

International Political Science

Women in Public Administration and Management: Upward Mobility and Career Advancement

Research Project of the Research Committee on Sex Roles and Politics, International Political Science Association

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At the IPSA Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in August 1982, the Research Committee on Sex Roles and Politics formed a research team to study the extent to which women administrators are participating in policy-making and to analyze the opportunities and obstacles to this participation. Members of the Research Committee, both women and men, from over 20 countries on all continents joined this research team, including scholars from India, Nigeria, England, Eastern and Western Europe, Brazil and the United States. Initial work began under a grant from the U.N. Branch for the Advancement of Women (Vienna) for which the research team coordinator prepared a report on trends, analysis and training needs of women administrators in the public sector.

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In a working meeting in Groningen, The Netherlands, in April 1984, the group met to compare preliminary research findings, develop themes and formalize methodological decisions. The goals of the research team are (1) to create and apply a model for cross-cultural research, (2) to examine the status of women administrators in a wide variety of countries, (3) to identify commonalities in women's experience cross-culturally, and (4) to discover strategies for enhancing women's opportunities in public sector employment.

In addition to the gathering of aggregate data concerning the extent and level of women's employment in the public sector in each country, researchers are analyzing the conditions in their countries which may impede or enhance women's formal employment. Factors include overall economic conditions, educational facilities, and political and legal support for women's participation in government.

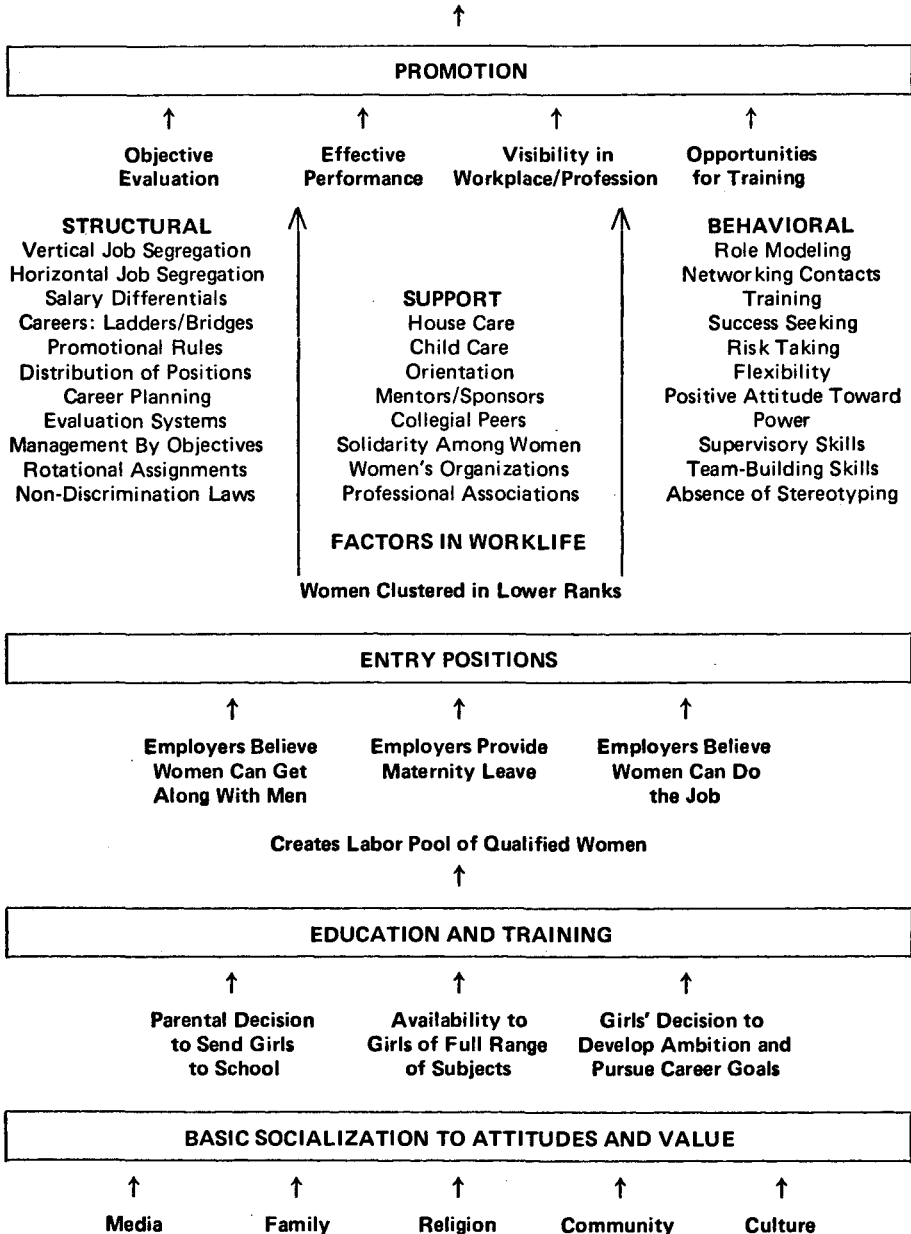


Monika Langkau-Herrmann, left, Federal Republic of Germany; Margherita Rendel, United Kingdom; Monique Leijenaar, Netherlands; and Jeanne-Marie Col, United States. In Groningen, The Netherlands, at a working meeting held during the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, April 1984.

Background interviews are being conducted with senior level civil servants, retirees, personnel training officers, politicians and leaders of women's organizations. The actual sample will include at least 25 women in each country

who hold policy-making positions in the national public sector. Where possible, researchers are also including women politicians and staff in governmental organizations and non-governmental, not-for-profit and for-profit organiza-

**Factors Affecting the Advancement of Women:
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tions. For comparison, some researchers are also interviewing a sample of "matched" men and a sample of potentially upwardly-mobile women from lower levels in the public organizations.

The working group has agreed on common sampling rules and procedures and has identified major concepts involved in upward mobility studies, for example, career history, personal, educational and familial background, personal goals, skills, recognition, institutional mechanisms for training and promotion, management style, inclination to take risks, and organizational evaluation. The respondents are also asked to assess the opportunities for and barriers to women's advancement.

We expect that socio-cultural, economic, political, educational, legal and organizational factors will be related to the level of participation of women in administrative policy-making positions and related to policies and practices which constrain or enhance women's advancement opportunities. Previous work of research team members indicates that there are at least four critical influences on women's advancement: basic socialization, education and training, point of entry into the public service and promotional opportunities, as indicated on the accompanying chart. Even in cultures where women have access to education and where skilled personnel are in limited supply, women find obstacles in their path to the highest positions. Preliminary comparisons indicate that while every country has special conditions, women everywhere seem to experience discriminatory attitudes and practices that result in women being denied equal opportunities to advance their professional development and to serve their countries.

Another working meeting is scheduled during the 1984 APSA meeting in Washington, D.C., at which time the researchers will compare aggregate statistics and the use of the questionnaire. In this session, sponsored by the Women's Caucus for Political Science, participants will present working papers. All APSA members are welcome to attend.

The results of this international research project will be shared at the IPSA Con-

gress in Paris in July 1985, under the panel title, "Emerging Careers of Women in Public Administration," to be chaired by Monique Leijenaar (Holland) and Niroj Sinha (India).

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