superintendent got up and made a few gestures and comments that were simply inappropriate. He did a pelvic thrust at one point in his little presentation and then made some comment with sexual innuendoes to one of the women in the audience. And I sort of . . . you know, I wasn't happy about it, but the following week or so I said to [the Director] that I guess [the retiring superintendent] didn't pay attention to what you spoke to him about last year. The next thing I know, I'm being called into the office by my boss and that probably was the most hurtful conversation I've ever had there. You know, I was out of line for making that comment . . . was I speaking only for myself or was I acting for other people because if I was speaking only for myself . . . the message was that no one else there was defending me . . . I mean, it was just a really hostile, humiliating kind of lecture from my boss.
Clearly, while having direct access to the top of the administrative hierarchy is important to equity workers for effecting change, ultimately the efficacy of that organizational relationship is commensurate with the collective level of consciousness about gender equity in their particular educational organization. In Kate’s case, because a normative consciousness prevails at all levels of the educational system, including the trustees, decision-makers within the organization were able to resist the power which was attached to the position of Director, even when he supported transformation of practice. Therefore, her access to the Director as an equity advocate did not protect her from the coercive response of her immediate supervisor. Linda’s board, on the other hand, is characterized by a normative consciousness politically and a prescriptive consciousness administratively. The result is a veneer of support for increasing awareness about gender equity from the Director which satisfied those who wished to see change in employment and pedagogical practices. However, when gender equity became more politically challenging because of resistance to Bill 79, support for Linda’s position quickly collapsed.

All of the boards struggled with where to place their equity workers – on the program or personnel side of the organization – because they had not completely resolved the question of what an equity worker was supposed to do. Board A resolved the issue by setting up an equity program in each area which was answerable directly to the Director, but most boards in Ontario, including Boards B and C, placed employment equity on the personnel side of the organization. Both Kate and Linda were supervised by the superintendent whose primary responsibility was human resources and yet neither felt entirely comfortable there.

Kate: I’m part of the personnel department but I’ve never ever been a team player there. Not because I don’t want to be. It’s just because anything else that goes on is seen to have nothing to do with my job. I’m not informed about whatever’s going on and much of it doesn’t have a whole lot of bearing on my day to day work but, in terms of feeling a part of the larger system, it’s very important. And that has
never happened and it's not even happening now that I'm a so-called full-fledged member of the personnel department.

Both Kate and Linda were keenly aware that neither the program nor the personnel side, by itself, offered them the opportunity to work on what Cynthia Cockburn (1991) calls "long agenda" changes: i.e., moving beyond simply admitting women to PARs in educational organizations to undoing the patriarchal practices which hold gender inequity in place. Therefore, being aligned too tightly with personnel meant not having ready access to resources for creating awareness about gender equity in ways that would permeate a school's culture in both pedagogical and personnel practices. On the other hand, while program consultants enjoyed high prestige in all of the educational organizations in this study, they had no formal influence on employment practices. Thus, a gender equity advocate working in the program department would not have access to the formal organizational structures which are linked to employment practices that disadvantage females. An additional drawback to being too tightly aligned with personnel was raised by Marg who pointed out that since unions negotiated salary and working conditions with board representatives from personnel, it would be difficult to build alliances with those unions which were sympathetic to gender equity employment initiatives.⁵

All three women struggled in varying degrees with being seen as somewhat peripheral to either department's central goals, which limited their opportunities to effect substantive change through the usual networks of communication. For example, much of the work that all three women did in raising awareness about various issues in employment equity took place in schools among educators. However, principals often saw workshops on improving awareness about gender equity in the workplace or information sessions about employment equity legislation conducted by the equity worker as disruptive to the gender order in their school and only marginally important to either their managerial or instructional responsibilities, so they simply ignored, diverted or actively prevented notices and brochures from reaching their staff.
Kate: Often there were memos to go out or events to be held and that kind of thing and there were various schools . . . I would send something out from my office and in some schools I don't know where it went. But I would get calls saying, "If I'd ever known this workshop was going to be held . . .," and that sort of thing happened all the time. And it was particularly bad in secondary schools.

Her observations are troubling, but understandable, since statistics gathered by the Ministry prior to Bill 8 reveal that employment practices in secondary schools have proven to be far more resistant to gender equity reform than elementary schools.

A strategy which all of the women in this study used to circumvent traditional networks and build coalitions in schools and with employment groups was to set up a network of equity representatives. Although the commitment of these representatives was somewhat uneven, Linda, Kate, and Marg felt that their ability to encourage grassroots support was essential to broadening the impact of their work. Linda, for example, comments:

I'm not sure how successful I was, but I think that you have to get the word out to the grass roots. So I think the strategy of having school representatives – I think I mentioned that we had an equity rep at every school – and hopefully these were people that knew what they were doing and didn't just sign up for a job that they thought wouldn't involve too many meetings.

All three women noted that it was difficult to maintain the on-going involvement of the equity committee, and that equity representatives seldom initiated awareness of or action related to issues of concern. Instead, Kate and Linda, in particular, initiated the entire agenda for the meetings, and tried to educate the participants despite their sporadic attendance.

Linda: It was an interesting committee. I mean, when it has something to do, to meet, to work with, it was a good committee. But oftentimes the meetings were . . . you know, I was responsible for putting the agenda together and quite often it was a struggle. You know, oh boy, what am I going to talk about this month? Well, sometimes I would get a video and that would prompt discussion, but there
was always this uneasy feeling on my part, and I know this to be true. that what we talked about never got beyond the group sitting around the table to the others in the employee groups.

Kate had a similar experience with her committee and offered an interesting theory about their disinterest which mirrors her experience of institutionalized resistance.

Kate: But there was that resistance. Resistance among employment equity committee members . . . people who just didn't show up to meetings frequently enough that you lost the momentum.

JW: So would they have been sort of forced onto this committee and then just resisted after the fact?

Kate: No, I think what happened and maybe this is it, but I can't say with certainty, maybe they came in thinking something was going to happen and then after some years nothing really happened so they just lost interest.

In contrast, the working committee which was mandated by Bill 79 met during business hours to discuss policy implementation issues and was taken more seriously than other equity committees by participants from the various worker and community groups. Part of the reason seemed to be tied to the provision of release time to do this work and the other was that the policy provided a specific focus for the work to be done to achieve an equitable workplace. Furthermore, their efforts were not isolated. Instead, representatives of boards across the province met regularly to share information, ideas, and concerns. With regard to resistance to gender equity, although it is difficult to verify, Bill 79's extension of employment equity to four identified groups disrupted the singular focus on gender equity for women that had characterized previous policy such as P/PM 111 and, therefore, diffused, but certainly did not eliminate, resistance to it. I will take up this theme later in this chapter as I consider the particular resistance en countered by policy focussed on female-only employment equity.
Muting Resistance

Because Linda and Kate's role and place within their board's organizational structures were unclear, and because they experienced substantial resistance to their work as advocates for gender equitable employment practices at various levels of their board's political and administrative hierarchies, they felt personally and professionally vulnerable. The result was a form of self-censoring, despite a relatively supportive administration, in an attempt not to step outside acceptable discursive boundaries.

Linda: You can only do so much on your own initiative in an organization this size. And I'm not a, umm – I don't necessarily see this as a fault – but I'm not a super pushy person. I'm not a soapbox type. I will speak. I will give workshops. I will go out and I will lobby. But, to a point... I mean, I know that there are people who may be possibly in that position who could have done more in terms of keeping it prominent, but whether it would have helped in the long run or whether it would have just ticked more people off... you have to strike the balance. Because, if you're perceived as being a pushy woman trying to push the gender issues again... so you have to be sensitive to the best way to deal with people.

As an insider to her organization, Linda was very aware of where the lines were drawn both around gender equity and women's actions and it was a largely unspoken expectation that she would not cross those boundaries in her work. As a result she revealed that she was very comfortable doing awareness work through workshops and so on but much less comfortable doing advocacy work in which she held administrators accountable for acting on their awareness.

Kate, on the other hand, was used to the relative independence of a senior management position in private business and found it very difficult to know where the boundaries were when she joined her board. After several unpleasant encounters over the years with her superintendent, however, she learned how far she could push an issue and when she should retreat. For example, when she was rewriting the sexual harassment policy, she suggested that a peer review panel of four should be made up of at least two women. Her superintendent objected to this suggestion on the grounds that it could mean
that more than two women might be on the panel which he felt would be discriminatory to men. Kate pointed out that women represented more than fifty percent of the staff in schools and were most often victims of harassment, but he strongly opposed her arguments. Kate eventually abandoned the fight because his continued resistance had worn down her commitment to counter-resistance.

Kate: To be honest, the extent to which I may have argued in the first two years in the job, I know there's no point in arguing that going into my sixth year on the job because I know it won't happen and it will just get his defences up and hackles up about me and he'll probably end up giving me the silent treatment some time if I should challenge him on that issue.

Some gendered norms that are woven throughout organizational structures are at the heart of the self-censoring which all three women employed to some degree. First, role expectations for women in the public sphere restrict many behaviours that are considered acceptable for men when their position is challenged such as expressing overt anger, dominating “air space” during discussions, and challenging authority. Instead women tend to respond to conflict by withdrawing, deflecting hostility with humour, or acting as mediator while subordinating their interests. Second, women and men tend to, and are expected to, exercise power in different ways. All three women preferred a “power with” model of interaction when there was a difference of opinion while their male supervisors often exhibited a “power over” form of authority when they wanted to ensure that their position prevailed (Russell, 1995; Fennell, 1995). Third, access to support for their work, when it was contested, was ambiguous. Both Linda and Kate enjoyed symbolic support for the work they were hired to do, however, when they needed substantive support from their superintendent and/or Director to continue doing their work, it was usually not available. Thus, for either woman to respond to anger with anger or assume a position of power which had not been accorded to them within the board’s hierarchy was certainly foolhardy, especially since they were isolated from mainstream organizational structures and networks of support.
Constructing Gender Equity as a Non-Issue

In the focus group conducted after all of the interviews had been transcribed and analysed for themes, I asked the participants to describe how the concept of gender equity had changed during their organizational tenure. Kate’s comments echoed the sentiments of all three women in the aftermath of Bill 8, and the challenges following Bill 160.

Kate: I guess if I had to talk about the differences in terms of perception about gender equity, it’s just that now it’s gone. It’s gone from the horizon and that’s really troubling to me. Some things have changed and I think in the backs of some people’s minds they do know that gender equity needs to be attended to and by rights should be attended to. But it just doesn’t have the status that it used to have and it’s just gone. It’s gone.

All three women perceived that the lack of a structural representation of equity in their organization not only signified its discursive absence symbolically but practically as well. However, interviews with administrators at each board revealed that, because the goal of gender equity employment policy had been defined narrowly as simply achieving greater numerical representation for women in PARs, they viewed gender equity as a non-issue since current statistics suggest that its numerical goals have been accomplished at some levels of the administrative hierarchy and improved at others. For example, according to 1998 statistics which I obtained from the Ministry of Education and Training in Ontario, women hold more than 50% of vice-principalships and just under 50% of principalships overall, although the percentages are significantly higher at the elementary and lower at the secondary level. Numbers are up at almost every other level as well.6

These changes have led to the perception that a formal mechanism to ensure the implementation of employment equity policy is unnecessary. As a senior male administrator from Board A noted,

Our previous Director – and it’s just this past year that we’ve had the current Director – was female and we’ve had increasing numbers of women move into supervisory officer roles, more women administrators and so on, so a number of leadership positions within the board are now occupied by women. And that, I
think, perhaps makes the issues more prominent without – and this is going to sound strange – being obvious about it. They’re just there.

Conversations that I have had with the equity workers in this study and many teachers and administrators in various boards in Ontario strongly suggest that he is not alone in believing that gender equity has been largely accomplished and anything that still needs to be done will be, and should be, achieved by osmosis because women “are just there.”

When success in implementing gender equity employment policy is equated by many senior administrators with being seen to improve the percentage representation of women in PARs and that goal is largely achieved, the “problem” of gender equity is perceived to have been “solved”. In other words, a short agenda of reform informed by a prescriptive consciousness, means that the boards’ structures maintain control over women’s access to bureaucratic resources even while remediating women’s “deficits” in order to offer more equitable employment opportunities. The possibility of achieving long agenda reform means that a truly transformative discursive space would offer room for gender equity workers not only to speak to women’s diverse and complex concerns but also to have those concerns truly heard in the sense that decision makers would be open to transforming patriarchal relations of power. Cynthia Cockburn (1991), for example, found a clear difference in the length of the employment equity reform agenda intended by the top management and sought by equity officers in the companies she studied in England. Like the boards in this study, after several years and despite each company’s avowed commitment to employment equity reform, a “basically conservative management retain[ed] its hold” (p. 44) to one degree or another and there was little substantive change in the patriarchal relations of power, although there were more women in top level positions. Like Cockburn, I found that the equity workers in this study who were also working to transform the patriarchal relations that characterized not only their boards but also the communities they served, were in most cases resisted by senior administrators who opposed substantive change.
During the focus group, for example, Marg listed the disproportionate effect of cutting programs such as day care, English as a Second Language, and adult education on women and added,

I agree with Kate that gender equity has become invisible. We’ve still got a lot of women principals out there, and even with the changes and reorganization, we’ve still got women superintendents in fairly significant numbers, we do have a woman Director... but it’s fragile. Those gains are fragile. They can be blown away... So coupled with this attack on women in other parts of the organization, I think our gains are so fragile. So when people start to think that the war’s been won...

As all three women observed, despite their boards’ official rhetoric of gender equity, and the widely held perception that “the war had been won”, men acted to protect the interests of other men. For example, Marg gave an example of the ways internal-patriarchal relations of power were rumoured to have been enacted in order to circumvent gender equity policy in Board A during the pay freeze imposed by the NDP’s social contract legislation.

Some of the stuff that hasn’t been investigated that gets rumoured around is that during the social contract era the only way around the freezes in terms of money was to bring in some responsibility. You know, there were some back door ways of doing it. But the kind of rumour that I was hearing was that those kinds of pay increases were going to men and almost no women throughout the school boards [with whom we eventually amalgamated] — not just [my board]. I was told this by someone who goes to meetings [with key decision makers for all of the boards] so it’s more than just phoney stuff that people whine about... She said that across the boards, the number of men receiving these responsibility allowances was extremely high and the women who received them might be two or three compared to a couple of dozen men. So there’s a lot of this kind of hidden inequity stuff going on.
Changing inequitable practices requires more than having more women around. As Blackmore (1999b) points out, "women can be equally complicit in perpetuating masculinist discourses" (p. 209). Furthermore, as chapter 2 points out, feminist positions around issues of equity policy, in particular, and relations between women and the state, in general, are complex and sometimes not supportive of one another. For example, Cornell (1995) argues that when feminists working within organizations are constructed as "bad" feminists who are consorting with the enemy by "good" feminists who challenge bureaucratic practices,

we indeed reinvent the gender hierarchy. That form of moralising involves the separation, undertaken by feminists themselves, between a 'sensible' feminism committed to a reasonable program of reform, and the 'wild' feminism that seems to leave little of our most basic institutional practices unchallenged. (p. 83, cited in Blackmore, 1999b, p. 209)

Therefore, there needs to be a recognition of the multiple discourses which women bring to gender equity employment policy and provision of a conversational space in which feminists might examine their own repressive truth claims in ways which embrace both pragmatism and idealism.

Creating Duelling Equities

Another way in which the potential for gender equity employment policy to create change for women has been deflected is to include it as part of generic equity efforts which include issues of class, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, and so on. From an administrative perspective, such a position appears to be a more efficient use of resources. Even from a social justice perspective, there is merit in this position since, for example, visible minority women, and women seeking employment in untraditional areas such as caretaking have benefited least from gender equity employment policy in educational organizations. Therefore a strong case has been put forward to encourage equitable employment initiatives through less specifically directed policy. A senior human resources administrator for Board C, for example, commented,
But as far as I know, it’s not as though the board has really specifically set out to change things just to help women get these positions. I don’t think you could say we have this specific program or this specific policy. I mean, [Linda was] responsible for a lot of documenting how things are moving so that they can keep their eye on it, but from what I’ve heard, things are moving reasonably well. So I think the board is kind of continuing what they have been doing and, like I said, through more general means, trying to make sure that any remaining barriers are slowly removed so that, you know, it paves an even easier path for people.

In the case of Board A where there is an equity worker who will specifically advocate for women’s employment issues and enjoys considerable administrative support for doing so, a generic employment equity policy may be less dangerous to the interests of women, including minority and disabled women, however, the historical roots and lived experience of various forms of discrimination, while often inter-related, are not the same. Therefore, as Kate recognized, generic policies do not serve well the particular needs of any equity seeking group.

Kate: Initially when I came into the board there was some discussion about moving – and this was on the part of my superintendent and the director of education – about joining together the employment equity advisory committee and the anti-racism (well, at the time it wasn’t the anti-racism) . . . the race relations committee. I argued against that because I felt that the issues would be lost under one umbrella. . . . You have resistance at meetings with trustees where you will have trustees saying, I don't know why you have – and not every trustee by any means, but – I don't know why you have to have special programs for women. You should just treat her the same. And that's a . . . recurring theme. If you just treat people the same, everything will just fall into place. . . . or that women have come a long way and, you know, what's the big deal?

There are at least two discourses going on here which are difficult to untangle from one another in the discursive webs of organizational structures. First, there is the politics of difference in which groups are seen to be systemically discriminated against
based on their historically effected material, social, and political position of privilege, or lack thereof. Left wing politics has constructed differences as categories of disadvantage which are somewhat fluid but are systemically constructed and reconstructed as, to use Tilly's (1998) phrase, "durable inequalities." Those inequalities which have been given the most policy attention since the 1980s in Ontario are ethnocultural and gender differences. However, as a strongly individualistic ethos has gripped the political agenda of both the right and left, difference has been increasingly constructed across a wide range of individual differences that are seen as ahistorical, apolitical, and equally influential in shaping individual opportunities. As a result, neo-liberal/neo-conservative governments have taken up the issue of equity as one of individual "fairness". Blackmore (1999a), commenting on this phenomenon in Australia, writes,

[T]he notion of diversity conservative governments have promoted, contrary to the concept as it originated in the civil rights movement in the USA in the 1960s, does not rank gender, race, and class as first order differences, but merely as equivalent to other individual differences in a range of behaviours, attitudes and skills (Morrison, 1992, Bacchi 1997, Blackmore 1998). (p. 40)

Second, in Ontario, the political effects of a growing and increasingly ethnoculturally diverse population along with a legislative environment which protects individuals from discrimination through the province's Human Rights Code and the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms means that ethno-cultural equity cannot be completely ignored, even by right-wing governments. Gender equity, on the other hand, is more often viewed by educational organizations and the voting public as a non-issue because it is perceived to be one that has been "solved" and is, therefore, not as deserving of shrinking public education dollars. The choice is, as Harris would say, simply "common sense": race equity has become the dominant discourse. As a result, ethnocultural equity has remained the Minister's responsibility under s.8 of Ontario's Education Act and an active equity issue in all of the boards, amalgamated or not, in this study. At the same time, gender equity initiatives gained over twenty years of policymaking have been completely dismantled. As Marg observes about her board,
Marg: People acknowledge that racism is a problem, and I think we acknowledge that we're still, by and large, a white dominated group, and we have this problem, racism, and we're going to kind of put our minds to it. Somehow or other, . . . we'll get together and talk about it and figure out how we can solve it. Getting people to acknowledge that sort of thing around gender is, I have found, very hard to do . . . we have an equity studies centre, but in curriculum that's almost all anti-racist/multiculturalism. It's all really dealing with issues around race, ethnicity, culture, rather than gender. So, again, I may be proved wrong, but there is that sense that when it gets too. . . well, like with O.J. Simpson, you know, when you play the race and gender cards . . . the race card is the card that comes out.

Since the passage of Bill 8, equity advocates have been placed in the untenable position of directing their efforts towards one form of equity at the expense of the other while the public perception has grown that the government and its educational systems are attempting to channel public resources as efficiently as possible in resolving the remaining equity dilemma. Arguably, much of the public rationale for doing so has been fuelled by a racist public perception that student diversity is creating tensions in schools that are affecting the educational experience of all students in negative ways. For example, the sub-text of much of the current anti-violence rhetoric has focussed on cultural tensions in schools and one solution proffered has been to increase the diversity of the teaching staff. The Harris government has, therefore, had sound political rather than social justice reasons for retaining ethno-cultural equity policy because, as Blackmore (1999a) writes, "In times of greater political and economic volatility, policy is increasingly viewed as a solution to public media generated problems as much as seeking a solution for social or economic problems (Wallace, 1993)" (p. 43). However, while ethno-cultural employment equity has been constructed as having pedagogical merit and is therefore aligned with the central goals of schools, feminists — and by extension gender equity — have been constructed by many influential neo-conservative writers (e.g., Loney, 1998) as perpetual whiners whose claims of victim status for designated groups are responsible for equity policy which increases social division and is, therefore, liable for
many societal ills. Not surprisingly, gender equity has not only disappeared from the public policy agenda in educational organizations but actually regressed in influence, while ethno-cultural equity has remained as a legitimate discourse.

**Summary**

As I read what I have written and attempt to synthesize my discussion of post/structural resistance, I am struck once again by the disparity between earnest and self-congratulatory administrators who feel that they can be justifiably proud of their progress towards gender equity in employment practices, and the tapestry of discourses which weave a more complex picture in the lived experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg. As they do gender equity work in their particular educational organization, they expose both the ways in which they are attempting to change gendered structures as well as the ways their efforts are constrained by the very practices they are attempting to change. Sadly, institutionalized resistance is inevitable as long as organizations are characterized by fraternal-patriarchal relations of power. While policy initiatives may attempt to rework the levels of representation of males and females in organizational hierarchies and bureaucracies, unless the discourses which hold fraternal-patriarchal structures in place are reworked as well, educational organizations will only change symbolically, not substantively.

What has become clear to me, however, is that moving towards truly transformative policies and practices in educational organizations is a long, slow dance in the discursive spaces between individual and collective consciousness and organizational responses in policy and practice. As Cockburn notes, "Public sector organizations are in theory subject to transformation from above, below, and outside" (1991, p. 230). For example, Board B, while generally operating within a normative consciousness was moving towards a prescriptive consciousness as a result of provincial policy initiatives (above) and changing public perceptions about gender equity (outside). In addition, Kate reported on several individual decision makers who moved beyond a prescriptive
consciousness to an historically effected consciousness which elicited a transformative response in their gendered practices in their schools and in their expectations of board level policies and practices (below). However, much of the momentum at all three levels has been lost with the passage of Bill 8 and the ascendance of a neo-liberal economic agenda.

As the discursive space is shaped and reshaped by changing political ideologies and institutional structures, the ability of Kate, Linda, and Marg to reconstruct the narratives which hold gendered relations of power in place is enhanced or limited. At the present time, their place is either extremely limited or non-existent in the formal structures of their boards, but they have each continued to ally themselves with equity networks outside their organizations and any advocates within in order to claim some space for continuing to counter institutionalized resistance to gender equity employment policies. Positioning oneself at the nexus of competing discourses around gender equity is, however, a personally exhausting place to be and the experience of personal resistance to which I will turn in the next chapter is potentially the greatest challenge of all for gender equity workers.

Endnotes

1. Premier Harris announced a shuffle in the organization of the Ministry of Education following his recent election. The former Ministry of Education and Training is now split into the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities.

2. I am writing my first draft of this sentence on the morning after the provincial election in which Harris’ Conservative party was returned to office with a majority government for the second time.

3. The aboriginal advocate became more involved in curriculum development, so his employment related responsibilities were assumed by the race relations and women’s issues advocate. The needs of the disabled were a particular interest of the employment equity administrator in human resources so she assumed this responsibility as her other duties diminished with the passage of Bill 8.
4. Although I cannot cite my source without identifying the board, I will assure readers that a respected columnist for a large urban newspaper recently confirmed that equity programs which had existed for years were indeed being cut back or undergoing substantial changes which were undermining the board's long-term commitment to gender equity.

5. Of course, not all union locals were potential allies. In particular, male-dominated groups such as the caretakers' and carpenters' unions were blatantly opposed to gender equity reform.

6. Although it would be interesting to do a comparative statistical analysis over time of the gender representation at various levels of the hierarchy in the three boards in this study, two impediments to doing so have made such an analysis impossible. First, statistics which used to be gathered on a board-by-board basis by the Ministry of Education are no longer available. Second, the amalgamation of Boards A and B with several other boards makes the statistics, even if they were available, impossible to untangle and compare in any meaningful way.
CHAPTER SIX

En/Countering Personal Resistance

The personal is political. Feminist slogan of the 1960s

But they personalize it so much and that's what makes the job so hard. It's so personalized." Kate

Ideological resistance is en/countered in the consciousness of social actors who negotiate, construct, and reconstruct social regularities enacted in the policies and practices – the discursive structures – of educational organizations. Both ideological and structural resistance converge on the body and are expressed in the personal, intimate discursive spaces of public and private life. As the last chapter suggests, for example, the positioning of Kate, Linda, and Marg in their particular organizational structures shaped the ways they acted and were acted upon. That is, they experienced ideological and structural resistance as a deeply felt personal phenomenon. The personal, however, is shunned by the scientific metanarratives that mould modern organizational theory because it is subjective and, therefore, suspect, forbidden, emotional, and irrational.

Conversely, despite the fact that the words "individual" and "personal" are conceptually connected, the notion of an "individual" is one that is highly valued in liberal democratic ideology and objective organizational theory. Perhaps that is because an individual is conceived of as an active, individuated and rational social actor who thrives in the public realm. On the other hand, the personal is associated with an objectified and particular "other" whose actions are embedded in the non-rational and relational sphere of the private, the body, and emotions.

The former, which is associated with normative constructions of masculinity, has been the focus of dominant social theories while the latter, associated with normative femininity, the subjective, the emotional, and the body has been largely absent. This is not terribly surprising since the genealogy of knowledge about the social world has emerged out of the Enlightenment myth of rationality and the Cartesian split between body and mind. However, it is in the discursive terrain of the personal in organizations where the
fraudulence of this dichotomy is exposed. In the chapter which follows, I will turn to the role of the personal – the realm of private actions, emotions, the body – in organizations and explore the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by resistance in the lived experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg.

The Irrationality of Organizational Rationality

In organizational theory, modern bureaucracies are discursively constructed in opposition to the non-rational while binding themselves closely to the rationalization of human interactions through the technologies of patriarchal bureaucracies. Weber saw ideal bureaucratic forms as the “transformation of a moral order into a mechanical order” (Bates, 1989, p. 147) and observed that “the more [bureaucracy] is dehumanised, the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business, love, hatred, and all personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Weber, 1968, p. 975, cited in Bates, 1989, p. 147, italics added). Weber’s statement infers, however, that the imposition of bureaucratic rationality is always incomplete because the non-rational, like emotions and sexuality, are not easily contained. Hearn and Parkin (1995) point out that attempts to eliminate, control, or harness the energy of the non-rational are ultimately futile because “the reality is that organizations are places of emotion, ranging from anger to joy to sorrow, from love to hate, with characteristic emotional climates and cultures,” (p. 136) including sexual feelings, which are not so easily “managed” in a utilitarian way. Since traditional organizational literature perpetuated the fiction that emotions have no place in bureaucratic practices, women in organizations represented a particular intrusion on this fiction since women are seen as “the repository of emotion in Western culture” (Boler, 1999, p. 31). As such, they have been discursively constructed as troublesome “others” who disrupt gendered norms. As Chapters 2 and 3 point out, this normative notion of gender constrained women’s involvement in the public realm, however current prescriptive organizational models have proven to be only somewhat less constraining in practice.
Boler (1999), building on Foucault's theory that the technologies of bureaucracy such as surveillance or the fear of surveillance lead to internalized control, argues that organizations are inherently non-rational because bureaucratic rationality "occur(s) fundamentally through structures of feeling" (p. 21). Human relations theory, recognizes this irony in a limited way, but attempts to incorporate the non-rational and emotional instrumentally as a means to motivate workers in order to achieve the goals of the organization. Current models of organizations, seeking to respond to the postmodern challenges of rapid and unpredictable change, have commodified "the intellectual (creativity) and emotional (e.g., personal commitment to a value position or loyalty) energy for their ends through voluntary means" (Blackmore, 1996, p. 338). Women, who are perceived to be more capable of providing "caring" leadership at a time of great social, economic, and political turmoil are increasingly being positioned as emotional labourers in restructured organizations. While radical feminist scholars welcome this phenomenon as a recognition of the merit of women's ways of leading, others argue that the caring model for women's leadership does not break down the bifurcation of normative gender roles which continues to privilege males. Indeed, research (Blackmore, 1996; Coulter, 1999) suggests that the discursive position of women as caring leaders has been used to displace them to the margins of power in educational organizations in which authority is being sucked into the centre of restructured and much larger bureaucracies that are largely managed by men while responsibility to manage change — and particularly the highly charged emotions related to change — is being downloaded to local administrators, who are increasingly women.

The ambiguity of current organizational practices is apparent for many men as well. The theme of caring leadership has been picked up in emerging literature which purports to espouse moral leadership, leading with the heart, and so on, but postmodern social, political, and economic forces are demanding a managerial ethos in which administrative action is subject to the dominant question, "Is it efficient?" (Whitehead, 1998, p. 207), rather than humanitarian concerns. A particular kind of hegemonic masculinity is privileged in this managerial model which marginalizes undesirable
expressions of maleness including "gayness, paternalism, lack of aggression/assertion, and so on" (Whitehead, p. 206) and encourages normative male characteristics such as competitiveness. In this context, if “the managerial subject in organisational life is a subject working at identity construction, an existential project of becoming, but one constantly exposed to points of discursive interruption – and resistance” (Whitehead, 1998, p. 207), then men and women are positioned differently by gendered discourses in which emotion is not only taken up instrumentally but is articulated in ways which are normatively prescribed for both men and women. The emotional ambiguity of an increasingly performative ethos in educational organizations for men and women, then, is extremely complex: men are privileged in seeking administrative positions because they are men but are constrained by a hegemonic masculinity which may be uncomfortable for many, while women are seen as a disruptive “other” whose socialization may be useful to achieve the ends of the organization but constrained by an essentialized femininity which limits their access to the centre of bureaucratic power.

**Taking up Personal Resistance**

In either case, undertaking to change gendered norms represents a discursive interruption that is resisted – especially by those in power, mostly men, who enjoy the material benefits of dominant ideologies and, therefore, have little motivation to give up the privilege they enjoy. For Linda, Marg, and Kate, their reason for taking up this daunting challenge is evident in their ideological commitment to implementing gender equity employment policy that seeks to resist and transform ideologies and structures in educational organizations which unfairly privilege men – as uncomfortable as that fit may be for some. As Chapters 4 and 5 suggest, however, working towards transformation is itself resisted ideologically, and structurally and, as I will argue in this chapter, is experienced personally in the complex inner processes of emotions, the body, and constructions of sexuality.

Boler (1999) argues that “ideologies reflect emotional investments” (p. 181) that often remain unexamined but emerge from our consciousness of the other and are
embedded in the discursive structures of society, including educational organizations. Disrupting the emotional investments that hold fraternal-patriarchal bureaucracies in place, then, is itself an emotional process which calls others to become conscious of prejudgements that are often more comfortable to ignore or deflect. Boler (1999) cites Pratt (1984) who describes this change process eloquently as "the willingness to be 'at the edge of my skin, listening, asking what new thing will I hear, will I see, will I let myself feel. . . . I try to say to myself: To acknowledge the complexity of another's existence is not to deny my own'' (p. 182). What Pratt is describing is close to what I have described in the conceptual framework as a transformative consciousness: a willingness to engage with and be modified by an authentic openness to the voice and experience of the "other." However, "I" can also choose to ignore, deny, or subvert the desires of "other" and remain within a normative consciousness because of a fear of risking or actually losing social benefits. Or "I" can assume a stance of empathy for an "other's" experience which, Boler suggests, does not break out of the self/other binary, but allows "I" to remain as judge. Boler clarifies this concept with these words:

In popular and philosophical conceptions, empathy requires identification. I take up your experience and claim I can know your experience through mine. By definition, empathy also recognizes our difference - not profoundly, but enough to distinguish that I am not in fact the one suffering at this moment. What is ignored is what has been called "the psychosis of our time": Empathetic identification requires the other's difference in order to consume it as sameness. (p. 160)

Boler goes on to describe empathy as "consumptive objectification" (p. 160), or what Gadamer calls a missionary consciousness, in which "I" has assumed a prescriptive consciousness of "other's" experience which destroys its claim to meaningfulness. Whatever "I's" level of consciousness, whether normative, prescriptive, or historically effected, changing gendered practices is personal, emotional, and lived "at the edge of our skin" for both those who benefit from those practices and those seeking to change them. The emotional tension between the positions taken up by gender equity workers and
social agents who possess power (in the Foucaultian sense) in their organization is lived in the discursive space of the conceptual framework shaping my analysis of personal resistance which follows.

**Personal En/counter with Gendered Emotional Investments**

Before turning to an examination of Linda's, Kate's, and Marg's lived experience of en/countering personal resistance, I will situate the discussion in my own experience of and continuing en/counter with personal resistance to gender equity which have called me to this study. Over the last several years I have been teaching undergraduate, preservice, and graduate students at a faculty of education in Ontario, Canada while I have been completing my doctoral studies. During that time, I have increasingly aligned myself with feminist research and have attempted to incorporate feminist and critical perspectives in all of my classes. As I have done so, it has become obvious to me that there is nothing which promotes the kind of visceral reaction from students and peers that introducing gender issues to the discussion does. I have come to expect reactions which range from benign scepticism to outraged hostility when I insist on, for example, inclusive language in classroom discussions and written assignments. However, nothing prepared me for the reaction of my cohort group during an assigned presentation for a core graduate course in educational administration.

Our group, which was very collegial and often met to discuss academic issues or socialize over various libations after class, had been asked to choose topics that explored various aspects of administrative power. I discovered during a casual conversation over coffee that most of my female peers had chosen some aspect of gender issues in administration for their presentation. We quickly decided that it would enhance the effectiveness of our presentations if we organized them for the same day and arranged individual topics so that content was complementary and cumulative. Immediately, however, there was a lot of "joking" from the men on our e-mail chat line that the women were "taking over the department." Although the tone of some of the exchanges was
infuriating, most was interpreted as a friendly exchange of banter that I assumed would end in the more formal setting of our class presentations. I was wrong.

When I began my presentation on Charol Shakeshaft’s discussion of masculinist research inquiry models in educational administration – a relatively innocuous liberal discussion as feminist writing goes – I asked the class to imagine that they had awakened as the opposite sex one morning and then asked them how this might affect their work as administrators. I had used this strategy before in pre-service and graduate classes where, as instructor, I maintained some measure of authority and the question had always prompted interesting discussion. However, in this case, I was teaching my peers and the men in the class decided to take back the discursive space that I believe they perceived, consciously or unconsciously, that they had lost to the women in the class. I suspect, too, that, because I was the only woman who openly identified myself with feminism, they may have been particularly pleased to disrupt my discursive position by trivializing the discussion, thus diminishing my authority to speak. Their responses ranged from banal (“I would redecorate my office.”) to downright lewd (“It would be harder to masturbate.”) until I closed down the discussion. I was angry and confused by this response from peers with whom I shared an otherwise respectful relationship. Given that my relations with my male peers were positive before and after this incident, how can such an apparently aberrant response be explained?

I have come to realize that gender is at the centre of how men and women construct meaning around issues of power and identity: the more power one has to lose, the more one resists reconstructions of gendered identities. Since men generally have more power to lose, they are more resistant to attempts to reconstruct their identity. Bem (1993), as I have suggested in an earlier chapter, uses the analogy of the “lenses of gender” to describe the “hidden assumptions about sex and gender [that] remain embedded in cultural discourses, social institutions, and individual psyches that invisibly and systemically reproduce male power generation after generation” (p. 2). She suggests further that these lenses “are embedded in cultural discourse and social practice that are internalized by the developing child and . . . that once these gender lenses have been
internalized, they predispose the child, and later the adult, to construct an identity that is consistent with them" (p. 138). That is, as Gadamer (1993) points out, “Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live . . . . That is why the prejudices of the individual . . . constitute the historical reality of his [sic] being” (pp. 276-277, italics in the original). Or, as Kimball and Garrison assert, “These prejudices constitute our identities” (1996, p. 53).

If the levels of consciousness described in my conceptual framework can be seen as constitutive of and by prejudices or pre-judgements, then the levels of consciousness are constitutive of identity as “self” becomes conscious of “other.” Therefore, identity is not a stable category, but instead is “relational and contextual . . . relational because it is shaped and made meaningful in relation to other people . . . [and] contextual since what is significant about each of us shifts depending on the situation, and who is present and absent” (Briskin, 1995, p. 4). The conception of identity I have just described is closely mirrored by post-structural notions of subjectivity that have come to replace traditional concepts of a unified identity. That is, the rational, autonomous, and fully conscious individual has been removed from the centre stage of social analysis and, instead, “attention should be given to the objective social forms which constitute society and ‘construct’ the subjectivities of individuals” (Layder, 1994, p. 96). Layder argues that belief in a coherent and unified subject is itself non-rational because,

First, such a view vastly exaggerates the degree of control that individuals exert over their own destinies and the social environment against which they are worked out. Conversely, it neglects the role of history and social-structural factors which shape individual subjectivities. Furthermore, the idea of a coherent and rational subject implies that human beings are unaffected by irrational and contradictory feelings and drives over which they have little control. From a post-structuralist standpoint it is important to understand that individuals have a psychic interior which is many-faceted and deeply layered. The unconscious forces of which Freud spoke (such as sexual, aggressive, and generally anti-social drives) play a
significant part in human experience and produce tension and
ccontradiction in people's behaviour and in their attitudes and perceptions.

The fact that people exhibit contradictory aspects in their behaviour
reveals the self is a fragmentary and multiple phenomenon that varies
according to both social circumstances and social position, as well as
unconscious forces. The self is constituted within the play of language
(and discourse more generally) and the field of practices and power
relations that define the social locations in which people live out their
daily lives. (1994, pp. 96-97, italics added)

The interplay between social-structural forces and the unconscious forces which
shape our psychic interior is lived at the edge of our skin – in our sense of self, and our
consciousness of other – and is acted upon in the discursive space between consciousness
and public response. Thus, the conceptual framework for this study provides a means for
coming to an understanding of the contradictory behaviour I encountered during my
presentation by mapping social locations and tracing the intersections of discourses and
practices around issues of gender equity and their intersection with personal identity. For
example, although most of the men in my class, including the professor, publicly
espoused a prescriptive consciousness of gender equity issues, at the personal level of
their experience, normative prejudices enabled the privileged power relations they enjoy
in both their intimate and professional affiliations. My presentation was calling for more
than passive empathy for women's oppression in organizational settings; it was calling
for active deconstruction and reconstruction (transformation) of those prejudices (their
identities). Although I was not demanding a transformative response, I was bringing
prejudices that are most often unspoken and unexamined from unconsciousness to
consciousness and their response was to close off the discursive space using coercive
tactics with the tacit approval of the professor.

Encountering Anger

At the heart of their reaction was anger and fear: a defensive anger 1 that masked
their fear of loss in response to perceived threats to the pre-judgements which support
their privileged identity. Boler (1999) describes the process this way:

Defensive anger can be interpreted as a protection of beliefs, a protection of one's precarious sense of identity. To challenge a student's [or colleague's] . . . cherished assumptions may be felt as a threat to their very identity. This reaction of anger should be interpreted not so much as a righteous objection to one's honour, but more as a defense of one's [emotional] investments in the values of the dominant culture. To respond in defensive anger is to defend one's stake (whether or not one acknowledges that stake) . . . [W]ith more nuanced reflection one may come to recognize defensive anger as the protection of precarious identities. (p. 191)

A recent example of defensive anger is Martin Loney's book entitled, The Pursuit of Division: Race, Gender, and Preferential Hiring in Canada, in which he attacks all forms of preferential hiring as victim politics. He directs particular volleys at the feminist movement and more particularly . . . the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, an organization that owes its existence to the federal government. The growing acceptance that racial minorities in Canada experienced pervasive discrimination has received considerable impetus from NAC . . . (1998, p. xiii)

He claims that the "liberally funded" advocacy groups of the political left, such as NAC, with the help of "left-leaning" media (particularly CBC Radio), have been able to capture the public policy agenda and that, even though the Conservative government of Harris has repealed equity employment policy in Ontario, "the claims of group membership over merit have sunk deep roots" (p. ix).

It is difficult to know how to respond to such an outrageous statement, given the history of reluctant neglect which greeted most efforts to implement employment equity policy and the current policy environment which provides no support for employment equity. Furthermore, given the fact that the Canadian media is largely in the hands of a few owners who explicitly support the neo-conservative/neo-liberal political agenda, one
would be hard-pressed to find the deep roots of support for employment equity which Loney claims. However, his position is not surprising given that his arguments reflect many of the themes of ideological and structural resistance I have already described in chapters 4 and 5. However, it is emotional resistance, which he reveals on the first page of his book, that is of particular interest to my analysis in this chapter.

Loney’s vociferous resistance to equity policy is rooted in the anger which pervades every page. By his own account, he reveals a precarious identity emotionally invested in his status as a white male which was challenged when he returned from an academic appointment in Britain to find that he was competing for shrinking job opportunities against a much more diverse field of candidates because of employment equity policy. Such policy, in his view, “privilege[d] those with the right racial and gender attributes even as academic ideologues declaim[ed] against the continuing domination of a Eurocentric curriculum and a white male pedagogy” (1998, p. x, italics added). Apparently it is acceptable to Loney that “the right racial and gender attributes” — white and male — which had privileged him while maintaining the pretence of meritocracy were perpetuated through normative social practices. However, equity policy which disrupted that privilege is met with a barrage of defensive anger which rails against not only employment equity, but also inclusive language, highly-paid femocrats, diversity training for human resources workers, the equity provisions of the Charter, and anything else that challenges his presumption of a privileged identity as a white male.

Linda, Kate, and Marg felt far from being part of the highly paid elite that Loney describes, nor did they enjoy the level of support Loney purports to be available to equity workers. Instead, they encountered resistance to change which was often blatant or more subtly nuanced but always representative of the fearful anger which forms a protective shield around the emotional investments that were so deeply entrenched in both the individual and collective consciousness of their educational organizations. In fact, all three women revealed that they more often felt vulnerable in jobs that they perceived to be, and indeed proved to be, tenuous. In other words, they often experienced the work of resisting gendered pre-judgements as deeply personal and unpredictably emotional. I will
now turn to the emotional labour that each woman perceived to be at the centre of her en/counter with personal resistance to gender equity employment policy in her educational organization.

**Doing Emotional Labour**

In one of the few anthologies available that theorizes emotions in organizational settings, Fineman (1993) differentiates between emotion work and emotional labour. Emotion work is the effort we put into ensuring that our private feelings are suppressed or represented to be in touch with socially accepted norms. . . . Emotional labour is the commercial exploitation of this principle: when an employee is in effect paid to smile, laugh, be polite or ‘be caring’. An essential feature of the job is to maintain an organizationally prescribed demeanour or mask. This can be fun: an exquisite drama. It can also be stressful and alienating. (p. 3)

Using this definition, some of the scenarios described later in this chapter suggest that many of the administrators who publicly espoused support of gender equity employment policy were doing emotion work in the sense that they suppressed private feelings of defensive anger in order to be seen as supportive of these policy initiatives. Linda, Marg, and Kate were also doing emotion work because they felt that they needed to suppress their true feelings in order to maintain credibility so that their work would not be further marginalized. For example, in many of the incidents which I recount in this chapter, they all felt that if they had responded publicly with the level of indignation they felt, or had cried, or otherwise expressed strong emotion, their emotional expression would be pathologized as irrational and “typically female,” thus negating their work of resistance. However, as the discussion which follows will make clear, the differing discursive positions of men and women in educational organizations constrained men only minimally since their private feelings received tacit or even open support from other male, and sometimes female, workers and administrators.
As Chapter 5 points out, however, Linda, Marg, and Kate were required not only to do emotional work but also emotional labour in the sense that they were hired and positioned within the organization to deflect administrative responsibility for changing gendered practices and to absorb the anger of some workers towards gender equity employment policy and the frustration of those who were seeking equitable employment opportunities. In Kate’s words, she perceived herself as “a buffer between the people who are seeking equity and the administration.” Because each of the women in this study had a deep ideological commitment to gender equity, their decision to absorb resistance to employment equity with silence on many occasions, while strategic, was also very painful. As Putnam and Mumby (1993) comment, “Emotional labour is experienced most strongly when employees are asked to express emotions that contradict their inner feelings” (p. 38).

Even though Marg’s organization was formally, and often informally, supportive of gender equity employment policy, Marg still found herself working to motivate apathetic and sometimes hostile workers and leaders to put the policy into practice.

Marg: Through membership in committees, I represent the advocacy part of keeping women’s issues alive in those particular settings, which isn’t that easy to do. I mean, trying to keep it in front of people, including a lot of union/federation people as well as management who are supportive but are apathetic a lot of the time.

Although all three women strongly emphasized that their commitment to their work as gender equity advocates helped them persist in the face of unpredictable support for their work, they often felt alone and vulnerable in that role as they tried to inform uninterested and/or hostile stakeholders about various aspects of employment equity policy.

Kate: The thing about this work is you don’t know, you never, ever know what the reaction of the people in the room that you’re going into – whether it’s Executive Council and you’re making a case for something, or whether it’s at a trustee meeting, or whether it’s, you know, a parent council meeting at a school, or speaking to a group of teachers – you just never know what the reaction is going
to be. . . You don’t know whether you’re going to be personally attacked. You do not know, and that is extremely stressful, so you know, those are just some of the joys of the job.

At one point in the focus group I introduced the phrase “emotional labour” in the context of our discussion, but with no explanation of its meaning. While none of the women knew its academic definition, they responded with an intuitive sense of its meaning in their lived experience. For example, Linda offered this observation about her work as an equity advocate.

Linda: I had to go out and talk to teachers about Bill 79 . . . about the need to hire and promote minorities and women and setting up goals and time lines. I almost at the end wanted to wear a t-shirt saying, “Don’t shoot the messenger!” because I really did experience . . . what were the words you used? . . . emotional labour. Yeah. It was very, very hard work going out and dealing with those presentations and presenting to teachers at staff meetings. . . . I guess my biggest challenge was going out to speak to the “fellahs” in the maintenance department - and they were all “fellahs”. I was invited out twice: first to speak on employment equity, then to present on harassment. I gritted my teeth, you know. I wore my armour.

As Linda’s story demonstrates, the level of consciousness Linda, Marg, and Kate found themselves confronting most often was normative, despite the prescriptive rhetoric of the policy they were hired to implement. Positioned as both subject and object of the employment equity policy, their message may have been read as self-interested and was definitely unpopular with the majority of those in their audiences in many organizational settings. All three women spoke to the need for strong administrative support in implementing gender equity employment policy but, even when there was official support for the policy, it was clear that substantive support was unevenly available. For example, Marg relates a story where, despite official and structural support for gender equity, the level of consciousness of two associate directors was revealed.

Marg: I wished them each “Happy International Women’s Day” and they were not amused. One of them refused to acknowledge my remarks and just sort of ignored
me. The other one said, “I’d hoped that I would’ve gotten through today without having to hear that.” The third director who was there – a woman – didn’t say anything. I thought to myself, “Thanks a lot.”

All three women reported similar incidents and confirmed that constantly negotiating the emotional terrain of advocating for gender equity policy among resistant colleagues was, just as Fineman suggests, “stressful and alienating.”

In the story described above by Marg, the stress and alienation she felt occurred between her hopes for change, supported by the official discourse of her board and Ministry policy, and the anger and hostility inherent in the normative consciousness of powerful administrators and workers that she often encountered in her work. She found it particularly painful when she did not receive support from female colleagues, yet she also recognized the tenuous position many of these women in administration occupied and the emotional labour that was required, including alienating themselves from female colleagues, in order to maintain their position. The result for Marg and many of the female administrators in Board A was constant stress and a sense of alienation from their own feelings and one another as potential allies.

**Emotional Labours (Gained and) Lost**

During the focus group, Kate and Marg described a process of literally embodying emotional labour by displacing their emotions with food.

Marg: I gained five pounds the first month I was in this job. I was just so upset in my first four weeks on the job. . . . I ate. I ate . . .

Kate: I’ve gained forty pounds.

Marg: Oh, I’ve gained and lost. . . . But it was just dramatic for me that first month in the place. . . . At the end of the day I used to feel like the [fluorescent] lights were sitting on my eyebrows, like on my forehead, and that was just the first month. [collective laugh]
After this exchange, all three women agreed that the opportunity to share their experiences with other equity workers relieved some of the loneliness and alienation they felt in doing their work.

Marg: We need more opportunities to get together like this [focus group]. It used to be good when the province had equity conferences for us . . .

Kate: . . . or even regional meetings. When [name of an equity worker] was at the [name of a nearby board] we used to talk almost daily so that was somewhat helpful.

In the end, of course, each one not only lost opportunities to get together with professional colleagues doing equity work, but also her position as an official equity advocate in her organization. All seemed resigned to their fate but found that letting go of their hopes for the work that they were doing was difficult emotionally.

Linda: I have a wonderful half-written employment systems review done. . . . My regret is a lot of the work I’ve done has not amounted to a whole lot in the end. I mean, individual change has happened, and I do think in terms of classroom practices a difference was made. I do think within individual mindsets there’s been some change, but overall I think the structural barriers are still there big time . . . big, big time!

An Exquisite Drama

Despite the toll taken by the emotional labour of doing equity work, however, it became obvious during the focus group, that each woman had chosen her work because of the emotional attachment she felt to the possibility of transforming sexist practices which disadvantaged women in educational organizations. Fineman (1993) refers to the paradox of concurrently experiencing both the pleasure and pain of emotional labour as “exquisite drama” (p. 3).

Kate: The emotional labour, it was intense . . . it was intense but it was balanced by the fact that you were doing work that needed to be done . . . that at times you could assist someone who really needed help, that on occasion you would see real
change in a school administrator. You know, someone that at first you could hardly believe that this kind of person still existed – a real dinosaur – and actually see that person change over the course of two years or three years, primarily through, in the case I’m thinking about, his interaction with me and then became involved in things that were going on.

Each woman had similar stories of success in changing individual and systemic practices and took great pleasure in those victories, but every statement was tinged with battle fatigue.

Marg: You may get your victories. I mean, I look at our new standard procedure [for handling sexual harassment cases] and I think of all the energy and the work that went into it. But it’s done and it’s printed and it’s out there. We’ve done training on it, you know, and you get this feeling of satisfaction, but a lot of stress. Marg’s comment brings together the pleasure and pain of emotional work and emotional labour and demonstrates what Hearn (1993), citing Game (1991, p.8), suggests: “All knowledge of emotion is inter-subjective, is a matter of desire (rather than disinterested cognition) that is structured around power, and is dialectical” (p. 149). To quote the opening lines from an old television sports show, there is “the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat” in en/countering resistance to gender equity policy, but only because the ideological stakes are high, the structural barriers to success are formidable, and gender equity policy is lived closer to the edge of our skin than most other educational policy since it is so closely aligned with a sense of personal and sexual identity.

**Embodying Gender Equity**

At one point in our interviews, Kate spoke directly to the paradoxical position she embodies as an equity worker situated inside organizational structures by remarking with considerable emotion, “This is the problem with the way it’s been set up from point one . . . Kate does equity; Kate IS equity.” Kate’s comments point to a fundamental discursive nexus in not only her work, but also Linda’s and Marg’s experience: each equity worker
in this study represents a resistant discourse which provides the possibility to transform patriarchal practices that hold gender inequities in place. At the same time each woman offers a target within the organization for normative and prescriptive discourses which are resistant to that transformation. In other words, Kate, Marg, and Linda embody gender equity policy that by its very nature increases “specific consciousness of gender” (Hearn & Parkin, 1995, p. 139). Thus they became signifiers of an otherwise covert sexual ideology at the same time that their bodies became the target of resistance to transforming that ideology. One particular incident demonstrates this duality in Marg’s experience.

Marg: We did a lot of workshops [on gender equity in the workplace for the care taking department]. We have a new head of the department and [a female colleague of mine] and I would open the workshop with the head of the department and then the facilitator – we had a paid facilitator – would then do the workshop. We’d only be there for about fifteen minutes to make sure everything was set up, say hello to the people, introduce people and leave. One day our facilitator was sick and we all got to the workshop and got the message that she’d be unable to attend. So we cancelled the workshop but the head of the department said – he must have been to twenty of these workshops already – he said to the group of men (they were all men – chief caretakers) that the facilitator couldn’t come but [my female colleague and I] were going to strip for them . . . . It was just absolutely appalling. I mean, [my colleague] and I just . . . [my colleague] didn’t say anything to him but the look was . . . so I just said it was inappropriate. But, you know, these guys were all guffawing and I did report it to the higher-ups and asked what we were going to do with this guy but he was retiring so . . .

As this incident demonstrates, gender equity policy is not only embodied by female equity workers but is also resisted by attention to their embodiment as sexual beings. In organizational settings which are presumed to be rational, sexualizing women has the effect of drawing attention to their embodiment of the non-rational, their intrusion in the public domain, thus deflecting their message and marginalizing their voice as not valid in public discourse. At the same time it disciplines women who have assumed some
authority over male actions in public settings in which men have assumed a normative privilege over women's bodies in both public and private domains. This incident also reveals that organizational rationality is a facade that is frequently disrupted by what Hearn and Parkin (1995) call organization sexuality.

Revealing Organization Sexuality

One way to think about the concept of organization sexuality is to examine, as I have already in previous chapters, the ways in which divisions of labour are both constituted by and constitute normative constructions of sexuality called masculine and feminine. However, organization sexuality is also about desire, the body, the biological states associated with the masculine and feminine, and the ways in which female sexuality may be seen as disruptive to organizational efficiency. Organizational rules attempt to rationalize and control organization sexuality by, for example, controlling physical and emotional proximity, but it still finds expression in the interstices of space (e.g., in the stock room or other out of the way locations) and time (coffee breaks, office parties, etc.) in organizations through language and imagery, gaze and touch, and emotions and feelings. The sexual power which men possess over women and frequently act upon and the heterosexism that is at the centre of human interactions in organizations are both powerful forms of resistance to gender equity workers attempting to deconstruct gendered subjectivities in organizations.

A normative consciousness of the expression of sexuality in the particular culture of organizations which privileges male sexuality is called into question by gender equity policy and is often resisted by the imposition of male sexual power. For example, all of the women in this study reported being constructed by others, even senior administrators, as a "prude" and "spoiler." Linda described one incident at an end-of-year party in June.

Linda: We had a little party in the courtyard at the education centre and somebody was up at the microphone. They were making speeches, giving out little parting gifts to people and he made some comment . . . but then he said, "Whoops, can't say that. Linda's here." So it's as if whatever that little comment - it was a sexist
comment – his reaction was to say, "Whoops, can't say that! Linda's here." What about the fifty other women who were standing around the microphone listening to the comment he made?

Linda had not only been labelled as a prude, but by constructing her as a spoiler, the administrator making the speech had also differentiated her from other women. In other words, Linda was discursively constructed as deviant, whereas his characterization of other women in his (hetero)sexist comments was imposed on them as normal.

Kate responded to Linda's story with her own example of the same pattern of behaviour exhibited by her supervisor who, in the one and only performance evaluation she had in almost seven years of employment, noted that she had not given enough credit to a colleague, whose blatant sexist behaviour she had reported, for the strides he had made in improving his behaviour. He also commented on his perception that since she had come to the board, "people feel like they can't have any fun any more." She commented somewhat wearily about this experience, "I wore a lot of that as personal . . . (pause) . . . and I don't want to say attacks but, you know, that sort of personal . . . (pause) . . . I don't know what the word is if not attacks." As Marg listened to each of these stories, she wryly commented, "Sexism is such fun." Martin (1988), citing Adrienne Rich (1980), observes of this phenomenon that "heterosexuality is itself a compulsory set of relations produced not at the level of the body, but at the level of discourse and social practice, a compulsory sexuality that enables male dominance and refuses autonomy or solidarity among women" (p. 12). While Linda's and Kate's stories demonstrate the validity of this statement, it is in danger of falling prey to the same Cartesian divide between body and mind that continues to privilege male norms. Discourses of sexuality do inscribe themselves on the body in potentially coercive ways.

**Boys just want to have fun**

Hearn and Parkin (1995) note that, "The valuation of men over women in mixed hierarchical organisations is paralleled in the tendency to value men's sexuality over women's sexuality" (p. 92). Freedom from constraint in expressing one's sexuality in
behaviour and language, while seen as disempowering for women in an organizational setting, is viewed by men and many women as a sign of status for men. That is, it has been — and often continues to be, despite harassment policy — seen as normative for men to exhibit sexual behaviour in organizational settings, which ranges from mildly playful to painfully misogynist, with relative impunity. Although not all men choose to act on this privilege, Gutek (1985), writes that it is possible for men to “make sexual jokes and comments, use sexual obscenities, proposition women at work, dress to attract women, and still be considered a desirable worker: analytical, rational, tough, a good leader” (p. 166). Often these behaviours are less about attracting women than they are about proving heterosexuality to other men and fitting in with assumptions about prevailing male discursive patterns. But they are unsettling for many women nonetheless. On the other hand, while men can foreground their sexuality without compromising their ability to lead, Gutek observes that a normative consciousness of women means that others believe that they “cannot be an analytical, rational leader and a sex object at the same time” (p. 167). Yet, Kanter (1977) argues that women may have little choice about whether they are constructed as a sex object or not because men evaluate women in terms of sexuality whether or not women behave in a manner which foregrounds their sexuality: e.g., the “dumb blonde” if they do or the “frigid prude” if they do not. Since Kate, Marg, and Linda had not only chosen not to foreground their sexuality but were also working to deconstruct the objectification of women in their organizations, they were constructed by some men and even some women in their organizations as “frigid prudes” who were “spoiling the fun” of essentially misogynist behaviour that many other women also found demeaning.

A normative consciousness of sexuality which privileges men’s freedom of sexual expression in organizations creates a conserving space in which men may attempt to deflect the limitations which they perceive gender equity policy will place on their discursive privilege. For example, Marg recalled a conversation prior to doing some sexual harassment workshops at the school of a principal who was about to retire.
Marg: He says to me that he’s looking forward to his retirement and then he says, “And when I’m in the drugstore or the variety store selecting my magazines, I won’t have to care whether you come in and look over my shoulder at what I’m reading.” I thought to myself . . . he *seems* like a nice guy to work with . . . and these workshops were on sexual harassment! There had been a few little incidents at the school with the students but nothing that the school hadn’t handled well. And yet I was really upset by what he said . . . When I think of people — men — as allies, I know a lot of them aren’t really . . . I mean, they’re supporting some of the stuff that we do but it’s for ulterior motives and basically they don’t really agree, and don’t like me for it.

Marg’s comments demonstrate the complexity of the emotional terrain in the discursive space between consciousness and response. This principal’s professional and public subjectivity is aligned with the prescriptive nature of gender equity employment policy because it is politically expedient in a board that has a long history of public support for gender equity, but it seems to be in conflict with a normative consciousness in the personal and private expression of sexuality. One can only guess at whether and/or how this conflict may have been acted out in the interface between his personal and professional behaviour in his school and other professional settings but it does point to the difficulty that Kate, Marg, and Linda often experienced in reading the discursive terrain between consciousness and response. Doing so with any certainty is particularly challenging around issues of sexuality.

**Blurring the borders between public and private sexuality**

Much of the difficulty understanding issues of organization sexuality centre on the perception of a presumed separation of public and private sexuality which is at odds with the actual experience of the intertwining of public and private sexual behaviour in organizational settings. Administrators of educational organizations operate under particular constraints with regard to issues of sexuality since educators are held to a high moral standard under the law but the culture of many educational organizations hardly
meets these standards. Much of the sexual activity, however, while well known by others in the organization (e.g., extramarital liaisons, flirting, language full of sexual innuendo), is hidden from the public. The administrators who complain about the equity workers being “spoilers” seem to be chafing at restrictions imposed on their covert sexual behaviour. Inside their complaints is the normative wish to be a ‘bad boy’ with impunity but the equity workers’ presence makes visible what was formerly hidden, ignored, or tacitly supported.

Discursive tension emerges when official organizational discourse demonstrates a prescriptive consciousness around issues of organization sexuality in school settings among students and faculty while ignoring sexual behaviours in board offices. For example, throughout his remarks below, the former director of Board B was supportive of Kate’s efforts to implement a sexual harassment policy in schools but gave little indication that the forms of resistance which he described were the same as those demonstrated by administrators in his organization. Female sexuality is framed as a “problem” and, while men’s “enlightenment” is the “solution”, women are seen as primarily responsible for both controlling male sexuality in the public domain and raising men’s consciousness about changing sexual mores.

Director (Board B): And there’s no question that we had to start in the schools and we’re still struggling today because there is some, maybe, backlash or whatever. It’s hard to determine it, but we’re struggling with male students more today, I believe, to accept that women have rights . . . that women have freedoms that have to be afforded them. And at the same time that that’s occurring, the loosening up of society mores and so on has caused many males to believe that anything goes. They misread women looking for those same opportunities and think, therefore, well they’re fair game now. And I find that there’s an element that’s caused us some difficulty . . . and it’s part of the growth and it’s part of moving on because as much as there are more blatant examples of bias and mistreatment of women – it’s maybe because it’s out more obviously in the public eye – you know, there’s a
relaxing of certain sexual/social mores and young men are struggling with understanding . . . . I think that some of the home environments are just not coming through in terms of helping them to realize that social mores have changed and women have rights and the anger about them is just not going to carry . . . . It's got some steps to go but it certainly raised the consciousness level within schools. There's a more open environment for discussing matters and I think in some ways women took the lead with much more confidence in our schools.

While the director is referring to principals struggling to implement sexual harassment policy at the school level, his remarks also point to the same struggles at the board level that Kate had described during our interviews. In fact, his conflation of women taking up greater opportunities in the public sphere with “looser” sexual mores reveals a great deal about how organization sexuality works differently for men and women.

Although the director’s remarks point out the dangers that he perceives women will experience as social mores shift, he gives little support to the notion that women, like men, may wish to be free to be sexually expressive while at the same time being viewed as a competent student, employee, or administrator. However, young women, so-called third wave feminists, are not waiting for organization sexuality to catch up with their wish to construct their own sense of sexual identity as both competent and desirable. Popular culture is awash with young women who are defining power for themselves by appropriating and attempting to restructure the discourse around male-defined business savvy and sexuality. Sarah McLaughlin’s wildly successful Lilith Fair, The Spice Girls, Melissa Etheridge, The Dixie Chicks, Mary J. Blige, and Lauryn Hill are representative of individual women and groups who are defining the parameters of sexual desire for themselves and their audiences while circumventing male-dominated organizations that have traditionally reaped the financial rewards of their music. The “Ali McBeal effect” in organizations is evident in popular magazines, for example, where women are no longer exhorted to “dress for success” – which is either more like a man or a fetishized sexual object for the pleasure of the male gaze – but instead are provided with a wide
range of options that recognize women’s wish to be seen as both desirable and capable. In fact, Camille Paglia (1990) argues that women’s sexuality is a powerful force that shifts the discourse from victimhood, in which women are objects of male desire to subjects who define male desire.

However, this period of shifting representations is not without its dangers. Old guard feminists fear that preoccupation with sexuality is not only deflecting women from an emancipatory political project but also deluding women into thinking that they can escape the power of the male gaze. Entertainment news items in the popular press (e.g., Entertainment Tonight, People Magazine, The Toronto Star, etc.), for example, have noted that the currently preferred body shape for women actors is thinner and more boyish than ever before. Calista Flockhart, the actor portraying Ali McBeal, who according to the June 29, 1998 cover of Time magazine is the quintessential representative of third wave feminism, is one of many young women dubbed “lollipops” – women whose head appears overly large in contrast with a painfully thin body. Her TV character is portrayed as a wide-eyed, infantilized young woman in impossibly short skirts whose work day is preoccupied by the twin desire for a successful career and a committed relationship, and nights embedded in a fantasy dream world. It seems that male representations of “liberated” women who dare to venture into the public realm, in popular culture at least, are still disciplined by the male gaze.

Bartky (1988), commenting on the shifting discourses around female sexuality in organizational settings, observes that

As modern industrial societies change and as women themselves offer resistance to patriarchy, older forms of domination are eroded. But new forms arise, spread, and become consolidated. Women [in most Western cultures] are no longer required to be chaste or modest, to restrict their sphere of activity to the home, or even to realize their properly feminine destiny in maternity: normative femininity is coming to be more and more centred on woman’s body – not its duties and obligations or even its
capacity to bear children, but its sexuality, more precisely, its presumed heterosexuality and its appearance. (P. 81)

That is, taking up the option of expressing one’s (hetero)sexuality in (educational) organizations is still to mark oneself as “female” and, therefore, less authoritative and capable because of the difference one represents. As Blackmore notes, “Gender, sexuality and the body are part of the complex ‘technology of control’ within organizations and how women come to be integrated unequally into organizational life” (1999b, p. 171). I have already spoken about the ways in which this works in organizations for males who are compelled to conform to a heterosexist norm. However, Kate, Linda, and Marg observed and experienced how the complex intersections of gender, sexuality and the body formed hegemonic heterosexist technologies of control for women doing the work of equity.

Controlling sexuality

One technology of control that all three equity agents noted was the trading on heterosexist discourses by both men and women who labelled women working towards gender equity as lesbians. Within homophobic school settings, the effect was to discourage, isolate, and belittle the efforts of these women in schools, particularly secondary schools which also effectively disarmed allies for the work Marg, Linda and Kate were hired to accomplish..

Linda: [T]here were committed people in our schools, and I’m going to say particularly at the secondary level, that I know are doing some awesome stuff.

Marg: I think that they personally get singled out within school environments and often get subjected to a lot of personal attacks. I mean one of the things that . . . People get accused of lesbianism all the time, and I mean, it shouldn’t be a hurtful thing, right? . . . But it gets thrown up as an accusation, you know, so you’re either prudish, you don’t have enough straight sex in your life, or you’re a lesbian and that this is a terrible thing in a homophobic world. I mean, women who are
lesbians have a terrible time working on these issues and women who aren’t lesbians . . . they’re all “tainted” in a homophobic world.

Kate, the only woman who was single when she took up her position (although she is now married), made a particular point at the end of our last interview of returning to the theme of the ways in which her work was personalized which was, as she put it, “what makes the job so hard.” Perhaps, as Blackmore (1999b) notes, Kate encountered particularly coercive resistance to her presence because “single women in particular [are constructed as] deviant, different and dangerous, either because of their implied lesbianism or sexual availability” (p. 171). Her refusal to act on her sexual availability in any explicit way was read as somehow deviant. On one occasion, for example, Kate found some “virgin again” pills had been placed on her desk by a “secret pal” and on another it was publicly drawn to her attention that her predecessor had been willing to participate in such antics as wearing a “boobie prize” – a hat festooned with large plastic breasts – at an office golf tournament. The implication was that her unwillingness to participate in similar sexual “play” was interpreted by colleagues as at least prudish and humourless, if not evidence of an alternative sexual preference. As Martin (1988) observes,

Traditionally, feminists have been labeled prudish by those liberationists who would force them into a position for or against sex; there is a sense of urgency within the women’s movement now of the importance of developing our understanding of “sexuality” so that we can move beyond these false alternatives and shift the focus of attention to the relations that have produced “sexuality” as we know it. (pp. 11-12)

Clearly, then, organization sexuality is a circular discourse in the sense that it constructs as well as refuses constructions of masculinity and femininity that are embedded in the structures of educational organizations. Linda, Marg, and Kate found themselves at the discursive nexus of having to make a choice “for or against sex” in order to deflect attention from the ways in which normative sex roles and sexual play act as “technologies of control” to maintain normative power relations which privilege males.
Their perceived role as spoilers made them especially vulnerable to discipline based on a moral standard that set them up as outsiders in the organization.

**Personal Resistance as Emotional Discursive Space**

Despite the fact that all of their actions were fully supported by provincial and board policy which they were hired to implement and uphold, Kate, Linda, and Marg were perceived to be *personally* holding others to a higher moral standard of behaviour and all of their actions were, therefore, under an extraordinary level of scrutiny.

Kate: It's that personal moral stuff that's so hard. Like you can't do anything wrong without it being considered forty times worse than someone else doing something wrong.

For example, in one case, her superintendent misinterpreted the funding arrangements for a series of meetings which she attended. She was paid for attendance through outside funding and, although she transferred those funds to the board's budget, her superintendent assumed that she had kept those funds while also being paid by the board. His demeanor was one of moral indignation rather than information gathering when he confronted her with his suspicions. Kate felt under extraordinary pressure during this conversation partly because she knew that both he and many of her colleagues saw her as "the spoiler" and would enjoy seeing her "caught" by a moral code which was as scrupulous as the one to which she was seen to be personally holding them responsible.

After reflecting on this experience, Kate sighed, "It's like they don't know me at all."

Kate's remark is pointing to a desire for a conversation that demonstrates an historically effected consciousness: a discursive position in which her superintendent comes to know her "through authentic openness which lets something be said, wills to hear rather than to master, and is willing to be modified by the other." However, as Gadamer suggests, an historically effected consciousness distances us from "efforts to control things, to make things, to manage things" (Misgeld & Nicholson, 1992, p. 144). In other words, it stands in opposition to today's dominant narratives of competition,
performativity, and efficiency that characterize supposedly rational organizational practices. However, rationality is simply another name for preferred power relations since, as Blackmore (1999b) notes about the resistance which equity advocates faced in Australia, “One could be passionate about power but not about equality”(p. 112). While the equity workers in this study found it strategically expedient to contain their passion for equality, it was that passion which allowed them to remain hopeful that dominant notions of “meritocracy”, based on non-rational normative preferences for a particular gender, race, physical ableness, and so on, could be disrupted and transformed.

Finding a place in which transformative discourse is possible is most often located in the personal discursive territory where Gadamer (1992) suggests, “We may not forget that we, as living beings, are by nature ensnared in many ways, and that means that we are totally and completely embedded within praxis. We are always already completely encompassed in our expectations and hopes, our prejudices and our fears . . .”(p. 231) – i.e., our emotional investments. Transformation of gendered practices, then, is a profoundly hopeful enterprise that is inherently emotional and, as Kate’s, Linda’s and Marg’s experience demonstrates, very personal.

**Transforming Emotions**

As I have worked my way through the ways in which gender equity employment policy is resisted, personal resistance has emerged as the most powerful form of resistance en countered by Kate, Linda, and Marg and yet it is also the most ephemeral. Feelings spill around rationalized bureaucratic technologies, form obstacles for change at unpredictable discursive locations, and vibrate invisibly just beneath the surface of prescriptive policies which attempt to change gendered organizational practices. While it is difficult to delineate exactly where, why, and how, the personal seems to be at the heart of motivating change, particularly around gendered practices that are embedded in one’s sense of identity. Blackmore (1999b), in fact, suggests that gender equity reform is tactically dependent on an expanded rationality that encompasses the non-rational. She
writes, "[G]ender equity reform needs to focus more upon why people change. Change is often cast as an intellectual exercise, reinforcing the emotionality/rationality binary of administrative theory" (pp. 213, 214). A transformative consciousness breaks down this binary because, expanding on Boler’s (1999) discussion of emotion, consciousness is inherently emotional and embedded in the personal. Moving towards a transformative consciousness, then, is a personal process of reflecting on one’s emotional investments, centred in historically privileged discourses, that hold constructions of sexuality embedded in material conditions, such as sexist employment practices, in place.

While Kate, Linda, and Marg are clearly aware of the power of current neo-conservative/neo-liberal discourses to move public equity policy towards a conserving discourse, they are also willing to continue the emotional labour of acting as individual subjects to effect change within a variety of organizational locations. As political ideologies have reshaped the discourses around equity positions and practices in their organization, they have simply repositioned themselves within the discursive territory of the conceptual framework informing this study. For example, even though the amalgamation of her board with three others and the ensuing restructuring of committee structures made it difficult for Kate to know where she could continue to work on behalf of equity, she was actively pursuing that information so that she could continue to advocate for all forms of equity on the committees that shaped equity discourses. She spoke specifically about her intent to continue advocating for equitable employment practices, especially for immigrant women, in whatever ways she could.

Kate: I still try to do my work . . . I still feel that new Canadians are not given a fair shake when it comes to getting jobs and that it’s who you know . . . it’s still the principal’s kid who gets the jobs and that’s wrong quite frankly. We’re not giving other people a chance. So I still, through whatever means I have, through whatever connections I have, try to move on that front. That’s how I would talk about emotional labour now. . . . I mean, it’s important work. I have thought a lot about different ways that this work can be done. I know how in Utopia it would be
done but . . . I certainly regret not being in the role I was in but I continue to do the work.

Linda has taken up a full-time appointment with her newly amalgamated federation, ETFO, where she has worked to ensure that the constitution protected significant representation of women at the executive level both locally and provincially. She has also worked to ensure that some percentage of the overall budget is set aside for women-only programs.

Linda: If you don’t have a budget for women-only programs, they won’t take place, so they managed to agree that six percent of the budget would go towards women-only programs and they asked the local associations to achieve that as well. Great hew and cry of course. We have resolutions coming to our annual meeting this summer to either increase the six percent, lower the six percent, or eliminate it entirely, so a lot of work has to be done. I mean, we talked about the loss of a number of things that had been put in place through FWTAO and we don’t want to see those giant strides gone with ETFO. Right now we’re looking at strong numbers of females running for the executive. . . . The other issue, of course, was the issue of designated spots on the executive both provincially and locally. We took terrible flack for that locally. This was not an easy thing to get into the constitution and locally was not well received.

The tension between Linda’s and Kate’s hopeful resistance and the continuing ideological and structural resistance within educational organizations, including federations, provides for the kind of creative emotion which may transform possibilities within the conserving and conciliatory discursive space of gender equity employment policy. As Putnam and Mumby assert, “Emotions ignite creativity and form the foundation for moral and spiritual development” (1993, p. 40). I interpret the words “moral and spiritual development” to mean what Gadamer describes with these words:

Where one is not concerned with learning how to control something, we will always and again learn through experiencing our own biases, the otherness of the other in its other-being. To participate with the other and
to be a part of the other is the most and the best that we can strive for and accomplish. . . . We may perhaps survive as humanity if we would be able to learn that we may not simply exploit our means of power and effective possibilities, but we must stop and respect the other, whether it is nature or the grown cultures of people and nations. (Misgeld & Nicholson, 1992, p. 235)

There is a profound hopefulness in Gadamer’s words that elicits an emotional response which has the potential to ignite or quench transformative possibilities for more humane and equitable social practices.

**Summary**

The personal is a category of analysis that calls into question the arbitrary oppositions of the Enlightenment – mind/body, public/private, rational/non-rational, individual/community, and so on. These binaries work together to construct normative sexual identities and maintain male privilege in administrative theory and practice. In this chapter, I have outlined the ways in which personal resistance is en/countered by equity advocates whose gendered subjectivities make these false bifurcations visible. Kate, Linda and Marg were hired to implement policy which revealed the emotional investments of those who had previously benefited from inequitable access to social benefits. Access, however, is determined through unspoken social norms that are shaped by the privileged component of each oppositional pair but this knowledge flies in the face of a deeply entrenched belief in individual meritocracy. Those who benefit most from their position within these discursive intersections may be emotionally invested in maintaining the status quo. Therefore, questioning the discourse around inequitable employment practices is often met with non-rational, emotional, and very personal resistance despite the fiction of rationality maintained by most organizational theory.

Policy is, by its nature, educative in the sense that it attempts in one way or another to shift social practices. Gender equity employment policy has proven to be an
educative process that requires what Boler (1999) calls a pedagogy of discomfort – i.e., the critical examination of prejudgements that hold social regularities in place. Because Marg, Linda, and Kate were responsible to question and restructure the organizational discourses that confirmed belief systems at the core of normative gendered identities, they found themselves en/countering resistance in the historically contingent context of constructions of sexuality, emotion work, and emotional labour.

Although I have attempted to foreground three distinct forms of resistance – ideological resistance in Chapter 4, structural resistance in Chapter 5, and emotional resistance in Chapter 6 – there are clearly many ways in which they are intertwined when considering the text of gender equity employment policy. In the chapter that follows, I will draw this particular “tapestry of discourses” to a close with a consideration of the ways in which these interdependent forms of resistance inform one another and how that understanding might transform practices around gender in educational organizations.

Endnotes

1. I wish to differentiate here, as Boler (1999) does, between moral anger and defensive anger. Although this differentiation is tenuous (pp. 191-192), the phenomenological roots of the anger I felt during my presentation were less about protecting my prejudgements from change than they were based in a sense of injustice which I was attempting to address in my presentation and saw replicated in the actions of my colleagues. Such a differentiation should not be seen as replicating the “either/or trap of guilt or innocence” (Boler, p. 192) but simply representing the “emotional genealogies” which “make visible what we have and have not learned, or chosen, to see” (p. 192).

3. In fact, although academic papers are available, Fineman’s (1993) edited anthology is the only book that I have been able to uncover in my literature search which explicitly attempts to theorize emotional work and labour in organizations. Boler’s book, *Feeling Power*, is another important resource but is less explicitly focussed on organizational theory.

4. The term “organization sexuality” is used by Hearn and Parkin (1995) to connote the notion that “organisational life and sexuality occur simultaneously. Not only do organisations construct sexuality, as does sexuality construct organisations, but more importantly, the very occurrence of ‘organisation’ invokes ‘sexuality’, and the very
occurrence of ‘sexuality’ in the public domain at least, frequently invokes ‘organisations’, so they are no longer separable” (pp. 131-132).

5. I am including sexual harassment policy in the category of gender equity employment policy in the sense that it conforms to Cockburn’s notion of “the long agenda” of employment equity policy.

6. For example, Ontario’s Education Act, s. 264 (1) (c) calls for teachers to display a long list of moral qualities such as sobriety, temperance, honesty, and “all other virtues.” In addition, case law, like the Schewan case in British Columbia, makes it clear that teachers are judged by a moral standard that is higher than other professions and need to conform to the moral standards of the community.

7. The “Ali McBeal effect” refers to the conflicted message this character represents for feminism. For example, she appears on the June 29, 1998 cover of TIME magazine along with Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem. Under Ali’s picture are the words, “Is feminism dead?” Since Ali is a self-absorbed, Ivy League lawyer who appears in most episodes with short skirts that defy not only social conventions for women in formal legal contexts, but also the demands of the inhospitable winter weather of Boston, the fictional setting for the show, the inference seems to be that, if this is feminism, it is at least terminally ill. However, given that this show and TIME magazine are firmly in the grip of patriarchal control, I suspect that a more critical reading of this conclusion is called for – one that I attempt to provide in this chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Moving On: Strategizing Resistance

*Freedom ought to be conceived of as an achievement within the concreteness of lived social situations rather than as a primordial or original possession. We might, for the moment, think of it as a distinctive way of orienting the self to the possible, of overcoming the determinate, of transcending or moving beyond in the full awareness that such overcoming can never be complete.*

Maxine Greene, 1988, pp. 4-5

Gender equity employment policy is a discourse of liberty – “the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 1988, p. 3). However, as Black-American freedom fighter, Frederick Douglass, observed in 1857, “Those who profess to favour freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men [sic] who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning, they want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters” (1857/1967, pp. 21-22, cited in Greene, 1988, p. 89). As the stories of Kate, Marg, and Linda demonstrate in preceding chapters, working towards gender equity in educational organizations has required, metaphorically at least, plowing the ground of resistant ideologies, enduring the thunder and lightning of resistant organizational structures, and muting the roar of personal resistance.

Their lived social situation has taken place within the concreteness of an increasingly pervasive conserving discourse in a rapidly changing educational environment. While change is hardly a new phenomenon in education, the rate and range of policy change in Ontario’s education system since the mid-1990s has been, if not entirely unprecedented, at least extraordinarily challenging. Since I began my doctoral research, two political parties with ideological positions at opposite ends of the political spectrum have governed Ontario, the three women that participated in my study have all had their jobs reconfigured and two were reassigned, their network of colleagues with
formally designated equity positions has disappeared, boards were amalgamated in an effort to redistribute resources and centralize administration, financing mechanisms for public education underwent complex and substantial revision and budgets were drastically cut, the male and female elementary teacher federations were amalgamated, and equity policy has come and is now mostly gone. Many of the changes I have just described have been a response to an increasingly performative ethos that pervades education policy and practice in Ontario. By performativity, I mean the shift from state policies based on humanistic values to those that emphasize measurable performance indicators that mirror the practices of big business (Lingard, 1993; Yeatman, 1994). Blackmore (1999b) notes that in educational systems,

the performative state is increasingly premised upon contractual exchanges between individuals that become embedded in curriculum and behaviour negotiations between students and teachers, in teacher employment contracts with principals, in performance management contracts between managers and teachers, and in school charter contracts with the ministry, which produce a form of self-regulation of the individual. (p. 36)

None of these changes is unique to Ontario; its education policy and structural shifts in its educational systems reflect national and international responses to global reconfigurations of political, economic, and social alliances. As neo-liberal economic patterns and neo-conservative social expectations have gained ascendancy in public policy in Ontario, as elsewhere, feminism in general, and gender equity policy initiatives in particular, has fallen on hard times (Blackmore, 1999b, p. 204). Lingard and Douglas (1999), for example, describe these political shifts as the regendering of the state and educational systems in the wake of an anti-feminist backlash that has swept over the largely prescriptive, but significant, gains in equity policy and practice in public institutions. For example, previous chapters have described the resistance that emerged when liberal feminism produced greater representation of women in positions of added responsibility. Even minimal gains were read as inequity for men in the neo-liberal economic and neo-conservative social environment: a reading that produced vehement
opposition to short agenda reform and a reawakening of ideological, structural, and personal resistance to further transformation of gender inequitable practices.

Giddens' (1994) analysis of the new social and economic order describes this phenomenon as post-traditionalism or the re-fundamentalizing of gender orders based on justifying claims of economic imperatives. That is, while gender norms were simply taken up as self-evident "truths" by the old traditionalism, or what I have called a normative consciousness, the new traditionalism is subject to greater scrutiny because of a more pervasive prescriptive consciousness. Thus, policy which disproportionately penalizes working women (e.g., cuts to daycare funding, gender equity programs) is no longer accepted unproblematically in a post-traditional world and so is rationalized based on the "common sense" mantra of neo-liberalism centred in the self-justifying claims of competitive globalisation.

The new traditionalism has prompted a shift in discourse away from one in which schools were seen as sites of producing change around issues of social justice such as gender equity, however weakly it may have been embraced by individuals, schools, and boards. Instead, a discourse of reproduction in which education systems are increasingly called upon to meet the demands of postmodern and global definitions of an economic and social status quo are apparent in official Ministry documents and reports. For example, Radwanski's report, *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts*, which was commissioned by a Liberal provincial government in 1987, cited three goals for Ontario's education system: excellence, equity, and accountability. Seven years later, The Royal Commission Report to the NDP provincial government, *For the Love of Learning* (1994), retained excellence, equity,\(^2\) and accountability and put forward another goal – efficiency – in response to the economic restructuring which was reshaping both the public and private sector of employment. Current Ministry of Education reports and documents, however, contain a few generic references to equity but have dropped all specific references to gender equity,\(^3\) while efficiency, and accountability dominate policy language.\(^4\) With the passage of Bill 8 and the disappearance of any official support for gender equity initiatives that are not tied closely to dominant discourses of individual
economic mobility, the cultural change in educational organizations for which so many gender equity advocates worked so hard for so long has already lost important ground and seems in danger of disappearing entirely. As Marg remarked during the focus group, "Gender equity is so vulnerable and can disappear so quickly."

As I have conducted my research, I have found little evidence to dispute the claim that gender equity work is currently experiencing a degree of backlash that has not been so keenly felt for at least two decades. Quite truthfully, it has been difficult not to be overwhelmed by the degree of resistance to gender equity employment policy I have encountered. Despite the perception touted by media headlines and board administrators who believe that women have "won" in reaching their goals for full participation in the public sphere, the discursive space I encountered during interviews, document searches, a focus group, and in anecdotal notations remains largely conservative. Many of those encounters have been shared in this dissertation, however, one particular moment may serve to illustrate this point further. Following lunch after we had met for the focus group, I was walking back to my car with Marg and Kate. We knew we would probably not be meeting again as a group and so our conversation became rather reflective. We talked about how good it was to get together to talk about issues of shared concern and then Marg told us that she was meeting with her Director that afternoon to find out whether her position had been cut in the restructuring of Board A. It was a particularly poignant moment for all of us because Board A had been a bastion of gender equity for boards across Canada for almost three decades. The thought that a conservative discourse had reasserted itself where the pressures of provincial policies had successfully undercut Board A's commitment to employment equity silenced Kate and I as we continued walking together.

As if to emphasize the return to a conserving discourse, the provisions for employment equity -- especially gender equity -- brought forward by our new faculty union for ratification prior to contract negotiations at the university where I now teach, sparked protracted and increasingly heated exchanges in faculty association meetings. A well-organized and almost instantly mobilized anti-equity lobby used e-mail, university
newspapers, union voting mechanisms, and membership drives to stall votes on equity clauses or force their rewording. Because the employment equity clauses were relatively conservative and did not move much beyond conditions already required by federal law, the equity backlash came as a surprise to equity advocates on campus. While complacency was their initial stance, the speed with which anti-equity forces gathered strength motivated a strong response from groups like the Women's Caucus. Their efforts did not dissuade the anti-equity forces but they did draw together coalitions of students, staff and faculty who comprised a less vocal but determined majority in support of the articles which would allow the union to negotiate for modest employment equity policy.

As I watched these events unfold, I heard the same arguments brought up at meetings against gender equity employment policy based on notions of meritocracy that had emerged in my own study. I took some comfort from Foucault's claim that power is a circulating discourse of privileged knowledge, and that the current inhospitable equity environment may provide a sufficiently dark backdrop of dominant social regularities for strands of resistant discourse to be viewed more clearly. In other words, the social patterns of neo-liberal economic policies and conservative social policies have been in place long enough in Ontario, as in other jurisdictions worldwide, to provide a clearer picture of who wins and who loses and, as a result, who may become more vulnerable to discourses that oppose the patterns of privilege they espouse. In a recent column in the Toronto Star (December 12, 1999, A14), for example, political commentator, Dalton Camp – a long-time Conservative with progressive leanings – claims that the radical right is losing ground or has lost entirely in jurisdictions around the world. While his claims are almost certainly overly optimistic (for a more sobering view, see Corson, in press), Camp writes that

Neo-conservatism, its time running out, is failing, has failed. because its vision was obsessed with the institutions of capitalism, because its success left it blind to the dark stain of poverty and hunger, like an oil spill on the ocean, spreading throughout the world, observed only by ordinary people, not by their politicians.
We are, hopefully, now adapting to these realities and to our reawakened humanity.

Although the potential of a move away from pervasive neo-conservative social policy rationalized by neo-liberal economics may be encouraging news for advocates of gender equity, it does not dislodge entirely what Chafetz (1990) calls gender ideologies: that is, "belief systems that explain how and why males and females differ; specify on that basis different (and inevitably unequal) rights, responsibilities, restrictions, and rewards to each gender; and justify negative reactions to non-conformists" (p. 35). Thus, wherever the discourse of gender equity is politically positioned, historical evidence suggests that it will continue to be resisted in the three interwoven layers described in previous chapters: ideological, structural, and personal. As a result, although I am drawing this study to a close, gender equity employment policy is an ever-evolving tapestry of discourses in both form and substance.

**Considering the Tapestry Already Woven**

Throughout this study, I have returned to the image of weaving a tapestry as an evocative representation of the more ephemeral social fibres referred to as discourses. If taken too literally, metaphors are inevitably self-limiting; however, I am taking up the image as a living tapestry. That is, while tapestries have a beginning and an end, discourses are never-ending threads of language woven on the loom of historical and cultural contexts. Over time, these discursive strands intersect with one another in changing patterns of dominance and regression as individual and collective consciousness shifts. Some social patterns, which Scheurich (1994) calls social regularities, form durable inequalities (Tilly, 1998) that privilege some social actors and marginalize the interests of others based on ideological positions that are entrenched in social systems. As a result, social regularities tend to persist and continue to resist change even in the face of formal policy, no matter how social conditions may shift. Normative gender regimes are regularities that resist change more persistently than most.
As I have explored the meaning of resistance to gender equity employment policy in the specific context of Ontario's educational systems, I have attempted to provide a thoughtful analysis of the tapestry of discourses that I have en countered. First, before turning to a consideration of the specific effects of gender on shaping organizational practices in Ontario's educational systems, I considered the etymological roots of the phenomenon of resistance in Chapter 1. Resistance was theorized as a circulating text that appears in the strong threads of social regularities but also appears in counter-discourses of those who wish to speak otherwise. Employment equity policy is premised on a vision of meritocracy that recognizes and works to eliminate historical patterns of inequality by bringing to consciousness unproblematized prejudgements. The dominant narratives (the prejudgements) of liberal capitalist democracies, however, value competitive individualism, the concentration of power in the hands of owners of capital, and scientific rationality in which "truth" is a value-free commodity based on objective empirical evidence. All three narratives converge in a deeply entrenched belief in a liberal version of meritocracy in which social benefits are perceived to have been ascribed based on individual merit rather than one's social affiliations.

Gender equity employment policy, then, is a resistant counter-narrative to core liberal prejudgements in that it is premised on communitarian values of shared responsibility for those who have inequitable access to social benefits based on their group affiliation. That is, proponents of gender equity take up the particularities of social experience embedded in historical patterns of social interaction. They argue that these patterns privilege some more than others around markers of identity such as race, gender, sexual orientation and so on and that social policy needs to provide for greater social justice for those whose subjective experience is not represented in dominant discourses of privilege.

As I worked my way through the dominant narratives and counter-narratives at the heart of the tapestry I am weaving, the tensions between universalism and particularism, objectivity and subjectivity, individualism and collectivism revealed complex concepts of equality which reflected the dual notion proposed by Aristotle of treating equals equally
and unequals unequally. In Chapter 2, I picked up these dual strands within the context of feminist critiques of political and organizational theory. In particular, I investigated the ways in which patriarchal arrangements of power, which Pateman describes as the sexual contract, have been replicated in industrialized liberal democratic states and the social construction of modern hierarchies that manage power relations in organizations.

Gendered power relations, however, are not static but are constantly negotiated between social actors at various locations within organizations. Educational organizations are particularly interesting examples of the ways in which masculinist discourses have been resisted by predominantly liberal feminist counter-narratives that have challenged and reshaped both policy and practice. Like other feminist positions, a liberal feminist perspective has offered both possibilities and limitations for changing gendered practices in organizations. For example, it has called into question the unequal gender distribution of positions in organizations whereby men occupy positions of authority and prestige in far greater numbers than women. Moreover, Hester Eisenstein (1996) argues that liberal feminism has a radical core that unsettles patriarchy. However, its critics charge that it tends to undertheorize the public/private split between men’s and women’s spheres of activity, and does not adequately problematize forms of rationality which exacerbate the ontological dichotomies which privilege men.

Since challenges to gender regimes in Ontario's educational organizations have primarily been informed by liberal feminism, I chose to explore its possibilities and limitations as well as three alternative categories of theoretical positions taken up by various feminist scholars in order to extend the possibilities for my analysis of resistance to gender equity employment policy. First, difference/radical feminists attempt to situate their theory in the particular experience of women and have provided some very interesting analysis that offers woman-based models of organization and leadership. However, critics point out that difference is almost always transformed in practice into deficiency and that even when difference leads to transformations of practice that are taken up by men, such as more caring and collegial models of leadership, women are not
necessarily more welcome or are co-opted temporarily by "greedy organizations" (Blackmore, 1996) to serve particular ends.

Marxist feminism foregrounds the ideological underpinnings of capitalism and provides a way to understand their effects on women who were traditionally excluded from the benefits of a productive work force, but is not entirely satisfactory for providing an understanding of why women continue to be oppressed even when they enter the public sphere of activity. Dual systems theory, which considers the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism in maintaining the privilege that men enjoy in both the public and private realm, has been more successful as a theoretical lens but is often critiqued as a master discourse of the left which imposes closure on more complex readings of women's lived experiences.

I argue that postmodern/poststructural feminisms offer the opportunity to explore women's lived experience in more complex ways through the intersecting and often marginalized discourses of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination. Because postmodernism and poststructuralism take an anti-foundational stance, they also offer the opportunity to break with dichotomies that hold gender privilege in place and even question totalising discourses such as identity construction around essentialized notions of being male and female. However, postmodernism/poststructuralism are not without their critics, particularly those who point out that they debunk the foundations of a feminist critique of male privilege just as that critique was gaining ground in transforming sexist social practices. Others, however, point out that the conjunction of feminism with postmodernism/poststructuralism pushes the discussion towards opposition, critique, and resistance to dominant ideologies. I would concur and have offered a conceptual framework in Chapter 3 for considering the intersections of discourses, both as they exist and as they might be, in educational organizations. Using the conceptual framework as an analytical heuristic, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 consider the themes of ideological, structural, and personal resistance to the implementation of gender equity employment policy as it is revealed in the discourses en/countered in the lived experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg.
Having considered the tapestry already woven, I will turn now to the intersections between the strands of resistance I have already described in previous chapters and weave them over the conceptual framework in an attempt to identify and explore the possibilities of locations at which transformative change may emerge. In the process, I will re-examine the influence of social and economic pressures that are reshaping employment equity policy and consider potential locations for transformation that need further research. Lastly, I will briefly consider the possibilities of doing gender equity work in educational organizations and consider how we might move into a conversational discursive space in which we may "learn to speak otherwise" of gendered policies and practices.

**Weaving Together Strands of Resistance**

In attempting to identify possible strategic locations for transforming inequitable employment practices, I will reconsider the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3 that has shaped my study. The conceptual framework draws connections between individual and collective consciousness and provides for a discursive space in which policy is enacted between social actors whose prejudgements may differ. Since social actors are positioned differently within the dominant discourses of power, resistance and counter-resistance often characterizes their interactions within the public domain. Therefore, in the context of my study, in order to foreground ideological, structural, and personal resistance to gender equity employment policy in educational organizations, I have arbitrarily separated these strands of resistance that are in practice interwoven by social actors as they interact with one another, both individually and collectively.

For example, in the case of Kate's decision to self-silence in her encounter with her supervisor over the committee structure overseeing sexual harassment cases, all three strands of resistance are evident in a largely conserving discursive space. First, a traditional liberal ideology is evident in the supervisor's desire to have each applicant's case heard by an equal number of men and women in order to provide a "fair" hearing. His notion of fairness reveals an unproblematized belief in a rational process based on the
merits of the case in which applicants seeking recourse in sexual harassment cases, the vast majority of whom are female, are viewed as non-gendered individuals, rather than as particular individuals who are objects of male privilege based on fraternal-patriarchal rights to a larger social category to which the applicant belongs: women.

Second, structural resistance to Kate's suggestions, based on prescriptive prejudices inherent to his ideological position, emerge in his ability to act on his ideological position because of his privileged structural location in a system described by the board's Director as conservative. That is, structural practices provide him with the power to enact policy that entrenches an equal number of men and women on the committee, based on his belief that the usually male defendant might not otherwise be treated equitably, while limiting Kate's ability to challenge his actions. Interestingly, his objection calls into question his belief that the formal process is rational and is, therefore not subject to the vagaries of personal beliefs and values in deciding on the complex issues of sexual harassment. After all, if only the facts of the case and not the gender of the main players are important in arriving at a fair judgement, then why is the gender composition of the hearing committee important at all? However, Kate's organizational position was too vulnerable for her to chance eliciting more defensive anger than she had already encountered by presenting a liberal feminist argument attached to equitable representation based on the numbers of women in the teaching force. On several occasions, she had experienced personal resistance from her superintendent based on his normative consciousness of gender equity which was also demonstrated by the board members to whom he answered. Kate believed that, if she continued the debate in order to point out the prejudices at the heart of his objections, she might cross the boundaries that he had drawn around him in order to conserve the normative social order and so she chose to remain silent. However, that choice is context-bound and is only one of the large number that construct complex discursive patterns over time between consciousness and response.

The case above not only demonstrates that ideological, structural, and personal resistance are intertwined throughout the discursive space between consciousness and
response, but that social actors move between levels of consciousness in response to wider social influences, policy constraints, and personal interactions, sometimes within the same interaction. As a result, whether the discursive pattern is characterized as conservation, conciliation, or conversation, it will be shaped by the strands of resistance running through it that are complex, contextual, and framed by individual and collective pre-judgements which change over time. The conceptual framework I have used for my analysis of resistance to gender equity employment policy has been useful in identifying the separate threads which make up the tapestry of discourses shaping gender equity employment policy. It is not, however, a predictive template which can be applied, but instead is a heuristic device that encourages understanding of the various layers of resistance encountered when working towards gender equity in the workplace. Figure 3, below, provides a visual representation of the conceptual framework that has informed my analysis.

**Conceptual Framework for Critical Hermeneutic Analysis of Gender Equity Employment Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Consciousness</th>
<th>Discursive Domain of Resistance</th>
<th>Public Policy Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Consciousness</td>
<td>I T E</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D R R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive Consciousness</td>
<td>U O S</td>
<td>Remediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historically Effected Consciousness</td>
<td>A L</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.
Reconceptualizing the Conceptual Framework

The discursive arena of Kate’s, Linda’s, and Marg’s lived experience is the public world of provincial policy, educational bureaucracies, and political demands – the polis. Within that discursive domain are the multitudes of resistances and possibilities that both constrain and give hope for moving towards a more equitable future for women in educational organizations. As I have already suggested, however, while layers of discourse were neatly separated for analytical purposes in the conceptual framework, the discursive domain of educational organizations is a much messier web of actions and interactions that offer probable but not entirely predictable discursive patterns. For example, while the themes of ideological, structural, and personal resistance I have explored demonstrate that a normative consciousness most often elicits a coercive response in policy and practice, they also indicate that once consciousness is expressed in the discursive domain, it is open to debate, disruption, and deconstruction at any of the discursive intersections within the organizational context. In the polis, then, multiple intersections offer social actors what Hannah Arendt described as “that public space between themselves where freedom could appear” (1961, p. 4, cited in Greene, p. 86). In Figure 4, which follows, I present a reconceptualization of my original conceptual framework that acknowledges the complexity of the lived experience of working within a public discursive domain in which constraints and possibilities intersect with one another at myriads of locations.

The reconceptualized model is, I believe, a more accurate visual representation of the lived experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg. Each nexus within the tapestry of discourses is reminiscent of Kashope-Wright’s (1995) discussion of discursive crossroads. That is, it is a meeting place that is imbued with “tension and contradiction, danger and possibility” (Kashope-Wright, 1995, p. 10). It is inherently discursive and inevitably messy in that the meanings that interactants bring to the crossroads are indeterminate and often contradictory. Yet, in Kashope-Wright’s conceptualisation, it is also an "enchanted site" to which we bring our hopes, fears, and symbolically place non-rational (in the sense of being beyond scientific rationality) "sacrifices to the gods to ward
off evil spells or to cast spells for good and evil" (p. 10). It is a place that pulses with our storied existence.

In the stories of Kate, Marg, and Linda, I have discovered the tensions and contradictions, the dangers and the possibilities for employment opportunities for women at the myriads of discursive intersections within their educational organizations at which they en/counter ideological, structural, and personal resistance. The public sphere, or polis, in which they do their equity work is represented below by the circle and the intersecting lines represent discursive strands that weave their way in and out of the discursive boundaries of educational organizations. As they do so, they weave social regularities that resist transformation but also form discursive nexus at which patterns of resistance can be disrupted and altered.

**En/countering Resistance in the Polis**

![Diagram: Public Sphere and Discursive Intersections]

As I have researched the themes that have emerged from interviews with Linda, Marg, and Kate, conducted document searches and elite interviews within their boards, and followed up with a focus group in which all three women participated, the intertwined discursive threads of ideological, structural, and personal resistance have formed differing patterns. None of the lived experiences of the women in this study
formed consistent discursive tapestries, but Kate’s experience of resistance was generally conserving, Linda’s was characterized by conciliation, and Marg’s was sometimes authentic conversation. Not surprisingly, the consciousness of the role of women in the public sphere of activity demonstrated by Kate’s board was generally normative, while Linda’s board was more often prescriptive and Marg’s demonstrated movement toward an historically effected consciousness. None of the boards demonstrated consistency, however, although the discursive patterns of practice I have just described tended to weave dominant texts of resistance in the polis around issues of gender equity employment practices.

Although my research found some disruption of gendered employment practices in all three boards, all of the boards demonstrated rapid movement towards conserving discursive patterns as soon as normative ideological positions dominated provincial policy. As I have observed this rapid regendering of practice in all three boards, even Board A, in the aftermath of ideological change represented by Bill 8 and hasty restructuring under Harris’s Conservative government, it seems clear that gender ideologies offer persistent discursive threads in the public sphere. The experience of personal resistance that I described in Chapter 6 is poignant evidence of their persistence, despite public policy that has attempted to offer remediation for sex-based practices that disadvantage women in educational organizations. Still change has occurred in the representation of women in administrative positions. Direct statistical comparison is impossible because, since Bill 8, data about gender representation by position in educational organizations are gathered on a very limited basis by the Ministry of Education. However, the minimal statistical evidence that is still available reveals that women represent slightly more than fifty percent of the vice-principals in elementary schools in Ontario and are better represented in all other administrative categories. While these numbers do not meet the targets established in P/PM 111, they are somewhat encouraging. Numbers of women in positions of authority, however, are small comfort if practices that continue to exclude them from the cultural life of organizations are not similarly transformed. That is, transformation requires strategizing resistance to the
regendering of the educational workplace at all of the discursive nexus represented in the reconceptualized analytical framework (Figure 2). I will now turn to a consideration of those nexus in the lived experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg and the locations for further research that they identify.

Discovering Locations for Transforming Resistance

The reconceptualized framework in Figure 4 provides a representation of the myriad locations at which employment practices and policies that disadvantage women and strategies for transformation might be reconsidered. During this research, many locations were identified but more inquiry is needed to fully develop an understanding of their potential for transformation. For example, federation negotiations were identified by all of the participants in this study as an important location where gender equity advocacy might occur, particularly in the absence of provincial employment equity policy. Their comments during the focus group, however, point to the complexity of this discursive location in considering its possibilities for changing policy and practice around issues of gender.

Kate: If there isn't legislation out there, then they [i.e., federations] need to negotiate this stuff into their collective agreements. They need to give equity, gender equity, racial equity, a profile within their collective agreements somehow, some way, and that's when I'll believe that the federations have bought into this the way I believe they should.

Kate saw teacher federations as primary players in ensuring that equity is still a part of board employment practices, but also saw them as resistant to employment equity. Marg pointed to the importance of building alliances with supportive groups within the unions and teacher federations as well, but also recognized that resistance to gender equity is entrenched in many of the union groups of her own board. Such resistance became very evident during prior joint committee work related to developing the survey and follow-up policies required by The Employment Equity Act.
Marg: There were female-dominated groups who were very, very supportive . . . But there were a lot of managers on that joint committee and federations and unions that were male-dominated, and I would include in that the OSSTF for the secondary level and to some degree [the amalgamated elementary union] members, who were not good on the employment equity stuff . . . [And with amalgamation, budget cuts, and the loss of employment equity policy], I think it's going to be really, really hard to get support for equity. They're going to be fighting those basic job security issues and half the population gets lost in all that.

Linda, however, felt that the process around *The Employment Equity Act* had been a valuable one in her board and, since it had not had the structural disruption of amalgamation, her board had chosen to follow through on many of the recommendations that emerged from that process.

Linda: We did the employment systems review, and we did an equity plan. Now, I said to my former Superintendent who I reported to, "So how much dust is sitting on that plan?" And he said, "There are things that we are doing that are directly related to that plan. " . . . When I hear them doing, for example, interviewing skills, you know, unbiased interviewing skills, they're bringing their principals in and doing workshops on how to interview, I know that they're still keeping in mind some of those recommendations.

Further study of the residual effects of gender equity employment policy are needed to determine whether Linda's guarded optimism is based on actual change in practice as a result of the influence of employment equity policy or whether the influence of temporary need based on economics and demographics are more explanatory. For example, boards may be more amenable to recruiting women administrators to fill the growing need for qualified principals as the baby-boomer generation retires. Other explanations for the relatively steady growth of women in entry-level administrative positions include the need for emotional labourers to mitigate the organizational stresses of restructuring (Blackmore, 1996). Anecdotal evidence provided by Linda during the focus group and many conversations I have had with practitioners and graduate students
suggests, as well, that the general unattractiveness of entry-level administrative jobs to both male and female candidates is forcing senior administrators to widen their search and identify more women.

More research is needed, as well, at other discursive nexus that offer transformative possibilities, which were identified by the participants in this study. For example, how do equity advocates work within networks of school principals and curriculum developers, in faculties of education, and on new policy councils like the Ontario College of Teachers? All three participants agreed during the focus group that policy alone is not enough to transform the pre judgements that hold gender inequities in place in educational organizations. Instead, as Marg remarked, "You have to be ready somehow" - i.e., ready to recognize the various discursive layers which enable or transform inequity at all of the locations where intersections occur within the polis and then work at reweaving social regularities into more equitable texts. The word "somehow" signals that the means by which one might be ready or even where one might strategize action are diffuse and unclear, particularly in the context of postmodern social and economic pressures on the policies and practices of public institutions. I will now turn to a brief consideration of some of those pressures on the tapestry of gender equity employment discourses.

Weaving New Threads into Gender Equity Employment Texts

Even when gender equity work is being done at various locations within educational organizations, the social regularities, which have shaped gender equity policy, are being challenged and reshaped, often very quickly and with little public consultation. As previous chapters have demonstrated, gender equity employment texts are often a response to strong advocacy by liberal feminists who emphasize "individual and gender-neutral ideas of merit" (Blackmore, 1999b, p. 210) acted upon within a rational bureaucracy. As a result, policy has remained formally prescriptive while in practice it has often been implemented by administrators who demonstrate a substantively
normative consciousness. All three women in my research confirmed that having policy in place that makes equitable practice a contractual and/or legal responsibility has been and, where it still exists, continues to be a useful support for equity advocates (Collins, Batten, Ainley, & Getty, 1996, cited in Lingard & Douglas, 1999).

As we have discovered in Ontario, however, employment equity policy can disappear very quickly. Moreover, even if it did exist, neo-liberal responses to the forces of global competitiveness, technological insurgency, and the marketization of the public sphere are making public policy less responsive to the pressure of government censure. For example, most boards of education in Ontario have been devolved into larger administrative units with limited representation and authority at the local level. While local boards retain less authority, they are increasingly responsible – or, to use the currently favoured language, accountable – to a Ministry of Education that has centralized power over most aspects of school practice as well as the primary financial levers at the provincial government level of authority. However, at the same time that the provincial government has centralized power over the primary budget issues such as class size and tax mechanisms for financing public education, it is actively encouraging the outsourcing of board and Ministry services to private providers who cannot be held politically accountable for their practices. The centralizing of power to a government that has demonstrated its antipathy to gender equity policy while embracing the devolution of public education to the private sector has limited the ability of equity advocates to hold educational organizations even minimally accountable for many of their employment practices.

As boards of education scramble to respond to the broader forces that shape their programs and practices, the discourse of equity is often not only reshaped but virtually disappears. For example, Kate spoke of changes to policymaking practices within her newly amalgamated board that were driven by the discourse of efficiency at the expense of equity.

Kate: It's interesting in talking about [gender equity and anti-racism] policies and review of policies. I mean, in our new board, we are so far removed from any of
that kind of work it's unbelievable, and now they've taken this approach that we will have minimal numbers of policies, the policies that we do have will be one or two lines long, and things will be procedural. Generally one, maybe two people sit down and write the policy and it gets shoved through . . . I don't even know how the [committee appointments process] works anymore . . . Speaking directly to our former Director about this, I couldn't even get an answer about how this was going to operate except to say, well, you know when we get to the point where we want employee involvement [on equity committees] you'll probably hear about it.

Clearly, the policy-making model she describes offers no opportunities to provide for a conversational discursive space; instead, the focus is on efficiency based on a heightened managerialism, which has no time for transformative practice, particularly around issues of gender equity.

While boards struggle to implement massive structural change within the context of deep budget cuts, one thing seems clear, based on the lived experience of Kate, Marg, and Linda; the days of providing a formal space for advocates of gender equity employment policy in educational organizations are gone. During the focus group, Kate considered the position of formal gender equity policy in late 1998 relative to when she first began her position as an equity advocate and remarked,

Kate: If I had to talk about the differences in terms of perception about gender equity, it's just that now it's gone. It's gone from the horizon and that's really troubling to me because, well, some things have changed and I think in the backs of some people's minds they do know that gender equity needs to be attended to and by rights should be attended to. It just doesn't have the status that it used to have and it's gone. It's gone. That's really hard for me to take and accept.

Marg concurred and said that while the number of women in administrative positions had remained relatively steady at the school level throughout the amalgamation process, the discourse of gender equity was fragile as the unions and federations focussed their collective energy on resisting the political agenda of the Harris Conservative government. Therefore, as the normative threads have reasserted themselves in the tapestry of
discourses that forms the text of employment equity policy, resistance to the dominant patterns that are emerging will need to be provided if gender equity is to survive.

Reweaving the Conversation: Learning to Speak Otherwise

Just as Chapter 1 suggests, the cases in this study demonstrate that, although employment equity policy never reached a place of truly dominant privilege, its formal discursive position opened it up to resistant discourses that have displaced it in public policy. However, the discourse of gender equity continues to circulate through the discursive intersections of educational organizations. Grassroots organizations of educators (e.g., EDGE – Educators for Gender Equity) and parents (e.g., PERC – Parents' Education Resource Council) in Ontario, coalitions between governmental agencies still doing gender equity work and faculties of education, and computer resource networks and equity list servers that transcend geographic boundaries have all worked strategically to ensure that issues of equity remain a part of the public debate about educational issues in Ontario despite the press of marketization of the public sphere. However, even these networks of advocacy are being worn down by the pervasive resistance they en countered to work that is done by volunteers outside their ongoing daily responsibilities which are often increasing in restructured workplaces. In fact, since most of these grassroots organizations are predominantly female, their members are already carrying "the double shift" of working women. Still, the effect has been to keep the conversation alive around issues of gender equity in educational organizations despite the lack of formal support.

While the current challenges to employment equity, particularly gender equity, are daunting for those who advocate through formal or informal discursive networks, postmodernists would argue that they also offer the opportunity to break apart the hegemony of gendered dichotomies and move towards more complex understandings of the ways gender works in the workplace. In fact, as Blackmore argues (1999b, p. 215), in an era when we can no longer depend on the "maternalist state" to act on behalf of groups with inequitable access to social benefits, it is strategically dangerous to depend on its
largesse. Instead, "as discourses shift with new policy initiatives and as new political ideologies take hold, so we need to be constantly aware of how such shifts may close some possibilities and open others" (p.212). For example, the movement away from employment policy which acts to redress inequities for identifiable groups, while regrettable in many ways, also moves the conversations, where they exist, away from a focus on greater representation – i.e., numbers – to a consideration of the more complex cultural issues of women in the workplace.

As I have already suggested, one effect of previous policy has been an increasing number of women in administrative positions as well as women working towards their qualifications for school leadership. In addition, as many Ontario boards anticipate a shortage of qualified leaders in the next few years due to the retirement of a large cohort of baby boomers, they are actively recruiting women as well as men to become qualified for these positions. The result is an increase in opportunities to dialogue with men who are working towards or are already in positions of leadership. For example, the gender distribution of the cohort group currently working on principals' qualifications at the faculty of education where I teach is approximately even. Although I do not have direct knowledge of what happens in this course, based on my experience with mixed gender groups studying leadership at two universities in Canada, the increased cohort of women may offer a wider range of perspectives and experiences as issues of leadership are discussed. In essence, because gender equity employment policy seems to have encouraged greater participation rates for women in administration in educational organizations, opportunities for conversation between men and women present themselves in multitudes of settings where women can encourage cultural change.

However, women and men who support gender equity will need to act knowledgeably and strategically in order to ensure that opportunities which have increased possibilities for women in the past are not unavailable for women in the future. Beyond assuring that opportunities exist, however, is the need to challenge masculinist gender regimes that are more firmly entrenched in the present political climate (Coulter, 1998) in educational systems.
Kate: It's the way that organizations like school boards work, the male domination, the power structures, the way that men protect themselves, the way that men, you know, work together to give themselves more power and maintain that power.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the ways in which organizational structures act to maintain a normative gender order. In addition, research in various jurisdictions (Ball, 1994; Blackmore, 1999; Coulter, 1998; Lingard & Douglas, 1999) provides substantiation of the claim that so-called postmodern hierarchies that are flatter and, at least ostensibly, more consensual have simply reworked normative rationales for maintaining traditional gender relations. In fact, Chapter 6 suggests strongly that personal resistance to gender equity has been exacerbated by the new managerialism that is replacing more complex discourses of leadership. Therefore, to proceed with principal's courses and Masters programs that focus on theories of leadership and administration that do not challenge the retraditionalizing of gender relations in organizations is to ensure that a masculinist culture will pervade educational organizations during the tenure of the next generation of administrators.

Men En/countering Feminism

As men work through the effects of feminism in public life, they respond from a variety of perspectives to the complex ways in which women, whether they name themselves feminist or not, interpret their own experience. In general, men are openly or covertly resistant to the changes in the workplace that the presence of women elicits and even more resistant to the various feminist theories that inform and support change. However, some men have taken up a more pro-feminist stance and, although it is difficult, I would argue that more work needs to be done between pro-feminist men and feminist women researchers and practitioners, including especially visible minority women. Doing so creates the potential for transforming gender relations by creating a conversational space where the voice of the "other" is not only spoken but is heard.
As feminism itself has become an increasingly complex theoretical field that has given rise to more subtly nuanced political responses to gender inequity, the conversation has widened. While the potential for interaction between men and women increases in the public sphere, the conversation has become potentially transformative for both. Messner (1997) offers the following provocative observation:

[M]en will have to work against our narrowly defined economic and political interests. But men also have a stake in the movement for social justice. In rejecting hegemonic masculinity and its rewards, we also become more fully human. For I am convinced that the humanisation of men is intricately intertwined with the empowerment of women. (p. 110, cited in Lingard & Douglas, 1999, p. 156)

However, providing for a conversational space between men (even pro-feminist men) and women researching or actually engaged in administration is highly problematic for many women who view attempts by men to build alliances with deep suspicion. The issues are complex and, too often, the conversation has become one of conservation or remediation in which men continue to tell women how to “fix” their femaleness or expect that the challenges of masculinity will be “fixed” by women. For example, in conversations between men and women, how might feminist theory recognize the experience of powerlessness felt by many men (Kimmel, 1998, p.64), especially in the context of economic rationalization, while grappling with workplace practices in which women, even women who are senior administrators, are seldom allowed to forget that they are the “other” whose presence is tolerated within inequitable gender constraints? How might we carry on a conversation that does not degenerate into a simplistic, “But what about the men?” list of winners and losers. In other words, how might we find a place for the authentic and diverse voices of men and women to be heard within an historically effected consciousness?

The difficulty, of course, is that unless "I" is willing to enter into conversation with and is willing to be transformed by the voice of "Other", conversation cannot occur and deeply entrenched gendered norms in society and the differential value they evoke
within organizations will not be transformed. The experience of Kate, Linda, and Marg suggests strongly that formal mechanisms of advocacy for gender equity such as educational programs, affirmative action goals, and even administrative support had some success in changing the number of women in positions of added responsibility but little success in moving toward a consciousness that would support more substantive cultural change. As Beck (1984) notes,

I don't wish to be naive about the efficacy of education or the power of ideas by themselves to bring about change, Many supplementary forces will be necessary: the direct influence and pressure of women, institutional changes, laws against violence, equity laws, strict law enforcement, social movements of various kinds. But clear and comprehensive discussion of the issues in various settings could do much. (p. 164)

That is, movement towards social justice may require the head, the heart, and a (not so) gentle shove of employment equity policy towards a more transformative discursive space in order for shifts in consciousness to take place. Although policy that attempts to remediate the conditions imposed by a normative and prescriptive consciousness has played an important role in the past and may again in the future, in the end, transformation of both men's and women's gendered realities in the public and private sphere will only occur through authentic conversation at many locations within the polis. Therefore, if gendered organizational theories and practices are ever going to be transformed in education, conversational meeting places need to be strategically identified and acted upon.

Board rooms, classrooms, graduate courses in educational administration, pre-service education policy courses, staff lunch rooms, professional seminars, and academic and professional journals are all sites for reinscribing or resisting gendered norms. As my research suggests, however, women's voices have been, and often continue to be, silenced by male teachers and leaders, or the tone of the discussion has been that of coercive conservation or patronizing conciliation rather than authentic conversation. Instead, those who theorize about and practice educational administration need to re-appropriate these
sites as meeting places in which our understanding of the deep questions raised by differing gendered roles and the values which support them may be transformed.

**Transforming the Conversation**

As I draw my dissertation to a close, I struggle to give shape to the "not yet", the possibilities for finding a meeting place in which a more robust form of gender equity than numerical representation might emerge in educational organizations. Resistance against normative gender regimes is about the struggle for the "not yet" and therefore is always about the indeterminate, the almost unimaginable conditions in which women and men might work together equitably in educational environments where girls and boys are offered substantively equal opportunities to learn, regardless of class, race, ability, sexual orientation, and so on about the world they might create. A utopian dream? Perhaps, but one for which many women and (some) men have struggled. However, resistance is a politics of discomfort and ambiguity. It is also one in which moral positions are often unclear and the dichotomies of Enlightenment thinking with which most of us are so comfortable are broken apart. After all, in a post-Enlightenment world, whose position do we accept? Or, as Boler asks, "How are we to decide which 'good' habits replace the old" (1999, p. 197)?

Gadamer claims that this is "the essence, the soul of [his] hermeneutics. To understand someone else is to see the justice, the truth, of their position. And this is what transforms us... For my experience has been that my own power of judgement finds its limits, and also its enrichment, whenever I find someone else exercising his [sic] own power of judgement" (Misgeld & Nicholson, 1992, pp. 152-153). Gadamer (1997) describes this transformative discursive space as one where "I" knows "Other" through authentic openness which "lets something be said": "wills to hear rather than to master." Most difficult of all, in this meeting place, "I" is willing to be modified by "Other".

Gadamer is talking about conversation -- a turning together to a phenomenon, a setting aside of personal or organizational agendas, and a valuing of that in the "Other" which is
authentic, genuine — a self that is reflexively ambiguous and open to change. It is a place where both men and women enter into a "deep reexamination of the main premises and values of our culture [which may require] a rejection of those conceptual models that have outlived their usefulness . . ." (Capra, 1982, p.33). It is not a place where "different" is equal to "less than."

The conversational space I am describing is not a comfortable environment for many men and women, particularly administrators who are often perceived to be (or perceive themselves to be) the one with the answers, because it is a meeting place where there are often more questions than answers. However, although conversation requires the authentic questioning of the efficacy of traditional values and beliefs and an openness to change on both an individual or collective level, it is not a place where deeply held convictions must be abandoned for some kind of homogeneous moral compromise. Instead, it provides for an acceptance of different understandings without the imposition or valorisation of one over the other. It is a place which recognizes that there may be a need to lose some of the privilege and power and prestige based on one's gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination in order for society to achieve social justice. In these losses, however, are the seeds of a more desirable and satisfying "way of being" for both men and women in their public and private lives.

Endnotes

1. It is tempting to believe that the changes wrought by the Harris Conservative government are unprecedented, but arguably the changes brought about in the mid-1960s with the amalgamation of Ontario school boards from over one thousand small local boards to just over three hundred amalgamated county and urban boards were equally challenging. Under another Conservative government during Bill Davis's mandate as Minister of Education, hundreds of community-based one-room rural school houses were consolidated into larger schools to which students were bussed and necessitated the centralizing of bureaucratic board governance with which we are currently familiar.

2. Although equity was retained as an educational goal, no specific reference to gender equity remains in the Royal Commission Report.
3. Boards remain responsible to implement anti-racist policies under the provisions of s. 8 in Ontario's Education Act.

4. A colleague at an Ontario faculty of education was recently invited to participate in a curriculum development project but was stunned to learn that she was forbidden to use the words "equity" or "culture" in her reports, despite the fact that she was working on a team looking at foreign language instruction.

5. In separate conversations with two long-time senior government bureaucrats working in the area of gender equity, one in Conservative Ontario and the other in NDP British Columbia, they confirmed that each government's predominant agenda was now entirely focused on women's economic development programs.

6. One of the graduate students in an organizational theory course I was teaching this past summer at the University of Victoria included an article in his reflective portfolio with the headline, "Feminism Has Won". It went on to suggest that feminism's goals have been achieved and that the new millennium will be dominated by women. I haven't been able to locate this reference again but remember reading it with melancholy amusement.

7. The primary spokespeople (yes, some were women) who made up the anti-equity network were members of the Society of Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) who are also acknowledged by Martin Loney, for their grant which made his book, The Pursuit of Division: Race, Gender, and Preferential Hiring in Canada, possible.

8. The image of the crossroads is explored by Kashope-Wright (1995), who acknowledges the connection between the African god of the crossroads, Esu, and the Greek god who embodies hermeneutics, Hermes. He raises the concern that making those connections explicit may reduce the tropes he puts forward "to a type of 'otherness' which in fact is...a mere reflection of the dominant (and thus open for distortion and appropriation)" (1995, p. 19). I share those concerns, however, given the context of my discussion and its resonances with his concept of the crossroads, I have chosen to proceed with a limited comparison.

9. For example, the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education pooled resources to fund projects at three faculties of education. Each faculty produced teaching resources to encourage movement from awareness of gender equity issues to taking action around these issues. Our target audience for each project was education faculty members, educators in schools, and student teachers. We are currently working on follow-up projects to assess the effectiveness of each project -- another study of resistance in itself, as it turns out.
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APPENDIX A

*Title of Research: EnJCountering resistance to gender equity in educational organizations*

Thank you for considering being a part of my study. Enclosed you will find a brief outline of my proposed research as well as your specific part in it. Please read the outline carefully, and if you have any questions, I will be pleased to talk to you about them.

**Purpose of Research:**

Although employment equity policy initiatives have been in place in Ontario since 1986 there has been only limited success in meeting the established goals of 50% women in the positions of superintendent, principal, and vice-principal, and 30% representation in all other job categories in educational organizations. Almost Ten years later, in December 1995, the government has enacted legislation which removes the requirement to meet specific employment equity goals as outlined in Policy/program Memorandum No. 111. This brief policy history raises several intriguing questions:

- What motivated the enactment of employment equity policy?
- Why and how was it resisted in some cases and welcomed in others?
- What will happen to employment equity policy with specific reference to gender in educational organizations now that it is no longer mandated by the government?

The work of equity officers is interwoven with an exploration of the above questions. First, most came to their positions as the result of government incentive funding to implement employment equity policy. Second, their work has made them privy to both systemic and individual responses to employment equity initiatives as expressed in formal and informal organizational discourses. Third, many equity officers have developed strategies for raising awareness of the need for and countering both systemic and individual resistance to employment equity policy. And fourth, because of their particular organizational duties, they are well placed to understand what is likely to happen to current employment equity policy in their board.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the phenomenon of resistance to employment equity policy and to explore the role of equity officers in its implementation.

**Research Design:**

The research will include a policy analysis of employment equity policy at the provincial level and will then examine its implementation in four boards of education. Board documents, including the minutes of board meetings, and other supporting
documentation (e.g., memos, correspondence with the province, etc.) will be useful in enabling this process.

At least two in-depth interviews will be conducted with the equity officers of the three boards involved in this study. In addition, the researcher will "shadow" the equity officer for two days selected randomly at the convenience of both the equity officer and the researcher. If potential participants are identified during the interviews as important to the study, informed consent will be sought from that individual to conduct an interview with him/her. Interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed and on-site notes will be taken by the researcher. Transcriptions of interviews will be made available to all participants for correction and reflection.

Following the completion of the interviews, a focus group will be conducted with the equity officers to reflect as a group on the lessons which their lived experiences offer to educational organizations for creating equitable employment opportunities for women. The focus group will be tape recorded and video-taped in order to ensure accurate analysis of the group discourse.

The data will be analyzed using a critical hermeneutic conceptual framework. That is, my task as researcher is to search for meaning in the social practices of educational organizations as it is revealed in the discursive practices of that organization. I will be focusing my analysis on the phenomenon of how differing notions of gendered roles in educational organizations affect the implementation of employment equity policy.

**Participant Information:**

*Interviews:* Each interview will be scheduled at the convenience of the participant and will be conducted in a private location of the participant’s choice. The initial interview will be approximately one hour long and will be tape-recorded. A transcription of the first interview will be provided to the participant for correction, clarification, and reflection. A second interview will be scheduled at the time that the first transcript is provided to the participant. The second interview will also be approximately one hour long. A transcription of the second interview as well as some written discussion of emerging themes will be provided to the participant. If necessary, a third interview will be conducted to complete consideration of the guiding questions. In all cases, a concluding meeting will be held to discuss the second (and third, if necessary) interview transcription and mutually reflect on the emerging themes.

*Shadowing:* The researcher will accompany the equity officer for two days of duties chosen at the convenience of the equity officer. The researcher will take notes during the day but will attempt to remain as unobtrusive in the ordinary completion of duties as possible.

*Focus Group:* The researcher will moderate a round-table discussion which will focus on the themes which have emerged from the interviews. The goal will be to synthesize the emergent themes into data which will provide useful strategies for countering resistance to employment equity initiatives. The session will be
video-taped and tape recorded in order to provide a variety of data for discourse analysis.

Participants may refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study at any time. All data will be securely stored and the identities of participants, boards, or communities will not be revealed in any written analysis that results from this study.

If you need further clarification or have any questions, I may be reached at 1-519-661-2087 (Xt. 8608) or at 1-519-657-8595. I look forward to talking with you soon and will be calling you in the near future to discuss arrangements for your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Janice Wallace
PhD Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
I have read the Letter of Information relating to the above-titled thesis. I understand the proposed research and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time without incurring a penalty of any kind, that I may decline to answer any specific question should I choose to do so, and that the information collected is for research purposes only*.

I consent to participate in this study.

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature                                      Date

* The data collected may be used in further research and/or presentation in any form by the researcher, if the researcher:
(Please initial applicable condition(s) listed below.)

a.) advises me in writing                  
b.) obtains my written consent            
c.) no further consent required           

It is understood that anonymity of persons and places will be maintained at all times unless express permission is given to use real names.

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Participant                          Date

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Researcher                           Date
Appendix B

Guiding Questions for Interviews

- What first called you to your involvement in gender equity work?

- How would you describe your responsibilities as an equity officer?

- How would you describe your particular responsibilities for achieving equitable employment opportunities for women?

- Where are you positioned in the organizational structure of your board? In what ways does that position enhance the possibility of achieving employment equity opportunities for women in your board? In what ways does that position limit the possibility of achieving employment equity opportunities for women?

- In what ways have you experienced or observed resistance to employment equity initiatives for women?

- What strategies that you have initiated or observed have attempted to counter that resistance?

- What successes have you had?

- How would you explain the success of some strategies and the failure of others?

- Have there been any changes in attitude toward equity employment initiatives since you began your responsibilities as an equity officer? (e.g. in policy, organizational practices, individual awareness, etc.)

- Can you give me some examples that would illustrate those changes?

- What is there in your own life experience which has had a significant impact on the work you do as an equity officer?

- What else do I need to know?
Guiding Questions for Focus Group

- How have your ideas about gender equity and employment policies changed since you first began your work as an equity worker?
- What motivated your interest in gender equity work?
- What factors would you identify as influential in changing gender equity employment practices?
- What remains of gender equity employment policy at your board?
- What are some of the ways that resistance to gender equity employment policy is evident in your experience as an equity worker at your board?
- What are some strategies you have used to try to counter resistance to gender equity employment policy?