ENGINEERING DIVERSITY:

AN ANALYSIS OF FEDERALLY DEFINED EMPLOYMENT EQUITY FROM THE

VIEWPOINT OF THE EQUITY PRACTITIONERS OF ENGINEERING

COMPANIES

by

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Equity from the Viewpoint of the Equity Practioners of Engineering

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that employment equity practitioners working within

engineering companies have had only marginal success, the principle obstacle

being the refusal of executives and managers to recognize and deal with

employment equity, especially equity for women. The lack of executive and

managerial commitment to employment equity is illogical as the engineering

industry is facing a decreasing supply of technically competent employees, yet

companies continue to view equity as extrinsic to business success. The

situation for women is exacerbated by two factors: first, male dominance in

engineering is institutional and systemic in structure, and second, there is a lack

of legislation mandating employment equity.

To test this thesis six equity practitioners were interviewed. All six stated

that the only reason their company implemented employment equity was to meet

the requirements of the Federal Contractors Program (FCP). The practitioners

stated they did not have the support, commitment or involvement from most of

the executives and senior managers, support which would be a prerequisite for

achieving real change in employment equity. The majority of practitioners stated

they were expected to ensure only that the company could pass an audit by the

federal government. One of the major weakness of the FCP is that it is the intent

to implement employment equity and not the improvement in representation for

designated group members on which employers are audited. Although all the

practitioners were aware of the weaknesses of the FCP, most agreed that

stronger legislation alone would not significantly increase the representation of women within engineering firms.

Along with stronger employment equity legislation, this thesis argues that two additional changes are necessary in order to significantly increase the representation of women in engineering. At the level of education, teachers and school counsellors must ensure that girls are not channeled away from studying mathematics and science. University engineering faculties must be made more 'women-friendly' so that more women obtain the necessary education to enter the engineering profession. At the level of the company, employment equity must be supported and directed by the company executives in the same way that other business issues, such as technological innovations and sales, are. Without changes in all three areas, equity will not happen.

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE - THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATED

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY, ENGINEERING AND WOMEN

Introduction

Although there have been some advancements for women in the male-dominated field of engineering, those of us who have been assigned the task of implementing employment equity initiatives within engineering companies have been only marginally successful. The main barrier to success has been the refusal of executives and managers to recognize and deal with employment equity, especially equity for women, as an issue intrinsic to the success of their business. This is not logical because they are facing a serious shortfall in the supply of needed technical employees. Management's refusal to recognize equality in employment as a business issue is exacerbated both by the institutional and systemic structure of the male-dominated engineering profession and the lack of substantial legislation to enforce employment equity. I will show how employment equity issues are treated within engineering firms by examining the experiences of employment equity practitioners. I will include my own work experiences as an employment equity practitioner within the engineering industry, as well as the experiences of five colleagues.

This thesis has six chapters. This introduction explains how the thesis developed and my choice of research methods. Discussions of several other background topics are also included: why the research focuses on women; how

employment equity has developed at the federal level; current employment trends within the engineering field; and the impact on women of those trends.

The sole reason that the engineering firms in this study began implementing employment equity was to meet the requirements of the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) in order to be eligible to bid for contracts with the federal government. Accordingly, chapter two analyses problems with the design and enforcement of the FCP. The assessment includes a discussion of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1986. Although the companies in this study were not covered by the EEA, the design of the FCP was modeled on the EEA and has many of the same features. Unlike data from employers covered by the FCP, annual data from employers covered by the EEA is available to the public and is useful in assessing the effectiveness of federal employment equity because it charts the representation, in these workforces, of designated groups. Root similarities between the EEA and the FCP mean that an assessment of the effectiveness of the former supports an analysis of the latter.

Another reason for including the EEA in the analysis is that the federal government intends to replace the existing EEA with a new act early in 1996. Unlike the current EEA, the new act specifically mentions the FCP in order to ensure that the core requirements of that program are compatible with the principles reflected in the new Employment Equity Act. When proclaimed, the new act will legislate the similarities between the EEA and the FCP.

Historically, engineering is a relatively recent invention, having been established in the early 1800's. As a profession, its commitment has been to the

specialization of technical knowledge. Yet it has always been, like many other professions such as law, medicine and religion, a male-dominated structure which has remained, until recently, unchallenged. In chapter three, the historical roots of the profession, its current nature (educational prerequisites and typical work environments), and the relationship between women and engineering are briefly examined.

Chapters four and five analyse this relationship in actual companies and employment equity within engineering companies is looked at from the perspective of equity practitioners. Chapter four describes my own experiences implementing employment equity in two companies, NewCo and BDI[1]. The case study shows dimensions of the resistance from executives and senior managers to employment equity. Chapter five confirms that my experiences with attempting to implement employment equity within NewCo and BDI were similar to those of the other equity practitioners. This chapter briefly describes how employment equity is structured within the sample companies and then discusses what approaches each company has taken in order to address the issue of diversity in their workforces. This includes an analysis of the strategies used by executives and senior managers to marginalize the effectiveness of employment equity, categorizing them under three main areas: how practitioners were selected and prepared for this role; the significance of the positioning of responsibility for employment equity; and the nature of senior level resistance. The chapter concludes with an outline of the practitioners' definition of employment equity,

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[1] For confidentiality these two companies are referred to by pseudonyms.

whether they believe it is achievable, their evaluation of government intervention, and concrete results achieved by the practitioners.

The concluding chapter looks at these results and indicates some reasons for hope. This is not guaranteed, however, and equity will never be more than a veneer on the profession until three factors change. First of all, employment equity legislation needs to be stronger and enforced. Secondly, all levels of prerequisite education necessary for a career in engineering must be more welcoming of girls and women. Finally, employment equity must be supported and directed by company executives in the same way that other business issues are.

The Development of Employment Equity Legislation

Because the driving force behind the implementation of employment equity within the seven sampled engineering companies has been the government's Federal Contractors Program (FCP) and in order to set the context for an analysis of the practice of employment equity within engineering firms, it is important to first understand how equity is defined by the federal government and why it came to be legislated.

The Employment Equity Act (EEA) resulted from the 1984 Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment which was prepared under the direction of Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella. Judge Abella was appointed by the federal government to chair a Royal Commission which would make recommendations for improving the situation of four groups: women; Aboriginal people; persons

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with disabilities; and visible minorities. The federal government targeted these groups for two reasons. Firstly, a number of studies had indicated that "There is ample evidence . . . that equal access to employment has been denied to members of certain groups because of their sex, racial or ethnic characteristics, or disability."[2] Secondly it was believed that, "the majority of the labour pool from which new employees will be drawn over the next decade will be members of the target groups."[3]

The Abella Commission's investigation examined the employment practices of eleven crown and government-owned corporations. It confirmed that despite anti-discrimination legislation and voluntary affirmative action measures, such as the Treasury's Board 1983 Affirmative Action Policy, the four groups continued to experience systemic discrimination. Abella concluded that without legislation and a reporting requirement, equity in employment would not happen. The final report made 117 recommendations for change.

It was the Abella Commission which proposed the use of the term "employment equity" instead of the American phrase "affirmative action". The reason for the new term was that quotas, a part of the American Equal Employment Opportunity program, were considered potentially too divisive. Abella stated that "In creating our own program in Canada, we may not wish to use quotas and we should therefore seriously consider calling it something else

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[2] Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Employment Equity. A Guide for Employers (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1987) 4.
[3] Canada, Rosalie Silberman Abella, Commissioner, Research Studies of the Commission on Equality in Employment, (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1985) 60.

if we want to avoid . . . intellectual resistance and confusion."[4] This recommendation was incorporated into the 1986 EEA and, as a result, instead of being accountable for filling quotas, employers covered by the act were encouraged simply to set goals and timetables.

The EEA was proclaimed on 13 August 1986. Its purpose was:

> to achieve equality in the work place so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of difference.[5]

As a companion to the EEA, the federal government developed the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) "To ensure that the federal contractors who do business with the Government of Canada achieve and maintain a fair and representative workforce."[6] This program only affected suppliers who employed more than 100 people and bid on federal contracts worth $200,000 or more.[7] For suppliers meeting these criteria, the senior executive of the company had to certify in writing their commitment to implement employment equity measures, defined by the federal government as "the identification and removal of barriers to the selection, hiring, promotion and training of members of the [four]

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[4] Canada, Rosalie Silberman Abella, Commissioner, Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment, (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1984) 7.
[5] Canada, The House of Commons of Canada, Bill C-62, An Act respecting Employment Equity, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, First Session, Thirty-third Parliament, 33-34-35 Elizabeth II, 1984-85-86) paragraph 2.
[6] Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Federal Contractors Program, (Ottawa: Public Affairs, Employment and Immigration Canada, October 1990) 1.
[7] Canada, Federal Contractors 1.

designated groups."[8] Under the FCP, suppliers were also encouraged to increase the representation of the designated groups throughout their organization.

As is commonly the case, the 1986 EEA included provisions for review. Thus, in May 1992 the Special Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity Act published their findings in a report entitled A Matter of Fairness. This report included recommended changes to the EEA and the FCP.

On 12 December 1994, after a delay primarily resulting from a change in government, Human Resources Development Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, tabled Bill C-64 to replace the Employment Equity Act. Bill C-64 is more detailed than the current EEA. For example, where EEA contains four definitions of terms, Bill C-64 has thirteen. Moreover, unlike the EEA, Bill C-64 clearly defines what an employer's obligation is, what compliance involves, and how monetary penalties will be assessed.   The coverage of Bill C-64 is also more comprehensive than the EEA, in that it includes the Public Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defense and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, none of which were covered by the EEA. Bill C-64 also states that the Federal Contractor's Program would incorporate the core requirements and be compatible with the proposed Employment Equity Act. The 1986 EEA did not mention the Federal Contractor's Program.

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[8] Canada, Federal Contractors 1.

Focus on Women

My own awareness of equity issues developed over the course of several years, yet I soon realized the difference between knowing something abstractly and dealing with it in the workplace on a daily basis. Immediately after completing a BA in communications, I began working at NewCo in the Human Resources Department. At that time, NewCo was newly formed as a result of a joint venture agreement between a large, international, manufacturer of electronic equipment, BDI, and a telephone operating company. Although NewCo was a joint venture, BDI provided the direction and control for the day-to-day operations of NewCo, thus NewCo was more closely aligned with BDI in how it conducted business than with its other parent company, which was essentially a silent partner. The primary business of NewCo was software development.

At the outset in 1990, there were a number of visible minority men who held senior or other managerial positions in NewCo. Although representation data for other groups, excluding gender, had not yet been obtained by the company, there appeared to be few employees at any level of the company who had visible disabilities or who were Aboriginal. Later data, resulting from the self-identification process, confirmed the low representation of these two groups. Women comprised approximately 30 percent of NewCo's workforce, yet there were no women in management (including management in non-technical areas such as finance or human resources), no female executives, and few women in

engineering positions. The majority of women in NewCo were concentrated in low paying, support roles.

I had been with NewCo for about seven months when I attended a public forum in Vancouver sponsored by the Canadian Committee on Women in Engineering (CCWE). Working from the premise that "there is no physical or intellectual barrier to women entering the engineering profession", this committee was established to "uncover the social and cultural barriers responsible for the under-representation of women in engineering, and to design bridges that will bring them as full participants into the profession."[9] In order to accomplish this objective, the CCWE held a number of regional public forums, reviewed numerous briefs and private submissions, commissioned a study of engineering faculties and workplaces, and sponsored a national conference. As I listened to the women presenting at the public forum, I was surprised at the discrimination these professionals continued to experience in the 1990s. Discrimination permeated every aspect of their working lives, from the sublime (lack of role models and mentors) to the ridiculous, (lack of washrooms). And where women were constantly challenged to prove their technical competence, their male colleagues were assumed to be competent unless they proved otherwise.

The continued low representation of women in engineering, the discrimination against women who were engineers, and the concentration of women in the lower paying, more routine, support roles, in engineering in

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[9] The Canadian Committee on Women in Engineering, More Than Just Numbers, (Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, April 1992) 1.

general, and within NewCo specifically, is what prompted me to focus my research onto equity and women.

Employment Trends in the Engineering Industry

The majority of the women employed by NewCo worked in what Statistics Canada classified as clerical jobs, receptionists, secretaries, and bookkeeping and accounting clerks, work which is now known as "women's work". In this regard, NewCo simply reflected the composition of the workforce as a whole: in 1993 27.7 percent of all women working for a wage worked in a clerical occupation, and women comprised 80.2 percent of all workers in this occupation.[10] Yet while the proportion of women in clerical jobs is declining, their share of this work is slightly increasing. Five years previously, in 1988, 30.8% of all women working for a wage worked in a clerical occupation and women comprised 79.8% of all workers in this occupation.[11] The reduction in absolute numbers of clerks is primarily attributable to office automation. The decreasing costs and increasing sophistication of new technology (such as voice mail, electronic mail, modems, fax machines and lap top computers) means that many managers and engineers perform functions traditionally handled by clerical and secretarial staff.

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[10] Canada, Statistics Canada, Women in the Labour Force, (Ottawa: Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994) 20.
[11] Canada, Statistics Canada, Women in Canada, (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1990) 82.

Between 1990 and 1994 NewCo experienced strong growth which resulted from increased sales and anticipated demand for new products. This growth precipitated significant recruitment in order to fill new positions. The majority of these new positions required individuals with an engineering degree and experience. NewCo was not alone in this: of the seven engineering companies in this study, six were engaged in hiring significant numbers of engineers.

But while women were strongly represented in the clerical occupations within NewCo, few women were hired in engineering or technical roles, and no women at all in senior management or executive roles. This situation directly reflected women's position within the engineering sector of the Canadian labour market: in 1990 only 3.2 percent of 121,464 professional engineers were women,[12] and this despite the fact that (in 1987) 12 percent of graduates with engineering degrees had been women.[13]

Low female participation rates in engineering may soon change, however. A factor which should work in favour of women who are beginning their careers as engineers is the continuing high demand for engineers. A number of studies indicate that Canada will experience a shortage of engineers by the year 2000. For example, a 1991 report of the Science Council of British Columbia, entitled Supply of and Demand for Human Resources in the Information Technology Industry, (the research for which was supported by a task force that included

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[12] The CCWE 2.
[13] Canada, Women in Canada 48.

seven of the largest "high tech" companies located in British Columbia), found that the demand for human resources in this field was increasing faster than the supply. The reasons for this imbalance are stagnating enrollment in science and engineering degree programs, as well as the dwindling number of engineers and other technical professionals immigrating from other countries. Even now, high technology firms, such as Hewlett-Packard Company and Apple Computer must recruit worldwide to find the technical talent they need to support their businesses.[14] In these growth industries, "being the employer of choice is seen as an integral part of maintaining a competitive advantage."[15]

This situation of high demand and decreasing supply has also created another window of opportunity for women. A number of major employers of engineers have broadened the definition of an engineer so that university graduates in computer science are now hired as "engineers". These graduates are hired to perform the same work and are put in the same engineering salary progression scales as engineering graduates. Women make up a larger proportion of computer science graduates than they do of engineering graduates overall: since 1988 women have comprised between 20 and 22 percent of the graduates from computer science.[16] To date, however, none of the professional engineering associations across Canada have recognized computer science graduates as 'professional engineers'.

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[14] Mary Winterle, Work Force Diversity: Corporate Challenges, Corporate Responses, (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 1992) 17.
[15] Winterle 17.
[16] Canada, Statistics Canada, Post-Secondary Graduate Report, (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, April 1993) 5.

Although both female and male engineering graduates, experience little difficulty in getting hired, the report of CCWE indicated barriers to career development for women are entrenched and as a result, "very few women engineers have reached senior management in Canadian companies."[17] Only one percent of female engineers, as opposed to ten percent of male engineers, were in executive positions in 1989.[18]

Methodology

To some extent, my methodology has grown out of my circumstances. For approximately four years I was responsible for employment equity in NewCo and, at the same time, I was BDI's regional equity representative for western Canada. At the end of 1992, I was selected for a three month research assignment to assist BDI with the development of employment equity[19]. Working on employment equity at NewCo and BDI, I realized that the perspective of equity practitioners was distinct and could offer unparalleled insight into the actual effectiveness of employment equity policy. Although there has been a good deal written on employment equity, there has been little research done from the perspective of those on the front lines – the employment equity practitioners. This perspective is a key component necessary to a real understanding of the

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[17] The CCWE 60.
[18] The CCWE 60.
[19] The purpose of this assignment was to gather information on equity initiatives within the various divisions of BDI. Although I was supposed to be freed from my other responsibilities at NewCo for three months, I was not entirely.

potential for change of employment equity legislation, and so far, it has been a missing component.

In order to best utilize the experienced insights of employment equity practitioners I used the following research methodologies: i) primary and secondary research; ii) participant observation; iii) interviews. I chose multiple research methods both to obtain a broader perspective and to act as a check on my own experiences and observations.

Primary and secondary research involved analysing the EEA, the FCP and Bills C-62 and C-64 as well as the supporting documentation produced by the federal government, for example, annual reports, implementation guides, special reports and news releases. In reviewing this material I was able to develop a detailed understanding of both the positive aspects and the shortcomings of the legislation and its implementation. I also reviewed a number of studies, articles and books written on the subjects of workplace diversity and women in engineering. This information validated my own observations of the types of barriers faced by women in this field and explained why their representation in engineering is relatively low.

While at NewCo, I belonged to a formal group of employment equity practitioners called Equity West. This group provided a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about employment equity. By attending Equity West's quarterly general meetings, and as well as by participating on the Education and Steering Committees, I learned a tremendous amount about employment equity. My colleagues from this organization were aware that I was studying employment

equity for graduate work and they candidly shared information about their experiences with me, as indeed I shared with them.

Although the discussions I had with members of Equity West and the studies and literature I reviewed, confirmed my observations, the interviews[20] with equity practitioners who specifically worked in engineering companies gave me perspectives on the effectiveness of employment equity in the engineering industry in a way that allowed me to compare their experiences to one another, and with my own, in order to determine potential common areas.   The interviews lasted, on average, between one and a half to two hours.[21]

Experience implementing employment equity, using the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) in an engineering company and being a woman were the criteria for selecting interviewees. Only the experiences of practitioners with the FCP in engineering companies were used in order to keep these aspects of the study constant for comparison purposes. Women were selected for their unique insights which resulted from trying to affect change for women and other minorities in white, non-disabled, male-dominated environments.

The first series of interview questions were designed to place the information in context by obtaining background information on the practitioner

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[20] The anonymity and confidentiality of all interviewees were guaranteed by using pseudonyms instead of real employee or company names. Interviews were exploratory in nature with the intent of providing qualitative research. Information from the interviews was used in an aggregate form and specific examples were used in such a way that they could not be identified as coming from a specific individual or company. Interviewees were informed, prior to being interviewed, that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. All five people selected to be interviewed chose to participate. Interview questions are attached in Appendix A.

[21] My senior supervisor and I decided five interviews would provide a significant representation of experiences for comparison purposes.

and the company. The remaining questions were designed to obtain the practitioner's point of view on the following: a) the implementation process; b) the level of management's' support/lack of support to employment equity; c) the progress of employment equity within the company; d) the effectiveness of the legislation; and e) what, if anything, should be done in the future in regard to employment equity.

The use of various research methodologies, especially the interviews and participant-observation, were essential in developing an understanding of the environment within engineering companies. This understanding provides the basis for an analysis of federally defined employment equity, from the viewpoint of those within engineering companies who are responsible for its implementation.

CHAPTER TWO

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT EQUITY LEGISLATION AND THE CONTRACTORS

PROGRAM: A CRITIQUE

Introduction

The Federal Contractors Program (FCP) has not contributed to an

acceptance of employment equity as a business issue by most companies in this

study, even though the FCP was the only reason all seven companies

implemented equity programs. Instead, the FCP is viewed by these companies

as part of the cost of doing business with the federal government. Thus, the

companies studied usually make as small an effort as possible to meet FCP

guidelines and do so only so long as there is business to be had from the

government. The FCP's limited coverage, weak design and lack of compliance

enforcement - themselves a result of successful lobbying by business - have

contributed to the failure of these companies to change the way they do business

in a manner which would significantly improve women's representation at all

levels of the organization. An analysis of these and other deficiencies provides a

better understanding of the context in which the employment equity practitioners

in this study were working.

As stated in chapter one, under the legislation current during the period of

this study, (1986 Employment Equity Act), there is no direct link between the

EEA and the FCP. By not being covered by the EEA, representation data of

designated groups with the companies in this study is not made available to the

public. Nevertheless, an examination of the design of the EEA can help us understand the inherent problems in the FCP. Data available from the companies covered by the EEA indicates that the EEA has been mostly ineffective in improving the representation of designated groups in the workforce it covers .

The recently tabled Bill C-64 is also relevant as it proposes changes to the EEA and the FCP which will tie them more closely together. This in turn will impact the companies in this study. Therefore, an analysis of Bill C-64 is included in order to assess whether the proposed changes to the law will in fact increase its effectiveness.

The Structure of the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program

Theoretically, the EEA was created by the federal government to address disadvantages in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. Employers affected by the EEA are encouraged to work with employee representatives or bargaining units in order to identify and eliminate employment barriers for the four designated groups. As well, the EEA states that the employer should institute policies, practices and reasonable accommodations which will ensure that designated group members achieve representation in levels and types of employment with the employer at least proportionate to their representation:

(i)   in the workforce, or

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(ii) in those segments of the workforce that are identifiable by qualification, eligibility or geography and from which the employer may reasonably be expected to draw or promote employees.[1]

The EEA also requires employers to develop an annual or multi-year plan outlining the goals and timetables they want to achieve in regard to employment equity. It is not a requirement that employers make these plans available to the public, or even to their employees. Nor are employers required to submit these plans to the Minister of Human Resource Development, (previously Employment and Immigration Canada)[2]. They are required, however, to submit annual status reports on or before 1 June each year. These annual reports, which are available for public inspection, must contain the following information:

a) the industrial sector in which employees of the employer are employed, the location of the employer and employees, the number of all employees of the employer and the number of persons in designated groups so employed;

b) the occupational groups of the employer and the degree of representation of persons in designated groups in each occupational group;

c) the salary ranges of employees and the degree of representation of persons in designated groups in each range and prescribed subdivision thereof; and

d) the number of employees hired, promoted and terminated and the degree of representation in those numbers of persons in designated groups.[3]

Employers failing to submit these reports annually can be fined up to a maximum of $50,000.

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[1] Canada, The House of Commons of Canada, An Act respecting employment equity 1986 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada) 2.

[2] Human Resources Development Canada, (HRDC), was created by the government's organizational changes announced November 4, 1993 which modified the restructuring initiated in June 1993. These changes were intended to make government simpler and more closely focused on broad policy themes. HRDC consolidated a number of departments such as Employment & Immigration, Labour, Manpower and Unemployment Insurance.

[3] Canada, An Act 3.

The FCP was created at the same time as the EEA. Its purpose was "To ensure that the federal contractors who do business with the Government of Canada achieve and maintain a fair and representative workforce."[4] Companies which have more than 100 employees, and who want to bid on federal contracts of $200,000 or more, are required to commit to implementing employment equity.

There are five components to the FCP: certification, implementation, compliance review, appeal and sanctions.[5] The first step is for a company to certify in writing that they are committed to implementing employment equity as defined by the government. Once a company is awarded a contract, it must begin to implement employment equity according to the criteria outlined by the EEA. Both the EEA and the FCP prescribe employment equity measures as the identification and removal of barriers to the selection, hiring, promotion and training of members of the designated groups as well as establishing initiatives which will increase their participation in all levels of employment. But because the FCP was not included in the EEA it is not enforced through legislation. Moreover, unlike the EEA, under the FCP there are no fines. Instead of fines, employers affected by the FCP and who fail to comply with prescribed employment equity measures may lose the opportunity to compete for future government business.[6] The third main difference is that employers covered by the FCP do not need to submit annual reports to the federal government.

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[4] Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Federal Contractors Program (Ottawa: Public Affairs, LM 105/10/90, 1990) 1.
[5] Canada, FCP 1.
[6] Canada, FCP 1.

Compliance reviews for the FCP are conducted by the Ministry of Human Resources Development. If the results are positive, the company is informed that the process is complete. If the compliance review results are negative, the company is expected to initiate remedial action, which will also be reviewed, within a set time limit which is not to exceed twelve months. The company has the right to appeal to the Minister of Human Resources Development and request an independent review. If the independent review still indicates negative results, then sanctions may be applied. Maximum sanctions would be removal from the federal government's bidding process. However, there is little point in analysing the weaknesses of the FCP, without first understanding the program it was modelled on, the EEA, and the reasons for its failure.

The Ineffectiveness of Federal Employment Equity

Since 1986, when the EEA was passed by the federal government, there has been little headway made by the four groups the Act was intended to benefit. At the time of this study, the EEA had been in effect for seven years, yet in the sectors covered by the Act the representation of Aboriginal peoples increased by only .4%, persons with disabilities increased by 1%, and visible minorities increased by 3%.[7] The representation of women grew by 5%.[8] However, the rise in women's representation is not as signficant as it may first appear, when compared to the three other groups, because it is partly due to the addition of

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[7] Canada, Lloyd Axworthy, Annual Report, Employment Equity Act, 1994 (Hull: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1994) B-6.
[8] Canada, Annual Report 1994 B-6.

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women who are also members of the other groups and who are, therefore, counted more than once.

A number of groups have criticized the EEA's and the FCP's ineffectiveness in improving the employment situation for members of the designated groups. For example, The Canadian Federation of Women's Clubs stated in their submission to the EEA 1991 Special Committee that "Despite the fact that the Employment Equity Act has been in effect for five years, . . . it has been relatively ineffective."[9] The National Employment Equity Network, a coalition of organizations from the four designated groups, came to a general agreement at their 1990 conference that the EEA had not succeeded in achieving its stated goal: "to achieve equality in the work place".[10] The National Action Committee on the Status of Women's (NAC), report, entitled Review of the Situation of Canadian Women, stated that the rate of success of the federal employment equity program continued to be virtually indistinguishable from trends in the general workforce.[11] John Hucker, Secretary General for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, stated that:

> I would like to be able to say that the current Employment Equity legislation is truly effective in promoting equity in federally-regulated workplaces. Unfortunately, I cannot say that to you today. Certainly we have made some progress, but employment equity legislation at the federal level contains serious weaknesses which hinder our ability to do even more.[12]

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[9] Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, "Reviewing the Federal Employment Equity Act", Canadian Woman Studies Vol. 12, No. 3, Spring 1992: 29.
[10] The National Association of Women and the Law, A Brief on Employment Equity (Ottawa: NAWL, June 1991) 1.
[11] National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Review of the Situation of Canadian Women (Ottawa: NAC, February 1991) 7.
[12] John Hucker, "The Law of Employment Equity", re conference held in Edmonton, Alberta called "Bridges: the Challenge of a Diversified Workplace", 23 Sept. 1992.

Recognition of these weaknesses, hence, of the potential ineffectiveness of the legislation was voiced prior to the Bill's passage. The introduction of Bill C-62, which became the EEA, led to:

> "an unprecedented alliance of groups in protest, including women's groups, labour, the disabled and community associations; for example, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Canadian Association for Community Living, the Canadian Hearing Society, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Urban Alliance for Race Relations, the Equal Pay Coalition, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, and the Ontario March of Dimes."[13]

The protest resulted from the fact that these "groups had been working long and hard for effective employment equity legislation and were outraged at what the government was proposing."[14] The major criticisms of the proposed legislation focused on the lack of enforcement, the lack of required mandatory goals, and the absence of timetables for achieving equity.[15] Although the concerns of these groups were raised during Commons debates on Bill C-62, they were dismissed by the government of the day and not included in the EEA.[16]

Limited Coverage

One of the primary reasons that the federal employment equity legislation and contractors program have been ineffective is their limited coverage both in terms of numbers of workers and types of worker. In the first case, these defects are rooted in the limited number of employers they cover. The EEA only applies

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[13]Phebe-Jane Poole, Canada's Federal Employment Equity Legislation (Toronto: University of Toronto, Doctoral Thesis, 1993) 46.
[14] Poole, Canada's 47.
[15] Poole, Canada's 47 & 48.
[16] Poole, Canada's 48.

to approximately 370 federally-regulated employers and Crown corporations which have 100 or more employees.[17] The regulated employers operate primarily in the banking, transportation and communications industries and have a combined workforce of about 660,000 employees.[18] However, since the legislation only covers employers with 100 or more employees, approximately 300,000 employees under federal jurisdiction are not covered by the EEA.[19] Also, since the definition of "employee" does not include contract workers, employers may retain over 100 workers, but not implement employment equity, if the excess workers are on contract. This technicality exempts some employers from having to comply with the EEA or the FCP.[20] Nor does the EEA apply to the approximately 220,000 employees of the federal Public Service.[21] The government's reason for the exclusion of the Public Service was that it was already subject to the Treasury Board's 1983 Affirmative Action Policy.[22] However, the 1990 report of the task force on barriers to women in the public service, Beneath the Veneer, indicated that seven years of the Treasury Board's Affirmative Action Policy had not significantly improved the conditions for women working in the federal public service.

Other employers excluded from the EEA were the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Armed Forces, Parliament, federal agencies,

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[17] Canada, Alan Redway, Chairperson, A Matter of Fairness (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group - Publishing, Supply & Services Canada, May, 1992) 1.
[18] Canada, A Matter 1.
[19] NAWL 1.
[20] NAWL 1.
[21] NAWL 1.
[22] Canada, A Matter 1.

boards and commissions, government employee unions, the federal judiciary, licensees and grant recipients, and Governor in Council appointments of full-and part-time members of all agencies, boards and commissions under federal jurisdiction.[23]   Also, private companies, such as the seven engineering companies in this study, are not affected by the EEA.

The federal government developed the FCP in order to extend employment equity to companies outside its direct jurisdiction. However, this program does not apply to all contractors.   Contracts for the purpose of purchasing or leasing real property[24], for example, are not covered by the FCP; neither are construction contracts, and this omission has been particularly troubling to those interested in moving women into non-traditional trades.[25]

Under the FCP the $200,000 threshold for contracts is not a cumulative total but, instead, applies to individual contracts. This means that an employer may receive many government contracts and not have to sign a commitment to implementing employment equity as long as each contract is under $200,000.[26] Most of the seven companies in this study had been, or expected to be awarded, contracts which exceeded $200,000. As a result, these companies provided the government with a written commitment to implement employment equity. Of the seven, one company had not yet bid on any federal government contracts with the result that employment equity was not yet included in any business strategy

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[23] Canada, A Matter 3 & 4.
[24] Canada, A Matter 1.
[25] Patricia McDermott, "Employment Equity and Pay Equity - And Never the Twain Shall Meet?" Canadian Woman Studies Vol 12, No. 3, Spring, 1992: 25.
[26] McDermott 25.

development sessions, nor was it dealt with in any tangible way by the company's executive. Another company did not see federal contracts making up a large share of their future business, thus, management was beginning to question whether continuing with employment equity was necessary.

In the second case too, the defects in coverage were written into the EEA and the FCP. The EEA and the FCP specifically targeted women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. However, by restricting employment equity to these four groups, other groups which experience discrimination in the Canadian workplace, some of whom are recognized in the Canadian Human Rights Act, receive no benefit from the EEA or the FCP. For example, gays and lesbians, older workers, and workers who are perceived as ethnically different because of their foreign accents are not protected. The latter are of particular signficance in this study because the majority of the seven companies in the study have been hiring qualified new immigrants from Central Europe and while their physical appearance may seem to place them as "white males", because they have an accent and foreign credentials, they sometimes experience workplace discrimination.

There have also been problems in defining the four designated groups, essentially because definitions were never provided by the EEA or the FCP. Consequently, employers develop their own definitions, resulting in inconsistencies between organzations and problems for the designated groups. For example, definitions of what constitutes a disability on self-identification

survey forms have caused controversy between employers, unions, government and disabled people's groups. If the definition of disability is too vague, then individuals who are not in fact disabled, (who, for example, use eye glasses for reading), identify themselves as having a disability. This would indicate a higher representation of persons with disabilies in the workforce than was actually the case. As a result, the focus of a company's policy on improving the representation of this group may be redirected to one of the other designated groups that is not as well represented.

Both the EEA and the FCP fail to address the obstacles women encounter which make it difficult for them to enter certain jobs. Neither the EEA nor the FCP does anything to address the low representation of women in the prerequisite education which is required for entry into male-dominated occupations such as engineering.

Weak Design

One of the most significant weaknesses in the design of the EEA and the FCP is that employers are not held accountable for meeting goals and timetables for increasing the representation of designated groups. Employers are only accountable for submitting reports. The EEA and the FCP have "been severely criticized for lacking mandatory 'goals and timetables' which most employment equity advocates feel are necessary to accomplish action in this area."[27] For example, the National Association of Woman and the Law, (NAWL), prepared a submission for the Special Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity

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[27] McDermott 25.

Act which proposed eight recommondations for changes to the EEA.[28]   One of the proposed changes was that the federal government should set mandatory goals and timetables.[29]

The Special Committee's report, A Matter of Fairness, noted that, "the most common position of advocacy organizations representing the designated groups was that only mandatory numerical goals and timetables would ensure that employer obligations under the Act are fulfilled."[30]   On the other hand, the Special Committee's report also stated that most employer organizations strongly opposed any imposition of quotas and "favoured continuing the present system of allowing the employer to determine and establish the employment equity program best suited to its particular business circumstances."[31]   The report added that employers felt, "because employment equity forms such an integral part of an organization's human resource and strategic planning process, the organization itself is in the best position to determine what form of employment equity program is required."[32]

In its final report, the Special Committee chose to support the employers' argument and recommended that the form of employment equity programs [including the goals and timetables] would continue to be left to the employers' discretion.[33] The Special Committee also recommended that these plans remain

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[28] NAWL 3.
[29] NAWL 3.
[30] Canada, A Matter 12.
[31] Canada, A Matter 11.
[32] Canada, A Matter 11.
[33] Canada, A Matter 13.

confidential and be available only to monitoring and enforcement agencies.[34]

Ironically, despite the obvious failure of the EEA and the FCP to improve significantly the employment situation for designated groups, the Special Committee believed that the organizations who created the necessity for an EEA and an FCP were also best placed to determine how to eliminate their discriminatory practices.

Another factor decreasing the effectiveness of the EEA and the FCP, specifically in regard to women, is the separation of employment equity from pay equity. For example, women of all the designated groups employed by companies covered by the EEA, continue to experience wide wage differentials with their male counterparts. Of the permanent full-time employees covered under the EEA in 1991, 28% of women and 72% of men earned over $27,500 annually; 24% of aboriginal women and 76% of aboriginal men earned over $27,500 annually; 28% of women with disabilities and 72% of men with disabilities earned over $27,500 annually; and 40% of women who are visible minorities and 60% of men who are visible minorities earned in excess of $27,500 annually.[35] Although those employers under the EEA are required to submit reports on salaries, neither the EEA nor the FCP addresses wage inequities. By focusing solely on representation, to the exclusion of salaries, designated group members may be getting some jobs, but not, necessarily, equitable wages, when they are hired or promoted. The exclusion of pay equity

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[34] Canada, A Matter 17.
[35] Canada, Monique Vezina, Minister of State for Employment and Immigration, Annual Report - Employment Equity Act, 1991 (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada 1991) B-27.

in the design of the EEA and the FCP was in contrast to the Abella Commission which recommended that "Equal pay for work of equal value should be part of all employment equity programs."[36]

A number of other omissions in the design of the EEA and the FCP make it difficult for women to achieve equity in employment. For instance, the current employment equity system seeks to encourage employers to hire women for non-traditional jobs. However, this emphasis on non-traditional roles, especially with the absence of pay equity, does little to benefit the majority of women who are currently working in "women's" jobs. Items such as childcare and retraining were not addressed in either the EEA or the FCP, yet these are crucial elements in women's ability to achieve equity in the workplace. Moreover, the EEA and the FCP also failed to recognize that discrimination takes place on a number of levels simultaneously, such as, gender and race. As a result, compounded disadvantage is not acknowledged nor dealt with by either the EEA or the FCP.

Finally, even the term itself, "employment equity", is "weak and can mean anything".[37] This change in terminology from affirmative action to employment equity "has in practice allowed the government to appear to respond to [women's] demands while in fact doing little."[38]

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[36] Canada, Rosalie Silberman Abella, Commissioner, Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1984) 261.

[37] Marjorie Cohen, "Employment Equity is not Affirmative Action", Canadian Woman Studies 6 4 Summer 1985: 25.

[38] Debra J. Lewis, Just Give Us the Money (Vancouver: Women's Research Centre, 1988) 30.

Lack of Enforcement of Compliance

The major criticism of the EEA and the FCP by equity seeking groups has been the absence of enforcement procedures. Section 7 of the EEA states that "An employer who fails to comply with section 6 is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand dollars".[39] Unfortunately, section 6 of the EEA deals only with an employer's failure to submit reports. Employers are not penalized for failing to improve the working conditions of the designated group members. Also, the fines, when they are used at all, fall significantly short of the maximum penalty of $50,000. The 1991 Annual Report on Employment Equity lists only one employer being fined $1,600 for not submitting the 1989 report before 1 June 1990.[40]

Deadlines for submitting a report, as well as definitions of what constitutes an acceptable report, have been broadly interpreted by both employers and the federal government. For instance, in 1991, 9 employers filed their reports too late for inclusion in the annual assessment, 6 employers' reports did not fully comply with the EEA, and 20 employers submitted corrections too late to be included in the annual report.[41] Not one of these companies, including those who did not fully comply with the EEA, were penalized. By 1993 the situation had improved in that only one employer was late, three submitted corrections late, two submitted inaccurate data late and one did not submit a report. Even

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[39] Canada, An Act Section 7.
[40] Canada, Annual Report 1991 2.
[41] Canada, Annual Report 1991 51.

so, none of these employers were fined for being late or not reporting as defined in the EEA.

Since the FCP is not legislated, it has even less impact on employers than the EEA. Under the FCP, there are no fines. If employers do not sign a commitment to implementing employment equity in the workplace, and they happen to be selected for a random audit, then the government may refuse future contracts. As with the EEA, it is the appearance of a commitment, not any actual change, which is monitored by the government. Since FCP employers do not have to submit reports on an annual basis, non-compliance will only be detected if a contractor is selected for an audit. Audit selection is random and if a company is informed that it will be audited, it can negotiate a date in order to allow it to put the necessary reports together.

Since 1986, only eight FCP contractors have been found in non-compliance. Three were reinstated after submitting workplans and five chose to not to bid on federal government contracts. Being decertified means these employers can no longer bid on federal government contracts worth $200,000 or more. However, they are allowed to continue working on the contract they have been awarded without penalties or any requirement to implement employment equity.

A serious flaw in the enforcement process of the EEA and the FCP is the absence of an independent monitoring agency with a clear mandate to audit,

police and enforce significant penalties. The Abella Commission's report stated that:

> "An ideal instrument of enforcement for monitoring the promotion of equality in employment would be an agency independent from government, with a qualified staff familiar with labour relations, employment systems, and human rights issues, and with sufficient resources to discharge its mandate adequately."[42]

Because neither the EEA nor the FCP clearly delegates enforcement responsibility, the task has devolved onto the Human Resources Division (HRD), a ministry already overburdened, ill-prepared and not far enough removed from the federal government to effectively handle the task.

At the same time, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, (CHRC), is also involved in the monitoring and enforcement of employment equity. Yet, because their involvement is not clearly spelled out in the EEA, a certain amount of duplication and confusion has resulted. John Hucker, Secretary General for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, has also outlined the other major limitations for the Commission in dealing in the area of employment equity:

a) the Commission does not currently have the power under the Human Rights Act to require the production of information about an employer's hiring and employment practices when investigating a complaint. It can only seek a search warrant and attempt to uncover material when a respondent refuses to cooperate with an investigation.

b) The Act authorizes the making of binding regulations on how the reports are to be constructed, but the guidelines under Section 12 of the Act, which detail exactly how an employment equity analyses should be done and what should be in an action plan, do not have the force of regulations. It has been our [the Commission's] experience

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[42] Canada, Report of the Commission 214.

that employers, even when fully committed, have not taken the kind of systematic approach which will guarantee results.

c) The Act is silent on a clear mandate for the Commission to audit and monitor whether or not employers are complying with these requirements. Complaint investigation is a valid tool the Commission already possesses, but there is also a need for a clearly articulated authority to undertake compliance reviews directly related to the obligations established under the Employment Equity Act.[43]

The confusion resulting from having both HRD and the CHRC involved in employment equity in an unlegislated way has encouraged a number of companies to challenge the mandate of the CHRC. For example, Bell Canada launched a court challenge to the Commission's right to investigate a complaint laid against Bell by a disabled people's organization.[44]

There is an obvious conflict of interest which arises when federal government departments monitor federally-regulated companies: both HRD and CHRC currently monitor themselves. During the hearings on the review of the EEA, those who supported more effective equity legislation made it quite clear that, due to the conflict of interest, "Most members of the designated groups generally opposed the involvement of EIC, [now HRD], in the enforcement of the Act."[45] Moreover, many witnesses representing the interests of labour and the designated groups rejected the CHRC as an enforcement agency because of the CHRC's inability to use its resources to enforce the EEA.[46] A number of groups called "for the establishment of an independent employment equity commission,

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[43] Hucker 9.
[44] Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada, "Reviewing the Federal Employment Equity Act", Canadian Woman Studies Vol. 12, No. 3, Spring 1992: 31.
[45] Canada, A Matter 26.
[46] Canada, A Matter 26.

comprising representatives of all parties with an interest in employment equity, which would report directly to Parliament."[47]

Other Problems

A number of other problems with the EEA and the FCP further weaken their effectiveness. The statistical information provided by the federal government for employment equity purposes is problematic in that the statistics do not clearly indicate the numbers of people who belong to more than one of the designated groups, such as an Aboriginal woman with a disability. Individuals who identified themselves as belonging to more than one group were counted more than once, thus the representation of the four groups is actually much less than the data seems to indicate.

Instrumental to both the EEA and the FCP is the availability data of the designated group members. Currently both programs are built on the principle that corporate populations should reflect the make-up of the workforce from which a company recruits. But, if the four designated groups are experiencing discrimination in the Canadian workplace, what sense does it make to use the data of a discriminatory system as a benchmark? As well, availability is based on the Canadian census, and there are at least three problems with this. First, data is not available until several years after the census has been completed. Second, the census data does not provide a true representation of the numbers of designated group members. One omission is the Indian reserves and

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[47] Canada, A Matter 26.

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settlements which refused to participate in the 1986 census.[48] Also, those who

belong to more than one group are counted, in the census data, more than once,

thereby inflating representation numbers. Third, the census data does not

adequately reflect desires of the designated group members who would work if

they felt there was a place for them in the Canadian workplace, for example,

people with disabilities who require special workplace accommodations.

Future Directions - Bill C-64

As mandated by paragraph 13 of the EEA, a review of the Act was to

occur within five years of its passage. The review, entitled A Matter of Fairness,

was prepared by the Special Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity

Act and submitted to Parliament in May 1992. Recommended changes to the

FCP were also included in the review. The Employment Equity Branch of

Employment and Immigration Canada was instructed to prepare a response to

be ready before the end of 1992 for approval by cabinet.[49] This response formed

the basis of Bill C-64, which was tabled on 12 December 1994.

When proclaimed, Bill C-64 will not significantly increase the

effectiveness of the EEA and the FCP in their ability to influence the companies

in this study into accepting employment equity as a business issue. This is

because Bill C-64 leaves the major problems inherent in the EEA and the FCP

fundamentally unchanged: it too has limited coverage, weak design, and

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[48] Canada, A Matter 8.
[49]Mamie Clarke, Director General of the Employment Equity Branch of Employment and Immigration Canada, personal interview, 21 October, 1992.

ineffective compliance enforcement. In fact, in practice, it is entirely possible that Bill C-64 would render the EEA and the FCP even less effective than they currently are.

Although Bill C-64 would include more federal government employers, it still would not cover all government employers or private employers. For example, Bill C-64 leaves in place the requirement that employers only need comply with the legislation if they employ 100 or more employees. However, this bill would extend coverage to the federal Public Service, the Armed Forces, The Communications Security Establishment of the Department of National Defence, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, none of which is currently covered by the EEA. Bill C-64 would also apply to those employers who report to the Treasury Board and, of course, have 100 or more employees. Yet, many agencies, boards and commissions who do not have over 100 employees and/or do not report to the Treasury Board, for example the National Film Board and Parliament, would not be covered by Bill C-64.

Most significantly for this study, Bill C-64 will not fundamentally alter the coverage or design of the FCP, nor will it extend employment equity legislation to private employers. In fact, the FCP notes a single, brief mention in Bill C-64 (Section 39 [2]):

> The Minister is responsible for the administration of the Federal Contractors Program for Employment Equity and shall, in discharging that responsibility, ensure that the core requirements of that program are compatible with the principles of employment equity reflected in this Act.[50]

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[50] Canada, An Act 25.

The simplest interpretation of this vague paragraph is that the federal government will resist any significant improvements to the FCP. As a result, Bill C-64 will be no more successful than its predecessor in encouraging private employers - such as the seven employers in this study - to view employment equity as a strategic business issue.

Other problems with the current EEA remain unchanged. On holding employers responsible for meeting numerical goals, Bill C-64 specifically states that employers will not have quotas imposed on them. As to equity timetables and plans, while Bill C-64 does state that employers will consult with its employees' representatives or bargaining agent (by inviting their views in the preparation, implementation and revision of the employer's employment equity plan), there is still no requirement for the employer to submit anything other than annual representation data. Employment equity plans remain private, and the final plans may not even be accessible to employees' representatives or bargaining units.

Bill C-64 would also reduce the effectiveness of legislated employment equity in the way it redefines compliance, and the penalties for non-compliance. Penalties would still only be incurred by employers who, "without reasonable excuse" fail to file a complete or misleading report. Bill C-64 proposes that the monetary penalties be lowered: the amount of a monetary penalty would not exceed $10,000 for a single violation and $50,000 for repeated or continued

violations.[51]   At the same time the bill makes the enforcement process more

cumbersome. When the Minister of Human Resources Development is informed

of a violation, the Minister may issue a notice of assessment of a monetary

penalty, but he or she has two years to do so. The employer then has 30 days to

comply or contest the notice. If the employer contests the notice, the Minister

then appoints a Tribunal to conduct a review which will receive representations

and evidence from the parties involved. If the Tribunal determines that a

violation has occurred, it determines the monetary penalty. This entire process

could take longer than two years, something which seems incongrous with the

fact that penalties are intended for late or incomplete statistical reports which

employers know in advance must be submitted every year.

It is also important to note that although the federal Public Service and

some other parts of the government not currently covered by the EEA are

included in Bill C-64, there are no penalties, monetary or otherwise, for public

sector employers who violate the Act. If, for example, the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police did not meet the requirements of the Act, there would be no

penalty. Nor does Bill C-64 address penalties for non-compliance under the

FCP. No change means no improvement to how non-compliance is currently

addressed under the FCP.

Bill C-64 does clearly define which body would be responsible for the

enforcement of the obligations on the employers: the Canadian Human Rights

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[51] Canada, The House of Commons, Bill C-64 (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group - Publishing) 21.

Commission, (CHRC). However, Bill C-64 significantly weakens the power of the CHRC by stating that the Commission should be guided by the policy that, wherever possible, cases of non-compliance be resolved through persuasion and the negotiation of written undertakings and that an application for direction in applying a monetary penalty should only be used "as a last resort".[52] Also of concern is whether or not the CHRC has the staff to take on this added responsibility. An article in the The Globe and Mail (29 March 1995) reported that the CHRC has informed its Toronto staff that the agency's six regional offices will no longer investigate human-rights complaints, the investigator positions in Toronto would end, and that complaints would be handled through a toll-free telephone line to Ottawa.[53]

Conclusion

Between the passage of Bill C-62 and the present time, there has been some increase in the representation of the designated groups in the workplace. However, this cannot be attributed to the effectiveness of either the EEA or the FCP, but more to the fact that women continue to enter the workforce at higher rates than white, non-disabled men.[54] Still, women's equity gains remains slow. Structural weakness inherent in both the EEA and the FCP, the lack of a clear mandate for enforcement, the limited coverage of the legislation, and the

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[52] Canada, Bill C-64 13.

[53] Margaret Phillip, "Human rights staff say offices closing", The Globe and Mail 29 March 1995: A2.

[54] Canada, Statistics Canada, Women in Canada (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1990) 73.

emphasis on reports rather than results, all contribute to the ineffectiveness of the federal government's attempt thus far of enforcing employment equity. An analysis of Bill C-64 indicates that the government will not be much more successful with employment equity in the future.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROFESSION - ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN

Introduction

The current structure of engineering as a profession, defined as including both the educational prerequisites and the exclusionary strategies of the profession leading to a male-dominated work environment, is an obstacle to a career in engineering for many women. In other words, the structure of engineering creates obstacles for women because it was created by and for men. In the first instance, the profession controls who performs engineering work by recruitment restrictions: access to, and usage of, the specialized body of knowledge and skills was until very recently restricted to men. In the second instance, the "collegiality" of the male dominated workplace within engineering companies creates an atmosphere which, at times, is similar to a men's club, where such behavior as using foul or sexist language during executive meetings, conducting business on fishing trips, or taking clients to a strip bar[1], have been accepted as normative behaviour. This male-centered structure has not been altered by the employment equity requirements of the Federal Contractors Program (FCP), and this environment creates obstacles for women pursuing an engineering career because the predominately male management are the gatekeepers to hiring, mentoring and promotions.

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[1] Each of these examples actually occurred within companies in this study.

Women are readily accepted into engineering companies only in support roles. These kinds of positions are acceptable because they challenge neither the definition of women's proper place in a patriarchal society nor the power position of men in engineering companies. Women who are engineers often are expected to conform to male-centered behavior in order to work in this environment. Even so, these women are still viewed as outsiders who, by virtue of their gender, challenge the way business is conducted. As a result, women are not always welcomed into engineering companies as engineers.

Within NewCo and BDI, a number of senior managers openly refused to hire or promote women for anything other than clerical support positions, even when the best qualified candidate for a particular position was a woman. These managers were never disciplined for such discriminatory behavior, rather they had the support and esteem of their colleagues.

Change is occurring, though not through government action. The market is beginning to work to the benefit of women in that the increasing demand for engineers means that employers are less able to hire only a certain gender and/or race. This increasing demand, and not employment equity, is driving the slow rise in representation of women within engineering. This chapter will analyse the engineering profession, both in terms of education and workplace so as to determine how the profession has so successfully kept women out.

The Profession

The professionalization of engineering dates from 1828, in Great Britain, with the charter which incorporated the Institution of Civil Engineers.[2] This society's charter listed its main purpose as " promoting the acquisition of that species of knowledge which constitutes the profession of a Civil Engineer, being the art of directing the Great Sources of Power in Nature for the use and convenience of man."[3] This definition could have been interpreted literally as, at the time of the society's formation, women did not legally have access to the education and experience necessary to qualify as civil engineers.

In general, a profession is defined as "an occupation whose incumbents create and explicitly utilize systematically accumulated general knowledge in the solution of problems posed by a clientele".[4] From a social point of view, professions are occupational roles which denote "market-related work that has come to be sufficiently standardized as to be recognizable by relevant lay members of a society."[5] The cornerstone of all professions is specialized technical knowledge, thus existing professionals act as gatekeepers to the profession by controlling access to the knowledge they already possess. As the body of knowledge within a profession grows and becomes more specialized and complex, the profession's importance to society increases. The importance of a

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[2] A.M. Carr-Saunders and P.A. Wilson, The Professions (London: Second Impression, Frank Cass & Co, 1964. First edition, Oxford University Press, 1933) 155.
[3] Carr-Saunders 155.
[4] Wilbert Moore and Gerald Rosenblum, The Professions: Roles and Rules (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970) 53 & 54.
[5] Moore 52 & 53.

profession results from the dependency of those without this specialized

knowledge on the relatively few who have it. Professions are intentionally

structured in an exclusionary fashion not only so as to control the fees which can

be demanded for services, but as well as restrict who will be allowed to deliver

services.

The exclusionary structure of male-centered professions, such as

architecture, engineering and the priesthood, are problematic for women

because these structures have been created by and for men. Anne Witz, in

Professions and Patriarchy, outlines the relationship between professions and

patriarchy. Witz says that the generic notion of profession is really a gendered

notion "because it takes what are in fact the successful professional projects of

class-privileged male actors at a particular point in history and in particular

societies to be the paradigmatic case of profession."[6] The sociology of

professions have, she notes, generally, overlooked this relationship.[7] The

systemic nature of gender within a profession means that exclusionary strategies

which prevent women's full participation are not viewed by society as

discriminatory but simply as the "nature" of the profession.

Where the people who create admittance criteria are gendered, the

criteria they develop will also be gendered. Witz argues that male gendered

strategies are extremely effective in achieving closure to women within

professional projects because they operate under the dominant patriarchal

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[6] Anne Witz, Professions and Patriarchy (London: Routledge, 1992) 39.
[7] Witz 39.

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structures which institutionalize and organize male power. For example, while Canadian human rights legislation states that no one will be denied employment because of their sex, the Catholic Church continues to forbid women access to the priesthood. Although the Catholic Church has been criticized for its discriminatory hiring practices in regard to women, the practice continues as it is viewed as a mainstream, religious institution and not an employer.

The professionalization of engineering, like medicine and law, was originally male-centered. However, unlike law and medicine, where women have made some progress in challenging the male-centeredness of these professions in order to also benefit women[8], engineering continues to remain distinctly male-centered. Why have the exclusionary strategies been more successful in this profession? The answer to this question lies in an analysis of the required education, and the engineering workplace.

Education

Where other degree granting programs have seen a significant increase in the enrollment of women, engineering has only had a relatively minor increase in the already low enrollment of women. In 1990 the previously male-dominant faculties of law and medicine had women comprising 47 and 44 percent, respectively, of graduates.[9] By contrast, women comprised only 12 percent of

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[8] Feminist lawyer Catharine MacKinnon wrote the legal argument that became the basis of finding sexual harassment a form of sex discrimination. (Kramarae & Treichler, A Feminist Dictionary, London: Pandora Press, 1985) 413

[9] Canada, Statistics Canada, Post-secondary Graduate Report (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, April 1993) 2 & 4.

the graduates from Canadian university engineering faculties in 1990.[10] Of the

35,843 bachelor of engineering degrees earned in Canada between 1960 and

1975, a mere 0.6 percent were earned by women[11]. Although 12 percent marks

a significant increase from .6 percent, the achievement is diminished considering

how long it took to achieve and how comparatively rapid increases in medicine

and law have been.

Two recent studies have identified a number of factors which contribute to

the slow rise in representation of women enrolling as students in engineering

faculties. Beginning in 1986, Judith McIlwee and Gregg Robinson conducted a

study of engineering graduates from two public universities in southern

California. McIlwee and Robinson randomly sampled one thousand graduates

from the mechanical and electrical engineering faculties, using an eight-page

questionnaire, about the educational and working environments for female and

male engineers. Their findings were published in 1992 in a book entitled,

Women in Engineering - Gender, Power, and Workplace Culture. The second

study, as noted earlier, was released by the Canadian Committee on Women in

Engineering (CCWE) in 1992: More Than Just Numbers, and provides

information on the status of women in engineering within Canada.

Both studies began by investigating the paths leading to university

enrollment in engineering, and concluded that because girls and boys are

socialized differently, boys are led to, and girls are channeled away from

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[10] Canada, Post-secondary 4.
[11] Linda Shuto, et al., Report of Task Force on Opportunities for Women in the Engineering
Profession in British Columbia, (B.C.: Department of Highways, May 1976) appendix 7.

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engineering. One factor contributing to this differentiation of educational outcomes between girls and boys is "the perception that girls are not supposed to be 'good' at mathematics, science and technology."[12] In response to this situation the CCWE recommended that "the active role of women in engineering be portrayed so that parents and the public will encourage young women to pursue careers in engineering."[13] In order to achieve this, girls would need positive female role models, both in real life and as portrayed in the media, together with the appropriate counseling and instruction while in primary and secondary schools. The CCWE report also recommended "that faculties of education include the study of equity issues, gender stereotyping and gender differences in teacher education programs so that all students have equal opportunities for learning, participating and contributing in the classroom."[14]

The McIlwee and Robinson study indicated that even when women chose engineering their path to this decision was quite different than that followed by male engineers. For men the choice follows naturally from their gender role socialization, which encourages boys to tinker and to see engineering as an appropriate career.[15] For women, the path to engineering is seldom so straightforward. Instead, women chose to enter engineering because "engineering is a function of their skills in math, and their practical

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[12] Canadian Committee on Women in Engineering, More Than Just Numbers (Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, April 1992) 12.
[13] CCWE 13.
[14] CCWE 16.
[15] Judith McIlwee and J. Gregg Robinson, Women in Engineering - Gender, Power, and Workplace Culture (Albany: State University of New York, 1992) 45.

orientations."[16] McIlwee and Robinson study indicated that most women who enter engineering excel academically, especially in mathematics and the sciences.

Presently, there appears to be a decline in engineering enrollment. Although the number of women graduating from engineering within universities is slowly increasing, the number of men graduating in various engineering fields is slowly decreasing. Between 1988 and 1990 the number of male graduates from Canadian universities' electrical engineering faculties fell by 9 percent.[17] Female graduates in electrical engineering faculties, over the same period, rose 9 percent.[18] During this same period, there was an overall decrease in the number of graduates in electrical engineering of 10 percent.[19] Despite the decreasing enrollment of men, and the increasing enrollment of women, engineering faculties remain male-centered; women, where present, are virtually invisible. In 1990, approximately 12 percent of bachelor degrees, 14 percent of masters degrees and 7 percent of doctorates awarded by Canadian universities in applied science and engineering, went to women.[20] During the same year, women comprised only 2.2 percent of full-time faculty, and 1.8 percent of part time faculty in the engineering departments of Canadian universities.[21] This results in a lack of role models for female engineering students, as well as accounting for the "chilly campus climate" which "has been well documented by

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[16] McIlwee 45.
[17] Canada, Post-secondary 4.
[18] Canada, Post-secondary 4.
[19] Canada, Post-secondary 4.
[20] Canada, Post-secondary 8,9, 14.
[21] CCWE 52.

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studies . . . that identify behavior that causes women to lose confidence, lower their academic goals, and limit their career choices."[22]

As a result of the masculinized environment within the engineering profession, university engineering programs are structured to achieve more than simply the transmission of knowledge. Engineering faculty members have the power to decide what must be learned in order to qualify as an engineer, "and to weed out those deemed 'unfit' for the profession".[23] The schools thus serve as "gatekeepers" to the profession.[24] One aspect of this gatekeeper function is an extremely rigorous academic program which was never designed to include women and the different realities of their lives. The grueling work load of the curriculum creates difficulties for student single mothers. Because course work for engineering university programs is so demanding it also often involves late nights in laboratories on university campuses, something which can create a personal safety issue for female students. The most horrific example of how dangerous a campus can be for women occurred at the engineering school of the École Polytechnique de Montréal. On 6 December 1989, fourteen women were massacred by a man who hated "feminists" and blamed them for having ruined his life.

The most difficult barrier to surmount, however, is the inherent collegiality of the study of engineering. Many course projects are done in teams and, being in an overwhelmingly male-dominated environment, women, unlike men, must

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[22] CCWE 31.
[23] McIlwee 76.
[24] McIlwee 76.

gain acceptance into these groups. Engineering students soon realize that cooperation on group projects will ensure higher marks but female students have to be especially bright if they are to find acceptance among their male peers.[25] Women may be allowed to participate if they are able to conform to the culture of engineering as defined by the faculty.

In other words, women will succeed in engineering schools if they can meet the criteria created by the male-centered profession. This means, in effect, that there are different acceptance criteria for women than for men. Academically-average male students often enter engineering; academically-average female students do not. In 1986, the American National Science Foundation found that women as a whole enter college with higher SAT math scores than male engineering students, (558 vs. 549), and women are more likely than men to have earned an A average in high school, (59% vs. 38%).[26]

Because women are still relatively under-represented in engineering faculties, they are highly visible and, therefore, often seen as tokens by faculty and male students. The woman seen as token is not viewed as an individual but rather as a representation of her gender.[27] Common social stereotypes of women are often automatically applied to female engineering students by the male majority. This type of labeling will often "create stress in the token, make social interaction more difficult, and heighten feelings of insecurity, even though

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[25] McIlwee 63.
[26] McIlwee 47.
[27] McIlwee 57.

work performance may be unimpaired.[28] Also, those who are viewed as tokens "often adopt the characteristics of the majority group in an attempt to fit in."[29] As a result, women studying engineering may engage in, or condone behavior they would not otherwise support in order to downplay their difference.

Women must also deal with the fact that although sexism often exists in male-dominated engineering faculties, it is seldom seriously dealt with by university administrations. In October 1990, 20 male engineering students-in-residence within the University of British Columbia (UBC) wrote notes to 300 female students threatening sexual violence unless they participated in a tug-of-war. Although 17 of the 20 male students received four-month suspensions, these were timed to run concurrent with summer vacation. In 1991, UBC's engineering faculty was once again in the media for the misogynist behavior of some of the male engineering students. The media had discovered that the Engineering Undergraduate Society used Alma Mater Society funds to publish The Red Menace and other similar misogynist newsletters, as well as to pay strippers and prostitutes to ride naked through campus, posing as Lady Godiva. During this period, Terry Gould, in the course of researching an article on University of British Columbia's engineering faculty, uncovered documents which proved that the then administration actively suppressed efforts to halt the outrages of the Engineering Undergraduate Society.[30]

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[28] McIlwee 57.

[29] Nancy Johnson Smith and Sylva K. Leduc, Women's Work - Choice, Chance or Socialization? (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1992) 94.

[30] Terry Gould, "The Engineers of Dumb Behavior", Vancouver May 1991: 30.

Although subtle sexism is replacing the more blatant forms, "students, faculty, deans and researchers all agree that sexist activities and actions by engineering students discourages many women from choosing to study engineering and deters others from completing their studies."[31] The tendency of university administrations turning a blind eye to the sexist and racist activities of male engineering students and faculty has perpetuated, within university communities, an ignorance about what actually constitutes sexism and "a refusal to acknowledge [that] sexism exists in the faculty."[32] This blindness results from the myth that universities are free from the racism and sexism in the societies surrounding them. However, "though the university is often a site of struggle where opposing views get aired, it is nevertheless a site of legitimation of the ruling social relations."[33] As a result, the way relations of power and knowledge are organized in and through universities makes it possible to live these relations without reflecting on them.[34]

Acknowledging the existence of sexism, as well as other forms of discrimination, within engineering faculties would aid in its elimination, as well as helping create a more welcoming environment for women. Recognizing this, the CCWE recommended "that universities create attractive environments for women and commit - in principle and practice - to the recruitment and retention of

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[31] CCWE 31.

[32] CCWE 31.

[33] Linda Carty, "Black Women in Academia: A Statement from the Periphery" in Himani Bannerji, et al., Unsettling Relations - the university as a site of feminist struggles (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991) 19.

[34] Himani Bannerji, et al., Unsettling Relations - the university as a site of feminist struggles, (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991) 7.

women faculty and students, especially in faculties of engineering."[35] It is likely that the continuing tolerance of sexist behavior would diminish if there were more women in engineering faculties. As Terry Gould said in an article in <u>Vancouver</u> magazine, "The Engineers of Dumb Behavior", discussing the UBC's male engineering students' continued publication of the sexist and racist tabloid <u>The Red Menace</u>; "Perhaps the engineers will be less inclined to publish graphic material offensive to women if they know some of the potential readers are also reading their term papers."[36]

The problem here is that the profession itself continues to excuse, even condone, such behavior as appropriate for engineers. For example, in 1991 both BDI and NewCo were involved in a program called "Strategic Universities". This program involved the establishment of partnerships with selected universities across Canada. The partnerships consisted of a number of initiatives such as assigning a senior executive to develop a relationship with the university, funding for various programs, and a commitment to hire more than 70 percent of new graduates from these universities. Of the three universities in British Columbia, UBC was selected to be the strategic school. The recent incidents at UBC were brought to the attention of executives within both BDI and NewCo, with a request that either UBC not be a strategic school for that year, or at least that the partnership be made conditional on real change in the engineering faculty. The situation was quickly brushed off and not investigated

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[35] CCWE 33.
[36] Gould 112.

further. The response of the President of NewCo when he said he remembered being a student engineer and "that's just the way it is" was typical. So while it is true that some of the blatantly sexist traditions, such as the Lady Godiva Ride, have now disappeared, engineering faculties remain especially challenging for women.

Changes Required in the Educational System

In order to establish genuine equity in employment within the engineering profession, change must begin not at the point of entering the workforce, but much earlier, in the socialization and education of children. The CCWE report, More Than Just Numbers, identified how the early socialization of girls and boys continues to be gendered. For girls, one of the most serious consequences of this fact is that by secondary school, they often lose confidence in their science and mathematics abilities even though studies, such as Heather-Jane Robertson's A Cappella, [37] and the research discussed in Meredith Kimball's Feminist Visions of Gender Similarities and Differences,[38] consistently show that girls do not lose their ability to perform in these areas . Although more studies are needed, this loss of confidence likely results from a number of causes, including teachers and counselors treating girls and boys differently, the lack of gender-sensitive teaching materials, and the lack of relevance to girls' lives in how mathematics and science are taught. When girls opt out of mathematics

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[37] Heather-jane Robertson, A Cappella, as cited in CCWE, More than Just Numbers 14.
[38] Meredith M. Kimball, Feminist Visions of Gender Similarities and Differences, (New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 1995), 91.

and science in secondary school they have virtually resigned from any chance at a career in engineering. What this in turn suggests is that neither the Employment Equity Act nor the Federal Contractors Program really addresses the obstacles to those jobs which women experience while they are still girls.

However, there have been individuals and groups who have been actively working to improve the situation for girls and young women who wish to pursue studies in mathematics, science and engineering. One such group is the Association of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) founded some twelve years ago. The primary objective of WISE is to promote science and engineering amongst youth, particularly girls. WISE members go into elementary and secondary schools and either speak to classes, participate in career fairs, or counsel individual students on a one-to-one basis.

There are also initiatives at the university level. One such initiative is the Chair in Women in Engineering which is sponsored by Northern Telecom and the National Science and Engineering Research Council in recognition of the low representation of women in engineering. The position is located at the University of New Brunswick and is responsible for recruiting, educating, encouraging and supporting female students across Canada, from elementary school to university for the purpose of enriching and enlarging the profession of engineering. The incumbent, Monique Frize, was also the chair for the study which was published in the report More Than Just Numbers referenced in this study.

A number of engineering companies have also forged partnerships with elementary and secondary schools and universities, intending to bridge the void between business and education. Although partnerships vary in content, they usually include such activities as career fairs and seminars, facility tours, job shadowing and cooperative and summer work placements. These partnerships may also involve inviting teachers to participate in internship programs, providing speakers to talk with students, and funding for educational programs.

The Engineering Workplace

Once women complete their engineering degree and seek jobs, their situation does not improve significantly. Evidence of continuing segregation on the basis of gender, as well as for racial, ethnic and other minority groups within the professions, is overwhelming.[39] For example, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's report, 1993 Review of the Situation of Women in Canada, found that as women move into professional occupations their work status and wages are lower than their male counterparts. As women enter the professions, they "are expected to have academic qualifications and experience superior to those of the men with whom they compete, and they are expected to accept lower pay than that of men with inferior qualifications."[40] NAC's report also stated that "although it may be true that a very few high-profile, well-educated, mostly white women are faring somewhat better in the workforce than

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[39] Stephen Peitchinis, Women at Work - Discrimination and Response (Toronto.: McClellend & Stewart, 1989) 23.
[40] Peitchinis 23.

twelve years ago, many women in management and professional work reported hitting a glass ceiling on their ability to advance".[41]

The structure of engineering work creates barriers for many women. The workload is often project- or product-oriented and tied to demanding delivery dates. As a matter of economic survival too, many engineering firms must focus on a global marketplace, and the consequence is that overtime, extensive travel and offshore assignments have become permanent features of many engineering jobs. This emphasis on overtime and travel is difficult for both women and men striving to achieve a balance between work and family.

Within engineering firms "there are still elements of resistance to the promotion of women".[42] Most engineering firms are based on authoritarian and patriarchal models in which men are in the majority and primarily responsible for controlling the business while women are in minority and support roles. Male managers have preconceived attitudes and perceptions about women and their ability to handle overtime, shift work and the work environment.[43] These attitudes and perceptions persisted in spite of the obvious talent of female engineers and the fact that their education, work-related values, and work continuity patterns were virtually identical to male engineers.[44] One outcome of these preconceived attitudes and perceptions is that they are used to justify male managers' preferences for promoting people like themselves; other men.

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[41] National Action Committee on the Status of Women, 1993 Review of the Situation of Women in Canada (Toronto: NAC, July 1993) 13.

[42] CCWE 71.

[43] CCWE 72.

[44] McIlwee 177.

Sexual harassment can also follow from being a woman in a male-dominated profession, and such harassment can be effectively used as a strategy to intimidate women and "keep them in their place". In 1990, of 121,464 professional engineers only 3,875 were women.[45] Because of their relatively small representation, when women experience harassment they will likely feel powerless, especially if management does not actively put a stop to harassing behavior. Yet the profession does not even acknowledge sexual harassment as a problem. The CCWE recommended that "associations of professional engineers develop and institute programs for all members and engineers-in-training to ensure full acceptance of women engineers in the profession, and to eradicate harassment and discrimination against women members."[46]

Professionalism contributes to this problem of sexual harassment of women, as their membership in such a restrictive profession inhibits their interaction with and thus, support from other women working in a non-professional capacity for the same firm. Within the profession of engineering, "men form friendships through, and thrive upon, the mutual exchange of knowledge and a humorous competitiveness concerning technology."[47] This male dominated environment, which includes colleagues and clients, creates a great deal of enjoyment for men engaged in this type of work. When this environment is coupled with the fact that men continually support the stereotype

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[45] CCWE 61.
[46] CCWE 88.
[47] Cynthia Cockburn, "The Relations of Technology", in Rosemary Crompton and Michael Mann, eds., Gender and Stratification (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1986, reprinted 1989) 77.

that women are not by nature technological and, therefore, cannot become good engineers, the resulting highly masculinized environment does not invite the participation of women.[48] Women are keenly aware of the male construction of the work environment and the difficulties involved with their attempting to enter this sphere.

Another example of how the engineering workplace continues to be male-centered is in salaries. The high demand and low supply of engineers, which has largely resulted from the exclusionary strategies within the profession, encourages engineering associations to publish salary ranges for their members. Most engineering companies structure their professional pay rates on the published wages provided by provincial engineering associations. Even with this amount of control and influence by the profession over salaries, female engineers, on average, earn less than their male counterparts. The 1990 Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario Membership Salary Survey showed that women professional engineers earned on average less than their male colleagues who graduated in the same year.[49] The study concluded that because engineers are paid by level of responsibility and type of work performed, rather than year of graduation, lower average salaries meant that women were not being promoted as quickly as men, but instead were being kept in less responsible positions.

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[48] Cockburn 77.
[49] Cited in CCWE 70, 71.

Salary increases for engineers are often a result of a performance appraisal process. Essentially, this is a subjective process, dependent on management's perception of an individual's performance. Given that overtime in many engineering companies contributes to positive perceptions, on the part of management, and resulting preferential work assignments, given too that management tends to promote those who are like themselves, this system presents another barrier to women. Significantly, "in a survey of women engineers in Ontario, many reported that job responsibilities are the biggest factor affecting salary increases."[50] Thus, women are locked in a circle; less responsibility leads to lower performance evaluations, leading to less responsible assignments.

Conclusion

Unlike other professions, such as medicine and law, engineering continues to be a male dominated profession. This is seen not only in the extremely slow increase in female engineering graduates, and consequent small number of women as engineering faculty, but as well in the secondary status of many female engineers within the workplace. Strategies originally put in place to restrict access have proved effective in keeping women out while keeping the profession of engineering male-dominated.

The Employment Equity Act (EEA) and the Federal Contractors Program, (FCP) have done little to address the obstacles women experience in the

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[50] CCWE 70.

engineering workplace and nothing in regard to the obstacles women face during the stages leading to a career in engineering. The limited coverage of the EEA and the FCP mean that few engineering companies are required to implement employment equity initiatives. Coupled with the weak design and compliance requirements, the result is almost no improvement for women in those engineering companies which are covered by the EEA or the FCP. Finally, the scope of federal employment equity is so narrow that the obstacles to women in obtaining the necessary educational prerequisites are not taken into account.

If opportunities for women in the field of engineering are increasing, this is a result of the growing demand for engineers, and not the federal government's employment equity initiative. Even so, many studies indicate that women still experience significant discrimination both in engineering faculties and in the workplace. The continued under-representation of women in engineering argues a striking need for equity legislation.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKING WITH EMPLOYMENT EQUITY I: A CASE STUDY

Introduction

All seven companies in this study implemented employment equity for just one reason, the Federal Contractors Program. Unfortunately, equity practitioners in these companies have been able to achieve only marginal successes with equity initiatives. Although the equity practitioners viewed inadequate government legislation as part of the reason for marginal success, they were unanimous in agreeing that the main obstacle to improvement lay in the lack of support and involvement from the companies' executives and senior managers.

The following case study, which outlines the problems experienced in implementing employment equity in two engineering companies provides specific examples of the issues and obstacles faced by equity practitioners.

Establishing Employment Equity within NewCo and BDI

Late in 1990, NewCo embarked on a recruitment strategy that would almost double its workforce over the next four years. Because representation of the four designated groups throughout the organization was low, the Human Resources Specialist thought it an opportune time to convince the company's executive to implement employment equity initiatives.

In January 1991 the Human Resources Specialist presented a business case in support of the implementation of employment equity to the Manager, and Vice President of Human Resources. The Vice President then presented this case to the company's President.

The business case was based on the following points:

1) As NewCo employed over 100 people and would probably bid on contracts for the federal government worth $200,000 or more, the company should start to implement employment equity immediately rather than waiting until a contract was bid on. The amount of work required to implement employment equity initiatives was extensive.

2) NewCo provided substantial amounts of services to the Ontario government as well as having two offices in Ontario. The [then] new NDP government had published its intention to implement employment equity legislation and NewCo should be ready to meet the resulting requirements.

3) NewCo also provided services in the United States and had already been requested by several US cities and states to supply information on equity initiatives within the company.

4) As NewCo was embarking on a period of significant recruitment, primarily for engineers and software developers, it should position itself as an employer of choice so that it could attract the best graduates which were increasingly women, and women and men who were visible minorities.

5) As NewCo expanded its market internationally, this expansion could be facilitated by a greater understanding of, and responsiveness to, other cultures which would be made possible if those cultures were represented within NewCo's workforce.

The President of NewCo agreed to support employment equity primarily in response to government requirements. Following the request of the Human Resources Specialist, the President issued a letter to all NewCo's employees

outlining his support. Although four of the five points outlined in the business case had the potential of directly affecting the company's success (attracting top talent, improving the global sales strategy), the viewpoint adopted by NewCo's executive was that employment equity was merely a government requirement that should be met without significantly changing the way its business was done. The Human Resources Specialist was given responsibility for employment equity, but without significant support or resources. The letter was essentially the end of the President's involvement and interest in employment equity. The only other direction from the executive was to "keep us out of trouble".

Other business initiatives, such as new product development, recruitment, and opening up new global markets, were clearly initiated and directed by NewCo's executive. Such initiatives were treated by the executive as business issues critical to the success of NewCo. Employment equity, by contrast, was viewed as a government program, and not as an initiative to be integrated with other business concerns, such as recruitment and the opening of new global markets. From the start, then, employment equity was marginalized within NewCo and viewed by the executive and managers as a separate and less significant responsibility of the Human Resources Specialist.

Aside from the President's concern for government requirements, there was an additional reason why his letter of support was issued so quickly. The parent company of NewCo, BDI, was at this same time in the process of resurrecting its attempts at implementing employment equity. Because the

President of NewCo reported directly to one of the senior executives of BDI, the latter company often determined the programs, policies and procedures which NewCo was expected to follow. Employment equity was not one of the initiatives that BDI specifically directed NewCo to implement, but because BDI was doing some work on employment equity, the President of NewCo asked the Human Resources Specialist to work with those in the parent company who were also trying to establish employment equity.

BDI had dealt with employment equity in a sporadic way. In 1986, shortly after the federal bill on employment equity was enacted, BDI issued a memo supporting employment equity. The President, it said, would develop the "overall philosophy of Employment Equity by establishing affirmative action as a major company objective and assigning accountability for those objectives at all levels and in all groups." BDI then moved to the next step of the process outlined by the FCP, a self-identification survey of all its Canadian divisions. After this initial burst of activity, however, employment equity was virtually forgotten for the next four years. The survey data was not updated and quickly lost its validity. It was not until 1990, when BDI was experiencing strong competition in the hiring of new engineering graduates, that it created an "Employer of Choice" initiative in order to attract top engineering graduates from universities across North America. As well as going to many university campuses for recruitment interviews, and offering multi-year contracts of guaranteed employment, part of the Employer of Choice initiative was a renewal of BDI's commitment to

employment equity. This was viewed as a strategy which would attract recent graduates, whose makeup was becoming increasingly more diverse. That year, BDI gave a white, non-disabled male responsibility for reactivating employment equity; several months later he quit.

The position was then given to a white, non-disabled woman, "Wilma", who would also be responsible for employee relations. Reporting to a Vice President, her new title was Manager of Employee Relations. Wilma's office was located in BDI's headquarters. Her first task was the development of a network (in April 1991) of employment equity representatives. The network was comprised of regional representatives and location specific representatives and included representation from NewCo. Although Wilma nominally headed the network, because its members were appointed by managers from the regions and locations, they did not report directly to her; and since the reporting structure tended to undercut Wilma's authority, it was an effective marginalization strategy.

From the beginning the network had trouble getting executive and senior management level support for employment equity. When the network proposed a plan for implementation of employment equity initiatives, with the goal of winning an award from the federal government that could be used as part of the publicity developed for the "Employer of Choice" initiative, the Vice President responsible for employment equity informed Wilma that it was "corny to try and win an award in employment equity".

Even within the network there were problems. Two people assigned by their managers to the employment equity network immediately stated that they did not support employment equity; they were left in place. Those in the network who did support employment equity found that because their employment equity responsibilities were not given priority by their managers they, therefore, had little worktime to devote to the development of initiatives.

One of the first initiatives completed by the network was to create and publish, near the end of 1991, a four-page bulletin announcing the establishment of employment equity, explaining why it was necessary, and introducing the people who could be contacted for additional information. Part of the information supporting the need for employment equity in this bulletin was statistical information drawn from the 1986 self-identification survey. This statistical data showed unambiguously the low representation of the four designated groups within BDI. Although this bulletin was only intended for employees, one of BDI's lawyers argued against the release of the statistics. Her concern was that "our dirty laundry" would become public when employees took these bulletins home. The bulletin was published anyway and there were no negative repercussions. Although these concerns were proven to be groundless, the fact that they were referred to as "dirty laundry" indicated to the network that at least some executives within BDI recognized the company's poor record in creating a diverse workforce.

In late 1991 the network requested that the President of BDI, the parent company, sign a statement in support of employment equity similar to the letter issued earlier in the year by the President of NewCo, which would then be distributed to all BDI and NewCo employees. The intent of the statement was to demonstrate top level support for this initiative and, thereby, increase the support and participation of the various levels of management within both companies. The President refused to sign, demanding instead to know why employment equity was necessary. Wilma explained the necessity to the President and, although he then stated he understood the necessity for employment equity, he still refused to sign the statement. In the end, the network had to settle for the Vice President of Human Resources signing the statement. When the President did not support employment equity, it was further marginalized because his refusal reinforced the perception held by many of the company's managers and employees that rather than a business issue which could improve business viability, employment equity was just another government administrative requirement which would best be handled by the Human Resources Department as this is where the information required by the FCP resided.

Wilma soon experienced the same workload problems her network representatives were facing, in that other responsibilities, such as overseeing a world-wide employee satisfaction survey, prevented her from giving the startup of the equity initiative her full attention. Eventually Wilma asked for and

obtained another position outside employment equity because of her frustrations in trying to implement employment equity with so little support from the executive and senior management of BDI.

Her experience of lack of support led Wilma to recommend that her replacement be a white, non-disabled man. She believed that a white man would more easily gain credibility in the white, male-dominated headquarters of BDI. Her belief appeared to be justified. Not only was her replacement, "John" given a higher grade, salary and title, (Director), than she had, but when he proposed that BDI develop an employment equity plan which would win a federal government award, the Vice President who had previously called this "corny" now thought it was a wonderful idea.

John was able to push employment equity a bit further along. He successfully obtained the signatures of BDI's President and Vice President of Human Resources on a statement of support which appeared on the redesigned self-identification survey forms. The value of this commitment became apparent in the wake of BDIs winning (in January 1992), a $5 million contract with the federal government. Under the FCP, the contract meant that BDI's employment equity program would be audited. Nevertheless, four months later when the President of BDI sent his business objectives[1] for the year to the President of NewCo, there was no mention of employment equity or the fact that the company

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[1] The common practice for determining what business objectives needed to be achieved during the year was that the President of BDI would determine the business issues which needed to be addressed by the entire organization and these objectives would trickle down throughout the various divisions. Theoretically, these objectives were to go from the President throughout the entire organization including entry-level positions.

needed to prepare for a federal government audit, something which involves a significant amount of work, especially when very little had yet been done in regard to employment equity initiatives. (The insensitivity to equity issues was evident in a detail of the memo outlining the organization's objectives: it used only male pronouns.)

But the chief obstacle to further progress was the absence of funding. The network Wilma had earlier established still, a year and a half later, had no budget and dedicated human resources and the individuals who comprised it were finding it increasingly more difficult to dedicate any of their paid working time to equity initiatives. Prior to John taking over responsibility for employment equity, Wilma and the network had presented a budget to senior executives estimating the financial and human resources needed to successfully jump-start the employment equity program BDI had committed itself to under FCP. The budget request was denied.

John decided that a budget was crucial to the success of the employment equity program and invited a well-known, external consultant, one specializing in employment equity issues, to speak to the two Vice Presidents of Human Resources. John's plan was that once these men realized the need for resources they would convince BDI's President to allocate funds. (The President had also been invited to the consultant's presentation but did not attend.) When the consultant started the meeting by asking the senior Vice President, Human Resources what the status of employment equity was within BDI, the network

was surprised to hear from the Vice President about all the work BDI was doing in regard to employment equity. After a few minutes, however, it was clear that the only solid example he had was some past work John had done in an aboriginal community prior to his taking the employment equity position. Two members of the network finally interrupted the Vice President and said that, in reality, very little had been accomplished within BDI in regard to employment equity. They cited the main reason: equity initiatives did not get the funding, promotion and dedicated human resources which other initiatives had received. The network also noted that the discriminatory hiring and promotion practices within BDI sent a clear message that the company was not genuinely interested in changing the way it did business. The Vice President recovered quickly, and said that employment equity was important, that it had to be implemented. He said it was the network's responsibility to get the job done: "don't worry about the costs." The meeting broke up.

But nothing changed. The network received neither a financial nor a human resources budget. In September 1992 a final attempt to secure a budget for employment equity was submitted to BDI's executive but it was not successful.

The most significant indicator of the lack of support for employment equity was the response by BDI's executive to the notification that the federal government would audit BDI in August 1992. BDI was not prepared for an audit and John immediately requested, and received, a four week postponement from

the auditor. When it became clear to John that the additional four weeks would not be enough time to prepare for the audit, he negotiated with the auditor to extend the audit date to February 1993. In spite of the obvious problems with meeting the requirements of the FCP audit, no budget was allotted to employment equity. However, in early 1993, John established the Diversity Steering Committee. Comprised of eight senior human resources and line managers, they were expected to become employment equity "champions" in their respective divisions. The Diversity Steering Committee met several times but was disbanded shortly after it was created as a result of changing priorities within BDI.

The lack of response by BDI to the notification of an audit was in contrast to the responses of other companies in this study. In part, this can be explained by the fact that all the companies in this study, except BDI and NewCo, had already gone through at least one audit and expected more. Thus too, the other companies in this study made passing the audit by the set date a priority.

Having successfully postponed the audit by six months, John contracted two studies from different consultants, an employment systems review and a study of BDI's "culture." The first was a review and evaluation of BDI's documents and practices in regard to human resource management. Completed in February 1993, the study was to identify systems and procedures which were weak, over-emphasized, misused or non-existent, and which, as a result, might have an adverse impact on designated group members. This study produced

thirty-four recommendations to improve BDI's management of its human resources. The consultant noted no evidence of an employment equity policy was found, and the employees interviewed for the study were unaware of any employment equity initiatives.

The second study grew out of John's (and his US counterpart's) concern about the failure of the company's executive to view employment equity as a business issue. The purpose of this study was to identify BDI's culture and the implications for diversity. The study approached this by identifying who succeeded, how people were promoted and developed, by comparing diversity policies with practices, and by finding out what BDI's employees thought the company should be doing about diversity. John, and others trying to establish employment equity within BDI, hoped that the results of this study in particular would finally convince BDI's executive of the need for employment equity by redefining it as a business issue which, if ignored, would negatively impact on the business. The Canadian portion of the study consisted of interviews with thirty-one senior managers across Canada, twenty-eight focus groups and a review of various BDI data (including the employment systems review study noted above.)

The study was completed in the spring of 1994, and it identified a number of strengths in regard to diversity issues within BDI. One of the more significant findings was a recognition that diversity was getting onto the corporate agenda despite business challenges, as a result of pockets of interest, concern and

activity around diversity which existed within the company. Many of the survey and interview respondents felt that the company had made some advances in employment equity. For example, entry level hiring was fairly representative of the diversity within the population, the sexual harassment awareness training was successful, and the extension of benefits without regard to sexual orientation was seen as progressive.

The study also identified some major weakness in BDI, highlighting them as the primary obstacles to employment equity; they were the same obstacles which the network had been unsuccessfully presenting to BDI's executive for years. One of the main weaknesses was a hard-nosed, tough, aggressive, macho culture which was not conducive to diversity. Also identified was that employment equity had few executive champions or open supporters and was treated as an issue for the human resources department, not a line management issue. As a result, employment equity was not given priority or treated as a valid business issue. In support of their identifying these obstacles, respondents referred to the lack of an articulated, coordinated diversity strategy, and the lackadaisical approach to assigning resources to work on employment equity. Respondents further indicated that the inflexible management style, the ambivalence and resentment regarding employment equity and the "glass ceiling" for women and minorities also provided obstacles to diversity within BDI. The report noted also that there was a general skepticism among respondents that BDI would embrace diversity and act on the findings of this study. In short,

the study amply confirmed the perceptions of those who had worked on employment equity at BDI of the status of diversity issues within BDI.

When the report from the consultant was finalized, however, BDI's executive informed the senior managers that the study would remain confidential. It would not be released to BDI as a whole; and this was still the case as of early 1995. There has been no indication that either the executive or senior management of BDI has used the information from the study in any way.

John himself had already moved out of employment equity before the study was completed. He was concerned that his career would be seriously hampered if he spent too much time working with such an unpopular issue. At the time he left, although BDI had still not been able to prepare for the audit, the executive decided that John would not be immediately replaced. The employment equity network was disbanded, although some members continued, on their own initiative, to work on employment equity within their locations. Responsibility for employment equity was eventually given to another white, non-disabled male whose main responsibilities lay elsewhere.

Due to his additional responsibilities, the person responsible for employment equity was not happy that he was given responsibility for employment equity and indicated the he was only prepared to do "the bare minimum in order to pass the audit." When this individual left BDI in February 1994, he was not immediately replaced.

Still facing the audit in the fall of 1994, BDI resurrected employment

equity. This time responsibility was given to a recently hired, white male Human

Resources trainee with no experience in employment equity. By early 1995, the

status of employment equity within BDI and NewCo remained the same and the

audit, though now begun, was still incomplete. BDI received no penalty in spite

of the fact that after two and a half years they were still not prepared to have the

federal government audit their employment equity program.

Conclusion

Although the experiences within NewCo and BDI provide the most

extreme example of the lack of senior level support, and resulting structural

features undermining the success of employment equity, other equity

practitioners in this study experienced, to varying degrees, similar types of

marginalization strategies. Aside from not hiring or actively developing equity

specialists and positioning responsibility for employment equity at a level which

could both initiate and direct significant change, as in BDI and NewCo,

marginalization also followed from the lack of strong senior level support, and

inadequate time and financial resources. Although the majority of companies in

this study had an executive theoretically in support of employment equity, no

company had an executive champion who clearly desired changes in

employment equity, and who pushed for those changes.

WORKING WITH EMPLOYMENT EQUITY II: CONFIRMING PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

While the equity practitioners in this study are critical of the Federal

Contractors Program and recognize its inadequacies, the majority of them

believe that it is the lack of commitment on the part of executives and senior

managers, rather than problematic government legislation, which creates the

largest obstacle to the successful implementation of employment equity. The

following analysis of the experiences of the equity practitioners indicates how the

lack of executive commitment created powerlessness and structural barriers for

the equity practitioners which, in turn, meant marginal success in implementing

employment equity.

The Companies in this Study and Employment Equity

The seven companies studied are engineering companies operating in

Canada. One, NewCo, began (as I noted previously) as a joint venture between

the second company in this study, BDI, and a telephone operating company; by

the end of this study NewCo was wholly owned by BDI. The third company was

a division of BDI located in Ontario. The fourth company was a wholly-owned

subsidiary of a large, BC corporation. The fifth, a wholly-owned subsidiary of a

large U.S. organization. The six and seventh companies were independent

organizations. Four of the companies had their corporate offices in British

Columbia. The workforce populations of these companies ranged in size from

approximately 165 to just over 1,000 employees, with the average size being roughly 500 employees. BDI's Canadian workforce at the time of the study was approximately 23,000. Two of the seven companies had unionized employees.

As is commonly the case, all seven companies were hierarchically structured, though some were flatter than others, that is they had fewer steps between entry level positions and the top of the organization. The number of structural levels within the companies of this study varied from approximately three to ten. Half of the studied companies use a form of matrix structure in their engineering departments with varying degrees of success. In this context, a matrix structure simply means that the engineering staff are housed as a central function and loaned out to various business units within the company, depending on business requirements.

The requirement to implement employment equity through the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) generated similar responses from executives within the seven companies. For example, one of the employment equity practitioners told of a senior executive who expressed concern that a "customer" - the federal government - was telling him how to run his business. Another practitioner was asked by members of the executive what the minimum effort necessary would be in order to meet the requirements of the FCP. A third practitioner noted that, because the work the company was doing for the federal government was coming to an end, the executives said - "Well, why should we worry about it?" The executives in this company seemed unconcerned over the possibility that

discontinuing work on employment equity could easily jeopardize their being awarded government contracts in the future.

One of the requirements of the FCP is that organizations must assign senior personnel responsibility for employment equity.[1] In four of the seven companies studied (including NewCo and BDI) the Director or Vice President of Human Resources was theoretically responsible for employment equity. In one company the CEO was ultimately responsible for employment equity while the Executive Vice President and the Director of Human Resources share responsibility for the implementation of employment equity. In another company an employment equity committee, comprised of executives and senior managers, was formed. However, at the time of this study this committee had not been active and had limited input into employment equity initiatives. In the seventh company the Human Resources Supervisor was responsible for employment equity. Except for brief statements of support, executives in the majority of the companies did not exercise responsibility for the employment equity program. In most of the companies, employment equity was viewed by executives as a government requirement for statistical reports which was best dealt with by the Human Resources Department as that is where the data resided. Executives did not view employment equity as an issue which, with their leadership, could improve their respective businesses.

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[1] Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Federal Contractors Program - Information for Suppliers and Organizations (Ottawa: Public Affairs, Employment and Immigration Canada, October 1990) 3.

The fact that most of these companies identified an executive as being responsible for employment equity means little, because the functional responsibility for equity initiatives in each case belonged to individuals at a lower level. In five companies (including NewCo) those lower level individuals were responsible for most, and in some cases all, aspects of employment equity, including the development and implementation of strategy, plans and initiatives.

Only one company did not entirely delegate responsibility for employment equity to one individual and, as well, attempted to involve designated group members. This was the company where the responsibility for implementation of employment equity was shared by the Executive Vice President and the Director of Human Resources. In this company the Director of Human Resources was involved, as were other senior managers, in an employment equity advisory group created in the summer of 1993. This group was comprised not only of senior managers, but also of women and men of different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as from different levels within the organization. The group's task was to develop a five year employment equity plan for the company. Both the advisory group and its membership came about as a result of significant and strategic lobbying on the part of the company's employment equity practitioner. As a result, a number of the company's executives, at the beginning of 1994, finally supported the idea that "this is the way we should do business". The advisory group invited the participation of key senior managers, that is those who had the authority to make decisions and take

corrective actions in regard to employment equity. These were the people who made hiring decisions and controlled the career development of individuals within the organization. However, not all the executives supported employment equity according to the company's employment equity practitioner.

Six of the seven companies first began to address employment equity in the late 1980s. All the companies in this study (except for NewCo, BDI and its division) had an employment equity plan in place at the time of the interviews. One company had a five year plan, one had a two year plan in which the goals were revised annually, one had an annual plan and the fourth company had an annual plan but the company's management was beginning to question the relevance of having an employment equity plan as they did not view federal government contracts as a significant part of their business income in the future. This perception was shared by the executives of NewCo.

The overriding goal for the majority of companies in this study, in regard to employment equity, was to meet compliance of the FCP in order to pass a potential audit. What this means is that six of the seven companies still do not think of employment equity as a business issue. In other words, they do not see employment equity as a strategic process which, if properly implemented, can positively impact the success of the business. Management in most of these companies regarded employment equity as an additional cost of doing business, rather than an aid to competitiveness.

Although four of the seven companies had employment equity plans, the majority of the companies had no formal process for measuring the progress of employment equity. In most cases, it was left up to the initiative of individuals responsible for implementing equity measures to ensure that information about such measures was presented to the companies' executive. In one company, if the federal government audit was passed, employment equity was considered to be progressing well. In two companies, statistical information on the representation of the designated groups was presented only annually to senior management, where other statistical information - sales figures, new product development schedules - was reviewed every month.

The lack of any genuine involvement, interest and support on the part of executives of the majority of the companies in this study indicate that employment equity remains stalled because it is not considered a business issue. The executives in several of the companies said that employment equity had already been achieved, pointing to the increased representation of males of Asian ancestry as proof. However, this particular increase resulted not from equity initiatives, but simply because this group now comprises a growing percentage of engineering graduates; they hired who was available. The employment equity practitioners in this study who worked with these executives had to continually remind them that, yes, there has been an increase in the hiring of visible minority males but they are not proportionally represented in management. The practitioners also reminded the executives that visible

minority males were only part of one of the designated groups, there were three

other groups under the FCP whose representation needed to be addressed.

The Role of Employment Equity Practitioner

There were a number of common experiences shared by the women who

took part in this study. All encountered problems which resulted from their

inadequate preparation for the job. The low priority given to employment equity

by executives and managers meant that credentials in employment equity were

not required of any of the practitioners when they were either hired or assigned

the responsibility. Company training for practitioners was virtually non-existent

and usually undertaken on the practitioners' own initiative. All but one of the

women in this study had additional responsibilities besides employment equity.

Occasionally these additional responsibilities, such as outreach recruitment,

supported employment equity. In most cases, however, the start-up

requirements of the FCP required an enormous amount of extra work on the part

of the practitioner, because they were starting from zero. The additional work -

developing and implementing a communications plan to inform employees of

employment equity; reviewing all human resources programs and procedures for

systemic and overt discrimination; creating and maintaining statistical databases

and reports on the representation of designated groups within the company -

was seldom made a priority by their managers. As a result, the majority of the

practitioners had to spend some of their own, unpaid time on employment equity in order to meet the requirements of the FCP.

The practitioners shared other qualities. All were designated group members under employment equity. All worked in the human resources department of their respective companies. In most cases too, the work they were doing was not seen by their colleagues and managers as being as valuable as other areas of responsibility within the human resources department. The following analyses how their backgrounds and position within their organizations affected their ability to work on employment equity.

All the practitioners identified themselves as white females, aged between 34 and 45, and as either middle or upper-middle class. The majority of practitioners identified themselves as feminists, and the minority who did not do so, nevertheless expressed their belief in, and support for, women's rights. All the practitioners understood the need for employment equity and all expressed, as one practitioner explained, a "passion for fairness." This passion helped them past repeated frustrations in their attempts to facilitate real change in generally unsupportive environments.

Each practitioner had completed post-secondary education, obtaining either a diploma or a degree. One practitioner possessed a BA degree which resulted from her study of Inuit and First Nations peoples, and had experience in outreach recruitment of Aboriginal peoples, but the remainder of the practitioners had no formal training or experience in employment equity prior to their

appointments. This was in contrast to the usual hiring practices of the companies. In general, only people with relevant experience and/or education for a position were hired. The companies' willingness in this case to hire inexperienced personnel reflected the low priority attached to equity issues by the executive and management of these companies.

Although all the equity practitioners interviewed for this study were knowledgeable on equity issues, their inexperience, and hit-and-miss training did hamper their initial effectiveness. The practitioners needed time to learn about the requirements of the FCP, as well as determining how their respective companies were positioned with respect to it.

"Training" often involved such activities as meeting with a representative from the federal government and reading the material she or he provided; subscribing to relevant journals; meeting with other practitioners to exchange ideas and experiences and, if there had been work done on employment equity within the company previously, reviewing the files. Practitioners met with each other informally - for example, having lunch with a colleague in another company who had already implemented employment equity and discussing common concerns, - and formally in meetings and seminars organized by such groups as the Human Resources Management Association of BC and Equity West*. The annual Employment Equity Practitioners' Conference in Vancouver also became a main venue for practitioners to share information.

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* See page 14.

All six practitioners were female working in a masculinized environment, thus, they saw their being designated group members as a dichotomy. On the one hand, being a designated group member gave them the sensitivity to, and understanding of, many issues resulting from diversity, such as unfair hiring practices and sexual harassment. Membership also motivated the practitioners to continue to work in this area in spite of the obstacles and lack of support they regularly faced. On the other hand, a number of the practitioners also stated that a woman working on employment equity was viewed negatively by some people in the company. As one practitioner said, "what I'm getting at is that it's [employment equity] not seen as a real business issue. Therefore, it may be seen as a softer issue and, as a woman with perhaps a softer delivery, I can see where that combination might be a little detrimental." Another practitioner noted that the predominately male management would often hear things differently if the presenter was like them, meaning male, as opposed to someone who was different, meaning female. From her experiences of working on employment equity, this practitioner concluded that "It's more believable, somehow, if they are being told by someone who is like them". All but one practitioner reported to a white, male manager.

All six practitioners worked in human resources departments and viewed themselves as human resources practitioners first and foremost. All six practitioners had a number of other responsibilities besides employment equity. The practitioner at BDI worked solely on employment equity for less than a year

(following her return from a maternity leave) and even then she worked only three days per week; when this practitioner returned to full-time work, she was shifted to another area of human resources work.

The majority of practitioners stated that their work in employment equity did not carry the same prestige or importance as the work of their human resources colleagues who were responsible for other areas such as compensation or industrial relations. In NewCo this difference in perceived value of employment equity versus compensation, translated into a lower grade and salary for the equity specialist. Job evaluations[2] eventually proved that the two jobs were of equal value. However, when the grade and salary was increased for the equity specialist, the compensation specialist was automatically given a further grade and salary increase with no change in responsibilities or an additional job evaluation to justify the continuing difference between the two specialists.

One of the other equity practitioners in this study eventually threatened to resign over this issue. She was being paid less than colleagues performing routine functions that did not require them to develop and implement a completely new strategy. Although the company finally agreed to increase the practitioner's salary, it took the threat of her resignation to obtain recognition for the value of her work.

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[2] Job Evaluations in NewCo and BDI involved rating what the position requires in the following areas: knowledge; education; relevant experience; level of problem solving and decision making; occupational level of external and internal people interfaced with; interpersonal skills; scope of supervision; and work environment.

For a third equity practitioner in this study, the problem was not in the perception of her human resources colleagues, but rather, the value attached to human resources itself by other employees. As she said, "I don't think you tell somebody in a technical position that you're in employment equity. I mean, ha ha, employment equity, big deal, [would be their response]." This type of attitude was typical. The message she was getting was simple - employment equity was not an issue to be taken seriously.

The Positioning of Employment Equity

The prominence employment equity practitioners were given within a firm reflected the seriousness with which a company intended to pursue equity initiatives. Employees within a firm are quick to grasp the distinction between an equity practitioner who reports to the President or Vice President and one who reports to a position lower down in the firm's hierarchy. Within most of the engineering firms in this study, there was also a clear distinction made between positions reporting to Human Resources and those reporting to Technology, or Sales and Marketing and Finance, with generally more prestige and responsibility being given to the latter areas. Recognizing the significance of the positioning of responsibility for employment equity to its success, federal government guidelines, "Criteria for Implementation of the Federal Contractors Program", stated that "The assignment of a senior level person to manage the Employment Equity program is an obligatory element of the Criteria for

Implementation".[3] The guidelines further state that the person assigned must have the necessary authority to ensure the program's effectiveness, must be knowledgeable of the problems and concerns of designated groups, and must have the status and ability to gain the cooperation of employees at all levels in the organization.[4] In the majority of the companies in this study these criteria were not met; the person assigned responsibility for employment equity was not a senior level person, and did not report to a senior level person.

Within NewCo responsibility for employment equity was vested in the position of Human Resources Specialist - Recruitment, several levels down from senior management. The specialist reported to one of two Human Resources Managers who, in turn, reported to the Vice President of Human Resources, who reported to the company's President. Besides employment equity, the specialist was responsible for recruitment, sexual harassment, (training and investigations of complaints), performance appraisals and orientations for new employees. This position was also responsible for the development and implementation of projects such as competencies,[5] process re-engineering,[6] training initiatives and

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[3]Canada, Employment & Immigration Canada, Employment Equity: A Guide for Employers (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1987) 16.
[4] Canada, Federal Contractors Program 3.
[5] The use of competencies is a departure from the traditional method used by many companies to determine what an individual must bring to the job in order to succeed. Traditionally, the tasks within a job would be identified and then recruiters would require job candidates to have experience performing those tasks. Competencies are the skills, knowledge and abilities an individual needs in order to be successful in a job. Competencies are identified through lengthy process which evaluates the types and levels of skills, knowledge and abilities which top ˜ forming job encumbants possess. Once established, competencies may be used for various process involving human resources, such as recruitment, training, succession planning and compensation.
[6] Process re-engineering is a systematic procedure used to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of a business process. An example of a business process is how a company deals with proposals. The entire process, from beginning to end, is analysed by representatives of every

quality standards for training. The demands and priorities of these additional responsibilities (determined by senior management) left little or no time for employment equity and, more importantly, little support for the integration of employment equity into other relevant areas. For example, management positions were often not filled through an open, competitive process. Instead, people would be hired into management positions based on closed discussions among senior managers. Inevitably, such a process placed a higher value on personal contacts than professional competency. Even when a hiring manager could be persuaded to use an open, competitive process, he had quietly informed the favoured candidate that the job was his, thus the remaining candidates were not seriously interviewed. Any work on employment equity within NewCo resulted from the initiative and determination of the Human Resources Specialist, and such work was usually performed after normal working hours, without direction from either the Manager of Human Resources, or the Vice President of Human Resources.

The other equity practitioners in this study faced similar reporting structures and had similar experiences. At the time of this study, one equity practitioner, "Chris", (who had worked for several divisions of BDI) was working as a Human Resources Generalist. When she was interviewed, BDI was experimenting with a new structure of human resources personnel. Instead of

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department involved in the process. The analysis usually involves flow charting the process, breaking the process down to the minutest detail and then re-designing it in order to increase efficiency by such things as eliminating everything which does not add value to the process. Various methodologies, such as Rummler Brache, are used.

specialists and managers, there were predominantly generalists who operated as consultants providing the full range of human resources support to a defined segment of BDI's population. A few of these generalists were referred to as "practice leaders" and their role was to provide advice to the other consultants.[7] In theory, all of BDI's human resources personnel, which numbered in the hundreds, reported to one person; this person was not in the same city as Chris so in practice she was on her own. While this structure was not directed primarily against equity, it nevertheless had the effect of undercutting the continuation of work on employment equity.

This radical change in the structure of human resources within BDI bears closer inspection. Historically, people within BDI's headquarters would research and develop policies and programs around initiatives such as employment equity and then assist in the transition to the divisional offices through policy development, training, materials and other forms of support. Because the new structure placed Human Resources personnel essentially "on call" to their assigned areas, they were left no time to develop initiatives unless specifically directed to do so by line managers. BDI had also reduced the number of human resources people just prior to the implementation of this new structure. Because BDI's headquarters was no longer producing policy or programs around employment equity, the Human Resource Consultants working in the divisions

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[7]The new structure of the Human Resources department was based on a model similar to a legal firm whereby the Human Resources practitioners would act as consultants and the company's employees were to be viewed as clients.

lacked both authority and support necessary to continue working on employment equity because it was never requested by their client base.

At another company, "Pat", the Manager of Staffing and Organizational Development, was responsible for employment equity. Pat was also two organizational levels from the President. As the company Pat worked for was engaging in significant hiring at the time of this study, approximately 75% of Pat's time was spent on recruitment. The rest of Pat's time was spent on evaluating policies, procedures and programs which could be used to "make the organization run more smoothly".

Another equity practitioner, "Terry", a Human Resources Administrator, had previously reported to the Director. Shortly before the time of this study, however, Terry was two levels down reporting to the Manager of Employee Relations, who reported to the Director of Human Resources. Terry was also responsible for a number of other initiatives along with employment equity, for example, developing and maintaining an employee handbook, and creating working groups to assess new methods of implementing human resources processes. In addition, Terry was also responsible for employee relations and the development of any additional special projects which were assigned to her.

"Sam", another practitioner in the study, estimated that approximately ten to fifteen percent of her time, per year, was actually spent on employment equity. Sam's position - Human Resources Supervisor - reported directly to the company's President. With an assistant, Sam performed human resource

generalist functions, and together the two were responsible for all aspects of human resources including, for example, benefits and salary administration.

The next practitioner interviewed, "Leigh", estimated that less than ten percent of her time per year was devoted to employment equity. At the time of the study, Leigh was Manager of Human Resources, reporting directly to the President of a Canadian division of a large, American organization. As Manager, Leigh and her staff of seven were responsible for all aspects of human resources including recruitment, training, compensation and job evaluation. When Leigh joined this engineering company several years ago, the Human Resources Department consisted of herself and a secretary, and although Leigh has since been able to hire more staff, she maintained responsibility for employment equity both because she enjoyed working on it, and because she was the person responsible for preparing for federal government audits.

In the majority of the companies in this study, employment equity was viewed by executives, managers and employees as generally not being the responsibility of a senior level position. On the contrary, employment equity was most often a program initiated and managed by one individual, generally not senior level, in the Human Resources Department. Although the guidelines provided by the FCP clearly indicate the necessity of assigning senior personnel with responsibility for employment equity, there are no mechanisms for insuring this nor any consequences when it fails to happen.

Senior Level Resistance to Employment Equity

The federal government's <u>Employment Equity: Guide for Employers</u> stated that employment equity was most successful when commitment and support at senior levels was visible and consistent. The <u>Guide</u> is also ambiguous about the necessity for senior managers to believe that change was necessary and that employment equity would contribute to improved employee morale and productivity. In this study, the majority of executives were only superficially committed to the concept of employment equity in that they really did not want any significant change to occur. In most of the companies in this study, the extent of the executives' commitment was a requirement that the equity practitioners implement the bare minimum necessary to pass a federal government audit.

Many executives and managers in the engineering companies in this study failed to recognize there was a need for employment equity because they did not believe this to be the case. Rather, they believed that their workforces were already diverse, primarily because there had been a significant influx of Asian males into the profession. The lack of penalties under FCP for not increasing the representation of all the designated groups at all levels of their organizations, combined with their own personal perceptions that "enough" equity had already happened, meant that most executives regarded demands for the extension of equity initiatives as unnecessary. The lack of penalties under the FCP also meant that while executives often provided commitment in

principle, they did not do so in fact. As noted earlier, written statements of commitment from the President of NewCo were circulated to all employees, but this was not followed by any further activity by the President. Nor did he build employment equity objectives into the annual expectations of those who reported to him. The company allotted no money and little time for implementation of employment equity, and those whose behavior actively hindered equity initiatives (for example, a senior manger's refusal to promote women into management) continued to be rewarded through salary increases and promotions.

The Practitioners and the Federal Contractors Program

All the practitioners in this study acknowledged that, without the Federal Contractors Program (FCP), they would not have been authorized to work on employment equity by the engineering companies which employed them. They supported the focus of the FCP on the four designated groups, yet they were unanimous in their vision of a future workplace where all diversity was valued. The majority felt, however, that they would probably not see this vision become a reality in their lifetime. All agreed too, that the type of change required to make engineering companies places where diversity amongst employees was not only managed, but also valued, would take a long time and a lot of effort. Thus, their criticisms of the FCP focused on two main areas: the program's inability to facilitate meaningful change in the corporate culture, and the lack of support provided by the government.

The majority of practitioners stated that engineering companies share a similar corporate culture whose chief attributes were male-centeredness, workaholism and credentialism. They viewed the corporate culture, especially the way people were managed, as the most significant obstacle to the achievement of employment equity and the valuing of diversity. Based on their experience, practitioners believed that the FCP alone was incapable of altering the culture. All the practitioners agreed that the program was about more than just the increased hiring from designated groups; retention must also be addressed. As Leigh stated, "I mean it's fine to say 'Oh well, we recruited this many women and this many visible minorities', but if people in the designated groups don't feel comfortable working here then what have you really accomplished?"

Legislated change, including the requirement to meet numerical goals and timetables, was viewed by some of the practitioners as a way to guarantee increased representation of designated groups only over the short term. Nevertheless, the majority of practitioners contended that, given the current climate with in engineering companies, the backlash to increased government intervention would diminish what little headway was gained through the FCP. For most practitioners, the key to greater success with employment equity would be long term, through the championing of executives and managers whose behavior confirmed their verbal support.

All of the practitioners stated that the support provided to companies implementing employment equity by the federal government should be strengthened. The focus of audit requirements under the FCP was analysis of statistical data, yet the software provided for this purpose by the government was unreliable, time-consuming to use, and produced reports which were difficult to read. The majority of practitioners also criticised the government's job codes used for comparison purposes in the data analysis. Although there were hundreds of job codes available, they did not correspond to the new types of jobs being developed in the engineering field such as software developer engineer. This hampered the integrity of the statistical analysis, especially when practitioners attempted to compare the representation of designated groups within their companies to the availability of designated group members in the workforce. The federal government did provide both consultants and advice on how to proceed through the processes mandated by the FCP, but several practitioners believed that the government could be of greater help by providing funding and developing more formalized training for equity practitioners.

The majority of practitioners were emphatic that employment equity had to be driven by executives and all levels of management, understood and supported by employees, and that it must involve designated group members as well. Although this might be difficult to accomplish, all the practitioners believed that it is necessary to have other employees involved in the development and

implementation of employment equity initiatives. Ownership of the issue must be broadly based if it is to succeed in transfo.ming the corporate culture.

Motivation

All of the equity practitioners believed that working on employment equity contributed to their own personal development in that they gained a broader understanding of the issues facing the designated groups in the engineering workplace. The majority of practitioners thought that what they had learned by working on employment equity had the potential to impact, in a positive way, all their work as human resources professionals. The overwhelming motivator for all of the practitioners in this study was that they had all experienced some change in the workplace as a result of their efforts. Few of their efforts on employment equity resulted in large scale change, yet even the smallest improvement was enough to encourage the practitioners. Being women in a male-dominated work environment, they appreciated how long it would take for significant change to occur, but as long as there appeared to be some forward movement, they were motivated to continue to work on employment equity, in spite of the disparagements of senior management.

The following are some examples of the kinds of changes, both large and small, which the practitioners in this study achieved. The majority of engineering companies in this study have included articles on employment equity in their newsletters. Written materials, such as newsletters and advertisements, were

being analysed within these companies for their use of inclusive language. Three companies were involved in outreach recruitment in an attempt to attract designated group members. The majority of the companies offered progressive benefits and programs such as employee assistance programs, maternity/parental leave allowances, sexual harassment policies and awareness training, language training for employees whose first language was not English and tuition refund programs (BDI offered benefits to same sex couples). However, it was not just the establishment of programs which motivated the practitioners in this study. Most of the equity practitioners were also motivated by being instrumental in the change of just one individual, such as having a manager change the way he hired people as a result of a discussion on non-discriminatory hiring practices.

These successes, large or small, happened in spite of resistance in the senior levels of the organization. An example of this is demonstrated in the establishment of a sexual harassment policy in BDI and NewCo. A sexual harassment policy was one of the first employment equity initiatives Wilma and the network wanted to establish at BDI and NewCo. Because one of BDI's lawyers resisted putting anything in writing in regard to sexual harassment, senior management was reluctant to authorize the development of a policy. The equity network's response to the legal department's concerns was that harassment had to be addressed through formal policy if other employment equity policies were to have any affect on the work environment. During this

time, late 1991, there was significant media attention to sexual harassment. As a result, senior management decided that there had better be a clear policy in place to deal with it. As a result of senior management's support, a comprehensive sexual harassment policy was established and effectively distributed throughout BDI and NewCo. Both managers and employees were provided with training on how to recognize sexual harassment and managers were also trained on how to receive sexual harassment complaints. Training for managers was mandatory. Comprehensive training was also provided to those individuals who were responsible for investigating formal complaints of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment policy was established, but the network was not successful in its next initiative, obtaining support for a personal or racial harassment policy.

Conclusion

There was a consensus amongst the equity practitioners that, without the FCP, their companies would never have implemented employment equity. However, all the practitioners recognized the limitations of the FCP and most agreed that legislating employment equity would not necessarily make it a reality. The practitioners believed that the most significant obstacle was the view of the majority of executives and senior managers that employment equity was not a business issue, but rather a requirement from a customer (the government), to be met with as few resources as possible. Although the majority

of the companies implemented some employment equity initiatives, the lack of executive commitment and the resulting structural obstacles within these organizations ensured that the success of equity initiatives would be minimal.

In spite of the challenges and frustrations, all the employment equity practitioners in this study believed that there was a need for employment equity and that, although slow, some improvement was occurring for designated group members. All the practitioners stated that before employment equity could become a reality fundamental changes would have to occur to the corporate culture of engineering companies. It would also require the active participation of people throughout the organization, and not just themselves. Practitioners recognized that this would involve a slow change. Although the majority acknowledged that quotas would create more rapid change, all agreed that this would not be a strategy likely to have positive results in the engineering industry.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Engineering was developed as a masculine profession, and the resulting male-centered social environment within engineering companies continues to view women as not technological and, therefore, not belonging in the profession. Upon entering the workplace as engineers, women often experience sexism.

The Federal Contractors Program (FCP) does not directly address the manifestations of sexism within the engineering workplace nor does it have any authority to penalize companies who continue such discriminatory practices. Further, because of weak design, lack of enforcement and limited coverage, the FCP has been ineffective in making employment equity for women in engineering companies a reality. This is unfortunate, as the only reason all the companies in this study implemented employment equity was to meet federal government requirements. The strong business lobby's influence on the federal government resulted in a watered down, ineffective program which was excluded from the Employment Equity Act and, therefore, not legislated. Consequently, while the FCP increased administrative work, it created little substantial improvement to the designated groups' representation or treatment within the workplace.

The executives of the engineering companies in this study were aware both of the limitations of the FCP, and that there would be no penalty for their failure to comply with its guidelines. This was the purpose of business lobbying prior to the passage of Bills C-62 and C-64; to ensure that the requirements of

the FCP could be met without altering the fundamental nature of how business was conducted. Therefore, the people assigned responsibility for employment equity were not expected to achieve any greater success than meeting the administrative requirements of the program. In this way both the companies and the federal government gave the appearance of addressing the unequal treatment of certain groups in the workplace, such as women, without changing the reality of working life within engineering.

This thesis has also demonstrated that the interrelationship of the many facets of the profession of engineering, such as the differing socialization of girls and boys, the chilly environment for women in engineering faculties and the ability of companies to successfully lobby government for weak equity programs, has perpetuated an ethos in the industry which continues to discourage women from entering. Engineering is still very much a male-dominated profession and many men in that profession prefer to keep in that way. As Cynthia Cockburn stated in her study entitled, In the Way of Women, "In the short run, men do not gain by a situation in which quantities of women as individuals and as a sex compete with them for money and status....however, men have always understood that when women take power as a sex, it threatens a more qualitative, revolutionary change."[1]

The practitioners in this study believe that legislation alone will not make employment equity a reality within engineering companies. Employment equity

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[1] Cynthia Cockburn, In the Way of Women - Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations, (Ithaca, New York: ILR Press, 1991) 220.

legislation could be more effective if it was made more substantial, enforceable, if it covered all employers and addressed the critical importance of areas leading up to employment, education and socialization. In light of recent attacks on employment equity and affirmative action programs in Ontario and the US, it is not likely that this will happen in the near future. However, this study has demonstrated that, even though ill-prepared, and working with limited resources, employment equity practitioners and others are committed to opening up the challenging and rewarding field of engineering to girls and women. The work of social activists, combined with a strong demand for engineers, will continue to lead to increasing numbers of women engineers, not the executives and managers of engineering companies or the current federal employment equity program.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Context Questions:

Sex:

Race:

Class:

Age:

Education:

Position Title:

Position you report directly to:

How would you define yourself?

Would "feminist" be one of the terms you would use in your definition?

Type of business:

Locations:

How many employees?

Are there unionized employees?   If yes, how many?

What types of jobs are unionized?

What is the organizational structure of this company?

How many top level (senior) executives with this company?

How many of these executives are members of designated groups as currently defined by the Federal Government's Employment Equity Act?

Which position is ultimately responsible for employment equity?

To what extent is this person actually involved in Employment Equity?

Questions in Regard to the Implementation of Employment Equity in the Workplace:

Why was employment equity initiated in your workplace?

How long has it been an initiative?

How did you become responsible for implementing employment equity?

How long have you been implementing employment equity?

Do you have other responsibilities?

What percentage of your time is spent on employment equity?

Do you have a budget for employment equity initiatives?

What training and/or experience have you had in the area of employment equity, prior to your assuming this responsibility? While you were in this role?

Is there one department, viewed by the management and employees of your company, as "owning" employment equity? (Please explain)

If yes, does the job function of employment equity coordination hold the same level of prestige as other job functions in this same department?

Will working in employment equity be seen as career-advancing experience by the management of your company?

As an Employment Equity Practitioner, how do you define "employment equity"?

Do you think that your being a designated group member has any impact, positive or negative, on your ability to implement employment equity?

Do you believe employment equity, as you have defined it, is achievable?

      a) If yes, in what time frame?

<div align="center">or,</div>

      b) If no, why not?

How will you know whether or not you have achieved employment equity?

How do you measure your success in this role?

How does your manager measure your success in this role?

Do you believe employment equity is achievable in the company which employs you?

      a) If yes, please provide specific examples which support this.

<div align="center">or,</div>

      b) If no, in your opinion, why is employment equity not working.

What is your goal in working in employment equity?

What do you think the goal of your employer is in regard to employment equity?

In your opinion, is employment equity truly supported by your company's executive? It's management? It's employees?

      a) If yes, can you provide some specific examples which has contributed to this opinion?

<div align="center">or,</div>

      b) If no, can you provide some specific examples which has contributed to this opinion?

What involvement in employment equity does your company's executive, management, employees, designated group members have?

Has your company's population completed the self-identification survey?

What was the response rate?

What problems and/or roadblocks have you experienced while working on employment equity?

Please explain the nature of these problems and/or roadblocks.

What, from your experience, is beneficial about this program?

How, in your opinion, can this program be improved?

What do you most enjoy about working with employment equity?

What do you least enjoy about working with employment equity?

Do you think employment equity is achievable?

If yes, in your opinion, what will make employment equity happen?

Should current legislation be changed?

If yes, how should it be changed?

Should there be quotas or some other method of encouraging equity in employment?

If there is a union:

Describe the makeup of the union's population.

Does the union support employment equity?

If yes, in what way?

If no, what are the union's concern?

Is the union open to examining such issues as seniority and how this relates to employment equity?

Was the union invited to participate in employment equity?

If yes, how was this done?

If no, why not?

What has the union's role been in employment equity within your company?

What, in your opinion is the union's future role in employment equity with this company?

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