DANCING ON A MOVING FLOOR:

LAY WOMEN AND THE PRINCIPALSHIP

IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

To those who have gone before …

My mother and father, Eileen and Jim Power, who always believed in me, encouraged me, and taught me to believe in myself

and to

My sisters-Sisters of Mercy-who have supported me in so many ways.
I would like to express my gratitude to the following people who helped me in so many ways in the course of the production of this thesis:

to my supervisor, Jill Blackmore for her invaluable advice, and to Robin McTaggart for his assistance in compiling questionnaires for data collection for it;

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I am deeply grateful

I would also like to thank the Deakin University Librarians who were so encouraging and obliging in acceding to my requests for materials
LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ACCIR  Australian Catholic Commission for Industrial Relations
AEC   Australian Education Council
AST   Advanced Skills Teacher
BCE   Before Christian Era
CAFS  Child and Family Services
CE    Christian Era
CECV  Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO   Catholic Education Office
Co.As.It Comitato Assistenza Italiani (Italian Assistance Organisation)
FAP   First Assistant to the Principal
KSC   Knights of the Southern Cross
NBEET National Board of Employment, Education and Training
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<tr>
<td>NCEC</td>
<td>National Catholic Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>POR</td>
<td>Position of Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Religious Education Co-ordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>YCW</td>
<td>Young Catholic Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>WATAAC</td>
<td>Women and the Australian Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WERG</td>
<td>Women in Educational Research</td>
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CONCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

'Female disadvantage' has been the explanation given in previous studies to explain the under-representation of laywomen who achieve principalships in Catholic Education. Women, themselves, have overcome many of the barriers that disadvantage them. These include an apparent inability to cope with financial management and time constraints due to family commitments. The introduction of Equal Opportunity legislation and related programmes has assisted this process, but as my research shows the under-representation of women in principalship in proportion to the numbers of women teachers in Catholic Education still remains. This thesis examines the phenomenon in three dioceses in three Australian states.

I have investigated this problem using a feminist research approach which is characterised by an emphasis on the significance of everyday life. Statistical material as to percentages of teachers in comparison with percentages of female principals was collected; dates of formulation and acceptance of relevant policies at diocesan levels were checked and questionnaires compiled. The questionnaires were distributed to appropriate stakeholders. Following the compilation of data from the questionnaires, themes emerged which provided the initial questions for focus groups made up of male and female principals and potential principals. These focus groups were then conducted in all three dioceses. Through all stages I carried out cross-referencing with my own journal...
sentries (Power, 1993—1999). The qualitative and quantitative data generated from the focus groups was examined and analysed drawing on feminist concepts.

I have found two major features emerging from the materials that I have generated. The first was the unpredictable, ambiguous and often contradictory relations that occur within Catholic Education, and how they were experienced by lay women. This aspect gave rise to the title of my thesis: 'Dancing on a Moving Floor' as many women felt the rules changed the closer they got to achieving principalship. Then both male and female participants highlighted 'male advantage' in terms that have been identified in other education systems, but this factor emerged as being further heightened in Catholic Education and occurring at systemic, organisational and individual levels. I have made a number of policy recommendations that could possibly change attitudes and practices for each of these levels. I conclude with some suggestions for further research.

1 All references to this journal throughout this thesis are specified and dated at the point of reference.
INTRODUCTION

This study is an historically informed analysis of the contemporary position of lay women in primary school leadership in the Catholic Education system. As an exploration of lay women's experience in this education sector it highlights the difficulties women encounter when accessing principalship and the barriers they face once they achieve that position. It connects closely with issues I encountered in my workplace, and has been part of my own professional journey. Information is provided on hindrances women experience in the particular area of obtaining leadership positions in Catholic primary schools.

In previous studies researchers have listed factors and given significant explanations for the unequal ratio of women achieving principalships compared with the greater numbers of women teaching in Catholic primary schools. These listed factors include individuals' lack of appropriate qualifications, their lack of ambition and motivation to pursue an administrative career, and a lack of confidence in their ability to assume successful principalship positions. These 'lacks' are complemented by positive aspirations of seeking to remain in the classroom and/or with home commitments, not principalship, being their first concern at a particular stage in their life careers.

Recent literature calls to give women voice by including their experiences in leadership theory-making rather than treating masculinist leadership is taken as the norm (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999; Sinclair, 1998; Cox, 1996). Obstacles or hurdles women encounter persist but are moving constantly in unpredictable ways. I have identified these and discussed strategies to overcome them.
This thesis cannot be fully appreciated without knowledge of my personal professional journey which informs the study. Additionally, because I have selected Feminist Standpoint Theory as the conceptual framework, this qualitative method of research accounts for the embeddedness of the researcher's story within the research, the research process and the world researched.

To situate this study, I begin with a personal narrative which is to a large extent informed and explained by the literature on organisation, leadership and feminist theories. I have located the personal within the broader frame of reference supplied by both the literature and the methodology employed in this study. In this sense then, this narrative is indicative of the experience of many female teachers who are competent, articulate, physically and emotionally strong, and have a vision for Catholic Education and a concern for others. They have obtained the necessary educational qualifications, held middle management positions in schools, trained in Catholic institutions and freed themselves of family commitments, if they had any. Yet, many of them have not been selected for principalships in Catholic primary schools in country Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

The figures (Catholic Education Office, 1999) below tell the story. In 1999, in the states in which I have undertaken this study, 78% of full-time teachers in Victorian Catholic primary schools were female and 53% of the principals were female. In South Australia, in the Catholic system in the same year the percentage of female principals was 52 with the percentage of female teachers being 71. In country New South Wales in 1999, 79% of teachers were female
and only 47% of the principals were female (see Attachment 1, Figure 1). This shows a consistent pattern of unequal representation. These statistics illustrate the disproportionate number of lay women who achieve principalship compared with the number of women teaching in Catholic primary schools.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Stories of women's experiences of applications for principalship positions show a similar pattern to that of the following:

I knew that I wanted to be a leader in a Catholic school. But it's very hard to get anywhere unless you go through the correct channels. But having said that, it doesn't mean that it is the only way because 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 have worked so hard. I went up to the school. 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 well—I was relaxed. You have to get on this program, get your Master's degree, which I am doing, go through the correct channels and then—wham! (Meg, applicant for principalship).

Another applicant described the experience, "if one enjoys disappointment and disillusionment, then applying for principalship is a lot of fun." Colourful metaphors in the literature describe the subtle processes and structures operating in organisations which prevent women from gaining leadership positions—glass ceilings, perspex walls and ceilings, sticky floors and cobwebs and slippery poles (Still, 1995, p. 234). These metaphors can assist our understanding as well as 'grab our attention and stimulate imagination', but they do not provide a solution to the problem of under-representation of lay women in principalships
They do, however, testify to the difficulty faced by women in moving into leadership positions.

The incident cited above, along with many other stories that I had heard in my position as Director of Catholic Education in my own region, urged me to investigate the problem. These stories highlight the position of some women in principalship, as well as those still endeavouring to achieve it, and in combination with my own experience, demonstrate the need for a better understanding of how lay women are positioned within Catholic Education.

**My Story**

My background is that of the orderly world in the shadow of the Enlightenment. Having been reared by devout practising Catholic parents of Irish descent and then taking up a career in analytical chemistry, I gained knowledge in an objective, reasoned and reliable fashion. In addition, as a Religious Sister, my life was organised for me within a hierarchically patriarchal model (with a matriarchal overlay—that of the Sisters). Initially, truth for me was constructed as objective and universal, and knowledge was institutionalised in the sciences, history and philosophy. There was never any discussion about who ‘possessed’ the truth. Male members of the Catholic Church had formulated documents and held all positions of authority in the Church itself. Once I became a Religious Sister I found that Reverend Mothers of Congregations of Sisters quoted the Constitutions that must be obeyed. It was quite foreign to me, as a Religious, to learn that universal truths of science are but one truth among many and that much science was indeed 'bad' science in its own terms, not least in that it ignored the experience of women and was conceptualised from and focused on
the experiences of largely white middle-class males (Harding, 1987). The same could be said for theology and scripture.

During the training we received to become vowed Religious we were instructed that we were not to express our feelings, to show no emotion, not even to acknowledge that we were tired; and certainly not to get angry or become tearful. We were to respond to the needs of others even to the detriment of our own needs. We were almost non-persons. This training overflowed into the style of leadership. Religious principals practised servant leadership expressed in unemotional, rational and efficient modes with strong discipline of students being maintained. No sign of affection towards students was permitted. Sisters were to be aloof and maintain this remote disposition in all relationships.

In 1973 I was appointed as a principal. There was no selection process or interview panel. The matriarchs (Reverend Mother and Council) made the decision unilaterally with no consultation with me, the total group of Sisters, or the parent community. By obedience I was ordered to take up that position. My style of leadership, however, was apparently not acceptable to some of the Sisters. I am not sure what aspects were displeasing to them, and was never told, but I was replaced by a lay male in 1976. Within two terms, however, I was reappointed. The male did not fulfil the expectations his employers had for him and I can only guess that they had no choice but to re-appoint me. Again, I was not consulted. Nor was the parent community. As this study shows, this experience reflects the treatment of women seeking principalships.
Transitions—1970s-1980s

Rigid hierarchies were breaking down in schools in the late seventies but there were still many staff who hung on to past procedures and processes. In the Catholic Church there were clear mandates. The church was seen as the 'dispenser of salvation'; one person was 'god-the-infallible'; the clergy were the knowledgeable ones and the laity were 'the ignorant'. (One must remember that lay people are lay purely in their relationship to the clergy. Simply, they are not clergy). In contrast, other staff believed that all members had equal rights and that many lay people were very knowledgeable and qualified. They believed all voices were to be heard. For them, there were no absolute truths and one opinion was as valid as another. Often everyone saw things differently and all knowledge was interpretive, all truth was relative. People began to consider that there was not one truth but many truths.

By 1985, when I was finishing my term as principal, a more collaborative style of leadership was possible and many innovations were introduced. The development of the school community—Sisters, lay staff, parents and students, was progressing well. I had begun with a staff of twenty Sisters and two lay teachers and finished at that school twelve years later, with fifty-one lay teachers and one Sister, in addition to myself. The replacement of Religious Sisters by lay staff was nearly complete in this school, a trend that was reflected in Catholic schools across the country.

When I applied for the position of Director of Catholic Education in late 1985 I was interviewed along with ten other applicants—all male. I was successful.
This was an exception to the norm in this country, as there were twenty-four males and four female Directors of Catholic Education in Australia at that stage. Given the current climate of Catholic Education my appointment at this time raised many questions both for myself and for others.

What did the role entail? Did I feel powerful in this role? As I was the only female director in Victoria did I have the skills to be a leader? The three other male directors had each held the position of director for more than fifteen years. What did a female know about administration? How would she manage the financial aspect of the job? Would she be firm enough with staff? Did she have the stamina to endure extended travel, and be able to sit through lengthy meetings? These latter questions were asked by the previous male director of the diocese where I had just been appointed.

It was my daily experience to feel powerless as I negotiated, resisted, re-asserted and endeavoured to re-position myself. If power is described as 'power over' rather than 'power with' then, at this time, I did not feel that I was a powerful person, my role being more that of assisting others, being a link between people. At meetings the few women present were "allowed to be honorary men when it suited the prevailing establishment to confer this dignity upon us" (Byrne, 1988, p. 23). It became obvious to me that it was not until in similar vein to Gurney (1985), "after carefully examining the negative treatment accorded other women in the organisation I was able to recognise that I was being treated in the same way" (p. 45). I felt alienated sometimes. I wondered how other women would be treated, for, as Blackmore (1996c) puts it, "post-
structuralist theories of power suggest the struggle against male dominance is often fundamentally different for different women. Equal Opportunity legislation provides individual white women access to male-dominated organisations only to face discrimination further up the organisation, whereas black or coloured women are less likely to get even initial access" (p. 1008).

**Personal Questions**

This research project then had its origins in my own experience. I kept reflecting on similar questions as those asked by White (1995) and Macdonald et al (1999). Am I, as a twentieth century Australian woman of the Christian tradition, freed by that tradition or trapped by it? Should I trust the tradition or be suspicious of it (White, 1995, p. 12)? What is our role as women in preserving the traditions of the church (Macdonald et al, 1999, p. 66)? Have I experienced a dichotomous relationship with the church characterised by such feelings as love, hate, commitment, alienation, frustration, persistence, searching, longing? Do I “both love and hate the Catholic Church" (Macdonald et al, 1999, p. 174)?

As Director, I asked myself sometimes if I was the token woman at meetings. Was my contribution acceptable only when I was logical and rational but not when I made an intuitive response? Was I only accepted when I won men's games like being successful in the football tipping (Helgesen, 1990)? Did I feel "out of place here" (Cockburn, 1991, p. 65) in situations where men generated a masculine culture? I was aware that I was different. I was participating in a
gendered environment where males dominated and I had been accustomed to an all-female staff and community for many years.

Did I hear myself using self-deprecating speech markers that often preface women's comments for example, "I don't know too much about this, but …" or, "this may be wrong , but…"? From my journal I noted, "I've finally gained credibility at [Catholic Education Office] Finance Meetings" (March 17, 1998). Did I remain silent when seemingly unimportant issues were being discussed so as to conserve my energy for the moments of debate when critical issues were tabled, or were there elements of collusion in my reactions? Casey (1995) observes that, "women (and some men) may be lulled into colluding with their organisations. These people use their people skills in ways which both contradict their principles and make other workers' lives harder" (p. 20).

In my experience, and from the stories I heard from other women, these expressions of domination were practised frequently. My contribution to a discussion was often re-interpreted by men through phrases like, 'What Thérèse really means is', and then sometimes in a subsequent discussion my ideas were voiced by one of the men, appropriated by him and passed off as his own. From my journal I recorded after a meeting with the parish priests, "I do believe I had to win my credibility" (May 10, 1993) and nearly a year later, "I'm building up my credibility at the Children's Home meeting" (February 18, 1994). I was under pressure constantly.
The strategy used by many women in this type of situation is one of blending in with the existing organisational structure, of being feminine enough in terms of appearance and business-like enough in terms of procedure so that the issues of gender and sexuality are apparently minimised in the work context (Burrell and Hearn, 1989). Women are faced with a dilemma when they begin to enter the male culture of the organisation. They consider whether their gender and sexual identity be somehow transformed in order to enable them to participate in the male-defined organisational world (Burrell and Hearn, 1989). In my case, gaining acceptance seemed to be an ongoing struggle.

Schmuck's (1996) metaphor of 'insiders and outsiders' (p. 347) described my situation. Although an insider, I felt like an outsider as I observed what Smith (1979) called 'fault lines' or the discrepancies between what traditional knowledge told about what we should experience, and what we actually experienced in everyday life. Furthermore, I experienced a landscape to which I was truly a stranger; a landscape dominated by a culture of privileged, white male leadership which set the standards and norms of the education profession with the added dimension of the male-dominated Catholic Church hierarchy as an overlay. Although I had insider status, I did not feel comfortable embracing many of the activities, values and beliefs of the dominant leadership culture in both the education sphere and the church realm. I felt like one of Schmuck's (1996) 'outsiders within' (p.347). This has led me to the concept of position in terms of Davies' (1989a) definition, "as the immanentist replacement for a clutch of transcendentalist concepts like 'role'" (p. 44).
Reflecting then on the concept of positionality (Alcoff, 1988) and applying it to how I was positioned daily was extremely useful in helping me "to read both the culture (of Catholic Education) and its patterns of power relationships" (Kenway et al, 1994, p. 199). How was I positioned, both in the broad educational scene and more particularly in the Catholic Church and its education system? My sense of marginality enhanced my awareness of prejudice and discrimination (Gurney, 1985, p. 59). I recalled the tensions, contradictions and powerlessness I experienced and I continued to ponder whether I was perpetuating the current system or challenging its functioning by my presence and actions.

I am one of the feminist researchers that Reinharz (1992) has observed that often, "begin with an issue that is both an intellectual question and a personal trouble" (p. 260). I wondered what the experiences of other women educators in the Catholic system were. Like Grundy (1993) I found I was, "constantly positioning myself in relation to members of the department as colleague, not as superior" (p. 175). I worked with them.

Because of my own experiences, then, and also because of my interest in lay women and their aspirations for principalships, I felt urged to pursue this research. A major question presented itself—do other women like me experience multiple and contradictory positioning in their everyday lives? The general purpose of this thesis then, is to answer the question, “why are many lay women not successful in achieving principalships in Catholic Education?"
Addressing this question, this thesis identifies many of the hurdles women encounter when endeavouring to access and achieve principalship.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

In Chapter One I define the problem—the under-representation of lay women in principalships in Catholic Education; provide statistical evidence that supports this dilemma, and identify the hurdles that lay women encounter in their search for principalship. I then consider government legislation and systems which endeavour to alleviate the under-representation of female leaders in all education sectors. Finally, I discuss the structural barriers that affect selection of women in leadership with merit as a gender-neutral principle of selection, grooming, mentoring and the changing nature of career paths for women.

In Chapter Two I give a brief description of the context, structure and history of Catholic Education within the larger organisation of the Catholic Church. Then I discuss organisations, approaching gender as the 'lens' through which this study is to be viewed. I review concepts of patriarchy, kyriarchy and hegemony as outcomes of what Connell (1995) describes as a “gender regime” (p. 187). In the second section of this chapter I discuss the culture of the Catholic Church and the exercise of authority.

In Chapter Three I explore a relevant body of literature—that concerning power. Power relations, a study of approaches and the functioning of power follow. As Catholic Education is a highly gendered organisation with parish
priests being male, and lay men and women holding principalship positions the concepts of sexuality, masculinity and femininity need to be explored also.

As this study is concerned directly with leadership in Catholic Education I undertake a review of the literature on leadership in Chapter Four. In the same chapter, literature on change is discussed as the demise of Religious principals has affected members of the parish community.

Chapter Five outlines the theoretical framework selected for this research. The chapter then describes the methods used to gather data, the process of analysis and the parameters of the study. It also notes how ethical issues have been managed within the research.

In the first section of Chapter Six, I show that in previous research, the focus has been on women rather than on particular organisations. I show that many women have overcome personal barriers but in organisations, or particular institutional sites, there has been no corresponding shift in the culture of the organisations. Government legislation, and the efforts of women themselves, have been ineffective in assisting lay women achieve principalship. I posit the conclusion that 'female disadvantage' is sharpened out of both structural and cultural barriers and within Catholic Education. In the second section of Chapter Six I highlight 'male advantage' within the same theoretical framework. This is central to my study, for it moves the discussion of the problem from the margins of male-defined conceptualisations of the position of women in leadership roles
to a definition in terms of the Feminist Standpoint of the methodology that I have employed.

Chapter Seven has three sections. The first argues that with the demise of Religious Sisters from leadership positions in Catholic schools, 'male advantage' has not diminished. It takes the position that it would be logical to suppose that Religious women are being replaced by lay women, particularly with increased numbers being eligible. My research, however, shows that such is not the case and I provide some reasons for this occurring. I compare locations that help and hinder women in their endeavour to access leadership positions. I use the phrase 'gender geography' to describe both the isolation experienced by lay women, and also the exclusion of them from both professional and social activities because of their gender. In the next section I discuss the relevance of the decision-making process in the selection of principals, likening the interview panel to a microcosm of the broader functioning of the Catholic Church, as many characteristics of the wider church funnel down into this process. These include the exercise of power and authority, hierarchical structures, and the effects of white masculinist hegemony. Finally, the influence of the parish priest is then highlighted.

In the last chapter, Chapter Eight, there are two sections. In the first I discuss the over-riding dilemma for lay women in not being successful in achieving principalships. Then I offer some policy recommendations which may be taken up by the appropriate authorities in the hope that lay women may access
principalships in greater numbers in the future. I discuss these in relation to systemic, organisational and individual levels.

Finally I provide a Conclusion.
CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this research is to explore lay women’s experience in their endeavour to achieve principalships; to identify the hurdles they encounter and to make some policy recommendations that could possibly change attitudes and practices at systemic organisational and individual levels. The focal question is, “why are lay-women under-represented in principalship positions in Catholic Education”?

THE HURDLES PERSIST

This chapter identifies some of the hurdles that hinder lay women seeking principalships. It includes a discussion of the effects of government legislation and the concept of merit as a seemingly gender-neutral process of selection. It takes up the focus of the literature on careers, grooming, mentoring and blocks to advancement. A list of some of the changes in Catholic Education serves to highlight the context in which there is potential for these to become hurdles for all staff members. The particular effect of this for lay women rather than lay men is outlined.

All school staffs have experienced restructuring within their own schools, with these linked to restructuring in their Education Offices. There is a constant movement and sometimes reduction of numbers of service personnel such as educational advisors and consultants. This adds pressure to principals who wish to offer professional development activities for their staff. The composition of staffs is changing with women returning to work much sooner than in previous
decades. This can affect the male/female and part-time/full-time ratio of staff members. At the same time teachers who were members of Religious Congregations\textsuperscript{2} are being replaced by lay teachers. In Victoria in 1979 there were 89.2% lay staff in Catholic schools; in 1989, 96.5% and in 1999, 98.0% whereas in the 1960s the numbers of lay teachers were statistically negligible in any census surveys (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 1999). The decrease in Religious personnel has been dramatic, and the effects of this change are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Further, there has been a change in the number of Religious female principals. While the 1950s saw 100% Religious principals in the three to four hundred Catholic primary schools, in 1975 there were 260 in Victoria. In 1999 only 37 remained (see Attachment 2, Figure 2). This sudden decrease is a significant moment in the history of leadership of Catholic primary schools but it has not resulted, proportionally, in more lay women becoming principals in these schools. Chapman (1986) observed that in Catholic schools "with the retirement and withdrawal of female Religious, young men are increasingly being appointed to principal positions" (p. 16). As I found in my research, this pattern continues.

In a study of Catholic schools in a state other than Victoria, Tinsey (1998) found there is a communication gap between teachers and clergy where expectations of

\textsuperscript{2} These teachers will be referred to as Religious in this document
each group differ. Tinsey found that whilst the parish priest is the employer in primary schools\textsuperscript{3}, this gap caused distress for applicants for principalship who were then unsure of the decision-making intentions of the priest, with each priest reacting differently. The rotating nature of appointments of priests also created localised changes in expectations and goals for potential appointees, “when we get a new parish priest we have to find out what he likes” (p. 13).

As well as a communication gap, there seem to be changing goals for Catholic Education as 56\% of the clergy and 37\% of the teachers in his study felt that each has different aims and vision for Catholic schools. Tinsey's (1998) study was conducted in a country diocese similar to that of the focus groups in my study. This suggests that the culture and context of both Tinsey's and this present study might be similar in terms of attitudes of the priests and of the community to women in leadership. He uses the word ‘clergy’\textsuperscript{4} where I will usually use ‘parish priest’.

Shifting governmental legislation creates an illusion of change which affect women more than men, as will be shown later in this chapter. New career paths are available for women but Morrison (1992) found that performance standards can be higher for women than for men. Following his research, Hede (1993) concluded that women tend to be promoted only to the level of their proven

\textsuperscript{3} This is the case in one of the dioceses but in the other two, the parish priest makes his recommendation and the Director of Catholic Education makes the final decision

\textsuperscript{4} In this study ‘clergy’ will be used interchangeably with ‘parish priest’ and sometimes with ‘priest’.
competence and only after they have demonstrated their capacity to perform at a higher level. Men, on the other hand, are assumed to be capable of performing at a level higher than that of their proven competence. This finding impacts on my research if males are promoted more easily than females.

There are changing demands of society with parents being more articulate and diverse in their requests of schools. The rise of education markets where schools compete for students poses another problem. Schools are constantly trying to find their niche. There is a shift from leadership to management. Blackmore's (1996a) research found, “[a]ll principals spoke of their need to be seen to perform to survive in the market. This re-focused their priorities away from educational leadership to management” (p.343). Principals must now attend to the student market, the leadership market, and the teaching market. Blackmore (1996a) showed that these markets are interrelated, interdependent, and often in conflict. This shift to the management aspect could disadvantage females and this is one of the possibilities explored in my research.

Then there are the barriers that are harder to detect. Hede (1993) cited considerable research findings in the paper he gave at the 'Glass Ceiling Forum' in Sydney, 1993. He found that women encounter unseen barriers at every level as they climb the corporate steps. At senior management levels women become highly visible because of their very low representation. This can be a hurdle for women when their style of leadership is different from that of their male counterparts. A subtle barrier, then, is added in the form of a tendency towards
homosocial cloning whereby the predominantly male executives seek to recruit 'someone like us'. Given this, it is not surprising to be told that "the glass ceiling in the Church is pretty low" (Macdonald et al, 1999p. 254). My research has examined just how low this might be. Hed's (1993) research argues that an alternative theory of women in management would be beneficial. He provides the 'sticky steps' metaphor which proposes that women and other minority group members encounter attitudinal and behavioural impediments at every level in management. The effect of this is to restrict managerial performance as well as progression. These impediments are not only invisible but are also often completely undetectable, and they may vary in nature across levels, organisations, sectors, and countries. One of the purposes of this study is to identify these hurdles.

GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

*Equal Opportunity—Policies and Issues*

In the 1980s, federal legislation and institutional policies were introduced into the education sectors and schools with the intention of enhancing the numbers of lay women in leadership. All three systems of Catholic Education in the dioceses studied had begun to face the dilemma of under-representation of women in leadership and were endeavouring to address the situation. One of the strategies they used was to introduce Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Sex Discrimination policies and programmes.

The Affirmative Action Act was introduced nationally in 1986 and Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Sex Discrimination policies were then introduced into Catholic dioceses and schools. Anti-Discrimination
and Affirmative Action legislation were cornerstones of the Government's attempts to create Equal Employment Opportunities for women. Since 1999 the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act applied to all organisations which were previously covered by the Affirmative Action legislation of 1986. Annual reports are now required from organisations with greater than one hundred employees every three years.

A policy on 'Participation of Women in Catholic Education' (in Victoria) was formulated in 1985. It seems that little notice had been taken of its recommendations. As Poiner and Wills (1991) observed, "change is not necessary" (Poiner and Wills, 1991, p. 59) and it seemed that if discrimination was a problem for society, society did not believe that it existed in schools.

In Victoria, in 1993, an 'Affirmative Action in Catholic Schools in Victoria Policy' was promulgated. The same was done in South Australia and in the Wilcannia-Forbes diocese in New South Wales in 1996. The legislation placed responsibility on the employer to review policies and practices and so endeavour to eliminate discrimination in a more systematic way than had been the case previously. Whilst I was visiting schools at that time, it was my observation that it was rare for this implementation to have taken place, and implementation of Equal Opportunity has been marginalised under recent governments. This was in contrast with a strongly centralised direction in government schools where programs could almost be enforced. In some schools, however, policies and programmes were introduced, but, for all the
rhetoric, little changed. This research has explored whether these strategies assisted lay women in achieving principalship.

Poineer and Wills (1991) found that in order for the status quo to be maintained in organisations some people were obstructionist (consciously diverting benefits from flowing to the disadvantaged); others circumvented (getting around the requirements, or following the rules but in such a way as to maintain the bias); or others again, exhibited institutional inertia (not formally resistant but exhausting any such initiatives). These seemingly gender neutral procedures were really exercising inbuilt biases. I have studied these approaches in terms of their inhibiting women from accessing principalships in Catholic Education.

**Gender Equity Strategies**

Liberal feminism has framed most gender equity policies but I argue that the underlying principle of the strategies was premised on the view of women being deficient. In the 1970s the approach was to change women to be more like men, because women were seen to be deficient in that they lacked confidence and specific administrative skills. Gender equity strategies both formulated in the dioceses studied and by individual schools, have concentrated on getting women to upgrade their personal and administrative skills through professional development programs. Others have tried changing selection processes (Chapman, 1986).

In 1996, under the Liberal Government, a 'Women in Leadership Program' was funded by the Victorian Department of Education to encourage and assist
women in applying for principal class positions in government schools with no
similar programme available to women in Catholic schools at that stage. In
research regarding management and organisation, as recommended in the
leaders rarely linked gender reform to changes in teaching and management, so
principals were unlikely to see gender as a priority. It was girls who were
targetted not women.

Even so, my research still had to examine the existing conditions of policy and
legislation development. Bacchi (1990) notes that Affirmative Action has often
been replaced by a general commitment to Equal Opportunity. According to
Bacchi (1990), even Australia's federal legislation contains a double message—
Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act. The argument is that
once a group is targetted as a recipient of Equal Opportunity efforts, all its
members become stigmatised by this label. The same is equally true, if not more
so, of course, of Affirmative Action which, in the popular understanding of the
term, suggests that people who are less deserving or less qualified are given
benefits. Bacchi (1990) goes on to say that what is important is to recognise that
the dominant group in society, white middle-class males, created the categories
of subordination in the first place, shaping the discourse in ways which set
limits on the reform process. In this way they set the stage for this sort of
discrimination. Some women are sceptical about the motivation of the makers
of this legislation in terms of who benefits. Yeatman (1990) argues, "Equal
Opportunity in this context comes to be reframed in terms of what it can do for
management improvement, not in terms of what it can do to develop the
conditions of social justice and democratic citizenship" (p. 341). Such reframing set some of the conditions for my examination.

There is another aspect which was identified in research carried out in the Catholic Church. The notion of women as a wasted resource of leadership was noted in Macdonald et al (1999), “[t]he energy and gifts of so many of our young women today are being lost as a resource for our Church. Many young women continue to be involved in social justice action but see the Church as a joke while it continues to exclude women in ways no longer tolerated by society under Human Rights and Equal Opportunity legislation" (p. 200).

These comments highlight the failure of Equal Opportunity legislation and programmes to produce the types of changes expected by women. Yeakey, Johnston and Adkison (1986) insist, “laws alone will not bring about meaningful change" (p. 139).

My research found that the legislation has failed women in Catholic Education. It has failed them to the extent that it relied on process and merit as being neutral and then on the good will of organisational leaders to implement this. This research has exposed practices which indicate that organisations are not neutral and some leaders do not see inequality as an issue, or oppose it. In addition, my research has taken into account the fact that women may absorb and reflect masculinist cultures when in the position to make change for other women, and consequently there is an unsympathetic response of some female selection panel members towards women applicants. This was described by Poiner and Wills (1991) as the whim of the 'Queen Bees' who were successful
themselves and felt other women could succeed too, without any assistance through policies or programs being introduced (p. 72). Maddock and Parkin (1994) make similar observations, “too often the blocks or resistance to women managers or professional advancement come from other women. There is a clear unspoken division between women who are career-oriented and those more home-oriented” (p. 37). Women in leadership themselves may act to sustain oppressive forces and beliefs. My research has found this to be the case in the dioceses under examination.

**MERIT PRINCIPLE AS A BASIS OF SELECTION**

Burton (1991) is insistent that merit should be the guiding principle for success in accessing positions. She has taken-for-granted assumptions that, "a person's relative merit in relation to a vacant position or a promotional position is commonly understood to be based on their ability, or their capacity to perform the position" (p. 26). In this sense, then, merit is seen as a neutral concept. A later work with others (Burton et al, 1997) explain that under Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) legislation, the merit principle is the basis for selection and promotion decisions:

In the employment context, the concept of merit refers to a relationship between a person’s job-related qualities and those genuinely required for performance in particular positions. The focus of a merit selection process is on what the job applicants possess, by way of skills, experience, qualification and abilities, which are required to achieve the outcomes expected from effective job performance. Job requirements are identified through analysis of the job and are translated into ‘person specifications’ or selection criteria (p. 179).
Yet, "research evidence suggests that men are seen as being more able, as having more natural ability, in many areas than women, or more of the important 'kinds' of ability" (Burton, 1991, p. 26). Therefore, merit cannot be seen as being neutral but rather as a social construct. Burton goes on to argue that further research evidence suggests that "men's good performance is more likely to be attributed to ability and women's to effort" (p. 120). These are based on job descriptions and criteria which tend to value men's qualities more than women's. Ironically, as women have improved their skills and qualifications to compete equally on merit, "the group most disadvantaged by the lack of recruitment on merit had been women" (Cork, 1991, p. 9). It is not surprising that research found that one quarter of the four hundred and eighty-six managers, surveyed in 1990, admitted that other factors (like appearance) were important in their most recent job selection decision (Hede, 1993, p. 7). So laws, policies, and even ability, have limited impact on who gets what job. I have therefore raised the issue of whether the application of liberal feminism has worked for women. Are there other hurdles to be cleared?

Hede (1993) found that:

[D]iscrimination against women has not been eliminated, but rather has gone underground and is still flourishing beneath a veneer of political correctness. There is now a clear disparity between the rhetoric and the reality. Certainly there has been a discursive shift about what is appropriate. Male managers know the 'correct' answers to researchers' attitudinal questions these days. But many are quick to pay lip service to equity and merit values while still practising subtle forms of sex discrimination particularly in job selection and promotion to ensure that the 'right man' gets the job (p. 8).

The change is that we have a rhetoric of opportunity that we did not have before, but the reality is that minimal change has occurred. Another 'hurdle' is that
women have to fight a system that purports for all intents and purposes to give a chance to women, but in fact, this has only served to mask the reality that they cannot win that battle. Previously women knew before they began that this was the case.

Another non-merit situation is that of the 'in-group' in organisations. Wallace (1999) describes this group as having privileged access to certain opportunities. They engage in a form of language (standard English is 'in'; accents are 'out'), mode of dress (suits are 'in'; dashikis are 'out'), and informal social activities (going to the bar after work is 'in'; going home to feed the family is 'out'). This limits the opportunities of those who do not belong to these groups and an even more troubling aspect is that those in the 'out-group' sometimes feel that they must adopt the characteristics valued by the 'in-group' in order to gain access to social benefits (p. 15). Women are affected more in these situations, as is borne out by the stories of the women in this study.

**Grooming, Mentoring and the "Glass Escalator"**

Mentoring and grooming have been listed by authors such as Kram (1985), Gray and Murray (1990) and Murray and Owen (1991) as helpful in assisting applicants, especially male applicants, to achieve principalships. Grooming of potential applicants is exercised often by principals, whereas mentoring occurs mostly between peers.

Williams (1992) uses the concept of the phrase 'the glass escalator' to describe the experience of males in a female dominated occupation. This process contrasts with barriers encountered by women. She records, “[i]n contrast to the
'glass ceiling', many of the men I interviewed seem to encounter a 'glass escalator.' Often, despite their intentions, they face invisible pressures to move up in their professions" (p. 256). According to Williams, grooming did occur but there was almost an automatic progression. "Subtle mechanisms seem to enhance men's position in these professions" (p. 263).

Williams also quoted one male who was told by his professor while studying, “you know, you are really lucky that you're in the profession because you'll really go to the top real quick" (p. 258). In contrast, Sampson (1987) found, “women are not given equally with men the kinds of experiences in schools which are likely to enhance their self-confidence, and that they perceive the reasons for this to be based on discriminatory practices and stereotyped perceptions of men and women" (p. 141).

**Career Paths: Are there new avenues for women?**

Career involves the personal aspect of motivation, the institutions the individuals are associated with, and the societal structures and attitudes of the place and time (Connell, 1985). All three aspects are part of the process of success for applicants. The traditional concept of career is described by Kanter (1990) as a 'corpocratic career' which is a linear progression through defined stages. It is assumed in organisations that this concept of career, built on male experience, is equally appropriate for women. Women are often confronted with 'multiple jobs' and 'flexible work', either by choice or necessity, and have often had breaks in their period of paid work. Women's private lives have a far deeper effect on their career development than on men’s careers. Another invisible
aspect of this discrimination lies in the contradiction between the readiness of school authorities to employ women with the potential to take another break in their employment, and the negative perceptions of the wider community to such broken time or job-sharing.

Limerick (1995) advocates that the women's 'accommodated career' be acknowledged and legitimated as a concept of career as a formal movement from one job to another. She believes that “inflexible requirements and limiting notions of a career should be challenged, adapted and modified to accommodate women’s access” (p. 76) to positions of leadership. Smith (1979) reflects on her experience:

Characteristically for women (as also for others in the society similarly excluded), the organisation of daily experiences, the work routines and the structuring of our lives through time, has been and to a very large extent still is, determined and ordered by processes external to, and beyond, our everyday world. I think I would be by no means alone in seeing in my past not so much a career as a series of contingencies, of accidents, so that I seem to have become who I am almost by chance (p. 151).

Because of this unpredictability women can be further disadvantaged. They are subject to unexpected forces which impede their career paths. Despite shifting structural processes such as legislation, Equal Opportunity policies, and changed attitudes towards women, lay women have not gained entrée to leadership in proportionate numbers, suggesting that this form of structural change is not enough.

A major focus of this thesis is to explore why male teachers are preferred in positions formerly filled by Religious Sisters. This foregrounds the cultures and
practices operating here. I summarise then some of the barriers that exist for lay women seeking to become principals: the changing compositions of staffs, restructuring within schools; the rise of education markets which emphasise the management role of the principal; the communication gap between the parish priest and the principal; the ineffective implementation of Equal Opportunity legislation, and the notion of ‘career’ which benefits males rather than females.

Before these hindrances are explored, Chapter Two outlines the history, context and structure of Catholic Education in which gender is an organising principle. Key concepts that have informed this analysis around how masculinity, religion and authority work, are patriarchy, kyriarchy and hegemony in the Catholic Church. These concepts will frame the analysis.
BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

A brief history of Catholic Education in Australia is necessary at this point, for there have been distinct shifts in the structures, cultures and composition of Catholic schooling since the mid-1800s. The first Catholic school in Victoria commenced in 1839 (Rogan, 2000, p. 3) with the first foundations in the Ballarat Diocese set up along the southern coast of Victoria at Port Fairy and Portland in 1849. Schools were staffed by lay teachers, and school authorities received funding from the government to assist with the payment of salaries. Buildings were the responsibility of the particular non-government system.

Victoria in 1872 saw the introduction of the Education Act. Accordingly, education was to be free, compulsory, secular and under centralised ministerial control. At the same time, Catholic schools would no longer receive funding from the government. Similar Education Acts were enforced in other States at that time. To solve the problem of lack of funds, the bishops, who were Irish clerics, returned home and pleaded with Superiors of Congregations there for more Religious Sisters and Brothers to emigrate to Australia as "nuns and brothers were considerably cheaper" (Selleck, 1985, p.101). Recruitment of Sisters and Brothers from Ireland was very successful. In addition, many young Australian women and men joined the Religious communities of Sisters and Brothers. Fogarty (1957) has plotted this rapid increase in numbers on a graph (p. 280) reproduced as Figure 3 in Attachment 3. In 1910 Religious Sisters outnumbered Priests and Brothers in primary and secondary schools by
approximately ten to one (Kavanagh, 1985). Selleck (1985) maintains that the
contribution of Religious Sisters has been the single most important reason for
the survival of Catholic Education in Australia (p. 103).

**Challenge to the Leadership by Religious Sisters.**

Religious Sisters were principals of schools but some clerics found it difficult to
accept such authority. Bishops had recruited Irish Religious presuming that they
would be submissive to clerical authority. Bishop James Quinn was unable to
cope with a woman holding a position of authority. He insisted (as cited in
Selleck, 1985) that it was "impossible for me to accept the government of a
woman or to have a community of nuns governed by a lady from Adelaide" (p.
103). The lady in question was Mary MacKillop. Nevertheless, Religious were
resilient and continued to staff schools and hold principalships for the next one
hundred years. Religious Congregations carried the responsibility for staffing
primary Catholic schools and appointed their own principals to these schools
without input from parish priests or the local community.

**Comparison with State Education**

Religious women were not restricted by the legislation that was in force in the
State system which, according to Blackmore (1999) "barred women from being
 principals of larger schools" and "reclassified women so that promotion
opportunities disappeared" (p. 27). In that system women were allowed to be
heads of the smallest country schools where no man could be found to take the
position. Religious women and men, however, led Catholic primary schools of
any size and were held in high esteem by the parents. 'Sister/Brother knows
best’ was the catch phrase still heard in the 1950s. This was in contrast to the perception generated by authorities in the state system. Blackmore (1999) says, "the legislative and organisational gate-keeping mechanisms excluding women from leadership established during the late nineteenth century were therefore predicated upon the naturalness of male authority and female unsuitability for authority" (p. 27). In that era the authority of the husband over the wife was translated into the authority of the male teacher over the female teacher. Religious women were in a different category. In many cases they led schools using a matriarchal approach which mirrored the patriarchal mode of operating in the church. Reverend Mother, who was the Sister-In-Charge, was very definitely in control of the organisation. The parish priest would visit the school but it was expected that he would fit in with all the arrangements and lead liturgical ceremonies when asked. He, as parish priest, owned the school, but the Sisters conducted it. They were the educationalists. He was the pastor.

In the 1960s the demise in numbers of Religious began. More Catholic schools were being opened and fewer Religious women and men were available so these principalships were advertised and lay men and women began to be appointed to the role of leader. The parish priest became the employer if the school was owned by the parish. This highlights the dramatic change that occurred following the stability experienced by the Catholic communities for the previous one hundred years when Religious Congregations provided principals. From the 1970s onwards, Governments provided funding for Catholic schools to assist in the payment of teachers’ and principals’ salaries, with school fees
complementing those funds. These schools operated within the framework of the wider church organisation.

**Context and Structure of Catholic Education in Australia**

In order to understand better how lay women are positioned as potential leaders within the Catholic Church, a wider understanding of the nature of church organisation, practices and discourses needs to be developed. Lay women have 'an additional foot', so to speak, in this system. Along with school and family, they have their connection with the Catholic Church to contend with.

Catholic schools cater for 19.7% of the school population in Australia (Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998). The Catholic school is situated within the larger organisation of the Catholic Church. This system of education has several levels—local or parish, diocesan, state and national. At the national level Catholic Education is the responsibility of the Australian bishops through their Episcopal Conference and in particular its Committee for Education. The bishops are advised on matters of national importance by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). The Commission was established in 1974 and is responsible for developing policies and also negotiating with the Commonwealth Government on matters of funding (recurrent and capital) for Catholic schools.

At the state level the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV), established in 1973, has a similar role. It is the over-arching policy-making body
for the four dioceses of Melbourne, Sale, Sandhurst\(^5\) and Ballarat. I found that each diocese has a policy-making board and an executive office. These offices are each led by a Director who is delegated by the bishop to co-ordinate services to schools. Similar structures exist in the dioceses in New South Wales (NSW) and South Australia (SA) in which I conducted my research. All bishops are male, as are the Directors of Catholic Education in each of the dioceses studied. The Catholic Church is a unique organisation in that it reflects a Christian social structuring that was, and still is, formulated by a male hierarchy, which has existed for 2000 years. It is slow to be adaptive to its environment, insisting that it must preserve the tenets handed down to it. It has a system of knowledge that was formulated by a male hierarchy that has transcended centuries, with some women's voices being heard in recent times, but only rarely. This has been my observation and experience.

Following the Second Vatican Council (referred to hereafter as 'Vatican Two') in 1967 it was recorded in the documents emanating from that Council that all baptised persons, not just the ordained male ministers, had access to the truth. Article 29 of a 'Vatican Two' document 'Gaudium et Spes' (Abbott, 1966) stated that "every type of discrimination is to be overcome". Yet thirty years later, the male hierarchy continues to hold on firmly to its pre-'Vatican Two' role of being arbiters of the truth. Chittester (1990) sums up the situation, "we talk only about him, we elect him, we ordain only him, we promote only him. We make him the

\(^5\) Sandhurst is the old name for the city of Bendigo, and the naming of the diocese reflects that fact.
norm and the judge and the power in, and of, and over, all of mankind [sic]" (p. 6).

In his Letter to Women, Pope John Paul II (1996) said, “we must examine the past with courage so that the contributions made by women can be acknowledged and injustice, exploitation and domination can be removed from gender relations within the Church wherever they exist” (p. 17).

Women have been given hope but little change has occurred. Pope John Paul II (cited in Macdonald et al, 1999) wrote three years later:

Women's dignity has often not been acknowledged and their prerogatives misrepresented; they have been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude. This has prevented women from being themselves and it has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity … And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision (p. 367).

The Social Justice Statement, entitled 'Woman and Man—The Bishops Respond' issued by the Catholic Bishops of Australia (2000), calls for increased participation of women in the church (p. 2) and a follow-up committee to be formed (p. 10) to make recommendations to the bishops regarding fuller participation. The question that arises is that of whether the role of women will change. From my journal I note, “it's sad, but understandable, that so many women are cynical about how much change will occur following the establishment of this committee” (October 9, 2000).
Macdonald et al (1999) provided some idea of the human consciousness expressed by some members of the church. These views are manifestations of that consciousness and can also be viewed as networks of subjective meanings or shared frames of reference that organisation members have to varying degrees. They found:

The structures of the Church were seen as male, hierarchical and authoritarian. Each of these characteristics was viewed as oppressive by the great majority of participants who addressed the issue of barriers to women's participation … Issues of patriarchy, sexism, clericalism and exclusive language were frequently mentioned together" (p. 193).

An explanation for this is offered, “historically, women were pushed out of leadership after the Romanisation of the Church in the 4th century. This has created a 1700 year legacy and tradition of male role models in most areas of church leadership” (p. 97).

Women's voices have been heard rarely (Macdonald et al, 1999):

It is an historical fact that mainstream history has been largely men's history. This is true of church history as much as for secular history. The basic problem has been that men rather than women have been the scholars whether in or out of the church. They have generally failed to carry out a gender analysis of their resource material and tended to ignore material that centred mainly on women (p. 19).

Catholic Education is situated within this broad Catholic Church organisation and Catholic schools’ relationship to the church is mediated by the position of the parish priest. This is an aspect of Church organisation that is of major importance as far as my thesis is concerned.
Parish priest: Gate-keeper to Leadership

In the selection process for principalship the parish priest either makes the final decision, as happens in one diocese, or makes his recommendation of his favoured candidate to the Director of the Catholic Education Office in the other two dioceses. He is the ‘gate-keeper’. He fits that pattern described by Stacey (1988) with men being the gate-keepers who decide and limit entry into professions, bureaucracies and union membership. Historically, in education, men have dominated the gate-keeping positions to publication in professional journals, to entry and advancement in academic positions, to policy-making positions in professional organisation and to the definition of subject areas to be taught in departments (Yeakey, Johnston and Adkison, 1986). In the Catholic school these hierarchies are overlaid by the privileging of religious beliefs.

Organisations as Social/Historical Constructs

Because the Catholic Church is an organisation my research has been informed by the work of a number of organisation theorists. Smircich (1983) argues that organisations exist in historical time and physical space. They reflect the social structuring of time and space within their own particular contexts. They are social instruments for task accomplishment, are adaptive organisms existing by the process of exchange with the environment, are systems of knowledge, are patterns of discourse and their forms and practices are the manifestations of unconscious processes. Recent organisational theories considering change have focused on organisational cultures and social practices as powerful ways of understanding organisational life (Burrell, 1992; Angus, 1995; Hargreaves, 1998). Organisations can also be understood and analysed in terms of their expressive
and symbolic aspects, in the existence and naming of sub-cultures as are manifest in terms of subgroups such as women's groups (Women and the Australian Church—WATAC) and male groups (Knights of the Southern Cross—KSC) as well as youth groups (Young Christian Workers—YCW) and others such as Justice and Peace groups.

In the Catholic Church there is much certainty in beliefs for some members. But there is also a strong degree of uncertainty for different groups of members, both female and some males, who are looking for justice. Macdonald et al (1999) found, “the frustration yet persistence of both women and men in trying to stay in the Church despite the Church's treatment of women was evident" (p. 174); and "at this point in time, a striking contrast is evident between the status of women in society and the status of women in the Church" (p. 194).

**GENDER**

I consider gender to be the 'lens' through which this study is to be viewed. Gender is significant because as Kenway (1993) argues, "gender is a phenomenon which helps shape our society" (p. 1). It is important for this study which is focusing on the Catholic Church which is such a male-dominated organisation. Flax (1987) notes, however that, "among feminist theorists there is by no means consensus on such (apparently) elementary questions as: What is gender? (p. 627)". She believes, "the single most important advance in feminist theory is that the existence of gender relations has been problematised. Gender can no longer be treated as a simple, natural fact" (p. 627). She finds the problematising of gender to be a positive move as she believes it fits reality. The central premise of feminism, then, is that gender is a basic organising principle
of all known societies and that, along with race, class and the sheer specificity of historical circumstance, it profoundly shapes and/or mediates the concrete conditions of our lives.

Gendered behaviour is constructed in a dynamic way and may vary according to the given contexts and over time (Itzin, 1995). Females and males have flexible options in their construction of gender rather than assigning such qualities as strong, dependable, dominant, rational, and so on, to the male, and caring, passive, intuitive, nurturing, and so on, to the female. This study argues that it is the authority and particular forms of masculinity that are invested in the priesthood by the Church that imparts to them significant discretionary power. It is the arbitrariness of how this religious/gender power is wielded that produces uncertainty for women seeking leadership.

**Gender Lens**

Even in my position as Director of the Catholic Education Office, let alone as researcher, the metaphor of the 'gender lens' assisted me in identifying the diverse roles in which I was involved. Newman (1995b) captures my experiences of a highly gendered organisation, “the use of the 'gender lens' makes visible the gendered power relations that are normally taken as natural and therefore invisible, and the multiple roles that women play” (p. 237). As well:

Any 'gender lens', then, has to be multifaceted, or prismatic, in order to reflect the perceptions and insights of women who experience patterns of oppression around age, disability, race and sexuality as well as gender. It also has to offer us ways of seeing beyond the boundaries of our own experience by opening
ourselves up to the perceptions of women in other cultures and nations. The different levels of analysis suggest that 'gender' can itself be a problematic concept. The term is used sometimes to represent symbolically differences between masculine and feminine modes of thought and action; sometimes to explore the gendered dimensions of culture; and sometimes to explore the dynamic relationship between actual women and men in organisational life (p. 274).

Many examples of these differences I listed in Chapter One when I related my experiences. Societal and church factors interact for potential applicants for leadership positions. It is my personal experience both as a principal and then as Director, that women, more than men, need to be aware of all factors which make gender significant in the culture of the organisation that I have studied. Women, most often in a subordinate role, as Feminist Standpoint Theory argues, know and experience power differently in male-dominated organisations. That is, they see the fractures and dissonances of organisational life.

In schools, as women step out of their traditional roles as teachers and move into leadership positions, they not only increase their own visibility but also highlight gender as both problem and possibility. This has been further accentuated when lay women have appeared as leaders by replacing Religious women in the male-dominated group of principals.

A woman is caught in a bind when it comes to advancing within the hierarchy. She is required by images, cultures and job descriptions to move toward normative male values and behaviour. But if, as a principal, she conforms too closely to a male norm she is suspect. If she conforms too closely to the female norm she is marginalised (Wallace, 1999, p. 33). She must also manage her
private responsibilities outside her public role. There is a perceived difference between the sexes and this is used as an organising principle which provides mutually exclusive 'scripts' for both men and women. These principles privilege men in the public realm of social activity, and seek to limit women to the private world, as my research has highlighted.

**Gender and Organisational Theory**

Hearn and Parkin (1983) note that organisational theory and sociology has "suffered from a neglect of gender issues" (p. 219). Notions embedded in organisations are themselves patriarchal. This means that a feminist theory of organisations premised as it would be upon a high level of openness becomes almost a contradiction in terms. These authors believe that "[u]ntil those most discriminated against can themselves research and theorise, or at least have their concerns brought more centrally into organisation theory, then the male domination of organisation theory is likely to continue" (Hearn and Parkin, 1983, p. 234). More research is therefore needed to understand better the concerns of groups of women and how organisational schemes oppress them. But, according to my research, it seems not possible that women are able to change the system themselves.

Greenfield (1973) challenged the Theory Movement to accept that people in an organisation 'were' the organisation. At that stage, within that Movement, the participants in the organisation were not perceived in terms of any gender. Yet Wallace (1999) found that people in the organisation, with unequal access to power, both contest and create meaning in the discursive spaces of organisations and that language is the medium for weaving texts of potential transformation in
these spaces. She found that the women in her study were positioned in opposition to male networks of power in educational organisations.

The ideas of 'silence' and 'din' can be applied to the processes of theorising organisations. In simple terms, dominant organisation theories are dins while those that are subordinated or absent are silences (Harlow, Hearn and Parkin, 1995, p. 103). I found their metaphor useful in explaining my situation when I was often unnoticed or disregarded at meetings and I struggled to find a place in the respective group:

Din and silence, silence and din, are part and parcel of the gendered domination of organisation. In a literal sense din includes the sound of imposing voices, interruptions and put-downs as well as the clatter of machinery. Silence might mean absence of noise but it can at the same time be full of significantly meaningful content … In one sense organisations are in constant change, but despite this, some features particularly of domination and oppression appear to remain constant. These relations do not exist without struggle, as domination has to be recursively produced (p. 91).

Silence and din in organisations occur within the context of organisations that are gendered. Along with the constant features there is consistent change as well. This means that not only are silence and din gendered processes but the very fabric, texture and existence of organisations and all aspects of organisation are gendered, including what is changed, how change occurs and with what intent.

Change is a process which takes place on the personal, the organisational, and social institutions levels. Hartsock (1974) says, "we change ourselves and our organisations for the purpose of changing the interlocking structures which
control our lives" (p. 17). Blackmore (1996b) is more challenging, “gender reform is particularly difficult because it requires self-reflection on one's own gender subjectivity and on long-held institutional and personal practices and beliefs. It is about personal change" (p. 12). Shakeshaft (1987) provides a challenge on a macro scale:

All barriers to women in administration are the result … of an androcentric society. To eliminate the barriers one must change the androcentric nature of the culture in which they flourish. To do this, behavioural change in men and women, structural and legal changes in school and society and attitudinal changes in everyone must be achieved (p. 126).

Schmuck (1996) suggests that at the individual level, if educational reform is to occur, "researchers, theoreticians and practitioners must recognise that gender must be considered as a relevant variable in the lives of girls and boys and women and men in schools" (p. 348). This author also noted that, “feminist scholarship and the new scholarship on women in educational administration remain outside of the reform literature" (p. 359). Further research may unveil how men and women react to change. My research seeks to understand better change and resistance and to recommend improvements in policy and practices in the processes for selection of principals and at all levels of Catholic Education.

**Gender-Neutral Representation of Organisations**

Angus's (1993) study of the culture of a Catholic boys' college revealed that, “administration and organisation are represented as being appropriately gender-neutral when, in most cases, they are in fact seen as being unproblematically male" (p. 236). It also, "supports the view that organisational cultures, including
gender regimes, are areas of conflict and not just hegemony. Specifically, gender relations in particular sites and in society cannot be simply assumed but must be continuously reconstituted as part of everyday life" (p. 257). In the case of schools, "education is complicit in confirming and producing the unequal and unjust gendered power relations which constitute society" (Kenway, 1990, p. 65). Blackmore (1995) reminds us too, that the 'gender regime' of a school is not simply a reflection of the gender order of society, but that schools participate in the production of the gender relations in ways that make for their own specificity and that, at the same time, contribute to, and are a result of wider social patterns (p. 245). Within Catholic Education the gender order is significant and is a reflection of the broader setting of the Catholic Church.

Mills (1988), insisting that gender concerns have been almost totally ignored within organisational analysis, gives examples of gender-blind approaches to the study of organisations and argues for the utility of an organisational culture focus for an understanding of gender. He proposes a, "materialist but woman-centred approach as an alternative to existing, functionalist and interpretive accounts of organisational culture" (p. 351). He says that the case for linking gender and culture in the analysis of organisations is a compelling one as gender is culturally determined. "A central characteristic of this process, across various societies, has been an association of female with 'domestic' and male with 'public' spheres of responsibility" (p. 352).

Mills (1988) argues:

[G]ender distributions have, at best, been taken-for-granted and, at worst, recorded through men's accounts of reality … Reality is negotiated or mediated between actors of unequal power—with females disproportionately occupying the weaker negotiating
Gender relationships, therefore, are far from uniform, and the particular character of male-female interactions can only be understood in particular instances in particular institutions and contexts. It is my observation that within that broad pattern there will be many irregularities and tensions, which compound, but do not negate, the prevailing gender order in which there are likely to be various forms of masculine domination (Connell, 1987). No individual male ‘fits’ the images of macho masculinity in leadership. It has also been my experience within Church organizations that largely taken-for-granted views are seen as legitimate and many instances of sexual discrimination and harassment can remain invisible because they appear normal and natural within the prevailing order. These multi-faceted and internally complex notions must be considered as existing within, and contributing to, competing values and discourses in Catholic Education.

In the everyday interactions, within an organisation, the culture is viewed as being primarily composed of a particular configuration of rules, their enactment and resistance within which gendered relationships are embedded and manifest. In schools, gender differences are both generated and are the means by which such differences are experienced or challenged. The National Catholic Education Commission (1997), in its statement on Gender Equity, notes, “gender constructs largely underpin the social construct of home, school, the work environment, the Church and society in general” (p. 2). This is the underpinning and the experience for women and men in the Catholic Church.
Mills (1988) links the interaction of gender and organisational culture when he notes that people do not leave their cultural perspective at the gates of the organisation.

Organisations thus shape and are shaped by their members. Mills (1988) asks, “given that understandings of reality are shaped by and within organisation, to what extent do organisational processes maintain and develop a person's identity?” (p. 356). This is just another of the questions that my research has tackled.

**Identity**

Gender identity or subjectivity is simultaneously constructed and also ongoing, contested and unfinished. Connell (1987) believes that gender relations weave, thread and loop their way through layer upon layer of the social and the psychic. Whitehead and Moodley (1999) found that the majority of their interviewees thought that gendered subjectivities, gender relations in the workplace and prevalent ideologies about gender roles were all important either in shaping their work as managers or in affecting how others regarded them and behaved towards them. For their interviewees, both the kinds of power relations within which they were positioned and their resistances to managing in particular ways were seen to be strongly influenced by gender. This was not only because the interviewees themselves saw gender as a political issue, but also because it was perceived that others operated on the basis of certain kinds of stereotypes or were defending particular conceptions of masculinities in their behaviour.
towards women managers. Women in Catholic Education would probably feel the same. Hede (1993) believes that:

The feminist call for women to 'stand in their power' may not completely eradicate the deeply ingrained inferiority beliefs that many of today's female managers would have absorbed during a lifetime of what may be called 'patriarchal conditioning'. Most women over thirty-five in the Australian workforce would have grown up in a society that generally accepted such beliefs as 'a woman's place is in the home' and 'only men can run a large organisation'. Although women can readily reject such beliefs at the conscious rational level, they may still experience doubts at an unconscious irrational level. According to some psychologists, this patriarchal conditioning may be manifested in the form of overly strong self-criticism by some women (p. 9).

There is pressure on women who do progress in management to adopt this masculine value system. Women accept values which include those of their own subordination. But then it was my experience that not all women (especially younger feminists) accept their own subordination. This may then influence the reaction of women on interview panels. Some succumb to the pressures and effects of domination, others reject it (Macdonald, 1999). My own experience and that of the research participants, foregrounds issues between patriarchy, a system of female subordination, and Catholicism.

**Patriarchy in Society and in the Catholic Church**

Lerner (1986) argues that the establishment of patriarchy was not one event but a process developing over a period of nearly 2500 years from 3100 to 600 BCE (p. 8). The system of patriarchy is also an historic construct. It sees the world in terms of oppositions based not on equality but subordination. Aristotle fixed women in a status less than human and, as Lerner (1986) points out, his misogynist construction has remained virtually unchallenged and endlessly
repeated for nearly 2000 years (p. 6). In the second century Tertullian (as cited by Lerner, 1986), described Eve as, "the devil's gateway" (p. 140). The Paulist second century tradition which reinforces this misogynist attitude was regarded as apostolic.

Following this period much of the context of patristic teaching from the third to the fifth century CE, was designed to convince men and women that rationality was a natural ability reserved for men while women were pre-ordained to educated ignorance and intellectual dependency (Lerner, 1986, p. 65). Jerome instructed that women would only be saved if they became men at death. John Chrysostom (345-407 CE) commented, “among all savage beasts, none is found so harmful as woman". Augustine believed women were not in the image of God as men are, but were rather a source of sin. He was influenced by Aristotelian thinking which defined women as inferior to men and insisted that the woman was created chiefly as an aid to reproduction whereas the male was created with superior capacity for knowledge and with a rational soul (Johnson, 1999). Aquinas' theology is based on Aristotelian thought also and his Thomastic or Scholastic theology is used currently as the basis for study in seminaries where priests are trained. Byrne (1988) quotes Aquinas, “the image of God is found in the man, not in the woman, for man is the beginning and end of the woman" (p. 6).

Johnson (1999) explains why the implicit inferiority of women is often taken-for-granted by Christians. Maleness has been dignified by theologians as the only genuine way of being human, thus making Jesus' embodiment as male an
ontological necessity rather than an historical option. Jesus' maleness had been so interpreted that he has become the male revealer of a male God whose full representative (Pope and Priest) can only be male. This relegates women to the margins of significance. This theology has importance for my research as it raises questions as to how it has affected the way women feel and are treated and how priests view women as leaders.

An examination of western social systems suggests that society is riddled with patriarchal assumptions. Code Napoleon (which was supported by the Catholic Church) and enacted in 1804, stated that married women and children along with the insane and criminals, were classified as politically incompetent. Lerner points out that among other things the Code forbade women to attend public meetings (Lerner, 1986, p. 278). As a result of this historical development of the assumption of female subordination and inferiority, there emerged two symbolic constructs which assume the existence of two kinds of human beings. On this assumption educational deprivation of women became justified (Lerner, 1986, p. 211). So did access to privileges. Institutions denied women equal rights. Yet the fact that the patriarchal family has been amazingly resilient (Lerner, 1986, p. 211) is due, in part, to the fact that the system can function only with the co-operation of women. This co-operation is secured by a variety of means. McLean (1997) reminds us that "patriarchy is about generational as well as gendered power differences. It is the 'rule of the fathers' over the sons as well as over women" (p. 63). Control over the symbol system took two forms—educational deprivation of women and male monopoly on definition giving a woman's experience of herself as defined by male expectations. Because males
have also written our theologies, women have inherited statements which have
denied and distorted their experiences and these theologies continue in the
Catholic Church and its schools.

Ramsay (1992) coined the term 'linguistic omission' for the absence of language
that accurately and adequately describes women's experiences. This linguistic
omission contributes to the construction of women's oppression and
simultaneously prevents any protest against oppressive processes as their voices
are not heard. A salient consideration for my research.

The Catholic Church is a patriarchal institution and sees its authority as derived
from that. Ebert (1988) sees patriarchy as a signifier, a cultural construct and not
a biological or natural feature (p. 21). It is a concept used to attempt to grasp the
mechanisms by which men, in general, manage to dominate women, in general.
Women as women can only be liberated from patriarchy through a struggle to
change the system as system (Cockburn, 1991, pp. 7-8). Because there is a
societal domination by men lots of patriarchies exist simultaneously, albeit over-
lapping and inter-relating. Weiner (1994) views the workings of patriarchy in
terms of plurality and diversity rather than unity or consensus (p. 63). Similarly,
feminists have argued that "the state is historically patriarchal, patriarchal as a
matter of concrete social practices. State structures in recent history
institutionalise the European equation between authority and a dominating
masculinity; they are effectively controlled by men; and they operate with a
massive bias towards heterosexual men's interests " (Connell, 1990, p. 535).
State authority works on bureaucratic rationality; church authority on biblical
and theological tenets. Patriarchy is implicit in much of the language of Catholicism, but also in daily practices, not least of which pertains to the appointment of principals in its schools.

Language Use

The appropriation and prohibition of certain language as a means of social control and political oppression has been used to these ends for a long time. Every language reflects the prejudices of the society from which it evolved. English evolved through most of its history in a male-centred, patriarchal society. Groome (1991) has shown that the Hebrew word 'adam' is 'earth creature' with no sexual identification yet the adamic myth is usually translated to legitimate male superiority. Many biblical texts are incorrectly translated. For example, 'not on bread alone does man live' should be 'not on bread alone does a person live' as the Greek word 'anthropos' (= person) is the word used in the text. Yet inclusive language is still not mandatory in the Catholic Church even though many women find this offensive.

Groome (1991) insists that there is no historical warrant for gender-exclusive language being used to maintain that the male is superior. Old English (500-1000) and Middle English (1100-1500) were more inclusive than modern English, for example 'wif' and 'win' were used for woman and man, and man was not used to mean humankind (p. 9). In 1746, however, Kirby's Eighty-eight Grammatical Rules included Rule Twenty-one which used man as more generic or more comprehensive than female and insisted that its superiority as the norm should be reflected in language. In 1850 the English parliament pronounced that
"he" legally stands for "she" (Groome, 1991, p. 10). Thus, our allegedly generic but androcentric language was man-made and made to man's advantage. It was literally man-made as all grammarians and parliamentarians were men. Women were excluded from such professions.

Inclusive language is still not mandatory in the Catholic Church. Many women find this offensive. The use of non-inclusive language in the new 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' (1994) accentuates the exclusion of women. 'Man' is used twenty-three times on the first page of the document (p. 1). "Because language is so powerful we include or exclude people in the way we use it" (Byrne, 1988, p. 9). The National Board of Women in England (as cited in Catholic Woman) stated, “[f]ailure to use inclusive language is seen as, at best, insensitive, and at worst, a sign of the wish to continue treating women as second class members of the church" (Catholic Woman, 1994, p. 4). Macdonald et al (1999) argue, “language reflects reality. Language makes meaning. The language we use tells us and others something about our values" (p. 202). Non-inclusive language is also a feature of some concern to me personally, shown in a comment from my journal, “the non-inclusive language used at the funeral irked me" (November 28, 1996). The pattern of language used is inconsistent with some parishes beginning to recommend inclusive language and others ignoring it. It is this inconsistency that becomes problematic for applicants for principalships and especially for women when they feel that they are the 'other' due to exclusivity of language.
Woolf (1977) using a powerful metaphor in 'Three Guineas', believes the power of patriarchy is a sort of 'metaphysical cannibalism' which feeds upon female energy, intelligence and labour force in order to sustain the monuments of masculine power. Women experience this 'cannibalism' in varying degrees. All these conceptualisations from the literature have provided me with a rich source of thought to draw upon in my own research.

**Kyriarchy**

An additional dominating structure to be considered in my thesis is that of kyriarchy. Patriarchy is usually identified as a binary sex-gender system. Schussler-Fiorenza (1992), however, believes that this dominating power not only acts along the axis of gender but also along the axes of race, class, culture and religion. She calls this power, kyriarchy, and she describes it as a complex pyramidal political structure of domination and subordination (p. 115). According to her, these axes of power form interlocking systems of oppression. For women in the Catholic Church the effect of patriarchy is then at least doubled. Using the framework of kyriarchy, a map of systems of oppression can be worked out from the kyriarchal social pyramid. She coined the term "women church" (p. 123) as a counter term to patriarchy and kyriarchy. This "women church" is a site of feminist struggles for transforming societal and Religious institutions, not just struggling for equal rights in order to become masculine. In such a site, women struggle in order to achieve the rights, benefits and privileges of equal citizenship which are legitimately theirs but which are denied to them by the patriarchal and kyriarchal regimes of western societies and Religious institutions (p. 129). At the same time, Lee (1995) is carrying out analysis to try
to find the underlying root or cause of patriarchy believing that gender discrimination usually operates in conjunction with other forms of discrimination and exploitation (p. 42). Between the works of these two scholars I have found much to inform my work.

I have found that in my sample, women often take up the challenge to endeavour to change the culture. It is not, and will not be, an easy task as Wainwright (1991) reminds us, “tension and ambiguity must be embraced if we are to move our contemporary churches and society beyond patriarchy” (p. 357). Ferguson (1984) and Braidotti (1991) agree with Wainwright and believe that women are now emerging individually from the darkness where patriarchal thought had confined them. Gunew (1991) presents the history of women in the Catholic Church as being that of a long struggle (p. 260).

The concept of kyriarchy decentres the epistemic privilege of gender. Thus, western churches are patriarchal because elite, propertied, educated men determine relations of power. Only if patriarchy/kyriarchy is understood as a complex historically changing system of domination can the church and its organisations be transformed. Kyriarchy refers to elite, male systems of ruling or modes of practices that characterise the power relations of contemporary capitalism and patriarchy. These relations are complex, dynamic organised practices that involve the dominant material forms of Western culture—bureaucracy, management, institutions and texts. They infect cultural practices at multiple sites, the least of which is our subjectivity. The importance of kyriarchy is that it can see power as a multi-faceted system of interlocking
oppressions rather than as a dualism between two genders. Its metaphor is a pyramid of hierarchies rather than two opposing sides. This is particularly challenging for white western feminist discourses which have conceptualised the oppression of women in a dualistic patriarchal framework of difference and equality, and for me in pursuing my research along such lines.

A dilemma emerges. Are practices of patriarchy and kyriarchy diminishing when women continue to embrace them and defend their place in them? Tong (1992) says that:

> [T]hrough conditioning, men usually secure the apparent consent of the women they oppress. They do this through institutions such as the academy, the church and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalise a sense of inferiority to men ... To survive in patriarchy she had better ‘act feminine’, or else she may be subjected to a variety of cruelties and barbarities (p. 96).

This is what Gramsci (1971) calls manufacturing consent or 'hegemony'. The problematic aspect for women is that each male exercises patriarchy in his own way and women are never sure how this manifestation will present itself.

Aristotle had taught that men are to participate in the public sphere and women are to be relegated to the private sphere of the household and this relationship has remained ubiquitous for the last two thousand years. In 2001, however, in Australia, women are no longer confined to the bounds of a domestic mode of production, and have considerable access to the public economic sphere. They are now doubly oppressed, in the home and in the workplace, and often triply oppressed if they are in the Catholic Education system where patriarchy/kyriarchy operates consciously and unconsciously, systemically and
ideologically. It is my observation that patriarchy has become a principle of social organisation in which the power of the father was replaced by the power of the state and the economy (Lerner, 1986). What was previously justified by reference to tradition was now justified in the name of science and economic progress.

While the term 'patriarchy' is problematic, it nevertheless points to the fact that there is a power imbalance in gender relations. Furthermore, it suggests that this imbalance is generalised throughout society and, in particular, in education.

Riehl and Lee (1996) quote Blackmore as saying that:

[T]he culture of school administration in Australia is masculine and hegemonic, based on such familiar images as the benevolent patriarch and the rational man. She argues that when women first entered teaching, they violated the traditional dichotomy between men's public lives and women's private lives. This contradiction was resolved by assigning to women the emotional tasks associated with teaching and nurturing, while men displayed discipline, authority and rationality as administrators (p. 900).

Patriarchy, however, is not a law of the unconscious. It is a law of society and its effects both there, and in the Catholic Church, are felt acutely. The fact that increasing numbers of women are employed in professional and managerial jobs does not mean that organisations are any less patriarchal than they used to be. Because women work closely with their patriarchal oppressors, they have been especially subjected to layers of myths about their nature and that of the society in which they live. Spender (1983b) regrets that the cumulative effects of patriarchy and the efforts of women who have tried to counteract their oppression have never been documented because women have been silenced. She wonders why:
[D]idn't I know about women of the past who have protested about male power—[why? Because] patriarchy doesn't like it. These women and their ideas constitute a political threat and they are censored. By this means women are 'kept in the dark', with the result that every generation must begin virtually at the beginning and start to forge the meanings of women's existence (1983, p. 13).

This is indeed the case for the women whose stories I have gathered, as their ‘silencing’ is reflected in their stories.

**Hegemony**

Another way of describing what underpins the culture and the exercise of power of the Catholic Church is to use Gramsci's (1971) term 'hegemony'. According to Gramsci 'hegemony' appears to have two meanings. It refers to a process within civil society whereby a fundamental class exercises control through its moral and intellectual leadership over allied classes, and also the relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. Giroux (1981) explains it this way:

Hegemony involves the successful attempt of a dominant class to utilise its control over the resources of state and civil society, particularly the mass media and the educational system, to establish its view of the world as all inclusive and universal. Through the dual use of force and consent (and with consent as more prevalent), the dominant class uses its political, moral, and intellectual leadership to shape and incorporate the "taken-for-granted" views, needs, and concerns of subordinate groups. Hegemony is rooted in both the meanings and symbols that legitimate dominant interests as well as in the practices that structure daily experience. In schools, as in other institutions, the production of hegemonic ideologies 'hides' behind a number of legitimating forms with the claim by the dominant classes that their interests represent the entire interests of the community (p. 17).
Voices of the dominant then, do not necessarily represent women's interests. Weiler (1988) advocates counter-hegemonic strategies which might prove useful to those struggling to improve the quality and purpose of education in order to produce a more just, radical and democratic society. She defines hegemony as an organising principle or world view that is, "diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialisation into every area of life" (p. 14). This sense of hegemony as control leads to individuals being shaped through hegemonic ideas and historical circumstances. She believes counter-hegemony then implies a more critical theoretical understanding and is expressed in organised and active political opposition. She goes further to say, “the work of conscious feminists is important in building counter-hegemony" (p. 54).

Weiler (1988) reflects that it is the internalisation of a male hegemony that leads women to devalue their own worth and to assume that the career of a man is more important than their own. She made women her focus in her study, as she wanted to reveal ways in which a feminist counter-hegemony is being struggled for in education. Giroux and Freire (in Weiler, 1988) in their introduction to her book observe that, "Weiler is not content to work solely within the language of domination, she also wants to stress the ways in which dominant social forms are contested, resisted and overcome" (p. ix). Weiler wants women to recognise the value and importance of doing what is possible, in the struggle against the forces of opposition even if their impact seems to be small. She says that, "by recognising the limits of what is possible teachers (and all of us) should recognise the value and importance of doing what is possible" (p. 153).
In this study the identification of hurdles may be one way of 'doing what is possible' to counter hegemonic practices particularly in the selection process for principals in Catholic schools. Again, I quote from my journal, “a friend observed that he thought I experienced hegemony at all levels in my work. I had to agree ” (February 8, 1997).

Summing up then, patriarchy and kyriarchy are the concepts of patterns of domination of men over women (Lerner, 1986). Hegemony and its practices are the successful attempts that allow the dominant class to exercise their control over the total group. Their interests become the norm for the entire community (Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971). And it was these dominating practices that I experienced.

**Hegemonic masculinity**

In my study of a male-dominated, hierarchical organisation, a discussion of hegemonic masculinity is central. In Connell's (1995) terms, “hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77). Hegemonic masculinity is used primarily to maintain power and unconsciously and consciously, involves a specific strategy for the subordination of women. Donaldson (1993) argues that while centrally connected with the institutions of male dominance, not all men practise it though most benefit from it. He goes on to say that hegemony is about the winning of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in that process—the ways in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its
domination. Women in the Catholic Church know what the practices of hegemonic masculinity feel like. As one woman in Desmarchelie's (1999) study said, "I would really like the church to realise that we live in a male/female world" (p. 56).

Hegemonic masculinity is useful in explaining the situation in which lay women find themselves in Catholic Education where domination by males is perpetuated. A ruling group dominates and through its principles and arrangements it produces what comes to count as, "the way it is" (Hennessy, 1993, p. 76). In such a context, women lack ongoing energy, and take the line of least resistance. As was mentioned in Chapter One, in my position as Director, I often conserved my energy in discussions on minor matters so that I could be more effective when important issues were tabled. Understanding how hegemonic masculinity works in specific contexts, such as rural schools and parishes, is strategically important. Donaldson (1993) notes that, “the most influential agents are considered to be: priests, journalists, advertisers, politicians, psychiatrists, designers, playwrights, film makers, actors, novelists, musicians activists, academics, coaches. These people regulate and manage gender regimes” (p. 646). And Catholic Education is one of those regimes with parish priests as key figures.

In Catholic Education women are endeavouring to overcome the hurdles they experience personally. Hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy and kyriarchy maintain dominance by claiming authority. Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that, "the Catholic Church has maintained its sway, not by strategic planning
systems or middle managers but by having one of the strongest cultures ever created—rich in rituals, ceremonies, stories, mythologies, heroes (and heroines) for people to identify with in day-to-day living" (p. 195).

The link between the Catholic Church and its schools is problematic as hegemonic masculinity may or may not be practised as overtly in the schools as it is in the church setting. The church remains stable. Schools are more influenced by society. Consequently, tension is produced and unpredictability ensues. Applicants for leadership positions could then be caught in this fault line.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) describe culture as "the way we do things here" (p. 4). They say that this provides stability, and fosters predictability for staff and students as it defines how people are to act most of the time within the core beliefs, traditions and history, symbols, and patterns of behaviour. It is learnt by being a member of a particular group, but the difficult aspect to this is that depending on the parish priest 'the way we do things here' changes when a parish priest is moved away and new learnings need to occur. Tinsey (1998) highlighted the fact that each time a new priest came to the parish the staff had to find out what he liked. More particularly, they had to find out for how long the 'way we do things' was stable? This is just another dimension of the 'hurdles changing'—and it has serious implications for the culture of individual schools.

A description of organisational culture that is largely unproblematised is that of the manipulative, managerial tradition. This tradition and the practices of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand. At first glance it would seem that the
culture in the Catholic Church and Catholic Education would operate solely out of this tradition. But each parish is a separate entity and so the parish priest and community have the potential to operate differently.

Culture is essentially composed of a number of understandings and expectations that assist people in making sense of life. It is a living phenomenon through which people create the worlds in which they live. As Bates (1986) says:

quote Culture gives meaning to life. The beliefs, languages rituals, knowledge, conventions courtesies and artefacts—in short the cultural baggage of any group are the resources from which individual and social identity are constructed. Part of this baggage is factual. Another part … is mythical. It is not concerned with facts but with meaning (p. 55).quote

It is highly problematic as organisational culture is always in the state of movement. Weeks (1989) says, "people, like the culture itself, are in as constant state of becoming" (p. 36). In the case of schools, Greenfield (1973) advises:

quote What many people seem to want from schools is that schools reflect the values that are central and meaningful in their lives. If this view is correct, schools are cultural artifacts that people struggle to shape in their own image. Only in such forms do they have faith in them; only in such forms can they participate in them (p. 570).quote

This reinforces the fact that in each parish, and consequently in each school, the culture is different, constantly shifting and being constructed and reconstructed—a dilemma for applicants for principalship.

**Cultures of Catholicism**

The traditional view of Catholic schools dating from the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century was that they were primarily ecclesiastical
institutions concerned with the handing on of the Catholic faith. This was the expectation of the parish community. But in recent years, in schools, it would be my observation as I visited schools that contest occurs over the construction and assertion of cultural forms rather than the culture always being imposed or bequeathed from the past.

Staff and parents in school communities may stifle change if they insist that the white male system is the culture for both society and in the church—if it is perceived as the only one that exists, is innately superior, knows and understands everything and is totally logical and objective (Wilson-Schaef, 1992). The strong cultural identity of the Catholic Church is both its strength and a weakness. For those in authority, reproduction of traditional practices can give security, but for others, the culture can be oppressive. Often men generate a masculine culture in and around their work. This makes women feel "[they] are out of place here" (Cockburn, 1991, p. 65). This shapes female perceptions of leadership and aspirations as well.

**Culture Breakdown**

In some places culture is often expressed as resistance to change. Panic and/or fear can be experienced during times of uncertainty. There is a typical reaction when organisational change challenges cultural and taken-for-granted behaviours. Fear and resistance can surface. As Arbuckle (1996) predicts, people react, or act out, and try to keep some aspects of the previous culture alive. When culture breaks down three parts are lost. First of these are the symbols—the feeling relationship to meaning. Secondly, there is the loss of
myth—truth that is so powerful to the people who believe it. Thirdly ritual—the way we used to do things is lost. In general terms there is an initial unease, a breaking down of trust and nostalgia and grieving for the past order, the assumed Golden Age. Anger may even appear. Then after disorientation the new order is taken on and integration and confidence need to be regained after passing through the liminal stage.

Arbuckle (1996) insists that this progression is not linear but cyclical. Participants are often at different stages in the cultural shift and they also can regress into old patterns as they seemingly progress from one position to another. Confusion and conflict in the Catholic Church occur between those who follow particular typologies. Restorationist groups can emerge. Arbuckle (1996) also considers that they can be fearful, confused and disempowered as well as being closed to dialogue, secretive and not encouraging of creativity but reiterative of patriarchal values.

Changes in the patterns of leadership in Catholic primary schools would be sufficient reason for such reactions to occur. Parishioners are uncertain of how their schools will function once the Religious Sisters are no longer the leaders. This raises issues of authority and what counts as authority in the church and educational leadership.

**Authority in the Catholic Church**

Firstly Jones (1993) provides a clear definition of the exercise of authority in western society:
The standard analysis of authority in modern Western discourse begins by defining authority as a set of rules governing public life issued by those who are entitled to speak. In these terms an authority is someone who is 'official,' (occupies a public, professionalised role recognised as having the capacity to issue rules), 'knowledgeable,' (has knowledge that meets certain epistemic criteria for issuing rules), 'decisive,' (possesses singularity of will and judges dispassionately so that the rules will be enforced), and 'compelling,' (constructs political obedience to the rules ordering public life through institutionalised hierarchy). In other words, those who are 'in authority' are perceived as being so because they exhibit characteristics of office, knowledge, judgement, and will associate objectively and formally with the practice of ruling (pp. 103-4).

Jones (1993) also considers, "what we construe as being in authority, and acting authoritatively, has depended upon representations of authoritativeness that privilege masculinity—male bodies and masculinised knowledge and practices" (p. 81).

Like Jones (1993), the interest of the study is with the broader philosophical question of what our understanding of the meaning of being 'in authority' becomes. What conceptualisation and practices of rulership and legitimacy do we sustain when we limit our analysis of being 'in authority' to accepted constructions of the four characteristics listed above. In western political thought, office, knowledge, judgement, and command have been connected more immediately to masculine than to feminine modes of being and action so those 'in authority' will most likely be male.

The traditional form of authority in the Catholic Church is legitimated as a consequence of the operation of the concept of patriarchy/kyriarchy/hegemony and percolates through particular hegemonic masculinities. This exercise of
authority as a traditional male hierarchy makes some sense when people accept on faith the need for an ordered, efficient social system. If authority is a set of rules governing a particular system then a person in authority is someone who is official, knowledgeable, decisive, and compelling, according to Jones (1993).

In the Catholic Church this is certainly the case. Then the evolution of patriarchy from the traditional form of "the right of fathers to rule to the right of men to rule" (Jones, 1993, p. 43) follows as a consequence. In the Catholic Church the Pope speaks as the official, knowledgeable, decisive and compelling leader. Macdonald et al (1999) noted that some women accepted the treatment they received from members of the hierarchy as a 'given' and prided themselves in being loyal to the Church. Others commented that, "[o]ur parents may have accepted that situation, but my generation will not" (p. 92).

Loyalty in the Church is different from loyalty in other organisations. Patriarchal attitudes and traditions which failed to reflect the vision of the gospel in the context of the modern world were cited as the fundamental barriers to women's participation in the study carried out by Macdonald et al (1999).

According to Jones (1993) Weber found that, "bureaucracy and patriarchalism share one important characteristic, even though they are antagonistic in many other respects. Their common characteristic is that they are rooted in continuity" (p. 114). The Vatican bureaucracy exhibits continuity in authority when it wields a heavy rod over all members of the Church, but especially over women, by making decisions for them on matters that control their lives and, in particular, their bodies. One man from Queensland was aware of the heavy
burden imposed on women regarding birth control. "While women are not part of the decision which controls their lives, there can be no justice" (Macdonald et al, 1999, p. 87).

In the traditional sense, one of the signs of being in authority is the ability to articulate universal and impartial rules that replace order with disorder. This discourse on rule-making normalises authority as a distant dispassionate and disciplinary gaze. Such a discourse secures authority by opposing it to emotive connectedness and compassion. Within this discourse authorities order existence through general rules. Actors and actions are deified by these rules.

A fixation on rules and regulations, a rigid and unbending manner, and a lack of compassion and openness to dialogue were frequently cited characteristics by Macdonald et al (1999) of a Church in need of renewal in the survey quoted above. The negative attitude towards women on the part of some clergy, especially parish priests, was also experienced as a significant obstacle to participation in church activities (p. 194).

The other way for women to act is to be compliant or to collude. Casey (1995) explains this process of collusion:

The option of collusion, of which there are basically two types, 'compulsive' and 'passive', is characterised by compliance, dependence, ambition, manipulability. Passive colluders manifest most of the characteristics of the compulsive colluder without the former's intensity and vigor. They comprise largely an older cohort, including retired employees, who committed themselves at an earlier time and have remained identified with the corporation ... Passive colluders expressed little awareness of the possibility that anything about the company might be different from the way it is. Unlike the compulsive colluders who can consider, however momentarily, a critical view, the passive
colluders are uniformly disinclined to express contrary views or to imagine divergent possibilities (p. 173).

Passive and compulsive colluders are present in the Catholic Church and in the community associated with a school. They are, then, potential members of interview panels for principalship. My journal showed that I found myself colluding on occasions. "I went along with all the propositions today. I'm tired of fighting" (December 8, 1997). Do other women oscillate between collusion and action for equality?

Due to the decentralisation of employment, the parish priest holds the authority. Decisions regarding principalships are made at the local level. To position this concept within my research, I would point out that the influence of the parish priest, usually a non-educationalist, and members of the local community (who may also not be educationalists) on the interviewing panel, are causes of unpredictability for applicants. A complicated set of relationships can result about lay/religious and religious/educational authority, where educational authority is legitimated through professional expertise.

It has been suggested by participants in Macdonald et al (1999)'s research that Religious women have traditionally been seen to have more authority in the Church than lay women.

Historically lay women have tended to see women religious as leaders in the Church. They have seen them as having easier access than lay women to the hierarchical administration of the Church and as having the resources and support of their religious congregation on which to draw. Women religious have acted as pioneers in many fields of ministry in the Church and prepared the way for lay women (p. 30).
But this preparation has often not resulted in lay women achieving principalship. It may seem logical to think that lay women would have replaced Religious women when principalships became available but statistics show an increase in numbers of males appointed. Figure 4 (see Attachment 4) shows that between 1987 and 1999, of the extra 79 lay principals that were employed as replacements for Religious women, only 22 were lay females. This issue, after all, is a central theme of this study.

**Authority and Emotions**

Another aspect of authority is its association with masculine rationality. Traditional organisational literature perpetuated the fiction that emotions have no place in bureaucratic practices. Yet schools are organisations where emotions are expressed constantly. The Latin origin of the word 'emotion' is 'emovere: to move out, to stir up'. When people express emotions they are stirred up by their feelings. Emotions are dynamic parts of ourselves and whether they are positive or negative, all organisations, including schools in this research, are full of them. Boler (1999) lists the conceptions of emotions which are linked to the dominant discourses of emotions, “the pathological, rooted in medicine and science; the rational, rooted in the Enlightenment philosophy of the Man of Reason; and the religious, rooted in conceptions of channelling passions in an appropriate manner" (p. 8). In Catholic schools, the rational and religious conceptions dominate. There has been a shift in thinking about emotion as public rather than simply private. This "allows us to glimpse the relationship between social control, hegemony, and emotions" (Boler, 1999, pp. 6-7). Also:
Emotion has most often been theorised as a 'private', 'natural', and individual experience that is 'essentially' located in the individual. Despite the increasing embrace of emotions over the last two decades as socially constructed, the view of emotions as individualised is deeply embedded in our language and conceptual frameworks (p. 5).

The emotional work of education is another aspect of this study and in particular in relation to leadership.

**Emotion and Leadership**

In recent years research has been carried out on emotion and leadership—Sachs and Blackmore (1998), Blackmore (1996a), Hargreaves (1995) and Court (1995). A study of a group of women principals in primary and secondary schools in Queensland, carried out by Sachs and Blackmore (1998) found that leadership, in times of change, is a highly emotionally-charged activity. Women in these positions were, "involved in a variety of ways of coping with and negotiating the ambiguity of the everyday experience of living educational restructuring" (p. 267). They found also that, "the expectations of the community made these women's jobs even more difficult, in particular, sexist attitudes prescribing the manner in which they were expected to behave and the general way in which they should be treated" (p. 267).

Gender and emotions were intertwined. Blackmore (1996a) expresses the dilemma in this way:

Leadership, particularly in a period of rapid change, is about emotion—desire, fear, despair, caring, disillusionment, pain, anger, stress, anxiety, and loneliness. They point to how organisational and personal change is about understanding the emotional investments of different individuals and groups in
changing (or not changing). Yet these are the aspects of leadership which tend to be neglected, played down, even denigrated in the literature, largely because emotionality has been cast in opposition to, and lesser than, rationality, in higher gendered ways" (p. 346).

As Blackmore (1996a) found from another piece of research, “the women principals in these projects were therefore faced with both managing their own and other people's anxiety" (p. 346). Then if you wanted to succeed, "being in control of your feelings and emotions was important if you wanted to be taken seriously in the job and if you were to be rewarded by promotion" as Sachs and Blackmore (1998) found. They quoted one of their principals as saying that 'they think I'm an iron lady, that nothing has affected me' (p. 271).

Because emotions that men show are aligned with strength and aggression, men are advantaged. Blackmore (1996a) argues, "[m]odes of masculinity closely identified with rationality, control and authority" (p. 342) are equated with strong leadership whereas the display of the 'soft' emotions is not acceptable. In general, "women in traditional positions are faced with the dilemma of balancing rationality, as demanded by institutional norms, and the affective dimension of emotionality" (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998, p. 268). As they expressed it, even in religious terms, "[i]n daily life rationality is seen to be a virtue and revered while emotionality is seen to be an encumbrance and reviled" (p. 268).

The culture of the Catholic Church, dominated by males in the key hierarchical positions, reinforces such observations. Therefore, women applicants are in a precarious position. They are in a double bind. In some people's eyes they are
judged as 'women' with certain characteristics, but also as people who aspire to be leaders. They have to live up to the images of womanhood and also have the qualities required of managers or leaders. If some bring special emotional and communication skills to the workplace others can also be castigated if they do not do so. Blackmore agrees:

[W]hile all principals are expected to do the emotional labour of the self-managing school as it goes to market, women principals are more vulnerable to the exigencies of the market and emotions. At the same time, economics positions emotions in opposition to the 'rational' processes of the market, yet 'the market' relies for its very existence upon exploiting emotions such as greed and desire, pleasure and envy (Blackmore, 1996a, p. 348)

I would argue with Blackmore (1997) that more theorising on emotions needs to be done. She sums this up:

Conventional wisdom constructs both men and organisations as unemotional. These stories demand we theorise emotion better … First, we need to make emotion explicit in organisational theory … Second we need to understand both the upsides and downsides of emotionality, and their differing implications for educational change. When change management literature concentrates on emotion—it is in the positive sense of passion, enthusiasm, verve, zest, and empathy. Little is said about how 'feeling individuals worry, envy, brood, become bored, play, despair, plot, hate, hurt, and so forth' (p. 347).

Blackmore (1996a) concludes that, "while all principals are positioned ambiguously and in contradictory ways by recent reforms, the issue is still highly gendered" (p. 347) with conventional wisdom constructing both men and organisations as unemotional. Emotional responses to change are also important in this study. The expression of emotions can help or hinder the management of change.
Noddings (1992) argues that educational reform efforts too often elevate cognition above care as a priority for improvement. In a later work Noddings (1995) insists, “[t]here is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life” (p. 368). This fits, however, with a masculinist way of operating if one uses stereotypes. The non-rational, emotional aspects of educational change are gathering momentum. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) and Fullan (1993) have given strong support to this notion. Hargreaves (1995) is even more critical of the literature which treats, "emotional states as accompaniments to rationality, not as integral to reason itself" (p. 11). He insists that emotions cannot be separated from reason, nor can judgement be set aside from feelings. He also sounds a warning that if educational reformers and change agents ignore the emotional dimensions of educational change, emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door. Festering resentment will undermine and overturn rationally-made decisions. Hargreaves (1998) believes:

Emotions are important as ends of educational change, in the development of emotional as well as other kinds of intelligence—the capacity to cultivate feelings, express them, manage them and empathize with the feelings of others. Emotional learning is integral to intellectual learning—adding value to the conventional kinds of achievements upon which students are usually assessed (p. 562).

Expressed in another way, "the emotional dimension of educational change is not a frill but a fundamental of improvement, and deserves increased attention in the educational change literature" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 293). This is because, "emotions are at the heart of teaching. They comprise its most dynamic qualities—literally—for emotions are fundamentally about movement" (p. 558).
Unfortunately though, "emotions are virtually absent from the literature and advocacy of educational change" (p. 559), yet they are talked about insofar as they help or hinder management. Stereotypes are quoted. Statements insisting that women are emotional and hence find it difficult to lead a school effectively whereas men are rational and non-emotional so more suited, apparently, to positions of leadership, are common. Yet from the comments of Hargreaves and others, such statements would appear to be completely missing the mark in this key issue of educational understanding and practice today. Women suffering because of such mis-informed type-casting is a salient aspect of this study.

In this chapter I have discussed organizations with gender as a ‘lens’ through which this study is viewed. Concepts of patriarchy, kyriarchy and hegemony assisted me to understand the masculinist structure and culture in the Catholic Church. Alternate ways of exercising authority were discussed with emotionality and rationality in leadership styles being significant. In the next chapter I look at power and sexuality.
Organisations and society are structured by relations of power that are infused by gender (Connell, 1987). In this chapter I explore the social relations of gender and power, and in particular how masculinities and femininities relate to each other in certain contexts.

### POWER

In endeavouring to understand and explain the hindrances lay women experience in accessing and obtaining principalships in Catholic Education, a study of the concept and nature of power is appropriate. The literature on power is extensive, but as Angus and Rizvi (1989) point out, "few sociological concepts are as elusive and ambiguous as that of power" (p. 1). I have reviewed some of the theories that have assisted in understanding the power relations that exist between lay women and their prospective employing bodies. In short, I have responded to the need, as Kitzinger (1991) suggests, "to deconstruct the different ways in which 'power' is understood" (p. 114) to assist in explaining the hindrances lay women experience.

*Traditional Approaches*

Traditional approaches to the study of power may be classified into two broad categories: those based on functionalist theories and those located within pluralist analyses of society. Both approaches are limited and fail to give a full
representation of how power is exercised in organisations. In the functionalist
literature on power provided by Parsons (1967), the focus of inquiry is on the
structure of formal authority. He views power as 'superordinate' and assumes a
fundamental distinction between authority and power, as cited in Angus and
Rizvi (1989), "with the idea of power viewed as a degenerate or immature form
of authority. Power and authority are thus seen as mutually exclusive" (p. 1).
This separation of power and authority has been highly influential in
organisational theory. The organisation's formal structure has been presumed as
a given (Angus and Rizvi, 1989, p. 2). By defining power this way the formal
structure is taken for granted by people, whether in authority or not. Only when
officers exceed their authority are they considered to be exercising power.
Structure is all important for Parsons. Individuals fit in. I have been struck by
how much this sounds like the situation in the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church
before 1962. The concept of power according to Parsons ties it to authority,
consensus and the pursuit of collective goals, and dissociates it from conflicts of
interest and in particular from coercion and force (Lukes, 1974, p. 28). Parsons
defines power as 'power to' not 'power over' and so power is a facility, an ability,
not a relationship (Hartsock, 1974, p. 10). Although more appropriate for a study
undertaken forty years ago, there are sections of both society and the Catholic
Church where this theory of power is relevant today and helps explain current
practices.

Arendt (1970) wrote, “power is never the property of the individual; it belongs
to the group and remains in existence only as long as the group keeps together"
(p. 44). Further, power, "far from being the means to an end, is actually the very
condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of the means-end category" (p. 51). Parsons and Arendt's definitions are similar. Both are concerned with "the public thing" (Arendt, 1970, p. 30) and both are opposed to the conceptual linkage of power with force and violence. Such conceptions may no longer be relevant to the majority of successful organisations today, but they still have a certain currency in relation to the situations of the women studied as part of this research.

Functionalist theories of power have come under a deal of criticism as they accept the moral legitimacy of formal organisational structures as unproblematical. This was the situation in the Catholic Church when it was believed that, ‘Father (parish priest) knows best’. As will be seen in Chapters Six and Seven, that belief still exists in some pockets of Catholic Education today.

The second category of the traditional theories of power is that of the pluralist theories. Instances of the exercise of power in decision-making circumstances are identified where there is observable conflict. In the pluralist view no interest group is sufficiently powerful to dominate. Lukes (1974) critiques both the functionalist and pluralist theories and sums up these notions of power. His view of power and related concepts have deep historical roots emanating from the thoughts of Weber. He provides three views of power: the pluralists' view or as he calls it the one-dimensional view; the view of their critics—the two dimensional view—and his preferred third view (the three dimensional view) which "allows one to give a deeper and more satisfactory analysis of power
relations than either of the other two" (p. 10). The pluralists tend to use 'power' and 'influence' interchangeably. They see their focus on behaviour in the making of decisions on key issues over which there is actual observable conflict. The two-dimensional view of power involves a qualified critique of the behavioural focus of the first view and allows for the consideration of the ways in which decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues over which there are conflicts of interest. Their typology of power then embraces coercion, influence, authority, force and manipulation (p. 17). The three-dimensional view of power, "involves a thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus of the first two views as too individualistic and allows for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics" (p. 24). The second view fits similarly with the operation in the Catholic Church in a previous era also.

This study aims to seek out and make explicit how such relationships are played out for women in Catholic Education. Lukes (1974) maintains that:

The most insidious use of power is to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances, by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it or because they see it as natural and unchangeable (p. 24).

Women in Catholic Education can fall into this trap if they have lived and been educated in the system and know no other way of acting within the Catholic Church. They have always followed what the church has promoted, taking that approach as the only way to proceed. In Desmarchelier's (1999) study, one woman expressed it this way, “the Catholic Church is part of who I am—it is my cultural inheritance, not only ingrained in my psyche through my own
experience but also through countless generations before me" (p. 34). The literature on power and conceptualisations around this theme, are thus central to the discussion of women's leadership potential in this thesis.

**Power as a Relational Concept**

Lukes (1974) argues that power is most effectively exercised through biases that are built into the structure of a system. These biases are, "not sustained simply by a series of individually chosen acts, but also more importantly by the socially structured and culturally determined patterned behaviour of groups and practices of institutions" (pp. 21-22). Often people who are compliant with a set of institutional practices feel no grievance. They take the procedure as the way things are and do not realise that their interests may not be served by the use of power. As mentioned above, many women, who have been brought up in traditional Catholic families, act in this way. Once again, as Desmarchelier's (1999) research found, there was, "an antiquated but ingrained thinking that we should abide by church teaching even when it constrains and limits us" (p. 80).

A major weakness in Lukes' theory is that he does not provide an adequate account of where personal interests reside or how they are developed in the bigger picture. As Angus and Rizvi (1989) put it, Lukes’ account is, "excessively individualistic" (p. 6). As such, it is not one that I have used to account for power relationships in the research sites under my examination. In the way that Angus and Rizvi (1989) suggest, it does not serve to explain fully what I have observed as occurring with potential and actual female leaders in Catholic schools.
Burbules (1986) theory of power takes issue with Lukes' individualistic approach, one which serves to explain further my decision in this regard. Burbules describes power, "as a web, as a system of relations: discursive, practical, material, intellectual, and psychological" (p. 104) and his relational conception of power further emphasises that, "power is a relation that is not simply chosen (or avoided) but made more or less necessary by the circumstances under which persons come together" (p. 97). Burbules also points out that power can, "effectively serve the interests of one person or grow to maintain a particular state of affairs by concealing it, by discouraging opposition, or by encouraging a range of free action and criticism that does not alter the essential features of the arrangement" (p. 103). Further, Angus and Rizvi (1989) believe that, "power involves culturally and historically formed dispositions that define patterns of social relationships. People rarely choose these relationships and often remain quite unaware of their nature" (p. 6).

Power then, is exercised in a variety of ways in the maintenance of authority so that some interests are legitimated while others are either overtly or covertly suppressed. Women are able to identify power as a web of relationships when they are aware that they are excluded from that web by not being male, and so have little chance in obtaining a position of leadership. Other names for the web for them are the 'Boys' Club' and similar metaphors. This study aims to seek out and make explicit how such relationships are played out for women in Catholic Education. Even under patriarchal constructs of power over people, there is the (albeit) marginalised construct of power, as exercised in and through organisational and social constructs, to be considered.
Critical Theory Perspective

Such a discussion of power leads me to the critical theory perspective where power involves those led and those leading. Drawing on a critical theory perspective takes me to concepts of power as they arise out of the interaction of the powerful and the powerless, and the exercise of power would want, "to explain a social order in such a way that [it] becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order" (Fay, 1987, p. 27). In such a scenario the focus would be on the social crisis and it would be explained as part the result of the false consciousness of the members of the society or group in question. Concerning leadership, Fay (1987) observes:

>[P]ower is fundamentally consensual. Leaders get others to act in a particular manner because followers agree to do what the leaders ask of them. This agreement may derive from the followers' judgment that the leaders occupy a position which gives them the right to command a course of action, or that they possess the requisite personal characteristics of leaders, or that they seek an action which is correct or justifiable. Power in this case is not something which an isolated person can have; it depends on the willingness of the followers as much as the characteristics of the leaders, and devolves to the leaders in so far as they are able to call forth the support of those whom they lead … This sort of power relationship is particularly amenable to a critical theory intent on promoting radical social change … In a leadership relationship, the powerless are in a fundamental sense not powerless because they share with the powerful in the creation of power. It is this implicit power of the oppressed which a critical social theory can tap in order to be a practical instrument of social transformation (pp. 121-122).

With one model of structuring parishes in the Catholic Church being for the priest to be the designated leader and the members of the congregation to follow, one may anticipate that women be expected to continue in this arrangement when they apply for leadership positions. The priest is the dominant figure and potential applicants can, and often do, feel powerless, and in effect, oppressed.
Critical Theory helps to explain this situation with the oppressed searching for a way of alleviation from this situation of feeling powerless. They work to achieve radical social change but may be thwarted in their efforts. Feminists have looked, then, to post-structuralism to understand better the contradictions they experience.

**Post-structuralist Perspective**

Foucault (1983), easily the most interesting and nuanced contemporary theorist of power, often speaks of power in a generic, undifferentiated fashion. His analysis provides a different theory of power from those I have already discussed, although he would not call it a theory. He is insistent on this point, “I in no way construct a theory of Power” (p. 207). He writes from what has come to be classed as a post-structuralist perspective. He suggests power is exercised and not possessed and draws attention to the mechanisms, processes and effects of power relationships which exist within systems including education systems. Foucault believes that power does not exist in a substantive sense. It is an institution, a structure of a certain force relations within which people operate. It is the name given to a complete strategic relation in a given society. It is not an omnipotent causal principle but a perspective concept. Power, “is never localised but exercised through net-like organizations with individuals simultaneously exercising it and having it exercised over them” (Foucault, 1973, p. 98). This concept is a useful tool for this study, as in the Catholic system, power is often seen as being invested in and exercised by the male hierarchy, not by right of birth but as a consequence of ordination and reinforced in much of the theology, culture and history of the church.
Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), in their considerations of Foucault's writing decide that a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements (the powerful and the powerless) which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship. Foucault (1980) explains that the 'other' (one over whom power is exercised) be recognised and maintained to the very end, and faced with a relationship of power, then a whole field of responses may open up (p. 219). Foucault (1980) argues that these power relations emerge at given places and times and, "in order to exercise a relation of power there must be, on both sides, at least a certain form of liberty" (p. 67). This means there will be multiple power relations which have different forms. This is a vital concept as far as this study is concerned, for it reflects the reality in Catholic Education as the research data has shown it to be.

A reading of feminist literature indicates that women can identify with Foucault's notion of power relations in that each situation they encounter is different, unstable and changeable. As Sawicki (1991) points out Foucault, "does not locate power in a monolithic, oppressive structure" (p. 186). He insists that power is a productive and positive force rather than a purely negative, repressive phenomenon (Foucault, 1980). According to Blackmore (1993) Foucault's conceptualisation of power is that:

Power is not something that represses, it also nurtures, cultivates and promotes. Power is not something outside the individual, acting upon the body, but is intimately involved with how individuals construct themselves as part of everyday professional discourses. So whilst there are overarching influences and structures which work to constrain or enable individuals, individuals also act upon themselves in ways which sometimes produce radically different experiences (p. 19).
Although Foucault ignores feminism, as Weedon (1987) notes, his theories can produce an analysis of patriarchal power relations which enable, “the development of active strategies for change” (p. 13). Women are looking for these strategies and are aware that each situation will be different, providing that a post–structuralist theoretical approach is helpful in informing studies such as this one.

Further, for feminist educators, (Kenway et al, 1994) believe that post-structuralism offers very different ways at looking at things as it is:

[A] term applied to a very loosely connected set of ideas about meaning, the way in which meaning is struggled over and produced, the way it circulates amongst us, the impact it has on human subjects, and finally, the connections between meaning and power. For post-structuralists, meaning is not fixed on language in other cultural symbols or in consistent power relationships. It shifts as different linguistic, institutional, cultural and social factors come together in various ways. Meaning is influenced by and influences shifting patterns of power (p. 189).

Post-structuralism becomes feminist according to Kenway et al (1994) "firstly, when matters of femaleness and maleness and the 'differences and dominations' between and within them are made a central feature of analysis, and secondly, when analysis implies a 'challenge' of some sort to any inequitable relationships of power which involve gender or sexuality" (p. 190—emphasis in original).

Feminists in schools need to identify the discourses, and the meanings that are being made and remade from them, by members of the school community. Weedon (1987) warns women to, “not take established meanings, values and power relations for granted" (p. 169). As Kenway and associates (1994) also
point out, "it means looking for weak points, contradictions, ruptures, discontinuities, and cracks in the systems of representation and converting them into moments of negotiation and possibility through the use of whatever resources are available" (p. 199).

I said earlier that power can be described as a web of relationships and this web is diverse and complex. But it is not permanent, static or unalterable. Because women are participants in the network of power relationships, they do retain some capacity to alter those relationships. A feminist post-structuralism is mindful of the multiple positions of women and men as policy is enacted in the discursive webs of educational organisation. Post-structuralists do not deny broad patterns of domination but they do deny that one theory fits all situations. As Sawicki (1991) says, they focus on the, "myriad of power relations at the micro level of society" (p. 20).

Foucault disappoints feminists if they find his seemingly asexual perspective problematic (McNay, 1992). But:

Whilst most feminists would acknowledge that on a political level Foucault is sympathetic to their work, on a theoretical level many may be forced to conclude that his silence on the issue of sexual difference is not enough to absolve his thought of the charge of androcentrism. When Foucault talks of the body or the self it is a male version that is frequently implied and thus, albeit unintentionally, he perpetuates the patriarchal habit of eliding the masculine with the general (p. 195).

Foucault's work has much to offer but concerns of women must be constantly included, as gender is a crucial factor in so many situations and especially in this study. Losing the female aspect towards power is the fear of Kitzinger (1991).
She notes that some writers are suggesting that the notion of power be abandoned and replaced with terms like 'regulatory practices of self'. But she says that:

To abandon the word 'power', to replace it with euphemisms which disguise the violence of our oppression and the courage of our resistance, is antithetical to feminist politics. As feminists it is important to address the concept of power and to clarify the meanings we intend by it. Contending concepts are not morally and politically neutral. How we conceptualise power reflects in part what it is we think requires explanation and what we consider a good explanation of it. It affects the questions we can ask about male power, and about female power, and where we are likely to look for the answers (p. 126).

She issues a further challenge. She believes women should, "construct our own theories of power, and powerlessness in terms which are useful to us as feminists" (p. 114). Riehl and Lee (1996) review the situation with evidence from Hurty (1995):

Women researchers and theorists have written of power as capacity, energy, or potential, rather than as force or the ability to dominate. In this vein, Hurty (1995) studied seventeen women elementary school principals and found that they saw themselves as having power 'with' others not power 'over' others (p. 906).

The five distinctive elements of power that came to light in Hurty’s (1995) research were emotional energy, nurtured growth, reciprocal talk, pondered mutuality and collaborative change. Hurty believes that “these are available attributes which bring new, qualitatively distinctive dimensions to the concept of power” (p. 385). These dimensions fostered connectedness with others, and led to a form of leadership that Hurty calls, “coactive power” (p. 396). This alternative approach of ‘power with’ utilises the resources of women’s own experience. They have, “a willingness to use a full range of emotions in their
work … (they have) the ability to nurture even small evidence of learning and
development … (they) ‘talk with’ rather than ‘talk at’ others by listening to and
learning from other points of view … (they keep) others in mind in the reflective
rumination used in making decisions … (and they work) with and involve others
in the transformation of schooling” (p. 385).

Like Hurty (1995), Corson (1998) found that "one explanation for the difference
in effectiveness and style of women administrators lies in the language used by
women themselves, which emphasises 'power with', rather than 'power over'
others" (p. 1051). McLean (1997) believes that male reaction is important, "for
men two things seem to go inextricably together—the desire for power and the
fear of powerlessness" (p. 62). The same author notes that, “one of the
paradoxes for men is that they often genuinely experience women as powerful
and intimidating” (p. 62).

Collaborative approaches such as these are emerging in Catholic Education but
they are uncommon in the hierarchically structured Catholic Church, as
discussed in Chapter Two. Questions arise as to what a post-structuralist
formulation of political power could entail.

Hartsock (1974), despite her devotion to materialism, ironically ends up
analysing power more as a problem of conceptualisations rather than practices,
thereby advancing our understanding of the gendered 'idea' of power but doing
little to investigate how power actually operates. She joins Ferguson (1984) and
a number of others in offering the idea of 'empowering' as a possible feminist
approach to power, a useful notion for breaking the common equation of power with domination but not much more. And MacKinnon (1982), an intriguing and controversial feminist theorist, offers a dazzling account of some of the mechanisms of men’s power over women but joins other feminists in decrying male power without exploring alternative modes and possibilities of that power.

Power embodies the remarkable paradox of being one of the most determining elements of human existence as well as being ubiquitous while remaining largely invisible. It is not a thing but a relational element. Like equality, power only exists between its subjects and objects; it is contained within and between them. In the Catholic Church the effects of power exercised by its male authorities are all-pervasive, and are felt keenly between its members as they relate to these male authorities.

Foucault (1977) interprets social power as a way of discursive control. Thus, control is determined by who has access to the various types of discourse, who can talk to whom, in which situations, and about what. The more powerful the people, the larger their verbal possibilities in discourse. Blackmore (1996c) sums up:

Critical theory and cultural studies have produced for feminists ways of considering how power works in organisations through exclusion, institutional ethos, language and discourse, capillary networks and sexual politics. Feminist redefinitions of power range from a communitarian, radical perspective arguing that women view and practise power differently (power sharing not power over) through to a Foucauldian perspective which sees no central unitary source or type of power, but in which power is dispersed arbitrarily and unevenly across multiple sites, working differently across different cultural contexts (p. 1007).
Power, then, can be described as the central dynamic of human relations. It springs up wherever human beings act, collaborate, unite or contest with each other and wherever there is organisation of arrangements. It is a concept central to this study. Foucault's concept of power represents a paradigmatic departure from the classical Marxist and Freudian understandings of power, in which power was viewed respectively as primarily located in the economic base and as repression. Foucault (1980) views the individual as constituted by power, and the relations of power cannot be, "established, consolidated nor implemented without the production and functioning of a discourse" (p. 93). The use of Foucault's concept of power in the analysis of organisation is not quite such a straightforward exercise, however, Maddock and Parkin (1994) suggest, "it is evident from Foucauldian enthusiasts that power is best explored not as an abstract entity but in particular contexts, so that the local conditions can be fully taken into account" (p. 38). I intend to use his version of power in this study as his view best informs my work in terms of the pluralities and multiplicities of discursive practice and discursive control as far as my research sites are concerned. These sites themselves, as local situations, are problematic in this study. Social institutions such as schools and education bureaucracies are made up of many different and often contradictory discourses and discursive fields. It is important to remember that although the powerful and powerless both use the dominant language, they stand in very different relations to it (Ferguson, 1984). Cockburn (1991) argues:

Organisation is the essential process of effecting power. No individual, however wealthy, however armed, can impose his will for long without organising others to act in the interest. Without organisation he is a King Kong or a Rambo, reduced to mortal muscle. Organisations, then, are not just of casual interest to men
as a sex. They are crucial to the production and reproduction of power (p. 221).

Ferguson (1984) believes feminist discourse calls upon the newly-disinterred past and the newly-revealed present to move towards a freshly-imagined future (p.15), especially with regard to the exercise of power. Women want to move towards a freshly imagined future in Catholic Education.

As Catholic Education is a highly gendered organisation with parish priests being male and lay men and women holding the leadership roles in Catholic schools, it is necessary to consider sexuality, in the context of the social relations of gender and constructions of masculinity and femininity.

**SEXUALITY**

Historically in the Catholic Church, in medieval times, there was much time and effort expended by those in authority in eradicating sexuality from their members. According to Burrell (1992), the widespread promulgation of desexualisation was undertaken by the hierarchy in an attempt to emphasise good order and discipline within its flock:

The legitimation for desexualisation offered by many religious beliefs was based upon a rejection of the 'baser animal instincts' within human beings. In later periods the development of a Puritan calculative rationality emphasised a view that sexuality was expressive of non-rational, uncontrollable emotions which must be suppressed in the interests of efficiency and good order (p. 90).

Even during my training to become a vowed Religious, in the fifties, we were not permitted to listen to music played on the saxophone as it was believed that
this type of music could arouse our sexual passions. Religious were not permitted to socialise and we were certainly not meant to be feminine. This was borne out in the fact that we all wore the same garb, were all called Sister, with no individuality, and were only allowed to speak with individuals who were not Sisters if there were at least two Sisters present. We did not eat with visitors, not even with members of our family. Sisters, then, were perceived to be 'asexual' in the same way as lay women were sexual beings. There are barriers then, as a result, for lay women that may not have been experienced by Religious women. Lay women's sexuality is, in contrast, overt. There is a real feminine presence.

With the shift from Religious to lay dominance this has greater significance.

When the change in staffing in Catholic schools from Religious to lay women occurred, I observed that parishioners had trouble adjusting to a female sexual being as the leader of their primary school. More importantly, the relationship with the parish priest is different. There is a potential inter-connection between the masculinity of the parish priests and the femininity of the lay women.

Another issue is the method of employment. Religious Sisters and Brothers were appointed by their Congregations whereas the parish priest employs the lay principal. This has potential for him subsequently to have a greater degree of control over that person.

As well as the aspect of control there is the consideration of the on-going relationship between the principal and the parish priest. The priest may well feel
'safe' working with the Religious, but not so 'safe' working closely with a lay woman. Anticipating that dilemma, the priest may have a concern that once a principal had been employed, on-lookers could misread the professional relationship between himself and the principal. If that person was a lay woman her sexuality could become a relevant issue.

Priests' sexuality seemed to be of little consequence when principals were Religious women and men, but could have significance now. Lay women are caught in this tension and ambiguity. Totally absent here, of course, is any discussion of homosexuality or lesbianism. This is an issue that lies beyond the parameters of my research, and while I acknowledge its potential influence in matters of power relationships, especially in terms of church leadership, it is not relevant to this study.

MacKinnon (1982) says that, "sexuality is a form of power" (p. 533). Hearn and Parkin (1987) describe gender power in organisations as part of the gendered structures and power relations of organisations. They also see gendered powers linked with sexuality in terms of: the power of men (over sexuality and over women); the power of the public realm (over sexuality and over the private); the power of production (over sexuality and reproduction); and indeed the power of reproduction (over sexuality). Theorising from the perspective of gender and sexuality means thinking of organisations as problematic, as a set of social relationships which are historically constructed. Maleness is embedded in the organisational cultural context and as such is not experienced as problematic.
Femaleness is a problem primarily for women and secondarily for men. Being a woman in a male-dominated environment demands handling one's sexuality in particular ways. As Sheppard (1989) says, women run the risk of not being taken seriously, of not being heard, and of not receiving necessary information (pp. 144-145). This problematises masculinity and sexuality. It is, as Davies and Harre (1989) say, the contradictory nature of the various positionings of these women that make them important sites for, "gaining understanding of what it means to be a gendered person" (p. 47).

**Masculinity and Femininity**

It is a matter of some importance as far as this study is concerned to consider ways in which masculinities and femininities are understood. Sexual differences research and sex role theory led us to believe that relatively straightforward answers to this question could be supplied, however these understandings have developed in recent years. Psychologists identified a range of personality traits associated with males and females and sought to explain them in terms of biology, or society, or some of each. As biological explanations lost authority, sex role theory gained ascendancy. Assisted by social sanctions against those who deviated, sex roles were seen to prescribe and constrain behaviour. Gender identity was defined in terms of simple polarities and measured accordingly. The emphasis was on differences between the sexes until feminists alerted us to both the oppressiveness of the roles and the stereotypes associated with females and then the different power and status of male and female roles. Following on the heels of feminist discussions of sex role oppression for women, men developed
a similar literature (Seidler, 1989) pointing out how men, too, are oppressed by the rigidities of their roles and stereotypes.

Although sex role theory gained considerable popular acceptance as an explanation of gender differences and difficulties, it eventually lost credibility in academic circles because its explanatory power was too limited (Kenway, 1995, p. 60). Because of its previously unchallenged acceptance, understandings about what is categorised as 'masculine' and what is categorised as 'feminine' are often discussed as if they are binary opposites—either/or propositions. This assumes that all females fit a narrow range of so-called 'feminine' behaviours and attributes, and similarly all males accommodate themselves to fit a narrow range of so-called 'masculine' behaviours and attributes. Instead, at this point, we construct our own interpretations of appropriate gendered behaviour in a dynamic way that may vary according to context and over time. It is important, however, to see that the options available to us, as individuals, can be limited. We sometimes speak of femininity and masculinity as if they were equivalent opposites. When we look beyond these limits, spaces open up in which taken-for-granted knowledge of social practices in our culture endorse a privileged form of masculinity. This is associated with power, objectivity, and competition. It is publicly admired and rewarded but problematical. These forms are often associated with settings which include school, family and the workplace. Kenway (1995) notes that masculinity may be thought of as a social construct about what it means to be male in certain times and places. Settings and discourses on masculinity offer a range of ways of being male but separately and together privilege some as superior. Following that, "despite the power of such
forms of masculinity, discourses within any social setting are multiple, often contradictory and to some extent in competition with each other" (p. 61). Even so the result is that most masculinities are associated with power over women.

My research found that the principal concern with heterosexual masculinities has been to present a counter to femininity. It is important to note that some femininities—those most emphasised by systems of representation and those most rewarded by men, are particularly important in sustaining masculine power. Compliance and service, subservience and self-sacrifice, nurturance and empathy, and accommodating the needs and desires of the male are evident. In the Catholic Church women complied and served males believing that this behaviour was appropriate for them. Some women still do. In a recent piece of research, already cited, women described themselves as victim with, "the victim role as a product of societal and church attitudes" (Desmarchelier, 1999, p. 74). The Catholic Church certainly accentuates a privileged form of masculinity through its hierarchical structure and authoritarian approach to its members. It is, as described by Kenway (1995):

[A]ssociated with the hard, the dry and the strong: femininity with the soft, the wet and the weak. More particularly, masculinity mobilises around physical strength, instrumental skills, public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity, rationality and competition. In contrast, femininity is associated with physical weakness, expressive skills, private knowledge, creativity, emotion, subjectivity, irrationality and co-operation. These dualities are usually arranged in hierarchies of esteem with the male claiming greatest merit (p. 63).

According to Seidler (1989), the Enlightenment established the identification of masculinity with reason (p. 46). As men, "we can discover ourselves to be more
focused upon our activities than our relationships, finding it easier to apply
universal rules and principles in our behaviour than to respond in an individual,
giving way to the needs of others" (p. 47). He goes further, “bourgeois culture
and our Protestant inheritance teach us to hide our natures, to think of them as
wicked. This is why we do our best to distance ourselves from our feelings and
desires” (p. 85).

Men, then, including priests, often hide their emotions, and act in ways that are
only seemingly rational. In contrast, “femininity, an unequal opposite, is aligned
with emotions, subjectivity, and cooperation, and its asymmetry with the
privileged form of masculinity is played out in both organisational and
interpersonal spheres” (Connell, 1987, p. 183). These sorts of oppositional
constructions can lead to a belief that all females should fit this emphasised form
of femininity and that all males ought to fit this sort of privileged form of
masculinity. This belief then leads to the formation of restrictive gender
stereotypes—directly linked to power differentials in our society and in the
Catholic Church.

The difficulty arises when stereotypes of sexuality are the basis for decision-
making, when people believe that the distinction between reason and desire, the
intellect and the body, the masculine and the feminine, is not only real, but
necessary as well. The tragedy is that the connection between the personal and
the political, between gender and power, is not fully understood. Women and
men are divided by gender, made into the sexes, by the social requirements of
heterosexuality, which institutionalises male dominance and female submission. If this is true, the expression of sexuality is the lynchpin of gender inequality.

Masculinity, therefore, does not exist in isolation from femininity. It will always be an expression of the current image that men have of themselves in relation to women. Freud's work thus comes to have a special relevance, for if psychosexuality is not simply natural but in some sense social, then it is reasonable to hope that we might come to understand how the psychology of masculine dominance and feminine submission reproduces itself. Kerfoot (1994) believes that:

[T]he concept of the masculine subject recognises that both men and women can be masculine, although masculinity, in whatever manifestation, can be conveniently elevated and privileged as a range of behaviours for many men. Masculinity exists merely as a way of being, most often but not exclusively for men, in which men express what it is 'to be a man' at any one time and in whatever location (p. 186).

Kerfoot (1994) goes further for:

[M]asculine subjects, the experience of spontaneity is as threatening as it is precarious and destabilising. For spontaneity, by definition, comes without a pre-ordered 'script' which might otherwise govern and direct the encounter: while the notion of an unscripted encounter is self-evidently threatening to those subjects whose very raison d'etre is the control of uncertainty and of the uncertainty generated by their own ability to respond in situations. In managing the uncertainty and unpredictability that is inherent in encounters with others, many men stereotypically find recourse to conventionally masculine behaviours as a means of evading or avoiding social interaction that is evidently uncomfortable. It is uncomfortable in that, because of the emotional intimacy so desired by many women, such intimacy, by its very nature, requires that the men respond authentically (p. 187).
If parish priests were to find social interactions uncomfortable, how difficult for a woman then to intrude into the arena of management and leadership, especially into a group led by males as Kerfoot (19940 explains:

[A] masculine mode of engaging with the organisational world is one in which all encounters and events become potential arenas for instrumental control. Characterised by the pursuit of control of all social relations, this masculinity is elevated in the discourses and practices of management as the way of relating to the world and to other persons. Moreover, the dominance of this mode of being in the activities of managing and organising is such that all persons regardless of their sex, must 'become' masculine, if only in order to succeed as a manager or to achieve any seniority or credibility. In 'becoming' masculine in this way, managers must adopt those behaviours and practices required of them in order to be masculine, or at very least give the appearance of so doing (p. 189).

Masculine practices flow out of three concepts which often tend to be confused in the literature as well as in political and everyday discourse. They are namely: masculinity, masculinism, and patriarchy, and these concepts impact largely on my study. I delineate the differences below.

**Masculinity / Masculinism / Patriarchy**

Masculinism is the ideology that justifies and naturalises male domination. As such it is the ideology of patriarchy. Masculinism takes for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women assuming that heterosexuality is normal (Brittan, 1989, p. 3). Masculinity, from this point of view, "is measured by a man's capacity to win" (p. 79) and so, definitions of masculinity are bound up with definitions of work. It is a relational construct existing only in relation to femininity. Moreover, masculine identities are not static but evolving. The terrain of gender differences, then, is a contested terrain
in which sexuality, power and authority are not fixed categories. So according to Brittan, "when we talk about patriarchy, masculinity or 'hierarchic heterosexuality', we are abstracting from a field of intentionalities and counter-intentionalities" (p. 195).

I have discussed the concepts of patriarchy and hegemony earlier. Hegemonic masculinity, however, can never be absolute. It is always challenged by other men and women. It is built upon heterosexuality, and heterosexuality constitutes the single structural fact that guarantees the global domination of men over women. The argument (Brittan, 1989) is that masculinism, as an ideology, "universalises 'man' as the 'maker' of history" (p. 174). It, "implies power and entails hierarchy" (p. 197).

Masculinity, however, only becomes problematic when changes in the social structure generate changes in social institutions like the family, and the Catholic Church. Men were threatened by women entering the labour market, and this led to a sharpening of gender differences and conflict. "As men became increasingly conscious of women as potential rivals in the public sphere, they not only felt insecure, but they constructed new rationalizations for gender inequality" (p. 180). Now that women are applying for leadership positions, men, too, can feel threatened as they have been accustomed to being the leaders. The very fact of women considering principal positions may thus be construed as a challenge to traditional concepts of masculinity.
Problematising the Masculine

In the Middle Ages, the duality between spirit and matter, between body and mind was legitimated by the church. Catholics have been taught that there is a less significant place for the body and subjectivity in the public world and particularly in the church. The body and its desires must be confined to the family, to the private sphere.

Masculinity differs from masculinism as masculine identities are not static but historically and spatially situated and evolving. It is this understanding which allows Connell (1995) to talk about masculinity as a life project involving the making and remaking of identity and meaning. It also allows us to understand the social and psychic complexity and fragility of masculinity.

Although there are many masculinities, they can be clustered on the basis of general, social, cultural and institutional patterns of power and meaning, and are built in relationship to each other. Connell (1995) calls these masculinities, hegemonic, subordinate, complicitous and marginal. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is now widely used in discussions of masculinity and refers to dominant and dominating forms of masculinity. It structures dominant and subordinate relations across and between the sexes and legitimates the broad structure of power known as patriarchy.

According to Connell (1995), men benefit from the 'patriarchal dividend'. Men gain an advantage from the overall subordination of women—without the tensions or risks of being the front line troops of patriarchy (p. 79). In this sense
men are complicitous with hegemonic forms of masculinity even if they fail to 
live up to and do not draw moral inspiration from their imperatives. While 
centrally connected with institutions of male dominance, not all men practise 
hegemonic masculinity but most benefit from it, as mentioned earlier. This 
makes it very difficult to challenge and change the system.

It is therefore not surprising that in their study Macdonald et al (1999) found 
that:

[A] ttitudes to the body and sexuality have a strong misogynous 

basis. Pronouncements on such matters by celibate males lack 
credibility for many of us. Women have been pressurised into 
accepting male emotional perspectives by clergy who have been 
isolated from mainstream life and have little understanding of the 
female emotional landscape. Teachings seem to be based on the 
medieval 'whore versus saint' model and perpetuate the Platonic, 
not Christian, dichotomy between body and spirit. Official 
teaching on matters concerning sexuality and relationships are at 

odds with women's understanding of themselves and the Christian 
call to wholeness and fullness of life (p. 95).

They went further, “clergy formation around sexuality and celibacy was 
stressed" (p. 334) as needing much attention. They also reported that, "the issue 
of gender equality was raised in terms of both theology and justice. Fundamental 
issues concerning the theology of personhood and the theology of sexuality were 
seen to underpin the church's position on the role and status of women" (p. 382). 
Yet leaders in the church, like their counterparts in society in general, are often 
unaware of their behaviour. It seems amazing but, "men in organisations often 
seem extraordinarily unaware of, ignorant about and even antagonistic to any 
critical appraisal of the gendered nature of their actions and their consequences"
(Collinson and Hearn, 1994, p. 3). Segal (1990) believes that although
masculinities lag behind the times, masculinism seems to have a universal, unchanging quality—rational, hard, and emotional, across generations.

Activities and practices of both organisational management and masculinity are grounded in hierarchy, especially in terms of the symbolic, material and social rewards. This provides masculine subjects with a near-impenetrable barrier that their formal positions offer and as well management and masculinity provide masculine subjects with the ultimate in self-deception. In the concern to maintain control masculine subjects hesitate in forming intimate relationships and are fearful of letting go in their engagements with others. They find confirmation of themselves only in the control they exercise over events and others.

For many parish priests this behaviour is legitimate as they could judge that they must be in control of their parish and they also must not become too close to parishioners. Davies (1989b) explains this process. She believes that, "the individual is not so much the product of some process of social construction that results in some relatively fixed end-product but is constituted and re-constituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate" (p. 229). Each parish priest reacts differently. This poses a dilemma for those applying for principalships.

*Parish Priest/Authoritarian Masculinity*

Personal communication from each of the diocesan offices indicate that in 2000 there are forty-seven parishes with parish priests in the Ballarat diocese. In
country New South Wales the number is sixteen and in South Australia it is thirty-six. Most of these parish priests in the Ballarat diocese attended a single-sex boys' school for whole or part of their secondary schooling and then were trained in an all-male live-in seminary. Priests in the other dioceses had similar backgrounds. As a consequence they have consistently been exposed to manifestation of the dominant discourse of power and authority as the norm. Davies and Banks (1992) found that, "children who have been interpellated into the social world via the dominant discourses have learnt to interpret not just their own lives but the lives of others within the terms of those dominant discourses" (p. 25). Many priests, therefore, presume that the traditional exercise of authority is the only way to function. There is a taken-for-grantedness of priestly authority, a discursive practice that often does not allow for questioning.

Davies (1989b) in another study shows how gender is created by and within individuals as they learn the discursive practices through which to locate themselves as individuals and as members of the social world. These practices are not just external constraints, they also provide the conceptual frameworks, the psychic patterns, the emotions through which individuals take themselves up as male or female (p. 235). Although it may seem that subjectivity is fixed, Davies and Banks (1992) insist that it is constantly in process. It is characterised by tensions and instability because it is constituted through discourses which are often in contradiction with one another (p. 3).

Considering development in another way, according to Chodorow (1978), girls develop more permeable, less rigid, ego boundaries than boys. She concludes
that the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world whereas the basic masculine sense of self is separate (p. 223). Gilligan (1982) draws on Chodorow's theory of gender identity which attributes fixed cross-cultural characteristics to masculine and feminine identities. She insists that, "masculinity is defined through separation, while femininity is defined through attachment. Male gender identity is then threatened by intimacy, while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males can tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation" (p. 8). Chodorow (1978) insists that, "because the achievement of gender identity is more precarious for boys than for girls, it has led to a repudiation of femininity" (p. 55).

This opens up questions of the effects of such discursive practices on priests. Davies and Banks (1992) in their research entitled 'The Gender Trap' found that it is by accepting the most powerful form of subjectivity that one achieves her/his subjectivity. Children's subjectivities are shaped by the discourses of gender to which they have access and which they take up as their own (p. 18).

For priests, separation from women for many years has been institutionalised in their formation. Some, then, have difficulty in relating to females. Priests' behaviour towards women and women's consequent lack of participation in church life was noted by Macdonald et al (1999). They found that, "sexist attitudes of some of the clergy and their fear of educated women were seen as major barriers to women's participation" (p. 272). A factor of no small matter as far as my research is concerned.
Role and Function

The parish priest leads the members of his community and cares for them in a pastoral way. He administers the sacraments and coordinates the functioning of the parish. Gonzalez (2000) says that, "John Paul II has told us that parish is a community of communities, a family of families" (p. 38). She goes on to say that "a Catholic parish is a place where diversity is valued and everyone is welcomed because everyone belongs: this is not idealism. This is the call of the Gospel" (p. 38). Unfortunately this is not the experience of many Catholic women as my findings indicate.

It was reported in Tinsey's (1998) study:

[O]ne barrier to partnership is the patriarchal attitude of many parish priests who treat women as subordinates and servants. The majority of primary teachers are women and it is interesting to observe in group situations how clergy 'put down' the women and speak only to the male counterpart. What is often judged as a 'put-down' could also be fear, but it is off-putting (p. 47).

This situation is not confined to Australia. In the report from the 'National Consultation of Catholic Women in the United Kingdom' (Catholic Woman, 1994) it was said that:

[M]any of those responding to the questionnaire cite their parish priest as the most important support to them in their involvement in church life. Sadly even greater numbers cite their priest as the greatest source of discouragement. These women recount their experiences of patronising, negative, monopolising or dictatorial attitudes—attitudes which they see running through the church at all levels (p. 4).

Instead of feeling supported by the priests, they felt frustrated and let down. In Tinsey's (1998) study he also commented that teachers seem to be concerned with their level of professionalism in regard to how they educate in their chosen
fields, with time for Religious Education quite often viewed as an interruption. He found that priests, then, often enter a school in a defensive mode, sometimes convinced that many teachers have no idea of the Catholic faith or, at least, little allegiance to it. The mission of Catholic schools is much broader at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholic schools were primarily ecclesiastical institutions concerned with the handing on of the Catholic faith.

As I said earlier, the parish priest makes the decision regarding employment of principals. He is advised by a Local Interviewing Panel but the final decision is his. Prior to these interviews he is also advised by a Central Interviewing Panel of educationalists from the Catholic Education Office. The Central Panel members find great difficulty in compiling their reports on each applicant as some priests are appreciative of their advice, while it was my observation as Director, that others do not want to hear their recommendations. If the Catholic Education Office members are too enthusiastic about a particular applicant, this may go against her/him. This is frustrating for the members of the Central Panel who spend many hours interviewing prospective candidates. It is more frustrating for applicants who are attempting to access principalships.

Davies (1996) is not surprised at the reactions of the parish priests. She insists that, "this is particularly so when they are located in systems that demand results from them that cannot be achieved without a firm grasp on power and when their manner of using their power is legitimated by hegemonic values in society" (p. 238). The experience of lay women in their quest to achieve principalship is
an illustration in point, as the respondents to the questionnaires and in the focus groups point out.

This chapter has linked the power of the parish priest with his masculinity in a discussion of power and sexuality. The next chapter discusses aspects of leadership and reaction to change.
A discussion of literature on leadership and change is developed because principalship is the career I am researching and the context is within the Catholic Church which is one of the most stable organizations in society,

LEADERSHIP

*Images of leadership*

Assumptions about good, strong, leadership reflect past experience, but unfortunately former leadership models have been almost exclusively masculine. Management norms too are synonymous with male norms. Gendered hierarchies such as those in educational management have been justified within hegemonic discourses as emerging out of biological difference between men and women. Women have been seen as naturally nurturant, acquiescent, passive and supportive and suited to be followers. Conversely certain kinds of men (commonly white, middle-class, heterosexual) have been considered to be more naturally authoritative and suited to leadership through their so-called masculine qualities of toughness, power, strength, confidence and an ability to dominate others and face down opponents in situations of conflict.

As I have discussed earlier in Chapter Two, the major theories of organisational behaviour have mostly been gender-blind, assuming that most workers are male, or that the gender of the workers in organisations does not matter. Research and literature on leadership have, until recently, described the experiences of men. If
the female experience was different, it was ignored or diminished. "The ideal school administrator was portrayed as male—literally the man in the principal's office" (Shakeshaft and Nowell, 1984, p. 67). One of the first ethnographic and autobiographical accounts in Australia was written in 1990 by Helen Henry. Even then she wrote under a pseudonym to describe a woman in the principal's office (Thomas, 1990). Maleness was seen as the normal referrent upon which all experience was judged. Women were allocated caregiving roles more often than their male colleagues. Weiler (1989) suggests that, "the bureaucratic school structure based on principles of 'scientific management' is built on ideological assumptions about men's supposed qualities of leadership and women's supposed acquiescent and humble nature" (p. 20). This chapter explores the range and variety of ways leadership has been exercised in Catholic Education particularly while Religious Sisters were principals.

Religious women, who have been seen as strong leaders as principals, leave a legacy of power, authority and control. This quality is stereotypical for males, possibly making them advantaged when applying for these principalship positions. Panel members often wish to have the behaviour exhibited by Religious principals perpetuated. I have heard them lament the fact that ‘Sister’ will not be principal. They desire that the change from Religious to lay leadership occurs as smoothly as possible so they wish to select a lay person who fits as closely as possible into the current mould. The statistics for Victoria for the replacement of Religious principals since 1987 bear this out. Only 21 females were employed to replace the 79 Religious female principals (see Attachment 4, Figure 4).
As I explained in the Introduction, Religious were constructed as strong, logical, efficient disciplinarians, as a result of their training. Many female Religious reigned as matriarchs, mirroring their patriarchal leaders in the wider church. It would appear from the findings of the study that parish priests and panels may be looking for this type of leader again. In 1991 the Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office carried out research to investigate why only one in sixteen appointments to principalship in that year was a female. Parish priests' comments were significant, "the image of male leadership is more inspiring for boys and girls and is part of their psychological education", "parents seem to want a male", "I am more concerned about the very few male teachers in our Catholic school system. There is too much femininity and too little masculinity", "a woman principal may find it more difficult to lead and control staff". These priests are not unlike those making decisions in the dioceses in which this study was carried out. This does indicate a problem for female applicants. Sinclair (1998) suggests that women are not putting themselves forward because of the maleness of the organisational culture particularly at the top (Sinclair, 1998). It has been with the intention of finding out if this is so, that prompted me to embark upon this research.

**Leadership Styles and Skills**

A review of the literature on leadership reveals that there are deeply entrenched societal attitudes about the competencies, styles, and skills required for effective leadership. Men's styles are usually modelled on a managerial or industrial perspective, and by the 1980s, restructuring, performance management, downsizing, and program budgeting were introduced so that notions of
management overtook those of leadership. Shakeshaft (1987) and Sampson (1987) found that this shift often worked against the career development of women and consequently favoured that of men.

Since the 1990s, discourses about types of leadership, which are inclusive of the so-called feminine skills of communication, care, collegiality, consultation and consensus, have emerged (Blackmore, 1996b, p. 2). There is also considerable evidence about women's styles of leadership as caring, sharing, and student-centred with a strong commitment to social justice and democratic practice (Blackmore, 1996b, p. 12). Women's views on leadership are now being published so that as Riehl and Lee (1996) suggest:

> By looking at leadership from women's perspectives, we can begin to identify the content and themes of their approaches toward leadership and how they might like to see leadership evolve. The question is not whether women lead in particular ways, or even whether women tend to lead in ways that differ from men. Rather, the question is whether women promote, through their practice and research, a particular rhetoric about leadership that can contribute to more effective leadership and more successful schools (p. 905).

The question is whether this rhetoric matches that of decision-makers and whether decision-makers even know there are other ways to lead schools. Research shows that it is not maleness or femaleness that defines a particular approach but rather what individuals employ to fit their style.

The National Catholic Education Commission's (1997) statement 'Towards Gender Equity in Catholic Education' includes a description of attributes, “power, authority, action and achievement are named as 'masculine' attributes
and are generally highly valued across all cultures. In contrast, 'feminine' characteristics such as service, caring, nurturing and intuitive reason are generally devalued" (p. 2). Are these dualisms still perpuated?

White (1995) believes that good leadership needs a repertoire of leadership styles which allow the leader to adapt to changing circumstances and the needs of the organisation. This would mean that mothers, who learn these skills whilst they rear children, could be advantaged. They react to children individually and this often requires a different style of mothering for each. The challenge is to have the ability to gauge and judge which approach to use in a particular situation, whether it is in the home or in an educational context. By extension of this argument some fathers would acquire similar skills.

In Corbiere's (1999) research it was evident that principals differed in their views on gendered leadership styles. Some supported the view that women had particular leadership qualities that were different from men, others were hopeful that males and females could choose the best management style suited to their personality, the demands of the job, and the appropriateness of the team that surrounded them. Corbiere (1999) found that gender, while not determining how leaders performed their jobs, became relevant in terms of how they were viewed by others and the notion that 'good' leadership meant strong, masculine control was challenged (p. 245).

In Catholic Church settings, Macdonald et al's (1999) study and Tinsey's (1998) research indicated that the clergy had little idea of a consensus style of
leadership as this was not part of the model of leadership for which they were trained. The result is that many of them, the decision-makers, have only one view of a style of leadership. This is particularly problematic for many women aspirants whose potential style may not fit that mould.

Weiner (1994) agrees and believes that leadership should be characterised as flat, democratic, participative, collaborative, team-working, firm and directive (p. 23). It is not clear just how many leaders have styles like this. Another aspect of leadership style is that of facilitator. Duke (1996) provides a description:

Building new cultures also may require changing people's attitudes, values, and ways of relating to each other. It is probably safe to conclude that many of today's school leaders have received little or no training in how to effect such changes. Risk-taking may be a key to growth, but support is vital to risk-taking. School leaders will need to function less as supervisors and more as facilitators and teachers. If they expect teachers to commit to continuous improvement, school leaders also must make a similar commitment (p. 863).

If this style was accepted by panel members many women could be advantaged as they have held middle management positions in schools where this skill was often exercised as they have facilitated inservice activities.

**Leadership Types**

Analysis of studies of leadership shows that in the 1950s good leaders were judged by examining their individual traits during periods of intense change and upheaval such as that of economic, social and political restructuring (Stogdill, 1970). In the 1960s the focus was more on a person's ability to perform tasks and/or be concerned for people (Fiedler, 1972 ) whilst in the 1970s leaders'
styles were often judged by the behaviour of their followers (Ashour, 1973). There was some shift in leadership from an individual activity to a relational activity.

During periods of intense change and upheaval such as that of economic, social and political restructuring in the Western world in the 80s and 90s 'transformational leadership' has been found to appear in the literature more frequently and has regained wide acceptance. This type of leadership is strongly related to satisfaction with the leader and positive perceptions of the leader's effectiveness and the willingness of the organisational members to engage in extra effort. Until the early 1980s, transactional practices of management-by-exception, and a laissez-faire or 'hands off' form of leadership, were the focus of attention for leadership theorists. Alternative approaches were then sought, so the transformational model was adopted by many school communities. This form of leadership can provide the school community with an overall sense of purpose, operating with a shared vision that assists members, "in understanding the larger, social mission of which their vision of the school is part, a social mission which may include such important end values as equality, justice and integrity" (Leithwood et al, 1996, p. 803).

This vision is consistent with both group and individual goals and encourages innovation as well as having the expectation that staff will be hard-working and professional. Leaders respect followers and are concerned about their personal feelings and needs. They challenge them to re-examine some of their work and to rethink how it can be performed, thus providing intellectual stimulation. A
consistency between the leader's behaviour and the values espoused by the group is also required as well as opportunity given for staff to use their expertise to greatest effect. As Leithwood and his colleagues insist, these practices attend to the basic needs of organisational members but, "do little to bring about changes in the organisation" (Leithwood et al, 1996, p. 787).

Interactive leadership is another type that suits leaders who work collegially and are educationalists. If schools are to function genuinely as learning organisations in which teachers and senior management show that they are lead learners, it presupposes a new form of leadership. Leaders who work to encourage participation and enhance the self-worth of their colleagues, are more likely to meet demands of the economy for flexible and adaptable organisations. Rosener (1990) sees this coming more easily to women by virtue of their socialisation "while men have had to appear to be competitive, strong, tough, decisive and in control, women have been allowed to be co-operative, emotional, supportive, and vulnerable. This may explain why women today are more likely than men to be interactive leaders" (p. 124). This type of leadership has potential for staff to feel empowered and for a strong sense of community to be developed. It does not, however, consider inequalities with regard to individual staff. Issues of race, class and gender are omitted. It is presumed that each staff member is articulate and sufficiently confident to participate fully in all school community activities but not all staff fit that category.

Smyth (1998) believes that leadership is, therefore, not simply about charisma, or acting decisively, in the way the educational literature talks of these matters.
The style or image of leadership for him, is first and foremost, educative. There must be a clear sense of what it is that the school communities regard as being valuable and worthwhile, and the mode of operating reflects and projects these understandings. Leadership in self-managing schools is about assisting teachers and parents to search out alternatives which the wider community is prepared to own. Leaders of socially just self-managing schools are able to carry people along with them enthusiastically, and they do this primarily by assisting the school and its community, "to uncover meaning in what they do, while investing in them the capacity to change, improve and transform what they do" (Smyth, 1996, p. 1126).

This illustrates how, from an educator's perspective, the principal's role has changed over the last few years. It has moved from being manager, to bureaucrat, to change agent, instructional leader, transformational leader, and hopefully to educator.

It is a concern, then, that parish priests and panel members may have not fully understood these shifts in the nature of the principalship for changing times.

**Multi-skilled Leaders**

A variety of skills is required of leaders of organisations and institutions. Cox (1996) suggests:

[T]hat a new management style, neither masculine nor feminine, is necessary … We are part of a world which is rapidly changing and we need to develop new leadership structures to match it … We need to value skills, abilities and other qualities in ways which match their outputs and functions, not the gender or class,
race or culture of their owners … We must make a change both in how leadership is perceived and in what it does. A supported and shared leadership concept involves staying in touch with other levels and having time for family and community (pp. 253-256).

We have, however, been socially constructed as male and female, and societal and organisational norms take up narrow stereotypes of gender. Spender (1997) cites an example where additional skills are required. A new context is emerging, that of the digital age. She has this advice, “the digital age calls upon very different leadership skills. Networking, flexibility, decentralisation, communication and cooperation; these are the terms that are now being used to describe leadership in the digital age” (p. 24). Skills required to cope with educational change will be discussed in a later section in this chapter.

The concepts associated with leadership thus have dimensions that go well beyond gender issues, and they are concepts that my research has found to be wanting in the contexts of principals selection in the dioceses studied.

**Self-knowledge and Leadership**

I regard self-knowledge and an understanding of human nature to be essential for leaders to cope. Mainstream writers such as Schon (1991) recommend reflection-in-action for a practitioner so that, “in subsequent cases of his practice, he may compose new variations” (p. 140). When reflection is triggered by uncertainty then the leader is puzzled and asks how can he understand it. This process consists of, “on-the spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understanding of experienced phenomena” (p. 241). Sergiovanni (1998) too, is aware of the need for self-knowledge when change in organisational leadership is required.
Feminists require another dimension, as argued by Court (1994) and Cox (1996). Court (1994) found that women developed a greater trust in, and knowledge of themselves and their styles of leading. Cox (1996) provides some useful advice:

Leadership involves a knowledge of one's self as a basis for serving others, thus women need to work on understanding who we are … Leadership requires a positive sense of self, of knowing our boundaries and our linkages. You have to move into unfamiliar territory; to try something new if you are comfortable with your ability to make connections (p. 266).

Knowledge of self, then, is essential if risks are to be taken. Women have to be aware of how they, as leaders, are perceived by others and how they are positioned.

**Leadership and Positioning for Women**

How, then, are women positioned by these discourses around leadership? Early research (Adkinson, 1981) on the behaviour of women administrators not only showed women to be highly competent, if not better, school administrators than men but that they had a strong emphasis on the instructional process and teacher-pupil dynamics. They tended to be more democratic and seek community involvement, leading to higher teacher morale and parent approval. These early findings are still consistent with recent cross national research about women and educational administration (Shakeshaft, 1987; Ozga, 1993; Blackmore, 1995a). Why, then are women not selected as principals?

Blackmore (1996c) has one explanation:
Significantly, the range of factors impeding women in the 1970's as in the 1990's is similar: women's under-representation in leadership, biases in recruitment techniques, composition of selection committees, job progressions, different job titles and status for equivalent work, unequal sex-segmented distribution of extra-curricular work, separate recreational activities, age and isolation on the job. What is different two decades later are the explanations of these phenomena and the suggested strategies to remedy it. Now informed by radical feminism particularly, sex role socialisation theory and psychological factors have been displaced by more agential theories of action and a sense of context with a shift away from blaming the victim and individualising the problem of 'under-representation' to consider contextual organisational factors (p. 1005).

These shifts also signify feminist challenges to the conceptual models of research which both justified and built upon androcentric concepts and epistemologies. As cited in Blackmore (1996c), Getzels and Guba's model of social behaviour, Kolberg's theory of moral development, Halpin's Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire, Fiedler's theories of leadership effectiveness and Maslow's concept of self-actualisation (p. 1005) all illustrate this bias. The extent of the discussion of the issue alone suggests that a change is required. Schmuck (1996) offers these ideas, "[i]f gender were included in educational texts, women would experience a landscape with which they were familiar, not strangers; where they were active participants in creating a new culture of schooling. Women's voices would be heard, their contributions recognised and their influence felt" (p. 361). Nevertheless, women's positioning continues to be problematic. "While all principals are positioned ambiguously and in contradictory ways by recent reforms, the issue is still highly gendered" (Blackmore, 1997, p. 346) as males hold the leadership positions.
**Leadership and 'Gender Geography'**

My review of the leadership literature has seen isolation emerging as a significant factor in the literature (Coombe et al., 1993a; Coombe et al., 1993b; McLay, 1992). For women there are two significant meanings for 'gender geography'. One is in terms of personal isolation and exclusion, and the other is geographic. If a single woman achieves a principalship in a remote town, she is vulnerable. Issues such as having family support and her acceptance at social gatherings take on some importance. Blackmore (1996a) is aware of the dilemma:

> Leadership is often described in terms of personal isolation and exclusion. But for women principals, usually in the minority, and particularly in small rural communities, they are also excluded from male social/professional networks ... Many women play down their isolation and the sexism of the system and their colleagues in order to survive (p. 346).

My research has identified features of the experience of women in these situations. Religious principals have their communities as sources of support and married principals have their families, but a single woman can feel quite alone.

**Leadership and Changing Structures**

Another cultural or structural change concerns the expectation that principals are always available. This was the case when Religious principals led schools and was my experience as a principal. In recent years lay people have families and obligations to them. This may mean that they are not always available to respond to the needs of members of the school community. Religious principals were expected to have no private or Religious community life. They were
available at any hour of the day. I have seen some members of local parishes continuing to demand the same time commitments from lay men and women. Unless and until these expectations of the parish community towards lay principals (male and female) are recognised and the needs of the principals respected, a major and necessary shift within the organisational culture cannot be achieved. Given the range and type of social change as the twenty-first century progresses, such substantive shifts must occur to reflect these changes.

Schools in the new century will have a different image. Murphy (1995) believes that the image for schools in the twenty-first century will be more communal in nature with the hierarchical, bureaucratic, organisational structures giving way to such communal systems (p. 8). He believes that tomorrow's leaders must replace a traditional focus on stability with a focus on change and they will need to function less as classical managers and more as change agents and embrace principles associated with cooperation, empowerment, community and participation (p. 16). Leaders will lead, not from the apex of the organisational pyramid, but from the nexus of a web of interpersonal relationships 'with' people rather than 'through' them (p. 14).

Grace (1995) observes that if the 'community of leaders' concept is exercised rather than that of formal, hierarchical leadership, the strong leadership culture of the 1980s and 1990s will be challenged. Leadership will then involve being at the centre of a group rather than being placed at a hierarchical distance from it (pp. 60-61). This implies that the task of leadership is to learn from living on the edge of chaos to realise that you are not necessarily out of control if you are not
in control. As the authors of 'Closing the Gender Gap' (1999) remarked, "the difficult demands of home and work, of domesticity and employment, have been constant tensions in our lives" (Arnot et al, 1999, p. viii). Spender (1997) observes that "women have shown themselves to be very good at managing cultural change" (p. 23), yet it is an open question as to how often they are given the chance.

Leadership and Faith Development

The final but very pertinent aspect of leadership to be discussed in relation to my research concerns levels of Faith Development of potential applicants and of those on the interview panels who will select the principal. Catholic Education inherently has an added religious dimension to be considered as these schools are concerned with the handing on of the Catholic Faith. Stages in personal Faith Development, then, are significant for decision-making. A brief summary of one classification of Faith Development by Fowler and Keen (1978) is given. Fowler recalls that, “when I became aware of the research and theories of Piaget and Kolberg, I began to sense that the broadly phenomeno-logical understanding of faith I had learned from Paul Tillich, H, Richard Niebuhr and Wilfrid Cantwell Smith would be susceptible to structural-developmental investigation” (Fowler and Keen, 1978, p. 35). Fowler delineated six stages. I provide a summary of those stages from Fowler and Keen (1978, pp. 42-99).

The first stage (intuitive projective) extends from birth to six years. Faith is received from our parents and our basic attitudes to God are picked up by a sort of osmosis. The second stage (mythic-literal) extends from seven years to
twelve. Parents, teachers, brothers and sisters pass on the stories. They share their Christian heritage. The third stage (synthetic-conventional) begins at about thirteen years and for many, it extends right throughout adulthood. Faith is received from the group or the environment. The game plan is to get into the middle of the group and to stay there. In this stage people do not want to be either too far out in front or too far in the rear. They want to be loyal members, that is, team players. They want to learn what the group teaches and do what the group does, they do not have to know all the answers but there is security in the group. It would be my observation that many priests and parishioners have lived and died in this stage.

For stage four (individuation-reflexive) the shift can occur as early as at sixteen years. People assume responsibility for their own faith system. It does not mean that they reject the faith system that they had in stage three, but they have re-appraised it to authenticate and personalise what they had in the third stage. It does not mean that they will become less community-minded but that they will feel an even greater need for community, as they are then fellow-seekers. A series of polarities forms. Are individuals or the organisation more important? Are spiritual lives more important or is service to others the thing that counts? In Fowler's fourth stage people generally cannot cope with both polarities. They tend to cling to one set and throw the other away. They may pay lip service to the other one but they are really committed to one polarity and they do not care for the other at all.
The fifth stage (conjunctive or paradoxical-consolidative) can be attained at about thirty years. (Perhaps this is why it is recommended by Catholic Education Offices that potential principals have had at least ten years of experience in Catholic Education). In this stage individuals absorb good from the opposite set of polarities. They may be seen as fence-sitters but they have become mature, liberated persons for now they can deal with logic and intuition, organisation and individual uniqueness, loyalty and independence. They can draw from polarities. They move freely, sometimes with difficulty, but a whole new world is now open to them.

The minimal age for entering the sixth stage (universalising) is about thirty-eight years. Few attain stage six, but one who does would experience a resolution of polarities as well as being a god-lover, a people-lover, a community person, an individual, a pioneer, a barrier-breaker—a rare person indeed. Some people are between stages and it goes without saying that a full transition from one stage to another can only take place over an extended period of time. People make progress in one of the categories while they may lag behind in another. This sort of thinking has profound implications for my research, for it indicates a depth of concern inherent in the processes and protocols surrounding the decision to be made as to who will lead the schools in which a major feature of the habitus of faith generation and maintenance is located.

Walsh (1984) argues that Christianity in general, is moving out of Fowler's stage three to stage four. He sees the situation as being one where many in the church want to move out of stage three. They may claim they favour change but they
would only consent to cosmetic changes. Their aim is for unity by uniformity. Stage four is a time of clinging to one set of criteria while feeling negatively toward the opposite criteria. That is one reason why there are so many arguments in the church today. There are those who want to cling to stage three and those who have opposite untenable positions in stage four. Some seminaries and convents offer stage three sanctuaries and are getting vocations to Religious life and the priesthood. The culture of the day, however, is evolving to the stage where unity is found in diversity. This sets the stage for the conviction that those aspiring to leadership in a Catholic school should strive for stage five because only a person who is able to absorb good from opposite sets of polarities will be able to lead people in stage four who tend to cling to one set of polarities. The 'fives' cope with both sides of the dialectical relationship: individual/group, intellect/social, interior/exterior (those who are committed to justice issues).

Walsh continues, “Fowler does not see faith as a noun but rather as a verb. He defines faith as active ‘mode of being in relation’ to God or others, accompanied by belief, commitment, love and risk” (p. 3). I would argue that Faith Development is always in a state of ongoing development. Fowler's set of constructs nevertheless provides a useful framework for the discussion of those issues and is relevant for this study.

It suggests that in parish communities all stages in members would be represented. Tensions could occur especially in times of decision-making when employers, panel members and applicants for leadership have different
understandings of levels of Faith Development. As Fitzgerald (1999) reminds us:

It is important to understand that leadership is contextual-contextual as to the time and place and also to the role and responsibilities that we assume. There is no one model of leadership that suits all occasions and certainly not at all times. Some people place strong emphasis on external authority to give definition to their lives. Others are more intent on developing their own responsibility and resources in a just, fair and respectful community with others. A highly authoritarian church will be attractive to the first group of people, the second group will experience various degrees of discomfort with such an institutional form of church organisation. They will try to move towards more participation and discernment involving the whole people of God (p. 2).

There may be any one of a number of types of 'church' present in any particular parish. Applicants are faced with this problem when they present for interviews, as the parish concerned is inevitably undergoing some sort of idiomatic development.

CHANGE

There are moments of change, transformation and reform and also moments of stability and continuity in Catholic Education. This is the experience of life but in the Catholic system it is of paramount importance where the maintenance of structures and conserving of traditions by Catholic Church personnel are often in conflict with demands for reform by educationalists, a situation giving rise to tension.

Change without leadership is a common enough social experience, but leadership without change seems to be a conceptual impossibility. Successful
change requires a willingness to embrace contradiction and inconsistency, paradoxes, dilemmas, and ambiguity. In this post-modern world of diversity, uncertainty and confusion the need for being open to human creativity, intuition and sensitivity takes on an added sense of urgency. Looking to the past to learn how to manage the future is counter-productive because change, as Foucault (1983) would remind us, is discontinuous. For effective change it is necessary to defamiliarise oneself with the familiar. This is the constant challenge.

As far as education is concerned, I believe, that on the one hand there is an increasingly post-industrial, post-modern world characterised by accelerating change; on the other, a modernistic, monolithic education system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures. Crumbling edifices of bureaucracy and modernity are clung to. Rigid hierarchies, isolated classrooms, segregated departments and out-dated career structures still remain in many places.

**Catholic Church View**

In the added Catholic Church dimension, the tension of coping with change is exacerbated. The male-dominated, hierarchically-structured Catholic Church is labelled world-wide as one of the most stable institutions in existence. I believe many of its leaders are still operating out of a modern world view. They try to tell their members what to believe and what to do. They believe that they speak the truth and there is only one truth. All issues are black and white and all problems have answers. This is the mentality out of which many of the parish priests and members of the parish community operate. In their educational
establishments, it is the principle of the sum of the parts from which the leaders are expected to function. Life is viewed from the outside, as if by an observer. It is static and inert. In some schools subjects are taught in a piecemeal fashion rather than with a holistic approach.

The tension occurs when those who apply for leadership positions in the schools operate out of a post-modern mentality where integration is the ideal and all knowledge is relative, as well as forever changing. Absolute truth is replaced by approximate descriptions. Participants view the world from within, as participants not as observers. Reason and intuition are both sources of knowledge for these applicants believe in an unseen reality.

In these post-modern times the hierarchical organisation of the Catholic Church has, for the most part, I would argue, changed very little. There is more interest in maintaining the structure than engaging in the process of development. There have, after all, been hundreds of years of conditioning. The unpredictability for applicants for leadership positions occurs when some decision-makers (parish priests) are more in tune with process rather than product, are flexible and work, or alternatively, do not work with their parishioners collaboratively, as the case may be. Along with the reaction of the parish priest, members of interview panels can hold a variety of perceptions on how principals should function, all of which adds to the complexity and unpredictability of the process for the applicant.
**Strategies and Models**

Adoptive and adaptive approaches of change have been provided by Hopkins et al (1994). The adoptive approach is concerned with a top-down approach to change. The adaptive method is more sensitive to the situation of the individual school and the local context. There is a capacity for the adaptation of the specific approach to fit the school situation depending on both the environment and the people involved.

Earlier, House (1979) used an organising framework for change which contains three perspectives, “the technological, the political and the cultural” (House and McQuillan, 1998, p. 198). The technological perspective is founded on production, task orientation, efficiency and a mechanistic view of innovation—how to do the job is the dominant concern. The parent discipline is economics, and the primary concern is efficiency. The political perspective is founded on negotiation, resource distribution and the exercise of power and authority. Key concepts include power, authority, and competing interests. The parent discipline is political science, the primary concern is the legitimacy of the authority system. The cultural perspective is founded on a sense of community and shared meanings based on shared values. Central concepts include culture, values, shared meanings, and social relationships. The parent discipline is anthropology with the primary concern cultural integrity.

Then later in the 1980s there were strategies for change that have been framed largely by liberal feminism (Arnot and Weiler, 1993). Promoters encouraged women to do what men did, but to do it better. Emphasis was on leadership,
mentorship, role models, assertiveness training, career planning, networking and building self-esteem. While this approach focused on the primacy of the individual, it did not address the socially constructed meaning of gender and did not change power relationships. Given the contexts of the applicants studied in this research these models prove to be less than satisfactory in framing the discussion of change that they have experienced.

**Skill Development**

Most of the propositions for success in coping with change involve the acquisition of skills: coping with anxiety, difficulties and uncertainty, continuous shaping and reshaping of people's sense of purpose, coping with problems in an active, assertive and inventive way, living with ambiguity and even losing control.

Guidelines for success can be set down for teachers and principals. They involve skill development, listening, reflecting, risk-taking, trusting, connecting, collaborating among other factors (Fullan, 1991, p. 12). Hargreaves (1995) believes that:

Existing literature of educational change offers only limited help to those struggling with these paradoxes. It either addresses change problems of a bygone age, or it relies too heavily on 'pop-management' models of change in the corporate world that transfer rather poorly to education. We need new guidelines and principles for knowing how to work in, lead and renew our schools in our rapidly changing world (p. 4).

He lists principles of renewal, the first of these being 'Moving Missions'. He argues that people cannot be given a purpose as, “purposes are driven from
within" (p. 4) and unchanging shared vision and mission statements may not be appropriate in this age for education. He asks if the process would, "work better if they are temporary and approximate" and explicitly open to renewal (p. 5). If this is the case then individuals need to have the skills to appraise constantly the school mission statements they are following.

Instead of operating in cultures of individualism or even 'balkanised cultures', to use the Hargreaves' (1995) description, where teachers work in sub-groups that are relatively insulated from one another, he recommends that schools need to be re-cultured on collaborative lines as, “collaboration brings together the human resources necessary for dealing with complex and unanticipated problems. Collaboration can also be a source of empowerment and assertiveness … In these ways, collaborative cultures can make the paradoxes of the modern age psychologically meaningful and politically manageable for teachers" (p. 8). This sort of thinking is very relevant to teachers in Catholic Education but teachers and principals may need assistance in acquiring collaborative skills. If and when they do, they can transform individual learning into shared learning within collaborative cultures. Hargreaves (1995) is sure, and I take his point, that these strategies can help educationalists manage the paradoxes of the post-modern age and so take charge of change rather than become, "its conduits or its victims" (p. 15).

In his classic study of the 'Culture of the School and Problem of Change', Sarason (1971) argues that efforts to understand educational change must take into account the three types of social relationships, “those among the
professionals within the school setting, those among the professionals and the pupils and those among the professionals and the different parts of the larger society" (p. 59). It would seem that skills in relating are essential for these relationships to operate because so much top-down change is being imposed. Catholic schools are places of great historical continuity but they are assailed with constant change. In this era of devolution of responsibility there is a further incentive for skill development. Linked with the need to develop skills is the necessity for all involved in processes of change to have accurate self-knowledge.

**Self Knowledge**

Sikes (1992) notes that teachers are in the rather strange position of being both the subject and agent of change. They are required to change themselves and what they do to meet specifications laid down by the policy-makers who neither know them or the contexts in which they work. As mentioned earlier in this chapter in the discussion on leadership, Sergiovanni (1998) believes that deep change in schools affects individuals closely. Our means of self-knowledge will vary according to our sex, age and personal characteristics. It is these unique aspects of ourselves and the type of groups to which we belong, that determine how we will come to know who we are, and then struggle to accept and transcend ourselves to adapt to changes or to bring about changes.

Whitehead and Whitehead (1991) are concerned with true knowledge of self which they label as self-intimacy. The underlying idea is that once one knows and accepts oneself, one can readily and willingly accept others. Not until
people are at home with themselves can they invite others in to share. They need to develop constructive coping techniques. Yet self-acceptance is probably one of the most difficult challenges of adulthood.

Educationalists need to know themselves if they are to cope with the impact of change as, "educational reform is complex, non-linear, frequently arbitrary and always highly political. It is rife with unpredictable shifts and fragmented initiatives" (Fullan, 1991, p. 2). How important it is then for educationalists to be aware of how they react in such situations and how they approach change and how it impacts on them. And then how they lead, as was mentioned above. In this post-modern era people would be advantaged if they had some idea of how they would react when an unexpected situation occurs or when they are trying to affect some change in their own lives and that of others. This is no less applicable to both interviewees and interview panels involved in the sort of life change when moving from the position of class teacher and/or middle management to that of school principal.

**Environment, Experience and Potential**

Then there is the context for these individuals. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) list four elements involved in educational change: the teacher's purpose, the teacher as a person, the real world as a context in which teachers work, and the culture of teaching or the working relationship that teachers have with their colleagues outside the school. These authors recognise that the personal is vital: their motivations, gifts, skills and their interaction both with their environment and with other people affect the way they cope with change. Hopkins et al (1994)
believe that "all successful change requires an individual response. Often the experience of change is individually threatening and disconcerting, which is why we need organisational settings which support teachers and students in the process of change" (p. 41). Leaders have to be sensitive to the above aspects of change. One might well ask how these people become empowered. The environment can hinder or help such movement. Yet we learn from our experiences. We assimilate learnings from reflection on our experiences to colour our perceptions and future choices. Then the broader picture must be included as well as the situation for individuals. Hargreaves (1995) reminds us that:

The struggle for positive educational change must move beyond the school in order to enrich what goes on within it. It must engage fully our hearts as well as our minds. And it must be extended beyond the emotional management of schools to the high powered politics of educational reform and restructuring above them (p. 22).

Women have often had extensive experience in non-paid situations, like the family, but it is doubtful that this experience is recognised. It could be seen that women's experiences in the home could equip them well for subsequent change situations. They have excellent transferable skills yet many interviewers on panels would not regard time spent in the home as professional work time. In this way women could be penalised in comparison with their male counterparts. In the interviewing process the potential of applicants could be taken into consideration as well as their experience. Ruohotie (1996) found that "individuals are increasingly employed by organisations more on the basis of what they can learn, than of what they know" (p. 442). The findings of my research suggest this is far from the case for lay women in Catholic Education.
The local context has an impact on the effects of change. Hopkins et al (1994) commented on the large-scale 'Rand Change Agent' study taken in the USA in the mid- to late 70s. They noted that the nature, amount, and pace of change at the local level was a product of local factors. They observed three specific implications: policy cannot mandate what matters; implementation dominates outcomes; and, local variability is the rule, uniformity is the exception. The culture of the institution, then, is of paramount importance. Other authors would support that notion, “the transformational leader must stimulate a collaborative culture by establishing the prerequisites necessary for such collaboration and stimulating the teachers to continue developing, collaborating and striving to realise the school's mission and target goals" (Van den Berg and Sleegers, 1996, p. 675). The constant challenge is for educators to be in touch with the changing culture of their particular environment which, "includes not only language, ethnicity and race, but other crucial dimensions such as social class and gender, because they may be key factors in explaining educational achievement," (Nieto, 1998, p. 420). As well, "culture can be understood as dynamic rather then fixed, as a process instead of just content, and as historically and socially contextualised rather the insulated" (p. 421). Groups must be constantly teasing out what constitutes their culture and how they are responding to change.

Murphy (1995) says that a century-old concern for independent work and competition is slowly receding in favour of more co-operative learning relationships, a focus on the social dimensions of human existence (p. 10) and a learner-centred pedagogy replacing the more traditional model of teacher-
centred instruction. Teaching will then be more like coaching where the student (as opposed to the teacher) is the primary performer. In tomorrow's schools, teachers will act as facilitators, modellers, guides, scaffold-builders and coaches (p. 12) as mentioned in the previous section on leadership. Again different skills will be required. It is possible that this could mean that women are advantaged by such changes. Then the sorts of situations described in my research will have to be revisited.

**Stability and Changing Mindscapes**

The see-saw aspect of stability and change is a fact of life. The effects of change, however, can be muted intentionally or unintentionally in which case only minimal transformation occurs. "Stability and change, it appears, co-exist because of the tendency of stability to absorb changes without altering underlying forms and assumptions" (Sergiovanni, 1998, p. 576). Arnot et al (1999) found that, "school cultures and … management cultures seemed to be particularly impervious to change" (p. 30). The crux of change is how individuals come to terms with the reality of the change in the context of their familiar framework of reality. In other words, their interpretation of what the change means for them influences what they do subsequently and how they do it.

Before parish or school culture can change, many meanings that are both collectively and individually held must often change. Perhaps the situation would be different if it were possible to move instantly from one set of meanings to another. But that is not how it happens. Sergiovanni (1998) points out:
The period in between causes the difficulty. Changing a culture requires that people, both individually and collectively, move from something familiar and important into empty space. And then once they are in this empty space, they are required to build a new set of meanings—a new set of norms, a new cultural order to fill it up. Deep change, in other words, requires the reconstructing of existing individual and collective mindscapes of practice (p. 577).

Conserving stability can drown the effects of change, and enthusiasm of participants can be dampened. The female participants in this study are already showing signs of such effects.

**Structure and Culture**

The context and functioning of Catholic Education depends on both the structure and culture of the organisation as a whole. It is helpful to heed the sociologists' distinction between structure and culture. Ignoring this important distinction is one of the main reasons for the confusion that reigns in the discussions of culture and by implication its impact on Catholic schools. Hopkins (1998) expresses it this way:

> Structure and culture are of course interdependent, and the relationship between them is dialectical. Structure influences culture, but it works the other way around too. Structures are often regarded as the more basic and profound, in that they generate cultures which not only allow the structure to 'work', but also justify or legitimate the structures. On the other hand, changes in culture, that is, value systems and beliefs, can change underlying structures. The two go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing (p. 1051).

The question of the possibility to change the culture, and hence the structures in Catholic Education then arises. For women, the perennial problem persists. Newman (1995b) also knows what the implications will be, “any real change
will involve challenges to established sources of power and so is likely to meet with considerable resistance" (p. 280). Changes in the ownership of power in Catholic Education would certainly meet with resistance.

Newman (1995b) has a further observation. Seemingly because some women have been successful, and hence visible, those selecting principals no longer feel the pressure to award leadership positions according to merit thus:

Women are stuck on a curious plateau. Some gains have been made. But those very successes now make forward movement difficult. The structures have adapted to our pressure, let a few of our representatives in, just to be able, it seems, to carry on as before. Now that women are no longer totally absent and overwhelmingly disadvantaged, the scandal effect has dissipated, and it is hard to assert the uncomfortable truth: that real equality is still far distant. It now calls for considerable courage on the part of women, and a perceptive awareness on the part of men, to acknowledge the legitimacy of this new cycle of demands (p. 275).

There are still many women who are struggling to be successful in their attempts to become a leader. The problem that I have researched hinges upon the question of what else must change so that a higher proportion of lay women become principals in Catholic primary schools. Marrying the concepts of change with power in the Catholic Church provides some insight into the barriers lay women face when accessing principalships.
In this chapter I discuss the conceptual and methodological approach I have adopted. This study has investigated women's experiences in accessing principalships in Catholic Education in three dioceses in three states of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. Its particular focus was to identify the hindrances women experience when they endeavour to access and attain principalship positions in Catholic primary schools.

**Methodology: The Selection of the Theoretical Framework**

I have adopted a feminist research approach which is characterised by an emphasis on lived experience. I have done this because in focusing on the everyday life of women, the connection between public and private is more likely to be revealed than if I used quantitative approaches.

Feminists have argued for the need for a different language based on women's experience which can inform social theory. Feminist researchers are committed to changing the position of women in their organisations and in society in general.

Women, as Ferguson (1984) argues, need to, "resist from where they are, not from where they would like to be" (p. 208). They leave no room for moments of self-creation, mediation or resistance. The aim of this research is to allow lay women moments of re-creation and hope.
Having reviewed several theories I was convinced that the use of the Feminist Standpoint Framework was the appropriate one for this study. Women researchers and theorists have come to see that male experience is taken as the norm of what is truly human. They know who they are by a double process, through the male hegemonic vision of reality with women as outsider, and women as subjects critiquing their own experience. Women exist in a peculiar tension of both being subjects and being denied as subjects (Weiler, 1988, p. 54).

Harding (1987) describes the process of feminist research as "studying up instead of studying down" (p. 8). She lists three features that distinguish examples of feminist research:

The first is that it generates its problematics from the perspective of women's experience. It then provides new purposes for social science, to provide for women's explanations of social phenomena that they want and need, and thirdly, by studying women from their own perspective, women can understand themselves. These features can be thought of as methodological features because they show us how to apply the general structure of social theory to research on women and gender (p. 9).

I, then, as the researcher, am not an invisible anonymous voice, but a real historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests (Harding, 1987). Women's daily experience must generate the problems requiring sociological exploration (Harding, 1987, p. 84). Weiler (1988) insists that feminist research is also "politically committed … committed to changing the position of women and therefore changing society" (p. 59). This research focuses on lay women seeking leadership in Catholic Education and it has the
intention of understanding how more women can move into principalship. I also intend to make recommendations to facilitate this outcome.

**Feminist Standpoint Theory**

In searching for a framework that begins from women's experience, I observed that Feminist Standpoint Theory fitted my inquiry well, “women are at the 'fault lines' of organisations; they see the discrepancies between what traditional knowledge tells them, what they 'should experience and what they 'actually' experience” (Schmuck, 1996, p. 356). This theory posits that marginalised people will be able to identify theoretical positions more fully by virtue of their marginality outside the dominant discourse but within the culture.

This theory, then, is appropriate for at least three reasons: it validates women's voice as evidence of how things work for them; it recognises the differences, complexity and taken-for-granted nature of organisational cultures and value systems in the Catholic Church; and, it indicates how those at the centre can learn from those at the margins.

Smith (1987) has developed a sociology from the standpoint of women, one which provides an understanding of social relations in a patriarchal society. She describes women as 'subjects' and 'knowers' in the sociological enterprise. This approach to research, "aims to give voice to women's concerns and to describe and analyse women's oppression. The personal truly becomes the political" (Griffiths, 1984, p. 513).
Women in educational administration, and I have been one of them, are often "outsiders within" (Schmuck, 1996, p. 347). Women who have been successful in achieving principalship may well identify with these sentiments. From my journal, “I felt today that at the meeting my contribution was not really heard" (June 3, 1997). I am interested in creating a space for women to tell their stories as, "in creating a discourse of women, we created ourselves, women, as subjects of that discourse" (Smith, 1993, p. 184).

Smith speaks from her own experience:

> We, women, have found ways of speaking and have created discourse that in multiple ways and from multiple sites of experience, speak for and to us ... We've learned in practice that women's speaking, as such, has things to tell us of their lives, of how things happen, of their work and struggles, that we don't already know, that discourse hasn't already previsaged (p. 189).

**Women's Experience as Silence**

The method of inquiry advocated by Feminist Standpoint Theory is an inverse strategy. It is one that traces women from where they are, and addresses the problem of how their everyday worlds are constructed in a world not of their own making. In societal norms, the power of the male hierarchy is evident and in the Catholic Church it is even more pronounced, as I described in Chapter Two. Smith (1987) believes the micro-view provides insights into the manner in which the patriarchal order has been created when specific examples illustrate the way in which the dominant group puts the principle of sexism into language.

So the problematic of the everyday world arises precisely at the juncture of particular experience with the generalising and abstracted forms of social relations organising a division of labour in society at large (Smith, 1987, p. 157).
Smith further observes that "in almost every area of work in opposing women's oppression we have to resort to women's experience as yet unformulated and unformed, lacking means of expression, lacking symbolic forms, images, concepts, conceptual frameworks, methods of analysis and lacking self-information and self-knowledge" (p. 58). Schmuck (1996) agrees and insists that:

The social construction view posits that women (and minorities), because of their minority and marginal status as administrators in public schools, simultaneously find themselves as 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in school organisations. Thus, as 'insiders' they adopt the roles, norms, behaviours and expectations of the role they occupy as principals or superintendents. But, because the conditions of social gender roles demand it, they remain 'outsiders' because they do not reflect the cultural expectations of the role of leader as male. Women administrators are therefore marginalised. Women who are administrators must find new ways to behave because they do not meet the cultural expectations of being male in the leadership role (p. 355).

In this study I wanted to hear stories from women about this insider/outsider experience. Feminist Standpoint epistemology is both a product of, and reaction to, Enlightenment science. It begins with women's experiences and works outwards along the fault lines seeking out the interruptions and the contradictions, thereby asking different questions, raising different issues and testing theories (Blackmore, 1995a, p. 7). To begin from the standpoint of women is to begin from a subject that stands fully embodied in a material, local world (Smith, 1987, p. 83). Then, as Cockburn (1991) explains, men and women may be brought back to their bodies rather than operating out of the masculine discourse that emanates from a disembodied, invisible man. There has been a 'peculiar eclipsing' (Smith, 1978) of women from male culture. There is a silence, an absence, a non-presence. I provided an environment where lay
women were given a voice so that processes of oppression could be identified. What was their standpoint?

A standpoint is an interested position—interested, in the sense of being engaged. A standpoint carries with it the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible. This contention has claims such that the vision of the oppressed group must be struggled for, and represents an achievement which requires both science to see beneath the surface of the social relations and the education which can only grow from the struggle to change those relations. It requires an engaged vision and the understanding of the oppressed, “by creating a situation in which hitherto marginalised groups can name themselves, speak for themselves, and participate in defining the terms of interaction, a situation in which we can construct an understanding of the world that is sensitive to difference” (Hartsock, 1987, pp. 189-190). The adoption of a standpoint exposes the relations among humans as inhuman, points beyond the present and carries an historically liberating role.

Women's concerns and experiences are determined and ordered by processes external to and beyond their everyday world. According to Smith (1990), because of this positioning, women often do not know how to begin from their own experience and to make themselves, as women, the subjects of the sociological act of knowing. Women's experience has been a resource but not the basis for a position from which sociology as the systematic study of society
and social relations proceeds. "A feminist sociology must be an 'insiders' sociology therefore, made by women and men from a definite standpoint in the society, and in the interests of those who make it" (Smith, 1990, p. 32). In this way, then, this study heard the insiders' voices and noted their stories.

Flax (1987), however, reminds us that any feminist standpoint will necessarily be partial. Thinking about women may illuminate aspects of a society that have been previously suppressed within the dominant view. None of us, however, can speak for 'woman' because no such person exists except within a specific set of relations to man and to many concrete and different women (p. 642).

In the use of Standpoint Theory, essentialism (a feminist version of the eternal female) is not desirable. It is not intended to represent all women equally, to speak with one voice. Smith (1990) speaks collectively but encourages each woman individually. "The standpoint of women is in a new place. We begin from the site of our experience with the ways in which we actually exist, and explore the world from where we are" (p. 200). In addition, "I have emphasised in my work a distinctive standpoint for women not necessarily as a general attribute of women as a class of persons … [rather] an experience of work around particular individuals" (Smith, 1989, p. 34). She believes that generalising relations, objectified knowledge, universalised forms are always to be made problematic (p. 37). She introduces the concept of 'problematic' where the inquiry and the researcher are located in actual lived situations. It is in the everyday world, not in theory, where sociological questions originate. "The standpoint of women situates the subject in women's lives, in people's lives, not
on the textual surface" (Smith, 1990, p. 203). This is especially so of the position of women in the Catholic Church as neither their voices nor their experiences have often been heard.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, non-inclusive language and discourse have alienated women. "Women need to hear themselves named if they are to be treated as equal in importance to men" (Desmarchelier, 1999, p. 65). Discourse then is an actual social process. Investigation cannot be confined to the text alone but must take into account the socially organised practices including sequences of talk that are integral to the discourse process. Kenway (1993) says that "it is through discourse that the social production of meaning takes place, through which human subjects are produced and power relations are maintained and changed. An individual's identity then, is the on-going result of the discourses that have shaped his/her history and which shape his/her world at the moment" (p. 69).

For the methodology used in this study these things mean that the truest account is that from the subject. As Blackmore (1999) explains:

Women's construction of their life stories was part of how they made meaning of their lives now and not merely an unproblematic rendition of a previously lived reality back then. Experience is constantly redefined by pre-existing discourses, both patriarchal and feminist. Women's experiences as leaders in the 1970s (when Religious led Catholic schools) were shaped by a wider range of discourses about women and leadership, feminism and femininity, education and inequality, professionalism and mothering. By focusing upon the similarity amongst women through biography and autobiography, feminists have produced new collective truths which, in turn, frame other women's stories (p. 67).
This is a challenge to women in Catholic Education. Again the dilemma occurs where lay women find themselves in contradictory and ambiguous situations, “social institutions such as schools and education bureaucracies are made up of many different and often contradictory discourses and discursive fields. Some of these are dominant, some subordinate, some peacefully co-existing, some struggling for ascendancy” (Kenway et al, 1994, p. 189).

**Concept of Problematic**

The conceptualisation of 'problematic' is intended then to hold a relation between the sociological subject and a sociology. In arriving at the formulation of the everyday world as problematic we find a sociological subject who is located in a particular material setting. The term 'problematic' is used to talk about matters at the level of concept or theory rather than at the level of experience and action, so as not to confuse with problem (Smith, 1987, p. 99). The everyday world as problematic is, "the place within which the consciousness of the knower begins" (Smith, 1987, p. 88).

The problematic of this study begins with everyday experiences of women as potential principals and their particular case studies in an organisation like the Catholic Church. The concept of problematic directs attention to a possible set of questions that may not have been posed or a set of puzzles that are latent in the actualities of the experienced world. The questions themselves, the inquiry, the puzzles and perhaps the issues are the means of developing the problematic as an inquiry (Smith, 1987). "The problematic of the everyday world arises precisely at the juncture of particular experience with generalising and
abstracted forms of social relations organising a division of labour in society at large" (Smith, 1987, p. 157).

In the light of these comments, it is essential that the experiences of potential leaders be heard:

Making the everyday world our problematic instructs us to look for the 'inner' organisation generating its ordinary features, its orders and disorders, its contingencies and conditions, and to look for that inner organisation in the externalised and abstracted relations of economic processes and of the ruling apparatus in general (Smith, 1979, p. 183).

Some women are very aware of this inner organisation. In my own experience I felt its effects every day in society and in Catholic Education. Previously sociological discourse has maintained its hegemony over experience by insisting we begin with a conceptual apparatus or theory. Here the beginning point is experience.

**Difference**

A potential problem with Smith's work is that she proceeds from the standpoint of women who are like her. Stanley and Wise (in Stanley, 1979) wonder how Smith would specify a Feminist Standpoint Project for women who are unlike her—those who embody a standpoint she could not share (p. 366). Weiner (1995) is not fazed by such a criticism of Standpoint Theory. She believes that a Feminist Standpoint recognises difference between women and also provides the framework for the recognition of differences within and between other social groupings.
This research moved away from the valorised 'I' to a renewed commitment to 'we' (Luke, 1994, p. 224). It is a philosophic commitment to coalitions of 'we' built around points of affinity (p. 227). This was achieved by listening and affirming each woman's story as each had individual and different elements as Luke (1994) believes that women want to take charge of the rules and of those disclosures that define centre and margin, insider and outsider, ruler and ruled. It is for women in Catholic Education to identify how they are positioned in the process. Many women have been positioned in a discourse where the individual has become an object of knowledge both to herself and to others, in order to know herself and to be known (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). Davies and Banks (1992), from a feminist post-structuralist perspective, discuss how we come to understand ourselves as having an 'essential self' through consistent positioning within a frequently-used discourse. That positioning then appears both to the person and to others to be a feature of the person rather than the discourse (p. 13).

The concept of difference, then, is difficult to accommodate into a system like the Catholic Church as, “difference cannot be readily accommodated in a system which reduces all difference to distinction, and all identity to sameness” (Gunew, 1990, p. 340). Feminist critical theorists such as Braidotti (1991) insist that feminist theory is all about difference. Ferguson (1993) reminds us that essentialism attributes women's psychological and social experiences to fixed and unchanging traits resident in women's physiology. Essentialism is a universalising move that takes the patterns visible in one's own time and place to be accurate for all. Indeed, that is the difficulty of talking about women as a
group. She develops her approach and uses 'mobile' rather than 'multiple' subjectivities as 'mobile' combines appreciation of difference with involvement for change rather than 'multiple' which implies movement from one stable resting place to another.

In my research, teachers (potential leaders) were being studied. While this group of teachers represents an homogeneous sample I did not assume them to be alike in all respects. Rather, I worked on the principle that generalising projects avoided, "homogenisation of women's experiences" (Jones, 1991, p. 107), in terms of recognising each experience as individual.

In my studies I heard 'truths' not already discovered, and used Smith's (1989) concept of the everyday world as problematic as the framework for my inquiry. I began, "from where the subject was actually located" (p. 38). Unlike other methods of inquiry, Smith's approach was not clearly defined. The problematic had to be developed and this put additional pressure on me as researcher. Neither the questions nor the issues were crystal-clear, as is typical of this type of research. Because I was studying the everyday world, situations were fluid and changing, and sometimes even chaotic. In contrast to using theories where parameters are fairly constant, the experience at a local setting was difficult to contain in a structured way. Yet Standpoint Theory provided a different 'lens'. My study had to preserve the presence of the active and experiencing subject. It seemed to me, however, to be the most appropriate framework for my particular research. My aim was to identify the gendered power relations women experience in accessing and maintaining leadership positions in Catholic
Education in three states, and the effect these power relations have on women's aspirations and actions.

This study has focused on critical questions for educational practice in the Catholic system with the intention of changing some aspects so that women may be able to access leadership positions more effectively. As Smith (1984) insists, "we are struggling to find new modes of understanding and changing the world … to create ways of organising and preventing us from becoming merely a means to enterprises which endanger these actualities and are not ours" (Smith, 1984, p. 401, emphasis in the original). Changing the expectation that males are the most appropriate leaders in Catholic Education is just one of those aspects.

Feminist Standpoint Theory, then, provides a sense of agency, a notion of fluidity as well as a stability of structure with an emphasis on difference and experience rather than feeding into dualisms. I found that other approaches were less relevant for my research. Hartsock (1987) and Flax (1987) are also key contributors to this Feminist Standpoint Theory which is one of the major feminist contributions to the rearticulation of the subject. It also offers a very powerful critical framework for explaining the relationships among knowledge, power and subjectivity (Hennessy, 1993, p. xvi). Because women have virtually been excluded from positions of influence (and particularly so in the Catholic Church), they have been unable often to offer themes and hopes to sociological and theological discourse. Arnot and Weiler (1993) have provided some voice for women but women are still largely silent in the discourse that develops the conceptual apparatus into which sociology is locked. Yet "the only way of
knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within" (Smith, 1990, p. 22). From this standpoint then I kept my own journal, participated in peer group discussions, conducted focus groups and also distributed questionnaires. My study was about making space to allow discourses to arise and asking questions about silences, as well as providing the opportunities to hear the stories of those on the margins and at the 'fault lines'.

**Method**

Harding (1987) defines a research method as a technique for a way of proceeding in gathering evidence (p. 2). Taking a feminist perspective in this research has meant that the method I have selected has been consistent with this ontological stance. As Reinharz (1992) explains feminist research is, “research by women” (p. 4). She adds that, “women have not one but many voices” (p. 4). They understand, “the experience of women from their own point of view” (p. 52) because, “there are women’s way’s of knowing” (p. 4). She also insists that, “feminist research practices must be recognised as a plurality” (p. 4). The design of this research reflects a feminist approach in the use of multiple methods to explore the issue by the gathering of statistics, journal writing, peer group discussions, questionnaires, and focus groups. It also breaks down the power differences between the researcher and the researched and the ownership of the information is shared with the rejection of traditional interpretations of objectivity. These methods have generated stories of experiences of women and some men who have been involved in Catholic Education as potential leaders, principals, board chairpersons or parish priests. The reason I chose to include men was to hear their observations of the treatment of women as well as to hear
their own experiences for comparison. Taken together they generate a rich picture of the field I have examined. Catholic Education, within its own parish community and along with the wider community, has then an additional dimension to that of the government system.

The sociology that Smith (1989) has developed is one that is not exclusively for women but one that addresses society and social relations from the standpoint of women by taking their own experiences and those of other women and asking how they are organised and determined and what the social relations are that generate them. This positions women's experience as source rather than as object. Women then share in the common construction of a social reality rather than in one formulated and controlled by men. Smith's approach also provides richness of detail by approaching the 'problem of women' as indeed as much as a 'problem of organisation'.

I believed that the Ed.D provided an appropriate framework for me as an educational practitioner seeking to engage in research in my professional context. It gave me the opportunity to complete my doctoral studies while being directly contextualised to my workplace. I valued the opportunity to feel 'empowered' to look at my own practice in critical ways. I related well to the way that the Ed.D was 'embedded' in practice and I found that it was a challenging program that lived up to its commitment to critical approaches to self-reflection, research and practice.
Gathering of Evidence

My aim was, firstly for breadth, to identify patterns; secondly for depth, using focus groups, to hear the richness of individual stories; and thirdly, to reflect on practice in the Catholic system regarding selection processes for principalships. This was a multi-method, multi-stage study that collected information from surveys and focus groups. I sourced the relevant statistics from the three Catholic Education Offices in the respective dioceses under examination, and supplementary statistical data from the National Report on Schooling in Australia (1998).

Research Stages

My research has been in several stages, the first of which was the collection of relevant statistical material which is not normally available to schools. Then I generated questions for the second stage which was the compilation of the questionnaires (Attachment 5). These were distributed to appropriate stakeholders - parish priests, board members, potential leaders and principals, as mentioned above. Following the compilation of material from the questionnaires, themes such as power, change, sexuality and gender emerged. These gave me material for questions in the focus groups. The third stage was the organisation and implementation of the focus groups. Throughout all stages I was cross-referencing with my journal entries. The fourth stage was an examination and analysis of the data generated, drawing on those feminist research concepts I have suggested earlier in Chapter Five.
Audit

To support the argument that there is an under-representation of women in principalships in Catholic Education I collected the percentage of women in workforce and the percentage of women who are primary principals from each of the Catholic Education Offices in three dioceses in three separate states. I also checked dates for the introduction of policies at a diocesan level for Gender Equity, Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Sex Discrimination. This was necessary as there is not a centralised system of implementation of policies in any of the dioceses. Schools are autonomous and, although they are recommended strongly to formulate such policies, it is not mandatory for them to do so. School board members decide which policies are relevant to them. Part of my investigation involved checking if these policies had been formulated in the schools studied. This would give an indication of the importance (or lack of it) that local groups placed on such issues.

Journal Writing

The journal that I kept allowed me to maintain a personal response that the statistics alone could not give. I lived through these times and was a professional in the field. I was able to understand better what was happening to me as, "experiences are comprehensible only after they occur" (Holly, 1984, p. 10). These entries could, "be revisited and examined for the overt and covert messages they contain" (p. 2). Material from audio tapes provided by the university gave me additional practical points regarding the process. Journal writing also helped me to be sharper in my responses as I became more reflective. As Fulwiler (1987) notes it allows for revision by, “writers looking
back at prior entries, realizing they have changed their minds, and using the journal to update and record their later thoughts” (p. 3). Also, “reading back is an important aspect of journal-keeping. It is only in retrospect that we are sometimes able to apprehend the unique patterns of our own personal thoughts and actions as well as the subtle regularities of the environments in which we work” (Nicassio, 1992, p. 15). Green (1993) gives additional reasons for using a journal, “writing fixes the dynamics of thought and meaning; it provides the basis for holding these dynamics steady and making them available for contemplation and interrogation; it makes them tangible in a way that simply keeping them ‘in the head’ can never do” (p. 5). Smyth (1992) adds a further dimension, “in a journal, the writer can carry on a dialogue with various dimensions of experience. What happened? What are the facts? What was my role? … This dialogue between the objective and subjective views, between description and interpretation, allows the writer to become more accepting and less judgemental as a flow of events take form. Actions interconnect and take on new meaning” (p. 3). For all these reasons I found journal writing most beneficial. Connections with other situations then became obvious. Journal writing was central to my Ed.D as it brought together workplace issues, professional concerns and research interests.

**Peer Group Discussion**

I participated in peer group discussions which I found to be very supportive both personally and professionally.¹
Questionnaires

Aside from personal, professional and academic insights generated, for myself as a 'novice' researcher, it was necessary to hear the voices of the stakeholders in this study. I compiled questionnaires for the relevant groups in Catholic Education. They were potential leaders and principals, parish priests and board chairpersons. Questionnaires were compiled to suit each group of respondents and were administered to ensure confidentiality and sensitivity. I have included a sample copy (see Attachment 5). The content was similar so that comparisons could be made, but some specific questions were tailored to each group since there were both employers and potential employees included. The responses to these questionnaires provided themes for discussion in the focus groups. These themes included power, change and sexuality. I collated the content of these questionnaires manually as several questions were open-ended. One such question asked the respondents to comment on their experiences in applying for leadership positions. Another asked for statements about experiences as a panel member for the selection of a principal or alternatively as one who had been interviewed for that position. These responses provided insights into how people experienced the processes of selection. I decided to use questionnaires as the method for collecting information from parish priests and board chairpersons in particular, as it was envisaged that their levels of attendance at focus groups would not be high, due to their busy schedules and often distant location from where I was holding the focus groups. It was very important for my research to hear their views. By sending questionnaires to principals and potential leaders I received a wider response as participation in focus groups was limited due to both numbers and to location. Potential leaders were identified as teachers who
were suitably qualified, had at least ten years experience, and usually held positions of responsibility in a school. I asked principals to distribute questionnaires to staff who qualified using these criteria. I provided stamped addressed envelopes for the return of these questionnaires.

**Focus Groups**

In order to flesh out the bones of the research data provided by my own reflections and answers to questionnaires, I conducted a number of focus group discussions. These were intended to provide 'depth' whereas the questionnaires provided 'breadth'.

The use of focus groups is a data collection technique that capitalises on the interaction within a group to elicit rich experiential data (Astbury, 1995, p. 414). Focus groups provide qualitative data that gives insights into attitudes, perceptions and opinions of participants (Krueger, 1988, p. 30). As Krueger (1988) also suggests, focus groups are not intended to develop consensus or to make decisions about a course of action to take (p. 30). They can have a particular advantage in providing in-depth information from the perspective of the participants (p. 7).

The selection process for the focus groups began with an invitation being sent out to schools in the three dioceses, and participants volunteered. I have included a copy of one of the invitations (see Attachment 6). Then I set my schedule of visits to each of the areas, and host principals invited potential leaders and principals to their schools to participate. In larger cities I had
separate groups for males and females as well as a mixed group. This allowed me to observe if there was any difference between the responses in a mixed group compared with those in a single sex group. I found that openness of discussion occurred in both types of groups. Before conducting the focus groups, however, I checked if participants would rather have separate sessions, and accommodated groupings accordingly.

The method of operation began with a Plain Language Statement (see Attachment 7) being sent to each participant. Once people had agreed to participate in the research, participation forms were signed and returned. Consent forms were given to each person at each focus group session (see Attachment 8). These were signed and returned also. Permission was asked of participants for taping to occur. The transcripts were typed up and then sent to participants to check for accuracy. All were signed, and with some minor changes, returned. They, and the tapes, were stored in a safe place. One statement had been made in the group after the recorder had been turned off. I asked the provider of that statement to authorise me to use it even though it was not in the original script. Permission was granted. Three times only a statement was incorrectly assigned. In each case the person who made the comment was found. All then were returned with initials beside individual statements.

Group size ranged from four to twelve. This satisfied the research provided from Astbury (1995) who suggests that a group of six to twelve individuals is desirable (p. 415). The one with only four was conducted in a very remote area with few teachers available. I conducted eleven focus groups. There were four
groups of females, two groups of males and five mixed groups. I included males in both the separate and mixed groups in order to compare their experiences with those of the females. Differences did emerge as will be discussed in Chapter Six. I was interested in men's perceptions of women's experiences as they worked side by side and were aware that their peers applied for principalships. I also wanted to hear of their experiences and compare them with those of the women. This study was about the social relations of gender, and how femininities and masculinities are constructed in relation to each other.

To initiate discussion I provided an overhead transparency sheet with some 'key starter' words and I asked each participant to reflect on her/his experience. I have included a copy of the 'starter' sheet (see Attachment 9). My initial intention was to create an atmosphere in which interviewees felt knowledgeable, and so I encouraged participants to tell their stories in their own way, rather than restricting them with set questioning.

I found women recounted anecdotes and confirmed one another's stories. "A woman listening with care enables another woman to develop ideas, construct meaning and use words that say what she means" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 25). I believe that this certainly happened and tended to confirm that the, "best tactic to give women a voice and space within which to speak is to start with personal stories" (Luke, 1992, p. 10).

I was wary of disclosing my story as, although self-disclosure by the researcher often promotes meaningful conversations, there is a danger that the researcher may be self-disclosing out of her own need rather than the group members' need
to know about her. In my case, as a Sister, my story was not as relevant to lay women and time could have been wasted. I was acting on the research that suggests that speaking like this allows women to be subjects not objects. "I will never know the experience of others but I can know my own and I can approximate theirs by entering their world" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 113).

Many of their stories had never been told. "The only way to accomplish this writing of a subject who has been restrained from public writing and speech, is to start at the very beginning—to speak of her understanding of her experience as 'other'" (Luke, 1992, p. 4). After each of the all-women sessions, some of the women commented that they felt secure in these groups discussing issues that women face. I did not hear any comment from those in the mixed groups. Perhaps I missed some useful information from them, or there was not the same level of security and openness in mixed groups.

The advantages of using this method were that data was provided more quickly and at less cost and I was now able to interact directly with respondents. Large amounts of data were generated and respondents reacted to and built on responses of other group members. A variety of individuals and settings was used and verbal responses were easy to understand as Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, p. 16) found. Focus groups were held in staff rooms or in general purpose rooms, usually on the respondents' turf, where they felt comfortable.

There were some difficulties, however. Firstly, some responses can be hard to summarise, but by the use of tape-recording and then having an excellent typist,
I was able to hear all contributions. The scripts were sent back immediately to participants who checked them, so I was assured that I had captured responses accurately. Secondly, bias in discussion could have resulted if the researcher tended to direct the process but I found that the conversation flowed easily. Thirdly, a difficulty can arise concerning the complexity of the analysis. This was certainly the case as so many views were expressed. It was accentuated by the fact that the problem was very complex, diverse, unpredictable and even contradictory. Rich material resulted.

Following the process of analysis as described below, three broad themes of change, power and sexuality emerged, along with sub-headings such as application of Equal Opportunity legislation, effect of qualifications, career opportunities, interview practice and influence of the parish priests, as will be shown in Chapters Six and Seven. I showed then, that there is an over-riding dilemma experienced by women. For reasons of anonymity I used simple descriptors that came out of the locations where the respondents were working or their personal details. It was certainly true, as the theorists list regarding focus groups, that the researcher has less control of the process than in individual interviews (Krueger, 1988, p. 47). I conducted a final focus group eighteen months after the initial ones. I offered an open invitation to those who had participated previously. It consisted of almost the same members as one of the earlier mixed groups. This was a validating or checking exercise. The observations made there will be discussed in Chapter Seven.
**Process of Analysis**

Using a framework for data analysis as suggested by Huberman and Miles (1994) I utilised three linked sub-processes: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. For data reduction I selected and condensed the data by coding, margin notes and clustering the material from the questionnaires and tapes into several broad themes. Then I assembled the information into a more organised display. Links and networks emerged. I found the use of metaphors with actual one-line quotes from the scripts assisted me in focusing in on the key themes. This resulted in a more condensed and clustered arrangement and further links appeared. Distinct patterns of relationships were evident. Validation was exercised by conducting the final focus group as mentioned above.

**Issues of Ethics**

The ethical considerations in this process were important. As Punch (1998) insists ethical issues are, “more acute in some qualitative approaches. This is because, while all social research intrudes to some extent into people’s lives, qualitative research intrudes more. Some qualitative research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people’s lives, and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information” (p. 281). Whilst participants were keen to tell me their story I needed to be sensitive to each person’s situation so that chances of their future employment were not hampered as a consequence of information divulged. Put another way, “because the objects of inquiry are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them” (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 70). I did not see any potential risks, stresses
or discomfort arising from my research. I did, however, see that the problem of confidentiality might arise with regard to comments on Catholic Education, from professionals employed by that same organisation. I moved to minimise that through a process of transcripts of focus groups. I indicated to the participants the material that I intended to use. Each person was at liberty to strike out any material which that person considered to be potentially damaging. This material was not used in the thesis or in any other way. Each tape was coded and the name of the location of the group was stored separately from it. Where specific information has been cited from the material arising from the tapes, participants were referred to in terms of the coded names and not by name, or any other form of personal identification. Similarly, all transcripts have been kept separately from the tapes. All tapes and transcripts have been securely stored and have not been, nor will be, made available to any other researcher or research project. All data will be stored for a period of no more than five years before the tapes and discussion summaries are destroyed. All participants were free to withdraw at any time during the research without any adverse consequences.

Consideration of other Potential Problems

There were questions I asked myself before I began. Would the participants feel threatened, silenced, muted because I held the highest position of responsibility in Catholic Education in one of the Dioceses? Would these participants feel that their careers could be affected? As I was well known to most of the participants, I needed to be aware that, "the greater the intimacy and the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship the greater is the danger" (Stacey,
1988, p. 24) for exploitation. I needed to be sensitive to that as, "fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships" (p. 23).

I found that in the Ballarat diocese participants in focus groups were all too eager to participate and travelled miles to be present. In the other dioceses participants were somewhat hesitant initially, until I interacted socially and built up a rapport with them. Then the conversation flowed. For the former group I was an insider, whilst with the latter I was an outsider. I could possibly be intruding into their world. I wanted to build up a relationship through an ethic of care by a feeling towards other women as if they were my sisters and we had profound positive relations and shared interests (Noddings, 1988). I wanted to hear from some men also to compare their perceptions and experiences both regarding themselves and also hear of their knowledge of experiences of women in accessing principalships.

Some feminist research is about telling stories and I enjoyed hearing these. I found it a privilege and wondered sometimes if I was invading their privacy. What were the ethical considerations? With women baring their souls about their lives, was I intruding? Such was never evident to me. In fact, participants seemed to want to share their experiences. Stories told by women do not occur in monologues but are often the product of a developing relationship between participants and the researcher. As the participants in the groups were all teachers, I found that the conversations continued outside the formal group situation.
Response rates to the questionnaires varied. Only 22% of the Board Chairpersons returned their forms. It was pleasing to receive 42% of the employers’ responses (who were mostly priests) as I was aware that I would not hear their views in any other way as they were not members of the focus groups. 61% of the male principals responded and 58% of the female principals. There were principals in some of the focus groups so if they had missed out in expressing their views in the questionnaires then they had the opportunity there. With regard to the potential leaders, principals were asked to distribute the questionnaires to teachers on staff whom they felt were ready for principalship. These were selected with respect to qualifications and experience, as mentioned earlier. Some had already applied for principalships. Responses were received from over sixty teachers but it was not possible to know their origin as all were returned in stamped-addressed envelopes. This number provided me with rich data for my study and assisted in formulating questions for focus groups around the themes of power, change and sexuality, experiences at interviews and the influence of the parish priest.

I have explored the relevant literature which has informed this study and discussed the reasons for selecting the particular theoretical framework that I have used. In Chapters Six and Seven the findings of this research are discussed.
In this chapter I show that many women have overcome personal barriers but there has been little corresponding shift in the culture of particular institutional sites and of the church in general. Government legislation and the efforts of women themselves have mostly been ineffective in assisting lay women to achieve principalships. ‘Female disadvantage’ has been sharpened. In the second section I draw on Eveline’s notion of ‘male advantage’ within the same theoretical framework of Feminist Standpoint Theory.

Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) identified both internal and external barriers that hinder women from taking up formal leadership positions in schools. Internal barriers included such factors as low career aspirations, self-limiting beliefs and attitudes, lack of motivation and poor self-image. External barriers were sex-role stereotyping, discrimination in schools and society, lack of adequate professional preparation, too few role models and the demands of family and home life.

Still (1995) categorised barriers into four general areas: cultural, organisational, individual and governmental. The type of government in office and aggressive legislation were key factors in the governmental section, and factors in the individual basket were similar to those listed by Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) who also added the factor of women's lack of access to information. Yeakey and associates (1986) found that men have dominated the gate-keeping positions to publication in professional journals, to entry and advancement in academic
positions, to policy-making positions in professional organizations, and to the
definition of subject areas taught by academic departments (p. 117). In this
chapter I canvass these as possible explanations of the situation encountered by
the women participants of this study.

Historically the twentieth century has seen administration become identified
with 'masculinist' cultures which are hegemonic in particular contexts. There are
both unseen barriers and overt impediments of this 'male advantage' for women
in their endeavour to access principalships. Foregrounding gender exposes the
functioning of power, authority, sexuality, hegemonic masculinity, and identity.
Qualities required for leadership within institutions and selection panels favour
males. Many more males are earmarked, groomed, and mentored. Catholic
Education again, exacerbates 'male advantage'. This introduction notes the
barriers that lay women have experienced and is relevant to this study as a back-
drop to additional barriers that have emerged from the findings.

From my study of women endeavouring to access principalships in Catholic
primary schools, it became evident that women are becoming more confident
and are far more ambitious than the cohort I met eight years previously when I
began considering the under-representation of women in leadership in Catholic
primary schools. The issue is not about women’s confidence or ambition but the
cultural context in which they work.

Women have worked hard to rectify their supposed insufficiencies, for example,
lack of financial/administrative skills. They have participated in professional
development activities, formed networks with other women and upgraded their qualifications. Colleagues and mentors have advised women of these requirements. Many women have become more professionally and personally equipped and family leave entitlements have improved. Instead of women using their sick leave entitlements to care for their children, in 1998 carer’s leave was introduced in Catholic Education which entitled carers to twenty days of leave. Maternity leave was also extended to six weeks. These entitlements provide women with more flexible arrangements in their home commitments (if they have any), which they re-arrange. This is no less the case for the women that I have studied in this research than in any other group.

But the statistics show that women are not accessing principalships in Catholic Education at a higher rate than they were ten years ago. There must be additional barriers that prevent women from achieving their goal. The findings of this study show that they are significant.

The organising framework that I have used in this section is that proposed by Eveline (1994). I show that women are disadvantaged and 'male advantage' prevails in the selection of principals. This advantage for men is more deeply ingrained in the Catholic Church than in secular organisations as the tradition and rationale of the Catholic Church legitimates hegemony in Catholic Education. I show that there are layers of expression of this 'male advantage' throughout the whole organisation and system which is Catholic Education.
IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

Focus on Women

“Equal Opportunity is for those outside Catholic Education”

In this chapter I show that the focus has been on women and their perceived deficiencies. As already discussed in Chapter One, Governments passed down legislation on Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Sex Discrimination. This was meant to alleviate the problem of a low proportion of women accessing principalships. These pieces of legislation were obviously insufficient tools to effect improvement in the numbers of lay women accessing principalships in Catholic schools, as the numbers of lay women principals did not increase since their introduction.

In one of the dioceses studied there was only one female principal out of fifteen in their larger schools in 1999. Responses to my questionnaires show that 75% of the Board chairpersons felt that either the Equal Opportunity legislation had had no effect or they were not sure of the effect, in the selection of principals. Also, 86% of the priests (the employers) were either unaware of the legislation or said that it, and the Equal Opportunity programs, had not made any difference. From the potential leaders, 73% of the female and 50% of the male potential leaders indicated that there had been no great impact.

Comments such as the following sum up the perceptions of some of the respondents concerning the ineffectiveness of this legislation in Catholic Education. From a potential female leader, “Equal Opportunity is for those
outside (Catholic) Education”; and another insisted that, "discrimination is alive and well". One male potential leader even felt that, "there won't be an impact until someone in the Catholic system uses the legislation to appeal against an appointment of a principal". Clearly, they had little confidence in the effects of the legislation. If, as Arnot and Weiler (1993) suggest, the focus of gender equity policy is on changing women to be more like men, then once a critical feminist mass has been achieved, a cultural shift to inclusivity would be evident.

There is a gap between Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action policy and practice. There was no evidence from my research at the local level that this gap was seen as a problem that needed to be investigated. The ideal situation would be that, "the implementation gap, that is, the discrepancy between policy text, intention, and practices, is evaluated in terms of micro-political interference, policy symbolism, and competing hierarchies of oppression" (Morley, 1999, p. 47). It would seem that the situation is no different in other countries. Datnow (1998) reports, “from discussions with feminists in three European countries, it was evident from their responses that current intervention on policies for equality appears to be contributing little to challenging cultural reproduction" (p. 72). As in Australia, "the policies remain at a symbolic level, with limited attention to implementation and monitoring" (p. 72).

**Successes of Equal Opportunity Legislation**

"Women have pushed further"

The questionnaires suggest that there have been some successes, however, resulting from the Equal Opportunity legislation and programmes. Many
respondents commented on the increased awareness of the possibility of principalship for women and the confidence this engendered. Two male potential leaders commented, “women may be more inclined to apply;” and, "I believe females are being encouraged to acknowledge their giftedness and what they can bring to leadership roles”. "It has given those females who have wanted to pursue such a role the confidence to do so", was a comment from one of the more senior female principals. And from three others, “I think that more women are considering the possibility of taking up a principalship;” "some feel confident in applying for those positions;" and "women have pushed further". These successes in confidence-building, however, have not resulted in more lay women achieving principalship. Internal barriers have lessened, at least for some women in this study, but external ones are more immutable.

It seemed that number balancing could be the motivation for the introduction of the legislation. It was stated by a frustrated female potential leader that, "blatantly equalising numbers just to equalise the numbers is often counterproductive”. It seems one way of rectifying this problem is, "the 'add women and stir' approach, as this way of making research more gender-inclusive is sometimes known, [which] would remedy some of the deficiencies of leadership research" (Sinclair, 1998, p. 111).

**Backlash**

"If you were a bloke ... you didn’t have a hope in hell"

A different reaction to the legislation and programmes was the backlash for males. One male principal commented that, "it used to be that there's all male
principals but now it's going the other way", and from another, "the boys would say for a while there, when we were getting this Equal Opportunity business that if you were a bloke and you went up for it (a principalship) you didn't have a hope in hell until they achieved the balance". These comments illustrate some of the backlash that exists, and bear out Faludi's (1991) findings that, “backlashes have surfaced with striking frequency and intensity—and they have evolved their most subtle means of persuasion" (p. 47).

Historically, "a backlash against women's rights is nothing new. Indeed it is a recurring phenomenon: it returns every time women begin to make some headway toward equality” (p. 46). So males reacted in predictable fashion. In some areas, "the pressures of the backlash only served to reinforce and broaden the divide. Women became more radical, men more conservative" (p. 60). This male was definite, “I mean, I have a real problem, even with gender and equity. I can't think of anything that I think of, apart from the toilets, as male and female". Williams (1992) is not surprised, “men's experiences in these non-traditional occupations reveal how culturally embedded the barriers are, and how far we have to travel before men and women attain true occupational and economic equality” (p. 265). Decision-makers can believe they have complied with the legislation if the numbers of women achieving principalship have improved slightly but other women can sometimes be disadvantaged. Lingard and Limerick (1995) insist that Equal Opportunity legislation is a necessary but insufficient condition for improvement (p. 3).
**Blocking**

"You belong in the kitchen remember"

In Chapter One the presence and influence of ‘Queen Bees’ was mentioned. Sinclair (1998) found that in her research the influence of Queen Bees is overstated (p. 138). This was also the experience of women in my study, however they were also present in a different guise. Rather than mentoring a younger woman, or believing they could achieve success on their own merits, these women block the advancement of younger women by citing reasons that they should not apply. One was told by a female panel member, “you belong in the kitchen, remember”. Another found that it was the female members on the panel who blocked her advancement to principalship. They were looking for the male leader. She reflected, “it was often by the female members of the interview panel ... there is just that perception that the male will provide stronger leadership”. Another female participant was told by a male panel member, “the little woman should be home with the children”. From Newman (1995a):

> [E]ven in organisations where equal opportunity initiatives are well developed, their cultures may be resistant and intractable. The informal organisation may continue to transmit cultural messages about the 'proper place' for women; and a gendered hierarchy, with men mainly at the top and women mainly at lower levels of an organisation, may be sustained and reproduced through cultural messages about the value of male and female labour (p. 11).

**Grooming**

"Males are definitely earmarked"

In this study I found that grooming of males for leadership began very early in their careers. From one, “you (a male deputy principal speaking) started
grooming whether you liked it or not, with some sort of a leadership role from the minute you walked into a school. In some ways we are groomed, in primary schools, almost from the minute we graduate". Grooming for some really began during training. At Teachers' College, the females remembered that, "our guys were told that. 'Oh, you'll be right,' meaning, 'they'll get the jobs'". One fellow recalled that, "during the first semester at a general assembly at Teachers' College we were told that 'most of you males will be principals within ten to fifteen years'". He wondered then, "how would the females feel?" Then he added, "the community put that sort of pressure on you too". One male was asked after only six years out of college, "are you a principal yet?" Whereas for his wife who had the same experience, "it has just not entered her mind" even though he had told her "I think you would be good at it".

As I mentioned in Chapter One, Williams (1992) uses the phrase 'the glass escalator' to describe the experience of males in a female dominated occupation. She believes, "the crucial factor is the social status of the token's group—not their numerical rarity—that determines whether the token encounters a 'glass ceiling' or a 'glass escalator' " (p. 263). And she adds, "the experience of tokenism is very different for men" (p. 263). Glass escalators were very much in evidence in this study. 'Glass ceiling' refers to the barrier women experience when they can progress no further up the scale of promotion. In contrast 'glass escalator' is the metaphor used to describe the ease with which males move up the ladder of promotion.
I found that 70% of female potential leaders believed that males were targeted. In contrast, all but one of the male principals felt that both males and females were groomed for principalships. These same men were unaware that their male peers were groomed. "Many are males", or "mainly male in my experience", or "usually male", were comments made from potential female leaders with regard to those groomed for principalship. One was very definite, “the males are definitely 'ear-marked', at least for the principal positions". From Williams' (1992) research, one teacher knew that, “his principal's personal interest in him [had] landed him his current job" (p. 259). She also found in her research that, “men are effectively being 'kicked upstairs' in the process" (p. 256) and another revealed, “I was recruited immediately to start getting into the track to become an administrator" (p. 256).

As will be seen later in this discussion, “men take their gender privilege with them when they enter predominantly female occupations; this translates into an advantage in spite of their numerical rarity" (Williams, 1992, p. 263). Female potential leaders, then, feel disadvantaged. With the demise of Religious sisters from Catholic schools, it was also the experience of lay women that, "nuns seem to prefer males," and their opinion was thought to have some sway in the decision-making process for principalships.

I have used the terms ‘grooming’ to describe the treatment given by principals or those in authority, such as university and training college lecturers, towards prospective applicants for principalship. In contrast, mentoring is usually exercised by peers.
Mentoring

"You need someone who can guide you and help you"

From her research Williams (1992) agreed, “women are generally eager to see men enter 'their' occupations. Indeed several men noted that their female colleagues had facilitated their careers in various ways (including mentorship in college). However, at the same time, women often resent the apparent ease with which men advance within these professions, sensing that men at the higher levels receive preferential treatment which closes off advancement opportunities for women” (p. 260). In this study, I found that instead of being annoyed, some women became surprised when a woman was employed, “you think then why did they employ a woman, were there no good males applying?” They, women, were almost resigned to the outcome, “it's always the saying isn't it, 'oh you're a bloke, you'll get the job’ ”.

Mentors were seen as invaluable by young female teachers. As one said, “[you need] somebody who can guide you and help you and it's things like finding out your best skills and highlighting those". Sinclair (1998) reminds us:

Mentors nourish self-confidence, particularly in early career. A mentor can plant the seeds of a woman's sense of her eligibility for leadership, which if left to her own devices she might never acknowledge or act on. The most important thing a mentor can do is say … 'why don't you try it'. As with other factors, a mentor is a welcome but not essential ingredient in women's apprenticeships to leadership (p. 91).

Modelling, too, has helped some women as observed by a male principal. "I think that (being a principal) is happening now more because they see that
others (women) have done it". Modelling by her mother was one of the pluses for one female experienced teacher. She believed her mother was, "a woman well ahead of her time. She certainly didn't sit back and allow things not to happen in her life. She made them happen". This participant felt that actions like this were then 'caught' by members of the family, "especially the girls". Closely linked with mentoring is the degree of encouragement that applicants do or do not receive. It is less planned and more spontaneous.

**Confidence and Encouragement**

"I don't think I can do this"/ "Have a go for it; you are capable"

One older, experienced curriculum advisor had been encouraged in later years by female mentors. Her experience was, "that women recognise particular gifts in individuals and encourage their use, more so than do men". Like the teacher quoted in the previous section, it began in her family, "my mother's influence. We were always encouraged to do things and she was a person who took on great challenges and I suppose I followed in her example to a certain extent". Encouragement was mentioned several times by participants, but one male principal felt that, "I don't think many males would need to seek the same reassurance as would females. Women kept on saying 'I don't think I can do this' whereas (Tom) was less reluctant than the ladies". In contrast, he believed that for a male, "if the desire is in you, you'll pursue it". "I didn't have much trouble to convince (Joe) to be a Religious Education Coordinator, but you need time to convince ladies, female teachers, to take on these. Affirming needs to happen to bring out the leadership of others". Women themselves believed that, "if you get a bit of encouragement along the way to go for the job, you think, well, I've got
nothing to lose, go for it, and you do”. One male principal said that there was a, "need to encourage more women really to put themselves forward, encourage them and give them confidence. Unless we push, it doesn't happen”.

This is one of the internal barriers women have to overcome. As mentioned in Chapter One, Sampson (1987) found that women needed encouragement. From my research, more than a third of the female potential leaders believed that men encourage other men to apply for principalships. They felt that encouragement comes from both male and female leaders, “females are being encouraged more than in the past, given leadership tasks and encouraged to do courses”. One experienced female teacher said, “I've had a couple of male principals who really encouraged me”. She remembered that one had said to her, “yes, have a go for it, you are capable”. Then, “I had another principal. She encouraged me to apply for it. It has been women that have generally empowered me to advance in different directions and take on leadership roles and not men at all. In fact, sometimes I think men have tended to want to squash me back down there”. Another female deputy principal said she would not have looked at a leadership role and, "it wasn't until it was suggested to me and encouraged that I started thinking about it and they boosted my confidence a bit". She asked some other friends. They said, “go for it, you're doing a great job and we think you are capable of it”. Another concluded, “we don't affirm each other very well at all”. So encouragement helped confidence-building.

One female experienced deputy principal was grateful for the opportunity to be an acting principal as, "until you actually have the 'hands-on' experience, you
can then feel confident". Experience in the role was an added bonus. Another female acting principal believed that experience, "has just added a dimension to my portfolio that would be a definite bonus if I was going for principalship". This process would be a typical entrée into principalship. This particular aspirant, however, was not successful just prior to her participation in a focus group.

Often when women return from maternity leave, they take time to regain their confidence. One current female principal suggested to one female potential leader, “well, I think you are capable of this, apply for some of these leadership positions". Another principal felt she needed to encourage other women as, "you can see leadership in some young women".

Being articulate is essential, “it is very important that you would be able to express your ideals for the position ... with principalship. It is having confidence in your own ability and disciplining yourself to go on with that".

Confidence rated highly, “someone who comes across as being extremely confident is going to be someone who can convince the panel they can do the job". In contrast, “if you didn't show any leadership, you wouldn't be considered". One female's friend, "went away and did this course and came back and said 'Yes'. It was just a case of her confidence that she could do it".

A female potential leader revealed that, "I know that I wanted to be a leader in a Catholic school". She realised that, "it is important that you would be able to
express your ideals for the position", and to "communicate with staff and even at assemblies". It was observed by a female potential leader that, "most males during some stage of their life want to get some form of leadership. Most females do not have the same drive; it may be not the same goals is probably more accurate. Women have to set all sorts of other goals".

Even at the interpersonal/professional levels, then, women find themselves very much in need of encouragement, specifically in terms of having or acquiring the confidence to consider themselves as suitable candidates in the first instance, let alone applying when positions become available. As mentioned earlier, this is one of the internal hurdles that women have to overcome. It is a salient aspect of this research. One learning from this research is that women are mentoring each other more. Confidence is engendered in each other. They see the potential in other women and encourage them to pursue their careers.

**Feminisation of Teaching**

"The token man"

There has been an increase in the percentage of female staff in schools in recent years so, “schooling has become even more feminised and indications are that this trend will continue’ (NBEET, 1994, p. 5). Fifty-nine percent of teachers in Australian schools were female in 1984. By 1991 the percentage was sixty-five percent. And as quoted in the introduction the percentage of female teachers in Catholic primary schools in all three states studied was over 70% in 1999.
Because of the feminisation of teaching, the community often wants a male principal to counteract the imbalance of the sexes. This leads then to the local community favouring male leadership. They were, "always looking for blokes because they have got all female staff—even if it be the token man", and, "a male presence was something that the school community saw as important". One woman realised when she was being interviewed for principalship and replacing a Sister that, "I was creating an all-female staff and therefore it became an issue and how that would be dealt with". Previously the community had not apparently counted Sister as being a female. One teacher was more logical, “teaching has really been dominated by females over the years so therefore the principalships should be dominated by females as well". But this is not the case. A male member of one of the focus groups observed that, "all the big towns [sic] in this diocese were male principals". One male principal felt that schools are, "top heavy with men compared to women and the bulk of the organisation is women", "and it's a minority of men who have the power and the positions". Another male principal of about five years' experience reflected, “when I was appointed there were no lay female principals in the diocese in the primary sector. And there hasn't been". But he did not have a solution.

In the year 2000, female teachers in Australia schools outnumbered males four to one, yet males still outnumber women in senior primary positions as principals (Australian Council for Educational Administration, 2000, p. 3). Females dominate at middle management levels. As one said, “most FAPs (First Assistant to the Principal) are female and unit leaders”. One female focus group participant quoted for her diocese that, "the proportion of males to females in the
teaching system is unbalanced towards females but in the leadership roles one out of five is a female". It is this disproportionate feature within the numbers, shown statistically, that I have felt the need to explore with some depth in terms of Catholic Education culture and practice.

**MERIT, AGE AND QUALIFICATIONS AS DISCRIMINATORS**

**Merit**

"One would hope that all would be on an equal footing"

The merit principle as a basis for selection is linked in this discussion. The most common non-merit factor for selection in my study was found to be related to gender. One potential female leader observed that, "males have received leadership positions because they have been there longer and they are male" and the staff are told, "it would be good for them (males)". Another had heard that, "even if a male hasn't proven themselves [sic] it might be good for them. It might make them 'pull their finger out' by giving them responsibility". She added, “where is the justice in all that?” It was her desire that, “one would hope that all would be on an equal footing". But she was disillusioned.

In the study carried out by Corbiere (1999) in Queensland, merit was viewed by principals as gender neutral and they rejected the view that selection criteria, interpretation of leadership qualities by selection committees, and the concept of merit itself reflected gender bias. This was not my finding.
Johnston, Yeakey and Moore (1980) had concluded after their analysis twenty years ago that "macro influences will only serve to perpetuate the status quo and lock in the existing disparities and patterns of under-representation" (p. 130). Changing structures does not necessarily change cultures—this is certainly one of the findings of this research I will discuss more fully later in this chapter. Poiner and Wills (1991) believed that policies and programs were aimed at changing the sex or race of staff positions but dominant values and patterns of work usually remained unchanged (p. 38).

The following comment from a current male principal once more vindicates this perception, “the Catholic Church is unable to change so women will still be discriminated against". The Catholic Church is part of the wider society. Itzin (1995b) believes that there are limits for equality in any organisation as, "the limits are determined by the inequality which exists in the wider society" (p. 150). One potential female leader commented, “one would hope that all would be on an equal footing and the best person would get the job. Unfortunately life's not like that ".

One of the board chairpersons commented in his response to the questionnaire that, “bias in the part of male Catholic clergy" (against females) was evident to him. One of the two female parish leaders in one diocese commented, “the parish priest wants a male". Comments from two priests accentuated their position, “a family man offers security and commitment to the school and parish”; and, "none (women) reached our short list". That sounded decisive and almost as though he was pleased about that outcome. An experience from a
female potential leader, “on one occasion the decision was made to employ a male prior to interview and yet I had to go through with the interview when the parish priest had decided already”. And another, “I think that they (women) need to know that their cases will be fairly judged, but I don't know how you can change the prejudices held by parish priests and some of the parents”. Merit, as a criteria for selection, has been lost in this sort of conceptualisation. This issue is referred to in the discussion in Chapter Seven on the influence of the parish priest as powerful decision-maker.

**Age**

"She's blonde and she's young"

Age, too, is linked to Merit. From a young potential leader, “if you happen to be female and you are looking for a leadership role, society goes against you as instead of getting a leadership position on merit it is decided according to gender, even on age, or both”. And another added, “because you are female, age comes into it a lot more than if you are a male. They accept males younger for leadership roles than females". In 1999 in Victoria there were 122 male principals under 45 and only 43 females in the same age bracket. In another of the dioceses studied, the male principals were younger than their female counterparts. Women felt that whatever their age it was held against them, “either people think you're too young and you wouldn't be able to do it or you're too old and you wouldn't know anything anyway". These comments fit with the theory espoused by Itzin and Phillipson (1995) who believed that there is a 'glass ceiling of age' for women (p. 82). They saw it as an institutional barrier,
“whatever age they are, women's age is held against them. They are never the right age; they are either too young or too old" (p. 85).

Age and gender then, intersect often to the disadvantage of women. One female potential leader felt, “the hurdle may be before making the decision about whether or not to apply in the first instant. Sometimes a woman is seen as being 'pushy or full of herself' because she puts herself forward. It is acceptable for a young, aspiring male to push himself forward, more or less the accepted thing". When one young woman had acquired a principalship there was an element of surprise expressed by the local community. They were reported to have said, “she has achieved a position of power that is well and truly in advance of what most other women around here have achieved, and she's blonde, and she's young, and she's fit". One woman was given a warning by her parish priest. He hoped, because she was young, that she was not going in to, "do everything quickly" and another was told, “you're not old enough to be a vice-principal". A male consultant commented, "we had a single female principal, young, attractive and she ended up in real strife. But she was followed by another female who was separated, slightly older. And she hasn't had any trouble. So it could be a life-stage thing. I'm not quite sure of that. I think the older thing might be it". Regarding the young men, one female potential leader remarked that, “I don't know if they're always good educationalists. It is just that they started with a small principalship young." Age then, is a discriminator for women, something repeatedly borne out in my study.
Qualifications

"It's like trying to plant the right sort of grapes"

Qualifications and skills are a necessary requirement, yet they do not mean success for applicants to leadership positions. The educational needs of students in each parish school are fairly unique with an emphasis on one particular aspect of education in one location and a different emphasis in another. For example, in one parish, particular qualifications in Religious Education were the first priority whereas providing for local community needs was a requirement in another. As one female potential leader reported, “I know a (person) who employed a centre half-forward”. There was no mention of educational expertise in any subjects or particular qualifications.

These are covert and overt reasons for selecting a male. Women, however, are aware that qualifications are a definite pre-requisite. A female deputy said, “if you don't have them you don't even get to first base really, because it is all looked at on paper”, and another, "if you haven't got equivalent to men going for the job, you're abandoned". They believed that it's, "the bit of paper regardless of any other merits you have. If you've got that piece of paper it is more official".

Qualifications, however, do not come without cost. If you are a married woman, "you've got family life to attend to. That leaves very little time to gain your qualifications". One female teacher, "realised that [her] reputation solely wasn't going to get her a job". She obtained additional qualifications so she could, "articulate [her] theories and beliefs about teaching and learning and reflect on [her] own goals". One of the principals interviewed commented, “I do think
you'll find there are a lot more women principals who have done more study than men". But obtaining qualifications is complicated. As one female potential leader expressed it, "picking the right one (course) three years in advance isn't always easy. It's like trying to plant the right sort of grapes". As this comment was made in a horticultural area, it would seem that the local analogy had some truth in it.

There were gender-related inconsistencies. One potential female leader looked at a current male principal and thought, “I look around and I think, well you haven't got this, and you haven't even got that. I've got that and that. And the powers-that-be are often male (parish priests) who are insisting on these things". One potential female leader had observed that a male principal she knew did not have the appropriate qualifications for leadership, “there is a justice thing here and principals should be qualified". She found that there was no consistency, “I think there is such a range of standards when it comes to qualifications". These different ‘rules’ are part of the ‘different steps’. It was interesting that both male groups I interviewed did not mention qualifications, yet for their female counterparts in the same towns it was a significant issue. One woman lamented that, "it seems that a lot of experience doesn't count". For women, transferable skills such as those necessary to rear a family are not recognised.

The effect on women of the lack of recognition of merit is that they can feel so disappointed when they are constantly upgrading themselves, especially as there is a myth that, "as more women earn professional degrees for entry into traditionally male professions, cultural beliefs about men and women in the
work-place will change" (Glazer-Raymo, 1999, pp. 30-31). But the experience of potential leaders was that it often takes years, if ever, for women to be successful in achieving principalship. A female deputy believed she'd taken all the appropriate preparatory steps to become a principal, “I've worked so hard. I've studied. I've done all the courses. You take all the preparatory steps. I was an REC (Religious Education Coordinator), POR (held Positions of Responsibility), and an AST (Advanced Skills Teacher). You work hard to get all these little steps along the way”. Yet she did not get the position she applied for.

In this study no males reported a similar experience for themselves or for their male peers. Some women had been working towards principalship for a long time. One female applicant said that she, "started working towards principalship in 1985 and achieved it in late 1995". And another, “I have always been interested in the work principals do and have been a keen listener and observer of those principals who have opened their doors and hearts to me. I have learnt a lot from them". From a female deputy, “I went to inservices for aspiring principals and made sure [my] application letter was well written and that I had all the certificates and references ready". Some women have had their eyes set on a leadership position for many years but they continue to be unsuccessful. "The fact that women are no longer confined to the bounds of a domestic mode of production, but have considerable access to the public economic sphere, means that they are now doubly oppressed in the home and in the workplace" (Brittan, 1989, p. 106) and this study asserts it is triply so in the Catholic Church, a point upon which I enlarge in Chapter Seven.
Advocates of equal rights tend to under-estimate the tenacity of obstacles deterring women's upward mobility. The acquisition of qualifications, the effects of Equal Opportunity legislation and the building up of personal confidence may get women an interview but then they often get no further. Even if Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies disallow certain things such as preference for a male or for a married person, attitudes still prevail and the effects multiply.

**Women's Careers**

"Queen of the toilets and garbage"

Married women can demonstrate that they can cope with many and varied tasks as they experience large workloads and exercise flexibility daily. They are capable of taking on multiple roles and changing careers. Their career paths are typically 'accommodated' (Limerick, 1995). Decision-makers are often unaware, consciously or unconsciously, that, "women's careers and lives are undergoing profound change. In Australia, two-thirds of women are back at work within eighteen months of child-bearing" and "traditional stereotypes of the breadwinner are almost bound to be wrong" (Sinclair, 1998, p. 4). From one mother, “you have got to try and balance everything if you want to be a leader and you work hard". Realistically, another said, “I believe that a married woman can cope with the many and varied roles”. Yet another, “you have got so much more to juggle but a woman can be a very organised, structured type of person”. A female principal in her second school described her role. It was:
[J]ust juggling because you have a lot of roles as well as the leadership role. A woman has the ability to think of many things at once and to be able to do a number of things at once and if you are going to be 'queen of the toilets and garbage' you need to focus on that and all the other myriad of things that need to be done so that people need to pick up on this.

It is often a balancing act between commitment to family, husband, school and also their parish church. One female potential leader had the experience of being told, “but you don't belong there, Sally”. Yet she wanted, "to be taken seriously. This is my career and I am serious about it. I'm sticking with it. I'm going to have it until I retire". She was amazed but insistent, “they're thirty. They're not sixty-year-old brain-dead people," and, "my father-in-law can't understand it either". She reminded those in her focus group, “this is the people I am dealing with". A couple in the group thought that this mentality had changed, "now this is the 20th century". But she was insistent, “no, I don't think it has (changed), not where I live anyway". It has been of importance in this research—this perception of women's professional careers not being seen to be as important as those of their male counterparts.

Wacjman's (1999) research validates the position of these women:

The approach in much of the literature on gender and careers tends to focus on women's difference: the way women experience different careers, as a result of their family circumstances. In my study, however, the women have adapted to the predominant male model of a successful manager and are pursuing the same organisational careers as the men. They have made a conscious choice either not to have children or to organise childcare and domestic life so as to be able to dedicate themselves to their careers. Yet they are still treated as different from men and their career progress is blocked. The sexual contract thus constitutes all women as workers with domestic responsibilities (p. 82).
My understanding of women’s careers following this research shows that women are able to juggle personal and professional roles extremely well. The women themselves know what they have to do even if the communities they live in have not made that transition. Change happens slowly, as Sergiovanni (1998) notes, with stability often absorbing the possible changes.

**Absence of Women in Leadership**

"Very much the whim of the community"

Sinclair (1998) lists stages which represent the range of conceptualisations and explanations for the absence of women in senior management such as principalships. The first is denial as the absence of women from executive levels is not regarded as a problem or a core business issue; the second is women: they just need to adapt to male norms. For the third stage she believes that the problem (if there is one) will be solved by incremental adjustments at the margins to allow access to individual women. These three stages show how the Absence Arguments are constructed (p. 19). These Arguments are tenacious as they focus on what women should and should not do and obviate deeper and more challenging introspection of the organisation and its practices and policies. This allows the executive in business to have faith in the company and conclude that, “it was the women who failed to ‘stand the heat of the kitchen’” (p. 24). One potential leader felt that success for women was, “very much the whim of the community” as any one of the Absence Arguments could be called on. Sinclair's explanations fit the findings of this study well. Women have been seen as deficient. What is needed is a commitment to a new culture. Recognition of
the exclusion of women from positions of leadership indicates a symptom of deeper problems requiring solutions focused on the existing culture. As they stand, I have used the foregoing series of statements, to inform my deliberations of features highlighted in the participants’ responses to my questioning.

GENDER RELATIONS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Gender, then, is one of the key factors which impacts on the functioning of the particular organisation. It influences how power and authority are exercised in the State, in the Catholic Church and in Catholic Education. In broad terms, it is the culture that governs the overall functioning of the organisation. Culture is essentially composed of a number of understandings and expectations that assist people in making sense of life. It is a living phenomenon through which people create the worlds in which they live. These cultures vary, sometimes depending on the location. An organisation the size of the system of Catholic Education will have many different cultures.

As I stressed in Chapter Two, "culture is an extraordinarily complex concept, and extremely difficult to define" (Angus, 1995, p. 66). Theorists are in two camps: those who treat culture as something that the organisation 'has' which is then able to be manipulated and controlled, and the second group who regard culture as something the organisation 'is' (p. 68). "Much of the literature directed at administrators adopts this second broad definition in its account of culture as a concept yet it takes on the first definition that culture is an artefact that can be
manipulated and controlled when advocating of prescribing managerial action" (p. 69).

Angus (1995) believes that:

Rather than a uniform concept of organisational culture simply being imposed from above, or bequeathed from the past, contest occurs over the construction and assertion of cultural forms. Organisation members as active and knowing agents have the capacity to influence organisational culture and structure while also simultaneously adapting to and influencing to come extent institutional cultural expectations both within the organisation itself and more broadly in society (pp. 69-70).

I do not believe that lay women, as active and knowing agents, are able to influence organisational culture regarding the employment of more lay women as principals in Catholic Education. The powerful hierarchy of the Catholic Church and many parish priests sustain their intentions of selecting males as leaders in their schools. They call on patriarchy and kyriarchy which have underpinned the culture of the Catholic Church for hundreds of years. As one consultant reflected, “women get told, put in their place as to what their socially expected behaviour is to be”.

It was observed by Mills (1988) that "organisational cultures were frequently cited as explanations for the failure of equity discourses in the particular establishments" (p. 73). I have come to the same conclusion.

Instead of listing women's deficiencies I will now show the features of this culture which impede women's success in achieving principalships in Catholic Education. Eveline (1994) agrees, “it had become customary to justify equal opportunity policies through a discourse of 'women's disadvantage'. But why is
there no similar demand to justify 'men's advantage'?" (p. 129). And Sinclair (1998) is more specific:

We are still a long way from seeing equal numbers of female and male leaders, of indeed an understanding of leadership which genuinely takes gender into account rather than accepting male experience of leadership as the norm. The reasons are deeply embedded in the way we interweave our understandings of leadership, assumptions about masculinity, womanliness and sexuality (p. 2).

Some literature tells us that, "feminists have always optimistically figured that once they demonstrated the merits of their cause, male hostility to women's rights would evaporate. They have always been disappointed" (Faludi, 1991, p. 59). This study has borne this out, as women participants have found that regardless of the meritoriousness or otherwise of their cause, they have still had to face, and deal with, male opposition to their attempts to access positions of leadership within the system.

Johnston, Yeakey and Moore's (1980) research revealed that, "women were more effectively responsible as leaders and more democratic than men in carrying out their administrative tasks" (p. 115). Despite such data they found that prejudicial attitudes and patterns of socialisation and culturalisation did not create an atmosphere which encouraged women to aspire to leadership in education. My research shows that women do aspire to holding leadership positions but are prevented from doing so by factors beyond their grasp. One experienced female teacher reflected, “I know there is a definite feeling in our diocese amongst female people. They feel very much that if a male goes up for a position in a school they will tend to get the position over them (women)"
The same analysis (Johnston, Yeakey and Moore, 1980) found that "women teachers believe in their own inferiority and accept the patriarchal system that exists" (p. 129). This, again, was not a finding in my research.

The task, then, of extending a theoretical and empirical focus on advantage into a catalogue of political claims is seen by Eveline (1994) as problematic. She sees two obstacles to such a task. They are the problem of men's reactions and the principles by which Equal Opportunity policy is formulated. "The feminists who expressed the concerns viewed the obstacles as prohibitive, if not insurmountable" (p. 141). They believed that, "a focus on advantage was perceived as a threat to contemporary equality itself" (p. 141). But it must be faced, even if it is much easier to sell policies that address disadvantage than to sell those that will take away something from one group. This highlights the need for there to be a movement beyond 'blaming the victim' as has been experienced by women to the realisation of the influence of 'male advantage'. One woman was told when applying for a position, “they're looking for a bloke, don't even bother", so she was not to blame. Instead 'male advantage' over-ruled.

**Male Advantage**

"You're a male also gives you an advantage over a female"

With this background on gender and culture I demonstrate now how 'male advantage' operates. When talking of obtaining principalships, one experienced male principal in a large country town acknowledged his advantage, “the fact that you're a male also gives you an advantage over a female and that's a sexist comment, but a fact, I believe. And I don't know what the reason is". The
assumption is that male leadership is the norm. According to Eveline (1994), "the discourse of women's disadvantage reinforces an assumption that processes advantaging men are immutable, indeed normative" (p. 129). As one male teacher commenting on society said, "I think part of the division we need to look at here is to examine what is the Australian ethos. What we created I think, largely ourselves, was very much a masculinised society. And I mean I think we need to demasculinate [sic], for want of a better term". This teacher could have also said 'I think we need to eliminate the hegemonic practices'.

It is my argument, then, that the women in this study have themselves been able to identify the very forces that are working against their advantage, and perhaps even because of this, are a step closer to dealing with such practices. It is for this reason that I have felt confident in making the recommendations that I do in Chapter Eight.

Firstly there are unseen covert barriers such as women experiencing a strong male ethos, the males belonging to a 'boys' club', and just the fact of one's being a 'female presence'. Macdonald et al (1999) found that, “full-time employment is a problem in the church. It is experienced by women as a 'boys' club'” (p. 259). These 'clubs' come in a variety of categories and types. Maddock and Parkin's (1994) typology includes the Gentleman's Club (old-fashioned, polite, paternalistic); the Barrack Yard (military, bullying); the Locker Room (excluding women, allowing men to build relationships on shared assumptions); the Gender-blind (the illusion that everyone is white, able-bodied and male, denying reality and difference); Paying Lip-service and the Feminist Pretenders
(with equal opportunities policies but little change); and the Smart Macho (with emphasis on corporate performance). All these 'clubs' are examples of groups where women are excluded in one way or another. Williams (1992) did find one women's club—an 'old girl network' for librarians (p. 260) but this group seemed to function more for reasons of privacy rather than for promotion.

The notion of a boys' club which is closed to women leads women to 'self select out' of promotion. It is exclusionary in terms of the images it provides and messages it sends. A female potential leader in a large city observed that, "there have been people who have got through to positions of leadership before and probably still do because they are 'one of the boys' and they're in the 'boys' club'. It depends on where you are, and who is involved in the process of selection. Some get looked after". This exclusion carries on into principalship. One of the female principals observed, "the principals' executive has been traditionally male-oriented". The male principals organise activities for themselves. She explained that, "the boy principals are going off to play golf, not the female ones".

The concept of 'male advantage' continues to assist males in achieving principalships. This illustrates that, "the dominant values and practices of the organisation remain rooted in patriarchy" (Morley, 1999, p. 97). A male teacher in a city school was aware that, "sexism really is alive and well in the hierarchy of the church". It is in this way that modelling accentuates the position of women.
In general then, women have to emulate their male counterparts if they want to succeed. Wacjman (1999) argues, “that far from patenting a feminine management style, women must generally 'manage like a man' to succeed” (p. 166). A female asked and answered the question, “is there life after teaching for a male? Yes, there is, but it's not teaching!” So the dice of leadership success is cast in favour of the males.

For males, according to one female deputy, “teaching is just a stepping stone” to principalship. One male potential leader commented that, "there seems to be an idea that female leaders are a threat to a male dominated organisation", and another that, "they (women) might have too much vision". Wacjman (1999) sums up the situation well, “the key point is that it is not only people who are gendered. Jobs themselves and organisations are gendered too” (p. 41).

Other aspects of ‘male advantage’ include the attitudes of priests’ and selection criteria with a male bias. These will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

**Constraints for Women**

"Being female"

Eveline (1994) believes, “the normative rule is to signify women as unlike men, rather than the reverse” (p. 134). One male principal felt that we, "almost change the gender of females to some degree when they become part of the boys' club" so they "can traditionally mix it with the boys". So women fit in, in masculine terms. From one potential leader, “women are definitely ignored often”. One female applicant recalled, “I was really disappointed because I didn't get it”. This woman was lamenting that she had gone, "through the correct channels"
but a male had overtaken her without going through the supposedly mandatory selection process. This is a similar story to that quoted in the Introduction to this thesis.

When asked in the questionnaire if there were any constraints for lay men in gaining principalships, one of the potential leaders felt there were "not too many". From a female deputy principal the answer was simple, "being female". Male leadership is the favoured approach, "even after two decades of equal opportunity policies, women are still expected to 'manage like a man'" (Wacjman, 1999, p. 160), if they are successful in achieving a principalship. This was the experience of women in Catholic Education.

These comments tap into my own experience of executive leadership. While I would be seen to be powerful to those outside this milieu, it was often my experience that males were favoured and I was ignored. I was sometimes not seen even to exist, much less to have a useful contribution to make at meetings. I note from my journal, “during the meeting he'd even turn his back on me and literally disregarded me to the point of being rude. When dates were being settled for subsequent meetings my availability did not rate highly. I'd have to be very persistent, or adjust my arrangements to fit in" (May 14, 1996).

Eveline (1994) notes that, "Cockburn (1991) specifically foregrounds the advantages of men. She confronts the pervasiveness of those advantages and itemises the ways men organise to retain them" (p. 139). Participants in my research have taken a first step in similar identification processes, which
suggests that the next step just may be possible, but my research has not been able to establish this as an eventuation of their present state of understanding of their own circumstances.

So ‘male advantage’ and constraints for women are the flip side to the same coin. What is an advantage for a man can be a constraint for a woman and such practices are taken-for-granted, as illustrated in the next section. Then the following chapter discusses additional examples.

**Hegemonic Masculinity**

"Women ... were put down"

Donaldson (1993) explains, “one aspect of ruling class hegemonic masculinity is the belief that women don't count in big matters" (p. 654). From my journal again, “both women at the board meeting were put down by men tonight" (2nd March, 1994); and another, “I attended a Co.As.It conference. It was so male-dominated and hierarchical, all Italian men. Men are the important ones. No women spoke. Belonging to a church centred in Rome then, makes our women's situation worse" (December 3, 1994). Datnow (1998) comments, “men may exert their dominance by finishing women's sentences, interrupting without permission, or not responding to women's comments" (p. 24). This was my experience at meetings. Braidotti (1991) insists that the world is masculine but coded as universal. "Men are marked by the imperative of carrying the universal" (p. 26). Male privilege operates. And Sinclair (1998) explains:

The concept of hegemonic masculinity goes a long way towards explaining how men with power resist examining or questioning their own maleness. Hegemonic masculinity may be so taken for granted and assumes that it is unobservable to men. For men its
existence is so assumed that it is imperceptible and therefore beyond debate. Hegemonic masculinity serves the interests and purposes of powerful men. Through it their particular enactment and expression of male leadership of largely heterosexual masculine dominance, remains uncontested and admired by other men and women (p. 57).

As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, there is an historical basis for this. Women were pushed out of leadership after the Romanisation of the Church in the 4th century. This has created a 1700 year legacy and tradition of male role models in most areas of Church leadership (Macdonald et al, 1999, p. 97). Is it any wonder there is a very masculine ethos in society and in Catholic Education? From one experienced potential female leader in a small country school, “I think you are disadvantaged because you're female, because everyone has got this attitude that male is best; male will do the job better than the woman”.

Newman's (1995a) research showed that women may 'come on board' as long as [they] do not 'rock the boat' (p. 21), making sure they fit into the male culture. One female principal overcame that difficulty by being, "able to demonstrate you can deal with the decision-making process and the running of the school regardless of gender and find ways that the male influence in the school can be covered in other ways". An experienced potential leader declared that the community would say, “'oh wouldn't it be lovely if we had a male principal'. They don't care who the male is". When asked if male presence in any role would be sufficient she insisted, “well, in this joint it would be a leadership". She believed there is an "ingrained culture that men are perceived as stronger leaders".
It was Sinclair’s (1998) experience, “I feel I have had to hide much of the person I am in order to operate at a 'leadership' level” (p. 12). She generalised by saying that "no matter to what lengths women go to conceal womanliness, it remains obvious and incriminating to those who are bestowing, or refraining from bestowing, the status of leader" (p. 178). Sinclair (1998) again, “the equation of leadership with masculine leadership persists because it suits not just the interests of decision-makers who are aspiring to be leaders and tend overwhelmingly to be male, but also because leadership as masculinity resonates so deeply with wider cultural mythology" (p. 27). She expresses it even more succinctly, “the two identities as leader and man have fitted hand-in-glove" (p. 177). My own experience concurred with this, and this research confirmed it to be a general situation.

From where does this mentality of maleness being the norm come? Maleness is embedded in the organisational cultural context and as such is not experienced as problematic (Sheppard, 1989, p. 144). But it is problematic for women. Wacjman (1999) explains:

Out of a dialogue between feminist theory and organisation theory, a concern with the way in which organisations are themselves gendered has emerged. This body of work links gender and organisational analysis and explores how the male culture of organisations shapes gender relations at work. The central argument is that gender relations are constitutive of the structure and practices of organisations. Gendered processes operate on many institutional levels, from the open and explicit to more subtle forms that are submerged in organisational decisions, even those that appear to have nothing to do with gender (p. 41).
Both my research and that of Williams (1992) bear this out. Williams (1992) interviewed a teacher who declared, “I am extremely marketable in special education. That's not how I got into the field. But I am extremely marketable because I am a man” (p. 256). One male potential leader in this research remarked, “teaching is not a male job, but principalship is”. Another female teacher on that staff commented, “parents generally accept a decision of the male rather than that of the female; (a male presence) was something that the school community saw as important”. They would say when speaking to a male applicant, “you'll get the job”.

A male admitted after being appointed as principal that he was told, “yes, we wanted a male. We couldn't advertise that we wanted a male”. I checked out the panel’s reason for wanting a male. It stemmed from the fact that they believed that males were better leaders. The panel had observed the rules but got what they wanted. This fits with the finding from Wallace's (1999) research that even after the debriefing there was the uncritical acceptance of the prejudgement that females are not able to lead effectively because they are female, not because they lack qualifications. Sinclair states that, “there is a close but obscured connection between constructs of leadership, traditional assumptions of masculinity and a particular expression of male heterosexual identity” (Sinclair, 1998, p. 1).

Bacchi (1990) argues that both sameness and difference depend upon a perspective which defines men as the norm and measures women accordingly. These collectively describe the covert practices in schools that create 'male
advantage’. Such practices include parents’ desire to have a male as a leader, as well as teaching not being seen as a male job. It has been an unexpected outcome of this research that the women themselves have identified such practices, in effect foregrounding them, so that these covert practices are being exposed. Women had previously looked at factors like lack of experience, and qualifications, and unacceptable careers paths as practices that precluded them from achieving principalship.

Zeegers (1996, p. 22) insists that "management and leadership are not interchangeable terms," yet many decision-makers during interviews confuse them, and look only for managerial skills in applicants during interviews. This is borne out in most schools including the Catholic schools in my research. Styles of disciplining students is one example of both management and practices of hegemonic masculinity that influences decision-makers.

Discipline

"Males tend to roar more- they discipline by fear"

The style of exercising discipline is often a key factor in the selection of principals. "Males tend to roar more; they discipline by fear" came from a male principal in a remote school. The same principal insisted that parents believe that is the way to discipline, “well, they do in this town! They take it for granted. That is what the children expect at home and the way the local parents discipline as well. When the father comes home after shearing, the mother says 'this is what he's done, go and deal with him'. So dad goes and roars". Thus, "community expectations [are] that males are leaders" and one male employer
said that the, "community thinks a male will be a better disciplinarian". Another male principal said, "‘male' is seen by many as the better disciplinarian. Parents have their particular brand of discipline and want that method practised in schools". Therefore, some parents want principals and teachers to discipline by using fear tactics. One male principal compared this parental reaction [towards discipline] in the country with that of parents in an urban school. "If that sort of thing happened in [the city] the parents would be up like a shot carrying on about why". This illustrate the conservatism of the country communities.

It is the very unpredictability of types of exercising discipline and associated parent expectations that provide an ongoing extra set of demands for women in leadership positions. This, too, is a part of the ‘new steps’ along with the taken-for-granted attitude that male principals are, or have been, able to deal with discipline.

Women often encourage self discipline which is viewed by some local communities as 'soft'. If they exercise tough discipline they are branded as aggressive. This fits with research carried out by Court (1994) where women saw their style of discipline as more negotiatory and less confrontational than those of men, as well as more effective (p. 54).

Males and females are treated differently in the local community. Sinclair (1998) agrees, “masculinity and femininity are not equally balanced opposites. In leadership too, masculinity is valorised and reinforced. Femininity, on the other hand, is so out of place when we think of management that it borders on the absurd" (p. 161). "Parents seem to pick up more on the male idea" came
from an experienced male principal. As Wacjman (1999) adds, "management incorporates a male standard that positions women as out of place. Indeed the construction of women as different from men is one of the mechanisms whereby male power in the workplace is maintained" (p. 2).

This is another aspect of the floor of ‘male advantage’: that discipline exercised in a dominating manner fits into the practice of hegemonic masculinity.

Many internal barriers such as lack of qualifications, lack of confidence and the like, have been overcome by some women, but external barriers such as type-casting of leadership roles are more immutable.

**Type-casting**

"Society expects them to move up the ladder"

It has become almost a truism that gender stereotypes alter according to social conditions in different times and places but practices are still being created as appropriate for men (and women). The guidelines that are deemed to be masculine continue to be accorded more status than those seen to be feminine. According to Court (1995) these masculine characteristics give, "men considerable advantages over women when it comes to applying for and working in, leadership positions" (pp. 9-10). One female potential leader felt that for men, “society expects them to move up the ladder " but for women, “there are people who put the guilt complex on you for wanting to apply for a position of leadership. The insinuation being that you should be home where
you belong”. This puts women in an ambiguous position when applying for positions of leadership.

Organisations such as schools play a direct part in the socialising processes in which people acquire gender identities (Mills, 1992, p. 94). They reflect the view that men and women are fundamentally different and have different roles in society. Women have minimal entrance to leadership positions. One female potential leader said, “society sets it, they set the stereotype and everyone follows suit. Therefore, if you happen to be female and you are looking for a leadership role, society goes against you. You like to think you get the leadership position/role on merit not whether you are male or female”. Society (which includes the Catholic Church) may set the scene, but there is an additional influence within the Catholic Church. There are other messages given too, which assist in perpetuating male leadership. As one male said, “the simple fact that a gathering of principals is a male-dominated scene presents a message that acts in many very subtle ways. The problem is much deeper culturally than educational leadership. I think there is a past notion that males are better leaders than female,” and, "I'd list again the many subtle ways that our culture conditions us to perceive the roles of males and females as the most powerful 'constraint". Further comments from focus group members, “jobs for the boys” seems to be, "the order of the day", along with, "traditional attitudes" such as, "men are the breadwinners, hence preference to them for particular positions". One of the male potential leaders commented on the image presented by the disproportionate number of males who are already leaders and the effect that could have on applicants. He felt the solution, however, is not a simple one, “I
think it is a much bigger picture than that. You need a change in society as a whole". Wacjman (1999) is again helpful:

The point is not that women are different, but that gender difference is the basis for the unequal distribution of power and resources. Men are still constructed as the universal standard, and it is women who are marked as 'gendered', the ones who are different, the inferior other. The problem is more complex than one of 'access'. The answer to women's exclusion is not simply to get more women to enter management. The norm for the managerial occupation remains male. My research confirms that to achieve positions of power, women must accommodate themselves to the organisation, not the other way round (p. 160).

My own research reflects that of Wacjman. Women adapt in order to fit in to the organisational expectations whether it is by being silent, as I recalled from my journal (December 3, 1994) as mentioned previously, or by realising that “community expectations that males are leaders” will be the order of the day, as one female potential leader recalled during a particular interview. Then a male consultant summed up, “a family man between forty and fifty-five seems to be the ideal stereotype". These stereotypical attitudes persist.

Is 'male advantage' assisted by a particular type of sexuality or, alternatively, is ‘stereotyping’ a male advantage and a female constraint? The same male consultant believed so, “if I had announced that I am bi-sexual or something which doesn’t fit the normal stereotype of what they assume male behaviour to be, you don't get the job irrespective of your levels of ability", rather he felt that panels would say, “we need someone who's hard and firm as a leader". He believed that there is a stereotype, and it is gender-prescribed, "that is expected of males particularly in leadership". Another example from a male, “let's say I was a gentleman in my fifties, been in the system a long time and single,
unmarried, no family, no partner. I tell you what, I'd be frowned upon today”. A particular type of sexuality, then, has been favoured, that of white heterosexual masculinity. There is a link, “between particular kinds of masculinity and leadership, and kinds of femininity and followership” (Court, 1994, p. 16). These have developed through hegemonic practices which have resulted in their becoming part of the commonsense ways we think about, and practise, the management of organizations, particularly schools.

Rationality and Emotionality

"It's not cool for men to show their feelings"

Traditionally then, men have been seen as better suited than women to executive positions. The qualities usually associated with being a successful manager are 'masculine' traits such as drive, objectivity and an authoritative manner. Women have been seen as different from men, as lacking the necessary personal characteristics and skills to make good managers (Wacjman, 1999, p. 55). Favoured leadership styles flow from this. The leader is required to be unemotional, rational and strong.

In Catholic Education, principalships are seen as highly gendered and type-cast. A particular type of power, authority, masculinity, and leadership style or type is sought in society, and at all levels of Catholic Education. Power is embedded in authority which is then rational and often non-compassionate.

With a particular type of sexuality being favoured, that of white heterosexual masculinity, leadership is characterised by a rational and non-emotional
approach. In terms of my own research, this is significant in that the participants thus characterised as being other than this, as part of their womanliness, found themselves at a disadvantage even before they filled in the application form for an advertised position of leadership.

In many instances examined in this study, vacancies for principalship occur because Religious Sisters are being replaced as principals in Catholic schools. How did the Sisters function as leaders? As I pointed out in Chapter One, Sisters who were the leaders in Catholic schools had been trained not to show their emotions. This has been the image presented by them to the community. Therefore, with the "conventional wisdom (which) constructs both men and organisations as unemotional" (Blackmore, 1996a) lay women are disadvantaged as they are seen to be emotional while men are seen to be rational and it seems that "emotion is antipathetic to management" (p. 347). One potential female leader knew that, "people think we're emotional and this is the down side". Males are seemingly rational and unemotional and that is applauded by the local community. It is perpetuating an expectation but it is real. Another female potential leader felt that, “society has deemed that it is not 'cool' for men to show their feelings to cry or show their emotions", and, "females are seen not possibly to be able to take on a leadership role because they are too emotional, too caught up and they might have children later on". More reasons for not employing a female present themselves. Once again, what is advantageous for males is a stumbling block for females. This is the flip-side of the same coin. Ambiguity is experienced by females. Wacjman (1999) expresses the dilemma in the following way:
Fundamentally, the terms rational and emotional derive their meaning from their specific connection with the domains of the public and private … Any action may be interpreted in a radically different way depending on whether the actor is a man or a woman. For example, a particular action or experience might be defined as 'firm', 'decisive' and 'rational' when constructed in relation to a man, and as 'bossy', 'hysterical' and 'irrational' where a woman is involved. A woman exercising a democratic leadership style may be seen as soft or indecisive (p. 61).

Women know that there are positive and negative aspects to expressing feelings. As one experienced female teacher said, “lots of women are in touch with their feelings and the upside is their being in tune to those people who need support”. It was further noted by a female member of staff that, "if you are feeling down or upset, usually it is a female staff member who notices". Also "women, especially mothers, appear to have more understanding of feelings and situations". One female potential leader, however, expressed the reality, “there is a community conception that females are not as strong, or too emotional to handle stressful situations".

These qualities are required of any leader and instead of an either/or approach males and females need to be in touch with their emotions and also exercise rationality and firmness when the occasion arises. Wacjman (1999) agrees:

When I reflect on the copious literature on leadership style, I am struck by the way in which it is permeated by gender stereotypical oppositions, such as that between hard and soft, reason and emotion. Instead of challenging the gendered nature of the dichotomies, they simply invert them. Leadership traits that correspond with male traits like dominance, aggressiveness and rationality are now presented negatively, while formerly devalued feminine qualities like soft and emotional are presented positively (p. 59).
The essence of this argument is that there is no need for the dualism of rationality versus emotion in leadership. Both are required. Brown (1988) recognises this fact and insists that "social dualisms are not only oppressive … but boring" (p. 191).

The context of this studying Catholic Education is a particularly stable, male-dominated, hierarchically structured organisation. The inclusion of lay women and men into its leadership roles is a relatively new event. The organisation, the Catholic Church itself can then determine what qualities are important when selecting the principal. Wacjman (1999) understands this process:

The central fallacy of leadership studies is that they reduce the study of power and leadership to the individual. Like power, leadership is not simply a trait which people possess. It is a structural asset that is exercised through a social network and is dependent upon the accounts and responses of those who are assessing the actions of a manager in particular situations. My study shows that organisational constraints rather than individual personality traits determine management style (p. 62).

And these constraints are very evident in the Catholic Church. This masculine bias enhances 'male advantage'. Davies (1996) argues that organisations must be seen as social constructions that arise from a masculine view of the world. The masculine view favours rationality rather than emotionality. Any action may be interpreted in a radically different way depending on whether the ‘actor’ is a man or a woman. Morley (1999) believes, "these dominant cultural meanings are sustained and reproduced regardless of employees” (p. 90).

It is due to:

[T]he success of hegemony, particularly patriarchal and capitalist hegemony, (which) requires that divisions between public and private spheres be upheld. The work of feminist theorists is
particularly useful to demonstrate how hegemony and emotion overlap. Public and private divisions, mapped on to gendered roles and emotional rules, require in turn that women internalise ideologies and enact their inferiority on a daily basis to comply with their own subjugation (Boler, 1999, p. 7).

My research found however that many women in Catholic Education no longer wish to comply by changing their preferred style of leadership. They would rather wait and hopefully achieve principalships on their own merit and style but the power and influence of the organisation remains.

The final focus group reinforced the idea that the cultural situation of Catholic Education has changed very little in terms of which qualities are favoured by selectors of principals. One senior male administrator observed in one diocese, "at the moment in education we seem to be requiring of men and women the exercise of more masculine characteristics in leadership". Acting in a rational way rather than in an emotional one would then be the acceptable behaviour as he added, "qualities of nurturing, qualities of consensus-making, they're not necessarily what is admired or what is looked for in leaders in education at the moment". This is reminiscent of White's (1992) research where she found that a masculine model of leadership was that favoured by panel members, but she did not further analyse why this was their selection. My research, however, has uncovered the fact that 'male advantage' takes precedence and a male model of leadership is the consequence. As Wacjman (1999) insists “the point here is not whether men are necessarily less or more emotional than women, but how these feelings are expressed, perceived and interpreted within organizations” (p. 61). The findings in my research confirm this statement.
To link the discussion in the first section of this chapter with male advantage in the second, I would argue with Sinclair (1998) that we press for a shift away from assessing 'women's disadvantage', and instead, focus on the 'politics of advantage', the way maleness systematically accrues invisible advantage (p. 55).

The local situations are problematic in this study. Social institutions such as schools and educational bureaucracies are made up of many different and often contradictory discourses and discursive fields. Many struggling for ascendancy (Kenway, 1994).

Factors in Catholic Education increase 'male advantage', and my research has substantiated this claim. The women in the focus groups, as well as the men, have taken issue with such factors, leaving me, the researcher, in no doubt. In the next chapter I will continue discussion on this issue with the ‘additional foot of religion’.
I show in this chapter that ‘male advantage’ is heightened following the demise of Religious sisters from Catholic primary schools. It would be logical to expect that Religious women would be replaced by lay women, but the culture of Catholic institutions provided an added dimension to the ‘male advantage’ experienced by lay women. I call this the ‘third foot’ that women in Catholic Education experience on the ‘moving floor’. Then I introduce the phrase ‘gender geography’ to describe both the isolation experienced by women and also the exclusion of them from both professional and social activities in specific locations because of their gender. In the last section of the chapter I look at the Selection Process for Principalship and the influence of the parish priest.

**THE INTER-RELATION OF RELIGION, POSITION, LOCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS**

*Religion*

"Third foot"

Catholic schools belong to the larger organisation of the Catholic Church where the effects of patriarchy are felt keenly by women. Macdonald et al (1999) found that, "the patriarchal system was identified as the greatest underlying barrier" (p. 8) to women's participation in the Catholic Church. This conclusion also bears weight in my investigations.
While some women felt that the broader culture was responsible for the selection of males over females as leaders, as discussed in Chapter Six, two-thirds of the potential female leaders blamed the Catholic Church. They gave these responses, “the attitude of a predominantly male-led church” and, "the maleness of the Catholic hierarchy”, have detracted from lay female leadership. It is a struggle as the cost of patriarchy had been high in the Catholic Church. Today, women like Joan Chittester, Denise Carmody and Mary Collins are trying to open the institutional church and its ministries to the vocations and gifts of women, challenging hundreds of years of defended male power structure. Lay women in these three dioceses struggle as they challenge a strongly defended power structure, a society, and a church that encourages 'male advantage'.

In this study of women's promotion to leadership positions within the Catholic Education system, I have focused on a number of hurdles that women face. Not least of these is the self-referential aspect of the clergy, which by definition can only be priests and therefore male, in determining the conditions under which women may even aspire to, let alone apply for and achieve, positions of leadership within the system. This has raised questions as to the assumptions underpinning the nature both of Catholic leadership and Catholic Education, questions of some importance in the context of the dwindling numbers of Religious since Vatican II in the late 1960s. The traditional position of the parish priest as the unquestioned leader in a given community has remained virtually unchallenged throughout this period of change. At the same time the number of
Religious Sisters in Catholic schools has reduced to such an extent that many openings have been created for the laity in this field. The spaces opened up however, have been filled more by lay men than women. One example was the filling of 79 places made available by the demise of Religious Sisters, as quoted earlier, when 57 lay men obtained principalships. In this chapter, I argue that what has been taken for granted has been the inferior position of all the laity, by virtue of no other fact than that they are non-clergy, and that the consequent practices and protocols of appointments to educational leadership positions have impacted in a way to disadvantage lay women applicants for these positions.

While lay men in terms of gender are at one remove from the clergy, they, as members of the laity, continue to fulfil a recognised and vitally important function as actual and/or potential heads of families and in possession of all the respect that such authoritative positions accord. Logic may suggest that lay women are at a similar remove from Religious women in terms of gender. Yet, as I have indicated, women have not, even as Religious, been accorded the same authority. Women's roles, when not those of Religious sisters, are perceived as subordinate in the form of wives, daughters, and/or sisters to those male heads of family. As one experienced male principal in a country town explained:

It's hard in a small country town like this because males are seen as a dominant species. It is just this real culture of the man as the head of the house and everyone else is subservient to him. They just downgrade women as if they are a second class citizen. Even where the sister is two years older than the brother and the brother treats her like dirt, she takes it.

As upper case 'S' Sisters, part of a Religious congregation, they could well have found themselves in positions of leadership in Catholic schools. As lower case 's'
sisters, part of the domestic family configurations, they may well find themselves prevented from performing those leadership roles in the Catholic system. One young female potential leader in another small town observed, “if there wasn't a nun as principal then it was a man!” And another female potential leader in a city school told of her experience, “I considered applying for a leadership position and was told not to bother as they were looking for a male. This was in a city where all the principals are either male or Religious". This situation fits with ‘male advantage’ being the over-riding principle both in society and in Catholic Education in particular, and illustrates the effect of the ‘third foot’—religion. Male advantage operates through taken-for-granted attitudes within society and the church. These benefit individual men who may not even be advocates of such a position.

**Principal/Parishioner Tensions**

"Laundry dumped on her doorstep"

Applicants for principalship who lived in a larger city reported that they were requested to be part of two communities, “where you live and where you work". One principal remarked that both church communities expected you to participate. Thus, being a member of the Catholic Church necessitated extra obligations. In Catholic Education there is that unwritten expectation that, "your commitment to the school and the parish is perhaps that little bit extra". It was noted that, "a lot of the work came to the principal of the small school when people needed help". One principal knew of a colleague who, "had the laundry (used by a visiting priest) dumped on her doorstep". One female accepted her obligations, “if we work in a Catholic school we do have responsibilities as
members of a parish”. However, another felt it is sometimes difficult, "to have a definite line between your role as principal and your role as parishioner". She felt that, “people automatically zero in on you. 'Oh, you'll run it' if the parish priest is away". And then, "when one of the staff walk into the church it is almost automatic. You turn up at church these days and you get a job”.

**Parish Obligations**

"Would you ... play the organ?"

An associated area is the involvement in the wider church community. One female potential leader remembered questions she was asked at an interview, “would you be available every Sunday in this parish to play the organ?"; "what was my involvement in parish and linkage with parish and community?". She felt the panel members were saying, "if you have been involved then that would be something that would really help in your role". Sister probably played the organ when she was principal. This reaction fits with Sergiovanni’s (1998) point that deep change requires the reconstructing of collective mindscapes of practice. Change is slow to take effect in the Catholic Church. Perceived religious practice is another reason for successful selection. One female potential leader said, “priests knew my parents really well. I really had a definite advantage in leadership particularly if you are going in that area". Family background could also help as one male observed, “if you are brought up in the Catholic traditions, then the answers to the questions you may be asked come as second nature as it's instilled in you". This factor would apply equally to males and females. This meant that this study was unable to determine if males or
females were favoured in this regard, especially as the focus group responses did not suggest anything different.

Sister or Mister

"Mate"/"Bad women"

Male leadership is modelled in the church. It seemed that if there is a female in charge of a school, "when it comes to the gender thing the assumption immediately was 'she had to be a nun'. She has been titled 'Mother' and 'Very Reverend Mother". These were comments made about a pending new appointment, “but you're just a woman". And when she visited the school, remarks were heard like, “not her over there"… "not that young one". When she became principal she found, “I've been called 'mate' more than ever before. Principalship is therefore a male role".

As one male principal observed:

Look, you take a female principal of say thirty-five or something, of a school of say one hundred and fifty, or whatever. Working bee Saturday morning, all right. A male principal, at the end of the working bee, pulls out the stubbies, we sit around we have a drink, we talk about the footy and whatever. A female principal does that and you get the wives starting to say, 'oh hang on'. And particularly if the guys think she is a pretty good sort, she mixes with the boys. I mean they are in big strife, they really are.

This is the bind. If lay women behave like their male counterparts they are labelled as "bad women". This is similar to Adkison's (1981) finding that women who attempt to emulate the stereotypical male leadership behaviour are "ignored, denied or punished" (p. 328).
Women can be seen to be out of place. "When a woman occupies a position traditionally filled by a man, the significance of her sex, for both how she operates and how she is treated, is subjected to scrutiny in a way that the 'normal' hierarchical order is not" (Wacjman, 1999, p. 2). By being classified as out of place, women's positioning is then called into question.

The import of this, as far as my research is concerned, is that participants found themselves under some pressure to conform with such perceived normal protocols of male leadership behaviours, then castigated for the perceived loss of femininity. It was easier to survive by conforming than to resist. This was my experience as a female leader in the Catholic Education system also.

**Women’s Compliance**

"You take these little knock-backs"

Another aspect associated with Religion is women’s tendency to comply. As Desmarchelier (1999) noted, "it's something women do well—fall into the victim role” (p.132). When lay women were unsuccessful they often accept the pain. As one potential female leader said, “you take these little knock-backs". This was part of the, "love-pain tension in their relationship with the Catholic Church" (p.127); and from another of Desmarchelier's (1999) respondents, “we should abide by church teaching even when it constrains and limits us" (p. 80). A female participant in a focus group was resigned, “you work hard to get all these little steps along the way; build these little links, and then at the end of it [you are unsuccessful]. You think well, what's meant to be is meant to be. There's nothing I can do about it now. They've made their decision". These are
further instances of woman's, "passive acceptance of suffering" (Desmarcheliers, 1999, p.132). While these instances could be seen to be women making decisions, "with humility and meekness and sacrificial love" (p.132) my research showed there is less an issue of humble passivity. Women are gaining confidence whilst they also recognise the significant barriers present. There had been attempts to blame the victim, in this case the unsuccessful applicants, but each time the ‘victim’ nevertheless exhibited a resilience to her situation, that kept her applying regardless of setbacks along the way. As mentioned in the last chapter one female applicant took ten years to achieve principalship.

**Pastoral Roles**

"Touchy, feely, tender, loving, caring types"

Following a Religious, however, posed some difficulties for lay male principals. Unlike many other situations the pattern of ‘male advantage’ was not followed. One remarked that his predecessor (a Sister) was, "able to really get into people as far as how they think and how they feel whereas I don't have that ability". He felt that, "people will tend to open up more personally with a Religious than they do with a lay person and that's whether it's a male or female lay". This followed on from the current issue of males and sexual abuse. Another went so far as to say that in the community "there's always a perception that Sister's better". He believed that, "there is a perception there that the fellow needs to be in more corporate leadership rather than a pastoral, touchy, feely, tender, loving, caring type". He hears mothers pouring out, "a lot of that tender stuff" to the secretary. "I feel like going over and giving them a big cuddle but a pat on the shoulder—that's about as close as I get these days if somebody is really upset". He calculated that, "for the most part you are dealing with mothers in a school
community. You tend to deal more with mothers say, even eighty percent mothers, to fathers". Another experienced male principal in a medium-sized school agreed, “most of my dealings, face to face, tend to be female". There was an advantage, however, for mothers (not single women). One experienced female lay principal said she, "spend[s] a lot of her time with other mums who come to talk to [her]". They were more comfortable woman-to-woman than male-to-woman. But the males are still selected as principals. This was difficult to reconcile. Dominant images of masculinity as being ‘macho’ worked against many individual men being able to follow good management practice, as well as excluding most women.

**Networks**

"It was so 'home and hosed' that he was going to get the job"

One lay woman felt there was a communication network operating between priests regarding the employment of males. They transfer because of, "word of mouth, the expectation is there". This fits with Sinclair’s (1998) experience that there are informal networks where, “discriminatory judgements about leadership potential, or lack of it, become buried in selection processes” (p. 26). Jones (1993) understands this advantage. She believes that, “leadership becomes a practice for establishing networks that sustain connections among members of a political group” (p. 119). And the parish priests in the Catholic Church could be described as political in that they held and wield both formal and informal authority with few constraints on arbitrary or subjective decisions. One woman knew that the odds were against her. "I had considered applying for a principalship but when I heard of an applicant who was a reasonably high
profile male and very friendly with the parish priest, good at football and had a
family, I didn't even bother applying because it was so 'home and hosed' that he
was going to get the job. I didn't come within a bull's roar of that parish priest's
mind". Unfortunately she felt that for the school, "it didn't matter who was better
educationally" or at what level of faith development the applicant was.

**Other Church Influences**

"Being known in the diocese"

Then there was the influence from broader fields. This is a different aspect of
networking. As one female aspiring to leadership said, “it is the relations that
you make with the higher people within the school to get places". There is the
diocesan aspect. She added, “how you are perceived in the diocese" is crucial.
She mused, “I guess the CEO who still have a critical input in the selection
panel, well they may not know you either", when you come from the country.
Then if the diocese is small enough, as one was, for the director/consultant to be
on each panel for principalship, "what you've done and what expertise you've
built up" is known.

Being known in the diocese can also be a disadvantage. One female potential
leader wondered about, "the office people, how they perceive you". Another
said, “yes, that can work against you", but another felt, "it can work both ways".
In another larger diocese they would not be known whereas in the third (the
smallest) diocese, judgements could be made about individuals, as most
potential leaders would be known. It was reported that a Catholic Education
Office staff member predicted that one female potential leader, "probably won't
apply for the position because [she] has just got a new boyfriend, and she was spending a lot of time with him and she wouldn't have a lot of time to be doing principalship". These judgements were not gender neutral as a female staff member noted, “I don’t think they would have said that about a bloke”.

This suggests that in the Catholic system the male laity are again favoured because of the image of the priest always being male, further reinforced by that of the Sister being some sort of genderless entity. Female laity who are gendered are, in this sense, doubly rendered invisible in leadership in a Church organisation.

*Training for the Priesthood*

“I had that background”

There is an additional aspect which disadvantages women in Catholic Education. The males in Catholic Education who have participated in some training to be priests certainly have a key network between priests which enhances their chances of success. One such male principal was aware of that advantage, “I had that background, and that sort of background wasn't there for ladies". There is no such similar network for women, and not likely to be in Australia, or other countries, in the near future. This is because the ordination of women in the Catholic Church is not permitted by order of Pope John Paul 11. ‘Male advantage’ was accentuated further. A male principal mentioned leading liturgical assemblies, “that's fine for me. I'm male, and I think the people would look to me as deputy priest. How does that affect female principals?”

With the shortage of priests in a country diocese, this principal felt, "that the
whole role of principal in the Church would need to be addressed". "I'm not saying that females couldn't manage it but it's the perception of the people. Catholics are very slow to change often and to see a female in that position is a big step for a lot of people". Nieto (1998) would not be surprised as she comments often that cultural change happens very slowly.

**Lay Principals**

"Not as valuable or worthy"

Lay leaders seemed to be regarded as inferior to Religious leaders. Focus group members said, “some sections of the school community pine for the 'good old days'. They see that the vocation lay leaders hold is not as valuable or worthy as that held by Religious". Reaction to change again, and a sense of unworthiness of lay people were at play in these instances. The Religious seemingly had a special privilege in the eyes of the community. A lay female principal observed that “lay principals do not just assume the same position of authority (as Religious) … they have to earn it". This attitude overflowed into every-day activities, “many people seem to still have the attitude that 'Sister' wasn't to be challenged whereas they are quite comfortable challenging lay staff". These principals had to contend with comments like, “it's not like it used to be"; "it's always been done this way". This mentality fitted with Sergiovanni’s (1998) theory that “stability and change, it appears, co-exist because of the tendency of stability to absorbs changes without altering underlying forms and assumptions” (p. 576).
One recently appointed female principal said that when problems arose she believed that, “it stemmed from the fact that I was the first lay principal”. In contrast, members of the community would say, “when Sister X was here we …”. And even, "as it's only ten years since the nuns left the school, there is a reserve about appointing 'outsiders' to this role". It is true to say that, "people had an intrinsic faith in the leadership of the Religious" and so as one current male principal said, “you have to work hard to gain people's confidence". One young female lay principal was having trouble gaining that confidence, “because I am a lay principal they felt that they could ‘come at me to the nail’ as there was always a perception that Sister's better". This inexperienced female principal in a remote area was suffering, “I was a lay principal and not a nun, and people had a problem adjusting to that”. She believed that "when Sister was here they certainly wouldn't make their complaints because she was a Religious". Arnot et al (1999) would not be surprised as they found that school cultures were particularly impervious to change (p. 30).

But then there were other parish community members who said that there was, "very little impact apart from romantic recollection of more elderly parishioners" regarding the demise of Religious sisters and brothers in the parish. One principal however, had to, "retrain the community to realise that [I] am not as accessible or 'on call' like my predecessor [a Sister]. I have my own family too". Sister had always been available. For the female potential leaders in this research, this means that they had the phantom of Sister in the background comparing their behaviour with hers whether it was concerning her availability
or her manner of exercising her authority. A major difference for lay and Religious was that lay women principals often had familial responsibilities.

**Family Person**

"The family person would have an advantage over a single person"

Males are sought particularly if they are family men, whereas females are often ignored. As one female potential leader said, "what is seen as a disadvantage for a woman is often an advantage for a man. For example, a married man with a family is viewed as stable and a good candidate, whereas a woman is seen as a problem". Another example of the flip side of the coin of ‘male advantage’. One principal observed that, "in this diocese the men who are employed generally in principalships, are mostly married with a family but the same does not apply to the females". And theory reinforces these comments. The problematic situation for women exists in the fact that what is advantageous for males is disadvantageous for females. This fits with Collinson's (1999) findings, “for men, real, imagined or potential domestic responsibility were usually evaluated as a positive indication of stability, flexibility, compatibility and motivation while for women, they were often viewed negatively as confirmation of unreliability and a short-term investment in work" (p. 81).

Young married men, the family men, are favoured. As one parish priest described his beliefs, “it's great witness in the parish to have a family man heading the school". An experienced male principal felt advantaged, “I think a family man, the family person, would have an advantage over a single person. You've got similar experiences with your own and then suddenly they've got an
empathy with you". Even at his interview this male felt, "[it] would have an advantage over a single for sure. It was never stated that way but I had confidence that this was one of my plusses". He added, "because you had children you were normal and you knew everything about family and discipline". Another dimension for males was found by Dunshea (1998), “community members and parents also claimed that a male, preferably a large male, is the only choice for a principal” (p. 209) in rural areas, as ‘largeness’ indicates strength, control, and power. Power is, therefore, embodied by principals.

One woman was positive about her experience as a teacher even if she was not successful in obtaining a principalship, “being a mother adds another dimension to it too. I've found I understand children a lot better after I had had my own family and watched their experiences in school. That adds another dimension that people bring to principalships”. Similarly a male said, “I was a totally different principal with kids than I ever was without”.

It was interesting that in one of the male groups it was mentioned that being a family man was an advantage because he was more familiar with family concerns; but workload was not mentioned. A reflection from a current male principal, “I think family is one of the hardest things to balance when you take on principalship". This would be the case for women and men but in the present milieu of child care where it is usually the mother who takes primary responsibility for the children, women have a more difficult task balancing all
aspects of their lives. This suggests that general social conditions are exacerbated by the specifics of the work situation within Catholic Education.

The reverse situation was experienced by single lay women.

**Single Women**

"Not being a family person"

Single women felt that they were further disadvantaged. A single female potential leader was told, “a single woman has no idea what life is about". Another single woman heard that "not being a family person" made parents hesitant in approaching her and, "added to that she was not bringing enrolments into the school". Single female staff members could marry, have children and be absent from the school.

In contrast, a mother felt, “because you've had children you were normal and you knew everything about family and discipline”. One female potential leader was asked, “what was [her] plan regarding having children. It seemed to put a limit on employment". These questions appeared to indicate that selection panel members felt they were exempt from Equal Opportunity legislation.

One female principal who had had difficulties with the local community felt, “I think too, maybe having a husband would have been a different kettle of fish”. Another potential leader had not observed any change in culture, “it's still the woman's job to have the baby and the father is back at work in the next couple of days passing the cigars around".
Yet there was the contrast which made it difficult for single women to know whether they would be acceptable or not. In one community it was noted, “the school I'm teaching in has a history of employing a single woman”. So how is a female to know if she will be acceptable or not? Many would say, like this female potential leader that, “all things being equal, they look for a male with a family who belongs to Apex and Rotary and so on, a member of a football team with a high profile in the community”.

These comments indicate that panel members seemed to be calling in aspects of supposedly being a good Catholic family person as their excuse for excluding a single woman. One potential female leader said, “panels are looking for a married male as he is perceived to be stable and credible and provide a good example to the school community”. For women, she said, “the constraints are covert and hard to identify. Many are based on non-tangible attitudes [that] a woman's place is in the home. This does not apply to nuns [Sisters]”.

*Competition in Education Markets*

"A male principal would be more suitable"

In schools there are a number of market relationships to which principals must attend as I discussed in Chapter One—the student, leadership and teacher markets (Blackmore, 1996a). Catholic schools are often seen to have the niche market for being "good" schools in that they promote strong discipline, and are usually insistent that uniform is worn. This supposedly necessitates in Catholic schools a particular type of leadership. The leader, then, is to be strong, rational
and unemotional. Because many Sisters were seen as strong disciplinarians, there was a perception that a male principal (who seemingly would be a stronger disciplinarian) would be more suitable as a replacement. Following a Religious Sister who was seen to be a disciplinarian, there was a perception that "a male principal would be more suitable".

One observation by a female potential leader, “young married males want principalships and come across as being good practising Catholics, family men. They get the principalship, then move very quickly from a small to medium school and by the time they are forty they 'expect' to move to a bigger principalship —they climb. This is not the same for a woman in her late twenties, married with young children".

GENDER GEOGRAPHY

"You are always under the microscope"

I now compare locations and contexts that shape opportunities for women to achieve principalship in Catholic primary schools. The 'gender regime' is sharpened and 'male advantage' is accentuated in specific locations. I coin the phrase 'gender geography' to describe both the exclusion of women socially, and the 'out of place' factor geographically. Males and females are treated differently by the same local community. A male consultant reported that, “a single woman might go to a country town and we don't have the same level of confidence that things are going to be as okay". One first year female principal reported that for a single woman, all her movements are observed, “my goodness, she's gone to the pub". She added that there were, "those people who really had problems with
that”. Confidence of the people needed to be gained. One member of a community was practical, “realistically, a country community like ours would be hesitant about appointing a single female or an aboriginal person” and another, “it is likely that unless there were some very strong personality factors operating, a candidate who is female, older, black or single would not fit community expectations as readily”.

Perceptions regarding the relationship between the parish priest and a female principal can pose difficulties in a small isolated parish also. Sinclair (1998) believes that, “no matter to what lengths women go to conceal womenliness, it remains obvious and incriminating to those who are bestowing, or refraining from bestowing, the status of leader” (p. 178). As one experienced male principal noted, “it’s difficult for a parish priest to work closely with a single woman, as people in the school community are quick to misinterpret working relationships”. Women’s physical presence is a constant reminder to them and others of their ‘femaleness’. Then he commented on participation in the local community and the parish community, “I think especially in the country, the community part is a very important part of being a principal”. But this aspect has its difficulties, “to be a member of the community is probably one of the hardest things I have found”. Another added, “you are always under the microscope to a degree where that is one of the negative sides”. ”Relationship with the community is always tenuous,” was the belief of one female potential leader. She added, “while you have the confidence of the people you are pretty right. But, if for some reason, that confidence fails then other issues can potentially come into play”. Fullan (1991) understands:
The ability to cope with and deal with change is one of the critical skills required of all citizens of the future … (and) educators have a special responsibility to become skilled agents of improvement. In so doing you cannot have an educational environment in which change is continuously expected, juxtaposed to a conservative system, and expect anything but constant aggravation (p. 8).

Rural communities are often highly critical. As one experienced male principal in a remote area said, “the expectations of rural communities are a little different. 'You're damned of you do and you're damned if you don't'”. He believed that it is due to the fact that, “because the communities are so small everyone knows who you are, and that's really hard". This applies to male and female principals. One male educational consultant believed that it was the females, however, who were under more scrutiny. He commented:

No-one has ever come to me and said that they were worried about a couple of blokes being 'gay' but we had a female principal at a little school and she shared a house with a female teacher from another small school. Now they were both fantastic teachers, wonderful people and the rumour went around that obviously they must be lesbian. Eventually those people left and I think it was partly that they couldn't put up with that innuendo.

There was a yard-stick, “there is no doubt that if a fellow came along who had certain sorts of traits—gentle, soft, maybe people wouldn't even know why they didn't want that person. And conversely if a female came along and exhibited some male sorts of thing they would probably say she was too hard".

In a small school in a remote area you need to be multi-skilled, according to a male principal, “you're everything from the light globe changer to teaching expert. You've got to be a good teacher so that you can lead by example". As far as this research is concerned, this attitude to multi-skilling only ever got as far as
the gendered male roles. The sort of multi-skilling exhibited by women juggling families, careers, professional development did not count.

One experienced male principal in a small remote country town said, “he (the parish priest) can be so time-consuming”. And another, “dealing with a difficult parish priest" is an added burden for a principal in a remote area. It is then, especially, that a female principal feels isolated; as one said, “you've got all these parochial things in the country, those attitudes that prevail”. It was observed by a male potential leader that, “if there is a real strong dominance [by parish priests] it seems to be in the country rather than in the city". It seems to be more difficult for a female principal in the country, then, to relate to the parish priest.

**Male Advantage Accentuated**

"*People here loved him*

Another experienced male principal believed that single males had an advantage in the country, “people here loved him", and so, "in many, many rural communities it is the perception that the male is seen to be the leader. It's a society thing especially in a rural area". 'Male advantage' is heightened in rural areas in these ways as was shown in this study conducted in three country dioceses.

But there are disadvantages for both males and females. One male potential leader felt there was an advantage applying for leadership positions in the country as, “you're not up against the opposition that you could well be in the
city. So maybe that's a help”. But if influence from personnel from the Catholic Education Office was required on interview panels, they were often unfamiliar with life in the country, according to one principal, “I think that the city perception of the complexities of the country perhaps is not taken on board as seriously as it might be. It is more difficult in the country”. It was lamented by potential leaders, both male and female, that, "it's really tough to crack a principalship in [a capital city] or even a deputy [principalship] coming from the country. It is well nigh impossible". Instead of seeing the country experience as multi-faceted and an opportunity for multi-skilling, "there is an incorrect perception that schools in the country don't have the same status as in the city". The mentality seems to be, “you have done a country stint, now you have to prove yourself in the city". In terms of my research, this was a hurdle that men as well as women had to overcome, so it was not seen to be an easy ride to the top for men either. The point that I wish to make here is, that it is additional to the hurdles that women already, by virtue of their gender, must deal with.

Selecting a male to be principal was important in particular rural and remote areas, “from where I come from it is, because you see it. It's all macho isn't it, up there? It's a big mining town and men are it”. This fits with Wacjman (1999) insisting that traditionally, “the qualities usually associated with being a successful manager are ‘masculine’ traits such as drive, objectivity and an authoritative manner” (p. 55). "You get some instances where they want a male because he can play in the local footy team", or "we want that principal because he has three kids and it will help enrolments". They forget that the mothers
could bring just as many children too. Female potential leaders made these comments.

The perception in the country is that a male is a, "good, strong disciplinarian and somebody who could look after the Grade Six boys—a male person with great discipline, no problem". One female potential leader said that, “it is an expectation employers have". They would say, “we need someone who's hard and firm as a leader”. One female potential leader in a remote school said, “I think with Catholics the only thing they see is a pair of pants walking towards them".

Also, in the country, a male deputy insisted, “if there is a greater aboriginal content or population in the school, then they would probably want the male because they see them as greater disciplinarians. That is the image, and the parents see it that way or some of the panel. But that may be a factor. 'A male's got more control'—that image”.

This fits with the type-casting of males as the preferred leaders. Then, “women must generally ‘manage like a man’ to succeed” (Wacjman, 1999, p. 166). My research, therefore, confirms key feminist issues of discourse of exclusion by virtue of taken-for-granted publicly-endorsed gendered perceptions of authority by foregrounding these in my discussion of the contexts in which the participants in this research have found themselves. This reinforces Jones’ (1993) belief that “where authority is lodged in any system is an effect of certain beliefs and values about where it ought to be lodged”(p. 109). In Catholic
Education, as in public leadership, “these values and beliefs vary culturally and historically” (p. 109) but with some women’s experience of interlocking systems of oppression, such as kyriarchy in practice, the exercise of authority is cast in the traditional form with clearly defined male and female roles.

**Career Opportunities**

"No opening here for us"

Wacjman (1999) argues that women “are still treated as different from men and their career progress is blocked” (p. 82). Female staff in a small country school knew that this rang true, “if you wanted to become a principal there is no opening here for us [women]”. Also they were sure that it is much easier in a large school, “to build a career structure. The same opportunity doesn't arise in a small school”. And that, "if you really want to advance, you'd have to go to a bigger school". Some women want to advance their careers. But the perception of males accompanying their wives may not happen as easily or be acceptable to the local community or even to the interview panel. One female former principal knew that some parents don't approve of their sons following their daughter-in-law's career, “I know they don't like that. He is chasing her”. Instead it is, "the perception that men can relocate easier than women. It's perceived that the man can move and the woman will follow". Women can be inhibited in following their careers in these ways.

In the country, a male principal with three years experience described how his wife's career had been affected, “it was me who took on the principalship and [my wife] who gave work away to rear the children. She gave away her career
for the family”. This behaviour fits with Kanter’s (1990) concept of career where males follow the ‘corporate’ path and women’s careers are ‘accommodated’. Then a further disadvantage as one male principal noted, “there is no guarantee that somebody can get back into the workforce, having been out of it for ten years or whatever”. And that someone is often a woman as it was in this instance.

One female potential leader spoke realistically, “the availability of work [for husbands] in the country areas was limited”. If men cannot get work in the country, women do not try for principalships. "Some [husbands] are willing to be house husbands, but I think the majority would see themselves as wanting to work and so going to a small country town is not much". She added, “there are not many husband and wife combinations both working in the country. In the city it's different". A female acting principal said she, “had to find a house in two days. And bring the kids, lock, stock and barrel … we could only go where he (her husband) was going to be able to get work”. From another principal, “it can be positive but it can also be limiting in you choosing where you might go. It applies especially in country areas. People in [cities] can go without moving house".

**Location**

"*I just felt so isolated*"

The other aspect of 'gender geography' is loneliness and exclusion. McLay (1992) found in her research of beginning female principals in small rural schools that, “a number of principals reported feeling a sense of isolation
professionally, geographically, and socially” (p. 151). It was also a contention of her study that, “the female principals in isolated rural schools may have compounded problems because of their gender and as such are disadvantaged” (p. 147). This aligned with comments from lay women in this study. From one single woman, “I have found being single has its drawbacks in a smaller place. I just felt so isolated. Whether you are male or female [you] need someone else supporting you”. Religious Sisters had their communities but lay single women are alone. The local community was slow to accept newcomers. And the conservatism of the rural areas exacerbates this resistance. It was observed by a female lay principal that they accept, "males a lot easier than they do females". This principal knew that, “local country communities, because they have such a strong sense of ownership about the school, are highly critical".

Women are observed closely even in regard to their friendships. There was the, "perception of a woman's private life, that she would spend too much time developing a relationship". As a single person it could be that, “you'll be able to devote a lot of time because you didn't have the other people to devote to". But that was not the lived experience of single women. They felt isolated and unaccepted.

Distance does discriminate when it comes to accessibility to study and job opportunities for partners. A first year lay female principal reflected that, “one of the things that I think does hinder being a principal is probably isolation of the communities. People just simply don't want to go out that far. It often hinders things like wanting to continue doing my studies. Being in an isolated
community it is really difficult to gain those qualifications.” The tyranny of
distance and the time for travel was significant, “time is a difficulty. You look at
the balance between children/family/school" when considering gaining
qualifications. Since this research was conducted, however, universities, and
some Catholic institutions, are offering opportunities for people to study on-line.

For some family men rural settings had an advantage for family reasons, “my
family tends to like the country environment and the atmosphere. But there is
little opportunity, in a sense, for you to follow a career in leadership. And if you
want to be a principal then you might have to look at going to [a city]”.

One female potential leader believed that she was fortunate to be in the right
place at the right time, “the time was right to move on and that was a bit of luck
that the principalship came up for a small school”. This was combined with the
encouragement that her principal gave her. In other cases in small schools males
were favoured, because of past experiences with former leaders. As a consultant
reported:

Two times that it has been obvious that they have been looking
for a male. The two schools have been in serious trouble under a
female principal beforehand. One was a single female and the
other was a married female principal. I felt that they were
thinking this needs a male with a bit more strength here. I think
they saw that in a male rather than in a female. I don't reckon the
female applicants ever had a real chance.

One male principal was in admiration of the two female principals in his
dioce, “I mean they are incredible ladies in themselves but it must be very
hard for them to prove themselves”. The culture was such that 'male advantage' was oppressive and building up credibility was essential for families.

A young teacher who had just returned from maternity leave and was teaching in a rural school commented, “my in-laws believed that I should be chained to the microwave”. Another young female teacher reported that her father-in-law had made the comment, “it's a pity she got married, I thought she would go much further”. One female teacher knew that, “the community I live in is very male-oriented and therefore they look more towards males in leadership roles. In many, many rural communities it is the perception that the male is seen to be the leader. It's a society thing, especially in a rural area”. Newman (1995a) understands cultures such as these, “traditional cultures, have tended to be based on a sexual division of labour reflecting traditional views about appropriate male and female roles” (p. 15).

As one male teacher responding to the questionnaire commented, “rural areas are conservative-politically, culturally, and ecclesiastically. An experienced male principal concluded about his diocese in general, “I think parents want more males as well. At our school most families were looking for a male principal so, in effect, no female applying for the job would have received it”. Men do not have to prove themselves. They hold the ‘natural male advantage’, enhanced by both community and church.
Visibility

"You're always in the limelight"

One male principal remarked that whether you are a male or a female in the country, you are in your professional role constantly, “you're seen as the principal and you're 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 demeanour. "It's because everyone knows who you are that's really hard". Also "some single women have been put off applying for principalships because of a feeling of living 'under a microscope'". Appropriate behaviour is also made known. A male consultant was aware that, “women get told, put in their place, as to what their socially expected behaviour is to be". This exemplifies the practice of kyriarchy where domination of women according to culture and religion is evident.

A young male teacher in a country school reflected that:

One thing I think about is that in a country school you're always the principal. Whereas in the city, and you live on the other side of the city, somewhere else and you are away from that and you get to let you hair down and you can be someone else and forget you are principal for a while. I think that is something that I think about. I don't think I would like to put myself in that situation where you're seen as the principal and you are not seen as a human being.

Also, “because the communities are so small everyone knows who you are. And that's really hard. And if they don't know who you are, they know of you, and know someone who knows you. You've got more anonymity in the city". Being observed in a country town was a problem for one female principal, “I think it is much more difficult in the country, too, because everyone can see". They "want
to know everything about you, and they get it wrong. They make things up about you and draw their own conclusions. They expect you to be twenty-four hours a day as a Catholic school principal”. So, "you are always in the limelight. The spotlight is on constantly". Again it seemed that females were criticised on personal issues. One single female principal recalled that, “I was away on camp for a week and one of the parents left their ute (they live twenty-four kilometres out) in my garage and the comments were made—'What is this strange vehicle doing at your place?'”. The public gaze is on the private lives of women leaders and they believed, "it's worse in the country".

Some others’ experiences, “things get around if she had a visitor stay last night, worse in the country. Single women are under the microscope more". "It's because everyone knows who you are that's really hard" and "some single women have been put off applying for principalships because of a feeling of living 'under a microscope". My research has generated a rich description of the participants’circumstances that takes into account more than the immediacy of their position in the school under consideration.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

I argue that the decision-making process for the selection of principals is a key factor for women in the dilemmas they face when attempting to access principalships in Catholic Primary Education. This is true across the three states and within the three dioceses I examined.
In Catholic Education, in these three dioceses the interview structure for selection panels continues to be used. Despite its unrivalled reputation as a highly unreliable technique with low predictive validity, the selection/employment interview remains the most common selective process used by organisations for management selection. (Burke and McKeen, in Davidson and Burke, 1994, p. 96).

Before I discuss how lay women are affected by this aspect of achieving principalship it is necessary to provide a description of the structure of interviewing. There are usually two levels of interviews. At the first interview, overseen by the Director and consultants from the Diocesan Catholic Education Office, decisions are based on the eligibility and suitability of applicants for particular principal positions. Applicants are potential leaders as defined earlier in this study. An interview is then conducted at the local parish level. In remote areas these two interviews may sometimes be conducted together so that the first question to be resolved by the panel concerns the eligibility and suitability aspects of the application. Eligibility requires at least ten years of continuous and immediate experience as a teacher in a Catholic school, along with the appropriate qualifications. Then the actual selection takes place with the parish priest being the ultimate decision-maker in one of the dioceses. In the other two dioceses, following the local interview, the parish priest makes a recommendation to the Director of Catholic Education who then makes the final decision. In the dioceses studied the final decision-makers were all males. This was a factor of which all staff would be aware.
One female applicant observed that the three central interviews in which she had participated, "were the only predictable interviews I ever had, due to the fact that everyone on the panel had an educational background. Therefore the questions were about topics I was confident with. For example, current issues in education, professional development, welfare and pastoral care. The feedback you get from this group is invaluable". Then she added, “the local panel is another issue. What an experience". Her experience reflects a common thread in the stories of the women who have participated in this research as will be evident from the comments recorded in the next sections.

Composition of Panels

"Four men all in a row"

Local interview panel members reflect the culture of the local parish. These people come with a variety of views. At an assembly of parishioners of the diocese held in Ballarat in October (1999), statements were made by those representing their parishes. One person's main concern was that people were not genuflecting as they came into the church, and another, that steps should be taken, "to ensure that we keep the church open", and yet another that we should be, "encouraging the younger married ones to have bigger families thus ensuring the future". In contrast, another type of representative wanted an adaptation of the liturgy, so that it fitted better into present day culture to ensure that a sense of community was not lost. "Perhaps we will see changes from the Vatican, married priests, mission priests, women priests. We live in hope". These comments indicate the differences between people in parish communities. These
are the people who are sitting on interview panels helping to make decisions for principalships. They have vastly different viewpoints.

From Macdonald et al (1999), two approaches to women's participation were identified: one oriented towards maintaining the current participation of women, or even returning to the position of the pre-Vatican Two Church, and the other seeking an expanded role for women. This shows the disparity of views (or the culture) among members of the same parish group.

The presence of males and females on panels is thought by some potential leaders to be necessary to hear both perspectives. They said, “gender equity is important, really important” as, "what appeals to females may not necessarily appeal to a male who is doing the interviewing". They decided, "we need that other perspective". If the board chairperson, however, is a male and the educational consultant is male (as often happens), that means three of the interviewing panel, which includes the parish priest, are already male before any further selection of panel members. As one female applicant said, “I walked in and there were four men all in a row”.

But it is not only an all-male panel that can be daunting. This research identified a different kind of 'Queen Bee' (Poiner and Wills, 1991) from that cited in the literature. It is the woman who tries to engender guilt in the applicant. As one potential female leader commented, “it is very easy for us to wear a guilt”. One experienced male principal said, “sometimes other women are harder on women. They tend to stick to the negative". A female potential leader agreed. Strong
leadership by males is, “often (supported) by the female members of the interview panel as much as the males … there is just that perception that the male …will provide stronger leadership than the female”. Another female felt, “there may be a glass ceiling from a cultural point of view and on interview panels, they are frightened of forceful women”. One female potential leader felt decisions go either way, “if you have had conflict with that person it could go against you. And then other people you feel comfortable with or worked with as colleagues, it can make you relax and then you can be yourself”.

Training of Panels

"I don't think this interview panel has been very well prepared"

Preparation of panels is a task undertaken by educational consultants in each diocese but sometimes it is not as thorough as would be hoped. One female applicant remarked, “I just thought to myself when I came out after the interview that I don't think this interview panel has been very well prepared". Another female potential leader commented, “I wonder if all people on an interview panel are quite in touch with what is happening”.

Some panel members seemed not to be trained to realise the value of transferable skills. One female applicant had been an educational consultant in another diocese and the panel, "didn't see that as a relevant experience" for principalship. If skills could be recognised, it may lead to counting experience at home as a mother. This could be a great advantage for female applicants.
As a component of the training of these panels, a profile is compiled of the person desired to take up the position of principal in that particular school. Many panel members, however, come with definite ideas about who they want, not what could be best educationally for the school. One consultant said, “you really have to work long and hard with a panel to overcome, ‘we need a male’”. This consultant was aware of the perceptions of the local community towards ‘male advantage’

Skills in questioning for panel members are difficult to acquire in the short space of time allotted for training of panels. Questions asked at interviews can be inconsistent, unpredictable, and often contradictory. This fits with the research by Poineer and Wills (1991) who found that some people, and in this case panel members, could be obstructionist, while others used circumvention as their technique to avoid following the rules of equity and others exhibited inertia. How can applicants prepare for such experiences? As one experienced female potential leader said, “these (questions) were as unpredictable as the (central ones) were predictable". Applicants had to pick up the special focus of panel members as they found the questions were usually to do with their own agenda. One female deputy recalled her experiences, “some of the questions that seemed to be coming from different people just seemed to be coming from different perspectives. I quickly learned that each person on the panel had a special focus. That didn't mean that their question would be any more coherent or easy to answer".
Another female deputy said, “there was a question along these lines—'how are you going to manage?' In the back of my mind I thought 'I don't have to answer that', but I did. But I wonder how often they would ask the men the same question?” Another had a pre-schooler and was asked how she was going to cope. She was able to say, “I have a supportive husband and a baby-sitter who just took over at a moment's notice”. She felt she should not have had to answer that sort of question.

What was asked seemed to, "depend on the panel of the day and what they're after" was the conclusion of one applicant. Some believed that panel members would be swayed, “if they follow the football, they'd be in". This mentality fits with Arnot and Weiler’s (1993) findings that women needed to change to be like men and have their interests if they were to be successful.

One of the key elements which should be covered in an interview with panel members and parish priest is that of faith development - a fundamental aspect of the role of the principal in a Catholic school. An applicant's stage in her/his faith development is of considerable importance, as discussed in Chapter Four. There are six stages according to Fowler (1978). For this research, characteristics of Stages Three to Five are the most significant. I have observed that many people in the Catholic Church remain at Stage Three all their lives. They want to be loyal members, team players. They want to learn what the group does. They feel secure in the group. From my research it seems that many of the members of the school community (potential panel members) and some parish priests fit into this category. Even at Stage Four personal views are not transcended but
instead they hold firm to a particular aspect of tradition. Some priests and panel members are at this stage.

I argue that many of the potential leaders of Catholic schools, however, are now at Stage Five. These individuals are mature persons who deal with individual uniqueness, loyalty and independence. They can draw from polarities such as logic and intuition. They move freely. The whole world is now open to them. This poses a dilemma at interviews when faith development and Catholicity are being discussed, as there are many different positions held by the selectors. Both male and female applicants could experience these ambiguities. As one female potential leader observed, “it is very difficult to know what they (panel members) are looking for”.

**Strategies for Interviews**

"You really have to sell yourself"

Summing up her experience at interviews, one female potential leader said, “you really have to sell yourself”. This applies particularly to women. It seems if:

You are a gentler person you will not be able to handle the position of principal. The aggression is seen by some as important … Conversely if you come across too forcefully that can scare males on the panels. They are frightened of forceful women. They can cope with it in men, but not in women. They think: 'how will this person be at working bees?' or 'she has got these little children how is she going to manage?' And again: 'could she balance the books?'

So how do women present for interviews? Some had worked out strategies on how to cope with questions from panels members, “you virtually have to give
the middle-of-the-road answer sometimes just to sort of cover both tracks". But then, the same experienced female teacher thought that, “you have to let some of your personality out in an interview though, definitely, which is a bit scary. I mean you can't be totally fake in an interview. I think people will see through that, especially if it is a long interview and there are more people in it”.

However, "with discipline, it is like the Board's idea of how they want the school to go. You could be a really good person for the job but they might really be wanting to go 'hard line' whereas you might have a more easier approach. So then you might not get the job because you are thinking differently to what the Board is looking for”. Women know that they are competent, as one said, “who does the budget at home?” or "who knows how to rob Peter to pay Paul?” But they are often not selected.

Questions asked during interviews soon gave applicants a clue about the perceptions of some of the interview panel members. One female potential leader was asked, “Why are you the only woman applying? What does your husband think of you going for this job?” These questions were discriminatory. Others were, “When are you thinking of having your first child?” “Do you have a boyfriend?” or the same question disguised, "Do you have someone in Sydney who would keep your mind off your work?”. The interviewee thought, “Do I say yes, or do I tell a lie?” When this was asked the female thought to herself: 'do they ask the males this question?’” It is doubtful practice according to Equal Opportunity guidelines.
Attitudes of Panel Members

“She’ll be too busy”

Female potential leaders felt that panel members make decisions for some female applicants rather than questioning the person as to how she could balance her roles. One woman commented, “[I] think people (women) look at people with kids and say, 'Oh she'll be too busy, she won't be able to do the job properly'”. It was thought by a single female applicant that some female panel members, "perceive women who go into the workforce, go in for a certain time and they get married to a local, have a baby and give up work". So they come to the conclusion that this woman is unsuitable without asking her how she could balance the roles. From the responses to the questionnaires, half the potential female leaders in this study felt that panel members feel more comfortable in selecting a male, and one third of the respondents who were principals believed that panel members felt more comfortable in selecting a male. 'Male advantage' again, before the interview even begins.

Panel members are very sceptical about taking the chance that an applicant may require broken time. A mother who was seeking a leadership position said, “I'm talking about you apply for a job as principal and you've got kids, then the general perception is, can she do the job? She's got kids to look after", and from a male in the same group who was not supportive, “I think also it's the future, like what if she has more kids, time off and disruption". This means that others are making the decision for her without allowing her to articulate that she has worked out how she can fulfil the role. Women need to be conscious of this attitude of panel members when they are being interviewed. Women know what
their commitments are, and know how they balance the consequent workload. According to one male staff member in a country town, “people, I believe, think women will not give one hundred percent to school if they have a family at home”. The decision is made before the interview begins.

Slattery (1988) had researched the criteria used by individual members of selection panels in making choices between applicants. Their attitudes were similar to those reported in this research. There were those respondents who rejected the idea of a married woman as principal on the grounds that they felt that she had too many family responsibilities, or they decided that in the present economic climate she should give opportunity for work to another. Others questioned whether a married woman would be able to fulfil the panel's expectations of the principal's position. Objections were raised for single women, “thirty-six and single, a limit to family experience, eligible for marriage", "no family experience, yet thirty and single", "the male population might treat her as 'open season'", and, "like the other single applicants, she gives no emphasis to the family". Finally, "can she handle boys?" The responses received in this research showed that panel members' questions and comments had changed very little in the last ten years with lay women, and lay single women in particular, still being discriminated against. A male consultant decided that at one particular interview where a female was not selected, “the panel was doctored”.

Localisation of decision-making has the appearance of democracy. But the biases become evident. One female principal remembered one male panel
member who, "went for the jugular and it was really hard". An interrogation of the discourse of democracy would imply that such occurrences simply should not happen, given the nature of leadership by consensus rather than force of majority, or even bullying. This female applicant, in identifying the behaviour towards her in such brutalising terms, even if she is overstating the case, is nevertheless identifying a non-democratic aspect of leadership application processes that purport to select according to merit. Panel members seemed to lack knowledge of the requirements of Equal Employment opportunity legislation and practice.

A contrasting experience was that of one woman who enjoyed her interview, “I found the panel very receptive and not terribly threatening at all". She was more confident as she had been an acting principal. "Once you get into a leadership role, you become very confident, and you have that experience to fall back on and you don't just sit there like a stunned mullet and go 'oh, my God what am I going to say?'" She had not been successful in gaining principalship at the time of the focus group, however.

During all the focus groups there were only two statements from male applicants about their experiences of interview panels. They were very different from those reported by most females, “I didn't have any particular worry about the panel"; and from another male, “I found the panel very receptive and not terribly threatening at all". Taken separately, this is an indication of an interview process working as it should but placed side-by-side, or even in turns with, descriptions given by women of interview panels, as outlined above, present a set of
contrasts which suggest that the interview process is not always gender neutral. It is rather that the 'gender regime' as Connell (1995, p. 187) describes it, is alive and well according to the comments received from participants.

In one diocese, in addition to local interviews, visits are made to schools where the applicants are currently teaching, and the applicants' colleagues are questioned. This additional aspect to the selection process was affirmed as one woman felt that, "being grilled for an hour at an interview is unreal". She felt she did "not work well in an interview situation". She wondered, "is there any likelihood that the current appointment process for principals will change? I am talking about the concept of interview as offered where people are actually observed fulfilling particular tasks". I will take up this suggestion in the last chapter along with conclusions and recommendations.

INFLUENCE OF THE PARISH PRIEST

I now discuss power and the position of parish priest then, as chief decision-makers in the selection of principals. Tinsey (1998) found that 87% of the teachers he interviewed in country New South Wales felt that some priests were 'out of touch' with what was happening in Catholic schools (p. 37). My research tends to support Tinsey's findings. It goes further, though, for it deals specifically with priests on interview panels.
Power

"I don't reckon the female applicants ever had a real chance"

Who holds the power in this organisation of Catholic schools? This is a key question. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, I used the poststructuralist approach to inform this study as schools are sites of pluralities and multiplicities of discursive practice and control. For women, as Kenway (1994) insists, “analysis implies a challenge of some sort to any inequitable relationships of power” (p. 190). One potential female leader was in no doubt when she went for an interview, “I felt when I walked into the room that that would be the end of that; I just felt it within myself”.

Then there is the influence of the parish priest. Maddock and Parkin (1994) believe that power is best explored in particular contexts so that local conditions can be taken into account. The presence of the parish priest is vital in the exercise of power within local contexts. A consultant recalled the influence of the parish priest, “I don't reckon the female applicants ever had a real chance”. So often power is exercised as 'power over' often rather than 'power with', not ‘coactive power’, as Hurty (1995) categorises it. One must remember that although the powerful and powerless both use the dominant language they stand in very different relations to it (Ferguson, 1984, p. 54) because of the very nature of male hierarchy and hierarchical positions within the Catholic Church itself. This is something that the participants in this research have acknowledged that they are required to negotiate, for Catholic Education is very much a part of that hierarchical culture.
“Every single one is a different ball game”

The clergy (priests) make up less than 0.1% of the population of the Catholic Church; lay people number more than 99.9%. It can seem somewhat incongruous that the identity of such a majority is defined with reference to such a small minority. The identity of Christians is determined by baptism, the basic sacrament of belonging in the Catholic Church. Any emphasis on divisions and distinctions in the church community does not sit well with St. Paul's statement, “there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3: 28 in Jones, 1966, p. 326).

But patriarchy, and more particularly kyriarchy, are at work, as Christians do not hold equal status. The parish priest is the leader of his parish and no-one can interfere, not even the Bishop, unless it is for very serious theological reasons—Canon 522 (Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1983, p. 94). Schussler-Fiorenza (1992) encourages the feminist struggles which aim at transforming religious institutions for at least equal rights. But still the parish priest holds the power in decision-making.

An experienced female principal in a city school, “I have worked with one who would have, if given the power … take over, and run, and pull out the Canon Law every now and again, and wave it around”. There are others, (parish priests) who recognise that educational expertise is not their strength and they say openly that they leave those aspects to the experts. Thus, women have a
dilemma. How does their potential employer operate? I argue that this unpredictability is a fact of life for aspiring leaders in this system. From a male deputy leader, “I've taught in Melbourne, Gippsland and here, and I think in every area priests are different, totally different. They have different expectations, and so I think giving them that responsibility (of employment) is just asking for something wild to happen”. A current principal indicated, “I don't think any of them are predictable. I mean every single one is a different ball game”.

Itzin's (1995a) study found that, “although men were numerically in the minority, they were positionally dominant” (p.49). She was not surprised, as culture is characterised by the feature that, "men are hierarchically in the positions of power and influence. They control information and access to information, the decision-making processes, and the decisions that are made. Men are the gate-keepers and control the access of women to training, promotion and career progression" (p. 49). This is certainly the case with many parish priests. Some women, "have said that they would not apply for a position because of the parish priest who is present there. They would be guided by who the parish priest was rather than the position". Others agreed, “it is a major consideration of whether you apply or you don't”. One experienced female educational consultant expressed it this way, “I think if you know the parish priest that's probably a big help”. But then, “it can be a disadvantage if you are not held in good stead by the priest”. And another female consultant, “he's got a huge say, really. If he doesn't like you, you're not much chance. If the parish
priest doesn't want you, you're not going to get the job”. Hegemony is being practised both overtly and covertly.

Women have learned to avoid the possibility of working with parish priests who promote hegemonic ideologies and practices. They self-select out. Here power is exerted individually rather than coercively, making it easy to ‘blame’ the individual woman for lack of ambition.

So acceptance or non-acceptance by the parish priest is problematic for women. A journal entry of mine, “I heard of a woman today, a potential leader, with four children, one being a pre-schooler, who applied for a position in a Catholic school. The parish priest told her to go home and mind her children, and did not even consider her for a position. She went home but then applied for a job in a State school and got it” (September 1, 1999).

Priests and Power

"I am the powerful figure here"

According to Itzin (1995a), power is gendered by role, position, person and task. The results of my study have borne that out. A female potential leader described some parish priests, “you will get some who will say, well, I am the powerful figure here. I'll have that decision”. Itzin (1995a) says that some men appear to be oblivious of the power they have (p. 47). I am not sure whether priests are aware or not, of the power they hold, but it was the experience of applicants that many wield power freely and as Foucault (1983) argues they
exercise power in the form of networks. As Cockburn (1991) argues, “men will not let women in” (p. 221).

One male potential leader, however, was insistent that there are, "stubborn priests who will not relinquish power". This fits with Cockburn’s argument. Four experienced male principals in a large city described parish priests, “they have as much authority as they wish to call in", "I don't think any of them are predictable", "you will get some who will say, 'Well, I am the powerful figure here, I'll have that decision' " and finally:

Then, you'll get some who'll sit back and say at interviews: 'Oh I might ask you one question', or, 'Oh you answered that anyway so I won't ask you'. They leave most of the questions to the educationalists. They may also say: 'You're the experts, you give me some input as to the academic ability of this person, I will look at the spiritual side'. And I've come up against priests that no panel could change his mind and he'll have the only say.

So parish priests hold the power by acting arbitrarily, according to their own whims. A female principal believed that, “what Father says goes. The priests do play a dominant role, often it is a dominant role that is not good for the school. I know two [priests] who actually dictated what the school board could and couldn't spend". I found that power is identified with an individual, the parish priest, who exercises it not by right of birth, but apparently, in his eyes, by right of ordination.

Responses did vary regarding the behaviour of priests. One principal decided that, “he is pretty good, pretty reasonable, no, I wouldn't say he dominates". So how a parish priest presents can vary. This fits with Foucault’s (1980) argument
that power relations emerge at given places and times with varying degrees of liberty (p. 67).

Women may see the exercise of power differently. Hurty (1995) gives the lead. She saw women using a full range of emotional energy in their work. They then nurtured all kinds of growth in others. “Connectedness symbolizes, perhaps most distinctly, the uniqueness of these women’s perspective on power” (p. 395). The results from the questionnaires and the focus groups would indicate that women want to be empowered, as the statement from Galatians 3:28 insists, so that male and female are equal.

As Brown (1988) describes the approach, “before all else then we need to get to know power as something other than an enemy, to recognise power as potency and not simply domination, as exciting and not only dangerous, as productive and not simply repressive or injurious” (p. 209). Foucault (1980) speaks of power in generic, undifferentiated fashion and not as domination. But the current practice in Catholic education indicates that structures and ideologies of the church converged systematically to enhance the dominating power of the priest locally.

Brown (1988) goes on to say that, “power embodies the remarkable paradox of being one of the most determining and elusive elements of human existence. Power is ubiquitous and also largely invisible. It is not a thing but a relational element; like equality, power only exists between its agents and objects, it is not
contained within them" (p. 207). Women certainly experience the existence and exercise of power between priests and themselves.

Jones (1993) is definite, “my aim is not only to argue that women should be included in authority, but that authority itself needs to be reconstructed in order to accommodate what women have been claimed, and have claimed for themselves, to represent" (p. 23). She believes that "the feminist critique of patriarchalism has shaken the foundation of a particular form of authority in public and private life" (p. 6). What we have, "construed as being in authority, and acting authoritatively, has depended upon representations of authoritativeness that privilege masculinity-male bodies and masculinised knowledge and practices" (p. 81). Women want a different type of authority. Instead of treating every one as anyone, not someone in particular, "compassionate authority pulls us into a face-to-face encounter with a specific, concrete other" (p. 143). Authority, then, for women, is not a command, but a connection. This is not the way authority is exercised in many parishes. One experienced female potential leader insisted, “the parish priest plays a vital role" and, "he would be vital in any person's application for leadership because he has so much to do with the school". But in every case the priest's unpredictability to assert or not to assert power and authority is a key dilemma. This unpredictability is powerful because there is no due process to which women could appeal. Then subjection to the arbitrary use of priestly authority leads to a sense of ambivalence and uncertainty about their power as women as principals. While not all priests fit the 'dominant', masculine roles and not all use their 'natural' authority, they benefit from it and have the potential to assert power
gained through their masculinity and religious authority. And this behaviour is the norm

Priest as ultimate, powerful gate-keeper

“You accept that as the rules of the game”

The power in decision-making for principals in Catholic Education, as an organisation, is with the male (the parish priest) who has a dominant role, position and task, in that he is the key person in all dioceses for the employment of principals.

The etymology of authority is ‘augere’ which means ‘to augment’ and “connotes an activity of growth, not decay” (Jones, 1993, p. 21). Priests hold authority in the employment of principals and it is instructive to review how they exercise it. Consider first their position on interview panels. It is frustrating for those on the local panels if their final decision is not considered. As one experienced male principal said, “whether they (parish priest) are prepared to sit with the panel under advisement as a member, or if they are just going to sit there and make up their own mind any way, which they are quite entitled to do. I mean the fellows I've worked for, they've all been so different". One remembered when interviewing potential staff members that, “I've been over-rulled even when a priest has been absent and that's happened a lot. There's really nothing you can do about it, I don't think”. He added, “you accept that as the rules of the game. It's not logical to have a non-educationalist as the employer but then the church isn't logical either".
As for the other panel members, “I don't think they (board members) have got nearly as much power as the priest”. One potential leader reflected that, “I don't think a lot of parish priests really know too much about what is current in educational practice and perhaps some parents that are on interview panels”. None of these comments indicate that growth could or would occur in applicants, or panel members, by their experiences at interviews.

Brittan’s (1989) valuable distinction between masculinity and masculinism is applicable with respect to the parish priest. Masculinism exercised here as men’s domination, is being justified constantly. With masculinity, male behaviour can change over time even if there is little sign of change here. I noted the comments that whether the panel operates, "by consensus or whether it is the parish priest [who] has the final decision" is important. "You just never know where you stand with them (parish priests)". There is never any certainty about the decision-making process except that the priest dominates.

A principal phoned me in late 1994 distressed that a panel had made a recommendation regarding the employment of a teacher and it had been overturned by the parish priest. This principal said, “why have a panel?” I had to agree. The parish priest was the ultimate decision-maker, so his decision stood. The influence of the parish priest was discussed by members of one of the all-male focus group. They all agreed that if the parish priest said, “look, I don't think that person would be suitable, I think the panel would be fairly swayed by that”. He holds the power.
The presence of the parish priest on interview panels could be seen to be humorous if it were not for the fact that people's future lives are dependent on the decision taken. One experienced female principal said, “I have sat on four panels and I have found parish priests to ask irrelevant questions”. Another female deputy leader said, “the tricky questions were always the hypothetical ones, especially when they came from parish priests”. She added, “women have to cope with unpredictable questions like, 'What do you wear to school?' 'Do you play football?' 'What is your involvement in fund-raising?' 'Would you enter teams in the inter-school sports?'” She continued:

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!

And she didn't.

It was believed that some priests had made up their minds beforehand as to who would get the position, "even before the interview, the women did not stand a chance," said a current male principal. One female potential leader felt, “in my experience some [priests] have made up their minds before the interviews and go through the process because the Catholic Education Office says they have to". She felt she had wasted her time applying, “you never know where you stand with them" and "how much authority they wish to call in".
Post-structuralists such as Foucault (1980) believe that power, closely linked with authority, can be life-giving, rather than purely negative, but the women in this study have often experienced it as oppressive. In the Catholic Church it was felt that, “authoritarian attitudes and the misuse of power and position were seen as serious obstacles to women's participation” (Macdonald et al, 1999, p. 322).

In Chapter Three, I discussed the development and formation of priests. The exercise of power could be traced back to priestly formation where men were trained for eight years in an all male, hierarchically structured environment. A man becomes a man because he, "learns the required behaviour associated with the male gender role. He comes to define himself from the perspective of those around him who treat him as male" (Brittan, 1989, p. 20). He is socialised into being a male. Priests would have had the opportunity to learn behaviour, to fit in with the practices that characterise patriarchy, and to exercise gender identity in a variety of ways at any point in time. As one current female principal said, “if you are unlucky enough to get a parish priest who has hang-ups about women for whatever reason it is difficult. You are not in luck. So you can be at the whim of the parish priest”. From Macdonald et al (1999):

Priests need to understand their training, their fears, their celibacy, and their identity, in order to allow shared leadership to take place. Originally priests were the only educated people or the best educated. This is no longer true, leading to fear and identity crises in clergy. Until this is owned by priests and bishops, women will be seen only as threat; this needs to be out in the open (p. 97).

It seemed that some parish priests, perhaps in their fear, treat women poorly. One female teacher said, “he (the parish priest) was a male who would like to
think females didn't have a brain and he found it hard to take when they did something". It is not surprising that more than half of the female potential leaders questioned felt that parish priests relate better to men.

This reaction is what Handy (1985) would class as “person culture” (p. 195). Handy, however, does not include gender in the classification, and it is men who are largely in the roles and positions of power where they often operate as an exclusive and closed male club. Person cultures are dominated by men and produce policies, procedures and practices defined by male values, experience and expectations.

Again, according to Handy (1985), the person culture replicates itself with men choosing the right people who think and exercise control largely through the selection of key individuals. They are individuals like themselves. Observations before interviews gave female potential leaders some clues about whom the parish priest was wanting to employ. As one said, “if he refers to the incoming principal as 'he' before the interviews there'd be no question that it is to be male. The language betrays his thoughts". One of the priests referred to women as 'ferals' at a priests' meeting with personnel from the Catholic Education Office. It would be fairly obvious what line that employer's decision-making would take when he was looking for a principal for his parish school. Often, "it depends on the parish priest and where he is at, is a big thing" said a female potential leader in a small country school. The parish priest selects the principal and so one female potential leader commented, “one of the big things which influences male leadership are [sic] the parish administrators. I challenge
anybody to defy that". Women believe, following Handy's (1985) theory, “if the parish priests [are] always going to be male, that sets up a difficulty for a woman". Added to that, one woman also observed, “it is interesting that final approval for principalship comes from a man" as mentioned earlier.

Tinsey's study (1998) found that "priests treated women as servants and in group situations they were often 'put-down' by them" (p. 47). In research carried out by the Brisbane Archdiocese (1991), a parish priest made the comment, “the less women the better". Another quite openly stated, “we would prefer the male". ‘Male advantage' persists in other dioceses in Australia as well.

To sum up this section on the parish priest one experienced male principal who had been a principal in three schools said, “I think in every area priests are different, totally different". Not all parish priests fit this dominant model nor exercise dominance, but all benefit from it. There are examples of schools where the parish priest is supportive. Once again it is this unpredictability that is disconcerting and gives rise to the metaphor of the 'moving’ floor. A comment from my journal:

It was refreshing to visit the schools at Y. Father X is so interested in the school, but he leaves all the educational and employment decisions to the principal. We need to use him as a model for other places. It could be very different for the school community if he is changed to another parish and a priest is appointed who operates in a different mode! (May 3, 1998).

This comment fits with feminist post-structural thinking which is mindful of the multiple positions of power relations in which women find themselves.
The employment of principals has become a significant factor in the ministry of parish priests with the demise of Religious principals who were appointed by their superiors. Statistics indicate that in 1999 less than one tenth of the principals in Victorian Catholic Primary schools are Religious so more than three hundred and fifty are lay principals (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 1999). This has caused dramatic change in the Catholic parish community and the effects are being felt by those communities. Women are self-selecting out or selecting parishes that have a priest who, they believe, is more supportive of their type of leadership, or women in general. It is obvious that the parish priest is a key figure in the selection of principals.

I listed some of the changes that are occurring in education and particularly in Catholic Education at the beginning of Chapter One. The conservatism of rural communities, the resistance of Catholics to change, and the influence of the parish priest in decision-making, continue to prove to be 'hurdles' for lay women in their quest to achieve principalship.

I have found that there is an over-riding dilemma experienced by lay women—that of ‘male advantage’. It can be described as 'dancing on a moving floor'. Old forms of masculinity are realigned with new forms of leadership and the barriers confronting women change constantly. Women are challenged to 'learn new steps' if they are to have any chance of being successful in achieving principalships.
The focus has been on women as the victims, or the deficient incomplete beings who are required to upgrade themselves in a variety of ways to achieve their goals toward principalships. Many women internalise attributes, skills and behaviours required of leaders in changing times, but still find that a 'glass ceiling' confronts them in their quest for leadership in Catholic schools. There are cultural, systemic, and localised discourses providing layers of often unexpected opposition which assist in excluding lay women from principalship. These result in a cumulative effect of favouring male leadership. It is the inconsistency in these discourses which poses an additional problem for women. Alongside employers who act in a dominating, hierarchical fashion are those who exercise their authority compassionately and cooperatively.

Applicants for principalships are often unaware of how a particular parish priest leads his community which includes the Catholic school. As said earlier, if women do know of the particular priest's style they often select out. They do this if they believe that either they would never be successful in their application for principalship in that parish, or that they would not be able to work with that parish priest if they did acquire the position of principal. This arbitrary discrimination has not been addressed systemically or systematically by Catholic Education.

The unpredictability and conservatism of priests affects some male applicants as well, as they may not fit the dominant model of masculinity. But, as men, they still have an advantage over women. Many priests relate differently to men than to women as shown by the comments made by both males and females during
this study. The probability that males will find difficulty in working with parish priests, then, is much lower. There is not a level playing field with regard to acceptability of males and females for leadership. Women soon learn that they "are again operating within contradictory sets of meanings: 'contribute fully, as equal members of the team', but 'remember your real place" (Newman, 1995a, p. 19).
CHAPTER EIGHT: OVER-RIDING DILEMMA, LEARNINGS AND POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapters Six and Seven I have argued that there is need for a shift from focussing on 'female disadvantage' to an analysis of 'male advantage' when considering the disproportion of lay women who are successful in achieving principalships in Catholic Education in the three country dioceses in the three different states in Australia that form the basis of my research.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss an over-riding dilemma that lay women experience and how my notions of culture, power, change, leadership and career have changed following this research. I will also comment on the change I have seen in lay women during this period of investigation. Then I offer some policy recommendations that could begin to change the culture of Catholic Education. I do this at systemic, institutional and individual levels.

**Over-riding Dilemma**

"Dancing on a moving floor"

Male advantage is the constant cultural barrier or ‘floor’. Then uncertainty regarding relationships can occur during a principal's term of office as the priest who employed that principal may transfer to another parish at any stage during a principal's contract. The incoming priest may act very differently. As one experienced female principal shared, “I think the parish priest can either be one of the most wonderful things to help you in a principalship, or can make your
principalship hell. At the last school I had one of each—one I nearly died under, and then one that I could have lived with forever, who was marvellous, just a total support without being a mouse”. I noted from my journal (June 14, 1998), “well, age is not a factor with regard to cooperation and collaborative leadership styles. Father [J] and the principal have such a great relationship. They work so well together. It is a pleasure to visit here”. Parents, also, are unpredictable. Some are supportive, others critical. As one first year principal in a very remote school recalled, “I was going along my own rosy little way thinking that everything was 'honky dory' and aren't these people wonderful and all of a sudden I get a phone call from out of the blue from one of the parents, quite abusive really”.

Despite the existence of Equal Opportunity legislation, local panels that interview applicants for the principalship do not receive adequate professional development on procedures. They often are out of line according to appropriate guidelines (Burton et al 1997; Cork, 1991). It seemed often to be a case of luck for the applicants. As one consultant observed, “if there has been an unsuccessful male then the female applicant is in good shape. The community is likely to be looking for a change". One male principal in a city school said, “the panel might think, what has happened, we don't want it to happen again, so we are looking for someone opposite. Or we're very happy with what we've had, we want someone in the same mould. It is like the Board's idea of how they want the school to go. You might not get the job because you are thinking differently to what the Board is looking for!”. But it is also problematic as the applicant is usually not aware of the aspirations of the interview panel until the day of the
interview. Then there is the added dilemma that the parish priest's aspirations may not be the same as those of the panel. Clear selection criteria and processes are not evident across schools.

What have I learnt from this research?

Newman (1995a) describes culture as, “slippery and elusive; because it is part of taken-for-granted, everyday reality, it is hard to see” (p. 12). One experienced female potential leader found that, "this varied from place to place". That was a key learning. It was the unpredictability of the culture that surprised me. Newman (1995b) found that, “[a]s women we are held in place not just by lack of access to jobs but by the cultural meanings attached to 'gender' which have real consequences for our lived experience. These cultural meanings are not fixed and immutable, and different patterns will occur within and between organisations" (p. 274). They do know the basic step, however. It is that of 'male advantage'. It was this immutable aspect that I had thought was the constant. It was. But it was also the unevenness of behaviour that caused additional stress to lay women.

Culture is essentially composed of a number of understandings and expectations that assist people in making sense of life—a living phenomenon through which people create the worlds in which they live. It is, “dynamic rather than fixed, as a process instead of just content” (Nieto, 1998, p. 421). There is no certainty therefore, that women will be appointed according to merit. As one experienced male principal, who had been in two previous schools as leader, observed, “culture is changing in some places but it's slower in small places rather than in
the bigger centres". In the Catholic Church there are many cultures. Macdonald et al (1999) found membership in a Church, "where the older laity have been able to maintain attitudes about gender that were acceptable four decades ago, and so on, is not going to hold the attention of young women" (p. 93). And in the wider society, "women have to live out the contradictions … in a climate which is rife with mixed messages resulting from the interplay between old and new regimes" (p. 18). This is certainly true in Catholic Education even if the 'gender regime' (Connell, 1995) remains constant. I was very conscious that the priest is often a major determiner of that culture.

From my research it has become evident that for women who are accessing principalships the ground rules of the local cultures shift constantly. People may come into organisational arrangements with a sense of gendered self, but that self, like the culture itself, is constantly in a state of becoming. Datnow (1998) reminds us, "not all organisations are alike—some organisational cultures are more or less 'women-friendly'" (p. 25). This variation within organisations can occur at different times and in different settings. There is then an additional tension between the unchanging, immovable culture of the Catholic Church which gives the impression of stability, and the unpredictability of behaviour of the parish priests and members of selection panels for principals. This was a key learning. I had expected that the ageless, immutable culture was the significant barrier. It became evident that it was also the unpredictability of how culture works in specific local contexts, that caused so much stress to many lay women.
I entitled this thesis with a metaphor that explains that lay women find the over-riding dilemma for them is that the 'steps keep changing' in their efforts to achieve principalships in Catholic Education. Newman (1995b) would agree that for women the only constant is change, “[o]ne of the key issues in researching women's experience and developing strategy is that the very ground on which we are standing is itself shifting constantly” (p. 275). Change occurs, but it is unpredictable and uneven.

I found the link between change and power to be strong. I was aware of Catholics being characterised as conservative or progressive (in a variety of degrees) and so consequently closed or open to change. But I was surprised at the strong link between resistance to change, and the challenges to established sources of power. I had expected that logic would prevail in decision-making for principalships—and that the best educationalist would be selected. Instead I found that not only were many of the parish priests often not well-informed educationally, but their actions indicated significant desire to protect their own authority and to maintain control by resisting any discourses about Affirmative Action. And within that there was an arbitrariness of role and behaviour. The effects of kyriarchy with the added dimension of religion were very evident.

I saw in practice that power is localised and exercised through net-like organizations with individuals both exercising it and having it exercised over them (Foucault, 1973). The ‘boys’ club’ of priests was a powerful group that had great influence and had exercised power over others. The enduring nature of masculinism re-invented itself over time.
This supports feminist researchers’ view that procedural justice is insufficient to achieve gender equity within the church, and that any advance forward is reliant on a cultural shift in values and attitudes.

My notion of career was also widened. First of all, women were delighted to be given the opportunity to tell their stories of their struggles in maintaining and developing a career. I had been aware that women ‘juggled’ all aspects of their lives. They valued their families and were also committed to their obligations in Catholic Education. They vindicated the belief of some parents that Catholic Education would suffer. They performed well in both arenas of work—paid and unpaid. I felt rather than having ‘accommodated’ careers as Limerick (1995) would describe them, they had ‘adaptable’ careers. They responded to the needs of family and school appropriately and usually coped well. I observed that women who had spent time rearing a family brought valuable skills with them to the position of principalship. All aspects were executed efficiently and with competence. They were adept at managing often on meagre resources both of time and money. As one said they knew how to ‘rob Peter to pay Paul’. They were creative in making ends meet and achieving the desired results. I felt the skills they had learned in family situations supported them in their roles as principals. Their careers were on track even if they were not sure where the next journey would lead.

These women showed me a different face of leadership. They had reflected on their lives, prioritised their values and made decisions with a high degree of self-
knowledge. Their approach of ‘power with’ (Hurty, 1995) had significant effect. They utilised the resources of their own experience by using a full range of emotions in their work and nurtured learning and development as they had done with infant children. They were resilient in their endeavour and as well as being adaptable; they were co-operative rather than competitive (which could have been to their detriment sometimes); they could lead and manage, and they had a variety of leadership styles and skills which they called forth at appropriate moments. They were rational and emotional, caring and firm, soft and hard as described by Kenway (1993). They viewed leadership as a dynamic connectedness between people rather than a vehicle of control. They were facilitators of a process of growth.

I found that some did self-select out when they were aware that they were not likely to be successful or they felt considerably discriminated against, and so were reluctant to be subjected to an ordeal that most saw as biased towards males.

I found, too, that selection was more arbitrary and less procedurally fair than my previous experiences had indicated. That is, merit is a cultural product. There could have been a presumption that according to the ‘pipeline’ thesis, once there were sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced women, more equal representation of women in leadership would occur. Instead, because of the resistance by males in power (kyriarchy at work) this automatic progression did not occur. A considerable cultural shift would be required.
Since I began the research I have noticed a shift in the reactions of women attempting to access principalships. More women teachers are becoming quite confident that they are sufficiently competent to take on principalship. They are better qualified, have worked out their family commitments, and are pursuing a principalship because they know they are excellent classroom teachers. This gives them the confidence to want to lead a school so that the students receive the best possible education as they are committed to the Catholic Education. They are resilient and are encouraged by peers and mentors to pursue their desires to achieve principalship. Although the proportion of female principals has not changed to any great extent, I sense a change in the women themselves and I look forward to studying the statistical material in ten years time. One significant factor is the slow demise of parish priests and the consequent leadership in parishes being taken over in some cases by Religious Sisters. Hopefully the decision-making with these people on the selection panels with be different as most of these women have been educationalists.

I, therefore, extended my argument beyond that of female disadvantage to consider the ways in which the church-school relationship advantaged males by the operation of systemic structures, cultural practices and religious beliefs. It was obvious that masculinism (Brittan, 1989), as the ideology that justifies male domination, was prevalent with definitions of masculinity being linked with definitions of leadership. In particular, I focused on the images of masculinity associated with religious authority that favoured the appointment of any male over lay women, even when they replaced female Religious. The very presence of lay women reminded both priests and many of the selection committee
members of issues of sexuality. This fits with Wacjman’s (1999) observation that, “when a woman occupies a position traditionally filled by a man, the significance of her sex, for both how she operates, and how she is treated, is subjected to scrutiny in a way that the ‘normal’ hierarchical order is not” (p. 2). Males were seen to be rational rather than emotional and usually had a supportive wife. Thus while particular masculinities were more acceptable, all masculinities were preferable to non-religious femininities.

The discriminatory practices of some of the individual priests cannot be attributed to serendipity in the context of the debates within the church. Rather, these individual prejudices were derived from the gendered discourses about strong leadership within the church more generally, where women's traditional roles were being encouraged not discouraged. Thus the systemic attitudes and values of the church reinforced traditional community notions that associated masculinity with leadership, and the gendered culture of church and school, with little political will from above to change that.

Part of my aim in undertaking this research as a professional doctorate was my wish to work for equality, especially with regard to increased access for lay women in principalship in Catholic Education.

**MY RECOMMENDATIONS**

I have recommendations for policy changes at systemic, organisational and individual levels which may address the problem of under-representation of lay women in leadership in Catholic Education.
I also include some practical suggestions which could be implemented in the hope of counteracting the pervasive 'gender regime' of 'male advantage' that exists at each level of Catholic Education.

Systemically

The Catholic Church is the over-arching organisation to which all the schools I have studied belong. I am not as ambitious as Radford Ruether and Schussler-Fiorenza (in Gunew, 1990), who hope to transform the sexist structures of the Judaeo-Christian tradition while remaining based within it (p. 7), for I, too, remain in the church, but I do want to expose the hindrances that lay women experience when they apply for and sometimes acquire principalships.

Many women around the world are agitating for a greater voice in church affairs. They have been told categorically that women's ordination is not permitted but they have other areas they wish to pursue. Pope John Paul II has recognised the importance of women in the life of the Church and has stated, among other things, that there is some urgency in the need to involve women at all levels in Church processes, including decision-making (Synod on Religious Life, 1999).

At the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) General Assembly in Rome in 2001, the following resolutions, proposed by The National Board of Catholic Women in England (in Catholic Woman, 2001) will be debated for acceptance. They are that, “the Church should be encouraged to review all its structures and systems to ensure that the absence of access to
ordained ministry does not exclude women from being involved in the decision-making process even at the highest level”. Further, that, "WUCWO should seek discussions at the highest possible level to ensure that such a review occurs in the central structures of the Church and at Bishops' Conferences and takes into account a widespread consultation of women” (p. 7). I will be asking Bishops and Congregational Leaders who will be present at that Assembly to support these resolutions so that appropriate action at national levels will occur.

Secondly, following the survey on Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia which has been referred to in this study under the heading of the report following that survey, 'Women and Man—One in Christ Jesus' (Macdonald et al, 1999), a follow-up committee has been formed to investigate further the problem of limited participation of women in the church in Australia. I recommend that strong support be given to this committee, especially by members of Religious Congregations, so that increased participation for women is achieved at all levels in the church.

On February 2, 2001, the first meeting of this follow-up committee was held (Hawkes, 2001). The chairperson reported that, "at our inaugural meeting, members had an opportunity to share their stories and their hopes for the church. All of us are excited at being involved in this partnership with Catholics throughout Australia and we hope that together we will enable a better balance of women's and men's experience, gifts and skills to come alive within the life of the church” (p. 20). A consequence then could be that women are seen to be competent decision-makers in the wider field in the Catholic Church and so
'male advantage' begins to be decreased at several levels. Some women are already lagging in their optimism about the success of this committee. This reaction fits with Mackay's (2000) observation concerning Australians in general. He believes that when a problem becomes too difficult to solve, Australians disengage from it. Will Australian Catholic women decide that their increased participation in the church will not occur? I do not intend to remain silent on this issue. In my role now as Leader of a Religious Congregation I will be encouraging this committee in every way possible. At our meetings with the bishops, I will also pursue the recommendations from WUCWO, and ask the Australian bishops for a review of decision-making processes and wide consultation with women in this country.

As well, with Australia’s commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), I will take every opportunity to remind authorities of our obligations toward women—the restating of the issue of women’s rights at an international level (Blackmore, 1999).

Thirdly, I will remind authorities in the Catholic Church, they are not excluded from Equal Opportunity legislation, they are morally and ethically committed to fairness in employment procedures for all leadership positions, and they should abide by Equal Opportunity legislation and reporting.
Organisationally

There is an urgent need for the improvement of professional development of teachers, principals, priests and selection panels around the issues of Equal Opportunity, merit, selection, and critical alternatives to existing leadership training courses. Many of the teachers who are employed in Catholic schools in Australia graduate from Australian Catholic University. Many of the teachers who participated in the focus groups in this study would have also been trained at this university. I recommend that a more critical approach to educational leadership be developed. Material on 'male advantage' could be included in leadership courses. This recommendation is consistent with the findings of this study.

A committee was set up in 1998 to investigate female leadership in Catholic schools in Victoria with the intention of providing courses to promote such leadership. It seems to have lapsed in activity. I will recommend to the Director of the Melbourne Catholic Education Office that this committee be reactivated and that material provided for their leadership courses contain the concept of 'male advantage' as well as presenting a variety of leadership styles. It is interesting that Wacjman (1999) believes:

[W]hat is ironic is that the participatory and cooperative leadership style with which the majority of both men and women identify also corresponds to current notions about a 'female management style'. If true it would suggest that rather than women having to become more like men to be effective managers, men are already becoming more like women (p. 71).
Personnel from this Office could then provide "initiatives [to] examine the way things are currently done, and the need for 'inside-out' change" (Sinclair, 1998, p. 19).

As this study centred on Catholic lay women educators I believe they could benefit from the courses and materials this committee would produce. Perhaps a school-based professional and personal training and support programme similar to that developed by Strachan (1991) could be conducted.

I further recommend that all personnel in Diocesan Catholic Education Offices who have responsibility for leadership courses include more critical feminist approaches and those informed by the new sociology of masculinity in their curriculum. These personnel should also be held responsible for encouraging current principals regarding this issue, as these principals employ staff in Catholic schools. In particular, the focus should be on 'male advantage' as a critical element that begins with the employment of staff. As Williams (1992) noted in her research, “many of the men indicated that they received preferential treatment because they were men" (p. 257).

I recommend that a review of the selection processes for principalships be undertaken in all dioceses. My research found that the interview process is a 'stand alone' for the selection of principals with one only diocese complementing this process with a visit to the applicant's current school. I recommend a broader process for selection of principals as, "it is essential that the selection process be carefully planned, tightly structured and based on clearly articulated criteria and
valid and reliable evidence. Everything must be done to reduce reliance on 'intuition' and 'gut reaction' (Chapman, 1986, p. 17).

I recommend that policies be formulated that insist that training for members of interview panels for principalship be mandatory. The emphasis on eligibility for membership should be that people have the skills to make informed decisions regarding educational matters. Such training should include discussion on leadership styles and the different forms of authority that can be exercised by leaders, being aware that there is a type-cast bias in society for the manner in which males and females operate. Jones (1993) believes there is a move away from "authority as domination to authority as meaningful, mutually constructed communal bonds" (p. 163). This a model worth pursuing.

Whilst parish priests continue to be the employers in schools, best practice by them could be identified. There are some priests who lead compassionately and practise equity. These priests should be encouraged and nourished in their best practice. A strategy needs to be developed to allow these priests to demonstrate to their colleagues how they operate. Practices of leadership may be altered toward a network model, and the relationship between leaders and followers would shift from a command-obedience structure, based on fear of loss of protection, toward a more consensual, egalitarian model (Jones, 1993, p. 240). Some priests exercise non-traditional forms of authority. It would be of genuine help if these practices could be modelled to other priests, as often parish priests and community members exercise traditional forms of authority which sustain the dichotomy between compassion and authority, between feeling and
cognition, between empathy and judgment which contribute to the association of the authoritative with the masculine. Jones' (1993) effort is, "not to replace one (masculine) set of marks of authority with another (feminine) set of marks but to contribute further to the displacement of the binary logic to which analytical thinking is often subjected" (p. 107). She argues that compassion cuts through this orderly universe. I, then, urge for a re-conceptualisation of authority itself following Jones (1993). That could be the long-term goal of personnel from Catholic Education Offices.

I make a further recommendation, however. Parish priests hold both the role of pastor in their primary schools and also that of employer, both of principals and teachers. I recommend that the parish priest remain the pastor of the school in his parish, but not the employer. He has been trained to act as pastor but not as leader of an educational establishment. This would clarify the role of the parish priest. Further research could be carried out in other dioceses than the ones I have examined to assess if lay women are disadvantaged when a centralised educational employment system is in place. It could also test if 'male advantage' continues to take effect. As has been shown in Chapter Seven, difficulty has arisen for many applicants when parish priests exercise the role of employer. This difficulty arises especially for lay women seeking principalships in Catholic schools as their sexuality becomes a factor, as described in the findings of this research. Following his research, Tinsey's (1998) study made a similar recommendation for his diocese but no action has been effected at the time of writing this thesis. While priests continue to be employers, however, there could be some input on 'male advantage' for them as well.
I recommend that identification of excellent female leaders be provided by Catholic Education Office personnel for selection panel members. It could then be suggested that the panel members visit the schools these women lead.

**Individually**

I recommend that diocesan and local authorities at school level formulate policies that allow participation by potential leaders in programmes that develop self-knowledge and assist in the acquisition of appropriate skills for the position of leadership. All these characteristics affect how a person responds to change, and self-knowledge is invaluable both for oneself and for the total group affected by the change. I also encourage authorities to develop and validate different leadership styles and values.

In fact, my research has allowed me to take a step beyond that of description and analysis of data collected in a systemic manner within the framework of an informing theory. It has enabled me to delineate aspects of worst and best practice and to formulate sets of strategies with which to tackle the problematic aspects of gendered leadership issues in Catholic primary schools.
CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the gendered nature of Catholic Education which privileges the male in the process of acquiring principalship. It has provided suggestions for policy changes that could enhance lay women's chances of achieving principalship in Catholic Education. The argument I have used throughout this thesis is that women are disadvantaged because, in applying for principalship, along with the constant barrier of 'male advantage', they never have the certainty as to what is required for success in achieving principalship. They constantly 'dance on a moving floor'. While I have limited my examination to three dioceses in three states, I have not argued that the findings are generalisable to the whole of Australia, or indeed, the western societies in which Catholic schools operate. What I do suggest is that they have uncovered disturbing trends within the Catholic Education system that need to be addressed. Women are positioned ambiguously and discourses at each level of Catholic Education are multiple, often contradictory and sometimes even in competition, as was shown in Chapters Six and Seven.

There are different conceptions of authority held by parish priests, parents and the community. Compassionate authority has become the way of operating for some leaders whilst others still exercise their control using the patriarchal model.

Educational change theorists agree that the task of the principal is extremely demanding and challenging. In their attempts to cope, the energy of principals is
deflected away from the core work of learning, teaching and building a cohesive and caring school community, as well as holding and developing the vision for their schools. Paperwork, litigation and industrial relations issues demand many hours of precious time. Competing markets and the discourses of managerialism and entrepreneurialism compete with those of educational leadership and professionality. These demands often position leaders in time-consuming and contradictory ways. Nevertheless, radically changing social relations of gender have resulted in cultural shifts which cut deeply into the stable foundations of the church and family. The changing nature and structure of the modern family, then, impacts on the construction of gender and its expression and this causes confusion both within the family and in classrooms.

These changes are not happening in manageable, predictable and wholesale fashion. Different expressions of masculinity, for example, are emerging both within staffs and with students, and in piecemeal and almost random fashions. This unpredictability gives rise to atmospheres of uncertainty and indecision. Not least of the problem is diversity in students both from an ability aspect and a pastoral care need. These students require additional attention from teachers and their leaders in nurturing, professional and informed ways.

For these reasons, a supportive environment is required, as educational change is constant, inconsistent, time-consuming, contradictory, open-ended and uneven. Burgeoning intrusion of the emergence of information technology necessitates involvement in different educational arms. Instead of turning out students for an industrial-based society, principals and staffs must keep pace with the revolution
in technology and educate students within this information age. This calls for a very different educational philosophy from that which has traditionally served all schools, be they Catholic or not.

Spender (1997) is aware of the pressures:

> If I were to nominate the skills that are most necessary for productive participation in the digital age, I would have to say that what is needed more than anything else is the ability to do more than one thing at a time; to be multi-skilled, multi-tasked, a product of a multi-media environment (24).

Leaders in the future will need to be able to recover quickly from 'interruptions'; they will have to be able constantly to make, and remake, contingency plans, to change priorities and practices on the spur of the moment. If there is one group in society that has been reared to best display such ability, it would have to be women. It does not mean that men are incapable of learning the same skills but the findings of this research suggest that women's experience of life should equip them well in this regard, should the hindrances they have faced so far be frankly addressed and seriously confronted.

The challenges for principals in the Catholic Education system must necessarily present a role of intensely pressurised demands. I have made a number of recommendations on the basis of strategies developed out of my research—strategies upon which I can act, strategies which may serve to crystallise the actions of others. Without such strategies, indeed without such actions, those men that make up an unbalanced proportion of principals in Catholic primary schools and those women who are still in the minority in Catholic Education system may well be overwhelmed. With them, overt ideals in action may well
serve to generate a productive relatedness to the challenges that will inevitably present.

I do not consider, however, that coming to the end of this project is the end of the issue. I feel that I have raised more issues than I have been able to canvass in this work of mine and see the task facing the authorities within Catholic Education as ongoing. I recommend that further research be undertaken on emotions and leadership, and the effect of change on men and women within the system. If a centralised system of employing principals is introduced, then I recommend that, as a preliminary step, an investigation is made to examine if lay women are disadvantaged.
ABBREVIATIONS


Australian Council of Educational Administration (2000) *Directions in Education*, 9, p.3


*Gender, Culture and Organisational Change: Putting Theory into Practice.*

London: Routledge, pp. 11-29.


California: Sage Publications.


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On an academic level, I participated in a critical friendship group for about three years (from 1993 to 1995) and found that experience to be very valuable in a personal and professional sense. One member was a current principal, the other, a deputy principal. Both were from Catholic primary schools in Victoria but not in the diocese in which I was working. We met monthly. I remained in contact with one member of that group and our discussion always centred around our study as we were both at comparable stages of our research. Also, we were focusing on similar but different aspects of women in leadership in
Catholic schools. We shared literature that we had read and discussed the material critically. Early in my research I communicated regularly with another colleague who was researching a music program for his Ed.D, but our paths diverged as our methodologies and issues studied differed considerably. A very valuable peer group was Women in Educational Research Group (WERG) at Deakin University. Even though I was an off-campus student I was invited and attended several of this group's discussions. Staff members would present their material and colleagues would comment critically. That was a helpful experience for me as I heard about the research of others and in particular how they linked their literature reviews with their findings.

In both these groups we looked at recent material found in books, journals and newspapers. I was writing my literature review at that stage so this experience helped me decide what material to include. I tended to discard material rather than debate its relevance. Initially I read widely and then I realised I had to make judgements about what I read and become more focused. I continued reading whilst I carried out my research and related the literature to what I had heard from the participants in my study and the findings I was formulating. This made me more critical of the relevant literature. I found that, as I left the literature and went back to my scripts, I was encouraged to go back to the literature.