In the Right Place at the Right Time: Rules of Control and Woman's Place in Ontario Schools, 1940–1980

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In a recent life-history interview study of two generations of male and female principals in Toronto elementary and secondary schools from 1940–1980, respondents repeatedly said that they had moved into their administrative role because they were in the right place at the right time. I use Clegg's (1981) configuration of organizational rules of control to question why so few women became principals in the Toronto Board during that period. The analysis illustrates how, despite pressures for change, the overall "place" afforded to most men and women in this educational organization remained unchanged. I consider how we might work within present-day organizations to alter systemic forms of control and to interrupt such persistent hegemonic patterns — which limit both men and women — in school culture.

Dans l'étude récente menée à l'aide d'entrevues sur les récits de vie de deux générations de directeurs et de directrices d'école au primaire et au secondaire à Toronto de 1940 à 1980, les répondants ont affirmé à maintes reprises qu'ils se sont vu confier leur rôle administratif parce qu'ils avaient été au bon moment au bon endroit. L'auteure utilise la configuration qu'a donnée Clegg (1981) des règles de contrôle organisationnelles pour analyser pourquoi un nombre aussi restreint de femmes sont devenues directrices d'école à la Commission scolaire de Toronto au cours de cette période. L'étude illustre comment, en dépit des pressions en faveur d'un changement, la "place" globale accordée à la plupart des hommes et des femmes dans cette structure organisationnelle est demeurée la même. L'auteure suggère des moyens à mettre en oeuvre au sein des structures actuelles pour modifier des formes systémiques de contrôle et mettre fin à des modèles d'hégémonie aussi persistants — qui limitent autant les hommes que les femmes — dans la culture de l'école.

Movement up hierarchies in organizations is often described in terms of an individual's efforts and circumstances. As Carlson (1979) explains:

Hard work, perseverance, skill, talent, creativity and similar attributes are evoked and attached to those who have successful careers. . . . No matter what influence such attributes have on the tracing out of a career, the evoking of them is comforting and confirms a belief in justice. Luck is also evoked and attached to those who have successful careers. They are seen as being in the right place at the right time. (p. 29)

In a recent life-history interview study of two generations of male and female principals in Toronto elementary and secondary schools from 1940 to 1980,[1] respondents repeatedly claimed that indeed they had moved into their administrative role because they were in the right place at the right time. In this article I use data from that study to examine "the complex ways in which skills and images have been historically constructed and redefined in specific administrative and educational contexts in gendered ways" (Blackmore, 1993, p. 44). Under study is the persistent pattern of women's limited participation in the principal's role in both elementary and secondary schools in the Toronto Board of Education over some 40 years.[2] That there were relatively few women in that role is rather easily substantiated. To explain why and how this occurred, however, is the more difficult task undertaken here.

A modified version of Clegg's (1981) configuration of organizational rules of control was used to clarify "how ideology works through the development of a hegemonic meaning system" (Grundy, 1993, p. 170). Here, hegemony refers to "an organized assemblage of meanings and practices, the central, effective and dominant system of meanings, values and actions that are lived" (Apple, 1979, p. 5). What the analysis makes clear is the "ideological power of such notions as merit and neutrality" (Blackmore, 1993, p. 45) and how that power works to sustain systemic forms of control supporting "unequal integration" (Connell, 1987, p. 97) of men and women workers in such organizations as schools.

Hunt (1991) defines organizational culture as: "the collective mental programs of the people in the organization" (p. 217). He goes on to explain the importance of such organizational culture:

Shared values and assumptions form the basis for consensus and integration, which encourages motivation and commitment of meaningful membership. The same shared values that define organizational purpose also provide meaning and direction. From these come organizations with high levels of built-in coordination and the capability to adapt by projecting existing values and assumptions on ambiguous situations. (p. 219)

This perspective argues against a simplistic mirror concept whereby school organizational cultures are seen only as reflections of the larger societal culture. While organizational cultures are influenced by the larger culture, they are created and managed in part by hiring and promoting "right type" people (Hunt, 1991, p. 233). Twenty-four "right type" people in the Toronto Board, appointed to principalships in either elementary or secondary schools between 1940 and 1980, described their experiences. Analysis of their comments reveals "a structured set of rules" bounding their behaviour.

This study used the method of ethnohistory (Quantz, 1981), an interdisciplinary approach to the study of culture that systematically integrates anthropological techniques and procedures with historiographic methods, to seek a concrete image of the subjective worlds of the members of a particular group or

groups — in this case, two generations of men and women school principals in the Toronto Board. Ethnohistory strives to uncover the meaning making practices of historical participants, the conceptions of "truth" upon which they acted. The importance of employing this "culturalist perspective" (Blackmore, 1993, p. 28) is that it not only helps identify ways in which, in the past, many women were excluded from roles such as the principalship, it helps us recognize how, in the future, we can transform and replace particular elements of that culture in order to advance gender equity.

MEN AND WOMEN PRINCIPALS

The particular period chosen for study is of interest largely because it encompasses a period of tremendous growth in this school system, as in others throughout Canada, in the percentage of teachers designated as administrators. A pattern of relatively low percentages of women in such administrative roles also persists.

In the Toronto Board Yearbooks in 1940, only 21% of secondary school staff were listed as administrative. By 1980, this figure had more than doubled and 47.6% of the staff were designated in such roles. Those same yearbooks show that in 1940 there were 88 elementary school principals. By 1980, that number had risen to 105. There were only 18 secondary school principals in the Toronto Board in 1940. By 1980, that number had almost doubled at 31.[3]

Although administrative roles were increasing within the board, the percentages of women in those roles were relatively stable and surprisingly low. In 1940, 96% of the elementary school principals were men and only 4 out of 88 or 4% were women. By 1980, 86% were men and 15 out of 105 or 14.3% were women. In the secondary schools the patterns by gender were even more persistent. In 1940, only 2 out of 18 principals in Toronto secondary schools were women or 11% compared to 89% who were men. By 1980, 4 out of 31 were women or 13% compared to 87% who were men.[4]

The persistently low participation of women in school administration over these years is curious because in many respects the period 1940 to 1980 also encompassed growing demands by social reformers for women's rights to equal treatment in society and as workers in school organizations. Indeed, in 1946 the Toronto Board officially rescinded a policy adopted in 1925 to ban all married women teachers.[5] During this period various teacher federations and other groups and individuals began to advocate equal benefits for men and women teachers.[6]

How is it then that so few women took on the principal's role in the Toronto Board over these years? Why were so few women as compared to men able to be in the right place at the right time? Considering only individual efforts, we might conclude that either most women in the Toronto Board over these years were not very hard working, skillful, or talented, or we might think them very unlucky indeed. Larwood and Kaplan (1980), however, remind us that:

The individuals who might manage best do not necessarily rise to the top of organizational hierarchy, where they could practice their skills. Actual career success depends on some combination of political tactics and social role presentation. . . . (p. 78)

Considering this possibility, we might conclude that over this 40-year period from 1940 to 1980, most women in the Toronto Board had trouble putting together the correct political tactics and social role presentation to significantly increase their participation rates in the principal's role. The explanation I offer is that a hegemonic meaning system, largely invisible to those who participated in its construction and maintenance, was part of the overall organizational culture within the board. Moreover, that culture was manifested in a structured set of rules operating in the organization in a web-like fashion. Changes over the period in one set of rules was compensated for in another set so that the entire web remained largely intact with only minor modifications. Thus, although some women became principals and other types of school administrators, the web rested on a strong belief that educational administration was most appropriately done by men.

THE TWO GENERATIONS OF PRINCIPALS

The principals interviewed for this study fall roughly into two generations or cohorts — those who began teaching in the 1930s or 1940s and those who started their teaching careers in the 1950s or 1960s.

In the first cohort the average age for men at the time of the interview was 73 and for women it was 71. They all indicated that their ethnic heritage was British and whereas some of the men were from rural backgrounds, all of the women had grown up in Toronto. Each of the men in this cohort had married and only one man did not have any children. None of the women had married nor did they have any children. Four members of this cohort (three men and one woman) had worked in both elementary and in secondary schools during their careers and one woman and one man from this group had eventually become a superintendent with the Toronto Board. All members of this cohort were retired at the time of the interview.

In the second cohort the average age for men was 57 and for women it was 55. Members of this group reported a wide range of ethnic backgrounds including immigration from Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia, as well as Britain. Each member of this cohort described their upbringing as urban, although they came from a variety of cities and small towns throughout Ontario. Each of the men had married and had children. The women, however, varied considerably in this regard. Two were married and did not have children. Two were married and had children. One was widowed without children and another was divorced and had no children. The members of this cohort had worked either in elementary or in secondary schools exclusively (there were a mixture of men and

women from each panel). Two women and two men in this group had become superintendents. Two of the men were retired and the remainder of the group were still employed at the Toronto Board at the time of the interview.

CLEGG'S ORGANIZATIONAL RULES OF CONTROL

Clegg (1981) has identified a configuration of what he calls "organizational rules of control" (extra-organizational, technical, social-regulative, strategic, and state rules) that work as social mechanisms.[7] Clegg's focus on class, however, results in his assigning gender to only one area—extra-organizational rules. As Mills (1989) suggests, gender is best seen as affecting each type of Clegg's organizational rules of control.

   Clegg's configuration was applied to the data from the study of the two generations of principals in Toronto schools to try to understand how gender played a part in each rule category. The resulting analysis reveals that extra-organizational rules served as underpinnings of other rules of control—technical rules, social-regulative rules, strategic rules and state rules. The analysis also illustrates how these rules worked within the organization to support the unequal integration of men and women into the organizational culture pertaining to administration despite the appearance of gender neutrality within each set of rules.

EXTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

Organizations are constructed, and reconstructed on a daily basis by the various individuals who constitute them. These individuals belong not only to the organization in question (in this case schools) but also to other forms of organization (e.g, the family or the church). Rules of control within each organization must somehow be compatible with various extra-organizational influences or there needs to be an explanatory framework for incompatibility. Thus, rules of control found outside the organization may be replicated within it and indeed are often used to justify internally created rules.

   In considering gender and schools, the relevant extra-organizational rules are those resting on "understandings about the respective worth and function of males and females" (Mills, 1989, p. 33). These include ideas about womanhood and manhood, ideas that are linked to social rules about public and domestic spheres of life.

   From 1940 to 1980 ideas about middle-class and upper-class women's participation in the paid labour force in Canada were shifting. As Madeline,[8] from the first cohort in the interview study, remembered it, in the 1940s:

A lot of girls did not go to university. My cousin was 10 years older than I am and when she finished high school she just stayed at home. She didn't work and a lot of girls did this. Everyone got married or stayed at home with Mother.

Geraldine, also from the first cohort, commented:

Women had a difficult time in medicine in those days. You had almost to be the daughter of a doctor before you could hope to get anywhere in medicine. Teaching, however, was something that women could be fairly sure of finding a job in.

What these comments reveal is that for women in the first cohort working outside the household was still not entirely expected of young women. If they were to work in such a way, one choice open to them which did not seriously challenge old rules about their worth and function as women was that of the teacher. For women like Geraldine, however, teaching was attractive because it was one of the few areas in which she would be able to obtain paid work and, in that role, she felt she would gain general social acceptance.

Susan, from the second cohort, recalled that by the 1960s:

It was important to earn your own money and manage it without interference. Really, it was money and wanting to be independent instead of focusing on what my parents could provide in the way of income that was behind my choice to teach.

As Susan reveals, the situation had changed somewhat over the next 20 years. She and many other women sought economic independence. Like Geraldine, however, they still looked at teaching as one of their few acceptable choices. Maureen explains her decision to teach in the 1960s:

I guess because of my dissatisfaction in the chemistry line, I went into the traditional female role. I was looking at a position which was going to have some future for me, and that I would enjoy. I took the female route to be a teacher. It was logical, and it was acceptance, in those days. I would question it today, but 30 years ago, no.

For Maureen as for Geraldine some 20 years earlier, teaching was an alternative to less welcoming roles for women in the paid labour force in that period. It was a choice conforming to most people's views of what was womanly. It could provide a comparatively good future for women if they wanted to remain in the public sphere of the paid labour force.

For men in the two cohorts, however, others' reactions to their choice to teach was often problematic. Arthur remembered an old lumberman in the 1940s saying to him: "Any boy with red blood in his veins should be up North lumbering or mining or something. What are you doing teaching?" Jerry, of the second cohort, recalled:

I had feelings of not being exactly proud as compared to the guys on Bay Street, the movers and shakers in the real world. I didn't rush to say, "Hey, I'm a teacher." In fact, I've avoided that all my life.

Lester, also of the second cohort, explained:

I was tired of business. I wasn't that interested. Since jobs were available, I decided to go into teaching. I suspect that I could have made more money in some other kind of work, but those jobs didn't have the security or the kinds of benefits that teaching had.

For men, becoming teachers during this period actually contravened many of the extra-organizational rules they and others understood about manhood. The benefits of teaching and the security it offered, however, still made it attractive.

For women in both generations in this study, choosing to become a teacher was seen by them as compatible with their expected role as women in the larger society. For men in both generations, however, the choice to teach was largely incompatible with general societal expectations regarding their role as men. This difference in extra-organizational rules about womanhood and manhood may partially explain an internal pattern that developed within school organizations whereby most men remained in the classroom only for a brief period before they sought promotion to an administrative role. Thus, the situation in schools whereby women taught and men managed can be interpreted not only as replication of a pattern observed in other areas of the paid work force, but also as an internally generated organizational pattern that developed in response to extra-organizational rules about the most appropriate "places" for men and women within the organization. Such places were allotted according to generally shared understandings about the respective worth and function of males and females in the larger society and within the organization.

Not everyone, however, shared such understandings. Some women and men throughout this time period worked for social reforms that would expand traditional gender roles. These reformers demanded explanatory frameworks for the incompatibility they saw between new realities and new ideals about manhood and womanhood and the realities and ideals they saw operating within schools. Two explanations offered to such reformers over these years with regard to the low representation of women in educational administration were that women did not have the technical skills required for expanded roles and that women were not sufficiently committed to "careers" to warrant promotion up the teacher hierarchy. Such explanatory frameworks relied heavily on two within-organization rules of control in Clegg's (1981) configuration-technical rules and social regulative rules.

TECHNICAL RULES

Those who are newcomers to an organization quickly find out that there are usual "ways we do things around here." Clegg (1981) refers to these as technical rules of control within an organization. Those who wish entry to the organization or to specific roles within that organization often require training, formal or

informal, in the skills deemed necessary for those roles. Matthew's comments reveal his insights in this regard:

Matthew:	I knew the system and I knew the people. As we would say in the army, I knew the whole drill. I had the feeling that I was slated for further promotion. When I went to that school, I realized that it had been the training ground for inspectors, so I was at that school for four years when I became an inspector.
Interviewer:	What were you doing right? Why were you getting so many promotions?
Matthew:	Because I wasn't doing anything [laughter]. I wasn't causing any trouble.

Clearly, Matthew felt that knowing the technical rules was in itself a valuable and important skill, as was knowing when to be quiet and not rock the boat.

Participants in the study, both male and female, agreed that to become a principal, one needed to obtain certain officially recognized "skills." Such skills were attained through attendance at the provincially required formal principal's course. Respondents also revealed that other skills such as not causing trouble or good self-presentation were also part of the technical rules governing who would move into the administration. As Brenda, a member of the second cohort, recalled:

A lot of people on that staff, mostly males, I'd say five of them and myself, were all busy trying to become vice-principals. A number of them were so obvious in what they were doing. I just kept on teaching but they were busy figuring out, "Now what could I do?" I'll always remember one fellow who kept asking for coloured paper so that he could decorate his room.

Gender also affected the types of skills women and men were encouraged to develop as teachers. Women were more frequently found in such areas as primary classes or in such subject areas as Home Economics which were congruent with ideas about women's domestic skills. Brenda reported: "I took charge of the primary division. I never got out of grade one, two or three at that school." Agnes, a member of the first cohort, remembered: "In Home Economics you're talking to them about birth, sickness, and everyday living. We laughed and cried together."

Men in both cohorts were more likely than women to work as coaches or in other areas where their skills in the public sphere could be honed and showcased outside the classroom. In Arthur's words:

We put on dances and raised money. We took the play around to many places and we played hockey. Well, with the play and things like that, you can't go wrong. The dividends are tremendous in personal satisfaction and in the reaction of other people.

Thus, the technical rules, the way things were usually done, separated the activities of men and women teachers and offered them different opportunities

to develop and to display their various skills. Such differences meant that in terms of presenting themselves to superiors as candidates for promotion, men were often in a better position to claim that they had the requisite skills for the principalship since, by and large, those skills were the ones men rather than women were encouraged to develop during their teaching years.

Over this period, however, women began, by necessity or by choice, to take on expanded roles as teachers. Harry remembered in the 1950s:

You had 4 men and about 20 women, but the men were always on duty in the basement. When I was principal, some of the female staff said: "Sure, I'll take the boys' basement, what the hell."

Harry's comments reveal how up to this point most women teachers were not seen as being able to handle the more "dangerous" situations within the school. That view actual kept women from developing skills needed in that regard.

Robert reported that a major shift happened when the Toronto Board changed its policy in the 1950s and gave equal pay to men and women teachers. He explained:

Sports were virtually all boys' sports and I did yard duty every day. The men didn't mind because they got paid more but as soon as the Toronto Board gave equal pay, men withdrew other services. For the first time the principal was forced to put women in the boys' yards.

Here again, women teachers, through this change in work allocation, were able to begin to hone their skills in areas that had previously been denied to them within the organization. As more women took on expanded roles, they could present themselves differently. They could compete more directly with their male colleagues based on a wider array of recognized skills.

The claim that only men had the technical skills needed to become principals was harder to make. Under political pressure from both women and men, access to the principal's course widened as individuals could choose to upgrade their credentials without the sponsorship of their immediate superiors. This meant that a larger pool of women and men could claim the skills deemed necessary for becoming a principal.

Participants in this study also reported a change in the promotion practices used by the Toronto Board over this period. Madeline, a member of the first cohort, recalled that from the 1940s to the 1960s "there wasn't much applying in those days. You were just picked." Martha, also of that cohort, agreed:

The principal retired and in those days I just moved up from the vice-principal's role. I was appointed by the Board but it was almost a foregone conclusion. As I remember, your name came up in front of the principals, and they would discuss you, those who had

known you, and the administrators at the Board would sit there and listen and they would make the decision.

Those in the first cohort agreed that the usual practice was that a principal would be appointed and then approved to attend the principal's course. Both of these technical rules changed over the 1970s and 1980s and the common practice became that people would obtain credentials at the principal's course first and then they would put themselves forward for promotion. Putting yourself forward, however, often involved obtaining the support of your immediate supervisors in the hierarchy. Susan, of the second cohort, explained:

I simply identified myself. I spoke to my principal and my inspector, both men. I simply identified myself and they supported me and said: "Yeah, you'd be great at it. Go for it."

Comments such as this suggest that female participation in the principalship over these years continued to be controlled by their superiors, even though that control was somewhat lessened as promotion practices changed and as more women could claim the skills deemed necessary for the role. It was members of the upper levels of the teacher hierarchy, most of whom were men, who had control over the promotion process and over the value placed on certain skills.

Clearly, however, skill acquisition possibilities varied for men and for women, as did the value placed upon the skills held by males and females within the organization. Some changes in this regard occurred over the study period but these were insufficient to substantially shift the old pattern and by 1980 it was still mainly men who managed while women taught in the Toronto Board. To investigate another reason why that pattern persisted, we need to consider what Clegg calls social-regulative rules of control within the organization.

SOCIAL-REGULATIVE RULES

Although skill can be seen as a person's ability to perform needed tasks, social regulation refers to how that person is seen by decision makers as "a full organizational member, as someone who 'fits in,' as a 'committed' person" (Mills, 1989, p. 38). The comments of women in both cohorts in this study reveal that although they felt acceptance as full members of school organizational culture when they were classroom teachers, they did not feel that acceptance as they tried to become principals. Madeline, from the first cohort, recalled that in the 1950s:

There were only three women on that principal's course and that was the first year I began to understand how Blacks feel because there were a lot of people who were nice to me, but there were men who you would catch looking at you. What are you doing here? It was really very strong. I was trespassing in an area where I had no right to be trespassing.

Martha, also of the first cohort, remembered:

One principal said to me: "I just never thought of having a woman as principal. Men have a family to support and so forth and women shouldn't be getting the salary." It wasn't a nasty non-acceptance. I mean, they tried to be nice to me, but I remember that I went to a conference and sat down in the middle row, and nobody sat beside me.

Even in the 1970s, Linda reported:

I found out that the superintendent had not even been prepared to consider my application because I had four children and he thought I couldn't spare the time to do the job.

These comments reveal the operation, during the entire period, of social-regulative rules postulating that women would not easily "fit in" to the principal-ship because they were visibly different from those who had traditionally held that role. Most women could not claim the visible "breadwinner" status that allowed married men to be seen as necessarily ambitious and so women's motiv-ations for desiring to become principals were questioned differently than those of their male peers. Also, if they had children, women's commitment to their family was placed in many people's view as being in conflict with their commit-ment to their role as a principal even though little or no conflict was seen for their male colleagues.

Women with children needed to fit in by downplaying or denying their domes-tic responsibilities. Whereas most men in this study had children, relatively few of the women did. Linda, one of those in the second cohort with children, remarks on the tensions this created for her:

You really didn't have much time to socialize. You still had to try to meet your children's needs. I took a year off to be with the youngest child because I felt guilty that I hadn't spent much time with him when he was a baby.

Women in both cohorts agreed that a strict separation of the personal and public aspects of their lives was needed for them to gain entry to the principalship. Men in both cohorts agreed that although they had sometimes faced conflicting demands as administrators and as husbands and fathers, this did not happen too frequently. Most of their wives had been able to take care of the domestic responsibilities, freeing them to pursue their career.

Tensions were also reported by the women in both cohorts of this study as they tried to fit in as one of only a few women principals in the Toronto Board. Maureen, a member of the second cohort recalls that in the 1970s:

When you went to meetings at the principal level, there were very few of us and there were times when I purposely said that I didn't want to be identified with the other

women. I've come to see that I really wasn't getting support from the men, and I don't feel awkward now about sitting down beside a group of women. Until someone pointed it out to me, I wasn't aware of how I was coping and giving in to things, accepting those sexist jokes. I used to laugh because I wanted to be one of the boys. I don't laugh any more.

The comments of men and women in these two cohorts reveal that women who became principals over these years faced many difficulties not encountered by men. Social-regulative rules within the organizational culture together with extra-organizational rules about men and women's appropriate place in society combined to create such difficulties. Although both sets of rules changed somewhat over the time period and each of the women studied overcame difficulties, it may be that their experiences were sufficiently visible to other women in the organization to dissuade many of them from pursuing acceptance in the principal's role. Also, such limited numbers of women were insufficient to alter significantly the existing social regulative rules operating to perpetuate traditional patterns. Thus, only a few women managed to change their location within a traditional teacher hierarchy that remained strongly gendered.

These two types of organizational rules of control — technical rules and social-regulative rules — were underscored and supported by extra-organizational social rules about public and domestic spheres and numerous other aspects of womanhood and manhood. They are used here to help explain both why and how so few women came to work as school principals in this Board between 1940 and 1980. They illustrate particular mechanisms for managing the overall organizational culture. Another type of such within-organization rules fall under what Clegg calls strategic rules of control.

STRATEGIC RULES

Organizations often develop strategic rules to foster such things as an adequate supply of labour. Temporary strategic rules may develop within the organization when the overall good of the organization seems to demand them. Such strategic rules often become linked with notions of who are the "right" people for particular roles at a given point in time. Clearly, in the Toronto Board in the 1940s, such strategic rules were gender based and posited that, as Geraldine of the first cohort stated: "The principal was always he. Principals were people who ruled the roost."

Strategic rules for male teachers in the 1940s and 1950s related to age and teaching experience. Men in the first generation in this study talked about the "magic 40" rule, wherein the most desirable principal was a man in his forties. They also spoke about the "five-year rule," which dictated that men who had been vice-principals for more than five years had little hope of moving beyond that rank. There was also a rule that novice principals were appointed to small

schools and only when they had proven themselves did they get appointed to larger schools.

Each of these strategic rules for men, however, changed in the 1960s and 1970s as the number of schools in the Toronto Board rose and more principals were required. Ideas about who was right for the role changed and many men in the second cohort reported that they found themselves in a principalship long before they were 40 and with only a few years of classroom experience.

Different strategic rules were reported by women in this study. Women in the first cohort indicated that they were appointed strategically in schools where their superiors felt that their special skills were needed. Women in the second cohort also reported such strategic appointments. None of those in either cohort liked to think that they were appointed simply because they were women. Many women in the second cohort, however, did admit that by the 1970s and 1980s a new strategic rule was in operation. That rule posited that, given equal credentials and experiences, women and members of other historically disadvantaged groups should be chosen for principalships over traditionally advantaged groups such as white males. This rule developed in response to political pressures both within the Toronto Board and in the wider Canadian society for employment equity. Related to such pushes within the society, were new state rules of control and government policy statements regarding gender equity.

STATE RULES

Between 1940 and 1980 relatively few state rules can be said to have directly affected the placement of men and women within the teacher hierarchy. Only toward the end of that period do we see government initiatives to foster a more equal participation by women and men in administrative roles in schools. In 1973, the Ontario Government published a Green Paper, "Equal Opportunity for Women in Ontario: A Plan for Action," spelling out concerns about women's place in school systems and other sectors. In 1974, the Ontario Government introduced a program for Affirmative Action for Women in the Ontario Public Service and the following year it appointed a Women's Advisor. In 1979 the provincial government developed the Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Unit, spanning both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.[9] What is important to note, however, is the limited effect such changes appear to have had on the numerical participation of women in the principalship up to 1980.

One possible explanation is that, since these initiatives were rather late in the time period, not enough time had passed for changes to be observed. Another explanation, however, and the one put forth in this paper, is that despite such state rules, other rules of control within the school organization merely adapted to such political pressures and ensured that very little overall change in women's place in the teacher hierarchy would occur. This does not mean that the state

rules were unimportant in terms of challenging the existing organizational practices, but it does suggest that they were insufficient.

In her article on sex-equity legislation in education, Stromquist (1993) highlights some of the difficulties in assessing the effects of such policies. She points out that "the linking of legislative intentions to concrete indicators of women's educational conditions presupposes an intermediary process" involving a "complex set of relations and interactions" (p. 393). The argument here is that Clegg's configuration of rules of control helps us describe that process and identify its complex elements; there may be changes over time in certain elements of that process but these can be balanced by changes in other elements in such a way that the overall situation, in this case, the most "appropriate" roles for men and women in the organization, remain relatively unchanged.

There were pressures from the state between 1940 and 1980 questioning traditional understandings of "the respective worth and functioning of males and females" (Mills 1989, p. 33). The most direct pressure came in the 1970s in terms of a Green Paper and the creation of an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Unit for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. In the absence of direct legislation, however, the organization's response was largely to develop strategic rules admitting only a limited number of women to such roles as the principalship without significantly altering the overall "place" afforded to most women or men in the organization.

The men and women in the two cohorts of this study did not talk about state legislation directly. They were aware of changes in society's expectations of men and women in the paid labour force but they chose their most immediate surroundings and their lives as workers within the Toronto Board as the major topics of their interview. Women in both cohorts, unlike men, reported that they were placed strategically in schools where their "special" skills were needed. The recognition of these skills and the need for them in certain schools over this time period remained within traditional gendered understandings of the role of the male or female principal. This practice allowed for a continuation of a division of labour within the organization based on gender. It allowed the entry of a few women into the principalship but only as "special" cases, thus maintaining the belief that this role was most appropriately carried out by a man.

The impact of state pressures for change were deflected through "the complex set of relations and interactions" (Stromquist, 1993, p. 393) constituting the organizational culture. Technical rules and social regulative rules changed only minimally over the time period and it was "the right time" for only a few women to take on the role of principal. These women admittedly found it difficult to claim "equal status" with their male counterparts. Like immigrants to a new land, although they were admitted entry, there were many in the organizational culture who wanted to ensure that their entrance would not be disruptive to the old traditional ways of doing things.

SUMMARY

Why is it that so few women took on the principal's role in elementary and secondary schools in the Toronto Board between 1940 and 1980? Comments of 24 men and women from two generations of principals in Toronto schools over those years have been analyzed using a modified version of Clegg's (1981) configuration of organizational rules of control. That analysis reveals how gender played a part in each of the five rule categories in Clegg's configuration — extra-organizational, technical, social regulative, strategic, and state rules. The analysis also illustrates how, despite some changes over this period in societal expectations regarding men and women's proper place in society, their place in the teacher hierarchy remained relatively static.

The explanation put forth in this paper for such a static location is that even though some people, both within the organization and outside of it, challenged the "collective mental programs of the people in the organization" (Hunt, 1991, p. 219) regarding the appropriate skills and characteristics required of school principals, a hegemonic meaning-system prevailed. That meaning system was supported by a systemic form of control, a web-like set of organizational rules of control which perpetuated unequal integration of men and women into such school administrative roles as that of principal.

This systemic form of control was largely unrecognized by the men and women in the study but it ensured little change in the overall "place" afforded to most men and women in the teacher hierarchy over the time period. A change in one set of rules was compensated for in another set of rules so that the entire web remained largely intact with only minor modifications. Thus, a cultural hegemony, largely invisible, operated through specific social mechanisms. The right "place" for most men continued to be in school administration whereas the right "place" for most women continued to be in the classroom. Some men and women resisted this hegemony but the systemic forms of control ensured that they would encounter many contradictions by doing so.

A number of suggestions for countering this observed hegemony arise from the analysis offered here. Those within school organizations need to see that as long as the "ways we do things around here" (i.e., the technical rules of control) are based on problematic assumptions about gender roles, there will be little opportunity for women or men to move beyond their traditional locations within the organization. Questions about the benefits to individuals and to the organization of a traditionally gendered division of labour need to be addressed. Questions also need to be asked about how gender currently affects a person's ability to "fit in" to certain roles and how they can claim to be a committed member of the organization (i.e., the social regulative rules of control).

Ideally, such questioning and discussion should occur throughout the organization, but it is plausible that even within organizational sub-units such as

school districts or even individual schools, conversations on these issues would offer important opportunities to challenge the traditional hegemonic patterns described in this article. As I have argued, the hegemony persists through interrelated social mechanisms and it is best addressed through attempts to effect change within each of those mechanisms. Although state legislation is an important avenue toward improved gender equity, the active involvement of individuals and groups in sustained efforts to redefine organizational culture is crucial. Leadership, however, is needed to encourage and support the idea that today is the right time and that school organizations are the right place to mount a sustained challenge to systemic forms of control that limit each of us by our gender.

NOTES

[1]   Conducted between 1985 and 1987, this study used a guided interview format to collect experiences of childhood, decisions to become educators, and experiences as teachers and as school principals from 24 subjects (12 men and 12 women) located through the Toronto Board of Education yearbooks as people who had taught in elementary or secondary schools in the Toronto Board and who had become principals between 1940 and 1980. Two cohorts were sought, those who became principals in the 1950s and 1960s, and those who became principals in the 1970s and 1980s. Females in these categories were located and asked to participate, and male contemporaries who matched the female subjects on such characteristics as age and school levels taught were then contacted. Their interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed and were used as the data for Reynolds (1987).

[2]   Although it is acknowledged that there are differences in the "cultures" of elementary and secondary schools, the overall culture within a school board is the focus here. Many of the study's participants worked in both elementary and secondary schools over their career. Also, policies and practices within the board usually operated similarly for those in each panel.

[3]   A more detailed description of statistics for this period for Toronto, Ontario, and Canada is available in Reynolds (1983).

[4]   For more detailed discussion of the growth of the teacher hierarchy in the Toronto Board in this period see Reynolds (1990a).

[5]   See Reynolds (1990b) for further discussion of the marriage ban policy.

[6]   For a more complete discussion see Rees (1990).

[7]   Clegg's original configuration designates a sixth type of rule—reproductive rules. This type is not included here because I believe it merely repeats aspects of the five rules discussed.

[8]   A pseudonym is used for each participant in the study.

[9]   A summary of these events and a further discussion can be found in Rees (1990).

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