

**FACTORS RELATING TO WOMEN ATTAINING PRINCIPAL POSITIONS IN
VICTORIA'S GOVERNMENT SECONDARY COLLEGES:
A CASE STUDY**

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where reference is made.

Signature.....

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Abstract

Regardless of the promotion structures employed within the different educational systems of this country, men dominate the position of Principal of secondary schools. Despite legislation seeking to provide equality of opportunity and the apparent breaking down of deeply entrenched societal attitudes of women being the servers or followers, there still exist factors that give rise to the under-representation of women in Principal positions of secondary schools. This thesis was designed to investigate issues associated with the apparent gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools. It will attempt to identify elements that have militated against women gaining such positions.

The research methodology employed to investigate the problem is a case study approach. The study centered on a girl's school, Gilmore College for Girls, which has had a succession of female Principals. The research involved inviting women who were Principals of Gilmore College for Girls to participate in an interview. Within that format structured interviews were used to seek the women Principals' perceptions as to factors leading to this under-representation of women as Principals. The findings from this study are then interpreted in the light of factors by which the literature explains the problem.

Various reasons emerged to explain the lower number of women Principals. It seemed to stem from perceptions about their roles, which limited the level of their involvement in schools: for instance once women teachers were married with children they were less likely to advance in their careers and to apply for Principal positions. The workload of

the Principal was also identified as one of the factors inhibiting women from applying for Principal positions. It was seen to make marriage and child rearing almost impossible. Therefore most women were content to be classroom teachers and only apply for positions that suited their interests and allowed them to meet family, home and social commitments. It is suggested that further related investigations be pursued of women in Principal positions of our secondary schools.

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Chapter One

The Chances of Becoming a Woman Principal

Introduction

This thesis is an interpretative case study, designed to investigate the gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools. It attempts to identify factors that have militated over time against women gaining Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools, and explain why so comparatively few have assumed such a leadership role. The case study is located within an historical perspective of women's access to leadership positions.

When the research was undertaken from 1999 to 2001, the proportion of women in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools remained below that of men. This has been a consistent pattern over a long period of time (see Table 1). Further evidence of the trend of such proportional under representation of women as Principals is given by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (2001).

From 1973 to 2001 the percentage of women teaching in classified positions in the total secondary school workforce in Victoria varied between 46 per cent and 56 per cent. In the same time frame the percentage of Principals of secondary schools who were women varied between 8 per cent and 23 per cent (see Table 1).

Table 1: Women in Principal positions as a percentage of the total number of classified teachers in the Secondary Division, 1973 to 2001. (Malloch, 1995, p. 121 & p. 128; Workforce Studies, Human Resource Division of Education, Employment and Training, 2001; Schools Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 4221.0, 1989-2001).

Year	% Women Principals	% of Classified Teachers who were Women
1973	18	46
1974	18	47
1975	16	47
1976	18	49
1977	16	50
1978	12	51
1979	12	52
1980	12	52
1981	12	52
1982	11	52
1983	11	52
1984	12	52
1985	10	56
1986	8	53
1987	9	51
1988	9	52
1989	11	46
1990	11	49
1991	11	49
1992	13	50
1993	13	50
1994	16	50
1995	18	51
1996	18	52
1997	20	53
1998	20	53
1999	19	54
2000	21	55
2001	23	56

On the surface there does not seem to be an obvious reason why the proportion of women Principals should simply reflect the proportion of women teaching in secondary schools. However there is a large discrepancy between these two figures. The fluctuations in these two sets of figures over the 30 year period tabulated do not even approach an overlay between them. Such a large discrepancy is a reason for an investigation without the need for arguing in detail as to whether the proportion of women Principals should reflect the proportion of women teacher exactly, or what deviation from that figure is appropriate. The evident disparity goes far beyond such an argument. It seems that women have either not rushed into applying to be Principals, or they have been unable to obtain Principal positions in government secondary schools. Certainly their low representation as Principals requires some explanation.

Possible Research Questions

The data contained in Table 1 set the agenda for this research project. They suggested a number of questions in the mind of the researcher that seemed worth exploring. These included:

- ◇ How can the disproportionate numbers of male and female Principals in Victoria's government secondary schools be explained?
- ◇ What are the factors affecting the flow of women into Principals positions in Victoria's government secondary schools?
- ◇ Are women actually applying for Principal positions, and when they do apply, how successful are they?

- ◇ In a time when there has been some changing notions of justice and fairness in Victoria's society to improve the position of women, where there are government programs, legislation for affirmative action, when the press for equal rights for women is a dominant political issue and there is the active role played by the teacher's union, do more women in the teaching profession proceed to Principalships? Why/Why not?
- ◇ Is it because women are less trained or experienced and therefore do not seek Principal positions?
- ◇ Are women less geographically mobile than men, especially when they have young families? Are they far more likely to move when their partners move than vice versa?
- ◇ Have women teachers come to think of themselves as teachers and not managers? Does this sort of feminisation have an historical legacy that is still real today?
- ◇ Is lack of self- esteem or confidence an important factor that helps to explain why few women seek senior positions?
- ◇ To what extent are women teachers discouraged from applying for Principal positions because of the long hours and the workload involved?
- ◇ Has the selection system shown any gradual improvement in recent years?
- ◇ Does the fact of many women taking a break from work to have children play a role in career advancement?
- ◇ Did structural factors like equal pay, "the common role", superannuation and other issues shape women's views' of their roles in the system?

These questions provided the initial impetus for the study. Clearly a list like this needed refinement to give guidance for a research study. That refinement came as the relevant literature was read.

Aims and Purpose of the Study

The impetus for this present study was derived from the researcher's experience as a young teacher entering into a teaching career and hoping to have positions, may be even to a Principal position. It was observed that whereas women were numerically dominant in the teaching service in general, and even in the secondary sector they occupied about half the teaching positions, this situation was not reflected in the percentage of women who held the position of Principal. This was suggestive of gender bias, together with a disregard for equal employment opportunities, and thus the researcher's interest in this topic was stimulated.

This study is significant because it has the potential to help redress the continuing lack of balance between the number of women and men in Principal positions. It is important to examine the reasons why women proceed or do not proceed to Principal position, not only because there seems no reason to suppose that both men and women should be represented in equal proportions throughout all levels of the Education Department, but because we need both types of role models. Both girls and boys need to see women in leadership positions, not only men. If children and adolescents see men constantly taking "top" positions with higher salaries, status and power, they may come to believe that what they

see is normal. This is particularly so in schools where teachers act as significant role models for children and adolescents in their formative years.

Byrne (1978) takes up this latter point by suggesting that the presence of women in the leadership of schools is not only necessary in order for women to offer themselves promotion to challenging personal development and economic equality, it is crucial that students and colleagues see women in leadership positions. Larwood (cited in Edson 1988) argues:

By showing [the] men that women can be successful, the traditional images of housewife and dependent female employee will be displaced in favour of the more realistic female co-breadwinner and colleague. (Edson, 1988, p. 131)

Another important aspect of this study is that it has enabled some women Principals to speak of their experiences. This is a study that gradually unfolded using an interpretative framework. I started by investigating some of the historical documentation of this notion as it related to teaching in Victoria, and this raised the issues of structural discrimination, residual discrimination and affirmative action. These became themes that gave structure the rest of the project. Then a more general educational literature search was completed. This added other questions, such as the place of family responsibilities. Interview questions, based on notions developed from the historical analysis and literature review were developed and used in interviews held with some Principals from one particular girl's secondary school.

Robson (1993) reports that a major difference in the interpretative approach is that theories and concepts tend to arise from the enquiry. They come during and after data collection rather than before it. Also in the interpretative approach, data collection and analysis are not rigidly separated. An initial data collection is followed by analysis, the results of which are then used to decide what data should next be collected. The cycle is then repeated several times. This was the guiding principle for the above process used in this project.

Spradley (1980) points out the likeness of interpretative researchers to petroleum engineers and explorers:

The [petroleum] engineer has a specific goal in mind; to find oil or gas buried far below the surface. Before the engineer even begins an investigation, a careful study will be made of the maps which show geological features of the area. Then, knowing ahead of the time the kinds of features that suggest oil gas beneath the surface, the engineer will go out to 'find' something quite specific (Spradley,1980, p. 26).

The above quote can be interpreted as not needing to have all the questions lined up before the analysis begins. Indeed the expectation is that they will arise over time. Such was the case for this study.

The Organisation of the Study

The study is organised in the following way. Chapter 1 has briefly reviewed the number of women Principals in Victoria's Government Secondary Schools. The imbalance is clearly worrying to the general education community, given the continued reference to this matter in the literature and the action of government over the years. But this will be further clarified as the thesis progresses. Chapter 2 gives an historical context, mainly drawn from Victoria that examines some of the legislation affecting women teachers from the 1880s's to the present day. Then Chapter 3 is an overview of the educational literature that is presented in a way that suggests a line of inquiry, particularly about the structural discrimination against women who may wish to become Principals. Following this is Chapter 4 with the method section describing and justifying the case study method used for the study, a description of the data collection techniques outlining the interview questions and how they were developed, and the methods for analysing the data. Chapter 5, the case study, contains an overview history of Gilmore College for Girls', how it has changed over time and feedback from the last four women who have been Principals of the College. Finally, Chapter 6 is an interpretation of the case study, together with recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Victoria's Historical Political Context

Introduction

The initial questions listed in Chapter 1 that gave rise to this study are a jumble of ideas. One way to start shaping this study is to place questions such as these into an historical context. This chapter reports that historical research. It reveals that for 140 years Victoria's women teachers have been discriminated against, from a women's view. Victoria's women teachers had been for many years victims of institutional discrimination through legislation. This chapter recounts this history of structural discrimination against women teachers and identifies a range of issues that need to be explored further. It will be suggested that the culture that has thus grown up explains in part why so few women Principals have been seen in Victoria's government secondary schools.

The Beginnings

For many years, women teachers in Victoria's state schools were discriminated against. They were paid different rates from men depending on the class they taught, the school at which they taught, and the qualifications they held. Their rate of pay was as low as two thirds or just four- fifths of the male rate.

The pattern of discrimination was institutionalised in 1883 with the passage of the Victorian Public Service Act. The Act imposed restrictions upon women teachers and reinforced discriminatory practices against them. Women's qualifications were not recognized in the same way as men's', and their salaries were set at four-fifths of the male rate. The Act created a new classification structure (5 classes) that restricted women teachers from rising above the third class. Under the Act, women could not become head teachers of a school when its enrolment exceeded 30 pupils. Also at this time a new classification of junior assistant was introduced. Only women were put into this classification. This created another barrier to promotion since it meant that many women had an extra step to climb, even to reach the point where young males started their careers (Biddington, 1977, p.12; Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 4).

However, by the late 1800's many women were beginning to object to discrimination against women teachers in the teaching service. In 1885 for example, the Victorian Lady Teachers' Association was formed and so began the long struggle for equity for women in Victoria's government teaching service (Trudinger, 1942).

Conditions of Service and Pay Issues

The Victorian Lady Teachers' Association was one of the first professional associations formed in education (Trudinger, 1942). The Association was recognised by both the Minister of Education and the Director of Education as the body representing women teachers and, even after forming an association with the State School Teachers' Union in

1885, it continued to send separate delegations to the Department of Education to argue for equal pay and the removal of promotion bars (Blake, 1973).

The Ministry of Education did not agree that women and men did comparable work in teaching. It argued that the services of lady teachers compared to men were “less useful to the Education Department” (Blake, 1973). The Lady Teachers’ Association argued that women teachers performed the same work as men but received a lower salary:

[The] ladies had the same work to perform as the men but they received lower salaries and were compelled to teach sewing without any remuneration whilst the men got a thirty pound allowance to secure the services of a sewing mistress (Federated Teachers’ Union, 1991, p.4).

Apart from pay, there was other discriminatory legislation with which women had to contend. In 1890, under the Public Service Act 1133, Section 43, women were required to resign from the public service on marriage (Kelly, 1986). The Public Service Act was summarised by Kelly as follows:

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Act, no married women shall be eligible for appointment to any office in the Public Service. Every woman employed in the Public Service who marries after the Passing of this Act shall immediately upon her marriage retire from the Public Service (Kelly, 1986, p.20).

The Public Service Act applied equally to women teachers as any other public Servant. Hence a career for a married women in the teaching service was preemptly curtailed.

In 1910 the Education Act established state control of secondary education. Whilst it recognised women's' qualifications as equal with men's, the Act nevertheless reinforced discriminatory practices as it did not rectify the unequal pay situation. Also, patterns of promotion remained unequal at this time and women remained ineligible for senior positions (Kelly, 1986, p. 21).

In 1911 there were amendments to the Teachers' Act and pay was increased for women teachers from £ 80 per annum £ 100 per annum. Women teachers from then on could be head teachers, but they still could not apply for senior positions:

The 1911 amendments to the Teachers Act were supposed to start to redress the bias against women, so women could transfer from head teachers to assistant positions and vice-versa, but women could still not apply for senior positions (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 6).

In summary, during the 26 years from 1885 to 1911, although women teachers formed their own association and began a history of lobbying government, discriminatory government policies still persisted in Victoria.

Permanency

The next important time for this study begins some 30 years later. By then the Victorian Lady Teachers' Association had withered away, but the teacher unions were about to make a stand for women. By the 1940's permanency had become a critical issue for women teachers. As has already been noted, Education Department regulations required women who were to be married to resign from their classified permanent positions and resume as temporary teachers with less pay. They received no transfer or promotion rights. Gray (1998), a speaker on the program *Hindsight*, was a victim of the marriage bar in New South Wales which were similar to those in Victoria. She recalled:

Being a good Public Servant I followed the regulations and I duly sent them a letter stating my intentions to marry on the 16th of January 1942 and they wrote back, but not a letter saying how nice for you. They wrote back a letter saying your notification of intention to marry has been received, you will be dismissed as of January the 16th 1942 under the Act. So I was duly dismissed. Well my marriage took place... We rested under the very real threat of Japanese invasion. The men in the service were enlisting or being called up in great numbers. The older men remained and they became very dependent on women, even despised married women. So without any formal application on my part having been formally dismissed I received a telegram in February to report to duty...to the exactly same position I had occupied before. Except that I was temporary and think I was receiving, as temporary

Teacher, 70 or 80 pounds less than I had before (Gray, 1998, ABC Radio National).

In 1955 the Temporary Teachers' Club was formed to campaign for permanency and pension rights. They were supported by the Victorian Teachers' Union, (which represented teachers in primary schools) and the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA). These regulations were finally altered with the passing of the Married Women's Act, 1956. It was introduced because the Education Department had a shortage of teachers and there was pressure from the teacher unions such as the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Union and the Temporary Teachers' Club to remove the regulation that women who married had to resign their permanency (Kelly, 1986; Teachers' Federation of Victoria, 1986).

In 1986, the Teachers' Federation of Victoria sponsored an oral history project to record some of the experiences of women teachers. The result was the book, *The Done Thing: Women Speak About Their Lives in Teaching*. One contributor from the Temporary Teachers' Club spoke about the campaign to get permanency during the mid 1950s. She stated:

We set up a campaign to get permanency for married women so that we could not only restore our salary to its proper level, but also have promotion opportunities. Although we were all union members at the time, we had our own separate organisation for this particular campaign, more or less under the umbrella of the VTU and the VSTA, but we did our own organising and our own campaigning, and the two unions more or less had to pat us on the

head and say, 'God bless you, my children' (Teachers' Federation of Victoria, 1986, pp. 57-58).

As noted above, in 1956 the Teaching Service (Married Women's) Act was a critical breakthrough in improving women's career opportunities. Women could now apply to remain permanent. In contrast, men automatically remained permanent, and they did not have to apply to retain their permanency after marriage. The new Act also allowed women to retain their positions, seniority and rights as qualified teachers. The one issue that was not dealt with was their right to superannuation (Kirner & Rayner, 1999, p. 296).

The Teachers' Federation of Victoria (1986) reports an interview with a teacher regarding the 1956 Teaching Service (Married Women's) Act of allowing permanency for married women:

Up until that time, people had to resign, and they could be re-employed only as temporaries. At my first school, the situation was very strange: they had a staffroom which wasn't terribly large and it had three tables in it – three large tables – and one of them was a near the door. The senior women, who were unmarried, sat around that table. In the middle table were the young people, like me when I first started up, who had the potential to become career women, and at the back in a corner near the sink was a small plastic-type table and that was for the women who were married, and thus obviously unprofessional. When you were in the middle table and got married, you were required to move down into the scullery area; it was very

rigid: there were special chairs for every person on the staff, and you daren't sit in anyone else's chair (Teachers Federation of Victoria, 1986, p. 29).

Clearly then some changes for women were beginning, at least at the top. However the culture within schools showed the fundamental and rigid demarcation lines that had been in place for so long. To bridge them would be a difficult task.

Promotion

By the 1950's promotion had become a major issue for women teachers and they continued to pursue the issue throughout the 1950s. However, opponents of equal access to promotion and equal pay argued that women did not want these benefits. Evidence they pointed to was that some women's positions remained unfilled. In the Teachers' Journal in November, 1958, Mrs. May Cracken wrote a letter to the editor answering this claim. She argued:

The linking of the incidence of unfilled senior women's positions with the 'clamour' for equal pay fills me with amazement. The women's claims for equal pay are based on the indisputable fact that the work done by the sexes is equal.

The filling of women's positions is a matter entirely unrelated to the above. The unfortunate fact that many Class 11 women's positions have not been filled in recent months is due both directly and indirectly to the marriage bar.

In past years, many women, knowing that their teaching career would be cut short by marriage, failed to study for qualifications necessary for promotion. Others with qualifications for advancement to Special Class, married, and were stripped of their status until January 1957 now with many years of experience, these qualified people are forced to remain at Class 111 for three years, even though they may have served their time, before marriage in the second lowest class...This state of affair will not last...(Cracken, 1958, p.376).

The classification structure for women to teach in the 1950's started at Class I V. Then you could be promoted to Class I I I by gaining appropriate qualifications and assessments. Finally women could gain promotion to Class II with further appropriate assessment reports. So although some movement had occurred with regards to the women's right to permanent employment, some promotional issues still remained.

Equal Pay

In 1968 a major breakthrough occurred in Victoria when Victoria's women teachers achieved equal pay, phased in over three years (Kirner & Rayner, 1999, p. 299). In August 1968 the *Secondary Teacher*, the journal published by the VSTA, published an article written by Jean Mee. Mee revealed that the Teachers Tribunal, the statutory body of government that dealt with pay and other matters for teachers, agreed eventually to phase in equal pay. She commented:

The fact that it will take 3-4 years to implement is grossly unfair to the women who are expected to do and indeed do the same work as comparable male members of staff...

Overseas, Canada, Britain, USA, New Zealand, USSR, India, Indonesia, Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, France, Norway, Sweden, China, Lao, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, West Germany, Italy, have all granted equal pay to Government services, including teachers (Mee, 1968, p. 34).

The Teachers' Federation of Victoria (1986) argued that the long struggle for equal pay was won by collective struggle. A contributor to the book *The done thing: Women speak about their lives in teaching* argued:

There was a young fellow, also in his first year, much less qualified than I was, and yet he was taking home 20 per cent more pay than I was. I think the important point with both of these campaigns [equal pay and permanency] is the mingling of your own personal issues with a much broader issue and I think women should learn they can't always win these campaigns as individuals, but they can win issues in co-operation with other women who have the same basic concept to fight for (Teachers' Federation of Victoria, 1986, p. 26).

Thus very gradually the conditions under which women teachers worked were incrementally changing and coming into line with that of the men. However the legacy of such long term discrimination was much harder to overcome. This matter will be taken up in Chapter 3.

The Common Roll

Until 1969 women teachers could not be Principals of co-educational or boys' High Schools, nor of large Primary Schools. In the Victorian system there were comparatively few girls' High (or secondary) schools. This in reality meant that women had limited access to promotion positions. If they were never going to be Principals, why promote them to the lower intermediary position, which were seen as stepping stones to becoming a Principal? Partly because of this, and because of the other ways in which women and men were treated differently under the state government legislation, there had been two separate rolls, one for men and the other for women. Each roll recorded the seniority of teachers registered to teach in government schools. There was a need for a common roll for two reasons. First to enable women to become eligible for senior positions, including Principal positions, and secondly in this way increasing their status to equal that of men, and making that status more visible.

The Victorian Teachers' Union in 1969 began campaigning for a common roll instead of the separate rolls for women and men. The compilation of a common roll became a struggle particularly for primary women teachers. It was highlighted as the greatest single obstacle facing women teachers because there still was resistance to the notion of equality of

opportunity in the teaching service (Towns, 1982). The Victorian Teachers' Union (1969) in the *Teachers' Journal* defined the common roll as a common roll for men and women in each division, for the purpose of classification and appointment. The crucial significance of the common roll for women was that they were now entitled to compete with men for all Principal class positions. Prior to this time women had been restricted to applying for Principal positions in girls' schools, and occasionally for special and one-teacher schools when there were no applicants. The Federated Teachers' Union (1991) recorded comments made by women teachers about the common roll finally published in 1972:

The common roll was supposed to equalise opportunities for women and men, but in open competition women did not compete. Indeed the pressure for the common roll eventually came mainly from men because it meant extra promotion were available to them. Competition amongst men was intense. It is reported that some used to carry around copies of the roll and cross off teachers who had retired as one less they had to compete with in terms of seniority (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 12).

Malloch (1996) conducted interviews with Members of the Consultative Committee for Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in the Teaching Service, and Senior Executives from the Personnel, Human Resources and Equal Employment Opportunity Management Sectors and discussed the impact of the common roll on women. The interviewees were not identified by name. One interviewee reflected:

It's interesting that when the common roll was first introduced women were 40 per cent of the Principal class, as I said, and that was because most women had to have extra qualifications to even get to principal class which men didn't have to do and that of course made them higher up, because men then got very senior positions with only two years' qualification or else those men were inspectors or higher up. The women never got into those positions of inspector or higher up and as those women died or retired, the statistics got lower and lower and, oh well, the figure, the percentage of women principals got lower and lower and now I think it's round 26 per cent or something and that's how much it's been for the last few years (Malloch, 1996, p. 12).

Hence, there were clearly unexpected ramifications from having the common roll. It was not the panacea that perhaps some women had expected. However for this study it sheds light on some fundamental issues. Although there were clearly certain regulatory issues that stood in the way of equality of women and men, there were other forces at play. These will need to be explained at a later point in the study.

Superannuation

Superannuation had traditionally been a male domain. Up until 1956, as noted earlier, women were required to resign upon marriage and assume the status of temporary teacher if reemployed. Also, once married they were not permitted to remain a member of the State Superannuation Fund. In 1958 the Married Teachers' Pension Fund was introduced. It was

later renamed Married Women's Superannuation Fund, and then later still the Lump Sum Fund. It was still voluntary and women initially were reluctant to join (Federated Teachers' Union of Victoria, 1991). However the point that needs to be highlighted here is that married women had been treated differently from males and single women. It was not expected that married women required or desired financial independence. Hence the discrimination in the area of superannuation was on the basis of both marital status and gender.

In 1975 amendments were proposed to the State Superannuation Act which gave married women the option to join the State Superannuation Fund called the Married Women's Superannuation Fund rather than the Lump Sum Fund. The Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association in 1975, as part of its submission to the Victorian Premier's Committee on the Status of Women, pointed to major elements of discrimination in the proposals:

Firstly, although women were being provided the option to join, the proposal did not educate and legislate for the protection of married women's employment rights (if a married woman is) discouraged from joining the scheme there are obvious disadvantages:

1. Loss of the right to her own income upon retirement;
2. Lack of protection against premature retirement through ill health.

Secondly, 'the proposals to amend the Superannuation Act continues the present discrimination against widows who remarry and therefore forfeit their right to spouse pension. On the other hand, a widower in receipt of the spouse pension who remarries does not forfeit his right to the pension'.

Furthermore, the proposed legislation subjects de facto widows to a number of discriminatory humiliations. A de facto widow does not automatically have the right to spouse pension but is compelled to prove financial dependency, whilst the legal widow receives the spouse pension automatically. (In addition) that dependency must have spanned at least the previous three years (Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, 1975, pp. 2-3).

The 1975 Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association submission to the Victorian Committee on the Status of Women proposing amendments to the Superannuation Act argued for equality in all aspects. It took another seven years to achieve an end to this discrimination on the basis of sex (Kelly, 1986, p.78). Membership of the State Superannuation Fund became compulsory for all permanent men teachers in 1975. It was not until 1982 that membership of the State Superannuation Fund became compulsory for all women who gained permanency (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p.10).

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1977

In 1976, Victoria's initiatives to counter sexism in schools began with pressure from the three teacher unions, the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, the Technical Teachers' Association of Victoria and the Victorian Teachers' Union (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p.13). At the beginning of 1976 the Australian Teachers' Federation had successfully applied for funding from the Commonwealth Schools' Commission to appoint Coordinators for the Elimination of Sexism in four States. The original intention in Victoria was for the Teacher Unions and the Education Department to co-operate in the appointment of a Coordinator. In 1977 the three teacher unions appointed the first Coordinator for the Elimination of Sexism in Education (Kelly, 1986, p. 12; Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 13).

Equal opportunity had become an important feature of Australian society in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1972, the Federal Labor Government increased government support and funding for women's services and activities. This Government paved the way for the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation by passing in 1975 the Racial Discrimination Act (Sawer, 1990, p. 211).

In 1977, at the Victorian State level, the Liberal Party was in Government under Premier Rupert Hamer (Wilkinson, 1995, p. 47). In May 1977, the Victorian Government passed the Equal Opportunity Act, establishing an Equal Opportunity Board. The Act made discrimination on the basis of sex and marital status unlawful in four areas, employment,

education, accommodation, and goods and services (Equal Opportunity Commission, 1998, p. 6).

In July, 1977, 'The Victorian Committee on Equal Opportunity in Schools' Report to the Premier of Victoria' was tabled. Malloch (1996) summarized the importance of the Report. She maintained that:

It was important to view equal opportunity as not merely the possibility of women achieving in the male dominated and defined promotion sphere, but as the possibility of women making an impact on the whole structure and definition of a profession in which they, after all, comprise the majority (Malloch, 1996, p. 16).

With this law proactive changes became more extensive, rather than simply the removal of discrimination regulations. Some of these are discussed below.

Family Leave for Seven Years

Family leave for seven years was achieved in 1984. By 1984 it was recognized by government that both father and mother were jointly responsible for the nurturing of children. To give substance to this notion, Victoria's government school teachers gained seven years unpaid family leave and access to permanent part-time positions (Kelly, 1986, p. 23). The Act's objective was to allow teachers, male and female, to pursue their professional careers without suffering the disadvantages of broken service previously

associated with childbirth, adoption or child-care. It was not surprising that the greatest demand for such a legislation came from women teachers.

Things were improving for women teachers. They no longer had to take long service leave or resign to have or rear children. The Federated Teachers' Union (1991) stated:

Both these reforms have made an enormous difference to teachers, principally women, and enabled women to be better able to be both career teachers and mothers. Gone are days of women taking long service leave to have and rear their children and worst still, having to resign (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 16).

The Federated Teachers' Union (1991) interviewed Mary Beno, a teacher, about family leave. She commented:

Family Leave finally legitimised the role of the married woman in the teaching service. Before its introduction individual women, like me, were forced to challenge the social conventions of the time and suffer the personal criticism and the disapproval that inevitably followed such acts of rebellion. Family Leave could be viewed as "the system" granting approval for a whole class of people (women with children) to ignore the quite rigid social conventions regarding appropriate conduct for mother (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 16).

Family leave appeared to benefit women teachers because it meant that women retained their position and seniority. However it was, paradoxically, a process that maintained the glass ceiling. Once women took family leave for a long period of time, it became harder for them to climb up the promotion ladder which was (and is still) fundamentally based on years of experience as an active teacher. Here again was another example of a change in law, the intent of which was to improve the career prospects of women, having unlooked for discriminatory consequences.

Sex Discrimination Act

At a federal level, in 1984 the newly elected Australian Labor Party had brought into law, the Sex Discrimination Act (The Department of Education, 1997, p. 7). The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission stated that it is against the law to:

- discriminate against you because of your sex, marital status, or pregnancy
- sexually harass you
- dismiss you from your job because of your family responsibilities (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website, July 2000, www.hreoc.gov.au).

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission also listed the benefits of the Act since it was introduced:

Since its introduction, the Sex Discrimination Act has helped thousands of people, who have suffered sex discrimination, seek redress. The Act has also provided us with a tool to promote and educate people about equality between women and men (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website, July 2000, www.heroc.gov.au).

Wilkinson (1984) outlined the fundamental basis of the Sex Discrimination Act in “That discrimination in employment must not occur” (Wilkinson, 1995, p. 48).

In 1985 the Technical Teachers’ Union of Victoria appointed Jenny Stephens to analyse policies and practices concerning women teachers in technical schools and TAFE colleges. The result of her work was the book *The Price of Prejudice*. She argued that anti-discrimination legislation such as the sex-discrimination legislation was not enough to ensure equal employment opportunity for women:

Sex discrimination legislation is designed to deal with an “after the event situation”, where discrimination has occurred and a complaint has been made. The legislation does not of itself assist in breaking down the high degree of occupational segregation which exists in the Australian workforce. Nor does the legislation of itself require the examination of employment policies and practices to see if they are discriminating against women (Stephens, 1985, p. 9).

Thus there was some recognition that although progress was being made, still more change, and of a qualitatively different kind, was needed.

Affirmative Action Plan

In 1984, women comprised 53.3 per cent of teachers in the secondary service. However, only 12 per cent of the Principal class teachers were women, and only 24.7 per cent of the Senior Teacher class were women. Therefore affirmative action for women teachers had to be developed and implemented (Kelly, 1986). The Action Plan was regarded as the first phase of a continuing process of policy development to ensure that equal employment opportunity existed within the Ministry of Education.

In May 1985 the Director-General of Education, Dr Norman Curry, established a Consultative Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity in the Teaching Service (CCEEO/TS). The Committee consisted of representatives nominated by the Director General and by the Teachers' Federation of Victoria. Its primary role was to develop an Affirmative Action Plan for women teachers (Wilkinson, 1995). The main purpose of the Action Plans was to increase the number of women in leadership and management positions in the state education sector, the senior executive service, and the public service of the Education Department of Victoria. The other goals of the Action Plan was to identify and remove discriminatory practices and to redress the impact of past discrimination (Malloch, 1996, p. 7). There were in fact three Action Plans promulgated through the next ten years.

The first Victorian Action Plan for Women in the Teaching Service was launched in 1986. The objectives of the Action Plan included:

1. Awareness of, commitment to, and implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Action Plan for Women in the Teaching Service.
2. Increase the numbers of women in administrative and promotion positions and in non-traditional female teaching areas.
3. Discrimination in training and development to be eliminated by ensuring that eligible women have access to training places, that specialised training needs of women are recognised, and that training courses conducted within the Teaching Service are free from discrimination and contain relevant EEO material where appropriate. The purpose of this objective is not only to remove discrimination where it exists, but to use training and development to increase the number of women eligible for promotion within the Teaching Service and seeking such promotion.
4. To ensure that career structures and opportunities are designed in such a way that they do not disadvantage women and that women are encouraged to develop their careers.

5. To improve working conditions for all staff members, paying particular attention to the working conditions of women (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, 1986, pp. 5-15).

In summary then, the aim of the first Action Plan was to increase the numbers of women in administrative and promotion positions and to make improvements to recruitment, training, career structures, opportunities and working conditions for them.

Darke (1994 cited in Malloch, 1995) noted the success of the first Action Plan:

I think that for what it was intended to do, it worked very well. I think some people would have judged it as not having much effect because they were after automatic change so I guess there would be some people who would say that they thought that bringing out an Action Plan is automatically going to change people's attitudes and practices and that that would be automatically reflected in some ways to do with promotion of women and that was the main area that was focussed on at the time but I think that those were unrealistic expectations (Malloch, 1995, p. 234).

The second Action Plan for Women in the Teaching Service was launched in 1989 and ran through to 1992. It also focussed on increasing the number of women seeking and gaining promotion. The specific objectives and targets of the second Action Plan included:

A. An increase in the number of women: (a) seeking and gaining assessment for promotions both in schools and SSTS [School Support Teaching Service].

Target: The number of women holding promotion/allowance positions in each school/workplace to be in proportion to the number of female staff, or women to hold 40 per cent of promotion/allowance positions in the school/workplace, whichever is greater.

B. An increase in the representation of women in Principal class positions in primary and post primary School Support Teaching Service (SSTS).

Target: (a) the number of women occupying Principal positions in primary and postprimary schools and in the SSTS will be at least doubled by the end of 1991;

(b) in postprimary schools which have more than one leadership, i.e. Principal Class, position at least one position to be filled by a woman (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, 1989-1991, p. 6).

The Federated Teachers' Union in 1991 argued that the second Action Plan contained Affirmative Action proposals that would benefit women teachers. They noted that:

Targets for allowance and principal class positions, at least one woman on selection panels, first call for women on 50 % of professional development places (Federated Teachers' Union, 1991, p. 17).

Malloch (1996) argued that the second Action Plan was less prescriptive than the first. It focussed more on quantitative goals. Some of the goals were achieved and an increased awareness of, and participation by, women did occur. However it became clear that the Teaching Service had not met all the specific targets set for it in terms of the Second Action Plan.

The third Action Plan for Women in the Teaching Service for 1992-1994 built upon the work of previous plans and aimed to further improve the career opportunities for women in the teaching service. It contained successful Affirmative Action strategies aimed at overcoming the effects of past discrimination and increasing the number of women seeking and gaining promotion and allowance positions in the teaching service (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, 1992-1994, p. 8). The third Action Plan's nine goals were:

Goal 1. Increase the number of women on all committees and selection Panels.

Goal 2. Increase the number of women primary teachers gaining Assessment.

Goal 3. Provide women teachers with administrative and leadership experience.

Goal 4. Provide training, including in EEO requirements and responsibilities, for all panel members.

Goal 5. Provide professional development and establish networks to assist women in gaining promotion.

Goal 6. Ensure that selection procedures are consistent with merit-based Principles.

Goal 7. Provide child care during working hours.

Goal 8. Provide child care for professional development outside working hours.

Goal 9. Provide child care to increase women's participation in the democratic decision-making processes (Ministry of Education, Schools Division, 1992-1994, p. 10).

Malloch (1996) argued that the third Action Plan was more successful than the earlier plans. She commented on the advantages of the plan:

The creation of awareness of equal opportunity issues; the gaining of commitment to affirmative action programs that enable women to have

access to promotional opportunities on the basis of merit; increasing the application and appointment rates of women for principal class positions; and the trialing of innovative programs such as the Eleanor Davis Memorial Project (a professional leadership skills development program for women) (Malloch, 1996, p. 10).

One of the aims of the Action Plans was to provide professional development programs which would meet the needs of women. Davies (1993) provided a description of the Eleanor Davies Memorial Project, which fulfilled this criteria. Davies described the Project as follows:

A two week on-the-job leadership program for women teachers where participants work full time with principals in schools to develop administrative and leadership skills within the school environment. The name was chosen because Eleanor Davis represented a model for women in educational leadership. As well as gaining respect for the work she did in education Eleanor provided support to women in the Principal class and encouraged women teachers to seek promotion and extend their range of experiences (Davies, 1993, p. 32).

Davies (1993) further noted the responses received from the evaluation of the Eleanor Davies Memorial project:

When asked ‘What did you learn?’ one teacher responded:

The most important outcome for me was that I now have the self-confidence to believe that I can do it. I realise that I have done many of the tasks I observed and that I would/could willingly tackle others in which I had not much experience. Gained a lot from watching the Principal's interpersonal skills. And on a more practical level I learnt a lot about the financial management of the school (Davies, 1993, p. 32).

Wilkinson (1995) proposed that in terms of identifying and removing the discriminatory practices and redressing the impact of past discrimination, the Action Plans for Women were successful overall. The Plans also succeeded in increasing the representation of women across all levels of the promotion spectrum. Although women were still not proportionately represented in Principal positions in secondary schools, there was an increase taking place in the early nineties which may be the result of the three Action Plans for Women in the Teaching Service.

Summary

Victoria's women teachers in state schools have struggled long and hard to overcome institutional discrimination through legislation. It was not until the 1960s and early 1970s that things started to change in any dramatic way. Theoretically equal opportunity policies and practices since then have sought to improve the position of women. However, in practice, women are still not adequately represented in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools.

In analysing briefly the position of Victoria's women in the teaching service over the last 140 years, it can be seen that women teachers have been victims of institutional discrimination because of the law and regulation. The themes that have emerged in this chapter are 'structural discrimination', 'residual discrimination', and finally the advent of some 'affirmative action'.

The theme structural discrimination brought out the issues based around salary and promotion. Throughout the period 1860 to 1925 women teachers were worse off in terms of salary and promotional prospects compared to men. During the retrenchment years of the 1890s and the depression, married women were denied employment as teachers and were only accepted back during the war years because of the loss of many male teachers to war service. In the 1940s married women remained in the teaching service, but only in a temporary capacity. It was not until the 1956 Teaching Service (Married Women's) Act that married women could be permanent members of the teaching service and eligible to apply for promotions. This Act seemed to improve the conditions for women, but in practice discrimination against women teachers continued. One of the discriminations of the Act was that women still had to apply for permanency; it was not automatic. There were also other issues such as equal pay, the fight for a common roll and the position of married women in the teaching service. These issues emerged and were dealt with during the period 1950 to 1980.

The third theme that this chapter has revealed was the affirmative action taken over the last 30 years. This included the removal of direct barriers to women's equal employment opportunity, as well as action to remove the effects of past discrimination.

These themes will partly set a framework for the interviews developed later in this study.

Chapter Three

Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature about women's roles in the teaching service, with particular reference to those in the position of Principal. It draws on a wider literature than the Victorian legislative framework pertinent to the study, which was reviewed in the last chapter.

The scarcity of women in administrative positions in education is not something that is peculiar to the Victorian Education Department. The same situation is reported in American, British and Australia-wide studies. International research confirms that a gender imbalance occurs in the profession of educational administration, with women being considerably under-represented. A range of studies (McDonald, 1987; Laird, 1988; Marshall & Mitchell, 1989; Sampson 1991; Blackmore, 1993 , 1995 ; Victorian Education Department 1996) all suggest that men and women adopt, or are assigned, different roles in the teaching profession. To over simplify the situation, women teach and men manage.

The Feminisation of Teaching

Over many years the teaching profession has always been a major employer of women, and along with nursing has traditionally been regarded as one of the “caring professions”. Theobald (1983) for example pointed out that the traditional view of teaching was that it was one of the few occupations that connected the womanly principles of sacrifice and service with the mothering role. Leaders from an earlier time, such as Cathrine Beecher and Emma Willard in the 19th Century, argued that teaching suited women as it prepared them for the work of marriage and motherhood (Shakeshaft, 1987). While women entered teaching, men entered a two-tiered system. Referring to a common attitude of the 19th Century, it was said that:

One man could be placed in charge of an entire graded school of 500 students. Under his direction could be placed a number of female assistants (Shakeshaft, 1987, p.31).

Over time teaching, as distinct from educational administration, has been characterised as being feminised. In the United Kingdom, at the turn of the century, women were in the majority as teachers in the elementary schools. They comprised 69.5 per cent of all certified teachers and 56 per cent of all elementary headships (Bryne, 1978). By 1914 in the secondary grammar schools, the teaching force was fairly evenly divided. There were about 48 per cent of men in the teaching workforce, but men accounted for 65.7 per cent of headships. Just before the Second World War, 66 per cent of the teaching profession were women in the United Kingdom (Bryne, 1978). In the United States by 1928 women held 55

per cent of the elementary Principalships and 8 per cent of the secondary school Principalships (Shakeshaft, 1987).

In Western countries after World War II, there was considerable effort to attract men into the secondary schools by introducing administrative positions (Ziegler 1967 cited in Tyack & Strober, 1981). For women, the earlier belief that the woman's place was in the home was modified to allow married women to teach, but often their careers were interrupted by the competing demands of family (Clement, 1975 cited in Tyack & Strober, 1981). Teaching was seen to complement a woman's role as wife and mother, with a structure attractive to those who expected to leave work after a few years to care for their own children, or plan to accompany a spouse in frequent moves with an intention to re-enter the workforce in the future (Zeigar, 1967 cited in Adkison , 1981). According to Shakeshaft (1987), women had few professional options. The brightest women chose teaching as men traditionally had more opportunities to select professions that offered both higher salaries and higher status than teaching.

Grant (1989), Sampson (1991) and Maclean (1992) all argue that in Australia, despite a preponderance of numbers in teaching, women occupy only a tiny proportion of top positions as executives and leaders in schools. Milligan's (1994) analysis suggests that the school sector workforce has been, and remains, segregated. The teaching workforce has become feminised, but men continue to predominate in management, and in teaching older students. Women continue to predominate as teachers and teacher aides. The literature suggests that women remain heavily under-represented in school leadership and promotional positions, and the improvement in their position is very slow. This analysis is

in line with the data outlined earlier in Tables 1 in Chapter 1. None of these writers actually indicate what would be an acceptable number, or proportion, of women who should occupy such positions. They seem to assume that the proportion should be near fifty per cent, or reflect the proportion of women employed in schools. But these writers take the same position as is taken in Chapter 1 of this thesis; that the imbalance between men and women in higher positions is so distinct, the argument of what is an appropriate balance simply does not arise.

Barriers to School Leadership for Women

A number of studies have identified a range of “barriers” which prevent women from enjoying a successful rise up the leadership ladder. Limerick (1991), D’Arcy (1994), Dunlap and Schmuck (1995), Edson (1995) and Eggins (1997) all noted that women do not apply for promotional positions due to family commitments which lead to limited geographical mobility, and conflict of after school and domestic responsibilities. They also suggest that women are concerned about having less teaching time with pupils when they are in administrative positions, and that women often experience satisfaction with teaching. The authors also acknowledged that women sometimes lack confidence, aspiration and necessary administrative experience for Principalship. The perception by women that they should have obtained a higher qualification to compete with men is sometimes a barrier to them seeking advancement. Other barriers that were also mentioned in the studies were the lack of a mentor, the need for a high profile in the community, women’s leadership style, interruptions to a ‘normal’ career path, male prejudices and sex-role stereotyping. These concepts will be explained later in this review of the literature.

A framework for discussing the barriers that women face to their obtaining educational administrative positions locates them within the domains of internal, cultural and organisational barriers. Internal barriers (self-confidence, low rates of applications and family pressure) are those that can be potentially overcome by individual personal change, whereas cultural barriers (leadership qualities and socialisation factors) require social and institutional change. Organisational barriers (selection process, informal networks and mentoring, gender discrimination, the culture of schools as organisations and the glass ceiling) are factors that are seen as inherent in the education system that affect promotional pathways and the existence of an institutional climate mitigating against the promotion of women. Despite the introduction over recent years of laws and regulations that have promoted equality, perversely these same changes have often appeared to perpetuate dominance of males in administrative positions (Hoferek, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987; Eggins, 1997). This issue also noted in the last chapter.

To discuss these various issues the following structure will be used for the remainder of the chapter. The major headings used will be internal, cultural and organisational, although it is also noted that there is decided overlap between these, and of course between the sub sections also used to structure the rest of this chapter.

Internal Barriers for Women

Confidence and Self Esteem

Sampson (1987) proposes that lack of self-esteem or confidence is an important factor in explaining why few women seek senior positions. She suggests that women do not receive the kind of social message that men do. The messages men receive lead them to aspire to authority, to managing or controlling other people, especially as leaders of men. Data from her study found that inspectors, superintendents or other educational departmental officers had encouraged 36 per cent of males to apply for promotion compared with only 21 per cent women.

Schmuck (1981) also lists lack of confidence and low self-image as internal barriers that prevent women from considering school administration. Sampson (1987) points out that women do not have access to the kinds of experience that might enhance their self-confidence about administration as men do. Therefore it is understandable that they would not feel confident about applying for school positions, such as Principalships, about which they had little knowledge or experience.

Other researchers such as Ozga (1993) found that women were aware of, and felt subjected to, discrimination due to a lack of training and experience. They perceived these factors as adversely affecting their promotional opportunities. In this regard, two key points emerged from Dunlap and Schmuck's (1995) study. First many women felt that they needed to attain a higher qualification if they were to successfully compete for administrative positions.

Second, women felt the need for mentoring to assist them to gain senior positions. Certainly it has been noted by researchers such as Sampson (1987) that the traditional patronage, or mentoring, of younger men by older ones is symptomatic of the education community, and one which actively disadvantages women. The same study also acknowledged that for female teachers who were mothers, classroom teaching hours and workload were easier to manage than the hours and workload involved in a move towards a promotional position.

Cubillo's (1999) study also shows that women's apparent under-achievement in the management of schools, is the function of internal barriers such as low self-image and lack of confidence resulting from men's position of power and privilege over women within the organisation.

Low Rates of Application

McIntosh (1974, cited in Maclean, 1992) found that a lack of applicants is a major reason why women are under-represented in high status positions. Grant (1989) found in her study that men were twice as likely to apply for five or more promotion positions over a two-year period compared to the number of positions that women apply for. One explanation offered for this was that women frequently perceived themselves as being disadvantaged on account of their sex. In finding a job, women are more likely than men to make direct application for a promotional position to employers in schools in which they are already employed (Grant, 1989), or to rely upon placement rather than men who rely upon friends or relatives (Borman & Frankel, 1984).

A range of authors, Paddock (1978, cited in Adkison, 1981), Maienza, (1986), Grant (1989) and Eden (1992), suggested that conflicting roles of wife, mother and professional serve to limit women's aspirations and hence their low rate of applying for promotion. A particular concern was the clash between long hours of commitment to the organisation as opposed to family responsibilities. Many women, according to Schmuck (1980), assume low-responsibility positions so they can successfully fulfill their other important family roles, take up part-time positions, or consider developments in their careers after they return to teaching when their own children are settled in schools. Grant (1989) supports Schmuck (1981) and states that there are times in the course of their careers when women's' ambition varies considerably compared to men's, due to these factors.

Cultural Barriers for Women

Family Pressures

Family commitments have already been noted a number of times in this review. Here they are expanded on in some detail. Langrish (1981), conducted a study of women workers and found that the women regarded home life as a pressure, compared to men who saw home as a place of refuge, a place to recharge their batteries. In a 1984 study, Sampson (1991) determined that many Australians see child nurturance, provision of food and other service, as women's work. She also suggested that if a woman works outside the home, she would continue to do the major portion of work inside the home as well. This constraint can be shown to influence women teachers in their choices about time-consuming career pursuits.

The difficulties of juggling the full share of family responsibility with administrative tasks may just not seem to be worth it for many women. According to Cadzow (2002), a mid 1990s Australian survey found that both men and women believed having children had a positive effect on a man's corporate image, while women believed it had a negative effect on theirs. The corporate perspective of a woman once she has children is that she focuses on her family and children rather than the job. Blackmore (1999) also suggested that she did not want to take up administration because it was going to take her away from her son:

I am likewise attracted to research and teaching at this moment in my life in preference to an administrative role, particularly when the latter may further detract from time spent with my 8-year-old-son, Jesse (Blackmore, 1999, p. 2).

Biklen (1980) and Sampson (1987) argue that having a family limits women's' mobility and their capacity for advancement. They both suggest that women do not feel that they can move to take jobs in a different community. There is evidence that women defer to their husbands with regard to career development. This in turn limits their access to career positions.

Tomlinson (1994) suggest that there is a need for a school to consider the needs of families when staff are relocated to rural or remote areas. The dislocation from family support networks, friends and disruption to children's schooling are issues for families moving to rural locations. Such needs of families must also be part of the equation. Tomlinson (1994) suggested that the needs of partners and children could be addressed through financial

incentives available to departmental employees. However there is no evidence that this has occurred.

Morton and Morton (2000) also stated that a mother's identity was not the only thing that suffered once a child is born, but also her own career. They suggest that in the view of society:

The mother must be prepared to sacrifice her time, her career, her mobility and her intellectual and social life to the child's needs. To do anything less is simply callous...If a woman remains in the workforce after a child, her employer will regard her as no longer career minded or worthy for promotion...There is the expectation that she is the parent who will collect the child from crèche, stay home when it is ill, and generally shoulder the parenting burden with her primary responsibility, even during working hours, being to her child (Morton & Morton, 2000, p.15).

Leadership Qualities

The issue of women leaders having to change their feminine qualities and act like "powerful men" is one which recurs in the literature and raises questions about how women perceive school leadership and their suitability for it. These issues are noted by Edson (1995). He studied 142 women applying to become Principals. The research confirmed the finding that for female teachers who were mothers, classroom teaching hours and the workload was easier to manage than the hours and the extra workload involved in a move

toward a promotional position. Two further points which emerged from the study were that many women felt they should have obtained higher qualifications immediately after their initial degree as it would be essential for promotional standing. The women also regarded mentors as essential if they were to advance.

The literature makes frequent reference to the importance of a 'normal' career path. According to Eggins (1997), such a path is one without breaks or distractions, which, within an educational context, is characteristic of male teachers. Such a career path is not generally characteristic of women teachers who may leave the service for varied lengths of time, often to raise a family. It is this lack of a 'normal' career path or consistency of service that would appear to be a significant obstacle when women are considered for positions of Principal.

Marshall (1985) argues that educational structures are managed to make organisations run smoothly and efficiently in accord with rational planning along the lines of the theory and practice adopted from business management. A male model of leadership has evolved where women administrators, because of their abilities, different positions and life experience, special training and interests, may exhibit a leadership style that differs from the expectations of the male-norm of educational administration positions. Women, whose gender roles cast them in society's eyes as emotional, irrational and ineffective in abstract reasoning, are excluded from consideration in this male model. This distinction between the genders is noted in other research as well. For example, consultations and submissions to the Victorian Education Department's Ministerial Review of Employment Equity for Women in Education (1996) indicated that the prevailing culture or view of leadership in

many areas of education resulted in a preference for leaders who demonstrated an authoritarian management style. Parents and school community members also viewed the leadership and management role of the principal through the traditional stereotype of “the cane-wielding authoritarian” who was, most probably, a married man. In such situations, women’s achievements are less likely to be recognised or acknowledged, and women and some men who exhibited a different style of leadership and management were likely to be discounted for positions even when they were highly competent.

Women struggle with what they know about themselves as leaders and managers, and what the culture actually perpetuates and values. Giles (1995) found that women saw the role of Principal as conflicting with concepts of femininity. Women felt they had to identify with masculine agendas and work within a ‘man’s conceptual domain’. They believed the role of Principal demanded aggression and involved a certain confrontational style.

Hence it comes as no surprise to read Cubillo (1999) who states that men and women have different styles and approaches to management and leadership. Women are identified as being much more caring, consultative, collaborative, collegial and communicative than men in similar positions of authority. Women’s leadership style is seen as transforming and empowering as opposed to only exercising power. Men are also shown to be more competitive than women. Such attributes good in themselves, clearly do not fit the role of Principal, as traditionally understood.

Organisational Barriers for Women

Socialisation Factors

Greyvenstein and van der Westhuizen (1991) conducted a study that determined that socialised stereotyping of traditional gender roles and the associated attitudes of both males and females, are the major factors underlying the variables which function at individual, organisational and societal levels, compounding and negatively affecting the position of women in education administration. Fisher and Pottker (1977, cited in Adkinson, 1981) argue that sex role socialisation continues in most formal and informal setting. Schools are clearly powerful socialisation agents in our society. The nature of teacher-student interaction, textbook content, and sex typing of courses and activities is such that schools, systematically, ingeniously, and often unconsciously, act along the socially accepted norm of relegating girls and women to subordinate positions. Ross (1992) states:

to continue to ignore the role school systems play in creating gender systems is unacceptable because this behaviour both ensures the reproduction of current gender relations and deprives those actors interested in social change from identifying where transformation may be attempted (Ross, 1992, p.353).

Blackmore (1993) noted that the school experience of most women provides them with messages and practices that reinforce rather than challenge the sexual division of labour. Wilkinson (1995) points out that in society what was seen as men's and women's

appropriate work was still deeply entrenched. She indicates that there is a struggle that many women undergo to break the traditional mould. She speaks from experience as a Principal:

While I enjoyed being a principal I always felt I wasn't what was expected. I didn't storm around the yard and yell at kids and I always felt like maybe I wasn't doing a good enough job...In terms of the area I worked in...it was very male-dominated. It took me a long time to be accepted by the other male principals and all of the other networks that had been set up had been disbanded...So all of the local networking wasn't there... What was unexpected about becoming a principal was the expectation of people about what they expected a principal to be and the loneliness of the job...Women need in particular to talk to someone about what their style is so that they can talk through, well, the staff expect me to be out yelling at kids about being in uniform and I don't want to ...I want to be available to the staff at lunchtime so they can talk to me about all sorts of issues (Wilkinson, 1995, p. 102).

Wilkinson's experience underlines the difference between the way many women Principals want to operate, compared to their male counter parts, but there are clearly barriers to such a perceived way of operating which they have to overcome. In part these barriers are part of their socialisation.

Eden (1992) discovered that there were several difficulties in the workplace for women aspiring to positions of responsibility. They were factors such as gender discrimination, exclusion from informal networks, women's perceived inability to compete with men, the changing role of the Principal and the culture of organisations, including schools being shaped by men.

One such changed role within the culture was the introduction of selection by merit, something which was thought would help women (see Chapter 2). Blackmore (1995) suggests the implications for women undergoing the merit selection process need to be considered. She argues that the merit is a "social construct that favours those already in power, largely white middle-class males and not a neutral standard against which all can be fairly measured" (p.54). The exclusive notions of merit and leadership deny access to those whose experience and skills do not conform to a dominant view. Hence such a process may paradoxically perpetuate the exclusion of women from such positions.

Villa (1999) provided evidence that feminists would argue that sexism and patriarchy affects all aspects of organisations, including the teaching service, where the merit process is limited by men's resistance to women as leaders or managers. Villa (1999) also looked further into the Victoria's teaching service and identified the Principal class as the area which had the lowest number of women, no matter if they had equivalent qualifications. She argued that:

It was the seniority system which provided the most significant structural barrier to women, and most directly reflected and rewarded the male pattern

of employment in the teaching service. It was not removed without great opposition which continues to the present. The replacement of the seniority based promotion system with a 'merit' system was perhaps the most significant structural change. The analysis referred to in this objective altered feminists to an appreciation that educational administration, including leadership, was enmeshed within social understandings and expectations that were masculinist (Villa, 1999, p. 43).

The State Board of Education (1988) understood the removal of the seniority as the sole means of promotion would help women. But it did not.

The change to the merit system also gave school councils a role in the selection process. However this move to local selection has not lead to an improvement in the women's success rate for promotion to the Principal class. In fact it has highlighted women's under representation in leadership positions even more, and provided further evidence of women's limited choice of schools. The limitation seems to be closely related to the domestic situation of women, as discussed earlier. Women face difficulties under the local selection process when it comes to interviews, requirement for administrative experience, women's limited choice of schools, and lack of information concerning the nature of the Principal's job.

Villa (1999) argued that there were contradictions with the merit system and supported her case from research completed by Taylor (1992) and Blackmore and Kenway (1993). Blackmore and Kenway (1993) suggested that even when women gained suitable

educational qualifications they were not able to claim the appropriate rewards. The reasons for this related to the failure of the workplace to accommodate their domestic responsibilities, which have been discussed above, but also to the gendered power relations in the workforce. Blackmore and Kenway (1993) suggested that even when the formal barriers have been removed many women fail to win positions on the basis of the merit system because assumptions of organisational efficiency and authority have a masculine bias. Taylor (1992) researched this area and spoke on this issue in a report commissioned by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1994). She indicated that even when selection panels express a preference for collaborative styles, they responded best to a completely different style; aggressive, masculine and demanding. Blackmore (1999) stated that in the early 1900s to be positioned as a leader, women had to display male characteristics of strength and discipline. In her book she reveals that the then Director of Victorian Education, Frank Tate, referred to Margaret Robertson as the most senior woman at the Melbourne Continuation School in 1907, and as possessing the qualities necessary to influence the education of girls. Further, he described her as having style, ability, moral power and withering discipline, and being strict but much loved. These masculine styles of leadership still seem to be preferred today, Blackmore suggests. The selection and appointment process was also identified by Neidhart and Carlin (2003) as a significant barrier for women seeking Principalship. The problems encountered by the selection process include a concern regarding the transparency and fairness of the selection process, the lack of constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates, and a concern regarding the knowledge and experience panel members have to make appropriate recommendations.

According to Power (2002) women have to cope with unpredictable questions during the interviews like; What do you wear to school? Do you play football? What does your husband think about you going for this job? When are you thinking of having your first child? Power (2002) gives an example of a female teacher in the selection process interview:

In my interview of all interviews, the parish priest showed how keen he was to interview me (the only female applicant, I found out later) when, after the second question from the panel, he was asleep, and by the seventh, his head was flopped back and he was snoring loudly! They had to wake him at the end of the hour to tell him I was leaving. I felt pretty confident as I walked out – confident, that is, that I didn't get the job! (Power, 2002, p. 97).

Power (2002) provides another example where a female teacher has obtained the necessary educational qualifications, held middle management positions in schools, had been trained in a Catholic institution, yet was not selected for the Principal position:

I knew that I wanted to be a leader in a Catholic school. I went for an interview last week for the Principal's position. I was really disappointed because I didn't get it, and the person who did has not gone through the program. He's only had eight years experience. He is high-school trained and he won the position. Yes, it is a male. I visited there, I met and talked with staff and found out all the background information. You put so much energy and emotion into that and you come away with a great feeling- Yes.

My interview went- I was relaxed. I went through the correct channels and then- wham! (Power, 2002, p. 87).

Although this example clearly refers to a primary Catholic school, it appears from anecdotal evidence that similar situation occur in local selection committee meetings in government secondary schools in Victoria.

Informal Networks and Mentoring

Women often feel uncertain facing interview panels; they are torn between their personal values and the need to express a wide range of experience and skills that they believe are the mark of 'good' leaders and managers. However, D'Arcy (1995) believes the status quo is slowly changing. She sees the culture of Principals changing as more female Principals emerge with stronger participation and power-sharing philosophies. Many women now look to their own women's social networks for the emotional and professional support that has not been available in male power groups, such as Principals' Associations, which have often worked to exclude and silence women, whether consciously or unconsciously. Through other networks, women are learning about themselves and how women lead. If real cultural change is to be achieved however, the dominant male culture will also need to change and interpret differences in the way men and women lead as positive characteristics to be promoted in the interests of both students and teachers.

Networks appear to play a role in reculturing education and enabling women to obtain Principalships. They are seen as providing a valuable source of support, and hence are a

means of professional development (Taylor, 1988). In 1992, programs were established to support women to be more successful in obtaining leadership positions. Still's (1996) work illustrates that a program called 'Women in Leadership' at Edith Cowan University set out to meet the challenge. It had support from the Commonwealth Government's Staff Development Fund. The Edith Cowan University was named after the first women elected to an Australian Parliament. This name was very appropriate since women dominated both the staff and student bodies at Edith Cowan. The program was conceived as a training and development program in leadership skills and abilities for 30 female staff members. The program grew and developed. Still points out that the program dealt with a number of issues. How can more women get promoted? What are the challenges of leadership for women in the context of change at Edith Cowan University and in the wider higher education sector? What is leadership? What skills, knowledge and values do leaders need? Why don't women participate more in leadership? And, what personal and organisational strategies are necessary to include more women in academic leadership? The program's purpose was to enable women to claim their place at Edith Cowan University and play a role in its future by shaping its structures and culture in ways which will recognise and reward women's contributions. Still indicates that in 1996 the program was in its fourth year of operation. The outcomes of the program so far are that in the first round of promotions in 1994, women were successful in gaining 17 out of 25 positions. Of the 17 women, 11 had been through the program and more women are also gaining a fairer share of tentured positions. Although the context of this program was at tertiary level, it shows the aspect of professional networking that aspiring women Principals of secondary schools would benefit from.

Hackney and Runnestrand (2003) propose another type of network for female educational leaders. It is called 'Wellspring Community for Women in Educational Leadership'. Women in this group are supportive of each other as they challenge tradition and explore the application of democratic leadership in educational settings. Hackney and Runnestrand describe the network as:

a place where like-minded women leaders could come together, grow together, and explore what it takes to create a more democratically principled workplace. The women participating in Wellspring believe that effective democratic, value-based leadership must begin with a personal and professional formative process. They believe that self-exploration and development are vital to a woman's leading, and that this exploration and development happens more readily when they are involved in study and professional inquiry among like-minded others (Hackney & Runnestrand, 2003, p. 3).

According to Hackney and Runnestrand (2003) the Wellspring group has had many successes and it has also uncovered many concerns. The process of collaboration has helped to name the challenges and identify struggles that women leaders face. Both of the authors state that the benefits of this network are having many minds apply their unique talents to a specific problem or issue. Hackney and Runnestrand studied the Wellspring Community for Women in Educational Leadership as participant observers. They tell Mary's story:

Mary had always felt that her female support staff at work was dependent on her leadership and direction for their success. After the first Wellspring retreat, she “began to think about their development and success in a different way”. She began to realize that “leadership is the art of developing leadership in others” and that with her support, these women were capable of assuming responsibilities for their growth, development, and success at work. With the change in her leadership orientation, the women began to change: they are now exhibiting greater self-esteem and collaborating among themselves (Hackney & Runnestrand, 2003, p.11).

Also with the support of members at the Wellspring group, Alexa has addressed her problem. Alexa has successfully assumed a new position at a women’s college. Alexa’s story:

She “loved the rigor and scholarship required of faculty in the research institution, but the patriarchal nature of the institution made her frustrated, hurt, and often discounted.” She reported at the first meeting of Wellspring as being tired of the “boys’ games” and feeling “sucked into them to survive in the institution.” Members of the group encouraged her to find the courage to let go of dominant culture status issues and follow her heart to a more appropriate institutional setting. She is now the Dean of Graduate Studies in a small private women’s college (Hackney & Runnestrand, 2003, p. 11).

Such a support group would be good for female Principals. It would support, encourage and provide resources to women Principals and those aspiring to this position.

Rhode (2002, cited in Neidhart & Carlin, 2003) also argues that the lack of women in leadership positions is due to the lack of mentors and access to informal networks. Ehrich (1996) proposed that access to a mentor, an older and more experienced career professional, is a prerequisite for women's and men's career success. Ehrich (1996) describes mentorship as a helpful and powerful career strategy which greatly assists the career development and career mobility of professionals. She also proposes a professional mentorship policy in her article as a solution to redress women's under-representation in educational administration. Her research indicates that women in managerial, academic, professional and educational contexts continue to experience lack of mentoring opportunities. This has lead to some government and non-government organizations to introduce both professional and institutionalized mentoring programs as affirmative action strategies for women. Ehrich (1996) also states that mentorship alone will not solve all the problems confronting women when they aspire to higher positions. There are many factors that have been identified as significant for women and this is only one important factor that should not be overlooked.

Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) also describe the advantage of mentoring for those wishing to gain leadership positions. According to Dunlap and Schmuck (1995), in 1986 a system was set up by the U.S. Department of Education in which each year twenty practising administrators were appointed to act as mentors to twenty aspiring administrators. One objective with this system was to provide opportunities for women and minority groups to

gain pre-service experiences in administration. The feedback data gained from the participants from self-administered questionnaires and interviews demonstrated vital results from this system. The attributes of trust, mutual respect, friendship, commitment and communication were essential for the whole process. Sadly there appears to have been no formal attempts within government schools in Victoria to set up such program for mentoring aspiring female who wish to become Principals.

Gender Discrimination

Sampson (1983) notes that the hierarchical structure of organisations and the patterns of promotion within them have traditionally been based on 'staying power'. This is generally attributed to men, for women are penalised if they choose to take off more than the allocated time for unpaid leave for child rearing. Maclean (1989) notes a similar 'problem'. Women do not 'display' in the traditionally accepted way; that is the high degree of career commitment and persistence that is usually a prerequisite for promotion.

Evelyn Mathews (1995) states that while many women acknowledge the presence of discrimination in the gaining of educational leadership positions, others are naïve about its existence. Such women fail to recognize discrimination in their own experiences. They view the instances of support from men, their courtesy in educational situations, and their urging of women to gain leadership positions, as positive forces in their lives. But such women are also puzzled as to why they rarely gain promotion. Rob Jackson, a member of Melbourne law firm Slater and Gordon's Industrial, Employment and Public Interest Unit, argued that cultural discrimination was probably a thing of the past. However, gender bias

continued to restrict the careers of women. Jackson stated, “These days, gender discrimination is like a car accident. It happens when you least expect it. We see senior managers, women who have been happily travelling along, thinking everything is fine and then, wham, they get run over” (Stevens, 2000, p. 18).

Cubillo (1999) has argued succinctly that men appear to be reluctant to release their hold on power and therefore, consciously or unconsciously, continue to undervalue women’s contributions and qualities.

The Changing Role of the Principal

Carlin, d’ Arbon, Dorman, Duignan and Neidhart (2003) conducted a research project on leadership succession in schools in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. They found with regards to the factors that discourage women from applying for a Principal position were the complexities and pressures of the role of Principal. The study reported that over the past 20 years, significant changes have taken place in the economic, social and political dimensions of society, and these have had powerful sustained consequences for school leadership and teaching. The political forces have helped shape educational structures and processes. The Ministers of Education at both State and Federal levels in Australia, have been more actively involved in the administration of education since the late 1980s and have attempted to control educational policies and outcomes. Carlin, d’ Arbon, Dorman, Duignan and Neidhart (2003) also state that the societal changes have led to increasing expectations for the Principal. The Principal is expected to be legal expert, health and social services coordinator, fundraiser, diplomat, negotiator, adjudicator, public relations

consultant, security officer, technological innovator and resource manager. These policy and structural changes have resulted in a significant expansion of both the work of Principals and the pressure on them to meet government and community expectations. Many women, understanding this, simply choose not to become involved in such a complex and pressured role. They judge that other roles they can choose will be more healthy for them.

Duignan and Marks (2003) argue the need for shared leadership in schools is needed now, as never before, to cope with the new and diverse pressures. They suggest that leaders cannot lead complex organisations, like schools, on their own. Those in formal leadership positions will need to let go of the idea that leadership is hierarchically distributed and commit to growing and developing leadership, as a shared phenomenon, in their schools. Leadership, as both concept and practice, should be reinterpreted to encompass the collective action of all who work in the school as a community of learners. Leadership should not be the property of any one individual (The Principal) or group. It should grow out of the shared vision, beliefs and efforts of a committed group of staff, students, even parents, who have a sense of belonging, a sense of being valued members of their school community. If this blue print of Duignan and Marks was taken seriously, then it could be argued that women, rather than men, may well be the more natural appointments as Principals.

The Culture of Schools as Organisational

Sinclair (1994) argues that another barrier for women wanting to become a Principal is the culture of many organisations being shaped by men. Women are usually disadvantaged inside them. Reform of them also proves to be very difficult. He describes the executive culture in Australia as a man's world. It's more a male-oriented type of interaction. It can accommodate women, but it springs from an older white male kind of background. Sinclair was writing in general terms, but these observations apply equally to schools. Scutt (1985) follows a similar line and argued that the education system was and still is very much controlled by males. She stated:

Teachers' colleges are dominated by men, as are the universities. It is here that women (and men) learn to be teachers. They are influenced by what they have directly and indirectly been taught (Scutt, 1985, p.17).

Moving beyond the tertiary institutions to the education system itself, Scutt (1985) outlined what Dale Spender revealed about men controlling this system:

Men have set up the system and they control it. Such control can be used to appoint to their ranks only those who will help to *perpetuate* male control of *what* is taught and *how* it is taught. [This control does not use such] obvious [tactics] as advertisements for candidates who profess staunch allegiance to the principle of male dominance, of course, but [there are] many means

whereby “the best candidates” for influential positions appear to be males, or females who are indebted to males (Scutt, 1985, p.15).

Clearly when it comes to appointments, the applicants’ styles will also be considered important. Hall (1996) reported that women leaders in English schools had a preference for shared power in order to empower other leaders, and achieve agreed goals. However, Power (2002) conducted a study of lay women and the Principalship in Catholic primary schools. Her studies showed that women possess the knowledge, strategies and emotional strength to lead educational institutions, but are not confident that they will be supported in the challenge. Such differences will influence the frequency of appointments since the leaders’ style is intermediately aligned to the culture of an organisation. There is no doubt the same is true for secondary schools in Victoria.

Women and The Glass Ceiling

Many of the issues that have been discussed above pointed to an insurmountable threshold for women. This phenomenon often referred to in the literature pertaining to the lack of promotion for women, is the “glass ceiling”. Willis (1993) defines “glass ceiling” as:

The descriptive title given to the point at which a woman finds it almost impossible to get any further. It appears that there is nothing stopping her moving on in her organisation or profession, but every time she tries for promotion something seems to be in the way, but she can’t see or identify what it is (Willis, 1993, p.4).

An article from *Dataline* (1991) suggests that there are three levels (or stages) in which the glass ceiling seems to operate. These stages have been called: (1) Sorcerer's Apprenticeship (2) The Pipeline and (3) Alice in Wonderland. Different strategies are needed at each level and it is a mistake for women to use the same strategies from one level to the next.

In the Apprenticeship phase employees are entering the workforce after completing their formal education, for example medical school to internship and residency. It is at this stage that employees are at their most vulnerable. For women sexual harassment is most common. It is accepted as being just normal, but it affects whether women complete apprenticeship stages well or complete it at all. The price is that there is a loss of self respect and respect for others in the workplace. Much of this goes under-reported. There is also outright exclusion of women at this stage and in some professions women are not wanted; for example in trades and trucking. Individuals must find the line that must be crossed before they are "in the pack" to be considered for management or leadership. To overcome the pressures of this stage, women must rely on peer support and camaraderie, humour and the intense development of skills and expertise (Dataline, 1991).

The next stage is called Pipeline and here the ratio of men to women in all management positions can be fourteen to one. The existence of a "glass ceiling" at this level is explained by the fact that during this phase recruiting services and strategies unconsciously or explicitly discriminate, so much so that the ratio actually decreases for women to twenty to one.

The last stage – the Alice in Wonderland phase - finds the women in a system where the rules and relationships are dramatically different. There is a dramatic decline in the presence of female peers and the work load ensures that they have to work extremely hard just to stay in place. Their visibility is increased up to as high as one in twenty which has a warping effect as everything they do is scrutinized. There are different standards used for the women than those for men. Judging follows rigid and detailed but often trivial pathways. For example, she does not wear make-up, or her school was not an important one (Dataline, 1991).

Baxter (1985) in her article on *Access to Authority* explains further the glass ceiling idea is not just composed of one major impediment to women in the workforce. There are many invisible barriers, not a single one that coalesce at different points in a professional journey to form various ceilings. Baxter (1995) reinforces the idea that the glass ceiling may be better viewed as a greasy pole or as sticky stairs, and emphasising the notion that there is a series of multiple glass ceilings (Baxter, 1995). Tedeschi (1992) quotes Sharyn Cederman's description that the glass ceiling is more like a web. There are still gaps and hence some women do get through. But until there is a critical mass of women at middle management level, they will be the exception (Tedeschi, 1992). Many writers such as Stevens (2000), Morton and Morton (2000), Hudson (2000), Walker (2000) and Gare (2000) argue that the glass ceiling effect is continuing and is a significant factor preventing women from leadership positions.

The Weekend Australian on April 2000, published an article that was an example of how the glass ceiling debate is still proceeding. According to Stevens (2000, p.18) in the fifteen

years since the Hawke Government institutionalized Affirmative Action legislation (referred to in Chapter 2), there have been a lot of changes in the Australian workplace. Women have held courage and challenged the world of executive men, the many stereotypes, and are creating new ways of balancing family and professional life. However, the women who made it to the top were only a minority and were aware of the barriers that tried to prevent them from succeeding, but they try not to accept this. Rebekah O' Flaherty, who is a field commander in the Asia Pacific e-Business Manager for Hewlett-Packard, stated "I only have to look at the data to know that there are some structural limitations in this country for women". She further commented, "To accept a glass ceiling is to limit opportunities and deny responsibility" (Stevens, 2000, p. 17).

During the 1990s it was hoped that the glass ceiling was shifting. However, as soon as children enter the equation, women are still hostage to the values of the 19th century. Tony Morton and Ann Morton (2000) argued that:

Today's woman goes forth and forges her independent identity in the workplace and the wider society, just as her brothers have always done. Yet as soon as she becomes pregnant a curious transference occurs: her identity is taken from her and given to the child growing within her...Even after the baby is born, society sees not two identities but one the child's. The mother is now a mere instrument to her child's wellbeing (Morton & Morton, 2000, p. 15).

In the year 2000 Australian women were still losing the fight for equal pay, to secure top jobs, and they continue to experience discrimination at work. Walker (2000) provided evidence that women in Australia were earning on average 20 per cent less than men for doing the same work. Also over the past six years the pay rates for women have been dropping, which is widening the gap between males and females in the workforce. Walker stated “ The few who make it to managerial levels are the worst off, with some earning 33 per cent less than men in equivalent roles” (Walker, 2000, p. 58). The Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Halliday, reported “School children are taught that men and women in Australia have had equal pay for 25 years but that this is a lie” (Walker, 2000, p.58). Walker also pointed out that the glass ceiling in the year 2000 goes all the way to the top levels of government and the boards of Australian companies. Walker states an “Australian Institute of Management study released in May found the number of women on the boards of Australian companies is falling. Women account for just 10 per cent of board membership in large companies and 19 per cent in smaller companies” (Walker, 2000, p.58).

Each of the aspects of the glass ceiling debate is also played out explicitly for women Principals. This is clearly supported with the statistics showing that the number of women Principals in Victorian government secondary schools is not equal with men. Also it may seem like the glass ceiling is disappearing in recent times with the emergence of facilities of child-care and maternity or paternity leave where women have more options to consider if and when they decide to have a family. However such facilities are not available in every location, or the financial aspects of such services are not always acceptable to each individual. Interestingly, the legislation and provision of such facilities may cause a

problem for women deciding between children and career, or in fact children with career. None of the options appear to come without organisational or financial problems for the family such as one partner remaining at home, the use of extended family to do the child minding, or the use of child-care centers. Megalogenis (2000) in *The Weekend Australian* supports this with a quote by the Professor Belinda Probert from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. She suggested:

If society wants employers to fill the role of the extended family, then governments might need to offer more help. But the Howard Government seems to be pushing women the other way and back to the kitchen. Childcare fees have jumped by 56 percent since 1991 but government benefits have lagged, creeping up by just 29 percent over the same period (Megalogenis, 2000, p. 2-3).

It might seem that there are more options available for women in the education sector, but they all come at a cost. This has perhaps served to maintain the male dominant structures in educational Principal positions. Megalogenis (2000) suggests that despite a rapidly changing society, many women are still forced to decide between career and family. This creates difficulties because women are torn between guilt about leaving their children in someone else's care and the frustration that they can't take the sorts of jobs they want. This particularly applies to women Principals, and women who might wish to become Principals.

Summary

The literature on women in positions to gain promotion in educational settings provides no single nor simple explanation for their under-representation in the position of Principal. There is, however, general agreement within the literature as to the factors perceived as being potential barriers to women attaining this position. Many of these factors are interrelated. However attitudes toward the home and family, and the inherent social obligations that this involves, would seem to be the significant and central factor.

There were important themes that emerged from the literature which help explain why women remain at the teacher level. One of these involved the apparent lack of confidence and self-esteem. The literature revealed that women simply lacked confidence in their ability to assume leadership positions. They have not receive the kind of social ‘messages’ which men do, encouraging them to aspire to authority and in particular to managing or controlling other people, especially as leaders of men. ‘Application Patterns’ was another theme: the fact that there was a far smaller proportion of women than men seeking Principal positions has been a continuing pattern for decades.

The feminisation of teaching was another theme that emerged from the literature review. Writers stressed that the very choice of teaching was to a large extent fulfilling gender expectations. The expectations of what is right or natural for women to do, think, feel and act out. Teaching was thus conceptualised to encompass the notion of caring and of nurturing, as well as the imparting of knowledge. Within teaching, the positions assigned to women reflects such nurturing expectations. The greater responsibilities lies with Principal

positions, which are mostly held by men, since in this line of thought, this leadership position relies less on nurturing and more on directing, and this is seen not as suitable for woman.

The theme of what can be called 'leadership qualities' also emerged. Some writers suggested that managerial characteristics are male normed and that the female stereotypes make it difficult for selectors to see women in these roles. Also, aspiring managers are expected by those who make such selection, to exhibit leadership qualities such as objectivity, competitiveness, self-confidence, ambition, aggressiveness, forcefulness, and desire for responsibility. These were not the characteristics normally ascribed to women by selection committees in schools.

'Organisational barriers' was another theme in the literature that played a role in explaining why there are fewer women becoming Principals. The organisational barriers that seemed most difficult for women were the male dominated networks, both formal and informal, and overt gender discrimination. The literature suggested that women did not have the networks that men do. Networks were seen by writers as providing a valuable source of support, rather than a specific deliberate means of professional development. Gender discrimination was another difficulty in the workplace for women trying to become leaders. Women who took more than the allotted time for unpaid leave for child rearing, were not seen by employers as displaying the high degree of career commitment that is usually a prerequisite for promotion.

Finally the glass ceiling was a theme brought out in the literature. The glass ceiling was one phenomenon that stopped women moving up through the profession or organisation. Women often are unable to actually identify just what the glass ceiling is for them in any particular context. This metaphor drew together many of the themes developed earlier in the literature review.

It is one thing to read and analyse the literature to try and understand the perceived wisdom of researchers and commentators.. This enables an understanding to grow of what is likely to be the case in any secondary college in Victoria when the question of who has become the Principal of a particular college is asked. However the particular context of a specific college means that other factors invariably must come to have a large impact as well. It is such a context that the remainder of this thesis will deal with and in doing so, the interplay between the general and particular will be mapped out. Hence in trying to describe what has facilitated and inhibited the career paths of four women who did indeed become Principals of Gilmore College for Girls in the Footscray suburb in Melbourne, the space overlapping the general and local will become alive. This will provide more insight into why women have always had, and still do, have deep-seated oppositionals in comparison to men, to their leadership success.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Developing the Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate issues associated with the gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victorian government secondary schools.. It attempted to identify factors that have militated against women gaining Principal positions and to explain why relatively few women become Principals. Chapters 2 and 3 have suggested a line of inquiry centering on structural discrimination, although other issues play various roles as well.

As noted at the end of the last chapter, there is value in not only looking at the generalized frame of reference that speaks to this issue, but also looking at a particular context in which this issue can be examined in detail. The former has been explored in the last two chapters. The next three chapters are concerned with the latter, and the interplay between the two.

Qualitative Method

The study reported in this and the next two chapters was concerned with the factors that facilitated or inhibited the career paths, from their perspectives, of four female Principals at Gilmore College for Girls in Melbourne. Why these women were chosen will be detailed at a later point in this study. As the emphasis of this research was on gaining meaning from the respondents, qualitative research methods based on an interpretive framework were

employed as they involve the direct examination of the empirical social world (Blumer, 1969). Punch (1998) argues that these methods afford the best way of accessing the insiders' perspective.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define the term Qualitative Research as:

Any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about person's lives, stories, behavior, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 18).

Qualitative methods were used in this study because, although the statistics collated in Table 1 provided evidence that there has been a variation in the number of women in Principal positions in Victorian government secondary schools, their numbers at no time are near equal with those of men, nor anywhere near 50% of the total work force. However these statistics could give no explanation as to why such an obvious imbalance still existed. There was still a need to uncover and understand what lies behind this issue. Poiner and Wills (1991) concur in their support for the need for qualitative data in monitoring action and collecting information:

Numbers don't tell you why... Why does make a difference, especially if you are looking for lasting change (Poiner & Wills, 1991, p.54).

According to Piantanida and Garman (1999) and Wainwright (1997) qualitative findings are more in-depth since they make use of open-ended questions, the results provide more detail on behaviour, attitudes and motivation.

Although this type of research does not generalize immediately to a wider population, by interviewing four women Principals concerning factors that have been identified in the literature, and have impeded women's progression to the position of Principal in secondary schools, the analysis of the interviews may add some depth to these issues that are pertinent to the wider school sector in Victoria.

Case Study

The case study approach was used in this thesis. According to Robson (1993) a case study is a well established strategy where the focus is on the description and interpretation of the culture and social structure of a social group. This study was representative of a case study approach because it concentrated on a school and in particular women Principals.

The school was Gilmore College for Girls in Melbourne. The reason for selecting this school was that it was a girls' school, and all Principals have been women since its foundation. This is the only instance in Victoria where throughout a school's history, all Principals have been women. Hence it was hoped that the issues that women have to face in becoming a Principal, and the change in these over a period of years, might have been evident at this site. In some ways taking such an individual school such as this negates any application of insights gained to the wider school sector. However the special

circumstances may also lead to insights that may be very difficult to gain at any other sight. Thus the issue of applicability, as always in case study methodology, is a vexed one for this study. More details of the College pertinent to this argument are provided in the next chapter.

The case study approach was also chosen because it provides flexibility and focuses on explanation. Burns (1994) maintains that:

Flexibility is a vital trait, as few case studies ever proceed exactly as planned. Inevitably changes are made as new evidence comes to light and the focus can even change. Unexpected situations are new opportunities not threats (Burns, 1994, p. 322).

The case study, like any other method, has limitations. One of the limitations is subjective bias (Burns, 1994). The greatest concern is the role of human subjectivity when selecting evidence to support or refute, or when choosing a particular explanation for the evidence found. It is easy for the case study investigator to allow equivocal evidence or personal views to influence the direction of the findings and the conclusion. The bias can also enter into the conduct the study, as well as in the designing of instruments such as questionnaires and sets of interview questions to an unknown degree. An attempt was made in this study to let the data interact with ideas drawn from the literature. As well supervisors were relied on to read, and reread, drafts of the analyses with access to original transcripts for comment on interpretations made by the researcher.

Another limitation about the case study approach is the potential for time and information overload. Case studies are seen as time-consuming and can produce for the investigator a massive deluge of information which is impossible to adequately analyse. This increases the tendency to selectivity and bias (Burns, 1994). In this study this was countered to some degree by judiciously choosing a small number of women to interview, although interviewing in depth.

The possible data gathering processes available for case study ranges from interviewing, observation, analysing records and survey questionnaires. In this study the interview was the main data gathering process. The purpose of the interview in this study was to seek to understand the personal perspectives of each respondent to those factors facilitating and inhibiting women becoming Principals in Victoria's government secondary schools. The researcher was confident that individual interviews would allow the rich data that was sought, to be gained.

Interview Process

According to Punch (1998, p 174), the interview is a useful means of "accessing people's perspectives, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality," because leads can be followed, in-depth probes made and elaboration sought. Support for this point of view is provided by Edson (1988, p. 4) who stated that interviews offered "information about respondents' personal points of view and experiences which are the voices often missing from other studies."

Davies (1993) has argued that the use of interviews gives an explanation as to how and why, whereas statistics do not. She argued:

By looking at statistical information you are left guessing and predicting whereas a simultaneous use of qualitative data can be very illuminating... [it] gives a much stronger sense of how and why, it provides some explanation behind the statistics (Davies, 1993, p. 3).

In contemplating how to conduct the interview, there are a number of issues that need to be thought through. Van Manen (1990) contends that the interviewer needs to be familiar with the question:

Before embarking on a busy interview schedule one needs to be oriented to one's question or notion in such a strong manner that one does not get easily carried away with interviews that go everywhere and nowhere (Van Manen, 1990, p. 67).

Grosof and Sardy (1985, p. 156-161) discuss a variety of criteria for establishing the validity of instrumentation. In this study some basis of validity was established during the formative stages of the construction of the interview questions. Experienced researchers and colleagues at Australian Catholic University offered advice in devising the interview questions that were based on themes found within the relevant body of literature. The questions used in the interviews are discussed in detail in the next section.

Hence the primary reason the qualitative approach was selected for the study was to be able to use the interview process and to go beyond just a description of women's experience. The intention of the interview was to elicit from respondents information as to how each became a Principal, the obstacles that they have overcome, and the areas that require continuing work to be done by the profession. Also it was to compare the differences between their attitudes, knowledge or behaviour, which may lead to ideas that can assist women wanting to aspire to Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools.

The four female Principals of Gilmore College for Girls who held Principal positions at the school from 1968 to the present were invited to participate in the interview process. All Principals prior to these four had died. Together they represent about 30 years during which immense changes in the education system took place. A letter was sent to these Principals describing the project, and a copy of the questions was included. The interviewees were provided with questions in advance so that they could exert a degree of control over the interview process by deciding which areas had priority for them, and so go beyond the questions being asked if they saw this as appropriate. The letter was followed by a telephone request for an appointment time, and the interview was carried out at a convenient time for interviewee and researcher. Appendices A, B, C and D include the transcript of interviews, letter to the Principals, the consent form, and the interview questions.

The interviews were conducted over the period of a month at venues most convenient for the respondents. Two of the interviewees chose to be interviewed at their homes, one at her

work place because she was the present Principal of the school, and one at Australian Catholic University because it was more convenient for her. There were no indications that the different venues for the interviewees adversely impacted on any of the interviews. Of the four women interviewed only one of them was currently working as a Principal. The other three had retired. Each interview lasted an hour. For each interview this seemed to be ample time. All the interviews were tape recorded. All respondents were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any stage without having to explain their reasons.

The Development of the Interview Questions

The interview was structured around sixteen questions. An analysis of the literature did not provide a single explanation for women's under-representation in Principal positions. However, there were a number of factors perceived as being potential barriers to women attaining this promotional position. Many of the factors appear to be interrelated, although attitudes towards the home and family and the inherent obligations involved, was considered as a significant and central factor. Equal pay, the lack of a common roll, and superannuation were also issues that seemed to be preventing women from becoming Principals. It was expected that each Principal's responses would reflect to some extent their personal and professional reactions to what was happening to women in the wider society at the time they were Principals. The starter questions and the reasons for asking each question follow. Clearly these main questions were followed up at times to illicit further explanation.

1. ***Where did you go to school?***

Question one was an icebreaker to get the conversation rolling. The idea behind starting at each Principal's own education was that it would reveal basic facts about type of schools they attended, which may have implications in how to interpret other answers they gave.

2. ***How did your schooling help you choose your career in teaching?***

This question was used to get an indication of how much their schooling influenced their later career choices. For example, if the interviewees attended a girls' school they might have been influenced by the role models of women in authority to whom they were exposed.

3. ***Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?***

This question attempts to ascertain any non-school factors such as those identified in the literature review, like the choice of teaching fulfilling gender expectations, which the respondents believed to be influential in forming their career choice. Follow up questions probed whether in particular the studentship scheme' was an important influence enabling any of these women to enter secondary teaching. In the 1950s through to the 1970s the state Government ran a scheme where university students were paid an allowance and had all university fees paid, if they committed themselves to teaching following their graduation from university studies. According to the Teachers' Federation of Victoria (1986) these studentships were a significant influence which enabled girls in particular to become secondary teachers by entering university. The studentship provided an opportunity by overcoming the

obstacles of financial hardship, and parents' resistance to the idea of further study for girls.

4. *Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?*

This question may bring out the guidance and encouragement or lack of it provided to girls considering taking up teaching as a career. It may also highlight changing community attitudes towards women and work through that period of time. We can relate this question to the literature review where a study was taken place by Sampson (1991) showing that many Australians see women's primary role as child bearer and carer. Also Morton and Morton (2000) indicates that once a child is born, the mothers career suffers.

5. *What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?*

This may bring out such factors such as promotion, pay, status, power and freedom, all issues touched on in the literature review which suggest why men aspire to be Principals, but seem not to be so important for women. Indeed the literature gave few reasons as to why women did aspire to be Principals.

6. *For how long were you a Principal at the school?*

The reason for this question was there may be some teachers who became a Principal, and then decided they did not want to do that job any more. They may have wanted to go back to teaching or move on to something else. This question can relate to the literature review through Blackmore's (1999) idea that she did not want

to take up administration, because it was going to take her away from her son and away from the sort of work she got job satisfaction from.

7. ***What factors encouraged you to stay as a Principal?***

This question was used to give an idea of what made these female Principals stay in this position. It tried to bring out what the interviewees saw as being the rewards of being a Principal.

8. ***Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?***

A number of women in upper management positions in business, government, and service industries would suggest that a woman attaining a leadership position is, in itself, a major achievement. This question was used to find out if these women received direct encouragement from men or women in positions of authority to aspire to being a Principal. Was the decision to seek promotion the result of a gentle push from supportive colleagues, or partners, or of actually being asked to do so by the Board of Inspectors?

9. ***What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?***

It has been noted that the selection process can be a factor that makes it difficult for women to become a Principal. In recent years the methods of assessment for promotion to all levels have changed. The 1990s saw the replacement of the seniority based promotion system with the merit system. This notion builds from the literature review with studies conducted by Blackmore (1995). Blackmore (1995) indicates that the merit system favours white middle class males. The Teachers'

Federation of Victoria (1986) argued that years of teaching experience placed some women at a disadvantage if they left the teaching service to have children. This question will seek to clarify whether the four Principals felt these particular impacts and how they reacted to them. It also gives an opportunity to hear whether there were other factors that may not have been identified in the literature.

10. *Were there difficulties in balancing a number of roles?*

The question was designed to address the issue of balancing roles, for example, family and employment. The role of Principal does require long hours to attend to administrative duties, school management, parent/school liaison, regional and state meetings and conferences. For example, a number of meetings are often scheduled outside of the 9:00am to 4:00pm time span of weekdays, which approximates to a normal teaching day. Women may find it difficult to find care providers who are willing to provide the service for the long length of time each day and during evenings if required if in fact they have children. Studies conducted by D'Arcy (1994), Dunlap and Schmuck (1995), Edson (1995), Eggins (1997) and Limerick (1991) show that women do not apply for promotional positions due to family commitments and domestic responsibilities.

Finally, this question was asked to see if there were any breaks in these women's careers due to child rearing. If a large number of female teachers married and had children it might be expected that such breaks have an adverse effect on the pursuit of careers. Eggins (1997) supports this argument. He believes men have normal career paths without breaks or distractions and that women teachers may leave the

service to have children. Therefore this may become a significant obstacle for some women teachers wanting to become Principals.

11. *What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?*

12. *What did you enjoy least about being a Principal?*

With questions 11 and 12, the respondents were asked to identify negative and positive factors related to their role as Principal. The interviewees, by revealing the positive and negative aspects of being a Principal, would make the researcher aware that there may be changes needed in the role of Principal.

13. *Is it easier for a woman to become a Principal today than when you became a Principal at Gilmore School for Girls?*

This question investigated whether the respondents believed it was easier for a women to become a Principal in Victorian government secondary schools in the past or today. For example, in the literature review the legislation affecting women teachers in Victorian government secondary schools was examined. It shows that women teachers have faced discrimination because of past policies, such as equal pay, no confinement leave, superannuation and the common roll (Towns, 1982; Kelly, 1986; Federated Teachers' Union of Victoria, 1991). This question was used to invite the interviewees to consider some of the issues that were influential for them.

14. *Do you believe that women in your profession hit a glass ceiling?*

The term glass ceiling was defined in the study. How it had affected women in their profession was explored. It was relevant and important to ask this question of these women Principals because it seems the glass ceiling still affects all professions (see Stevens, 2000).

15. *Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?*

16. *If so, which writers influenced you and why?*

Question 15 was asked because feminist issues are not only important in education but they are also important in society. Feminism is a worldview rather than something that is only happening in schools. Feminism has played a large role in women's lives with its demands for increased female entry into paid workforce, higher education and women's increased participation in public life. There was also the whole movement towards affirmative action and anti-discrimination legislation that was going on at this time and noted in the literature review. By asking these questions we may get an indication of whether these four women see themselves see themselves as feminist, and if so, to what degree.

Analysis

All interviews were tape recorded and all respondents were given the opportunity to refuse to be recorded. In fact the four women had no objections. The researcher conducted all four interviews. No one else was present at any of the interviews. During the interviews, the

researcher made field notes for later reference. Following the interview, tapes were listened to but not transcribed fully. Key issues, concerns or particular events were identified and noted, along with the narrative that had described them. Notations made during the interview also assisted with the transcription and identification of particular incidents that illustrated the specific issues investigated during the interview. Themes were then determined from the clusters of issues that began to emerge from the interview. Themes common to most or all of the interviews were also noted. The researcher after looping through this process either partially or fully a number of times was also able to have the themes validated, debated, reshaped and affirmed as an account that makes sense of the women Principals' lives and experiences.

Summary

This chapter described the conceptual framework for the study, the context in which the study took place, and development of the interview questions with the related reasons for asking each question. The chapter also indicated the method of analysis of the data. The next chapter will discuss the data obtained and its analysis.

Chapter Five

The Case Study

Introduction

This chapter presents a case study of Principalships over the last 30 years within one inner western suburban secondary school of Melbourne, Victoria. It has been constructed from interview data obtained from four women Principals who worked at the school, other data from field notes, and notes taken in reading various historical documents to do with the school. This chapter begins with sketching out the historical context of the school, after which the four Principals who were interviewed are introduced. A set of themes is then elaborated which reflects the career aspirations of the four Principals, and the factors which supported or acted against their aspirations for a Principalship.

The Context for the Case Study

The college selected for this study was Gilmore College for Girls, located at 298 Barkly Street Footscray. Footscray is an inner western suburb of metropolitan Melbourne. The western suburbs of Melbourne have always been home to working class people in the main. On October 18th 1917, a deputation sponsored by Footscray Council urged the then Minister of Public Institution, the Hon. H.S.W Lawson, to establish a Domestic Arts School at Footscray. Dr Leach, the District Inspector of schools, was asked to report on the matter and in his 1921 report he recommended the establishment of the school and stated that there

were 250 girls available and ready to attend. The new school building was founded in March 1925 and was completed on the 4th of June 1925 at a cost of 15,034 pounds. The then Minister responsible for education, Sir Alexander Peacock, officially opened Footscray Domestic Arts School later that same year. At the opening the Director of Education Mr Frank Tate, told the people how fortunate they were to have this new type of school, which as well as teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, also taught cookery, needlework and aimed to educate girls for efficient and happy womanhood (Blake, 1973; Footscray Girls High School, 1985; Gallo, 1995).

The *Footscray Advertiser* on June 1925, pointed out that the girls at Footscray Domestic Arts School learned cooking in a practical manner. They learned to provide for a certain number of people, as the school provided meals on a daily basis for the public. The girls also learned how to set the table, how to wait on it, and how to clean up. In the domestic arts school there was a suite of living rooms in which the headmistress and one teacher lived. The cleaning of these rooms was left to those girls who were participating in the subject of House Cleaning (Footscray Advertiser, 1925, p.5).

Gallo (1995) interviewed a number of past students to document experiences of their time at the school. Dorothy Mckenzie, a student at the school in 1926 and 1927, mentioned how much she enjoyed going into the school flat. Mckenzie stated:

There was a flat at the school which I loved to get into. We used to have to make the Head Mistress' bed in the morning. She had already made it, but

we had to undo it and do it again and I'm proud to say that I got 10 out of 10 for that (Gallo, 1995, p. 7).

In the late 1920s Footscray Domestic Arts school began to be regarded more as a secondary school. Both parents and staff were concerned to improve the course options available to the girls, and there were attempts to make the school more like a secondary school and less like a cookery centre. By the 1930s the school offered a professional course of four years duration leading to the Intermediate Certificate (year 10), including handwork and domestic subjects, and a three or four year course providing general subjects as well as domestic arts (Victorian Public Records Series 3916, Unit 60).

At the end of 1930 eighty girls obtained the Merit Certificate (year 8), and twenty-five the Certificate of Proficiency (year 9) in home arts and crafts. For the first time in the history of the school, girls were presented for the Commercial Examination of the Technical School Certificate. By 1938 the enrolment of the school had increased to 391. There was also an increase in the number of girls remaining to complete the third year of the course (in today's terms, year 9). Fourteen girls returned for a fourth year and seven had entered for the forthcoming intermediate examination of the University of Melbourne (that is, year 10) (City of Footscray, Annual Report 1937-38).

As the courses offered at the domestic arts school were extended, the educational emphasis changed slowly, and this was reflected in the change of the name of the school. In a letter in 1938 the Advisory Council of the school asked the Education Department to change the sign outside the school to read Footscray Girls' Secondary School. It was believed the

original name had adversely affected the enrolment in past years and that many girls who should be attending the school were travelling daily to other schools some distance from Footscray. The Department agreed to change the sign in the next contract for general repairs (Victorian Public Record Series 3916, Unit 60), and in 1939 Footscray Domestic Arts School was redesignated as Footscray Girls' Secondary School (Victorian Public Record Series 3916, Unit 75).

Also in 1939 the school tried to arrange classes in languages and higher mathematics (City of Footscray Annual Report 1937-38). In the late 1950s when Miss E.L. Tippet became the headmistress she was successful in her application to the Department for permission to introduce a full high school course for girls with good academic ability (that is teach through to year 11). Nevertheless, classes in languages were not offered at the school until Miss M. Facey became headmistress in 1962. The school then started to provide advanced courses including French and Mathematics as well as the original arts course (Blake, 1973).

In the early 1970s the school name was changed again to Footscray Girls' High School, because the school had now gained high school status. During this period Miss Noela Eury was the Principal. At this time the science block was built and it provided facilities for teaching chemistry, physics and biology. By mid 1970 the Higher School Certificate was introduced with fourteen enrolments in the first year.

By 1985 the enrolment was 742 students with 62 teaching staff and 28 full and part time general staff. The curriculum of the school reflected the determined commitment of staff and School Council to provide educational opportunities equal to others offered in

comparable schools. Gallo (1995) highlighted an interview with a past student about the science course. Susan Sayed attended the school in 1978 stated:

Myself and the two others were the first students to do all science course at the school. We were the first ones to do Chemistry, Physics and Biology at Year 11 and Year 12 so it was fairly new. Basically it was the science areas that I was involved with. In Year 11 there were quite a few Physics and Chemistry students. They were fairly new but by Year 12 we were the first school to have Physics and Chemistry. Science and Chemistry were in demand. Physics was also pretty constant (Gallo, 1995, p. 67).

At this period languages such as German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese were offered. Sonia Nikolovski, a past student attending in year 1985 to 1990, spoke about her German class:

What I found amusing at school was my German classes. Mr Menke would come in with his piano accordion and would teach us German beer songs. We would sing as loud as possible, pretending we had tankards of beer in our hands. Those classes were entertaining (Gallo, 1995, p. 77).

At the start of 1990 Footscray Girls' High School underwent a further name change to Footscray Girls' Secondary College. The Education Department had changed the names of all the high schools in the state to secondary colleges. This particular school had not been under any pressure to become co-educational or to merge with other schools, because there

had been high enrolment rate and a great demand by the parents for girls' high school. This was unusual given the number of secondary schools that had to do one or the other, or which were simply closed during the early 1990s.

In 1991 Footscray Girls' Secondary College, like every other school in the state, had changed from offering the Higher School Certificate to a new course, the Victorian Certificate of Education. This was the new year eleven and twelve course of study. The new course at the school had studies ranging from the arts, Australian Studies, History, Human Development, Technology Studies, Languages other than English, Mathematics, Science and Social Education.

Ms Victoria Baxter was appointed as Principal in 1994. The school name was changed to Gilmore College for Girls, after Dame Mary Gilmore. The new name was to reflect the role of the school as a provider of education for girls from a wider geographic area. The school also expanded, with a new state-of-the-art science block, and access to computers and the school's internet/CD-ROM networked in many rooms.

Thus over time, the school was slowly transformed from a domestic arts school to a girls' secondary college with a curriculum similar to most other secondary colleges in Victoria. However for all its life, the school remained a girls' school.

The Principals

This school has been chosen as the site of this case study because of the interesting sequence of Principals that have lead the school from its inception. They have all been women. The only exception to this was for some eight months in the mid 1980s when a male held the position as acting Principal. This has not always been the case for girls' schools in Victoria. For example, a male has often led the large and famous Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne (private school).

The first Head Mistress of the school was Mary Agnes Keiller. Miss Keiller held office from 1925 until 1937. Miss Curtin acted as Head Mistress for 1938-1939 and Miss Dora Taylor was in charge during the war years. Miss Morrison took over for the years 1946-1948. Miss D.A Mackay held office of Head Mistress from 1949-1953, then Miss Olive Smith from 1954-1955, followed by Miss Cronin from 1956-1958. Miss E.L Tippet succeeded Miss Cronin in 1959 and remained Head until her retirement in 1961. Miss M. Facey became Head Mistress in 1962. Miss Noela Eury followed Miss Facey in 1970. Ms Irene Wescott was Principal from 1978-1984 and Mr Brian Magree followed her as acting Principal from September 1984-April 1985 when Miss Barbara Hall was chosen to be the new Principal. Miss Hall retired from the school in 1993. Mrs Val McDonald was acting Principal at this time and she led the school until the appointment in July 1994 of Ms Victoria Baxter (Gallo, 1995). Within this interesting context of a school having such a string of female Principals, it may be that there was a culture that developed within the school that can give insight into how women Principals saw and developed their leadership

role. This may not be so obvious in other schools; most if not all would normally be lead by a male, with occasionally a female being given the Principalship.

Four female Principals of Gilmore College for Girls were invited to participate in the interview process. The interviews were used to investigate how women achieve Principal positions and the barriers confronting women in Victorian government secondary colleges to becoming Principals. This data may give insight into why there is an under-representation of women as Principals.

The following female Principals who lead the school from 1970 to the present were interviewed: Miss Noela Eury (1970-1977), Mrs Irene Wescott (1978-1984), Mrs Barbara Hall (1985-1993) and Ms Victoria Baxter (1994-2000). The following paragraph give some background to each Principal:

- Miss Noela Eury attended Waringabil High School located north west of Ballarat, a co-educational non-metropolitan school. In those days the expectation was that to enter teaching, nursing, or be a shop assistant were suitable jobs for girls, especially in rural areas. Noela was fortunate to have parents that were supportive of her and could afford to send her on to university to become a teacher. She held the Acting Principal position at Gilmore College for Girls in 1970, and in 1972 was confirmed in this position. She stayed as Principal until 1977. She was single and never married.

- Ms Irene Wescott attended North Footscray Primary School, where she was inspired by Miss Roberstson when in Grade 3. Her secondary schooling was at Williamstown High School and then MacRobertson Girls' High School. MacRobertson High was an academic school, with competitive entrance examination. She had a positive experience in attending MacRobertson Girls' High School, a girls' school, with role models of women in authority to which she was exposed and was aware. Irene was set on a path to become a teacher through the strong influence of her family. Irene won a teaching studentship. She taught at about a dozen schools, including kindergarten, primary, and secondary, and had been Principal at two. Irene was first a teacher at Gilmore College for Girls, and then the Principal from 1978 to 1984. When she first taught at Gilmore College for Girls there were no men teachers on the staff. She has three children and her husband passed away in 1973.
- Miss Barbara Hall went through the government school system. She, also attended MacRobertson Girls' High School. At the time the government was offering secondary studentships to people who wanted to go to university, but that meant you ended up teaching. Barbara won a studentship. She was happy to teach. She was determined to be an independent person. She did not want to be financially disadvantaged the way she saw most women of the era. Barbara was Principal at the school from 1985 to 1993. She is single and never married.

- Ms Victoria Baxter attended primary and secondary school in the country.

The last five years of her schooling was at Mornington High School. It was Victoria's parents' expectation that she would be able to support her self, and they saw teaching as an assured career. Victoria was qualified as a technical teacher. She was appointed Principal to Gilmore College in 1994 and was still Principal when the study was carried out in 1999. She was married but separated.

The study was restricted to only these four women Principals because the Principals before Noela Eury have all passed away. It may have been better if we had more women Principals from Gilmore College for Girls to interview, however there were benefits from interviewing these four women Principals whose tenures in the position spanned continuously 30 years.

The rest of this chapter develops themes that emerged from the interviews held with these four women Principals. The first set of five themes was supportive of the women's aspirations, but the second set of six paints some of the disincentives.

Themes that Supported Women's Aspirations for Principalship

As noted in the previous chapter, each of the four women was interviewed using 16 lead questions. Field notes were compiled during the interviews. Partial transcription of the interview tapes were undertaken. The field notes and transcriptions were then analysed to reveal a set of 5 useful themes that were supportive of these women's aspirations in being a

Principal: broad experience, ambition and self-confidence, personal career planning, no marriage and family, and industrial relations. These five themes gave insight into understanding these four women's aspirations in wanting to become Principals, and how they perceived this leadership role, once they had attained it. Occasionally other data available from document sources such as old school magazines will also be used to illustrate points. These five themes will now be used to structure a discussion of the data.

Broad Experience

One of the first themes that arose from the interview data, which supported women's aspirations for Principalship, was that of the broad professional experiences that most of the interviewees had. These women Principals had teaching experience in a number of schools, spread across school type (primary / secondary and mixed gender / single gender). They each taught across subject areas, and had a determination to progress in their career. This would suggest that in terms of experience, these Principals had a good preparation for Principalship. Irene Wescott speaks of her teaching experiences in the school magazine:

I've taught at about a dozen schools, and been Principal at two (Footscray Girls' High School, 1982, p. 5).

Victoria Baxter also taught at different schools before becoming a Principal:

I had the opportunity to go around and work at a whole lot of different technical schools.¹

Noela Eury also taught a number subjects at different schools:

I taught everything and anything. I taught home economics once, just from my knowledge of cooking and we had a good time.

All the women interviewed for this study were also very “career determined”. They seemed to share a willingness to try different things and to move from one position to another. Barbara Hall did not mention the schools that she taught at, but we can see that she was career determined because she continued her studies:

When I was about to be appointed a Principal that I decided I would do another degree and I chose to do theology.

The women moved readily and regularly between schools and within schools. It suggests that they were more confident in applying for Principalship as a result of this. For example Victoria Baxter said:

¹ Unattributed quotes are all quotes from the interview with that particular principal

So many teachers get into being frightened to move because they are used to one culture and one environment...I actually started developing flexibility and a knowledge that I can fit in any where and I can grow and learn to read and fit into different cultures.

Noela Eury indicated something of this idea. She commented that when she was a Deputy Principal at Noble Park High School, she was asked to move to another school and become a Principal and she accepted:

The fact that I was asked to yes... At the time I was Deputy Principal at Noble Park High School.

Irene Wescott was the senior teacher at St Albans High School and Head Mistress. She also moved from her position to become Acting Principal at Point Gelibrand:

They wanted somebody to be Acting Principal down here at Point Gelibrand. I was the senior teacher at St Albans High School and Head Mistress. They wanted someone just to go for a year to be there.

In the end, Irene stayed for seven years.

These women interviewed were determined and had broad experiences. They taught at a number of schools, and they had already risen through the ranks. They had taught a range of subjects and year levels. From the women interviewed two were asked to apply for the

Principal position. The literature reviewed suggested that women are scared of applying, however the data from the interviews shows that not all women are like that.

Ambition and Self-Confidence

The aspiration or ambition to pursue an administrative career was a strong motivating factor for most women interviewed. Closely allied to this was self-confidence in their ability to assume successful leadership positions. Irene Wescott had aspirations and self-confidence in herself, which made it easier to become a Principal:

Part of it was the fact that you had a few (Principals) that were males and didn't seem to be doing the job too well and you thought to yourself why am I taking orders around here when I could do that just as well.

Barbara Hall stated factors such as ambition, examples from other people, and her skills as making it easier for her to become a Principal:

Because I went to MacRobertson Girls High School I always had women Principals and I just grew up assuming that women did what they wanted to do and could do what they wanted to do. That was the first thing I guess. The other thing was I had gone up through the degree of seniority and I guess I must have developed certain skills. Also I was keen to do it. Ambition, skill and example from other people too.

Victoria Baxter also believes that self-confidence is important in life. This is seen in the message given by her in the school magazine in 1995:

This year has been one characterised by many changes and achievements... implementing an integrated student personal professional development program aimed at empowering students to grow in self-confidence, self-reliance and personal achievement (Footscray Girls' Secondary College, 1995, p. 1).

Noela Eury was the only Principal interviewed that did not show a lot of a aspiration and ambition to become a Principal:

I suppose I just did not want to become a Principal. I just wanted to tag along as a Deputy Principal.

Again when we look at the literature, writers such as Schmuck (1981), Sampson (1987), Ozga (1993), Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) and Cubillo (1999) argue that lack of self-confidence and ambition is an important factor in explaining why few women seek senior positions. Looking at the interview data, the women Principals interviewed had self-confidence and ambition in themselves even though they were silent about it, therefore it was easier for them to aspire to Principal positions.

Personal Career Planning

Stockard and Johnson (1981) argued that men often planned their move into administration several years before it occurred, while women may not think about being in top positions until the opportunity arose. Stockard and Johnson's view is supported to some extent by the interview data from the Principals. It is not seen as a major theme that supports women's aspirations for Principalship. However it could help some women to aspire to Principal positions.

Of all the women Principals interviewed only one of them planned her move to Principalship. Barbara Hall planned her move, and she accomplished it:

When I was quite young in teaching, I just worked out a plan where my career would go and I decided that by a certain age I would reach a certain level of seniority and then I would go up in steps through the degrees of seniority and by a certain age I would become a Principal. That was what I worked out.

The other interviewee were quite silent on this issue.

No Marriage and Family

The literature is replete with accounts of the disabling impact of marriage and family on women's career aspirations (Langrish, 1981; Sampson, 1991). This study further confirms

this situation. In analysing the interviews that were conducted it was found that to be married with a husband and children, first it made it more difficult to attain the position of Principal, and second it was hard to cope with that position once attained. Managing home life and work life may be the most obvious areas of stress for the married women. Women may need to find suitable child care, or a very supportive partner, needing time to deliver and collect children from crèches or schools, and needing to take children to meetings so that they could participate in teaching related activities. Many women may also need to take time off work to devote time to a growing family, with some later managing to return to teaching. The four women interviewed in the study were either separated, not married or widowed. Only one of the women Principals, who was a widow had children, but they were attending university at the time of her Principalship.

Barbara Hall was one who did not marry and hence escaped this pressure:

So I didn't marry and I didn't have the problem of having to rear my own children.

Irene Wescott too was in this situation by the time she became Principal:

I didn't have a husband and I didn't feel then I was staying late or doing things or going to meetings.

Irene Wescott had been married, but after her husband's death she became more determined to be a Principal. If her husband had lived she would have been happy with staying as a teacher. Irene's case shows that marriage can be an impediment to becoming a Principal:

We started building at Anglesea and we were going to retire there and I would have just gone on teaching but when Perce died I thought well let's have a try at something else. It was just a few weeks after he died they wanted somebody to be Acting Principal down here at Point Gelibrand. I was the senior teacher at St Albans High School and Head Mistress. They wanted someone just to go for a year, it was a good challenge and took your mind off grieving.

Victoria Baxter also noted a similar situation:

I am not married. I am separated from my husband. Balancing life roles, I never had children.

Noela Eury did not comment...

...did not make a verbal response to this question.

Another interesting thing that was highlighted from the interviews, had been noted in the Footscray Girls' High School (1985). That is, all the female Principals of the school from its beginning were not married at the time of Principalship. Significantly they were addressed as Miss. Hence one could suppose that this was a culture that had grown up in

the school from its early days, with its curriculum focussing on domestic arts. In this situation it might have been assumed natural for an unattached women to be the Principal. Once established there were few factors to create change within this school. Hence this culture could be one that made it easier for women to attain the Principal position, and indeed cope with the position.

Industrial Relations

The four women interviewed also spoke about the role of professional associations in helping them to achieve their goals. It was through their unions that political and industrial campaigns for equal pay and equal opportunity have been waged, firstly within the union structures, and then with the education ministry and successive governments.

Barbara Hall noted that:

the way the unions fought for equality was also thanks to Joan Kirner. I think the women get a fair go if they want to take up these sort of positions.

Interestingly Joan Kirner during the 1970s and 1980s was a local politician (Williamstown) and known for the support of women in the work place. She had been a teacher and unionist. During the 1980s she became Minister for Education in the State Government, and finally State Premier. Barbara was not the only women teacher to see Joan Kirner as something of a role model.

Equal opportunity policies have eliminated some of the direct barriers to women's equality and access to higher status and salaries. As noted in the literature review, these included the requirement that women had to resign from the teaching force upon marriage, and married women not being able to join the superannuation fund. They would also lose their accrued seniority and return to the service as temporary teachers if they broke their teaching career to have children. It was not until 1956 that the Teaching Service Act granted the right to apply for permanency to married women. Married women were then able to retain seniority, classified position and rights as a qualified teacher.

The years 1971 and 1972 finally saw the introduction of equal pay and formal equal promotion opportunities regardless of sex. In 1975 married women were able to join the State Superannuation Fund. Irene Wescott recalls how in the past women who were not married received four fifths of the wage and once you got married, you had to resign and not join the superannuation fund:

For three years I taught at Dandenong High School before I was married. I traveled out from Footscray. You only got four fifths of the wage. In 1948 I think the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association started because the chappy at Dandenong High was one of the first people in the movement. He became head of University High School later on. Women weren't even allowed to join the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association. It was male secondary teachers so there was no one there fighting any argument about your equal pay. So as soon I married I was full-time Class 5 at Dandenong High School. Once the notice went in that I was getting married in February

I was gone. That's when I came back to the girls' school as a "temporary teacher".

Similarly Irene Wescott speaks about the superannuation scheme:

When we started secondary teaching in 1974 after the degree, diploma of education and things. We were on super just like the men. When you resigned you wouldn't believe it you wouldn't even get the full amount you paid in yourself. It came back in the 1950s. In 1962 I went to Footscray Girls' High School. You were told you can't have superannuation because you are a married women.

Late 1960s early 70s it was agreed women could go into the superannuation fund and what they did for us was work out a fund and an adjustment for the three years we taught so we could get a percentage and then would get into the full superannuation. That was government law.

In their discussion of points such as these, these four women recognised the gains that had been made for women during their time as teachers. They saw these gains as positive and it kept them in the teaching workforce, and helped drive their ambition.

Themes that were Disincentives for Accepting Principalships

From the analysis of the data, six themes emerged as disincentives to women aiming to be a Principal. These were: the increased workload associated with being a Principal, the selection process used for selecting Principals, commitment to teaching rather than administration, professional competition and the absence of female support, loss of close relationships, and the “glass-ceiling.”

Increased Workload

The workload of Principals was one area that all women interviewees mentioned. This was extremely significant from 1985 onwards when the government increased the administration workload of Principals with a change to school-based management (Department of Education, 1997). Not only was the Principal’s workload increasing, but the role of the Principal was being re-defined as a small business management position, concentrating on sponsorship and accounting, as well as learning. Many women who were committed classroom teachers did not wish to take on these other roles. The diversity of the role is seen in a report of a student of the school who interviewed the Principal Miss Irene Wescott on the work she actually did:

Oh, I do many things. I see parents when they come, and tend to students, both good and bad. I spend a lot of time reading articles and answering mail, taking phone calls and talking to teachers. I have to go to meetings and interviews. I get the chance to interview tertiary students who have passed

their exams and want to be teachers. Actually, what I do depends a lot on the time of year; there could be reports to sign, the timetable to worry about, and students to see before they leave the school to find work or further study. There are so many different things that I write notes to remind myself what I am doing (Footscray Girls High School, 1982, no page number).

In the interview conducted for this study, Irene Wescott also mentioned the workload:

All the paperwork, letters and the staff. You feel some days I would say to the office secretary, Laz (Masey) I just have to get around this at lunchtime. Because you feel staff and kids never saw you. The staff might come into the office but you would have so much of this. The paperwork, which meant that some days you feel you could scarcely move out of the office. Even though you arrived at 7.30 am.

Noela Eury also echoed the heavy workload problem when she commented:

The night before I left the school I did a list of the things that needed to be done and worked on that very next morning. I would arrive at the school early in the morning at 7.00 am and did the paperwork.

The other interviewees were also concerned about the workload and how it was a disincentive. Barbara Hall for example noted:

From 1985 onwards, the government shelved more of the paperwork to the Principal instead of the public servants. These were both political parties, the Labor Government and the Liberal Government. It was for two reasons: to save the cost of employing public servants and to narrow the interface between political parties and decision making. The Principals were not trained in business administration to work as clerks.

Stress because of the heavy workload was also a possible disincentive to becoming a Principal as Victoria Baxter said:

Yes, at times I suppose a fair demand. But it was more the stress load.

All the women interviewed had to balance their commitment to classroom teaching and intimate contact with students, and to distancing themselves in order to exercise wider power over the way educational values and the school directions can or should be shaped.

The Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (1960) pointed out that the workload of Principals was also a negative factor in the 1960s. A Ministerial Review of Schooling in Western Australia (1994) and Hatton (1995) highlighted the demands placed on Principals and the increased workload because of the devolution of responsibility to schools. They argued that the pressure on Principals, particularly teaching Principals, were sufficient to accelerate the turnover of Principals. School Principals were regarded as central to the quality of education provided in the school. But they were required to be not just good teachers, but needed to be quality managers and leaders as well. Principals were having to

compromise their commitment to both teaching and administration. All of the four interviewees would agree with this, as the above quotes show. But they also would say, as Barbara Hall noted explicitly (see quote above), that they had little or no education in being quality managers of administrative units, such as the school office.

Selection Process for Principal Position

Two of the women interviewed mentioned that the selection process had changed and had made it more difficult for women to be selected as Principals. They referred to the removal of seniority as a means of promotion, to one of a merit system which gave a school council the major role in the selection of Principals. Barbara Hall noted:

The only difficulty I suppose, might have been a difficulty, was at the point when it was time for me to become a Principal. They decided that you would not be appointed on the grounds of skills and seniority. You would have to be appointed by interview by the school council and decided whether or not they wanted you as a Principal.

Irene Wescott also commented:

They have the panel. I should think it depends on who is on the panel. Just when I was finishing they were introducing this thing where the school council chooses the Principal. I was on a couple of those panels. A matter of fact, it was Footscray High School and we had to write an assessment what

we thought about that and I thought that might be hard for women. If you had a panel in which your school chose, you had two parents that were male and someone from the region and you had a male Principal. I think that was hard. In our time it wasn't just seniority you got the job. You had a feeling that you were going up the ladder and you had assessments.

The local selection was designed to increase community participation in decision making affecting local schools. It was part of the government's commitment to its policy of devolution of authority and greater responsibility of school communities. According to the State Board of Education (1986), school council involvement in the selection process for school Principal appointments had been a tradition confined to the Technical Division. It was in the latter half of 1984 that it had been extended to secondary schools with all new Principals and deputy Principal appointments being based on this process. However, the State Board of Education (1986) stated that school council involvement had not immediately increased opportunities for women:

On the basis of the first rounds of local selection for Principal class appointments in 1985, it was concluded that 'The introduction of the process of school council involvement does not appear to have increased opportunities for women nor improved their rate of success in gaining appointments (State Board of Education, 1986, p. 9)

One would not expect Noela Eury to comment on this matter since the process was changed after she retired. The comments from Barbara Hall and Irene Wescott suggest for the period

during the mid 1980s that, as the State Board itself noted, this process was new and did not help women at all. The literature also shows that the selection process has been seen by many writers such as Taylor (1992), Blackmore and Kenway (1993), Villa (1999), Power (2002) and Neidhart and Carlin (2003) as a significant barrier for women seeking Principalship.

Commitment to Teaching

This is a factor that is attributable to women themselves. According to the Equal Opportunity in Schools Report to the Premier (1977) women teachers preferred classroom teaching rather than administration, and did not want to leave it. The desire to teach children, and the admission that they felt that they were already exercising reasonable influence on the decision making process within the school, motivated them to remain classroom teachers. A 10-year longitudinal study by Edson (1995) of 142 women applying to become Principals confirmed that in particular female teachers who were mothers preferred classroom teaching hours. They suggested that the workload was easier to manage when teaching, compared to the hours and workload involved in a move toward a promotional position. The women Principals interviewed claimed that women desire to remain in the classroom because it gives them satisfaction, and this in turn becomes a reason for them not seeking promotion. Noela and Irene felt that one of the negative side effects of being a Principal was the fewer interactions with the students, because you taught a limited number of classes. Noela put it this way:

That would be the one thing I would like least about being a Principal. The fact that you no longer taught most classes. That's what I suppose was the basic thing not wanting to be a Principal. I like to teach. I enjoyed teaching. I did not like the thought of not ever teaching.

Irene Wescott also recalled one of the things she did not like while being a Principal was the fewer interaction she had with students:

As a teacher you get far more interaction with the students than you do when you are a Principal.

Victoria Baxter also enjoys teaching:

I actually feel the passion of teaching.

From the interviews we can see that these women are still committed to teaching, and that their role in administration interferes, and in some cases prevents totally, their involvement in what they most love about being a teacher.

Competition and the Absence of Female Support

In the literature Ehrich (1996) argues that the lack of women in leadership positions is due, at least in part to the lack of mentors. Having access to mentors is a helpful and powerful career strategy. The women Principals interviewed support this notion, but also argue that

there is lack of support given to women by other women who are in leadership positions. An influence which Victoria Baxter identified as encouraging and shaping her career path to the Principal position was the support and encouragement of men rather than women. She said:

Mostly they were my mentors and all of them were men. It really amuses me and I am going to be totally horrifically now that we talk about women in leadership and how women encourage other women. I did not find it so.

There is a ... leadership program where women mentor other women to get them into leadership positions. I have been very heavily involved in lots of mentoring and other associate programs to allow people to shadow you. This person [name said] said you should support women in leadership. She was on one of my selection panels and she took an instant dislike to me as a person. She took a professional dislike to me and this person, who is supposed to be a great supporter of women, appointed a two dimensional cardboard cut out of a bloke to this position and I knew, without being prideful or totally egocentric I know my faults and there are huge number of them. I knew I was better than this guy was and I thought this is just hilarious. Here I am in this program and all the accolades that are awarded to this particular person. She didn't support women. She was very lemon lipped about me.

The issue then of mentoring is not simple. Clearly a more sophisticated approach is needed than that found in the literature.

Loss of Close Relationships

Some of the interviewees saw the loss of close relationships with former peers when taking on the role of the Principal as a disincentive. They saw the role of Principal taking them away from colleagues. Evidence that can be shown to support this is with a quote from Victoria Baxter:

It's a most dreadful lonely job and yet I will not permit it to be lonely. I refuse to follow the advice huge number of people who say you can never be friends with the staff because you will be placed in a position where you have to make decisions which will go against or compromise that friendship. It may influence your decision. You cannot actually make it outside the context of the friendship. I say no that is not right here are my friends and this is my job. When I have to do my job I do it with integrity and I do it with the best intentions for the school. If the friendship can't stand that and the friendship dies not the integrity.

Power's (2002) work supports the above quote and reveals that once a person of either gender becomes Principal, there is an end to at least some close relationships with friends in the private or public sector. She states that one Principal remarked that whether you are a male or a female, you are in your professional role constantly. You are seen as the Principal

and you are not seen as a human being. They are torn between being able to relax in a social gathering and being able to put on the serious demeanor.

Interestingly however none of the other three women choose to comment on this issue. However given the literature perspective it is hard to believe this is not a matter that all four Principals did not have to deal with at some level.

The “Glass-Ceiling”

Some of the women interviewed for the study agreed that women in this profession do hit a ‘glass ceiling’. Victoria Baxter suggested that women hit a glass ceiling in terms of taking breaks to have children:

I do. I think the glass ceiling is often created by the fact that they are the only ones that could have children. I think it is very much of a mind set and a paradigm in their own creation or societies created for them. If they could move outside the paradigm and expand their thinking.

...In teaching I think a part from the fact that women tend to develop the attitude. They are going to be the second breadwinner first thing, and then they are going to have children. That interrupts their professional growth. That’s fine. I don’t have problem with that because we have several women in the school who have had families and are now seeking professional advancement. But I do think the family leave and being taken away for a while does have a negative affect on the opportunities.

Noela Eury believed there was a glass ceiling in any occupation:

I think everybody does because there is no higher to go really or not much higher for most people to go than being a Principal. You can well in my days you could, get into the inspectorial board and women got there just as much as men. I think there is a glass ceiling wherever you get to and you are there.

Barbara Hall does not believe that women in teaching hit a glass ceiling:

Well I don't see how they can because the way the unions fought for equality, also thanks to Joan Kirner. I think women have a fair go. If they want to take up these sort of positions, provided they are willing to do it and they have the skills to do it, I think they get the opportunity to do it.

Irene Wescott was not sure whether women in teaching did hit a glass ceiling:

Not familiar now. A lot of the time I came through. You need to look at the percentage of people that were in teaching and the sort of things they were teaching and the sort of things they were doing. Even with my daughter she was able to get seven years maternity leave while she had her family leave. Clearly these four women had a mixture of opinion. However some clearly recognised the glass ceiling effect. Those that did not seemed to comment in

such a way that suggested that since they had made it to this level, then surely all women can. The latter suggestion does perhaps not take account of all factors.

Summary

An analysis of the data has indicated that the under-representation of women in Principal positions is an outcome of a number of factors. The factors from the literature review clearly are relevant. Most of these reappear in the case studies. However the factors referred to in this thesis do not appear to be the universal set of factors relevant to the situation. One theme that emerges is that the breadth of the professional experiences of all the interviewees including teaching at a number of schools seem to have prepared them well for the work of a Principal. The aspiration and self-confidence emerged as a very strong motivating factor for the women interviewed. They clearly had self-confidence in themselves to assume successful leadership positions. Personal career planning was an important theme that was brought up by one of the women interviewed. Literature from Stockard and Johnson (1981) supports this. Most women do not plan their move to Principalship. Another theme that arose in the interview data was marriage and family. The women interviewed were not inhibited by marriage or family commitments because they were single, divorced or widowed. However, they did mention it as an important factor in why so many women do not apply for Principal positions. The women interviewed also spoke about the change brought about in industrial relations and the role that professional associations had played in this process. They saw themselves as benefiting from these changes, and this had certainly helped them achieve their goals.

The interview data also revealed a number of disincentives that they had overcome when contemplating becoming Principal. The first one was the increased workload for Principals. Because the role has increased in administration work required from Principal, this has acted as a disincentive for both women and men, however these women seemed to think it was more of a disincentive for women. The issue of the selection process used to appoint to Principal positions appeared to be a major issue for the women interviewed. They found it intimidating and hence a disincentive. The desire to stay in the classroom was mentioned by all the women interviewed and brought about the conflict of commitment to teaching, as opposed to moving to a Principal position. The lack of support given to women by women in leadership positions was a powerful disincentive for one of the women interviewed. The women also saw the Principal role taking them away from colleagues. The literature pointed out that the role of Principal was a lonely job for both men and women.

In summary, a number of the themes identified in the literature that both hinder and help women move into the role of Principal have also been identified in the interview data. The next chapter will discuss these issues in relationship to the initial literature reviewed. In other words, as the methodology outlined in Chapter 4 suggests, the reflections made in this chapter will be folded back into the earlier analysis.

Chapter Six

An Interpretation of the Case Study

Introduction

The findings of this study contain ideas which might increase the number of women applying for Principal positions, as well as how the Principal positions can be made more attractive to women aspirants. It is hoped that some of the recommendations at the conclusion of this chapter may provide useful insights into the nature of some of some key issues related to women Principal succession, and some guidance on creative solutions to these issues.

The research group comprised of four women Principals at Gilmore Girls' College, a secondary college in Melbourne's western suburbs. The information collected from the women Principals reflects the situation with respect to women as Principals only at this school. However their experiences as teachers were gained from a number of schools before they became Principals, and hence there is some justification for feeling some issues may be the same in other schools, at least in Victoria. Their experiences also echo themes already found in the literature, so a tentative claim for a broader application could be held. However, any application of these results to different situations by others should take careful account of the context of this study.

It would seem that Victoria's education system is now not characterized by the intentional disadvantaging of women seeking Principal positions, because government legislation now prohibits any blatant acts of discrimination. However, the legislation has not brought about an increase in the number of women in Principal positions (Workforce Studies, Human Resource Division, Department of Education, Employment and Training, 2001). It is clear that the number of women applying for Principal positions is not as high as it could be. There is evidence to indicate that an increasing number of experienced women, and men too, are choosing not to apply for Principal positions. To consider this key issue further this chapter is structured around three research questions:

1. What are the most significant factors which discourage women from applying for Principal positions?
2. What factors have supported women's aspirations for Principalship?
3. What recommendations flow from this research?

Having reviewed some of the relevant literature in an earlier chapter, and having given an analysis of the four interviews carried out with women Principals who occupied this position during the last thirty years, this chapter will take a more interpretative stance looking forward to what could be possible solutions using the above three questions.

What are the most significant factors which discourage women from applying for Principal positions?

The Changes needed to be a Principal

In the literature writers such as Carlin, d' Arbon, Dorman, Duignan and Neidhart (2003) and data from the interviews, report that the new role that teachers have to take on as Principal was identified as the most significant disincentive.

The key issues seem to be:

- less contact with students and staff,
- more administration work, and
- having to compromise commitment to both teaching and administration.

Both the literature and the data from the interviews confirmed that the Principal's role has expanded beyond educational leadership. Although there has always been an element of administration in the role, now the role of the Principal requires much more time and energy for administrative and political functions, and this leaves virtually no time for teaching and little time for fostering positive relationships with students, staff and families.

The data from the interviews indicated that most of the Principals were of the view that adding a lot of administration work to this position was a reason why so many women reject a Principal position. The role of Principal was being re-defined as a small business management position, concentrating on sponsorship and accounting. As society changes it has also led to increasing expectations for the Principal. Hill (1999) argues:

The last fifteen years have been times of great change in which more and more has been expected of Principals (Hill, 1999, p.1).

A student in 1982 interviewed Miss Wescott about her role as a Principal at the school and came to the following conclusion:

Well, I nearly died when Miss Wescott started to tell me what work she does. All I thought she did was sit in her chair and tell us naughty kids off!
(Footscray Girls' High School, 1982, p.5).

Those teachers who have devoted a substantial proportion of their professional life to having the skills and insights that make a good teacher, may not wish to see themselves beginning again as a business manager. Both the interviews and literature suggest this is how many women teachers now see the role of the Principal, and not surprisingly they reject it as a possible role for them.

Principal Selection Problems

The issue of Principal selection problems emerged as a consistent and significant issue. It included matters such as:

- the selection process for Principals changing from the seniority to the merit system, with the merit system giving the school council the role to select the Principal,
- a concern about the fairness of the merit selection process, and
- a concern as to whether selection panel members had the knowledge and qualifications to make appropriate recommendations.

The selection process as a problem was mentioned in the literature by Neidhart and Carlin (2003) as well as embedded in the data from the interviews. Two of the women interviewed explicitly expressed their concerns with the selection process. They suggested that the moving from seniority as the means of promotion to the merit system, and giving the school council the critical role in the selection of Principals in this new system, made it more difficult for women to be selected as Principals. It seemed to the Principals interviewed that often a majority of a school council would be influenced by general societal expectations of women, which are at variance with what Principals are now expected to do.

Loss of Close Relationships

This disincentive came out only from the interview data, and interestingly was not found in the literature. The Principals interviewed saw the loss of close relationships with former peers and less contact with students when taking the role of the Principal as a decided disincentive for taking on the role. Two comments made by Victoria, one of the Principals illustrated the point of professional distance:

It's a most dreadful lonely job

You can never be friends with the staff because you will be placed in a position where you have to make decisions which will go against or compromise that friendship.

Women teachers also desire to remain in the classroom and have more contact with the students. It gives them satisfaction and this is a reason for them not seeking promotion.

Typical comments included:

I like to teach. I enjoyed teaching. I did not like the thought of not ever teaching.

As a teacher you get far more interaction with the students.

This issue has not arisen in the literature because, although it is a powerful issue, it is suspected that most women prefer to be silent about it since it is in effect a direct rejection of seeking promotion, the process assumed to be the norm for teachers.

Absence of Female Support

The absence of female support also is an important disincentive. A crucial element of this included:

- lack of support given to women by other women who were in leadership positions.

The findings by Ehrich (1996) reveal that one of the solutions proposed by research in recent years in response to the problems of not only women's lack of traditional mentoring experiences, but also male sexism and sex-role stereotyping, is the argument that women should be mentors for other women. Her findings also suggest that this is not panacea to the problem, because according to statistics women educational administrators are a minority group both senior and middle management in education. Therefore they could not be responsible for all the mentoring experiences required by women educators. But the situation appears more complicated than this. When we look at the data from the interviews we find out that there is lack of support given to women by other women who were already in leadership positions. One Principal commented that:

She was on one of my selection panels and she took an instant dislike to me as a person. She didn't support women.

Indeed this Principal received support and mentoring from men.

Edson (1988) states that the women who do succeed in administration often do so without the same support and confidence men give each other in leadership areas. This is an issue that needs far more explanation.

What factors have supported women's aspirations for Principalship?

The findings from the interview data show that to be able to become a Principal requires more than just willing applicants. The data that showed the pathway to the Principal position provided some interesting insights. Four factors were identified in the research as supporting women's aspirations for Principal positions.

Broad Experience

Data from the interviews indicated that most of the interviewees had teaching experience in a number of schools, and this was gained across school type. They were also very career determined. As well there were no gaps in their professional profile that would discourage them from applying for the Principal position. This would suggest that these Principals had a good preparation for a Principal position.

Ambition and Self-confidence

The respondents in the interviews all had high aspirations and self-confidence. They prepared themselves for leadership positions in education, although only one did so in an overt manner from a young age. They could be described as a group who do not conform to the sex role stereotypes. In response to the interviews they showed ambition and assertiveness. These themes are also reflected in the literature, but are normally applied to men. Schmuck, (1981), Sampson (1987) and Cubillo (1999), commented that few women seek leadership because they lack self-confidence and self-esteem. Hence again the general and particular data from this study indicates that ambition and self-confidence are important if women are to succeed as Principals. The following two key issues should be considered as factors supporting women who wish to be Principals:

- Women should never perceive themselves as being disadvantaged on account of their sex, and
- Women should not lack confidence in their ability to assume successful leadership roles.

No Marriage and Family

The complexities and tensions of the role of Principal, together with the workload and the need to be present at meetings outside school hours intrude into personal and family time and space. Therefore many women do not want to apply for Principal positions. The

literature mentions that many women are placing home commitments before their career, and this is a factor leading to the under-representation of women as the Principal. Marriage and children are assumed automatically still in our society to be part of the female role. In the light of the literature, this female commitment to the domestic sphere of life could be interpreted as evidence of the existence of two strong pressures acting on women. The first and most pervasive is the Australian society expects the female's role of wife and mother to take precedence over any other. Hence for many women the maintenance of a family and paid employment involves a continual balancing of societal expectations and any personal preference of the woman. The Principals interviewed did admit that having a family and being a Principal would be a major constraint on women, however they did not have that problem. They were either single, separated or widowed, and had few domestic responsibilities. The changing pattern of family relationships in the future with fewer children, earlier completion of child-rearing, marriage as an option rather than a necessity, and the willingness of some men to assume more duties in the home, do appear to give promise for the future with regards this factor.

Personal Career Planning

Career planning is a set of deliberate decisions taken by an individual to enhance their career, including gaining breadth of experience, professional development and qualifications. Three of the respondents stated that their rise to the position of Principal had been an unplanned progression. The common experience was that they had undertaken administrative duties while remaining as classroom teachers, and it was only then that they began to think about applying for promotional positions. The fourth Principal admitted to

having made a plan early in her career. However, despite the majority not planning their own career, they perceived that women generally needed to plan. The following key points are suggested:

- Women need to plan more carefully than men, and
- Career planning should involve gaining broad experience, professional development and qualifications.

Recommendations

The findings from this study may help professional associations, such as teachers' unions, or through official groups administering education such as government, to reflect further on the factors that may encourage more women to become Principals. The following recommendations are offered. Clearly each of them could become the focus for more research.

1. The modern role of the Principal appears to be a major issue, particularly for females. Several suggestions are offered for the restructuring of the role:

- The introduction of a co-principals structure in schools. This will both increase leadership capability as well as distribute and lessen the workload for Principals. Duignan and Marks (2003) argue that leadership

should not be the property of any one individual. It should grow out of a shared vision.

- The appointment of senior level Administrative Directors to the leadership team, who would be qualified to work on matters related to facilities and property management, safety issues and occupational health, administrative issues that have only relatively recently been added to the portfolio of Principals. This was noted in the literature and by some of the Principals who were interviewed as being a useful strategy.

2. The selection and appointment procedures for the Principal position need improvement. A number of comments from the interviews and echoed in the literature suggested that members on selection panels should go through appropriate training, and procedures should be developed that enable constructive feedback to be given to unsuccessful applicants.
3. The research indicated that there is a need for female support for women Principals. Those women who have successfully fulfilled administrative positions should be made visible and even accessible so that they might give encouragement and actively help other women. They need to encourage and support female teachers who display leadership qualities. Women should be encouraged to take risks. If failure does occur they need to learn not to personalize it.

4. Part of this research has shown that women for a variety of reasons do not gain experience in leadership and management skills, at least not to the extent of many of their male counterparts. May be there should be courses, particularly in leadership skills, provided for women who opt for them, so that they might acquire basic skills in personnel management and organizational procedures, as well as a sense of confidence in their own abilities.
5. Some policy areas have been tackled by government over the years. But the major policy area of childcare still requires intensive activity. The lack of childcare facilities to allow women to return to work from family leave are still hindering the increase of experience and self-esteem needed to gain promotion.
6. Existing Principals should be actively engaged as mentors to staff within their school. Both male and female teachers of ability should be encouraged to apply for positions of extra responsibility in the schools thereby developing the necessary skills for further promotion. This would also serve to developing the necessary skills for further promotion.

Conclusion

This study set out to understand and investigate issues associated with the gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools. This was

done by first a review of legislation changes that have been implemented, and then by reviewing a relevant body of literature. Based on themes that emerged from this analysis, a case study of Principals from a secondary college for girls was carried out using a series of interviews. Through these interviews it was possible to identify some of the factors that have supported these women's aspirations for Principal positions. From an analysis of this data, it also became apparent what some of the significant factors were that gave these women pause before applying for a Principal position.

This research study provides a rich body of relevant knowledge and perceptions about becoming a Principal. The study has established that the number of women applying for Principal positions is not as high as it is for men. The findings do not provide a single explanation for women's under-representation in the position of Principal. There is, however, general agreement in the literature as to the factors perceived as being potential barriers to women attaining this promotional position. The main reasons seem to be the demands and complexity of the role, and its impact on personal and family life. It is important that education authorities explore ways of restructuring the role of the Principal and senior leadership team, in order to more effectively distribute the tasks and responsibilities of the role, to make it attractive and manageable for women.

Another obstacle for women in becoming a Principal is their lack of support when contemplating such a move, but also when they attain such a position. It was noted in reviewing the literature that professional mentorship programs can be helpful to women. Such mentorships will not solve all of the problems women face when they strive to break

the glass ceiling, but it is likely that such a process will help a considerable number of women educators. It is one important factor that should not be overlooked.

In essence this study has shown that even though many changes over the last one hundred years have gradually improved the status of women in the teaching profession, at least in Victoria, not enough women are reaching the level of Principal in secondary schools. Just how many is enough is, at this stage, an open question. But as has been shown, the clear imbalance in the numbers of men and women Principals in Victoria's secondary schools indicates more women Principals are needed in the system. This remains a difficult problem for the system as a whole, and one that needs more attention from both government and the profession. This study has shown that attention needs to be given to both incentives and disincentives, importantly as they are perceived by women; bolstering the former and negating the latter in any on going process that has a time span of at least a decade.

In retrospect, judging this study again on its completion, it may well have been better, if time had been available, to interview Principals from more than one school. However there are always pluses. It was good that I used Glimore College for Girls in this research, because it was a place where clearly Principals were women, and there has grown there for more than 75 years a culture where women could succeed. This research has revealed that the road to success for women is one with many obstacles relating to gender issues. However there is a certain sense of hope that success can be achieved provided it is viewed as a long – term goal. “The winds are still hard, not easy”.

Appendix A: Transcript of Interviews

Noela Eury (1970-1977)

1. Where did you go to school?

Warringabil High School, north west of Ballarat

2. How did your schooling help you choose your career in teaching?

It didn't in anyway. I just decided that I did not want to be a nurse, I didn't want to be a shop assistant and I didn't want to be in a bank, so the only thing left was teaching.

3. Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?

I suppose that my mother became very ill and I then gave up the thought of being a nurse because I hated the things that everybody had to do for her. My father was a bank manager and that was not for me.

4. Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?

No they encouraged me in every inch of the way.

5. What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?

I never aspired to become a Principal. I just became one. In 1970 we had a Secondary Board of Inspectors and one of them rang me up and asked me if I would go to Footscray Girls High School. The Principal was ill, the Deputy Principal was ill and the senior one and only senior teacher went on maternity leave and there had been a fight out. They wanted things cleared up and they rang me up. They asked me to go and I said well I don't really want to because my best friend is the Deputy Principal out there. But she was ill at the time. He said well somebody else would go if you don't go and it was going to be a man so I went.

6. For how long were you a Principal at the school?

March 1970 to the end of 1977. I was acting Principal for a while and then became Principal.

7. What factors encouraged you to stay a Principal?

I rather enjoyed it once I got there, that's about it I suppose. I only had four more years to finish up when I left Footscray.

8. Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?

The fact that I was asked to yes. That's the only one. At the time I was Deputy Principal at Noble Park High School and I hated it. They knew I hated it at the Education Department.

9. What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?

I suppose I just did not want to become a Principal. I just wanted to tag along as a Deputy Principal.

10. Were there difficulties in balancing a number of life roles?

Yes my mother was very old and she died later in 1970 so that was out of the window so that was one thing. The other thing was my life was entirely out here and I was going out to Footscray and it was a long way to go by public transport. That's all.

11. What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?

I think the children. They were delightful out there really, once you got to know them. I guess they still are and the parents of the children the ones that I did see. I didn't see many of them. The ones I did see were very nice people. The community was very good to the school. Particularly the footballers use to bring tickets over to the girls every Friday afternoon and then the staff they were young and were very keen. But they found it difficult to cope. Plus the Education Department was so helpful all the time for me.

12. What did you enjoy least about being a Principal?

I don't know. I don't know I think there was anything. I rather liked it actually. I taught as well. That would be the thing I would like least about being a Principal. The fact that you longer taught most classes. That's what I suppose was the basic thing of not wanting to be a Principal. I like to teach and enjoyed to teach. I did not like the thought of not ever teaching. I taught everything and anything. I taught home economics once, just from my knowledge of cooking and we had a good time.

13. Is it easier for a woman to become a Principal today than when you became Principal at Gilmore College for Girls?

I don't know because I have not kept up with those things. I retired that was it.

14. Do you believe that women in your profession hit a 'glass ceiling'?

I think everybody does because there is no higher to go or really not much higher for most people to go than being a Principal. You can well in my days you could get into the inspector board. Women got there just as men. I think there is a glass ceiling what ever you get to and you are there.

15. Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?

No, never, no

16. If so, which writers influenced you and why?

Irene Wescott (1978-1984)

1. Where did you go to school?

North Footscray Primary School 1930-35

Williamstown High School 1936-1940

MacRobertson Girls High School 1941

2. How did your schooling help you choose your career in teaching?

Inspired by Miss Robertson when in grade 3.

3. Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?

My parents, although this was the depression of the 30's and World War II, my father wanted me to have a full-length secondary education. Because my mother had been part of a different education that had a governess and all this until the Depression of the 1890's. You know, the French and the piano lessons and that she was interested but dad also wanted it. Then I won a scholarship and that sort of convinced them I suppose that it was worth going on. Because even in those days once you got into year 9 you had to pay fees it was called tuition fees. We traveled from Footscray to Williamstown High caught a tram and then a train so all that sort of added up so I would say the parents.

4. Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?

Not in those days. I made up my mind before people were saying those things and even when my father died when I was 17 years old the local Presbyterian Minister came and he helped pay for me to go through. So I think it had a higher perhaps a status especially for people who did not have much chance of getting an education or opportunities further. It was teaching or nursing. When I came back I had eleven years out. I did a couple of years being a kinder teacher. Because I had a primary teachers qualification as well as the other. I didn't come back until 1962 so I had all those years away. Where a couple of my girl friends had been on the job full-time, one of them became a Deputy Principal, but she did not want to go further because she never had a break. She had always been at the job.

5. What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?

Well, my husband died he was 52 and I was 48. I had two children at university and one completing the High School Certificate. She was doing the exams just after her father died. We had started building down at Anglesea and we were going to retire there and I would have just gone on teaching but when Perce died I thought well let's have a try for something else and it was just a few weeks after he died they wanted somebody to be acting Principal down here at Point Gellibrand Girls High School. I was the senior teacher at St Albans High School and Head Mistress. You know in those days they wanted some one just to go for a year to be there and it was a good challenge and it sort of took your mind off grieving and I enjoyed that. One of my sons said to me we'll tackle that challenge, mum, and then you could do anything. But after that I found that at that schoolgirls' had problems

and they were coming to me asking me about things. I decided to apply to do a bachelor of social work and it was the first time it was going to be a full degree and the department put me through that for a couple years. I suppose even then I wasn't thinking madly about being a Principal because after I done the couple of years of the social work degree and I did not do the individual counseling the second year I did organization and stuff. I thought it might have gone into social work and all that rather than the Principal thing. The top inspector we had inspectors in those days and he said you can't you have to go back. I had been Deputy Principal at St Albans High School. You got to go back there, he said the chap that has been appointed Principal had a break down last year and you might be needed.

6. For how long were you a Principal?

I came to the Girls school in 1978. I think it was 1984 that I gave up because in between the time I spent time on assessment panels, what you called a contact inspector. Not the one that went in and mark the teacher and graded them. I went all round Geelong, Colac, Terang and Camperdown. I was meant to be the person they could talk to if they couldn't get on with the Principal. I had a couple of sessions of that in between.

7. What factors encouraged you to stay a Principal?

Several challenges encouraged me. I think getting different organizations going within the school after Noela had been there. There was new ideas coming through. They didn't have level Co-ordinators, they didn't have all that sort of thing. That was part of the encouragement, the planning of that. I had a terrific office staff, the most amazing lady,

who had been at the school. She was at the school when I went back there in 1960s. The first time I went back and she was still there in 1978 and she was great. The school council was very supportive. The lady who was president was at the reunion both days. I had the most terrific staff. They were very dedicated and fascinating all this talk about all these private schools and all this kind of thing. Well, several of them when they got fed towards the late 80s. One of them became the head at the intermediate school at Essendon Grammar. I enjoyed working out the financial stuff. I was a bit keen on working out the planning and with the staff development.

8. Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?

Part of it was that you had a few that were males and didn't seem to be doing the job too well and you said to yourself why am I taking orders around here when I could do that just as well.

9. What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?

I think the most difficult time was that I was Principal during the turbulence of the V.S.T.A. times with the business of having so many in a class. Down when I was Principal in 1974 at Point Gellibrand they had nothing to do with what was happening in your school. Don't forget it was one whole Education Department and the union was going that way too and there would be a roar down at a High School somewhere and the teachers would get the message and they would just walk out and they would say as they past me "Nothing personal, Irene, but we have been called out". I had girls who came by bus and

they would be gone half a day. One particular time they came back from a birthday with a birthday cake. That sort of thing. The first week I got to Footscray Girls High School the staff was good but they were also good union people too and they believed in the union thing. The week I got there, there were two extra that had enrolled for the biology class at year 11 and 12 and all your timetable had been worked out, all your class sizes and there was the dreadful stop work sort of thing because we got two over in the class. It's fascinating that the person who led that became the Deputy Principal at the Girls' Schools. The fact that what happened in your school you could not control what was going on out there and you would have other things going on, you know.

10. Were there difficulties in balancing a number of life roles?

Not particularly because all the three children were adults. I didn't have a husband and I didn't feel then I was staying late or doing things or going to meetings. The kids were at University. I played tennis on Saturdays and that was a break and went to the footy a couple of clubs and the dog. Because they had seen their mum in the early days come home and mark essays they were all sort of student types.

11. What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?

I think as well as the students although I think as a teacher you get far more interaction with the students than you do when you are a Principal. Especially if the people use you as the sort of punching bag thing. If you don't behave you have to go to the Principal. You are put into a totally different role. I enjoyed the staff development and the curriculum. We did a

lot of work with the curriculum stuff then. Footscray Girls' High School developed a number of Group 2 subjects in H.S.C and liaised with Footscray Institute for acceptance of girls' who took these subjects, rather than traditional subjects.

12. What did you enjoy least about being a Principal?

All the paper work and the letters and stuff. You feel some days I would say to Macey the office Las I just have to get around at lunchtime you feel that stuff and kids never saw you. You would have so much of this.

13. Is it easier for a woman to become a Principal today than when you became a Principal at Gilmore College for Girls?

I doubt it. I don't know a lot about it. Victoria would be better on that. I picked up some vibes from people. They have the panel that sort of thing and what the teachers done. I should think it depends on who is on the panel. I was on a couple of those panels. A matter of fact it was Footscray High School and we had to write assessment of what we thought about that and I think that might be hard for women because if had a panel in which your school chose, you had two parents that were male and someone from the region and you had a male Principal. I think that was hard. In our time it wasn't just seniority. You got the job. You had a feeling that you were going up a ladder and you had assessments. Even when they got rid of inspectors you had assessments. You got marks outstanding and you moved from a position of responsibility to senior teacher to a deputy. Things were advertised all round the place and then you could appeal too. Although I lost

one appeal. I don't know. John Kennedy the ex footballer coach was the head of the Point Gelibrand School. I think if you are willing to have a go at it. But it was not always easy. One of my friends had applied for Melbourne Boys High. She did not get that and then went to McRobertsons. But being in the western suburbs or in the country probably made it easier than out in the eastern suburbs where most of them lived.

14. Do you believe that women in your profession hit a 'glass ceiling'?

I am not familiar now of the conditions today. A lot of the time I came through. You need to look at the percentage of people that were in teaching and the sort of things they were doing. Even with my daughter she was able to get seven years maternity leave while she had her family. We did not have that sort of thing in those days. I really don't know. I think perhaps not in business. It's only a couple thousands of dollars more every year why do I have to have that hassle. It might be a glass ceiling.

15. Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?

No, I read Germaine Greer but that was not available in my formative years. My father and mother were influential. In 1940 when there were only 13 girls at Williamstown High doing matriculation it was unusual in not dragging me out to go to a "Commercial Business College" which was the general idea. You will only get married so why let you go to further education. They wanted their daughter to be a teacher. My friends from those years are still close.

16. If so, which writers influenced you and why?

Other issues that arose from the interview

Equal Pay

The three years I taught at Dandenong High School before I was married. I traveled out from Footscray. You only got four fifths of the wage. In 1948 I think the V.S.T.A started because the chap at Dandenong High was one of the first people in the movement. He became head of the University High later on. Women weren't even allowed to join the V.S.T.A. it was male secondary teachers so there was no one there fighting any argument about your equal pay. So as soon as I married I was fulltime Class 5 at Dandenong High School. Once the notice went in that I was getting married in February I was gone. That's when I came back to the girls' school as a temporary.

Superannuation

I started secondary teaching in 1947 after the degree, diploma of education and things. We were on superannuation just like the men. When you resigned you wouldn't believe it you wouldn't even get the full amount you paid in yourself. It came back in the 1950s. In 1962 I started Footscray. You were told you can't have superannuation because you are a married woman so I joined the married women's superannuation fund. Then Sunshine High School for three years and then Braybrook High School. I got to Braybrook High in 1967 and still paying this married women's fund. We were talking to the senior mistress about it and her

husband had been in New Guinea and she couldn't get superannuation. My husband couldn't get super because of the war. He was in the war for seven years. We talked about it and June the senior mistress said I am going to put in an appeal and can I quote your things to because there was no discrimination laws. We felt we were unfairly treated because of the fact we could not get super. The assumption was our husbands had it. However shortly after that they agreed. Late 60's and early 70's they agreed women could go into the superannuation fund and what they did for us was work out an adjustment for the three years we taught so we could get a per centage and then we would get into the full superannuation. That was the government law it might have been John Cain.

Barbara Hall (1985-1993)

1. Where did you go to school?

I went through the state schools and my secondary schooling was at McRobertson Girls High School.

2. How did your schooling help you choose your career?

I am not sure it had anything to do with schooling. It was more that I wanted to go to university and at that time the government was offering secondary studentships to people who wanted to go to university and that meant you ended up teaching and I was happy enough teaching. As at that time my parents weren't in a financial position to send me to university for any other reason and if I had wanted to go for any other reason I wouldn't be able to go. That's why I really took a studentship. I guess the people that taught me had an influence. I thought they were doing a good job and it would be a happy sort of job. I enjoyed learning and to teach seem to be part of learning.

3. Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?

In order to get to university I suppose you could say and I had determined to be an independent person. I did not want to be financially disadvantaged the way I saw most women at my era disadvantaged.

4. Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?

No, nobody.

5. What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?

When I was quite young in the teaching I just worked out a plan where my career would go. I decided that by a certain age I would reach a certain level of seniority and then I would go up in steps through the degrees of seniority. By a certain age I would become a Principal. That was what I worked out.

6. For how long were you Principal at the school?

Eight years

7. What factors encouraged you to stay a Principal?

I wanted to do for the school I hope to do. That sounds very vague but I had a plan that I wanted to fulfill for the school so I stayed on as a Principal and tried to fulfill what I wanted to do and then I decided I would retire.

8. Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?

Because I went to MacRobertson I always had women Principals and I just grew up assuming that women did what they wanted to do and could do what they wanted to do. That was the first thing I guess. The other thing was I had gone up through the degree of seniority and I guess I developed certain skills. Also I was keen to do it. Ambition and skill and example from other people.

9. What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?

No there really weren't because when I reached that point in seniority I decided that I would apply for certain schools and I got a school. So there really weren't any difficulties in becoming a Principal. The only difficulty was I suppose might have been a difficulty was at the point when it was time for me to become a Principal. They decided that you would not be appointed on the grounds of skills and seniority. You would have to be appointed by interview by the school council and the school council decided whether or not they wanted you as a Principal. That's what happened. I was interviewed at Footscray Girls and I was appointed.

10. Were there difficulties in balancing a number of life roles?

Oh yes heaps. A bit hard to tell you what they all were but you mentioned them before, family. I didn't marry. I didn't marry in order to become or take up senior positions in the schools. That was not my reason for not marrying. But it certainly I think would have been

a factor that when I was young if you married you lost your studentship you had to pay back everything or leave university if you were still there and later on women weren't paid equally. The boys I came out with through University were paid more automatically and for a long time salaries weren't equal. Well there were a number of reasons I decided not to marry but I am sorry what was the question. So I didn't marry so I didn't have that problem and I didn't have the problem of having to rear my own children. I was very involved in the rearing of my sister's children because of circumstances in her marriage so I had a lot of responsibility that sort but they weren't final responsibilities.

The balancing yes I think when you are a Principal you want to go on living and one of the greatest difficulties is to retain your private life and your own interests. It was when I first was about to be appointed a Principal that I decided I would do another degree and I chose to do theology. Which is what I was mainly interested in and that is really what kept me sane and the friends I made there and then. They were extremely supportive and kept a balance in my life when all sorts of things were difficult and tough. There were factors in being a Principal which could have made your life entirely out of balance but the study, the fact that I was still operating as a learning person made it possible for me to keep on writing and wanting to create a happy learning environment for other people.

11. What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?

A couple of things. One was I always had that vision of creating a great campus for girls to study in because I have been at one. MacRobertson was a great school and still is I think. I wanted to create that sort of campus for young Australian girls'. I would have been happy

to work in a co-educational school. But as I was appointed there that was the ambition I had for that school. I suppose I just enjoyed directing things and leading things and seeing education take shape and be realised at a certain innocent environment. Also we have a very big building program when I was there . But the school had become quite derelict actually in a number of ways. Not the fault of the previous Principal but largely the way the government dealt with these sort of schools. Although I was strong union member when I was a younger teacher, there was a conflict between the unions, the government and those who had to lead the schools. I was a V.S.T.A member but as a Principal teachers forgot that. That kind of conflict made it very difficult. But I still had a vision for the school that I wanted to try to bring to life for the girls' in the school. It was very important for young Australian women to, especially for those that came from so many different backgrounds to have the kind of opportunity in Australia. So we had this big building program going on to bringing the school out of its derelict state. We had about two and a half million building program which was quite a lot then in the state schools.

12. What did you enjoy least about being a Principal?

I think I could say the conflict that was set up by the government interfering with the schools. Even though I always attended and always worked here the state system use to be different. The state schools use to be a sense independent not independent totally of the government but they functioned in a way by being looked after by experts that have been trained in the field of education. By the time I became a Principal, the interface between the politicians and the education system became very thin and the politicians themselves decided to run the schools, which I thoroughly disapproved of because they weren't

experts. That was Joan Kirner even though she was a very clever lady and a very able politician in her own way. She wasn't a teacher except for a year and a bit. Despite the fact that her husband was a teacher, she really didn't know the sort of things that the people who were in the Directorate of Education have known. That's what I did not enjoy the way the government affected what was going on in the schools that caused a conflict of interest. So a lot of the teachers energies were taken up with struggling to survive as teachers in the political environment that was created so their energies went into that instead of looking after the youngsters. Not to say that they weren't good teachers, many of them were excellent teachers and it varied for the young people but not all of them because they were in such a position of conflict when you were a Principal you are caught right in the middle.

13. Is it easier for woman to become a Principal today than when you became a Principal at Gilmore College for Girls?

I have no idea. I would think probably is because when all my life I have known women that were Principals in a very narrow sphere. When I became a Principal there weren't many and after that there were quite a lot of women appointed. I suppose I was one of the first group of three women who was appointed about the same time by the council. All to the girls secondary schools. I had to be in a room with them and be interviewed by them.

14. Do you believe that women in your profession hit a glass ceiling?

Well I don't see how they can be because the way the unions fought for equality. I also have to say thanks to Joan Kirner. I think women have a fair go if they want to take up

these sort of positions. Provided they are willing to do it and they have the skills to do it. I think they get the opportunity to do it. When I was Principal I always made sure I was working in committees and so I joined the Principals' Union as well as the teachers' union. I found out there it would be mainly men and I would be one of the very few women involved. I was just determined to do it. Mainly I would say the people on the committees were tolerant ,welcoming and inclusive.

15. Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?

I guess you would say I am a feminist. It's not the feminist writers that influenced me to become a feminist. I just am. That does not mean I do not value men or there role in life and so on. I would call myself more of a postmodern peoplist rather than feminist.

16. If so, which writers influenced you and why?

Victoria Baxter (1994-2000)

1. Where did you go to school?

I went to several schools. I was educated in the state. I went to three primary schools in the country. My father was a bank manager. So I went to three primary schools in the country in very small primary schools in country towns. I went to a secondary school in the country in Kaskiden in Western Victoria. The last five years of my schooling was at Mornington High School down at the Peninsula.

2. How did your schooling help you choose your career in teaching?

It was almost like a foregone conclusion. It's very hard to describe because there were not huge number of options open. You assumed that you were going to go university. I had a pesh off school for the Arts, Art in particular. Also for the humanities subjects and quite interestingly I think it was almost pre-ordained by my parents that I should go to Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and train as an art teacher because I was quite good at art and really enjoyed art. So I was encouraged in that area by my teachers but also there was an assumption in my family that each of us would do a tertiary education and then go into some profession which would enable us to be independent that was much of my father and mother and that was conscious decision on their part. They said I am not going to provide for you financially or anything like that but one thing that I can ensure is that you have an education which will provide you with a career or an opportunity to support yourself the rest of your life. Teaching in those days was very much a chosen profession if

you were a humanities person. If you did an arts degree at University and I was going to RMIT but I didn't manage to get a scholarship because as faith would have it for a number of reasons I did far better in geography and history than I did in biology and art. My father just got a job in Hobart as the manager of the Hobart office. The bank he was working for said why don't you go to university rather than go to RMIT because I really would have had to repeat year 12. Simply to get better marks in art in order to get a scholarship a teaching scholarship.

That's another reason choosing a career in teaching because my father was not sufficiently well off to be able to afford to send me to University. Then you had to rely on scholarship or so you went for a teaching scholarship. You were bonded to the department for four years but then they actually paid your university fees and you also got an allowance a small one. If you took a teaching scholarship you entered a career in teaching and you were bonded to the department in other words you undertook to teach for four years and then you could go into another profession if you liked but that was the time when your learning finished. When you finished your formal schooling and then your career for life. Very different from now very different from what we have to teach students now. So I guess the things that led me into a career or teaching were financial necessity, support of parents ensuring that I was set for life in a job which had an assured income. There was an assured need in the community and also the subjects which I was excelled at which were the humanities which led into an Arts degree which usually led into a Bachelor of Education. There weren't the opening then for Human Resource Management. The things like that I would love to be a Human Resource Manager in a corporation but I was probably fifteen years too early for that.

3. Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?

Probably my peers. I never held any allusions about just proceeding through University and then getting married. It was always assumed that I always was just going to go into teaching. It was just like I said pre determination and it was a very different society from this society. In that you were assured of a job but it was just which one and there was an expectation of my layer in society. I suppose that after you qualify into University you get into something such as teaching and there was a demand for teaching. There was a time where a lot of people were having babies so there was a real demand for teachers. So no I don't think there was opportunity, it was determined I think largely by my parents expectation that I would be able to support my self and have an assured career and teaching is an assured career and it still is so. But apart from that I can't my passion for teaching developed after I became a teacher not before. I didn't have any huge ambition to influence a large number of people. It was just going to a job and hopefully one that I enjoyed. But the passion came later.

4. Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?

No. No there weren't. Surprising enough when I was at university and I was doing my arts degree, again I was a poor student. Poor not in that I did not achieve or pass my exams. I was poor in that I never saw the value in my education. What I should have done was take three or four years off and then gone to university then. University to me is one huge break, social fling. You can't afford to do that now but you could then. It was really interesting the only other career I ever considered was the stage because I really got involved in acting at

university. I did lots and lots of acting and I continued to do it several years afterwards and it was really a lack of that absolute gut commitment and which generates the courage and the egocentricity that you need to succeed. I don't think I was lacking in talent it was more that I was lacking in the ego driven desire that I think all successful actors have and I would have just crumbled on. I couldn't stand the rejection of not getting apart things like that and you have to be ruthless absolutely ruthless, and I did not have that as part of my character. But a lot of people said why don't you become an actor you should do it go into comedy acting and so no. My parents would have a pink fit because parents in those days particularly in my role my parents were immensely influential. That kind of incredible power that they had over you didn't stop you from making poor choices from time to time. By heavens it really your sense of responsibility towards them was so huge that it dragged you back. That sense that god I made a mistake, I have been really dreadful. I made a number of mistakes at University. I will characterise a number of things. I did utterly wild. But always in the context fact that I knew they were and I knew they were stupid or wrong or a poor choice. That I suppose is getting back to my upbringing. The people around me were going to become teachers many of them hived off afterwards and went into different professions, which I never did. The whole cohort of art, people 90 per cent of them I expected were going to become teachers and there was no influence and pressure to seek. It was before the large co-operations ,the corporate life. I guess it was time where if you were going into media, if you were going into any profession in a company or anything like that you started at the bottom of the company. You actually were in there as a receptionist, male clerk and you climbed your way up through the profession and gradually by a sifting process you would rise to positions. They weren't actually advertised anywhere but you would join. Now days you can draw a wonderful analogy or comparison between thirty

years ago. If you wanted to become a journalist you became the office copy boy or girl. You ran around and made people coffee and so. You gradually worked your way up and absorbed by osmosis all of the experiences around you. If you were good in it and you made it. Now days you have to have postgraduate degrees in media, journalism etc before they would look at you. The thought of entering from the end down the bottom, forget it. It's just a different era, different time.

5. What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?

Most they were my mentors and all of them were men. It really amuses me and I am going to be totally horrid now that we talk about women in leadership and how women should encourage other women. I did not find it so. Mind you I was in the technical division and there weren't that many in the technical division. I suppose one of the ironically mentor and very good friend of mine is now working in this school as the leading teacher there. She took the part of having children so on and so forth, which I didn't. There is many significant men teachers or people in leadership positions in every school who encouraged me. In the 1970s my head of department started to encourage me. I was in the school for 18 months when he started encouraging me for responsibility positions. I hadn't been teaching for five years when he started encouraging me to apply for senior teacher positions. It was all seniority so I was about three thousand five hundred on the role and you had to be in the low hundreds like you had to be under a thousand to even have a chance to be a senior teacher. He said you have to keep applying you've got to hone that ability to apply. He just made a natural assumption that I should in fact seek positions of leadership within the school. I did not contemplate of being a Principal. I was just encouraged to take on

responsibility and you can say that in some ways I displayed natural leadership. But I had brilliant teaching models before me. I was an appalling teacher to start with. All teachers experience huge fear in the first years because you are confronted by this group of young people like hunting packs. So if they sense a weakness they go for the kill. I was so regimental and so closed off to that whole concept of building relationships that just melted away when I saw really good real teaching model around me. From the point of view of being encouraged to aspire to become a Principal my aspiration was never something that was clearly articulated until the mid 1980s. Before that it was simply seeking professionalism advancement through professions. I did not see my self as a Principal but it was so interesting. Apart from my first head of department who encouraged me in the 1970s. He also got me out of the rut. So many teachers get into being frightened to move because they are use to one culture and one environment so he say All right, if you are not going to get promotion to get somewhere else what else can we do? You are to apply to other work in the Regional Office or you have to go for a consultancy job somewhere. So I ended up being a literacy consultant and working, what was known as demonstration units then, after my first 6 years. Then applied to a school with wonderful teachers, it was the first years of the school in one of the toughest areas teaching which is Melton. Then I became a regional reliever. So I actually started developing flexibility and knowledge that I can fit in any where and I can grow and learn to read and fit into different cultures. When I became a relieving teacher this was also in the technical division. So I got to be in different schools between one term , two terms to cover long term vacancies created by people going on long service leave. You held a position as a regional reliever and were deployed to cover vacancies determined by long service leave. As a humanities teacher based in one technical school and had the opportunity to go around and work at whole lot

of different technical schools. Alienation factor was huge but the learning curve was also very strong because I learn't that different schools had different cultures. You can fit into any culture so through an initial phase of huge difficulties with the classes that you take because you have to develop your relationship with them before you can get that effective learning environment. You also wear the legacy of the person who have taken the classes before you. If you had an absolute hard guy. I remember Werribee Technical School. Down I go there and there is a dreadful group and they were ferril. Because I had a very laissez-faire by teaching then that had developed. I would put them into groups co-operative learning and responsibility for your own learning and they just went bananas and they were use to sitting in rows and being absolutely controlled. The fear was the chief motivation. So I worked with them and worked with them. I had a dreadful first eight weeks assumed all responsibilities and I modeled them. I went away and relieved somewhere else for a couple of terms and had them again. This guy and my perfect example and he is still down at Werribee and I am talking about the early 80's and he is still there and he has leadership position. He must be absolute crystallised now, petrified and insane. I came back and the kids had reverted to tight. Again he has taken them and taught them in such a way that I had to start from square one again. I learn't things like that power of the relationship power of the attitude of the teacher is just immense.

6. For how long were you a Principal at the school?

Six and a half years. It's time to move on.

7. What factors encouraged you to stay a Principal?

I don't feel any fear about returning back to the classroom. In fact, that's where I am going next period. I would stay a Principal because although one of the first things you learn when you become a Principal is your lack of power. It is very amusing that people see you as if having immense power and influence and that is absolutely nonsense. I was far more powerful when I was assistant Principal than a Principal because you're insulated. There are layers between you and the staff and there is also that perception of the position which I think has a very pushing debilitating affect on your ability to influence them. So you actually have to think globally how do I influence the environment? How do I create an environment in which professionalism can grow? How do I model leadership in such a way that other people can feel they assume leadership positions? That's just a learning factor that you can never ever get to the end of. So I think why would I stay a Principal I have a huge amount to learn and experiment with and I can reflect on my previous experiences and know that there is just so much more that I can do and haven't yet come to grips with the dimensions of how to be a really excellent Principal. So why would you leave a position where you could continue to learn. I would leave the school to go to another school because a different environment gives you an opportunity to try not just new things but to try other things. Try them in different ways. The one thing else I would do is what I did two years ago. Move into some position in the Region like two years ago when I was Regional Consultant and I was responsible for 32 schools Primary and secondary schools. I have done stacks of facilitation courses and so on so I have actually trained up as a facilitator and a presenter in a number of different courses.

8. Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?

There were but again the very much encouragement the people around me. I never felt demeaned or anyway. I was never made to feel that I need to prove something as a women. I only ever had to prove something as a leader as a teacher. That was to be good as what I was doing and to champion the ideas I had and to make sure they were given every possibility of working so the fact that made it easy for me to become a Principal is the way in which I didn't stay in one school. Moving around gave me flexibility and made me recognise that initial fear of new places is something that is very easily overcome. Moving around was a factor that made it easy for me to become a Principal. Being open encouragement from significant men. I cannot think of one woman ever encouraging me and there was a natural assumption in most of the men in leadership positions and that I know this is completely contrary to the story you would hear from other women. But it may have something to do with the two- way attitude. It may have something to do with the fact technical schools that I was in were tough and we had difficulties with the kids and there were lots of boys and there were always imbalance between boys and girls. We were in survival mode and we had to come up with creative ways of dealing with students and when you are just incompetent and if more incompetent with the men you taught around you. It was the kind of men. They had been out in industry. They were much broader minded and far less closed off and narrow than a lot of teachers in high school and being a technical teacher and developing that ability to work with largely male staff to was really interesting. Even my last Principal he said, you will become the acting assistant Principal. I said I am not the only senior teacher in the school. He said yes you will become it and said what about this other chap and he said no he has less of right to it than you do in terms of

that you have taken on co -ordination or sub-school, and he just said when my job goes go for it. I said god no. What about Bob? He said no you should go for it you could become a Principal. He was not a well-liked man. But he just made that absolute blatant assumption you will make it, you will be a good Principal and it's very interesting. That kind of encouragement was pretty profound and I remember so well. That factor made it easy. The belief these people believed in me and they developed a belief in myself.

9. What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?

Maybe being a female but I don't think so. I don't think there were any. I never perceived any gender based factors why I became a Principal. I was acting assistant Principal for a year and then I became assistant Principal for two and half years and then moved into became a Principal in a high school. Having been in a technical school all my life I discovered the culture of the high school was very interesting particularly moving in there as a Principal and that was the early 90's. That was a very steep learning curve for me.

Another factor that made it easy for me to become a Principal was the nature of the beast. I am performer. I am an actress even if I am feeling dreadful I can go in and put on the performance of a lifetime for the kids. But I can also put a performance of a life time on an interview. That is a natural advantage. You see people frozen in interviews because they are paralysed by fear. I find that fear is an adrenalin rush for me or being anxious. It's the same as going on stage. Once you overcome the initial fear you play for all its worth so that is a personal factor.

In terms of difficulty, I don't believe there was anything that stood in my way except that I won't mention names it's very interesting. There is a namesake of a leadership program where women mentor other women to get them into leadership positions. I have been very heavily involved in lots of mentoring and other associate programs to allow people to shadow you. This person who namesake you should support women in leadership. She was on one of my selection panels and she took an instinct dislike to me as a person. She took a professional dislike to me and this person who is suppose to be a great support of women appointed a two dimensional cardboard cut of a bloke to this position and I knew, without being prideful or totally egocentric I know my faults and there are huge number of them. I knew I was better than this guy was and I thought this is just hilarious. Here I am in this program all accolades that awarded this particular person. She didn't support women. She was very lemon lipped about me.

10. Were there difficulties in balancing a number of life roles?

I am not married. I am separated from my husband. Balancing life roles, I never had children and that was always the choice I made fairly late in my mid 30s. It is difficult it is the perception of the job rather than its dreadly lonely job and yet I will not permit it to be lonely because I refuse to follow the advice huge number of people who say you can never be friends with the staff because you will be placed in a position where you have to make decisions which will go against or comprise that friendship and it may influence your decision. I say no that is not right here are my friends and this is my job and when I have to do my job I do it with integrity and I do it with the best intentions for the school.

If it does have a counter productive affect on friendship and if the friendship can't stand the friendship dies not the integrity. I have never felt that sort of dichotomy that sense that I cannot afford to be friendly with people that I work with and hold a position of responsibility over. As far as I am concerned it comes to a decision that benefits the school.

11. What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?

Experiencing that ability to influence a school environment and try to set up protocol structures, which facilitate professional growth in other people. I am not given to leading from the front so I enjoyed seeing other people professionally grow in an environment that I think I have done a lot to create and just having that I suppose the endorsement to be able to do those things. Although you do get side tracked so often. You don't get nearly as much as you would like to.

12. What do you enjoy least about being a Principal?

I hate lack of professionalism in teachers. I hate having to deal with it because one of my areas of greatest need to improve is moving towards creating that structure of accountability where teachers who behave in an unprofessional way and that can be as simple as not turning up to class on time or not turning up to particular meetings that is unprofessional. I cannot just assume that teachers will be professional. You could give them all the support in the world and create the environment, but if they are turned off and they choose not to follow that path then there is time we have to step in. Not in discipline areas but as to the person whom they are accountable to. That is very difficult. Then you

get into having to deal with the mind set and perceptions that you just find absolutely very difficult to deal with. I will give you a perfect example. We have a teacher who is very poor in terms of relationships. We had a girl come to us and after experiencing him for four periods and six periods a day. She went back to her previous school saying I came here to learn in all girls school but the teacher is not going to teach me anything. So I brought him in and I said do you realize this is the impression you created. I said what do you do in your class to encourage students to achieve their best? He said “ If they don’t, I fail them”. I just thought where do I start with an attitude like that. I had no common ground. The man needed a personality transplant.

13. Is it easier for woman to become a Principal today than when you became a Principal at Gilmore College for Girls?

Victoria could not answer this question because she was still a Principal at Gilmore College for Girls when I interviewed her.

14. Do you believe that women in your profession hit a ‘glass ceiling’?

I do. I think the glass ceiling is often created by the fact that they are the only ones that could have children. I think it is very much of mind set and a paradigm in their own creation or societies creation for them. If they could move outside the paradigm and expand their thinking. I think there is a glass ceiling but the glass ceiling is for men and women because there is so little chart once you get to level 12 promotion, that unless you go on leadership positions and then there is only one Principal in a school and one or two

assistant Principals depending on the size. There is the filtration system, which does create the glass ceiling. I don't think it is gender related, as it is in lots and lots of other professions. There is absolute huge discrimination against women in other professional areas and it's extraordinarily difficult for them to get beyond certain levels of promotion. But in teaching I think a part from the fact that women tend to develop the attitude. They are going to be the second breadwinner, first thing and then they are going to have children. That interrupts their professional growth. That's fine. I don't have a problem with that because we have several women in the school who have had families and are now seeking professional advancement. But I do think the family leave and being taken away for a while does have a negative affect on the opportunities.

15. Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?

No, I haven't. I am a science fiction reader.

16. If so, which writers influenced you and why?

Appendix B: Letter to Participants

Letter to Participants

Title of project – Factors relating to women attaining senior positions in Victoria's Government secondary colleges: A Case Study.

Names of investigators – Dr John Brick

Name of researchers – Naciye Ertan

The study is designed to investigate issues associated with the apparent gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools. It will attempt to identify elements that have militated against women in gaining leadership positions. The research method to be employed is case study method. It will focus on one particular school, Gilmore College for Girls at Footscray. The case study will be carried out using interviews.

There are minimal risks to you in participating in this study and you may withdraw at any time without giving reasons.

The research will uncover new insights into problems, issues and challenges that face the professional educational leader.

You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue in the study at any time without giving a reason.

Any questions you have concerning the project can be directed to the Principal Investigator, Dr John Brick on 03 9953 3372 in the School of Education at St Patrick's Campus 115 Victoria Parade Fitzroy, or the researcher, Naciye Ertan on 02 9974 2303.

This study has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study, or a query that the investigator has not been able to satisfy, you may write care of the nearest branch of the Office of Research. Any complaint made will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

These complaints should be addressed to

The Chair

UHREC

Australian Catholic University

St Patrick's Campus

Locked Bag 4115 DC

Fitzroy 3065

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the informed consent form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the investigator.

Appendix C: Letter of Consent

Title of Research – Project Factors Relating to Women Attaining Senior
Positions in Victoria's Government Secondary Colleges.

I.....(the participant) have read and understood the information
provided in the Letter to the Participants and any questions I have asked have been
answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I can
withdraw at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other
researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Participant.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of Authorised Representative: Professor Philip Clarkson

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of Principal Researcher: Naciye Ertan

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Principals, Gilmore College for Girls'

1. Where did you go to school?
2. How did your schooling help you choose your career in teaching?
3. Were there other influences that determined your choice of career?
4. Were there people advising you not to go into teaching as a career?
5. What factors encouraged you to aspire to become a Principal?
6. For how long were you Principal at the school?
7. What factors encouraged you to stay a Principal?
8. Were there factors that made it easy for you to become a Principal?
9. What factors made it difficult for you to become a Principal?
10. Were there difficulties in balancing a number of life roles?
11. What did you enjoy most about being a Principal?

12. What did you enjoy least about being a Principal?
13. Is it easier for a woman to become a Principal today than when you became a Principal at Gilmore College for Girls?
14. Do you believe that women in your profession hit a 'glass ceiling'?
15. Have you been influenced by any feminist writers?
16. If so, which writers influenced you and why?

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