ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND PERSONAL PROJECTS: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Susan D. Phillips
Brian R. Little
Laura A. Goodine

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

CENTRE CANADIEN DE GESTION

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A WORD FROM CCMD

One of the most important management challenges facing governments today is the search for creative, flexible work environments that promote job satisfaction and innovation. In an era of fiscal restraint, downsizing and demands for increased productivity, there is a pressing need to develop organizational cultures that provide public servants with opportunities for work that is personally meaningful and produces results that are valued by citizens. There is evidence, however, that some deeply rooted cultural and attitudinal barriers within the Canadian public service create a less hospitable environment for women than for men. This is especially true of women managers who, as minorities in the management category, experience the organizational climate in different ways than do their male counterparts.

This study, which was prepared for the Canadian Centre for Management Development by Susan D. Phillips, Brian R. Little and Laura A. Goodine of Carleton University, examines the experiences of women and men managers in two departments and one central agency of the federal government in the National Capital Region. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which these two groups differ in their job aspirations, their experience of the organizational climate, their approach to personal work projects and the factors that contribute to their job satisfaction.

Through their interviews with twenty women and twenty men managers from each of the two departments and the central agency, the authors discovered that although the job aspirations and levels of work satisfaction among women and men managers are remarkably similar, there are significant gender differences in the way in which the members of each group relate to their work environment. They found, for example, that women managers attach much greater importance than men to the effect of organizational climate on their work projects and experiences. In particular, the women rated the support of co-workers and supervisors, and a sense of fairness within the organizational climate, as having the greatest influence on their work satisfaction, while for the men the most critical factor was the absence of impediments or hindrances in carrying out their projects. They conclude, however, by observing that "both men and women value environments that allow them to do challenging, interesting and creative things that make a difference to society" and that their values and aspirations are highly congruent with current pressures for organizational change.

CCMD is pleased to add this study to its series of publications concerned with the diversity of the contemporary work force and the challenges facing public service managers. We welcome, and warmly invite, comments on this or any other CCMD publication.

Janet R. Smith   *Ralph Heintzman*
Principal   *Vice-Principal, Research*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Several studies of the Canadian public service have indicated that deeply rooted cultural and attitudinal barriers impede the advancement of women and create a less hospitable climate for women than for men. The position and situation of women, particularly in the management category, is one that the public service is addressing and must continue to confront.

The purpose of this study is to examine the sources of job satisfaction for a selected set of 112 managers (56 women and 56 men) from two departments and one central agency in the National Capital Region of the federal public service. The study is based on a "social-ecological" perspective which deals with individuals as they act in the context or "ecology" of their organizations. Specifically, the study explores the relationship of each of three sets of variables — individual characteristics, "personal projects" and organizational climate — with measures of job satisfaction, paying particular attention to gender differences.

The most striking finding of this study is that women and men experience the organizational climate of their departments to different degrees, if not in different ways. Our findings are not the conventional ones — that the organizational climates of the public service departments are chilly or overtly hostile to women — but that the process by which climate is encoded and negotiated by women managers is different from that of their male counterparts. While women managers do not describe their climates in significantly different terms than do men, organizational climate has a greater impact on their everyday projects and a greater influence on their levels of job satisfaction than it does for male managers. One possible explanation for this major gender difference in the influence of organizational climate is that heightened environmental sensitivity is an adaptive strategy in the process of acculturation for women managers, who, as minorities in the management category, are attuned to how to fit into the dominant culture.

The study also examines the relationship of organizational climate to nine different types of work projects: for example, administrative, people management, policy development and strategic planning projects. The major gender differences are in the category of people management. Women managers, in contrast to men, do not feel supported in their projects in this area by their co-workers, superiors or the organizational culture.

Our analysis of job satisfaction shows that both men and women managers have relatively high levels of satisfaction. There are, however, significant gender differences in the factors that influence work satisfaction and the impact of organizational climate on satisfaction. For women, the most important factor that promotes job satisfaction is active support by co-workers, supervisors and the organizational climate. A particularly critical aspect of the organizational climate is fairness — that all employees be treated in a fair and just manner. While support of co-workers and fairness are not unimportant for men, by far the more critical factor is the absence of impedance, specifically that the organizational climate not hinder male managers in conducting their projects.

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The study concludes with the suggestion that at least two aspects of organizational culture change are essential in the public service. The first recommended change is to enhance the degree of fairness so that all employees are treated (and are perceived to be treated) fairly. The second change would be to encourage more direct and visible support for managers — especially in their projects related to managing people. Women managers in particular feel that they do not receive adequate support from their organizations or colleagues in their staff management endeavours.

A final suggestion is that climate change must not remain targeted primarily at the upper reaches of management; the study results indicate that the public service is felt to be a considerably more positive workplace by those at the upper echelons than it is by those at the lower levels, where there are perceptions of low morale, limited advancement opportunities and, for women, a higher degree of sexism and elitism.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Existing management practices in the Canadian public service are under enormous strain from several sources. First, the ongoing downsizing of the public service has created an atmosphere of uncertainty, produced a decline in morale and created a need to enhance productivity. Second, there are internally and externally driven demands to "reinvent" government to make it more service-oriented, less bureaucratic and more entrepreneurial (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Finally, governments are under pressure to "rethink" their relationships with citizens, to make the process of governance more democratic, and to accommodate an increasingly diverse work force (Albo, Panitch and Langille, 1993; Phillips, 1993).

To respond to all three sets of pressures and provide strong governing institutions into the twenty-first century requires highly committed, motivated and innovative public servants, and, in particular, innovative and insightful managers. Thus, the task of promoting job satisfaction through meaningful work and accommodating work environments is an important management challenge.

There are, however, many indications that the public service provides less meaningful work and less constructive environments for some types of employees than for others. The position and situation of women, particularly in the management category, is one that the public service is addressing and must continue to confront. Although women constitute 47.4 percent of the entire public service, they occupy only 19 percent of management positions and only 14.5 percent of senior (EX-3 to EX-5) management positions (Treasury Board Secretariat, 1995). Evidence suggests that a significant portion of women in management positions in large organizations in both the private and public sectors are deeply dissatisfied with life in these organizations (Rosin and Korabik, 1991; Korabik, 1993).

The primary factors causing the disaffection of women managers are not related to a lack of interest in career or other personal characteristics, but stem primarily from organizational factors, such as inhospitable corporate cultures, office politics and attitudes of male co-workers that reinforce gender stereotyping (Rosin and Korabik, 1991; Korabik, 1993). The 1990 report of the Task Force on Barriers to Women (TFBW), *Beneath the Veneer*, painted a bleak portrait of the organizational environment for women in the federal public service. In particular, the report indicated the existence of a hostile and suffocating organizational climate that undervalues women's contributions.[1] A 1994 update of the work of the TFBW, conducted by the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women, found that in spite of considerable rhetoric about gender equity, "deeply rooted cultural and attitudinal barriers remain which impede the equitable development and advancement of women and their equal access to job opportunities"

(Consultation Group, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to examine the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of managers – female and male – in the federal public service. The study is approached from a "social-ecological" perspective which deals with individuals as they act in the context or "ecology" of their organizations. Recent literature in organizational behaviour indicates that a serious deficiency in this field has been the absence of such an interactional approach and that our understanding of organizational behaviour can be enhanced by focusing on the links between individuals and their organizational contexts (Mowday and Sutton, 1993: 220). We argue that it is important to consider not only individual-level variables (such as demographic characteristics, family situation or job aspirations) and organizational-level characteristics (such as climate), but also the interactive effect of individuals acting in the context of their organization's environment. The unit of analysis, termed "personal projects," captures this interactional effect in a manner that is sensitive to the things that matter to people and also to the context of their lives. Personal projects are defined as interrelated sets of intentional action (Little, 1983; 1989) and, in contrast to studies that measure attitudes to possible situations, projects are not hypothetical, but reflect the reality of people's everyday lives. This study thus explores the relationship of each of these three sets of variables – individual characteristics, personal projects and organizational attributes – with measures of employee job satisfaction, paying particular attention to gender differences.

Specifically, we address four sets of questions:

• What are the job values and aspirations of public sector managers? To what extent are these job needs and desires being fulfilled by employment in the public service? Do women and men managers differ in their job aspirations?

• How is the organizational climate experienced by employees? Are there gender differences in perceptions of this climate?

• How do the everyday activities or personal projects undertaken by women managers differ from those of their male counterparts? Do women find certain types of work projects to be more meaningful, efficacious or stressful?

• Finally, are there gender differences in the degree of satisfaction with work? What factors contribute to job satisfaction, or lack of it, and do these differ for women and men?

The Focus of the Study

This study focuses on women and men managers in two departments and one central agency of the federal government in the National Capital Region. Selection of participants was stratified according to level and branch within each department so that all levels and a wide cross-

section of management from each department is represented. Twenty women and twenty men from each department/agency took part in lengthy interviews of about 1 1/2 to 2 hours.[2] The interview strategy, in contrast to a massive mail-out of questionnaires, limited the total numbers of managers who could be included in the research, but the considerable advantage of the interview approach is that it yielded very rich quantitative and qualitative results.

II
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic characteristics of the women managers in our study differ from those of the men in some important ways. Given that women have begun to be promoted in a concerted way relatively recently, it is not surprising that the male managers are older (a mean of 49.3 years for men versus 45.6 for women) and have been in their present positions for a longer period of time: 4.3 years on average for men and 2.8 years for women.

TABLE 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Women	Men
Age	45.6	49.3
Years in public service	17.5	20.7
Years in position	2.8	4.3
No. of hours worked per week at the office	46.1	46.5
No. of hours worked per week at home	5.4	6.0
Percent married	78.6	94.6
Percent with children	64.3	89.3
Percent with children living at home full time	46.4	50.0
Percent with pre-school age children living at home	7.0	3.6
Of those who require child-care arrangements: percent with nannies	46.7	28.6

There is also a significant divergence in family situation. Only 78.6 percent of the women are married and only 64.3 percent have ever had children, while 94.6 percent of the men are married and 89.3 have had children. There is only a small percentage of either gender with pre-school age children living at home (3.6 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women). As shown in Table 1, there are no significant differences between the number of hours worked at the office or at home in office-related work.

III

JOB NEEDS AND DESIRES

Studies of well-performing organizations conducted by the Office of the Auditor General (1990) indicate that employees' values − "the ideals that are important to people in organizations and that are worth striving for" − are critical in driving people to improve their organization's performance. The degree to which aspirations and personal values are satisfied in a job have also been found to be contributing factors in determining an individual's satisfaction with the job and commitment to the organization (see Tubbs and Ekeberg, 1991; Stewart, 1990). In our study, job values and aspirations were assessed using an inventory of Job Needs and Desires on which each respondent rated the extent to which 33 potential job values are important and the degree to which these values are satisfied in his or her current position.[3]

What are the most important job aspirations and values for female and male managers? Are there gender differences in these values and to what degree are these values actually being satisfied by public service employment? The analysis shows that for both sexes the same aspects of a job are important: having a sense of achievement and of personal integrity; doing things that are interesting and challenging; testing one's abilities; and having an opportunity to be innovative and creative. The least important job values were also similar for both men and women. These lower-rated values related primarily to attributes of personal power and status, such as having a job that promotes social status in the community, being around powerful people and having a highly structured work environment.

The degree to which the values sought after in the ideal job are actually being met in the public service was examined by measuring the difference between the "ideal" (the extent to which the attribute is desired) and the "actual" (the extent to which the attribute is actually satisfied) ratings of each job attribute. The public service is least successful, for both men and women, in realizing the values of providing a sense of administrative fairness, promoting a sense of achievement, recognition and self-worth, and cultivating the sense that the employee is making a difference to society. In general, there are few gender differences − only two significant differences − in the discrepancies between ideal job needs and actual conditions. Women feel that their actual job involves being in a competitive game considerably more than they want to be (discrepancy of -2.5 for women and -1.6 for men).[4] But, by far the overwhelming gender difference between ideal and actual job aspirations is that men feel they have much less opportunity for advancement in the public service than do women.

TABLE 2

Most and Least Important Job Needs

Job Need	Mean Ideal Job		Mean Actual Job		Difference (Ideal - Actual)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
High Scores (Range 0-10)						
Feeling a sense of achievement	9.5	9.2	7.7	7.7	1.8	1.6
Having a sense of personal integrity	9.3	9.0	8.3	8.1	1.0	.9
Making use of abilities	9.2	8.7	7.6	7.8	1.6	.9
Being involved in decisions	9.1	8.9	7.5	7.8	1.6	1.1
Doing interesting things	9.1	8.8	8.2	8.1	.9	.7
Having a sense of purpose	9.0	8.7	7.9	7.6	1.1	1.1
Feeling a sense of self-worth	8.9	9.0	7.8	7.7	1.1	1.3
Being able to exercise leadership	8.5	8.4	7.8	7.8	.7	.6
Doing things that benefit society	8.5	8.3	7.4	7.1	1.1	1.2
Having an opportunity to be innovative and creative	8.4	8.4	7.2	7.7	1.2	.7
Having policies administered fairly	8.4	7.8	6.8	6.3	1.6	1.5
Having recognition for one's work	8.4	8.0	6.9	6.5	1.5	1.5
Low Scores (Range 0-10)						
Having a superior who ensures career development	6.8	5.9	5.8	4.9	1.0	1.0
Having job security	6.6	6.5	7.4	6.9	- .8	-.4
Having power	6.5	6.6	6.2	6.0	.3	.6
Being busy all the time	6.4	6.7	8.5	8.5	-2.1	-1.8
Having pleasant work conditions	6.4	6.1	7.1	6.8	-.7	- .7
Being in a competitive game	3.5	4.5	6.0	6.1	-2.5	-1.6
Promoting social status	3.4	4.4	4.8	4.8	-1.4	- .4
Having a structured work environment	3.0	3.5	4.4	5.0	-1.4	-1.5

These findings reinforce the results of the Auditor General's report on values which stressed the importance of self-expression and meaningful work and, hence, the need to find a better balance in the public service between managing by the traditional means of control and compliance versus managing by caring and commitment (which depends to a greater degree on satisfying people's aspirations). The absence in our study of differences between managerial men and women in their job aspirations contradicts most of the literature which builds on the notion of

bio-physical or socialization differences between men and women. Most of this literature suggests that these innate differences lead men and women to pursue and value different career goals. Specifically, it is often suggested that women strive for nurturing environments that use their interpersonal skills while men seek task-oriented, competitive environments. In contrast, our results suggest a considerable degree of androgyny in values; that is, men *and* women value both traditionally masculine and feminine orientations (Bem, 1975; Korabik, 1993). This may be a very positive situation because, as Korabik (1993: 25) argues, androgyny probably makes managers more well-rounded and promotes more balanced organizations.

IV

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

In recent years, organizations of all kinds have begun to pay considerable attention to their organizational cultures and climates because it is widely recognized that the informal norms and perceived atmosphere of an organization may make some individuals feel accepted and welcome and others marginalized or not taken seriously. This sense of "fit" with the organization's culture influences an employee's satisfaction with that environment to some degree. Organizational *culture* refers to the shared realities, values symbols and rituals held in common by members of an organization that contribute to the creation of norms and expectations of behaviour (Schall, 1983; Schein, 1990; Shockley-Zalabak and Morley, 1989, 484). The perception of this atmosphere, that is "how it *feels* to be a member of the organization," is often referred to as organizational *climate* (Cooke and Rouseau, 1988: 250-1). While organizational climate can be a powerful influence on individuals' expectations, behaviour and performance, the effect of the organizational context naturally may vary across organizations and may affect individuals or groups in the same organization differently (Mowday and Sutton, 1993: 208-10). In this section, we map the contours of the organizational climate experienced by our respondents in the three departments and explore any differences in perceptions of organizational climate between women and men.[5]

On an inventory called the *Organizational Culture Checklist*, respondents rated the extent to which each of 53 descriptors is characteristic of their immediate work environments as they personally experience these environments. The descriptors which are rated as most and least characteristic of the departments are similar for both women and men. As shown in Table 3, the most common characteristics relate to a climate described as challenging, stressful, overloaded, hectic, competitive and bureaucratic. On a more positive note, these environments are also described as stimulating, effective and accountable. Both women and men said that their organizations could *not* be described as highly boring, quiet, confusing, hostile to new ideas, or sexist. On the negative side, they also indicated a climate of low morale and a lack of nurturing. However, there are some gender-specific ways in which perceptions of organizational climate differ. Although in general women do not rate their organizations as highly sexist or hostile, they are much more likely than men to describe them as such.[6] Women managers also indicate that their organizational climate is significantly less tolerant of personal differences and of different ways of doing things.[7] But women, more than men, perceive that they have greater opportunities for advancement and that their organizations reward good performance. Male managers, in contrast, tend to experience their environments as significantly more "tense" than do the women, which may suggest a greater decline in general morale.

TABLE 3

High and Low Mean Scores on the
Organizational Climate Checklist

(Range 1-5)

Very Characteristic			Very Uncharacteristic		
Variable	Women	Men	Variable	Women	Men
	(Mean Scores)			(Mean Scores)	
Overloaded	4.4	4.3	Boring	1.8	1.8
Challenging	4.2	4.1	Quiet	2.1	2.0
Hectic	4.2	4.3	High morale	2.4	2.6
Stressful	4.0	4.0	Nurturing	2.5	2.5
Supportive co-workers	4.0	3.7	Hostile to new ideas	2.6	2.2
Stimulating	3.8	3.7	Personal bickering	2.7	2.6
Competitive	3.8	3.4	Rigid	2.8	2.7
Bureaucratic	3.8	3.4	Confusing	2.8	3.0
Holds people accountable	3.7	3.3	Sexist	2.8	2.2
Effective	3.7	3.5	Elitist	2.9	2.7
Allows me to take responsibility	3.7	3.9	Opportunity for advancement	3.1	2.6
Tolerant of personal differences	3.5	3.9			

It is not surprising that the ways in which the organizational climate is experienced varies in some important ways with level in the organization, because those at the top are more likely to have an opportunity to shape and influence the atmosphere of their branches, and the department in general, than are those in the lower echelons. Indeed, our results indicate that both women and men at higher levels of management tend to experience the climate as less constraining, less stressful, more fun, more rewarding of good performance and as having more supportive management than do people in lower levels. However, there are some instructive gender differences in the relationships between climate and level. Male managers at lower levels are more likely to see their environments as tense, less caring and low in morale than either men at higher levels or women at the same level. This suggests that there is a more acute problem of generalized low morale for lower-level men than for other groups of managers in the public service. Women at lower levels, however, perceive a more sexist, elitist and controlling climate, while perceptions of these characteristics do not vary by level for men. The relatively strong correlations with level indicate that, as Zussman and Jabes (1989) found, there is a vertical

solitude in the public service: the top stratum is a much different, more positive environment for both men and women.

Although respondents were asked to describe their immediate work environments within the branch rather than the department as a whole, there is little variation in the descriptions of climate across the two line departments. However, as popular perceptions and introductory public administration textbooks suggest, perceptions in the central agency are distinct. For women, the atmosphere of the central agency is perceived to be more controlling, more elitist and less promoting of equity, with less opportunity for advancement. While men similarly describe the organizational climate of the central agency as more elitist, stressful and tiring, they also perceive its climate to be less (not more) controlling, with good opportunities for advancement and more "fun" than the line departments.

It appears that, as Kanter (1977) argues, position in an organization is at least as important a determinant of experiences in that environment as gender. Nevertheless, there are some important gender differences. Women in lower management are most likely to experience their environments as sexist and elitist, while men perceive a generalized low level of morale. Moreover, as we discuss in the next sections, the degree to which organizational climate is an important influence on work projects and satisfaction varies considerably between female and male managers.

V

PERSONAL PROJECTS

Our social-ecological framework adopts an interactional unit of analysis termed "personal projects." Personal projects capture the interactional effect of people acting in the context of their organizations in terms that are defined by and salient to the respondent. Personal projects may range from the typical pursuits of a Tuesday ("write the memo to Personnel") to the magnificent obsessions of a lifetime ("transform management thinking in the public service"; "support my daughter in her recovery"). They may be self-initiated or thrust upon us; they may be solitary concerns or commitments involving co-workers or family members. They may be isolated and peripheral aspects of our lives or define our very core as individuals (Little, 1989, 15-16).

The concept of personal projects must be differentiated from formal organizational projects on the one hand, and from mere behaviours on the other. While a manager's formal project, as sanctioned and demanded by the organization, might be "brief the Deputy," the personal project might be "put Martin in his place." The concept of personal projects must also be distinguished from observed behaviour. Although the action of a manager, as witnessed by the cafeteria staff, might be "eating pizza with the support staff at lunch," the personal project actually being undertaken by the act of eating pizza might be "building team spirit." Observed actions may give some clues as to the nature of personal projects, but the intention and interpretation ultimately must be derived by asking people to give accounts of their own behaviours, indicators of climate change and personal adaptation.

In interviews, respondents first listed or "dumped" the personal projects in which they were currently engaged. This listing provides a useful prism through which to view the richness and diversity of managers' lives. On average, respondents list about 15 projects in this procedure. A few representative examples of the extensive range of work projects elicited include:[8]

- Deal with two staff with performance problems
- Get a regional job
- Rebuild the team spirit at work
- Work out new relationships with ministers' offices
- Study French for C level
- Design a useful and interesting training program for staff
- Implement a serious human resource planning system
- Create a better corporate planning system for my department
- Resolve the classification issue.

From the initial list of projects, each of the managers chose a subset of five work (and five non-work) projects according to the criterion that these would be "interesting to explore in more depth in order for us to better understand both your work and non-work life." Each project was put in matrix format and rated 0 (low) to 10 (high) along the dimensions of meaning as listed

below:[9]

Challenge: To what extent is each project demanding and challenging to you?

Commitment: How much are you committed to the successful completion of this project?

Competence: To what extent do you feel competent to carry out this project?

Control: How much do you feel that you are in control of the project?

Cultural Support: To what extent do you feel that the culture of your organization supports this project?

Cultural Hindrance: To what extent do you feel that the culture of your organization impedes or frustrates this project?

Difficulty: How difficult do you find it to carry out each project?

Enjoyment: How much do you enjoy working on each project?

Initiation: To what extent do you feel responsible for having initiated a project?

Others' View: How important is each project seen to be by relevant people who are close or significant to you either at work or home?

Outcome: How likely is it that this project will be successfully completed?

Possible Self: To what extent do you think each project facilitates becoming the possible self that you described earlier?

Satisfaction of Job Needs: To what degree do you feel that each project helps to satisfy this job need? (The respondent selected four job needs from the Job Needs and Desires Inventory and rated each project on fulfilment of each of these needs. Mean scores across the four columns were then calculated.)

Self-Identity: All of us have things we do that are typical of us. These things can be thought of as our "trade marks" or our personal "style." Think of what your own personal "trade marks" are, and rate each project on the extent to which it is typical of you.

Self-worth: To what extent do you feel being engaged in each project gives you a sense of self-worth?

Stress: How stressful is it for you to carry out each project?

Support: To what extent do you feel each project is supported by other people? For work projects this would include supervisors and co-workers and for non-work projects this may be family or friends.

Time Pressure: To what extent do you feel time pressure in working on each project?

Value Congruency: To what extent is each project consistent with the values which guide your life?

FIGURE 1
Personal Projects Matrix

Work Projects	1 Challenge	2 Commitment	3 Competence	4 Control	5 Difficulty	6 Enjoyment	7 Hindrance of Culture	8 Initiation	9 Others' View	10 Outcome	11 Possible Self	12 Self-Identity	13 Self Worth	14 Stress	15 Support	16 Supportiveness of Culture	17 Time Pressure	18 Value Congruency	19	20	21	22
1																						
2																						
3																						
4																						
5																						

We are interested in exploring the ways in which work projects are experienced – for example, the extent to which they are enjoyed, stressful or efficacious – and in examining the relationships between work projects and organizational climate.

VI

PERSONAL PROJECTS
AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

How our projects are going and what our work environments are like are, in theory, independent perceptions. It is possible that we appraise our projects as delights or disasters irrespective of how we see the climate in which they are embedded. Alternatively, it may be difficult to disentangle an oppressive or uplifting climate from how we appraise the nature and status of our daily personal projects. In addition, project-climate linkages may vary as a function of external variables such as career stage, the degree of turbulence in one's environment, or gender. As we shall see in this section, some very striking findings of the present study may be due to each of these factors, singly or in combination.

Correlations were run between each of the 19 personal project appraisal dimensions and the 53 work climate descriptors in order to determine the degree of linkage between them. In Table 4, the numbers in the columns indicate for each project dimension the number of correlations, out of a total possible of 53 for each, that are statistically significant. We argue that the greater the number of significant correlations between the project dimensions and the climate descriptors, the more closely the assessment of one's projects are linked with aspects of organizational climate. The content of the linkages will be dealt with below, but attention is called here to the frequency of significant linkages.

First, and most strikingly, for women there is an extensive pattern of linkages between personal projects and climate that generally does not appear for men. While male managers, on average, have significant project appraisal links with 3.8 climate dimensions, for women they are linked with 11.4.

Second, for both men and women the strongest linkages between project appraisal dimensions and climate measures is seen, not surprisingly, in the dimensions of cultural support and cultural hindrance of personal projects. For women, there are distinctive and very strong links with climate for the personal project dimensions of stress, support, competency, and total need satisfaction. For men, there are several project dimensions with no climate linkages: enjoyment, self-identity, others' view, commitment and possible self-facilitation.

TABLE 4

Frequency of Significant Project-Climate Linkages
for Men and Women Managers for each Personal Project Dimension

Project Dimension	Women	Men
Cultural hindrance	28 *	18
Cultural support	27	15
Stress	24	3
Support	20	6
Competency	18	2
Satisfaction of job needs	15	1
Self-worth	11	5
Others' view	10	0
Enjoyment	10	0
Time pressure	9	6
Value congruency	9	2
Outcome	8	3
Commitment	7	0
Control	5	5
Initiation	5	1
Self-identity	4	0
Possible self-facilitation	3	0
Difficulty	3	2
Challenge	1	3
Mean	11.42	3.79

*   For example, this figure indicates that the project dimension of cultural hindrance correlates significantly with 28 out of a possible 53 descriptors of organizational climate. These gender differences in the project-climate linkages hold up when statistical corrections are made to control for the number of dimensions being intercorrelated.

The finding that the project-climate linkage for women is more than three times greater than that for men is a striking one. There are several possible reasons for it. One possible explanation that cannot be ruled out is that the difference may not reflect gender but the different times of assessment of the two groups of managers. It is possible that the earlier time of testing, when the women were assessed, was a time of particular turbulence within the public service. Thus, the large number of strong correlations between projects and climate could be interpreted

to reflect the greater need, under such conditions, to read and scan the environment in order to gauge such concerns as the controllability or likelihood of success of one's projects. According to this explanation, men, had they been tested at that time, might well have shown equally pervasive linkages between project and climate dimensions. However, observation of the real world of political, financial and organizational pressures on the public service does not offer strong support for this explanation. Indeed, many public servants and outside observers undoubtedly would suggest that turbulence and crisis in the public service has grown, and certainly did not recede, over this one-year period. If this latter observation is correct – that turbulence was greater in 1992 than in 1991 – we might have expected results opposite to those obtained.

Assuming, however, that the results reflect true gender differences, a number of intriguing questions arise. Why, and with what effect, are women more sensitive to the environmental climate within which they work? Certainly much of the currently influential literature on the greater tendency of women to adopt a communal and caring rather than an individual or dispassionate stance toward the environment would seem relevant. For instance, Carol Gilligan (1982; see also Gallos, 1989; Larrabee, 1993; Marshall, 1989) argues that women adopt a distinctive voice or "ethic of care" and, in so doing, are more sensitive to contextual and, in particular, to interpersonal and interactional issues than are their male counterparts. Following this literature, we would explain the present results as further evidence of this generalized disposition.

A second possible explanation for the gender difference may be that women scan their immediate environments more efficiently and intensely than do male managers who may be more focused upon distant or macro horizons. This distinction is a common one in anthropological studies of gender and provides a plausible explanation for why women's projects and climate appraisals are much more intimately linked. The climates that are being rated by women may be primarily those immediately surrounding their ongoing personal projects, including such things as the personnel involved, the barriers they encounter, the support "the guys down the hall" provided or the helpful advice from the woman in computing services. We might see this as more of a micro-climate focus. In general, there are no differences between managerial men and women in the kinds, level, or content of the projects they engage in at work. But men, while undertaking or constructing their projects at the same level (as expansive or narrowly focused) as women, may appraise organizational climate at a more macro level, with such appraisals only very loosely coupled with their ongoing project systems.

A final possibility – and one that has considerable support in the literature – is that what we have observed is a process of acculturation (Berry and Sam, forthcoming). As Stewart (1982; 1989) argues, environmental stances vary in periods of transition. She cites a broad spectrum of support for the proposition that, at the early stages of a major transition (such as going to college, starting a new job), individuals are particularly sensitive to and influenced by their new environments. This hypersensitivity to the milieu serves the adaptive function of providing the individual with information relevant to surviving in the milieu, though it may well lead to a

perceptual distortion of the *actual* influence of the environment. In later stages of a transition, individuals are more likely to adopt assertive or even aggressive stances toward the environment wherein they enact their own plans and projects, operating more as active agents shaping the environment than as passive readers of it. Ultimately, in the final stages of transition, individuals are assumed to reach a more integrative stage of balance between self-assertive environmental action and reflective environmental monitoring. As Marshall (1993: 96) and Korabik (1993) note, however, women in management may remain strangers in a foreign land for long periods of time because the dominant culture does not readily accommodate them. As minorities, they have to read carefully the dominant culture in order to determine how to fit into it and how to guard their competencies and credibility. It may thus take a very long time to reach the latter stages of transition described by Stewart.

Given that the women in our sample generally were younger than their male counterparts and had spent less time in their current positions, the acculturation or transition explanation for greater climate sensitivity has considerable plausibility. If women are particularly sensitive to project-climate linkages in order to cope with the adaptational demands upon them in a relatively new job, we should expect that for both men and women managers linkage scores would vary directly as a function of the length of tenure in the job. When the data were reassessed to take account of variations in job tenure in the public service, however, the gender effect remained strong. At the very least, this suggests that acculturation for women managers is not a short-lived process that occurs during a brief period of transition.

Which Aspects of Organizations are Closely Linked to Personal Project Appraisals?

We have seen that at the management level women have considerably greater interconnections than men between their work climates and their personal project appraisals, and we have suggested that this may reflect their greater tendency to scan their environments for information critical to adaptation. Irrespective of the considerable difference in *frequency* of linkages, are the *types* of links between projects and climate characteristics essentially the same for women and men? Or are there, again, gender-linked patterns of association? What are the climate attributes which account for most of the substantial interconnections with project dimensions?

Although the sheer number of variables precludes discussing the relationships among *each* of 19 project dimensions and 53 descriptors of organizational climate, it is possible to assess what are the most frequently linked climate dimensions. We scanned the project-climate correlations to identify those organizational climate descriptors that tend to have a high frequency of strong correlations with the project dimensions and we have called these "central" climate aspects. We also identified those descriptors of climate that are relatively independent of managers' projects, that is, those descriptors that have very few, if any, significant correlations with the project dimensions.

TABLE 5

**Organizational Climate Descriptors with Strongest Links
to Project Dimensions
for Women and Men Managers**

Strongest Project-Link Organizational Climate Descriptions

Women	Men
Efficient	Overloaded
Just	Permits independence
Fair	Fair
Creative	Fun
Stimulating	
Supportive management	

Table 5 displays the most central climate descriptors, as linked to the work project dimensions. Generally, the pattern of results shows that while there is very little overlap in either the central or independent project-linked climate descriptors for women and men, there are some thematic similarities and differences. With respect to those climate dimensions with a large number of project-linkage scores, the single common descriptor for men and women is "fair." The attribute for men which had the greatest overall linkage with project appraisals (including project dimensions with many and those with few linkages) is that of "overloaded," while for women, the highest overall linked descriptor is "efficient." While the characteristics of being overloaded and efficient might be seen as roughly the negative and positive ends of a shared dimension of manageability, there are some subtle differences in the ways in which manageability is construed by male and female managers.The other central adjectives for men, for example, suggest a kind of playful, independence-facilitating climate, while for women, the other highly linked climate dimensions evoke a sense of engagement, support and stimulating innovation.

Because fairness plays an important role in both men's and women's personal project appraisals, we looked in more depth at those aspects of projects that are most closely linked with it (see Table 6). Both men and women see fairness in their departments as being tightly linked with the extent to which their own personal work projects are supported or not, as well as the degree of self-worth they see brought about by those personal projects. For men, however, the strongest correlate of perceived fairness of the environment is the extent to which it is associated with lower time-pressure in their projects. Fairness, for them, may well be primarily freedom and

time to pursue their own individual projects. For women, on the other hand, fairness is unrelated to time pressure, but very strongly linked with the *actual* support they feel they get for each of their personal projects. Fairness for women is also significantly correlated with "Others' View" (how important each project is seen to be by people at work who are significant or close to the respondent), but for men it is uncorrelated with the assessments of other people. Furthermore, for women managers, the fairness of the organizational climate is strongly related to dimensions that indicate project meaning (enjoyment, self-worth and value congruency) and the degree of personal responsibility for initiating one's projects. In short, both men and women managers see organizational fairness, relative to other climate dimensions, as highly related to their personal project appraisals, and both perceived such fairness as contributing to perceptions of general organizational supportiveness of their projects and to enhanced self-worth. However, for men fairness is rather limited in range, related primarily to decreased time pressures, while for women, fairness is extensively linked with dimensions relating to social support and meaning.

Given that men seem more likely to identify "fun" and "permits independence" as central aspects of organizational climate, it is tempting to see men's primary goal in evaluating their personal projects and organizational climates to be what we might call a philosophy of "fair game": an equitable, fun environment, stressing independence and the time to pursue one's projects with relative freedom. Women, on the other hand, may be described by what we might call a philosophy of "just managing."[10] The term is, of course, a pun — but a serious one. Women in our studies have been particularly concerned about two overarching themes — the need for a workplace which operates efficiently, one in which, given their hectic and overloaded environments and schedules, they are able to keep their heads above water instead of sinking because of the deadweight of bureaucratic delay or political games. In this sense they see themselves as "just managing" — tired, if not burned out, and impatient with subtle barriers that would prevent them from getting on with their projects and tasks. But they are also deeply concerned that the management of those tasks is *just* in the sense of being equitable and fair, and this goes beyond simply providing the space for individualistic pursuits desired by their male colleagues. It involves a broadly supportive and congenial atmosphere that is both personally meaningful and valued by others.

TABLE 6

Correlations of Organizational Fairness with Personal Project Appraisals

Women		Men	
Project Dimension	Correlation	Project Dimension	Correlation
Support	.53***	Cultural support	.34**
Cultural support	.46***	Self-worth	.28*
Self-worth	.44***	Cultural hindrance	-.33**
Initiation	.41**	Time pressure	-.38**
Satisfaction of job needs	.38**		
Value congruency	.30*		
Others' view	.29*		
Outcome	.29*		
Enjoyment	.28*		
Cultural hindrance	-.37**		
Stress	-.38**		

All correlations are significant to at least p<.05; in addition ** indicates p<.01 and *** indicates p<.001.

Note. We have used conventional levels of statistical significance throughout our analyses. The p value associated with each correlation is a probability value that the correlation (given the number of subjects) may be a product of chance factors. Thus p <.05, p<.01 or p<.001 indicate that the observed correlations could be due to chance factors five times in a hundred, one time in a hundred or one time in a thousand, respectively.

Project Types and Organizational Climate

It is self-evident to any public servant that not all projects undertaken at work are alike. To what extent are gender differences in the appraisal of work projects dependent upon the *type* of project in which a manager is engaged? To address this question, the analysis of work projects was taken a step further by breaking down the total number of 552 work projects into nine categories and examining differences on the project dimensions by category. These are the nine categories, or work "domains":

1)   *Self-development*: this category includes projects related to personal advancement such as taking courses; networking and career planning; and intrapersonal objectives, such as becoming more organized and managing time better. Examples include: "improving my efficiency"; "becoming a better manager"; "studying French C-level."

2)   *Managing people*: this includes managing interpersonal relationships; motivating staff; team building; and projects aimed at modifying in (small ways) the organizational climate. For example, "building a team"; "design useful and interesting training programs for my staff"; "dealing with my staff's interpersonal differences."

3)   *Administration*: this concerns matters related to staffing competitions and assessment (written evaluations); writing up minutes of meetings, operational and routine reports; preparing annual reports; physical reorganization of the office; cleaning up the backlog; preparing for meetings and presentations; and managing the technology of administration. Some typical administrative projects are: "reducing my correspondence backlog"; "write the job descriptions"; "complete computer upgrades for branch."

4)   *Dealing with superiors and colleagues*: this category includes liaison with colleagues in other departments on matters of policy or administration, inter-departmental meetings and working with one's supervisors and colleagues within the department. Examples: "providing support to my boss"; "get more involved with the interdepartmental committee."

5)   *Political and public sensitivity*: this includes dealing with the minister's office; being sensitive to political issues; consultations with the public, interest groups and the private sector. Examples are: "dealing with the Minister's staff"; "reflecting on political issues."

6)   *Financial management*: these are projects related to budget preparation and the management of the financial affairs of the branch or department. Examples: "prepare the financial report"; "calculate human resource implications of operating budgets."

7)   *Policy/program development*: this involves initial development of policies and programs; issues management and research with an eye to policy development; formal and informal policy review or redesign. Examples include: "policy work regarding legislation"; "program review"; "develop policy options."

8)   *Policy/program implementation*: this refers to the implementation of policies, including dealing directly with clients and regional or district offices; direct delivery of services; getting feedback from clients. Examples: "pursuing implementation of [policy]"; "working out the details of the strategy with the regions."

9)   *Strategic planning*: these are projects centred on long-term and strategic planning; review of departmental priorities; planning for the reorganization of the machinery of government; transformation of the culture of the department (on a large scale). In general, these are non-routine planning and review exercises. Examples: "restructuring the organization"; "strategic framework for HR development"; "cultural change from command-control to partnership."

As shown in Table 7, the frequency of projects in each of these nine categories is similar for women and men. Routine administrative and policy development projects are the most frequent types, although women listed more administrative and men more policy development projects.[11] Women also listed almost twice as many projects related to managing people than did their male counterparts.

TABLE 7

Frequencies of Projects by Category

Project Category	Women		Men	
	No.	%	No.	%
Self-development	40	14.4	33	12.0
Managing people	47	16.9	27	9.8
Administration	75	27.0	51	18.5
Dealing with superiors	15	5.4	19	6.9
Political sensitivity	6	2.2	9	3.3
Financial management	4	1.4	9	3.3
Policy development	50	18.0	80	29.1
Policy implementation	26	9.4	34	12.4
Strategic planning	15	5.4	12	4.4

Note: The projects listed here include only those listed in the Personal Projects matrix.

When we consider the extent to which different types of projects vary according to the 19 project dimensions, it appears that women made finer distinctions among project types. The project categories were differentiated significantly from each other on ten of the project dimensions for women, they were differentiated on only one for men.[12] This is consistent with the point made earlier that organizational climates and interpersonal relations appear to be differentiated and absorbed into an assessment of personal experience to a greater degree by women than they are by men.

TABLE 8

**Mean Scores on the Personal Project Dimensions
by Project Categories**

Dimension	Managing People		Administration		Policy Development		Policy Implementation	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Value congruency	9.1	8.5	7.4	7.5	8.1	8.0	8.9	8.1
Self-worth	8.9	7.8	6.8	6.9	8.0	7.5	8.4	7.9
Commitment	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.9	8.4	8.7	9.0
Challenge	8.1	6.5	6.6	6.8	8.0	7.7	8.2	7.9
Self-identity	8.0	7.4	6.3	7.1	8.1	7.7	8.0	7.6
Enjoyment	7.7	7.2	5.8	6.4	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.4
Competency	7.6	8.7	8.4	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.3	8.6
Satisfaction of job needs	7.6	7.1	6.6	6.8	7.3	7.7	7.7	8.0
Initiation	7.5	7.1	6.4	6.8	6.3	7.1	7.0	6.7
Others' view	7.2	7.6	7.4	8.1	8.7	7.7	8.4	8.5
Possible self	7.0	5.7	5.1	5.5	7.3	6.5	7.3	5.8
Outcome	7.0	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.6	7.0	8.1
Support	6.7	7.9	6.8	7.4	8.0	7.6	7.7	8.0
Control	6.4	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.3	6.3	6.7
Difficulty	6.4	5.6	5.9	5.8	6.7	6.1	5.8	5.8
Cultural support	6.1	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.7	7.0	7.6	6.9
Time pressure	5.9	6.0	7.2	6.7	8.0	7.4	7.2	7.6
Stress	5.6	5.0	5.6	5.2	5.7	4.9	5.8	5.6
Cultural hindrance	4.8	4.2	4.5	3.9	3.7	4.1	3.7	4.5

Note: The columns indicate the mean scores on the project dimensions for all of the projects given in each category, separated by gender. For example, for all of the managing people projects listed by women, the mean score on project enjoyment is 7.7 (out of a possible 10); for the managing people projects listed by men, the mean score on enjoyment is 7.2.

As shown in Table 8, it is in the project category of "managing people" that gender differences are most evident. Women rate this type of project higher in personal meaning (including enjoyment, value congruency, self-identity and self-worth) than men do. However, women also consider managing people to be more challenging and they feel they have less competency in these projects than do men. Do these self perceptions indicate that women are, in

fact, less capable of managing people? Not necessarily. There are several possible explanations for these gender differences in challenge and competency. Women may have higher standards of competency for these kinds of projects. Because women may be more attuned to the organizational climate and interpersonal relations, they may more fully appreciate the subtleties and thus the difficulties of these projects. For women, it may not be a matter of merely "managing" people, but of nurturing and developing them to a greater degree.

However, women do not feel supported by their co-workers, superiors or organizational culture in their managing people projects. Women also find that "relevant others" do not view people management projects as important and that there are lower levels of collegial and cultural support for them than exist for the other frequently mentioned types of projects, including routine administration. While male managers do not appear to ignore or be uncommitted to people management issues, they perceive that they have more support for these projects relative to the other aspects of their work than do women. For men, the projects which are highest in self-identity and most challenging are those related to policy development and implementation, although women also extract high degrees of personal meaning from policy-related projects.

The results suggest that the public service still has to make considerable changes in the extent to which senior management and organizational cultures support managing people if the objectives of a more service-oriented and productive public service are to be realized.

VII

WORK SATISFACTION

Our next step was to explore the degree to which satisfaction with public service employment is related to any of the factors discussed above – demographic factors, job aspirations, personal projects or organizational climate. Five global measures of satisfaction were examined: satisfaction with one's work life, with non-work life, with health, and with life in general, as well as the negative feeling of being "burned out." In general, for both men and women, the satisfaction with work life is relatively unrelated to satisfaction with non-work life, but both contribute significantly and independently to overall ratings of life satisfaction. In contrast to most traditional representations of men – focused on their work with little time for family or community life – the correlations between satisfaction with non-work life and the overall measure of satisfaction with life in general are higher (.76) for men than they are for women (.59).

TABLE 9

Correlations among the Measures of Satisfaction

Satisfaction with:

	Work		Non-work		Health		Burnout	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Life	.57**	.30*	.59*	.76**	.58**	.38*	-.40*	-.17
Work	—	—	.07	-.13	.42*	.01	-.31*	-.38*
Non-work			—	—	.50**	.35*	-.35*	-.12
Health					—	—	-.39*	-.29

*   significant at p < .05
**   significant at p < .01

One possible explanation is that because the men are slightly older or see little future with the public service due to the generalized low morale and lack of opportunity for advancement which they observe, men at the management level, to a greater degree than women, may have refocused their lives on leisure, community and family projects from which they derive the bulk of their overall meaning and satisfaction (although they still put in long hours at the office). Another implication of these results for both men and women is that there is no strong and persistent

contagion effect of stress from work to home life (or vice versa) that has the effect of diminishing satisfaction in that sphere. As expected, feelings of burnout are significantly and negatively correlated with work satisfaction (-.31 for women and -.38 for men). Throughout the following discussion, we will focus our analysis on work satisfaction.

Analysis of job satisfaction in our sample of managers provides positive news. Both men and women reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with their work.[13] There are no gender differences in the degree of work satisfaction, nor does work satisfaction vary by department. However, for women, but not for men, the degree of work satisfaction is positively correlated with level in the organization. Women at higher levels have a greater degree of satisfaction with their work. As Fagenson (1986, 94) notes, it is also likely that organizational environments are more supportive of higher-level women than those at lower levels. In effect, the power of a small and thus highly visible group of women at the top makes them luminescent both to the rest of the organization and to the outside as representatives of their organizations. In her work, Fagenson found that women in upper level positions were "more accepted by their organization's informal power networks and perceived greater organizational concern for their career growth than lower-level women." Our analysis also indicates that the support of other people, especially supervisors, and the organizational culture is much more important for women than it is for men. Thus, in the absence of such support – which, for women in lower levels of management, may be beyond their control or influence – it is not surprising that satisfaction with an organization would be reduced. This may mean that the public service is at risk of losing women in the lower echelons of management if their diminished satisfaction translates into voluntary exit.

In contrast to the literature which posits that satisfaction with work depends on work-family balance, there are few correlations with the demographic variables, but this may be related to the senior and advantaged position of these managers and their family situations. In spite of working longer hours in domestic labour, married women are more likely to be satisfied with work (and with life in general) than single women, but there is no relationship with the number or age of children living at home. This suggests that the managerial women in our study have the resources and career interests to keep demands from family responsibilities from negatively affecting their work. For men, there are no relationships at all between job satisfaction and personal or demographic characteristics.

Projects and Work Satisfaction

Analysis of the relationships between ratings of the project dimensions and work satisfaction indicate that, although the level of satisfaction is relatively high for both men and women, the routes to satisfaction differ somewhat by gender. For women, the most important factors that promote job satisfaction are active support of co-workers and supervisors and the organizational climate.[14] While support of co-workers is not unimportant for men, by far the more critical factor is the absence of impedance (which refers to the blocking of the pursuit of a project), specifically that the corporate climate not hinder one from doing one's projects.

TABLE 10

**Correlations of Project Dimensions
with Work Satisfaction**

Project Dimension	Correlations with Work Satisfaction	
	Women	Men
Others' view	.48***	.17
Cultural support	.47***	.19
Support	.43***	.28*
Commitment	.42***	.37**
Competency	.41**	.20
Self-worth	.39**	.03
Control	.32*	.30*
Value congruency	.29*	.40**
Enjoyment	.27*	.26*
Satisfaction of job needs	.27*	.36**
Self-identity	.21	.30*
Cultural hindrance	-.24	-.38**
Stress	-.48***	-.28*

*	significant at p < .05
**	significant at p < .01
***	significant at p < .001

   The differential role of support (the desire for positive support for women and the desire for absence of hindrance for men) in part is related to the role that the dimension of control plays (Bell and Staw, 1989). For both genders, the perception that one has control over work projects is positively correlated with work satisfaction. However, control, for men, is highly correlated with support (.46), while for women, control and support are not significantly correlated (.21). This may indicate that the strategy for men is first to achieve control over their projects and then to build or bring along support of others in the organization. Women, in contrast, tend to seek out and value organizational support even if they do not control a project. Thus, women may be more satisfied with work environments in which they have the opportunity both to work independently and to take charge of their projects (as long as other people also view these projects as important and valuable) *and* to work collaboratively in teams in which they personally do not control a project. Clearly a work environment in which there is a distinct absence of collegial and cultural support will have a more deleterious effect on women's satisfaction with that organization than it will for men.

The second set of factors which contributes to work satisfaction is project meaning and efficacy, including the aspects of value congruency, a sense of self-worth and competency, and satisfaction of job needs. Overall the pattern is similar for both male and female managers: meaningful projects and a sense of personal achievement and integrity are important correlates of satisfaction with one's job. However, there are some subtle gender differences. The correlations between work satisfaction and a sense of competency and self-worth in work projects, in fact, are higher for women than for men. These results remind us that, while Gilligan's ethic of care may be important to managerial women, the attainment of happiness in the work domain is just as focused on task accomplishment and concepts of *self*-worth and achievement. Indeed, it is more important for women than for men. The results also suggest that the notion of "self-worth," phrased as such, is a very central aspect of well-being for women, but is unrelated to well-being for men (Little, 1993).

The third aspect of job satisfaction relates to stress. Here, too, there are gender differences. Not only is stress more strongly correlated (in a negative direction) with work satisfaction for women than for men, but stress at work also diminishes overall ratings of life satisfaction for women, but not for men.[15] However, as we noted earlier, satisfaction with one's life in general is more strongly related to satisfaction with work for managerial women than it is for men. The differences in how these three factors – project support, meaning and stress – affect women versus men in management indicate that organizational context is more vital for women, whereas the inherent nature of the work itself may be sufficient for men. Male managers may be relatively satisfied as long as the projects in which they are engaged are value congruent, satisfy their job aspirations and promote their sense of self-identity and efficacy and as long as they are not overtly hindered in doing these projects. In contrast, women appear to be more embedded in and sensitive to their organizational context and consequently their work satisfaction is more attuned to changes in the climate and interpersonal relationships of the work environment. This argument is further supported by the relationships between work satisfaction and the measures of organizational climate.

Organizational Climate and Work Satisfaction

There are many similarities in the types of organizational climates that enhance work satisfaction for both male and female managers. Environments that are stimulating, high in morale, caring and cooperative, with supportive co-workers and management, and that allow individuals to exercise responsibility and listen to ideas, are conducive to satisfied employees.

TABLE 11

Correlations of Organizational Climate with Work Satisfaction

Organization Climate Descriptor	Correlations with Work Satisfaction	
	Women	Men
Stimulating	.53***	.45**
Fair	.50***	.28*
Efficient	.50***	.08
Just	.48***	.11
Fun	.43***	.59***
People listen to ideas	.43***	.35**
Rigid	-.42***	-.03
Supportive management	.42***	.33*
Permits independence	.41***	.43***
Bureaucratic	-.39**	-.31*
Tense	-.37**	-.29*
Cooperative	.36**	.34*
Creative	.33**	.22
Rewards good performance	.33**	.14
Nurturing	.33**	.12
Responsive to employees	.32**	.18
High morale	.32**	.29*
Caring	.32**	.37**
Promotes personal development	.29*	.09
Holds people accountable	.28*	-.03
Supportive co-workers	.27*	.54***
Promotes education/training	.27*	.03
Controlling	-.27*	-.48***
Tiring	-.27*	-.08
Promotes consensus	.23*	.37**
Allows me to take responsibility	.23*	.44**
Boring	-.23*	-.28*
Innovative	.18	.32*
Challenging	.17	.46**
Opportunity for advancement	.14	.44**

*	significant at p < .05
**	significant at p < .01
***	significant at p < .001
	Only significant correlations for women or men are shown

But, there are also some important gender differences in how the organizational climate affects work satisfaction.

First, there are several aspects of organizational climate that are critical for women and relatively unimportant for men. It is essential for women that their organizations be fair (correlated .50 with work satisfaction) and just in how they treat all employees (.48), efficient (.50) and not overly rigid (-.42; as compared to -.03 for men). Perhaps because women still represent only a minority of the management category, they are very dismissive of favouritism, cliques or "old boys' networks" that exclude them from being equal participants in organizational decision making. They also want to get things done, not just be seen to be busy, and they eschew rigid rules and inefficient organizations that frustrate them in doing this. For women, the opportunity for personal development and education is also more important than it is for men. Therefore, if budgets for educational leave and training are slashed in times of economic restraint, women are more likely than men to be disadvantaged as they actively seek out these opportunities. The factors which are strongly correlated with work satisfaction for men, but are unimportant for women, are opportunities for advancement (.44 for men; .14 for women) and controlling environments (-.48 for men and -.27 for women). A commonly accepted notion in the literature on women in management (Asplund, 1988) is that "women want to do interesting things; men want a career." Our results concur with this, but with a qualification. Men certainly value meaningful work, but they give primacy to career advancement over personal development.

The other gender difference is the sheer magnitude of relationships between the organizational climate dimensions and work satisfaction for women. This reflects, in somewhat muted form, the pattern of relations between organizational climate and personal projects noted in Table 4. There are 27 significant correlations of climate dimensions with work satisfaction for women and only 19 for men. This offers further support for the argument that women are more sensitive to their organizational climate and that climate affects both what they do and how they do it. In some respects, women expect more of their organizations, especially that they be just, efficient, flexible, and supportive of individuals and of creative processes.

VIII

CONCLUSION

The search for productive, flexible and creative organizations is an important challenge for governments. Organizational cultures that provide environments conducive to productive, innovative and satisfied employees can be one important way for meeting this challenge. This study has focused on the relationship of organizational climate to the experiences and satisfaction of work based on an analysis of the experiences and perceptions of a selected set of 112 managerial women and men in two departments and one central agency of the federal public service.

Our study shows that there are major differences between women and men managers in terms of how they relate to the environments of their organizations. However, these differences do not stem from differences in their career aspirations or values. On the contrary, our results indicate that in terms of job aspirations, female and male managers are remarkably similar, and indeed might be described as androgynous. Both men and women value nurturing environments that allow them to do challenging, interesting and creative things that make a difference to society.

The most striking finding of this study is that women and men experience the organizational culture of their departments to different degrees, if not in different ways. The effect of organizational climate on how women managers perceive and explain their work projects and experiences is three times stronger than it is for men. This does not imply that men are insensitive to their environments, but merely that women appear to be much more attuned and responsive to the micro-climates of their organizations. Several explanations are possible for the significantly greater linkages of work projects and satisfaction with organizational climate for women managers. One explanation is that women operate with a different perspective or voice, to use Gilligan's language, one that is more attuned to interpersonal relationships. A second, but related, possibility is that women may be much more focused on micro-climates of immediate relationships than on more distant horizons. Thus, when we asked women to describe their immediate environments and to relate these to their work projects, they did so in more finely tuned and subtle ways. A third explanation is that heightened sensitivity to their work environments is an adaptive strategy for women managers in the transitional phase of relatively new positions or in the longer-term acculturation process in environments in which they are minorities. Because on average the women in our study had been in their positions for a much shorter period of time than had their male counterparts, they may still be "feeling" their way through the norms, expectations and relationships of their organizational cultures and therefore have a greater need to be sensitive to environmental cues and responses. While we cannot definitely support one explanation over another at this stage, the basic finding remains important: organizational climate affects the personal projects and degree of satisfaction with work to a much greater extent for women managers than it does for their male counterparts.

If the public service were to undertake organizational culture change in only two aspects, the first should be to enhance the degree of fairness so that all employees are treated (and perceived to be treated) fairly. The second change would be to encourage more direct and visible support, by co-workers, supervisors and the organizational climate in general, for projects related to managing people. All the managers, but especially the women in our study, described the projects related to people management as high in enjoyment, self-identity and value congruency, but also as challenging and stressful. Women managers, to a much greater degree than men, also felt that they did not receive adequate support from their organizations and colleagues for their endeavours aimed at managing their staff. A final suggestion for climate change is that it must not remain targeted primarily at the upper reaches of management, although this may be a starting point. Our results indicate that the public service is experienced as a considerably more positive workplace by those at the upper echelons of management than those at the lower levels where there are perceptions of low morale, limited advancement opportunities and, for women, a higher degree of sexism and elitism. It is evident from our analysis that both men and women managers in the federal public service value creativity, innovation and a flexible, supportive and nurturing organizational climate. Their values and aspirations in general are highly congruent with the directions for change being imposed on governments by contemporary pressures – to be more innovative, flexible, client centred and human resource oriented. Public service managers are certainly not antithetical to such organizational change, but may be important conduits for it.

NOTES

1. The TFBW also placed considerable emphasis on problems with work-family conflict. However, for women in management, work-family conflict is a less serious concern, in general, than it is for women lower in the organization (Rosin and Korabik, 1990). In part, this is because women in management are less likely to have young children (or to have had children at all) than women at lower levels, and they have more financial resources to assist in balancing work and family. On work-family conflict, see Duxbury and Higgins (1991) and Lee, Duxbury and Higgins (1994).

2. The research instruments were first pilot-tested and cleared by the ethics committee on research with human subjects of the Psychology Department of Carleton University. We then contacted the deputy head in each department or agency, explained the nature of the study and requested the deputy's support. Without exception, the study received enthusiastic support from the deputy ministers who provided a list of individuals in the management category and sent those selected a memo supporting their participation. In each department 20 women and 20 men (with replacements for refusals) were selected, sampling across level and function within the department. They were then contacted by letter and by telephone.

    Only two people declined to participate, which represents a response rate of 98 percent. The sequential nature of funding for the study meant that women were interviewed first, from May to July 1991, and men were interviewed a year later, from April to July 1992. In the interests of being conservative in analysis, data are reported from 112 individuals (56 women and 56 men); 8 subjects are deleted because they could not be interviewed in the same time frame as the others of the same gender.

3. This inventory was developed by the authors for research with managers in the public and private sectors.

4. In part, this discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that men have a higher ideal score on the dimension of "being in a competitive game" (4.5) than do women (3.5), although men and women do not differ on the mean scores on the actual level of competitive game-playing that they experience in their jobs.

5. A modification of the Organizational Culture Checklist developed by Little (see Barnes, 1986) was used in this study. It consists of 53 adjectives, including adjectives sensitive to gender issues, such as "accommodating to family responsibilities," "sexist," "caring." For each, the respondent indicates on a five-point scale the extent to which the descriptor is characteristic of his or her organization. The "organization" is defined at the branch or unit level, rather than the department or public service as a whole, and culture is restricted to that which the manager personally experiences.

6. These results were obtained by dummy coding gender and correlating each organizational climate descriptor with this dummy variable. The correlation between gender and the descriptor, sexist, is significant at $p < .01$ and with hostile to new ideas is significant at $p < .05$.

7. These correlations are significant at $p < .01$ and $p < .05$, respectively.

8. Although participants listed both work and non-work projects, the present analysis focuses only on work projects.

9. The dimensions are not presented in alphabetical order in the original matrix. All of the instruments used in this study, including Personal Projects Analysis, are available as a separate technical appendix from CCMD or from the Social Ecology Laboratory, Department of Psychology, Carleton University.

10. For a discussion of the importance of just managing to this same subset of women managers, see Susan D. Phillips, Brian R. Little and Laura A. Goodine, "Just Managing and Women Managers: From Personal Projects to Public Service," Study prepared for the Canadian Centre for Management Development (Ottawa: CCMD, 1993). Copies are available from CCMD or from the Social Ecology Laboratory, Department of Psychology, Carleton University.

11. We cannot place too much importance on the mere frequency of project types because these data are reported at the project, not the individual, level. Some individuals may tend to specialize, by choice or job function, in a particular type of project (or at least chose to tell us about these types). There may not be an even distribution of project categories across individuals and thus the frequencies are not necessarily reflective of the portion of project allocation among men and women managers.

12. Differences in experience in each domain of work projects are analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ten project dimensions on which project categories were significantly different for women are: support (from co-workers and supervisors), time pressure, value congruency, cultural support, enjoyment, self-worth, self-identity, possible self (extent to which projects contribute to this), challenge and others' view of importance. For men, there was a significant difference among categories only for enjoyment.

13. The mean score on job satisfaction for women managers was 7.1 (on a 10 point scale) and 7.0 for men. Burnout — the feeling of being emotionally exhausted with depersonalization of clients, withdrawal from job involvement and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment — was also quite low, with a mean of 3.9 for women and 4.0 for men. For a discussion of burnout, see Maslach and Jackson (1981), Greenglass, Burke and Ondrack (1990) and Rowney and Cahoon (1990).

14. This is indicated by high correlations of work satisfaction with the project dimensions of others' view of importance (.48); cultural support (.47) and support (.43).

15. Correlations of work project stress and life satisfaction are -.34 (significant at $p < .01$) for women and -.16 for men. For neither women nor men is work project stress strongly correlated with non-work satisfaction (.02 for women and -.03 for men).

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