

Gender, Bureaucracy and Democracy: Careers and Equal Opportunity in the Public Sector. Mary M. Hale and Rita Mae Kelly (eds.). *Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Contributions in Women's Studies, Number 103, 1989, Pp. 208 hardcover.*

The appearance of this book is timely. Hardly a day goes by without a story in the media (newspapers, magazines, TV) focussing on women in management. In addition, North American organizations are slowly coming to realize that the utilization of women's talents has become a bottom-line concern. To be effective in the 1990s and beyond will require that all human resources be developed and challenged.

This book, dealing with the public sector, is relevant for these reasons. The two editors are professors in Political Science, and most of the other contributors come from departments of Political Science or Public Administration. It contains 174 pages of text plus an appendix. It is divided into three parts. Part I, entitled *Gender, bureaucracies, and public sector careers*, consists of two chapters that lay out the theoretical perspective and conceptual framework on which four quantitative case studies are based. Part II, called *Case studies of the impact of gender on public sector careers*, contains five chapters; the first four are case studies of the impact of gender on public sector careers in four states (Arizona, Texas, Utah and California) and the fifth provides a summary of the four case studies and some recommendations. Part III, a one-chapter addendum, presents the results of a study of women in municipal bureaucracies in 93 cities in the southwest. The book concludes with an appendix containing a questionnaire used in the four case studies, a selected bibliography, an index, and biographies of the editors and contributors.

Chapter 1 (*Gender, democracy and representative bureaucracies*), by Hale and Kelly, presents an historical perspective on women and representative bureaucracies. Prior to the 1970s, patriarchal nuclear families were prevalent. Men who were working in government or public bureaucracies were believed to be able to represent the interests of women and children. Relatively few women were then working outside the home. By the 1980s, both the public and private position of women had changed dramatically. Most women now had jobs outside the home. Marriages were ending at an increasing rate. Male-female relationships became more egalitarian. There was increasing pressure

to open all societal positions to women. These changes were supported by both legislation and affirmative action initiatives. Since men were no longer seen as trustees for women, women had, of necessity, to be represented in both government and the public sector to articulate policies and practices in their interests. After all, in a democracy, public bureaucracies should be representative of their citizens and clients. Yet, in the 1980s, women were still at the lowest levels of the occupational structure.

The purpose of the book is to identify factors that act as barriers and facilitators to career advancement of women at state and local levels of government. This initiative seems particularly important since government can serve as an important role model for society as a whole.

Chapter 2 (*Women in management and public sector careers*), by Hale and Kelly, provides a partial review of barriers encountered by women, but not men, as they pursue their careers. These include both personal/individual barriers and organization environment barriers. The former include gender role socialization, human capital investment, achievement motivation, and adult responsibilities and constraints. The latter include discrimination in employment, employer bias, sex-segregated occupations, and the absence of collegial networks and mentors. The four case studies in Part II were designed to test the role that these variables played in the career advancement of women in the public sector.

Chapter 3 (*Women in the Arizona Executive Branch of Government*), by Hale, Kelly and Jayne Burgess, reports results of a questionnaire survey of male and female middle- and senior-level administrators. Only thirteen percent of the top echelons were women. Comparisons of males and females revealed that men were older, had served in their positions longer, supervised more staff and earned more money. Other comparisons showed that more men were married, while more women were single parents, divorced or never married. More women were from upper or middle social classes, had college-educated parents or parents in professional or technical positions. Males and females had similar levels of education. Their career patterns were very similar. In fact, women spent less time on each of their last four positions than did men — they were on the "fast track." They had only slightly different reasons for seeking their new

positions. For women, power was more important. Both males and females felt equally successful in their careers and equally satisfied with their jobs. Females saw mentors to be more important than did males. Females reported sexual harassment to be a bigger problem than males did. Females reported greater career interference from childbearing, childcare and housework than did men. In general, however, both females and males reported few career interferences to be important. Finally, females were significantly more in favor of particular policies (e.g., childcare, pay equity, job sharing, flexible work hours) than males, and were more strongly supportive of affirmative action policies and representative democracy assumptions.

The next three chapters (Women in the Texas Executive Branch of Government, by Jeanie R. Stanley; Women in the Utah Executive Branch of Government, by Amal Kavar; and Women in the California Executive Branch of Government, by Jane Bayes), for the most part, replicate the findings reported in Chapter 3 on Arizona. The California study, however, adds some new information. First, the number of females in senior jobs was higher. Second, many of the top-level females were in "traditionally female" areas such as mental health, social or health services and rehabilitation. Third, more females reached higher levels in the larger agencies (more jobs, higher turnover) and agencies that were growing. Fourth, about one fifth of the government units studied had thirty percent or more women in their top- and middle-level positions. These numbers are encouraging.

Chapter 7 (Summary and Recommendations), by Hale and Kelly, pulls together common findings across the four case studies. Support is found for the individual/personal factors and organization environment factors they identified in Chapter 2. Although females are as educated as males and come from higher social class backgrounds, fewer have reached the top. Females with career aspirations choose or are required to remain single or childless. Females report more career interference from their adult living situations and responsibilities.

There were surprisingly few organizational factors that served as barriers (e.g., sexual harassment). For the most part, females and males report similar career patterns, with women making more rapid career progress. Still they hit the "glass ceiling."

The authors offer advice to both females and organizations, but there does not seem to be much new here. Females are encouraged to participate in collegial networks, develop a relationship with a dynamic mentor, rotate jobs, move to different jobs across agencies when going, stay with one agency and plan children, get a graduate education and required skills, and perform well on special projects. Organizations are encouraged to discourage sexual harassment, maintain high morale, "look out" for their employees, use affirmative action programs and encourage job rotation.

The final chapter, in an addendum (Women in Municipal Bureaucracies in the Southwest), by Richard A. Eribes, N. Joseph Cayer, Albert A. Kornig and Susan Welch, examines progress of women in public bureaucracies over a five-year period (1973-1978) as well as the profile of new hires in 1978, compared to labour pool availability. Their conclusions are bleak as far as the advancement of women is concerned. The gains made by women were mainly at the lower organizational levels and there were no ladders from the lower levels to the higher ones. Thus, whatever progress made during this time was painstakingly slow. These researchers draw two appropriate but contradictory conclusions: There has been a large improvement in numbers of women but little progress!

This book shows, once again, that women appear to be making slow progress in advancing their careers in public sector bureaucracies. Indeed, there may be a need to keep making this case. The problem must be highlighted. The heat needs to be kept on. Some progress had been made; the numbers of women are up; career patterns of females and males look very similar. However, others have already reported many of these findings, particularly in the private sector.

The contribution of this book would have been strengthened if the authors had drawn on the growing literature on women in management appearing in organizational behaviour, human resource management and women in management journals. Indeed, the authors' contribution would have been stronger if they had challenged head on issues of discrimination, the old-boy networks and the overload women face in juggling both work and family concerns, and used some of the more successful units in California to identify critical factors in the advancement of women.

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