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**Characteristics, Perceived Skills and Leadership Styles of Female Executives  
In The Senior Executive Service**

by

**Ahmad Mashayekh  
B.A. June 1976, University of South Florida  
M.B.A. August 1977, University of North Florida**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN URBAN SERVICES**

**OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
1995**

**Approved By:**

---

**Wolfgang Pindur, Ph.D.  
Concentration Area Director**

---

**Wolfgang Pindur, Ph.D.  
Dissertation Chair**

---

**J. Taylor Sims, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Business and  
Public Administration**

---

**John Ford, Ph.D.  
Member**

---

**Leonard Ruchelman, Ph.D.  
Member**

---

**Barazandeh Samiian, Ph.D.  
Member**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHARACTERISTICS, PERCEIVED SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP STYLES OF FEMALE EXECUTIVES IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE**

**Ahmad Mashayekh  
Old Dominion University  
Director: Dr. Wolfgang Pindur**

Recent studies have expressed considerable interest in the representation of women in the upper-level management in the federal government. Yet, very little is known about the characteristics and attributes of women in the executive level of the federal services. Most of the studies are undertaken to examine how women are different from the established male standards, or have used different models or variables to explain the slow career advancement of the women.

Using a 1991 survey of 278 female executives in the Senior Executive Service (SES) this study examines the characteristics, personal attributes, barriers, experiences, and leadership styles of women who achieved executive status in the federal government. The findings suggest that various factors play a role in the representation of the women in the SES. This research also underscores the barriers that female executives in the SES have encountered as they pursued their career growth to the top-level administrative position. The results further suggest that the majority of women executives in the federal government identify their executive style as advocates, but display characteristics of different types of executives.

## **DEDICATION**

To my wife, Paula, my sons, Ryan and Cameron and  
my father, Mahmoud Mashayekh.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

There are so many people that I am indebted to of which without them the task of completing this research would have been very difficult if not impossible.

I am grateful to Dr. Pindur, my advisor, professor and mentor for the past three and half years for his guidance, care, his valuable input and those Sundays he spend consulting me during the course of this dissertation.

I am grateful to Dr. Ford, for his immense guidance, care, advice in data analysis and editorial commentaries. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Samiian for her advice and guidance. I am grateful to Dr. Ruchelman for his encouragement and valuable editorial commentaries. I am indebted to Dr. Najand and Dr. Noronha for their invaluable assistance with the SAS program and data analysis.

Words are not enough to convey my greatest appreciation for all your help, assistance and guidance. To all of you, once again, from the bottom of my heart, I Thank You.

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# **Chapter I**

## **The Research Problem**

The purpose of this study is to examine the characteristics, common experiences and achievements of women executives who are members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the American federal government. The research focuses on the common career development experiences, managerial styles, and the strategies used to get ahead. In addition, this study presents a profile of women in the SES, the barriers to advancement experienced, and the experiences of women who achieved SES status.

The American federal government has the task of managing and running an organization as large or larger than most private corporations (Report of the Task Force on the SES, 1987). The responsibility of managing such a mammoth organization requires the selection and/or appointment of responsive civil service executives which can form, as well as implement the policies of the government.

These professional executives and elite group of men and women senior managers are in the Senior Executive Service (SES).

The United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines SES as "a personnel system that covers most of the top managerial, supervisory, and policy positions in the executive branch of the federal government that are above GS - 15."

The SES was established in 1979 by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 U.S. Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) 1992, and as a counterpart to the highly professional senior civil service of Western Europe and Canada (Report of the Task Force on the Senior Executive Service, 1987). SES members occupy positions ranging from supervisory scientists to assistant secretaries and are located in almost seventy-five departments and agencies of the federal government.

More than 67 percent of all SES members have an educational level higher than a bachelor's degree, and almost 33 percent have a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. More than fourteen hundred serve in the Department of Defense, followed by the Departments of Health and Human Services, the Treasury and NASA which have more than five hundred SES members each in their ranks. Thirteen percent are women, 87 percent are men, 9 percent are minorities and 91 percent are non-minorities (U.S. OPM, Human Resources Development Group, SES-94-3, 1994). The largest occupational group of the SES is administrative or management (Report of the National Performance Review, 1993 the Status of the Senior Executive

Service 1992 - 1993). More than half of the SES positions are career reserved positions which must be filled by career SES appointees and the remaining positions (i.e. general SES) are filled from within or outside the government by career, noncareer, limited emergency or limited term appointees (OPM, The Senior Executive Service, 1993). There are four types of appointments to the SES: career (selection by agency merit staffing process), non career (general SES positions approved on individual case basis), limited term (non-renewable appointment for up to 3 years to a general SES), and limited emergency (non-renewable appointment up to 18 months to a general SES). The executives included in this study represent the four types of appointments.

The promotion of women to the SES is significant since it highlights important issues in the federal government promotional processes. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 discrimination in the federal government has been illegal (Naff, 1994). Furthermore, given the role of the American federal government as a "model employer" (Mosher, 1965), it is perceived that federal civil service values fairness and equity among different sex groups more than the private sector (Schneider, 1993).

### **Problem Justification**

In the United States, like other industrialized nations, significant numbers of women are in the labor force. The rate of participation of women in the labor force

in the U.S. has increased dramatically in the twentieth century. In 1900, 19 percent of women in the U.S. were in the paid labor force. By 1940 the rate of participation in the labor force for women was 25 percent and increased to 31 percent by 1950. Recent data indicates that over 50 percent of all women are in the paid labor force (Bayes, 1991; Scandura, 1991).

Certain characteristics are evident in the employment of American women. One is the continuity and consistency of gender segregation (Bayes, 1991), and the other is significant lower wages than men (Choudhury, 1993). Despite legislation passed in the 1960s and 1970s to end gender discrimination, occupational sex segregations and gender wage differentials continue (Bayes, 1991; Guy, 1993). Sex segregation in the work force, with profound roots in the gender division of labor and a strong link to lower earnings for women, has been extensively experienced in the U.S. (Jacobson, 1994). Despite a modest decline in work force sex segregation after the 1960s, the phenomenon has been quite persistent and prevalent. In the early 1980s, 40 percent of all women employees worked in only ten occupations including nursing, retail sales, cashiers, waitresses, elementary school teachers, and clerical occupations (Bayes, 1991). In the 1990, 55 percent of either male or female workers would have to switch jobs to have complete occupational sex integration (Jacobson, 1994).

Depending on the type of occupations, women earn 25 - 50 percent less than their male counterparts (Choudhury, 1993; Jackson, Gardner, & Sullivan, 1992; Fuller, & Schoenberger, 1991; Gronau, 1988; Hersch & White-Means, 1993). In the public sector, the average earnings gap of female and male full-time, year round employees has been fluctuating at around 60 percent (Guy, 1993).

An increase in the employment of women in the twentieth century has been parallel with the struggle of women for equality and pay equity (England & Kilbourne, 1991). Although the campaign for pay equity is continuing, the focus of struggle has shifted to the representation of women in executive and managerial positions. In the past two decades women have begun to gain employment in traditionally men's profession, of which, managerial and administrative positions have been the fastest growing occupations (Bayes, 1991).

Although women have made remarkable gains in their labor force participation and labor market accomplishments, especially during the post World War II period, the majority of women still occupy lower level positions and have a difficult path to senior management (Newman, 1993; Rosenfeld & Kalleberg, 1991). Research suggests that some form of barriers have kept women from breaking through into senior management positions (Naff, 1994), while sticky floors confined the careers of other women on the ground floor (Laabs, 1993). The Department of Labor in its study, A Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiatives, (1991) identified



"those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions" as glass ceilings.

The public sector has played an important role in providing employment for women (Bullard & Wright, 1993; Scaltzstein, 1986). Studies suggest that there is substantial fairness and much less discrimination in hiring and promotional practices in the public sector than in the private sector. These personnel practices have become the major drawing card for women (Broder & Langbein, 1989; Preston, 1991; Schneider, 1993). Today, women hold more than 50 percent of all white-collar jobs in the executive branch of the federal government. In professional and administrative positions, women represent 55 percent of all the entry level occupations in federal jobs (GS 5 - 8). They occupy 41 percent of jobs in grades GS 9 through GS 12 and hold 19 percent of positions in grades GS 13 through GS 15 (U.S. MSPB, 1992). In less than two decades, between 1974 and 1990, women doubled their representation in both Professional and Administrative categories of federal government positions (U.S. MSPB, 1992). A study by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board (1992) reveals that between 1974 and 1990 women representation in grades GS 13 - 15 and SES grew from 5 and 2 percent to 18 and 11 percent respectively (Table 1.1). Current SES information reveals that the ratio of women executives in SES, is continuing to grow at slow pace. In 1992, 13

percent of the federal senior executive service (SES) positions held by women (U.S. OPM: The Status of the SES 1992 - 1993, Sept. 1994). By September 1994 there were 1,242 women in SES ranks composing 16.5 percent of the total executives in the American federal government's SES positions (OPM, Office of Executive Research). This promotional success to upper civil service grades clearly shows government's attempt to abide by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

**Table 1.1**

**Women Representation in General Service Grade Levels**

<b>GRADE LEVEL</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>1990</b>
SES & Equivalent	2%	11%
GS 13 - 15	5%	18%
GS 9 - 12	19%	38%
GS 5 - 8	58%	71%
GS 1 - 4	78%	76%

Source: U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board 1992, p.9

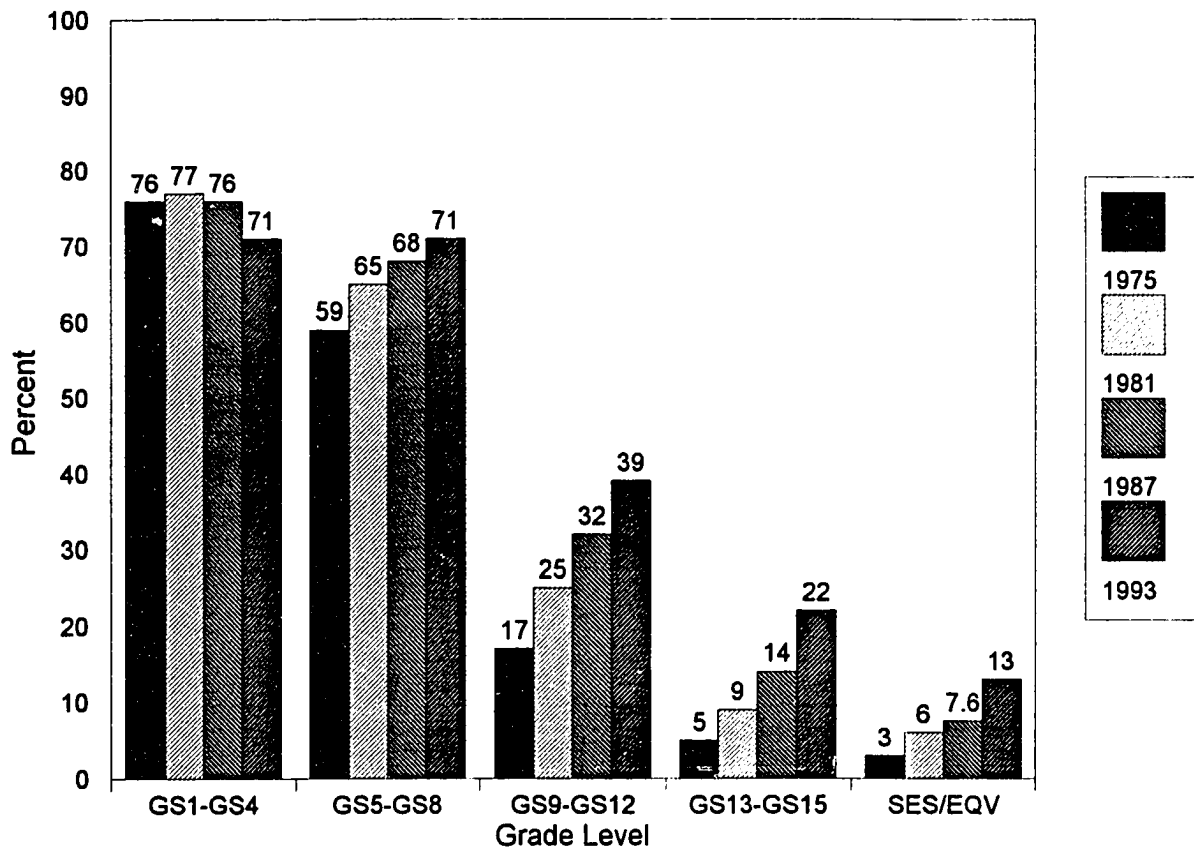
The preceding discussion suggests that the qualities that have driven women into middle management positions in the American federal government have not been sufficient for advancement beyond middle management and into executive ranks. Despite the increase in representation of women in mid- and upper-level

management in the past two decades, women are still under-represented at the senior administrative and executive levels. Only one in four supervisory positions (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1992) and only 11 percent of the federal senior executive service (SES) positions are held by women. Figure 1 illustrates the overall distribution of women in the federal government.

The process of women's advancement also has been quite slow, and there is no reason to believe that it will become faster in the coming years (Laabs, 1993). Dometrius (1984) suggests that since the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, the rate of upward progress of women to top management has been so slow that it will be the year 2040 before women will have complete representation in top level positions. MSPB (1992) in its study "A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government," supports Dometrius and suggests that if the current pattern of advancement continues, women will hold less than one-third of the senior executive positions a quarter of a century from now.

The disparity between the percentages of women employees and the number of female managers and executives suggests that there are forces operating in the federal government that are precluding women from advancing to managerial positions. Whether this force is a sticky floor (Laabs, 1993), the glass ceiling or some form of discrimination, statistics suggest the existence of some barriers

**Figure 1.1**  
**Distribution Of Women Within Each**  
**Grade Level Grouping, 1975-1993**



which prevent females from achieving executive levels in the federal government (Bullard & Wright, 1993; Naff, 1994). Lewis and Allee (1992) suggest that white male employees are 1.8 to 2.8 grades above comparable females. A report by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board [MSPB] (1992, P.9) supports Lewis and Allee's findings and suggests that the average grade of women in white-collar jobs is 7.7, which is 3 points lower than 10.3, the average grade for men.

Women who have gained top administrative and executive ranks have been the subject of researchers' attention in the past few years. However, there has been limited research on the subject of those women executives who advanced to the top level management in the American federal government (Bullard & Wright, 1993). In spite of increase in the number of women in top administrative and executive ranks in the hierarchy of federal service, a study of their characteristics, experiences and strategies are the least studied of the women managers within government.

The study of women managers is often undertaken to examine how they are different from the established male standards (Arnold & Davidson, 1990; Hill, 1993; Kelly, 1991; Kelly, Guy, Bays, et al., 1991; Newman, 1993). Much of the research on career development and/or advancement have used college educated, white males as a basis for comparison with other gender or races. The comparison of females' managerial traits with those of male managers continues to be a prolific foundation for research. Furthermore, researchers have used varying models, taking

into consideration different variables, to explain the reasons for women's slow, or lack of, career advancement (Guy, 1993; Naff, 1994; Newman, 1993).

Research suggests that there are internal dynamics to women's career development which allow solo examination of women's traits without comparison with men (Bayes, 1991; Cantor, et al., 1992; Northcut, 1991; Rosener, 1985; Scaltzstein, 1986). Rosener (1985) argues that women managers are achieving results, and succeeding in a growing environment, because they possess specific traits which are viewed as feminine and non-traditional. The study by Cantor, et al. (1992) of 25 women political leaders suggested that women are natural transformational leaders and that for them a new paradigm of leadership is quite natural. Northcut (1991) argues that women have entered late to the labor market and often have mixed their career with family responsibilities. This has resulted in their career developments to have more varied patterns and to be different than men. Thus, it is conceivable that successful career women may have more common characteristics with each other than they have with men.

The promotion of women in government has great significance. First, the greater representation of women in managerial positions widens the scope of the decision-making spectrum toward broader interests of population. In addition, government is a role model employer and an example of the American governments' commitment to gender and racial equality (Lewis, 1988).

The federal, state, and municipal governments are significant sources of employment and advancement for women. Demotrius and Sigelman's (1984) study found that women have had substantial progress in representation in management in state and local government. Bullard and Wright's (1993) study found that in the state government hierarchy one out of five (20 percent) of all executives are women.

There are many benefits associated with employment of women at local governments. Municipal governments are conveniently located in most cities, they require relatively low skills, and are large employers. They offer greater job security and benefits to women. Finally, there are more opportunities for advancement and higher pay to women in local government (Saltzstein, 1986). Thus, while many advocates of opportunities for women in municipal government are interested essentially with equity of women to access managerial positions, there are other strong views which suggest that expanded representation of women in municipal government will provide a concrete economic benefit to women (Kranz, 1976). It also enables female managers to participate and influence the output of policies of local governments and provides the means to represent women's interest in the urban policy development process.

There are distinctions between executives at the federal, state, and local governments. While most contrasts are not relevant to this study, the question

remains whether or not the approaches to achieve executive levels in the state executive offices become a model for federal positions.

The uphill battle for managerial and executive positions for women in the United States has been underway for the last few decades. Clearly, management and effective managerial behavior are seen as masculine endeavors. Despite fundamentally different styles, the activities of women executives in federal government are often characterized in terms of men's managerial style.

This study reports the results of a survey of 287 women SES members. Chapter One presented the research problem, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two places the study in a theoretical context. Chapter Three focuses on the data, research questions, research design, descriptive statistics, and methodological contexts. It presents and discusses criteria for selecting survey questions, variables, and their measurement scale. Chapter Four is concerned with the presentation of the findings. In the Fifth and final chapter of this study, the overall results of the study are discussed and the implications for both theory and practice are developed.



## **Chapter II**

### **Background and Theoretical Framework**

The review of related research and literature for this study highlights the following areas: women and the glass ceiling, women in management, gender differential and management style, bureaucratic decision-making and women's career advancement, and women's strategies for advancement.

#### **Women and the Glass Ceiling**

Advancement and promotion of any gender or race and ethnicity is an impetus that provides prestige, higher earnings, increased power, authority and upward mobility (Baldwin & Rothwell, 1993). The ultimate results are enhanced motivation, productivity and an elevated satisfaction level of employees. Barriers to advancement, on the other hand, deteriorate employee's morale, productivity, commitment, motivation and satisfaction. The problem is amplified when barriers to advancement are perceived to be identified with sex discrimination.

Historically, tradition, perception, stereotype, and discrimination, singularly or combined, may have had a restrictive affect on the equal occupational distribution of female employees. Although women have always worked, either in or out of the

home, the notion that women do not belong to the paid labor force has been a part of American ideology which has its origin in the "domestic code" of the nineteenth century (Freeman, 1990). The concept is that women--the purer sex-- should perpetuate the home as a sanctuary surrounded by a competitive society (Freeman, 1990, p.20). These cultural views were reflected in different aspect of our society. For example, when New York Mayor John Lindsay was asked by a female reporter why there were not more women commissioners in his administration, Lindsay muttered "Honey, whatever women do, they do best after dark" (Tolchin & Tolchin, 1974). In the Republican National Convention in 1972, when Governor Cahill was asked why so few women are present in the New Jersey's delegation, he responded: "Most women want to stay home and take care of their home and family. To ask them to do more is to ask them to do more than they are able" (Tolchin & Tolchin, 1974). Geraldine Ferraro in her campaign for vice presidency was asked by a reporter "... and do you think the Soviets might be tempted to take advantage of you simply because you are a woman" (Witt, Paget, & Matthews, 1994). President Nixon advised a thirteen-year-old girl, Julie Darco, who had ambitions to go into politics, "You are too pretty, you'll probably get married instead" (Tolchin & Tolchin, p. 15). In fact, our society viewed a woman who did not marry fairly young as a failure, notwithstanding how talented or successful she is in her career life (Bettleheim, 1970).

Traditional conditioning and sex-role education creates a state of mind from early years of life to adulthood. In the United States, until the 1940s and 1950s and to some extent in the 1960s social structure and culture promoted sex-based education for younger students. Girls were automatically taught cookery and needlework at schools. Opportunities to learn so-called "boys skills" such as science and technical crafts were available to few young female students (Peitchinis, 1989). Universities and special careers were not immune from the cultural prejudice against women. Professional schools and professions such as lawyers and scientists were thought to be exclusively male's domain. When Harvard Law School began admitting women in the early 1960s, Pat Schroder, one of its early graduates, faced with a strong reaction of a male classmate who was unhappy with her for "taking a man's place" (Witt, Paget, & Matthews, 1994).

Until the 1970s and the rise of the women's movement, the status of women was largely associated with an important man in their lives. The concept that woman's existence is not separate from her husband and the woman's intellect and her social status is a consequence of her husband has continued throughout the twentieth century. Ginsberg in 1966 wrote that women achieve their status through their husband and men attain it through their work (Wood & Greenfeld, 1978). The U.S. civil law, copying English common law, was developed around the notion of unitary interests between husbands and wives (Hale & Kelly, 1989; Whitney, 1984).

American legal establishments ascertain that men and women are united in the family and that the women's function is to support their men, with the primary responsibility of rearing and socializing children. The law assumed that since the interest of men and women within a family is the same, women do not need legal recognition after they get married. These cultural perceptions and legal views of spousal roles and relationships have been the drive behind exclusion of women from higher education and upper level bureaucracies in the U.S. until the twentieth century (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

Women's employment was also a target of restriction and limitations. From the early years of this century women have always occupied positions which were different than men, required less skill, were paid less, and had much less opportunity for promotion and advancement (Whicker & Kronenfeld, 1986). In the 1920s, virtually all women who worked for government occupied clerical positions (Stivers, 1993). While discriminatory practices, between 1920s and 1930s, in the federal government had pushed black women and men out of white collar jobs (Harly, 1990), the progress of the Depression spilled-over blatant exclusionary practices to white working women. State and local government, later joined by the federal government, targeted female employees, particularly those who were married. The laws passed, prevented women from public employment or discharged those whose spouse was employed by the government (Stiveres, 1993). Although

the law was repealed in 1937, nevertheless, it forced many women to find other jobs which almost consistently paid less.

Typical "women's work," recently described by Bradley (1989) is a job that "is usually indoor work, considered to be lighter than men's work; it is clean, safe, physically undemanding, often repetitive and considered boring, requires dexterity rather than skill; often has domestic association; it tends to lack mobility, being tied to a particular work station; it may well have association and requirements of beauty and glamour." Society as a whole believed that women can not take on tasks that traditionally were men's and/or involved some degree of power (Flanders, 1994). The highest courts in the American judicial system seemed to support this concept. In 1949, the Supreme Court ruled that women could not work as a bartender and in 1961, the Court ruled that the exclusion of women from jury duty in Florida, unless women ask for it, is not unconstitutional (Whitney, 1984).

Some of the predicaments that affect women workers today originated in the late nineteen and early years of the twentieth century. From the early 1880s to the mid 1890s women comprised between 28 and 43 percent of those who passed civil service examinations. However, only seven to 25 percent of the women who passed the test were hired, reflecting discretionary practices in the part of hiring officers in the specific agency (Aron, 1987).

Frederick Taylor, the father of scientific management, suggested that female workers are less efficient and more irregular in attendance than male workers and they should plan or look forward to getting married (Fry, 89). In 1951, Ginzberg's study for developing the theory of occupational choice utilized career development patterns of a sample comprised of urban middle to upper class, Anglo-Saxon men with different levels of education. Career development patterns of females and minorities were not examined (Zunker, 1986).

Cultural prejudice against women managers and executives was clearly reflected in a 1965 survey conducted by the Harvard Business Review. The survey results suggested that more than 45 percent of men have an unfavorable view about women in management. They believe the place for women was outside management ranks (Powel, 1993). More recently, in 1991 when the "A Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative" by the Department of Labor revealed the existence of barriers to promotion practices in nine Fortune 500 companies, it was criticized by the Business and Industrial Council which argued that the report was designed more for the feminists and the liberal civil rights establishment than for American business (Sugawara, 1991).

**The Federal Laws:** World War I was marked with a significant increase in women labor force participation. Participation of women in different jobs and activities

demonstrated their ability to work as effectively as men they replaced or joined in war efforts, and they began an strive to achieve equal opportunity and equal pay (Stiver, 1993).

The passage of the Fair Labor Standard Act of 1938 (FLSA) was the first major breakthrough in the struggle for equal pay (Berry, 1994). The FLSA provided, among other things, standards for minimum wage, overtime pay, child labor and equal pay. During World War II women were employed in many positions for the first time and their labor force participation continued to rise in the years post World War II (Stivers, 1993). The increased awareness of gender inequality created an outcry for gender pay equality. Despite strong support from the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administration, many corporations strongly opposed it.

The 1960s and 1970s are marked with the increase in government commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action for women and minorities. Figure 2.1 presents the significant legislation and executive orders affecting the equal opportunity in the 1960s and 1970s. The legislative efforts began with the Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 along with the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Equal Pay Act is an amendment of FLSA, but is now treated as a separate law (Berry, 1994). These legislations prohibited discrimination within federal government employment and private employers on the basis of race, gender, religion or national origin ( Hale & Kelly, 1989; Kanowitz, 1981; Whitney, 1984).

In 1965 and 1967 executive orders issued by the president's office made sex discrimination illegal by the federal government or any institution contracting with the federal government. In 1972 Title VII was amended and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1972. EEOA prohibited public sector employers and unions (of more than eight workers) to discriminate in employment practices. The legislation required the state and local government to give equal access to jobs in all groups and allow them a voice in governmental decisions. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 reorganized the civil service followed by the establishment of programs to recruit and hire more women (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

Three decades of changes in laws and societal structures have reversed some of the earlier laws, assumptions, and perceptions and have rejected the social structure of gender-based division of labor. After 103 years, in 1971, using the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, America's highest court ruled that women can become administrators of estates, a proclamation that women are legal persons and equal as men before the nation's law (Hale & Kelly, 1989).



**Figure 2.1**

**Law and Legislation Prohibiting Discrimination**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LEGISLATION/EXECUTIVE ORDER</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
1963	Equal Pay Act of 1963	Equal pay for equal work
1964	Title VII of Civil Rights Act	Prohibiting sex-based employment discrimination
1965/1967	Executive orders 11246/11375	Prohibiting sex discrimination by federal contractors
1972	Education Amendment of 1972	Outlawed sex discrimination in educational opportunity
1972	Title VII Amendments (EEOA)	Prohibited sex discrimination by public sector
1978	Civil Service Reform Act	To eliminate women's underrepresentation in the federal government
1978	Federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act	Prohibiting discrimination based on pregnancy
1991	Civil Rights Act of 1991	Allowing monetary damage for sexual discrimination

The Supreme Court's use of the Equal Protection Clause against discrimination and gender stereotyping led to greater equality and fairness in personnel practices such as hiring, promotion, maternity leave, pension rights and seniority (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

Today, the law does not allow the systematic discrimination and collective exclusion of women from hiring, training and promotion. While attitudes about women in management have changed in recent years, and women are entering, competing, and remaining in the work environment in increasing numbers, the behaviors of employers--both public and private-- have trailed far behind changes in the laws. While the momentum for greater gender balance in the labor force continues, most women are segregated into low paying positions in what is known as "pink-collar ghetto" (Berry, 1994), and very few women achieved promotional success to senior management.

### **Women's Advancement in the Civil Service Hierarchy**

There is limited research on the subject of women in senior positions in the federal government (Kelly, Guy, et al., 1991; Bullar and Wright, 1993). The few available researches conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Merit System Protection Board (MSPB), and General Accounting Office (GAO) have discussed very little on career development of female executives.

Despite the laws, executives orders in the past thirty years, and objectives of the representative bureaucracy to end gender imbalance in the public sector, the overall structure and distribution of senior managers and executives in the civil service has not changed significantly. Women continue to disproportionately occupy lower level positions in hierarchy of public organizations and bureacracies. During the last decade, statistics show only slight improvement in the senior management careers in the government over these years (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1**

**Representation of Women in SES 1974-1993**

Sex	1974	1979	1987	1990	1992
Men	98 %	94.9 %	91.3 %	89 %	87 %
Women	2 %	5.1 %	8.7 %	11 %	13 %

Sources: D. Little (1994) How Women Executives Succeed; U.S. Merrit System Protection Board (1992); U.S. Office of Personnel Management SES 94-7 1994

The women's advancement to executive positions in any bureacracy presents a dilemma. It is difficult for women to fit the portait of a executive which generally is perceived and represented by white professional men. Women who appetite to become executives or display the preceived characteristics of a manager are labeled as "earth mother," "manipulator," "iron maiden," and other stereotypes of women leaders (Stivers, p.67).

Most analyses of women's career advancement have focused on the overall representation of women and a broad comparison to men in both the public and private sector. The findings also suggest that there is a different career path for women than men in the federal government. Women seem to be promoted less often than men especially in the first five to six years of employment and then the promotion rates will increase, reach and surpass the rates of men's promotion (Kelly, Guy, et al., 1991). A study by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board (1992) suggests that in GS-9 and GS-11 positions, the stepping stone for managerial ranks, men are promoted at a rate of 33 percent and 44 percent greater than women respectively. The study concludes that women have not experienced the same rate of promotions as men during their federal careers. Table 2.2 demonstrates the average grade levels of men and women by number of years in service accounting for educational differences.

Representation of women in the executive ranks in federal jobs is crucial to the understanding of the equal opportunity in women's career mobility (Newman, 1993), and its effect on broadening the range of governmental decision making and actions (Kelly, Guy, et al 1991). When women do not have equitable representation in the senior level of the federal jobs, it indicates a lack of total commitment by government for implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity policies (Hale and Kelly, 1989).

Promotion of women in state government is characteristically "federal-like", that is career advancement in the executive level of the state government is not far better than their federal government counterparts. Nevertheless studies suggest a different pattern of promotion in the state governments. A study by Newman (1993) of career advancement in the Florida State government reveals that upper mobility of women executives in Florida are on a much faster track than men. The study further suggests that women spend less time on each job than their male colleagues. A study by Bullard and Wright (1993) points out that many women, in state governments, achieve the position of executives by circumventing or avoiding rather than breaking the glass ceiling. Bullard and Wright's findings challenge some long-held assumptions and theories about women's advancement and glass ceilings. The assumption that women have to break the glass ceilings to advance

**Table 2.2**

**Average Grade Level for Men and Women in Federal Government  
by Length of Service (1992)**

<b>LENGTH OF SERVICE</b>	<b>WOMEN'S GS RANK</b>	<b>MEN'S GS RANK</b>
Under 5 Years	10.8	11.34
5 - 10 Years	11.23	11.61
10 - 20 Years	11.58	11.85
More Than 20 Years	11.71	12.50

Source: U.S. Merit System Protection Board 1992

may not be totally tenable. At least some thought should be given that there might be other viable, productive alternatives to shattering through the glass ceiling to advance.

**Strategies for advancement:** At the higher levels of the professional scale, the required talents and skills of executives are less tangible and more problematic to quantify. These qualities are less structured and less formal than the required qualities for advancing into middle management. The executive tasks varies from one project to the next and from one day to another. Thus, in the description of the executive's job, there is less fixed skills and more personal talents and aptitudes (Freeman, 1991).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women in the higher ranks of the federal hierarchy. The activities of government and its significant role in the society and the economy has made it necessary for government to compete with the private sector for highly qualified men and women for the executive positions. The increased penetration of women to the higher level managerial and senior executive positions is a change from the period of concentration of women in secretarial and middle management assignments. The 1994 report of "The Status of the Senior Executive Service 1992 - 1993" indicate that of the 7,816 SES positions, women occupy 1,017 or 13 percent of the total ranks. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 present the number of women in SES positions in selected federal departments and agencies.

The erratic and inconsistent distribution of female executives in different agencies, as it is demonstrated in Tables 2.3 and 2.4, fosters the notion that there are no rules or standards of promotion set by the federal government for establishing a model for ratio of female executives in agencies or departments. Only some small agencies have a high or moderate proportion of women SES members (Table 2.4). The ratio of women members of SES in agencies with more than seventy five SES members is disproportionately low (Table 2.3).

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the relative absence of women from senior ranks in some of the departments. Does the old boys' network, discriminatory practices or other factors explain the contrast? Some researches assert that women and men have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their initiatives, capabilities, leadership, skills, and talents required for promotion and sustain these attributes over time (Peitchinins, 1989). Women fail to sustain these characteristics because of responsibilities associated with being mother, wife, and/or homemaker.

**Table 2.3**

<b>Women In SES Positions In Agencies With More Than 75 SES Members, 1992</b>			
<b>Department or Agency</b>	<b>Number of SES</b>	<b>Number of Women</b>	<b>% Women</b>
Education	79	23	29%
EPA	273	60	22%
HHS-Health and Human Services	635	141	22%
Labor	160	34	21%
HUD	104	17	16%
NSF-National Science Foundation	101	16	16%
OMB-Office of Management and Budget	82	12	15%
State	126	19	15%
GSA-General Services Administration	98	14	14%
Justice	392	42	14%
Transportation	404	58	14%
Interior	279	37	13%
Treasury	591	76	13%
Agriculture	332	36	11%
Commerce	424	47	11%
(OSD)-Office of Secretary of Defense	(523)	(57)	(11%)
VA	327	27	8%
Defense (All Branches)	1,431	104	7%
Energy	481	36	7%
(Army)	(332)	(20)	(6%)
(Air Force)	(167)	(9)	(5%)
NASA	584	32	5%
NRC-Nuclear Regulatory Commission	210	11	5%
(Navy)	(409)	(18)	(4%)
Others	803	175	22%
<b>Total Governmentwide</b>	<b>7,816</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>13%</b>

**Source: The Status of the Senior Executive Service 1992-1993, Office of Executive Resources, U.S. Office of Personnel Management**



**Table 2.4**

<b>Women SES Members In Small Governmental Agencies, 1992</b>			
<b>Department or Agency</b>	<b>Number of SES</b>	<b>Number of Women</b>	<b>% Women</b>
Pres. Comm on White House Fell'ships	1	1	100%
Cmte for Purchase from the Blind	1	1	100%
Interagency Council on the Homeless	1	1	100%
Trade and Development Agency	2	2	100%
Nat'l Endowment for the Arts	2	1	50%
Equal Employment Opportunity Comm	43	20	47%
Merit Systems Protection Board	17	6	35%
National Archives & Records Admin	15	5	33%
OSHA Review Comm	3	1	33%
Nat'l Endowment for the Humanities	10	3	30%
Federal Labor Relations Authority	17	5	29%
Office of Personnel Management	59	17	29%
Executive Office of the President	29	8	28%
Fed. Energy Regulatory Comm (DOE)	47	12	26%
Small Business Admin	50	13	26%
Office of Gov't Ethics	4	1	25%
Securities & Exchange Comm	71	18	25%
Federal Communications Comm	40	9	22%
Int'l Development Coop. Agency	36	8	22%
Board for Int'l Broadcasting	5	1	20%
Comm on Civil Rights	5	1	20%
Fed. Retirement Thrift Invest. Board	10	2	20%
U.S. International Trade Comm	10	2	20%

Source: The Status of the Senior Executive Service 1992-1993,  
Office of Executive Resources, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

## **Career Advancement Theories**

An important question has been raised as to the reasons for only a few women achieving promotional success to senior management in the hierarchy of the private sector and the federal government. Several explanations for this inequality have been reported in the literature. The three primary theories reported in the literature are human capital or individual analysis, sociopsychological analysis, and structural theory (Newman, 1993). From the theoretical standpoint, three views; human capital analysis, societal or psychological analysis, and structural or systematic analysis provide the map in explaining women career advancement or hinderance into management. Newman (1993) suggests that the human capital, sociopsychological, and systematic model each have their own set of variables or factors. She adds that the career advancement of the individual is a consequence of factors in these models. The linkage between variables and each model is demonstrated in Figure 2.2. Depending on the formation of these variables, they become barriers to or facilitators of women's career mobility (Figure 2.3). Career advancement facilitators are generally mirror reflections of the barriers. In most cases the lack of or inappropriate formation of these factors will inhibit women's

progress to top level positions while their suitable and proper formation will enhance women's career advancement opportunities.

The approach followed in this section is to discuss basic assumptions of each model. Consequently, the ensuing discussion is drawn from the three models with their own set of factors.

**Figure 2.2**

**Linkages Between Variables And Models**

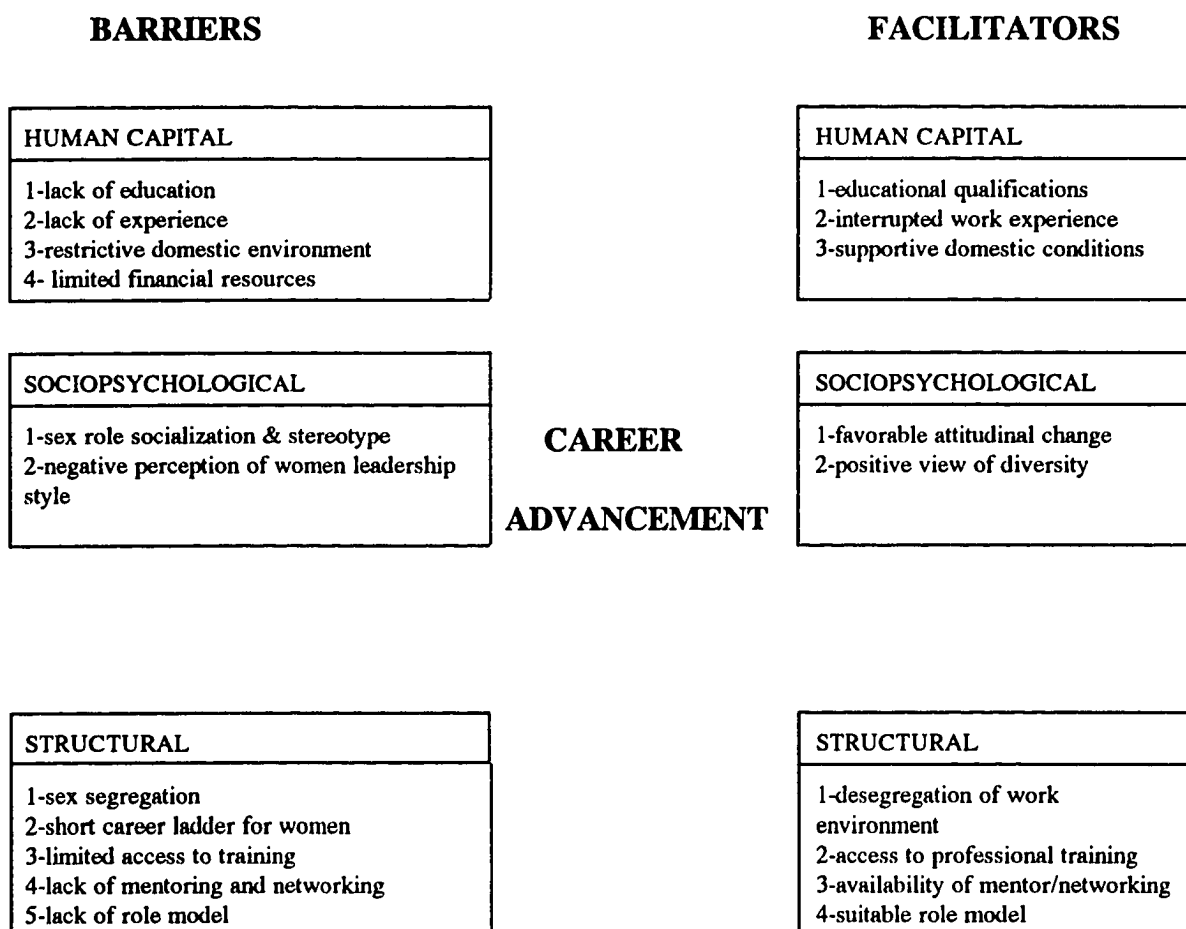
<b>MODEL</b>	<b>VARIABLES</b>
Human Capital Model	Education, Training, Experience, Ability, Hardwork
Socio -Psychological Model	Sex-role Socialization, Sex-role Stereotype, Self concept, Motivation
Structural Model	Access to Training & Information, Sex Segregation, Access to Power, Sexual, Bias, Mentor, Role Model

**Human Capital Investment:** The human capital theorists argue that the extent of investment in education, training, experience and other individual factors determines the upward mobility of the individuals (Kelly, 1991). The theory presumes a direct linkage between human capital investment (education, training, experience) and worker productivity and, consequently, career advancement (Kelly, 1991; Mincer & Polachek, 1974).

The women advancement problem, according to human capital theorists, are due to lack of qualifications, interrupted work experience, and less investment in training and education because of their family responsibilities (Becker, 1981). The assumption of this model is that home-making and career roles for women are mutually exclusive.

**Figure 2.3**

**The Linkage between Career Advancement  
and Barriers and Facilitators**



Source: M. Newman, American Review of Public Administration, Vol 23, #4 1993

The theory suggests that women's labor force participation is responsive to changes in their family environment. It asserts that family responsibilities influence the women's decision and result in lessened investment in education and training. Studies suggest that married women have to allocate their efforts between their jobs and their home and, as a result, seek positions that require less effort (Becker, 1985; Gronau, 1988; White, Cox, & Cooper, 1992).

Historically, our society has trained boys and girls for different future roles. Males have been taught "boys' skills" and girls were trained in household duties. One of the explanations used to rationalize why so few women have executive positions in management is women's inadequacies in science and technical knowledge. However, Peitchinis (1989) suggests that there is no evidence that effective and efficient management performance requires scientific or mathematical knowledge and hence, such explanations are only to justify discriminatory practices against women. Executives make management decisions, not a scientific or technical decision. Similarly, the notion that family responsibilities (i.e., being a wife and/or a mother) allegedly interfere with the uninterrupted commitment to job--which is necessary for advancement-- has been a subject of rebuttal. If the failure of women to advance into higher levels of the hierarchy is due to their family responsibilities, then it is expected to find a significant number of women in senior administrative ranks to be unmarried, and/or with no children (Peitchinins, 1989). Research,

however does not support this concept. Other studies, also, dispute the human capital thesis for its explanation of the reasons that so few women achieved higher level administrative positions (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Kasliwal, 1995; Treiman & Hartman, 1981). Newman (1993) suggests that the disparities in advancement of women to leadership positions is largely the outcome of factors associated with the societal and structural models.

The human capital theory has been a subject of critiques on both empirical and theoretical grounds. The theory's explanation of why so few women are holding executive positions, is inadequate since it suggests that investment in human capital (i.e. education and training) will pay off equally for both genders. In fact, research suggest that white men yield a higher return on their human capital investment than women ( Fuller & Schoenberger, 1991; Gyimah-Brempong, Fichtenbaum & Willis, 1992; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). In addition, the human capital theory does not distinguish between qualitatively different types of skill (Kasliwal, 1995). Furthermore, the assumption of a perfectly competitive market--economically rational employees and employers, total market information, unlimited job opportunity and total mobility of labor--as the sole determinant of worker's human capital value have been disputed because of its detachment from reality (Bibb & Form, 1977).

**Sociopsychological Model:** Sociopsychological factors, are people- oriented variables which have their roots in childhood and continue in adult and professional life. The theory suggests that societal patterns and stereotypes shape individual's choices among alternatives, hence it may explain the suppressed advancement of women to upper management. The status of women in a society is greatly influenced by their traditional role as mothers and wives. Social stereotypes which believe women belong at home with their families view their decision to go to work as defying societal norms (Freeman, 1990). Sociopsychological variables include sex-role socialization, sex-role stereotypes, family support, and motivation for achievement and power (Hale & Kelly, 1989; Newman, 1993).

**Sex-Role Socialization:** Individual's behavior is a function of one's background and role socialization. Sex-role socialization and culture influence individual's behavior and promote sex role differences that constitute strong individual barriers to women's career advancement (Hale & Kelly, 1989). The traditional roles of women as mother and wife, which is formed in childhood, continue to influence women's status and position in society. Executive positions demand a full-time commitment disregarding family obligations, and a vigor in personality attributes against all cultivated by the traditional mother role. Stewart (1976) argues that the women's family role and occupational goals are at best only partially reconcilable and at

worst mutually exclusive. Hale and Kelly (1989) hypothesized that many women high achievers may have to resolve the occupational and family role conflict by giving up their homebound role.

**Sex-role Stereotypes:** Upward mobility of women may be effected by sex stereotypes in three different stages of the employment process; occupational aspirations, entry into a position, and treatment and advancement within an organization. Society has assigned certain characteristics to men which lead to prepare and train them for different environments than women. Hale and Kelly (1989) suggest that difficulties facing women who are aspiring or entering management position are rooted in the societal perception that women's role behavior is not compatible with certain types of occupations. For many decades, and to a certain extent today, our culture has viewed that managerial positions should be filled by male and not female. Consequently, gender stereotype, rather than job-related skills, have become a significant variable in promotional decisions in organizations. Thus, women who enter administrative positions often experience the battles between cultural stereotyping of women and expected masculine managerial behavior (Cole, 1985).

**Achievement Motivation:** Frieze (1978) defines motive as "Unconscious psychological forces which excite and direct the action of the individual." The literature is generally consistent that there is no or little difference between men and



women in achievement motivation (Hale & Kelly, 1989; Newman, 1993). The rationalization for women's lower achievement compared to men is explained by the women's different underlying motives, and their definition and perception of success (Frieze, 1985).

Hale and Kelly (1989) suggest that motivation is important for understanding achievement and power-oriented behavior of women as well as their relative lack of participation in the public arena. Unlike men, who have been encouraged by society in their achievements, women, as a group, have been discouraged from outside achievements and instead have been judged by the success of a man in their lives, usually their husband (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

Many factors are influential in achievement behavior. Power behavior, viewed as part of overall factors in achievement, has been seen as appropriate trait for men. Whereas women view power as being able to affect changes, men, in comparison, see power as influencing others (Jones, 1983).

**The Structural (systematic) Analysis:** The systematic analysis views that career advancement failure is not the outcome of an individual's inadequacies, but rather the structure of the organization and institutional situations (Newman, 1993). There are certain factors in the organizational climate which are known to either inhibit or aid the advancement of women to managerial positions. Formal and informal

organizational patterns, norms, rules, and practices could effectively halt or enhance the women's career advancements (Zellman, 1976). Variables such as sex segregation, short job ladders for women, lack of access to information, education and training, pay inequalities, lack of advancement opportunities, unavailability of mentors, unequal access to power, and the lack of female role models explain an organizational structure which form barriers to women's career advancement (Chapman & Chapman, 1984; Col, 1991; Finnie, 1982; Stewart, 1985). When these variables are present in the organizational composition, they can explain the glass ceiling and its affect on women's upward mobility in the organization.

The mirror reflection of barriers to advancement are the career advancement facilitators. Employment decisions and choices are influenced by many factors: human capital investment, social stereotype, sex role socialization, training opportunities, support from mentors, and family responsibilities and constraints (Hale & Kelly, 1989). Depending on the magnitude and extent of these factors, and whether they are present in the form of barriers or facilitators, they will affect the sustenance of representative bureaucracies and equal opportunity and will negatively or positively affect the nurturing of equal promotional opportunity for women.

**Sex-Segregation:** Many studies suggest that the "management" position is a major sex-segregated occupation because of organizational structure (Col, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Stewart, 1985; Zellman, 1976). The existence of sex segregation linked with

pay inequity fosters the notion of discrimination by employers and stereotype about women's role in the society (Kanter, 1977). There are two broad categories of sex segregation: (1) horizontal segregation, where different type of jobs are allocated to different gender; and (2) vertical segregation where both men and women participate in different areas of work, however, women disproportionately occupy lower grades and men are concentrated in higher grades (Newman, 1993).

**Equal Access to Training:** Access to training opportunity is considered to be an important structural variable which facilitate women advancement in the hierarchial ladder. Lack of or limited access to training is an indication of the organizational failure to invest in women.

**Networking:** Access to informal networks within an organization and across women's professions is one of the most critical and significant factors in their career mobility. Power network, according to Kanter (1977), is identified with relations outside the authority established in formal positions. It defines who could be influential above and beyond the boundries of their positions. Advancement to higher ranks of management is perceived to depend, to a great extent, on whom you know. Bartless and Miller's (1985) study of 132 women executives in the U.S. found that more than 41 percent feel, in order to advance to the upper levels of executive hierarchy, "whom you know" becomes more important than "what you know." Flanders (1994) supports Bartless and Miller and suggests that many high

level positions are not publicly advertised but are offered to women who have highly visible achievements or are recommended by individuals whose judgement are trusted. As a result, women should put great effort into networking.

**Mentor:** There is strong consensus that mentors are crucial elements in helping both men and women advance in career ranks. There are many studies which suggest that women have greater difficulty than men in establishing mentor relationship (Guy, 1990; Hale & Kelly, 1989). Mentoring and networking will be discussed further in the following section of this chapter.

**Role Models:** The lack of female role models represent an important barrier to women's advancement; declaring "no entrance" to the higher administrative ranks by many well qualified and eager women ( Cole, 1991; Newman, 1993). Individuals who aspire a position would look for other persons who are in those positions and have similar personal characteristics. Upwardly mobile men can easily find and identify with at least few men who are already highly placed in different organizations (Cole, 1991). Both mentors and role models are important to the career advancement of women. They aid solve or remedy problems faced by women in their upward mobility.

None of the theories discussed above have produced a clear conclusion that explains the under-representation of women in the executive level. There is, however, a consensus that there exists some form of discrimination, prejudice and

barriers deriving from organizational policies, and environments which hamper women's advancement and career development (Arnold & Davidson, 1990).

In order to achieve career advancement, women must recognize, face and overcome these complex set of barriers. Variables identified in Newman's (1993) Model as reasons for the scarcity of women in upper-level management, while categorized differently by some authors, are shared and supported by many researchers (Bayes, 1985; Beckman, 1976; Cole, 1985; Zellman, 1985). It is important for women to know and understand the barriers to advancement, since, women, more than men, must confront and overcome a multitude of barriers in order to advance in professional and organizational life.

**In summary**, the human capital or individual analysis, sociopsychological analysis, and structural theory are the three dominant theories used to explain the under-representation of women in the higher ranks of management. Sex-role socialization and sex-role stereotype promote sex-role differences that result in powerful barriers and affect women's occupational and professional ambitions, as well as restricting their entries and career advancement. While researchers dissent on their focus, they agree that factors of organizational environment that hinder women's upward mobility consist of discrimination, sex segregation, pay inequalities, and lack of advancement opportunities. The type and the extent of support from organizations greatly influence women's career advancement. The facilitators include educational

and training opportunities, wage and salary equalities, promotional opportunities, commitment to affirmative action policies, and networks and mentors (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

### **Mentorship and Networking**

**Mentoring:** One of the objectives of managers is to be gratified with their job and become successful in their careers. There are different methods that individuals can use to accomplish this particular goal (Fagenson, 1989). Having a mentor as a mean to achieve this end has been receiving much attention in the past two decades in the literature (Flanders, 1994; Guy, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Kram 1983; Kram, 1985; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Newman, 1993; Noe, 1988). Studies suggest that mentoring is an important factor associated with career advancement and mobility (Kram, 1983; Kram, 1985; Newman, 1993).

The mentoring process is defined by Kram (1985) as a developmental relationship which results in support of an individual's progress and growth. Flanders (1994) defines mentoring as a professional relationship between two individuals of which one acts as counselor. Kanter (1977) suggests that a key to access to types of information which is significant to career progress and promotion is mentorship. The mentor, in general, is a more senior individual who utilizes experience, skill, and position to propel others to advance their careers. Kram's

studies in 1983 and 1985, of middle and upper managers of a large public utility and manufacturing firm suggest that mentors provide career and psychosocial functions to their proteges. Career functions assist younger managers in preparing for advancement opportunities and learning the intricacies of organizational life. Career functions includes sponsorship, protection, exposure, visibility, and challenging assignments. Psychosocial functions helps younger managers to develop a sense of competence, feel confident, and become effective in their managerial role. The psychosocial functions consist of being a role model, providing counseling, acceptance, confirmation, and friendship. The final outcome is that younger and less experienced managers learn how to maneuver in the organizational environment and achieve career advancement and enhancement.

Kanter (1977) suggests that mentorship is a key in accessing the types of information which are significant to career progress and promotion. In addition, it provides access to greater experience, broader contacts, a role model, moral support, encouragement and motivation, and increased self confidence (Flanders, 1994; Kram, 1983;). Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services asserts that mentors are not only valuable but they are necessary (Cleveland, 1991).

Studies suggest that traditionally, lower managerial ranks and less opportune positions are occupied by women (Guy, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Lewis and Allee, 1992). While literature suggests that the existence of a mentor is one of the

predominant factors for individual career growth (Fagenson, 1989; Kram, 1983; Kram 1985;), some researches conclude that, generally, individuals in high level positions in the organizations and men who basically have greater opportunity for advancement benefit from mentoring (Hunt & Micheal, 1983; Zey, 1985). The questions remain: Do individuals with less opportunity who are not in upper ranks in the hierarchy of organizations, benefit, from mentors, the same degree of career advancement as individuals in the higher ranks of the organizations? Do women benefit equally from mentor as men?

As it is contended in the literature, if mentorship significantly contributes to an individual's career advancement, then it should provide the same positive results to women and lower level individuals as men. A study by Fagenson (1989) of 518 men and women in high and low level ranks in a large firm in the health care industry found that, regardless of their sex and rank or level, individuals who were mentored characterized their career outcome better than individuals who did not have a mentor. While it seems that mentoring contributes equally and positively to men's and women's career enhancement, women, nevertheless, often either exclude themselves or are excluded from mentoring. Ragin and Sundstrom (1985) suggest that despite the crucial affect of mentoring to upward mobility, women often have difficulties in launching mentor relationships with men especially in male dominated occupations. Kram's study (1985) found that women proteges are more likely to feel



discomfort, overprotectiveness, or experience greater social distance than male proteges from male mentors. There are explanations for the perceived difficulty. Loden (1986) suggests that even when women's male counterparts are supportive, it is very difficult for many women to talk to them openly about their problems. Additionally, female proteges must deal with the public perception of their relationship with male mentors, as well as sexual strains and anxiety (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985).

When women leaders embark on a bigger task and take greater and more visible risk, sharing their apprehension with other women leaders who experienced the same concerns is very crucial. Women prefer female mentors because they do not have to maintain a pretense, can establish close personal rapport, are less likely to be the subject of harmful gossip, and share management style and each others' view and philosophy (Flanders, 1994). Hence, supporting men are unaware of the problems and are unable to offer the assistance to the needs of the women leaders. Furthermore, there are limited number of women in top level positions to become mentors to aspiring women and turn to for advice (Guy, 1993).

Historically, lack of women executive role models to act as mentors has been the major reason for women lacking mentoring systems comparable to men (Flanders, 1994; Hill, 1993). Guy (1991) suggests that mentors evoke and are drawn to similar or same types of individuals. When there are more men than

women who can become mentors, the mentorship becomes an informal procedure and means to maintain a male-dominated system.

The mentor/proteges relationship not only benefits the proteges with their career advancement, but also serves the organization as well. Kram (1985) suggests that as mentored employees grasp and master the intricacies of the organizations, and are advanced to higher ranks, they are less likely to leave the organization. Other studies suggest that mentors help proteges to feel closer to the organization (Collins, 1983; Zey, 1984). Furthermore, the mentoring process performs as a mean to integrate the proteges into the culture of the organization by providing them organizational information, norms, procedures and policies (Zey, 1984).

An increasing number of private and public organizations have set up a formal mentoring system (Flanders, 1994). The formal mentoring helps organizations develop new recruits, graduate contestants, younger employees, women and ethnic minorities, and disabled employees. As a result, such organizations benefit from formal mentoring by identifying and managing the careers of the promising employees early in their organizational life.

**Networking:** Networking is connecting people and linking ideas and resources (Lipnack & Stamps, 1986). Loden (1986) suggests that creating a network is the best way that women leaders can work together and benefit each other.

Literature identifies the interaction among individuals, when their contacts are not governed by the rules of a formal organization, as an informal organization. The roots of cooperation and interaction between individuals in organizations can be traced to Chester Barnard's concept of informal and formal organizational relationships. Barnard (1987) emphasizes that people often contact and interact with each other without any conscious common or joint purposes. The personal contacts and interaction of the individuals which are characterized by Barnard as informal organizations affect the experience, knowledge, attitudes, and emotions of the people involved.

Informal organizations possess certain characteristics distinctive in each organization. However, they commonly exclude individuals of the opposite sex (Rizzo & Mendez, 1990). Since men have historically dominated the executive ranks, women are most likely to be excluded from informal networks and interaction at high-level managerial positions. Women's exclusion may also be an act of subtle discrimination or an attempt by dominant individuals to continue the status quo rather than biological or status differences. In contrast, Flanders (1994) suggests that some women in high positions do not want to create or join a women's network because they think that this may create "them and us" barriers between women and men in an organization.

When women are excluded from the informal organization, then they are denied equal access to informal interaction, communication, and often vital information (Kanter, 1977). The inability to access job related information will impede women's advancement to high-level hierarchial positions. Information about key decisions, how employee's performance is evaluated, and the future developments are often shared during informal interaction in social settings (Loden & Rosener, 1991). It is in the informal networking that women get to know the system better, are given the proper information to make their job visible, and receive the right resources to accomplish organizational projects and goals (Little, 1994). The result is that the women would be more prepared and gain greater recognition which lift them to a higher position on the organizational ladder.

It is important to emphasize that interaction must be with high status individuals who have information, are in a position of authority, and can be advantageous by providing support when it is needed (Campbell, 1988). Merrit Systems Protection Board (1992), in its study, A Question of Equity, reports that, networking is a significant factor helping women to learn about career opportunities. More than 50 percent of the women surveyed agreed that knowing a supervisor, the individual who had occupied their current position, or a friend had helped to secure the position they are currently in. Women's networks, however, do not always provide access to many individuals who are in a position of authority, have

information, or can be useful in job searches. Consequently, women may depend only on lateral support rather than networks that provide information and executive level support which is crucial for advancement to higher positions (Rizzo & Mendez, 1990).

Networking for female executives or potential executives becomes equivalent to the male's "old boy network." Networking, thus, helps women to gain information, contact, support, and find internal vigor and confidence to succeed as a leader (Flander, 1994; Loden, 1985). Furthermore, networking facilitates alliances, provides an easy gateway to information and the scheme, and fosters establishing contacts beyond the immediate circle.

Clearly, without commitment to building a network, and willingness to assist other women managers, cooperation and support among women will not exist. Only a strong commitment to enhance opportunities for all women in the organization can create a network which is thorough and more than just an elitist club.

**In summary**, mentoring is a professional relationship between two people of which, one is usually more senior, experienced, skillful, in a position to help others to learn and progress in their job, provides moral support and encouragement, becomes a role model, and acts as a counselor. Studies have pointed to the importance of mentorship. It provides access to greater experience, broader contacts, a role model,

moral support, encouragement and motivation, and increased self confidence which greatly influence the career progress of women. Mentors would make a difference in women's career tracks by showing the ropes, teaching the system, giving support and encouragement, creating opportunity and paving the way. The mentor, in turn, gains a supporter and a friend, access to a potential future member of their team, and opportunity to practice and refine their counselling and communication skills.

Networking is making connection among peers and sharing values and interests. It provides information, contacts, a forum to exchange ideas, opportunity for personal development, and a means to enlarge the immediate circle of contacts. Women are commonly excluded by men or they have excluded themselves from the informal organization and are denied equal access to informal interaction and communication. The lack of access to job related information hampers women's progress to high-level hierarchial positions.

## **Gender Images in Management**

Certain characteristics distinguish managers from general employees. In all likelihood the manager is dressed in a suit, is white and male (Freeman, 1991). In general, the foundation of management theory and the definition of managers represented a masculine and paternalistic manifest of this role (Kanter, 1977).

Kanter suggests that the early images of manager are associated with a "masculine ethic." She writes:

This "Masculine ethic" elevates the traits assumed to belong to some men to necessities for effective management: a tough-minded approach to problems; analytical abilities to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal, emotional in the interest of task accomplishment; and a cognitive superiority in problem solving and decision making

These characteristics which are presumed to belong to men, were progressed to exclusionary principles when women tried to enter management positions (Kanter p 22). Kanter (1977) further discusses that Neither the first drive in management theory which chose the "rational man" as a manager, while disregarding human elements, nor the second move which acknowledged the human factor, motivation and moral, significantly changed the perceived image of the manager as being masculine(Kanter, p.23).

There are almost no occupations in which there is an equal representation of men and women. For many decades in the U.S., men were thought to be the natural choice for managing a business. Research suggests that both males and females expect and anticipate managers to be men (Stivers, 1993). Women often viewed incapable to acquire skills for management by virtue of intellectual and emotional differences (Fenn, 1978). New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu once said that "Women do the lickin' and the stickin' while men plan the strategy" (Tolchin & Tolchin, 1974). Culture and societal views edifies men to be independent, unemotional, aggressive, and blasé , while women are trained and expected to be dependent and emotional (Hill, 1993). In general, these two antithetical behaviors of men and women are viewed to create a balanced society.

The issue of differing managerial styles for women and men has been examined, scrutinized, and has become increasingly controversial (Billard, 1992; Hale & Kelly, 1989). The major theories on differing managerial styles between men and women are developed by Rosner (1991), Bass (1985), and Loden (1985). Rosener's theory assumes that women, more than men, adopt an interactive managerial style, share authority and information, encourage participation, and try to make employees feel part of the organization. Rosener's theory further suggests that women use transformational leadership--motivating employees to transform their own goals and objectives, through regard for broader goals, into organizational



interests and objectives. They do not covet formal authority and won't resort to asserting their superiority in order to lead. Rosener suggests that sex role socialization may explain why women, more likely than men, are interactive leaders. While socialization patterns are changing, until recently, women were expected to be wives, mothers, nurses, teachers, and community volunteers. In any of these role, they were providing support, cooperation, and service to other people. Men, on the other hand, were expected to be competitive, tough, strong, and in control.

Transformational and transactional leadership were first conceptualized by James McGregor Burns (1978). Bass (1985), in his study of the subordinates of women and men managers, further developed this concept. Bass (1985) suggests that women managers characterize themselves as possessing what is known as "transformational" leadership. Men managers, on the other hand, describe themselves in a manner that is identified as "transactional" leadership. Transactional leadership views job performance as a series of transactions with employees; exchanging rewards for jobs performed properly by subordinates or punishment for improper or inadequate job performance by the employees. Transformational leadership provides an atmosphere which leads the subordinates to transform their narrow self-interest into broader organizational interest. Furthermore, transformational leaders will strive and achieve in raising people who are influenced

by different levels of need according to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs.

Maslow's (1954) theory of work motivation suggests that individuals have a hierarchy of needs. The theory suggests that only when the lower-level needs such as safety and security are fulfilled, then they seek to fulfill the higher-level social and personal needs of affiliation and recognition. The highest level of the hierarchy of need is self-actualization--the need to achieve one's full capacity. In the transformational process, generally, needs are upgraded and as a consequence of the elevation of needs, subordinates become self-reinforcing and self-directing (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership, in contrast, usually involves the leaders who indicate how the current needs of subordinates are to be fulfilled.

Loden (1985) suggests that unlike the traditional style of management, the feminine leadership style relies on rational as well as emotional data. Women, Loden suggests, view the world through two different lenses, hence, they respond to situations from both logical and passionate levels. In addition, women are perceived to prevent problems, while men let them occur and then they seek to solve them.

Some studies suggest that there is no significant difference between men and women managerial abilities (Astin & Lelan, 1991; Cole, 1985). For example, Astin and Leland (1991) point out that research indicates no clear pattern of difference in behavior of the male and female manager. However, they suggest that subordinates react differently to similar behaviors depending on whether the manager is a

woman or a man. Other studies have found significant gender difference exists between male and female leadership traits ( Hill, 1993; Kelly, Hale, et al., 1991). A masculine style reflects managing from position power by controlling resources and the organizational authority (Kelly, Hale, Burgess, 1991). Classical stereotype of traits of femininity excludes the power and perceives women and authority to be mutually exclusive (Cantor, et al., 1992). The established perception of femininity include traits like compassionate, sympathetic, complying, warm, and sensitive to others' needs. Since being decisive, tough, strong, authoritative, and independent does not appertain to and would not correlate with the social concept of femininity, the assertive, aggressive and autonomous women have been branded as undesirable, deviant and generally considered unacceptable (Cantor, et al., 1992).

Traditionally, effective management style has been synonymous with male managerial traits (Powell, 1993, Stiver, 1994). At its core, this opinion was, and to some extent still is, the basic doctrine of the classical views that men are better prepared to assume decision-making responsibilities. While men's traditional skills have been challenged or destroyed in the course of history by the new technological, educational, and industrial advancement, nevertheless, they have succeeded to capture more responsible positions and tasks which were distinguished as skilled occupations (Bradly, 1989). Schein's (1975) definition of a successful manager supports this stereotype. She depicts a successful manager as an individual who

manifests male characteristics, behavior, and attitude. Another distinct definition of characteristics of a successful manager is presented by Douglas McGregor. A successful manager in American culture, McGregor (1967) describes, is masculine, aggressive, firm, and without any portrayal of impassioned and feminine characteristics. He further suggests that the emotional expressions are viewed as weakness associated with women which hampers effective managerial functions. The classical stereotype of masculine traits described by McGregor are strong factors which form the societal perception of men, women, and effective management. Stiver (1993) points out that a number of researches show that both men and women expect leaders to be men. Studies suggest that managers secure more credit for solving problems than preventing them. As a result, while preventers may get satisfaction, problem solvers receive promotion. Barnes (1991) suggests that women prevent problems because they have not had an opportunity to solve problems as regularly as men in the work place. Carr-Ruffino (1991) posits that part of the problem is that women do not feel as skilled and confident as men when they encounter logical problem solving and confident decision making . As a result, women often prefer to avoid problems by preventing rather than confronting them.

There is, therefore, quite a dilemma facing women leaders and executives in our society. Whereas women managers are expected to exercise so called "male

traits" such as aggressiveness, independence, and decisiveness, yet, our society views these traits as "unfeminine" and unacceptable. The cultural stereotype of women as the kinder and softer gender, and at the same time expectations from women managers to display "masculine" characteristics give an ambiguous message to women and create a complex task of self definition. These expectations of women managers to juggle acts bear the expression of "damned if you do, damned if you don't." Women may feel a certain level of dissonance between their womanhood and the expected leadership traits (Stivers, 1993). Therefore, while it seems easy for women administrators to manage and provide leadership in an organization, societal and cultural expectation and stereotype undoubtedly puts additional pressure and strain on women managers and administrators. In addition, studies show that subordinates react differently to similar behaviors according to the gender of the manager (Astin & Leland, 1991). In retrospect, the American society has not been much kinder to men who demonstrate traits traditionally viewed as female. These men are considered weak and often even marked and labeled as "wimps" (Hill, 1993; Stiver, 1993).

The inharmonious relationship between "femininity" and leadership has created some image stereotypes of women managers. The "earth mother" is concerned with the feelings of other individuals; the "pet" is the mascot of the working group; the "manipulator" uses her feminine traits to get her way; the "workaholic" lacks

emotions and does not delegate; the "iron maiden" is heavy handed and tries too hard; the "egalitarian" claiming to view subordinates as colleagues by denying her own authority (Stivers, 1993).

The difference in the perception of male - female leadership style is also partially due to the social formation and societal structure. For example, Epstein (1988) argues that society creates, modifies, and transforms what is known as gender differences. The aggressive or straightforward behavior of women could be labeled as "bitchy," "having tantrums," or "overbearing." In contrast, the same traits in men is perceived as "tough," or "gruff," and, in general, is considered acceptable behavior (Cantor, et al., 1992; Kelly, Hale, & Burgess, 1991).

Women, as a result, bear the perception of negative calibers of feminine traits. The preceived stereotypes cast doubt in the minds of women of their qualifications and it becomes extremely difficult to find or become role models. These kinds of stereotypes result in a diminished opportunity for women to be effective and efficient on their job and result in many female managers feeling and attributing their advancement, in part, to reasons other than effectiveness and competence (Naff, 1993).

The management style of individuals in any organization may depend more on organizational culture than the gender of the manager (Bayes, 1991). Cultural forces in society can form and mold the behavioral patterns of both male and

female. Kanter (1977) suggests that it is the organizational structure, rather than the gender of the manager, which forms the managerial style and behavior of an individual. Bayes' (1991) study supports Kantor's view and further suggests that the percentage of female employees in the higher levels of an organization influences the women's behavior in that organization. In other words, when the number of female executives are few, they must embrace male behaviors in order to survive. But, when the number of women administrators increases and it composes more than 20 percent of the top level of an organization, they behave as women with less risk and fear of reparations.

Men managers are perceived to be competitive, forceful, risk takers, better team players, and tend to be more independent, opportunistic, aggressive, and impersonal than women in their jobs, while avoiding conflict by regressing to authority and/or passive resistance (Kelly, Hale, & Burgess, 1991). A feminine style, on the other hand, would emphasize on interpersonal relationships and personal commitment to others (Loden, 1985). Kelly, et al. (1991) add that women executives prefer win-win strategy, an approach to conflict management, and pay more attention to managing relationships. Women managers, are perceived as having advantage over men in giving information, being receptive to new ideas, and working toward interpersonal relationships.

More recently, however, the perception of effective management style being "male" managerial traits, receives less support and has been renounced (Newman, 1993). With this change of perceptions and the increased number of women in leadership positions, in both the private and public sector, women increasingly find less need to "look" and "act" like men (Loden, 1985). Furthermore, researchers have turned their attention to the possibility that, because women have different personal traits and life experiences than men, their approach to managing organizations are distinct, and that these differences in leadership may actually benefit organizations by providing a more dynamic and flexible atmosphere to the increasingly complex organizational environment (Stiver, 1993).

Similarly, Freeman (1991) reports that what is perceived as female managerial style is equally or more effective than traditionally aggressive and authoritarian male styles of management. Loden (1985) contends that feminine leadership style utilizes the women's natural forte and traits to manage and they succeed without conforming to masculine managerial style. The feminine leadership style, unlike the traditional male style of management, relies on thinking and feeling and responds to circumstances from both a rational as well as an emotional level (Loden, 1985). Rosener (1990) in her article, "Ways Women Lead," discusses the theory of women's distinctive leadership style and posits that women use a participative managerial style, encourage interaction, and share information and



authority. She further suggests that women use transformational leadership to raise the subordinates to a higher awareness about the issues, to motivate them to take on greater responsibilities, and view their goals and organizational objectives as the same integral part of a whole.

There has been a growing appreciation for many traits which have been recognized as people-oriented skills, and are considered essential for future leadership success. These skills -- intuitive management, considerations for people, creative problem-solving, and interpersonal skills -- are the very same skills that many women were taught to develop and use from early childhood (Loden, 1985). At its core, the feminine traits, which had little or no room in the world of early management concepts, are being identified and acknowledged as crucial elements of an approach to effective management. Guy (1993) suggests that the "strengths that are attributed to women, such as mediating, facilitating,... are too valuable to ignore. The fact that women pay attention to the human dimension is exactly the reason they should have a place on center stage..." (Guy, 1993)

**In summary,** the literature review associated with women as executives encompasses broad areas of perceptions of women senior administrator. Most theories suggest a differing managerial style for women and men. Successful managers are viewed to be men who exercise "male traits". Men managers are perceived to be aggressive, impersonal, independent, competitive, and decisive.

Women are characterized as emotional, compassionate, and sensitive who are incapable to acquire management skills. Women, more than men, share authority and information, encourage participation and adopt interactive managerial style.

### **Women in Public Administration**

In the U.S., the acceptance of women into public administration did not occur until the mid 1800s, when they started to fill clerical positions and count money in the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Guy, 1993; Stivers, 1991). For the rest of the 19th century, counting currency became an exclusive function of females in the American federal government (Aron, 1987).

With the growth of public administration, the number of women in clerical positions increased dramatically. Women became known as capable stenographers because of their ability to be sympathetic, agreeable, and courteous ( Guy, 1993; Kanter, 1977). Women's entrance into government employment, however, did not happen because they were sympathetic or agreeable individuals, but rather it became a marriage of middle class women, who needed decent work, and government offices which needed cheap labor (Aron, 1987). Employment of women in the government was a significant "blow" to the gender-based occupations in the government and private businesses (Stivers, 1991). The admission of women to the

government violated the notion of separate domain -- a belief that government was a man's turf, and the private sector a women's sphere.

The passage of the Civil Service Act of 1883 established a merit system of employment in the federal civil service (Kim & Mashayekh, 1994). Between 1884 and 1894, however, discrimination in hiring practices was very evident in the federal civil positions (Aron, 1987). World War I resulted in a significant increase in the number of women being employed in the government. The increased employment of women in the public sector raised the demands for equal opportunity and equal pay which subsequently led to the creation of the Women's Bureau in 1920 -- an entity of the federal government focusing specifically on the issues and needs of women (Stivers, 1991). The women's entry into the work force continued through World War II. However, women primarily were employed in clerical positions, and most left their jobs permanently when they faced pregnancy and child care responsibilities (Guy, 1993; Stiver, 1991).

World War II created an abundance of job opportunities for women in multitudes of professions where they had earlier been excluded. By the end of World War II, American public administration was transformed into a modern bureaucratic state (Shafritz & Hyde, 1987). At the same time, the female labor force participation continued to grow (Table 2.5). Nevertheless, the percentage of

women employees in the federal government continued to trail behind the private sector.

The Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964, and later, in 1972, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA) brought all state and local governments, governmental agencies and industries and political subdivisions under the coverage of the Act, and became an impetus to bring more women to public service and to increase their numbers in the higher grades. The government's effort to increase the number of women in civil service became a major objective of the federal personnel policy in the 1970's. The goal was to recruit a "representative bureaucracy" (Nachmias & Rosenbloom, 1973). The implication was that any economic class or group should have the same proportional civil service representation as it has in the population. Krislov (1974) suggested that the notion of representative bureaucracy was that the broad social groups should have representatives, spokespersons, and officeholders in political and administrative positions.

**Table 2.5**

<b>Labor Force Participation Rates Of Women 1940-1993 (in percent)</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL - 16 YEARS AND OLDER</b>
1940	26.5
1960	35.0
1965	39.3
1966	40.3
1967	41.1
1968	41.6
1969	42.7
1970	43.3
1971	43.4
1972	43.9
1973	44.7
1974	45.7
1975	46.3
1976	47.3
1977	48.4
1978	50.0
1979	50.9
1980	51.5
1981	52.1
1982	52.6
1983	52.9
1984	53.6
1985	54.5
1986	55.3
1987	56.0
1988	56.6
1989	57.4
1990	57.5
1991	57.3
1992	57.8
1993	57.9

Source: Monthly Labor Review, July 1994, U.S. Bureau of Census, 1940, 1960.

By 1970, women constituted over 33 percent of full-time federal government employees, but, majority of them were converged in lower level grades. In grades 13 to 15, only three percent of employees were female and only about one percent in grades 16 to 18 (Stiver, 1991). It is important to note that, there was not a significant change in the percentages of female executives between 1959 and 1970.

Due to the passage of additional legislation and the emphasis on representative bureaucracy women have made improvement in their representation in the federal government. Less barriers and less discrimination towards pay and advancement have been the drawing card for women. By 1990, women constituted eighteen percent of all employees in grades 13 to 15 and eleven percent in SES (U.S. Merit System Protection Board, 1992). Table 2.6 demonstrates the employment of women in different grade levels between 1975 and 1993.

Today, women hold almost half of the white-collar jobs in the executive branch of the federal government. Yet, despite the improvement, the number of women in executive positions are disproportionately low (Table 2.7) Like the private sector, the path of women's integration to management ranks in the public sector has been rough and difficult. There have been factors which restrained women's entry into the rank of management in public administration. These factors are composed of: discriminatory practices in recruitment and promotion, occupational sex segregation, employee evaluations, old-boy networks, lack of

female role models, and assignments which would not help women advance (Bayes, 1991; Bayes and Cole, 1991).

**Table 2.6**

**Full-Time Civilian General Schedule Employment Of  
Women By Grade 1975-1993**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GS 1-4</b>	<b>GS 5-8</b>	<b>GS 9-12</b>	<b>GS 13-15</b>
1975	76%	59%	17%	5%
1977	76%	61%	19%	5.7%
1979	78%	72%	22%	7%
1981	77%	65%	25%	9%
1983	77%	67%	27%	10%
1985	77%	67%	30%	12%
1987	76%	68%	32%	14%
1989	75%	69%	35%	17%
1991	74%	70%	37%	20%
1993	71%	71%	39%	22%

The present statistics support Bayes' view. Almost 88 percent of the top level administrative positions are occupied by men. The male dominant managerial and leadership positions in the executive level may result in the development of the evaluation and assessment of the leadership skills and performances to be based on the male's viewpoint and be appraised by men.

**Table 2.7**

**Representation of Women Within the SES Grade Level  
in the American Federal Government  
1979-1994**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total of SES</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1979	6,780	348	5.1	6,432	94.9
1980	6,983	462	6.6	6,521	93.4
1981	6,451	373	5.8	6,078	94.2
1982	6,736	416	6.2	6,320	93.8
1983	6,924	468	6.8	6,456	93.2
1984	6,988	498	7.1	6,490	92.9
1985	6,818	520	7.6	6,298	92.4
1986	6,742	567	8.4	6,175	91.6
1987	6,948	602	8.7	6,346	91.3
1988	7,108	669	9.4	6,438	90.6
1989	7,305	741	10.1	6,564	89.9
1990	7,590	851	11.2	6,739	88.8
1991	8,012	958	12	7,054	88.0
1992	8,200	1,025	12.5	7,175	87.5
1993	7,816	1,016	13.0	6,800	87
1994	7,509	1,242	16.5	6,267	83.5

Source: Office of Executive Policy and Services; Office of Personnel Management



## **Bureaucratic Decision Makers and Career Advancement**

From the early twentieth century, studies have attempted to establish and identify the significance of the growing society of executives in federal government (Lynn, 1987). Studies of the role of public executives, especially in federal government, has increased with the growth of the government and the evolution of the role of government executives. These studies, however, tend to be marginally concerned with political and administrative behavior of the executives and more interested in the description of the functions and power of departmental officials and their actual responsibilities and activities. In fact, Lynn (1987) suggests that the students of politics and policy making have not produced a coherent theory of the behavior of public executives. The politics-administration dichotomy which, for over 50 years, promoted administrative governance based on neutrality lost its elegance in the early 1940s. By the end of World War II, and as a result of efforts exerted for the war, the notion of separation of administration and politics was changes to an inter-twisting phenomenon (Stiver, 1991).

After World War II, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, studies of executives in federal government revealed developing characteristics of government executives. Marver Bernstein (1958) in his study, *"The Job of the Federal*

*Executive,*" reports on the political appointees and suggests that government executives are "transient amateurs" who are, most of the time, unable to exercise control over the professional bureaucracy. The perception of government executives as "amateurs" or "incapable transients," since then, has been changed and redefined. Subsequent studies attempted to elucidate the role and characteristics of public executives. One line of studies, Lynn (1987) suggests focused on the actual power and responsibilities of the executives. The other studies aimed at the on-the-job behavior, leadership strategies, survival and coping of government officials. Lynn posits that the latter was an attempt to find a metaphore to characterize the bureaucratic behavior and managerial style of government executives (Lynn, 1987).

The functions, role, and efficiency of the federal executives have been discussed by various authors. The results of studies by Warner et al (1963), Neustadt (1978), and Helco (1977) suggest that the public executive, on average, cannot be more effective than they are because there are elements which may challenge, shape, or hinder the executives' role. Neustadt's (1978) study, specially, focused on the characteristic of the government executive's responsibility and authority. He suggests that federal executives have their own legal base, as well as their own mandate to administer. They have their own special clients, friends, and foes outside the governmental department. They have different masters to please;

for example, not only they are responsible to their superiors but, also, to other entities such as Congress, public, employees and staff. Consequently, these executives necessarily function within political, personal, and organizational constraints.

Warner, et al. (1963) suggest that federal executives cannot act aggressively or noisily. Assertive behavior of government officials may invite unwanted and undesirable attention from superiors, opposition groups, or the public. In 1977, Hugh Helco, noting that there is little information available about the environment of government executives, pointed out that executives acquire knowledge by on the job learning. He suggested that the interest groups, legislators, and career program officials function above the reach and limits of executives and consequently become a constant challenge to the authority of high ranking government managers.

The second line of research has been focused on the executive's behavior. Lasswell (1967) and Greenstein (1969) suggest that the personality of the government leaders, their beliefs and values, and professional orientation would have a profound effect on the implementation of public policies. Anthony Downs (1967) in his book Inside Bureaucracy, suggests that there are five types of bureaucratic decision-makers. These "ideal type" of bureaucrats are classified by Downs as climbers, conservers, zealots, advocates, and statesmen. The climbers and conservers are motivated purely by self-interest. In contrast, the zealots, advocates and statesmen

combine self-interest with loyalty to other larger values. Whereas the sole motivation of climbers is the desire to maximize power, income, and prestige, the conservers seek to retain their power, income, and prestige. Zealots seek power for their own as well as for influencing policies and concepts to which they are loyal. Advocates, in comparison, seek to effect a broader set of functions and organizations than zealots and hence seek power to effect relevant policies. Finally, statesmen seek power to influence national policies and actions. These bureaucratic decision-makers, consequently, pursue their ambitions through different tactics and behaviors.

Downs (1967) suggests that bureaus advance individuals who have or will perform well in their organizational positions. Further, he suggests that individuals can be promoted by either pleasing their superiors or score well in the standards (i.e., schoolings, test grades, experience, etc.) which are utilized to evaluate and appraise their qualifications or both.

In their striving to increase their power, income, and prestige, climbers pursue promotion, aggrandizement, and/or jumping, of which promotion is the most desirable to the climbers. The practice of increasing their present power by utilizing promotion, aggrandizement, and jumping is generally accompanied by changes in existing functions. Thus, climbers promote and support changes which are beneficial to their success.

Conservers, on the other hand, do not attempt to make any changes in the status quo. They are not as ambitious as climbers, do not actively pursue promotion or aggrandizement, are not willing to gamble, and oppose any changes in their power, income, and prestige. They are, nevertheless, promoted because they do a satisfactory job, are in the right place at the right time, or because a shift in an external or internal environment increase their power and prestige. Down suggests that in the long run, a vast majority of officials in bureaus become conservers due to intrinsic and existing pressures.

Zealots, advocates, and statesmen who combine their self- interest with loyalty to public interests and other greater values are called "mixed-motive officials." Downs (1967) suggests that the "mixed-motive" officials are generally idealistic in nature and relatively optimistic in character. However, they differ conspicuously in other respects. Officials become advocates for the policies they consider to be significant, are able to influence, and can use to acquire or secure more resources. The net result is that advocates enhance their power, income, and prestige attached to their positions.

Zealots are inspired by drastic and an intense expansion of their sacred policies. To achieve their objectives, they oppose status quo, support organizational changes, attract attention to deficiencies in bureaus, and are even willing to antagonize their superiors. Although zealots play a crucial role in altering existing

bureaus, their function to form new ones are critical. When their sacred policies suddenly becomes a significant social relevance and swiftly expands, then the zealots are jostled to decision making positions since they are identified with the policy and have more knowledge about it.

Statesmen are loyal to the society or to the nation. However, bureau specialization generates pressure upon the officials of the bureau to be an advocate of and loyal to the bureau. As a result, statesmen in many cases are forced to behave like advocates. Although statesmen may be found at lower levels in a bureau, they are also assigned to high-ranking positions with substantial responsibilities or influence of which the statesmen's loyalties deem appropriate.

Downs' theory of classification of bureaucratic decision-making is significant since it also identifies factors that determine the particular type of officials in a bureau. To the extent that behavior patterns of women executives in the SES can be identified, where would their style likely "fit in" in the culture and characteristics described by Downs?

Sandra Schoenberg (1973) describes four types of public executives: innovator, developer, maintainer, and figurehead. The "innovator" is goal oriented and highly motivated, with an appetite for new ideas and less interest for organizational detail and implementation procedure. The innovator would accept a role which gives him/her a chance to start a new program or a new agency. There is

a close personal and informal relationship with his/her staff and subordinates. Whenever possible, the innovators will delegate decision making responsibility to their staff and expends a little effort to develop a systematic organizational structure. The “developer” possesses the characteristics of the innovator with interest in longterm success and stability. Agency achievements and institutionalization of new programs have more value to the developers than their own personal accomplishment. The developers’ need for personal attainment is satisfied by organizational achievements. They view hierarchial organizational structure as essential means to achieve the ends. The developers’ association with their staff is more formal than the innovators. They expend effort on the allocation of authority and role definition dilemma, and esblishes some guidelines or limitations for staff decision-making. The “maintainer” is a leader who has the ability to maintain current activities, has little or no taste for new programs, avoids conflicts, and preserves a sound internal relationship. The maintainers attempt to maintain the current and existing programs while emphasizing long-term objectives. Their emphasis on hierarchy and order is similar to classical bureaucrats. Their relationship with their superiors, staff as well as constituents are based on the formal rules of the organization. They view personal relationships with staff as being unprofessional which may lead to unfair treatment. Maintainers stress value-free judgements on individuals and issues. Their need are satisfied through

maintaining their position, avoiding conflict by balancing outside forces, and by loyalty to the rules of the organization. Finally, the "figurehead" is a person who occupies and fills a position. The figureheads baroque image or friendship with their superior often secured their position -- for they usually lack expertise in the area of their position. They delegate decision making to their staff frequently. The contribution of the figureheads may be only limited to facilitating communication between political leaders and citizens. Their association with the constituents reward the figurehead by satisfying their need of expositionism and adoration.

The activities and characteristics of bureaucratic officials often portrayed in various studies in terms of business executives. Maccoby (1976) identifies four types of executives: craftsman, jungle fighter, company man, and gamesman. The "craftsman" searches for opportunities and seeks appealing work; "jungle fighter" seeks authority and has an appetite for power; "company man" strives to maintain the integrity of the organization; and "gamesman" appreciates the challenge of victory in competitive circumstances.

Characteristics of the functions or capacity of bureaucratic administrators are also applied to well known "laws." Parkinson's Law (1987) which declares that "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." Parkinson explains that "The fact is that the number of the officials and the quantity of the work are not related to each other at all. The rise in the total of those employed is



governed by Parkinson's Law and would be much the same whether the volume of the work were to increase, diminish, or even disappear" (P.251). The Peter Principle: "In a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." Peter and Hull (1987) suggest that, it is hard to find a system that each and every employee is in the stage of hierarchy which they reach their level of incompetence. So, they add, "Work is accomplished by those employees who have not yet reached their level of incompetence" (Peter & Hull, 1987, p.389).

Mintzberg (1989)suggests that the manager's function can be described by an organized set of behaviors associated with a position. He describes a manager as a person in charge of an organization or one of its subunits. This definition by Mintzberg would refer not only to the chief executive officer of a major organization but, also, includes others such as a foreman, head coach, religious leader, cabinet minister, agency head, and from street gang leaders to the United States President (Mintzberg, 1989). A manager's role, as Mintzberg describes, is composed of ten functions which are divided into three major categories; interpersonal roles; informational roles; and decisional roles. The first category "interpersonal roles" derived directly from formal authority and include figurehead, leader, and liaison. These roles are significant to the smooth operation of the organization. Managers, as a "figurehead," spend part of their time in ceremonial functions related to their status. Manager's role as a "leader" involves the

responsibility for the people's work in the organization. Managers act as a leader in actions such as hiring, training, motivation of staff, and harmonizing the employees need with the objectives and goals of the organization. The "liaison" cultivates contacts outside the hierarchy of command primarily to gather information. These networks of contacts are with peers and other people, and are generally informal, private, oral and quite effective.

One of the key aspects of a manager's function is processing information. The informational roles of the manager's function consists of three positions: monitor, disseminator, and spokesman. As "monitor," they scan the environment for information, question liaisons and subordinates, and through a network of personal contacts, they receive unsolicited information. Managers in their "disseminator" role, transmit some details to subordinates who have otherwise no access to privileged information. Furthermore, when employees can not easily contact with each other, the manager, relays information from one to another. Finally, in their role as "spokesman," managers communicate some of their information to people outside their organization.

Decision-making in any organization is greatly influenced by the managers and their authority. Mintzberg (1989) depict four roles for the manager as decision-maker: entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. Managers as "entrepreneurs" explore new ideas to use to improve their organization

so it can adapt to the changing environment. In their role as "entrepreneur," managers are voluntary initiators of change in their organization. In a role of "disturbance handler," managers response to circumstances are involuntary. Often, the environmental changes are beyond the control of managers and when the initial sign of disturbance is ignored or consequences of the manager's action are not anticipated, then crisis arise which managers must devote their time and effort to respond. One of the functions of the manager in his or her decisional role is "resource allocator." Managers make the decision of what will be appropriated to which individual in the organization. These decisions will determine how jobs will be divided and coordinated. The final decisional role of a manager is the function of "negotiator." Mintzberg suggests that a substantial part of manager's time is spent in negotiation. He adds that negotiation is an integral part of the manager's job since they have the information and authority to commit organizational resources.

**In summary,** the twentieth century has been identified as the period of focus on management. Earlier thought and studies of executives in public administration, like the private sector, focused on the functions of the executive, and stressed the separability of politics and administration. The role of the government executive has evolved with the growth of the government in the New Deal and post World War II era. In the 1950s and into the 1960s, studies focused on the characters, functions and behavior of public executives on the job. The functions, authority, and

responsibilities of public executives are influenced by element within or outside their organizations.

Downs (1967) identifies five types of bureaucratic executives: climbers and conservers who are motivated purely by self-interest, and zealots, advocates, and statesmen which combine self-interest with loyalty to other greater values. Downs theory distinguishes each executive type by the type of behavior associated with them.

### **Career Advancement in the Federal Government**

The potential for advancement in the federal government may depend on the following factors. Tenure in the the federal positions, formal education, mobility, commitment to the job and desire for advancement, of which the two most significant factors in career advancement in the federal civil service are experience (tenure) and education (U.S. MSPB, 1992). OPM's Guide to SES Qualifications suggests that appointment to the SES positions must be based on merit competition and the Executive Core Qualifications (OPM, SES-94-01, Aug. 94). The Qualification Review Board (QRB) at OPM reviews and certifies managerial qualifications based on candidates demonstrated executive experience and successful participation in an SES candidate development program or special or unique qualities (OPM, SES-94-03, May 1994). This suggests that there is emphasis on

experience, performance and leadership for appointment to the SES. In fact, the survey conducted by the U.S. MSPB (1992) about the effect of various factors on federal employees career advancement reveals that over 80 percent of both men and women feel that their work experience helped their careers. Sixty percent of women and 58 percent of the men reported that their previous work experience helped immensely in their career advancement. Women more than men (79 percent vs. 67 percent) reported that their performance or "track" record has helped them greatly with their career advancement.

Using the barrier/facilitator model, and based on the nature of data, this study will examine the characteristics of the female executives that might have influenced their career advancement. Furthermore, the organizational factors which have formed and facilitated advancement opportunity will be explored.

## **Chapter III**

### **Data and Methodology**

**Purpose:** Despite increased number of women in managerial and executive level in the federal services in the past decade, the disparity between the ratio of female executives and percentages of women employed remains. The purpose of this study is to identify and learn about the common characteristics of women executives who have become the members of the SES in the American federal government.

This chapter will discuss the population and the sample, the instrument, research questions, and statistical procedures.

**Population:** The population under study consisted of executive women in the SES. The data from the Office of Executive Resources of the OPM (SES 93-1 Oct. 93) reflect the following characteristics of the SES members. The average age of executives in the SES is 52 years and they have 24 years of federal service. Almost 50 percent of all SES members are between 45 and 54 years old. More than one-third (thirty-six percent) of them are over age 55. Almost 65 percent of all SES members have an educational level higher than a bachelor's degree, and about 33 percent have a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. More than fourteen hundred serve in the

Department of Defense, followed by the Departments of Health and Human Services, the Treasury and NASA which have more than five hundred SES members each in their ranks. Thirteen percent are women, 87 percent are men, 9 percent are minorities and 91 percent are non-minorities. Ninety-four percent are career appointees, and the remaining SES members are non-career and limited term appointees (U.S. OPM, Human Resources Development Group, SES-94-3, 1994; Office of Executive Resources, Sep. 94-7). The executives surveyed for this study include career and non-career appointees.

The target population for this study comprised all and only women members of SES in the American federal government, totaling 958 at the time of survey in 1991, who became senior executives by virtue of having been career appointees, or by selection in general SES positions or limited term appointments. The population was identified by the Office of Personnel Management which had the name and addresses of all SES members in the federal government and had the task of distributing the survey. The respondents were guaranteed confidentiality of the questionnaire and its gathered information.

**Sample and Instruments:** The sample consisted of 287 women executives in the SES who returned usable questionnaires. The instrument was a questionnaire (Appendix A) designed by Drs. Pindur and Cornelius of Old Dominion University

and distributed along with a cover letter (Appendix B) by the Office of Personnel Management to women executives in SES.

The design of the questionnaire was based on existing theories, years of experience, knowledge and prolonged engagement with the culture of the SES environment. The questionnaire was designed using a variety of theories and sources including Downs theory of how bureaucratic officials behave, and Becker's human capital investment theory. The survey questionnaire were also designed to gather additional information for demographic and descriptive reports including information on career advancement experiences, personal attributes and mentoring. In addition, the instrument was field tested and reviewed by executives and experts in the OPM to provide feed back regarding clarity of statements, direction of the questionnaire, and insight and additional information appropriate for the study. The instrument was revised based upon the comments, critique, and suggestions of OPM executives and were utilized after it was revised.

The survey consisted of 91 questions in nine sections and was designed to obtain information about career development experience, strategies for advancement, attitudes about position in their organization, barriers to advancement, managerial style and strategies, attitudes toward both male and female superiors and subordinates, perception of ethical conduct and support by superiors, and demographic data. Furthermore, open-ended questions were provided for



respondents for additional comments regarding their career achievements, barriers to advancement experienced and ethical conducts in the work place. In general, the instrument was designed to identify personal characteristics and to create a prevalent profile of the women executives in SES. The 5-point Likert Scale was used in several sections including career development experiences, strategies to get ahead, barriers to advancement, managerial support, and ethical conduct. The anchors on the scale were "Strongly Agree" [1] to "Strongly Disagree" [5].

This study is using the above data to provide demographic profiles of women in SES; examine their strategies for success, their career advancement experiences and perceived barriers to upward mobility; and finally contribute to the existing awareness of women members of SES.

The research on women employees in the federal government is confined to few available reports administered and disseminated by the General Accounting Office (GAO), the Office of Executive Resources of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) have basically surveyed the pay, changes in the numbers, their status in the SES, and some general SES statistics. The studies of women in the executive ranks in the federal government are limited to the survey conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (1988) and research by Danity Little (1994) on the learning and experiences of SES women in their career progression. Some of the demographics

from the studies of the OPM and MSPB and Little will be compared to the data which will be reported in this study.

**Limitations of Study:** The broad purpose of this survey was to get a clear insight into the characteristics, experience, and skills of the women in the SES. There are recognized limitations to this study. The key limitations include: (1) data collection was solely based on a mailed questionnaire. There were no direct contacts, personal interviews, or personal observations of the respondents. There were no opportunities to hear, see, or experience exactly how the SES women behaved in their position as executives. The analysis of this survey, as a result, relies on the self-reported behaviors of the respondents. Because of the limitations imposed by the Office of Personnel Management there was only one round of surveys and no follow-up questionnaires or reminders could be sent to the respondents. Consequently, the analysis was based on the usable returned questionnaire. (3) There was full reliance on construct validity; and (4) survey participation was voluntary.

### **Research Questions**

Characteristics of women executives in SES are related to their employment and career success in the federal government executive ranks. There are certain characteristics associated with women, which facilitate or hinder the women

representation in top managerial level. Studies suggests that educational level and field (Broder & Langbein, 1989; Fuller & Schoenberger, 1991), and marital status and children (Kelly, et al., 1991) and career advancement of women.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) said "research is worth doing if it builds knowledge." The objective is to provide general information about demographics of the SES women, based on descriptive reporting which includes age, race and ethnicity, marital status, number of children, years in the present position, and educational level and field so they could be compared with other executives across different fields. This research therefore explores variables associated with the SES women's demographic in the following question:

Q1. What are the demographic characteristics of women executives in SES?

Over the past few decades, many studies have discussed the many different barriers to the career advancement of women. The major categories of barriers to women's career advancement include (a) human capital barriers such as insufficient training and education, domestic constraints (Green & Quester, 1982, Hale & Kelly, 1989; Newman, 1993; Zellman, 1976); (b) sociopsychological barriers such as sex-role socialization and role-stereotype (Cook, 1985; Hale & Kelly, 1989; Newman, 1993); and systematic barriers such as sex segregation, short career ladder opportunities, limited or no access to network (Newman, 1993; Vertz, 1985;

Zellman, 1976). The following question will address some of these factors to assess their effect on women representation or promotion into SES ranks.

**Q2. What are the perceived barriers to advancement experienced by women in SES?**

Downs (1967) suggests that bureaucratic executives, depending upon their type, utilize different strategies to increase their power, income and prestige. This research will distinguish the strategies that have helped SES women to achieve their executive ranks in the federal services.

**Q3. What are the different strategies used by women to advance to SES level?**

The style of leadership of women is being observed and studied as more and more women move into executive ranks. The International Women's Forum survey of women and men managers in 1989 points out that there are two ways to lead an organization: transformational and transitional (Little, 1994). Downs (1967) identifies five types of executives in bureaucratic organizations: climbers, conservers, zealots, advocates, and statesmen. This study will explore the leadership style of women executives in the federal services by identifying the behavior of executive women.

**Q4. How do women in SES describe their management style in terms of executive types as characterized by Downs?**

**Statistical Procedure:** In order to provide information about the SES women the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) is utilized to provide means, ranges, and frequency distributions of the responses and the subjects. The process begins with descriptive data consisting of overall sociodemographic profiles of female members of SES will be presented. The information includes marital status, children, age, race and ethnicity, educational level and field, and the number of years in the federal government and in SES positions. This data is reviewed and compared with demographic characteristics of women in recent studies of female executives in the state, federal and private organizations.

Second, the mean values of responses to the questions in section of career development experience is computed, categorized base on the definition of the statements, and is ranked based on the ratio of agreements. The comments in the open-ended statements regarding their experiences and attributes are classified based on their contents and is incorporated into analysis to further explain the experiences and attributes of the SES women which have contributed to their success.

Tables are presented to show the degree of managerial support and to identify the executive behavior exhibited by the SES women. Strategies to get ahead are computed to provide means and standard deviation. Since computation of a mean is based on all observations, it presents a clear presentation of central tendencies of what are conveyed by the data. The statements of strategies to get ahead, in which

the respondents have the greater degree of agreement, are presented in descending order and will be used to analyze their links to the executive behavior.

Section IV of the questionnaire, perceived barriers to advancement, are grouped in categories of barriers to women's advancement as they relate to the literature reviewed. The comments provided by respondents are included in the analysis to explain the SES women's perception and their experiences of barriers to advancement.

**Summary,** the data for this research was collected by Drs. Pindur and Cornelius in 1991. The population were the SES women who received the questionnaire. The survey instrument was designed based on the theories of bureaucratic behavior and issues associated with women in top level management. The data were used to answer some major questions and to learn about women who have shattered through the glass ceiling to the executive ranks in the federal government.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS:**

This chapter presents and analyzes the results from the survey of SES women conducted in 1991 (See Appendix A). First, demographic characteristics of SES women will be presented. Next, personal experiences and traits, strategies to get ahead, and perceived barriers to advancement (as they are related to the research questions) will be discussed. Third, using Downs' theory of executive typology, the type and behavior of executives identified and performed by the respondents as well as the executive type which they prefer for themselves and their superiors will be analyzed.

Not all participants experienced the same event or circumstance, yet a pattern of common experiences and traits are reported. The information used for analysis was provided by 287 respondents who are female executives in the SES of the American federal government. These members of the SES represent 30 percent of the population of 958 women executives in the SES, in 1991, the time of the survey (U.S. Office of Personnel Management).

Despite their common characteristics, this group of female SES members is not wholly homogeneous. Within the group there are different educational fields,

levels, marital status, ethnicity, and family incomes levels. Among varying types of female executives, some relatively well-distinguished subgroups can be identified with their own representative profile. Attempts were made to determine whether differences in marital status, race and ethnicity, educational level and educational field affect and represent a difference in the responses of female SES members. Because of characteristics of the subgroups (i.e. very low observations in some subgroups), statistical models to test the significant differences between these subgroups could not present tenable results.

### **Participants' Profile**

The first research question was, what are the demographic characteristics of women executives in the SES? It is important to identify personal characteristics of successful women who have broken barriers and succeeded to executive ranks. This data can be used to identify and define women who had held positions of executives in the federal government which traditionally was held by men. Further, it provides the opportunity to compare their profile with those of other executives in the public and private sectors.

In 1991, the average female executive in the SES was 47 years old, ranging from 33 to 71. Almost 85 percent of were under age 55 (Table 4.1). This compares favorably to the results of a study by a University of Southern California researcher, Marion Wood (quoted in Ann Morrison, et al. 1992), who found that the average

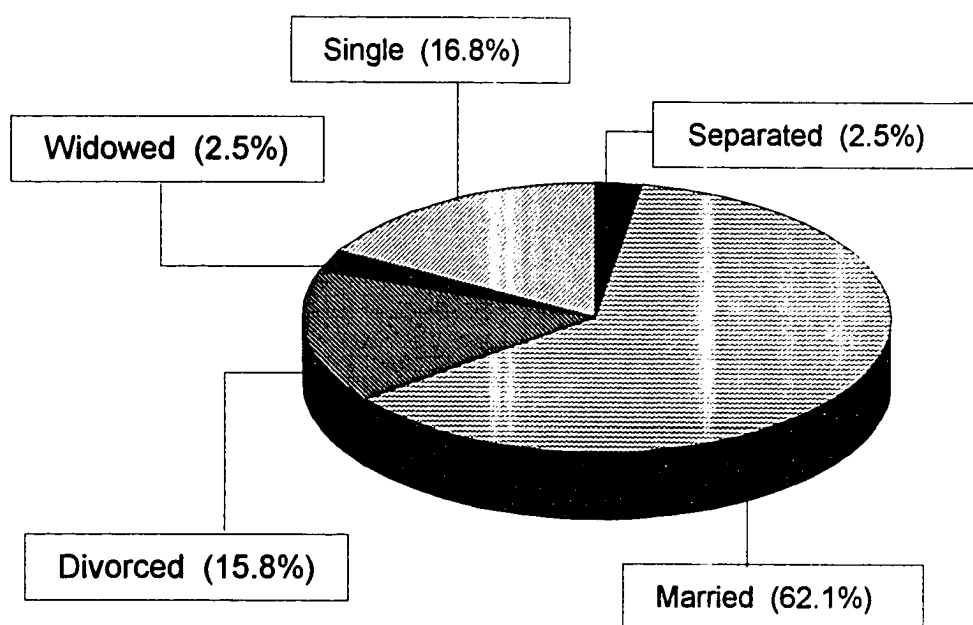


age of women executives in the United States was 46. This would suggest that the 287 women executives who participated in this study fit the national pattern. A more recent study of executives of Fortune 100 companies by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) revealed that women executives were younger, with an average age of 41 years old and a range from 30 to 60 (Little, 1994). The government executive survey of SES women reported that 60 percent of female executives were married (Nodell, 1988). In this study, 177 SES women (62.1 percent) were married, a figure that is only slightly higher than the government report and almost 12 percent lower than the CCL report of 74 percent for executive women of Fortune 100 companies. Forty-five participants (15.8 percent) were divorced, 7 (2.5 percent) were separated, 48 (16.8 percent) were single, and 7 (2.5 percent) were widowed. Almost 60 percent of SES executives had children with an average of 2 children in their household. The sample consisted of 249 Caucasians (87 percent), 20 African Americans (7 percent), seven Others--non-specified--(2.4 percent), five Hispanics (1.7 percent), and two Asian Americans (.7 percent). Nearly 85 percent of the subjects consider their job a predominantly male occupation.

In sum, the data suggests that women executives in the SES are predominantly white, most likely to be married and have children, and overwhelming majority are under age 55 suggesting that the existing group of

**Figure 4.1**

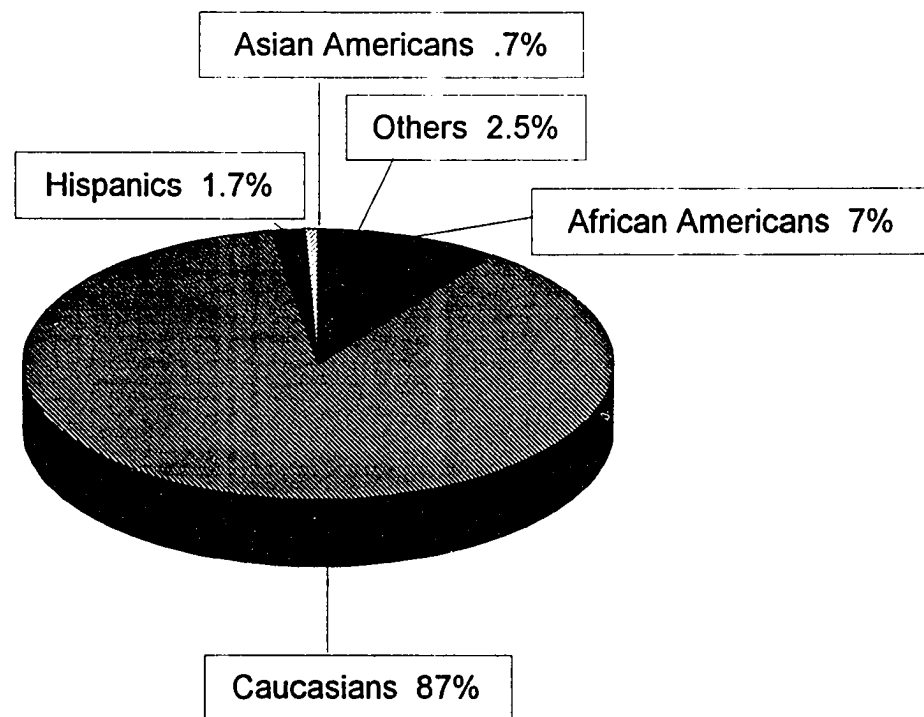
**Distribution Of The SES Women By Marital Status**



**\*Because of the rounding the totals may not equal 100%.**

**Figure 4.2**

**Distribution of the SES Women By Race and Ethnicity**



**\*Because of the rounding the totals may not equal 100%.**

**Table 4.1**

**Sociodemographic Profile of SES Women**

Average Age	47 years
Range of Age	33 to 71 years
Average years in Federal Service	19.8 years
Range of service	less than 1 year to 15 years
<b>Marital Status:</b>	
Married	62.1 percent
Single	16.8 percent
Divorced	15.8 percent
Separated	2.5 percent
Widowed	2.5 percent
<b>With Children</b>	60 percent
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity:</b>	
Caucasian	87 percent
African American	7 percent
Hispanic	1.7 percent
Asian American	.7 percent
Others (non-specified)	2.4 percent

women executives can stay a member of the SES for at least the next decade.

**Educational Level and Field:** Female SES members are generally highly educated.

Higher education seems to be a cardinal ingredient for advancing to the SES ranks.

Almost 99 percent of the female executives in the SES have had college training and more than 95 percent have received college degrees. Furthermore, the college

education of female executives did not cease with a bachelor's degree. Almost 75 percent have educational degrees higher than the bachelor's level compared to 65 percent of overall SES members. Nearly 35 percent have received a master's degree, almost 25 percent a Ph.D., and 18 percent have a degree in law. The field of study and specialization ranges from social science and humanities to science and engineering. As they progress from the bachelor's degree to the master's and Ph.D. degree, the field of study tends to be toward science and public administration. More than 14 percent have science degrees; business and public administration each compose 13 percent of the educational fields followed by social science and humanities degrees, which were 12 and eight percent respectively (Table 4.2).

The number of years as an executive in the SES ranged from less than one year to 15 years. Almost 64 percent of the respondents had been a member of the SES for five years or less. The mean number of years as an executive in the SES was five years. Table 4.3 shows data from this study and other studies of female executives both in the private and public sector. Given the problem often reported of balancing a career and a family life (Hale & Kelly, 1989; Newman, 1993; Peitchinins, 1989), it was surprising to see that in three out of the four studies reported, the percentage of married women executives was above 60 percent. Only one study of executives in the Arizona government reported that 45 percent of the women at the executive level were married.

**Table 4.2**  
**Educational Level and Field of SES Women (n=287)**

<b>Education</b>	
Bachelor degree	21 percent
Masters degree	35 percent
Doctorate degree	25 percent
Law degree	18 percent
<b>Educational Field</b>	
Science	14 percent
Business Administration	13 percent
Public Administration	13 percent
Social Science	12 percent
Humanities	8 percent
Engineering	4 percent
Education	3.5 percent
Other Educational Fields	32.5 percent

It was of no surprise to see that a majority of the executives in all of the studies (Table 4.3) were white, since other studies have reported a low ratio of minorities at the executive level (Kellough, 1989; Northcut, 1991). The average age of executive women in the state of Arizona was about five years younger than the SES women. This may support the study of Bullard and Wright (1993) that found

that women's advancement in the state bureaucracy was faster than that of the federal government. Furthermore, the average time in the current position was lower for state executives.

A comparison of the 287 SES women in this study with the total SES population (men & women both career and non-career) shows that the research sample respondents were 5 years younger and have been in the federal service 4 years fewer than the overall average SES members. While eight of the female executives entered the federal government as SES executives, 284 had been employed with the federal government before their SES assignment.

The preceding discussion presented the results of research focusing on the sociodemographic characteristics of women executives in this study and other studies in private, state, and federal organizations. A pattern of similarities and differences is evident. First and foremost, the majority of women executives in almost all cases, with the exception of California, have educations beyond the bachelors degrees. The private sector has the lowest ratio of women minorities (4 percent), while state governments in Utah and California have the highest percentages (17 and 16 percent, respectively) of non-white female employees. Although there are higher percentages of minority women in state and federal executive ranks, altogether, the data seems to suggest the existence of a more difficult path to senior management for minority women in the private sector. It

also supports the findings of Stanley (1989) and Prestage (1977) that minority women may be victims of dual discrimination. Contrasts between private and government sectors in the ratio of minority women at the executive level may be due to the federal government's stronger effort for greater representation of women and minorities (Broder & Langbein, 1989; Schneider, 1993).



**Table 4.3**  
**Comparison Of Studies Of Women Executives**

Study	Population Characteristics	N	Average Age	% Married	Education Above Bachelors	Race & Ethnicity		% With Children
						W	Non W	
Current Study (1991)	SES Women	287	47	62	75	87%	13%	60
Hale & Kelly (1989)	Arizona State Government	40	40.6	45	64	88	12%	NA
Little (1988)	SES Women	78	46	69	68	92	8	48.7
Morrison et al and CCL (1984)	Fortune 100	76	41	74	NA	96	4	48.7
Bayes (1989)	California State Government	31	41	40%	27	84	16	--
Kawar (1989)	Utah St. Women	46	45	52	63	83	17	44

## **Career Advancement Experience**

The first section of the survey questionnaire was designed to determine what personal experiences or attributes had enabled the female SES members to reach their current executive rank. Both negative and positive experiences reported by respondents, played a part in their career success.

Sixteen statements in section one were presented to the respondents. All of these respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, relative to their experiences or attributes that contributed to their career success. The Likert scale, with anchors of (1) "strongly agree" and (5) "strongly disagree," was utilized. The three highest level of agreement were found for (1) respecting and appreciating subordinates (with a mean of 1.29); (2) importance of being flexible (with a mean of 1.44); and (3) comfortable as a teacher, coach and facilitator (with a mean of 1.58). A sense of humor and ability to seize opportunities constituted the next two attributes which enabled the female executives to achieve their status. The mean ranks and standard deviations for these 16 statements dealing with career development experiences are displayed in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4****Career Development Experiences**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>STD DEV</b>
Mentored By Other Females	287	3.93	1.13
Mentor Younger Females	285	1.81	0.83
Used Power & Status to Reach Goals	283	2.36	1.09
Firmer Without Showing Anger or Frustration	286	1.88	0.81
**As a Female Had Work Harder To Get Ahead	287	1.81	1.03
Respect & Appreciate Subordinates	287	1.29	0.56
**Experienced Being Right But Not Winning	286	1.72	0.99
Have Courage to Seize Opportunity	287	1.62	0.69
Need for Sense Of Humor	287	1.60	0.84
Use Intuition As A Tool	283	1.77	0.84
Feel Comfortable As A Teacher/Facilitator	287	1.58	0.74
Managers Recognize Accomplishments	284	1.88	0.91
Organizational Support For Females	286	3.37	1.22
Adequate Training Available For New Jobs	285	3.04	1.21
Ability To Change Course Quickly	286	1.77	0.80
Importance of Flexibility	287	1.44	0.69

\* Lower mean indicates stronger tendencies toward agreement with the statement .

\*\* Standard deviation shows the measure of spread of the responses which fall on each side of the mean. Standard deviation is large when the observations are widely spread about the mean, and it is small if the observations are all close to the mean. Larger standard deviation for these statements suggests more extreme responses about the mean.

**Table 4.5**  
**Categories of Experience and Attributes of SES Women**  
**In Career Development Experiences**

<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>% Agree</b>	<b>% No Opinion</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>
<b><u>Mentoring</u></b>			
Have been mentored by other females.	11	20	69
Mentor younger females.	80	18	2
Comfortable as a teacher, coach and facilitator.	89	9	1
<b><u>Personal Perception &amp; Awareness</u></b>			
Ability to seize opportunities & make it happen.	79	13	8
Can change course quickly and effectively for the organization.	84	13	3
Have to work harder to get ahead.	79	13	8
Being flexible has been important in career path.	94	5	1
Sense of humor is a must for rising females. My intuition is a tool used intelligently to benefit everyone.	85	13	2
<b><u>Organizational Support</u></b>			
Strong support system for female employees in the organization.	25	25	50
Adequate training for new jobs is available to females.	32	33	35
My managers recognized my accomplishments.	79	17	4
<b><u>Relationship with Others</u></b>			
I respect and appreciate my subordinates.	97	2	1
I have learned to use power and status to reach my goal	57	29	14
I can be firm without showing irritation, frustration or anger.	80	16	4
I have experienced being right but not winning	85	9	8

The statements are grouped around categories that present the experiences, traits, and qualities of the SES women and their links to advancement. From the personal experiences and personal traits statements, the following four groups were identified and established: 1) mentoring, 2) personal perception and awareness, 3) organizational support, and 4) relationship with others (Table 4.5).

The experiences and attributes grouped in the four categories are part of the structure of understanding the skills, beliefs, training, and demeanor of the SES women. It suggests that the experiences, attributes, and behaviors of SES women are not unique and are not new. Further discussions involving similarities and differences of other studies are presented later in this section.

The personal attributes and experiences identified by the SES women are repeated throughout by a description given by the respondent in the open-ended comments. In reflecting on their personal experiences and/or attributes significant to their career advancement, each respondent identified key factors in her career progression. From these open ended responses, several major categories were recognized: a) mentor and mentorship, b) hard work, c) luck, d) self-image, and finally e) mobility and flexibility.

The research questions was, what are the career advancement experience of the SES women? From the perspective of earlier studies of executive women (Bayes, 1989; Kelly & Hale, 1989; Kawal, 1989; Little, 1994) as well as theories of

women's managerial styles (Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1990), the findings of personal experiences and attributes of female executives in this study are clearly mixed. The results are compatible with some of the earlier findings (Hale & Kelly, 1989; Kawal, 1989; Little, 1994) and contradicts some others (i.e., Kram, 1985; Loden, 1986). In the following section, the factors identified by SES women as crucial to their successful career advancements, the similarities, or contrasts, with other researches of women managers will be addressed.

### **Mentor and Mentorship**

Mentoring is a developmental relationship between two individuals of which one is more senior who acts as a counselor, and utilizes experience and skill to help and push others to advance their careers (Kanter, 1977; Kram, 1985; Flanders, 1994). Mentors are defined as individuals who help, advise, create opportunity, and protect the "mentee." Support from mentors is expected to assist the individual's career advancement opportunities (Flanders, 1994; Guy, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Kram, 1983; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Noe, 1988).

Three key statements fall in this category: 1) mentored by other women, 2) mentoring other women, and 3) being comfortable as a coach. The focus was on availability of mentors, both male and female, and mentoring others.

Of the research sample, only about 11 percent (32) indicated that they have had female mentors. Since relatively small number of women have moved to SES positions in the past decade, it is not surprising that there is not a significant number of female mentors available in the SES.

Almost 80 percent, (or 227) of these respondents stated that they mentored other females. Danity Little (1994), in her study of 78 SES women, also found that many of the SES women were mentoring others. About 90 percent of the SES women in the present survey stated that they are comfortable as a coach, teacher, and a facilitator. This statement was also reflected in the open-ended remarks by one respondent who commented:

" ...I genuinely like people and enjoy my responsibility to be a coach/facilitator."

Comments made on the open-ended questions of the survey reflect the female executive's awareness of the importance of mentors. Some women had mentors who helped them find the opportunity, advance in their careers, and protect them from risks. One executive wrote, "The support and encouragement of several mentors has been very important; they helped me find jobs, get promoted, and avoid pitfalls."

Another women said while her "communication and analytical skills were the fundamental personal attributes", luck in having strong mentors was also essential.

Studies suggest that most of the mentors are peers and superiors. To assess whether or not female executives in the SES receive support/mentoring from their own managers, the respondents were asked to provide information on their managers' support regarding their career development. Almost 30 percent of the respondents believed (agreed or strongly agreed) that their managers took time to learn about their career goals and aspirations. Nearly 35 percent felt that their supervisors cared if they achieved their career goals, and less than 20% said that their managers informed them of career opportunities (Table 4.6).

While the report of women executives regarding support from their managers (bosses, supervisors) is relatively negative, comments in their open-ended statements showed that some of them have been mentored by individuals and that mentoring significantly contributed to their career advancement. It is likely that some of the open-ended comments by the respondents were from the SES women who were mentored by their managers. Few respondents reported having only one mentor, but there were other SES women who had more than one mentor at different phases of their careers who helped and guided them to higher stages of their career.



**Table 4.6**  
**Managerial Support/Mentoring**

n = 282

<b>TYPE OF SUPPORT/MENTORING</b>	<b>% AGREE</b>	<b>% NO OPINION</b>	<b>% DISAGRE E</b>
Manager takes time to learn about my career aspiration	30	18	52
Manager cares whether or not I achieve my career goals.	35	24	41
Manager informs me on career opportunities.	20	21	59
Manager gives credit when I accomplish something substantial.	54	18	26
Manager gives helpful feedback.	36	24	39
Manager gives helpful advice.	28	28	45

While few of the female executives (11 percent) had female mentors, for some who reported receiving mentoring, male mentors were their only available choice. This is probably due to only a small number of women in senior executive positions to be mentors. This finding, however, contradicts studies that suggest that women do not experience upward career mobility because they have difficulty in establishing mentor-protégé relationships with men (Kram, 1985; Loden, 1986;

Ragin & Sundstrom, 1985). It supports, however, studies of executives which indicate that women, as likely as men, can establish mentor relationship with all supportive peers (Kawal, 1989). There are also similarities with the findings of Hale and Kelly (1989). In the study of women executives in the state of Arizona, Hale and Kelly (1989) found that at the administrative level, women administrators were more likely to have female peer mentors, however, at the executive level, males were most likely the women's mentor. Undoubtedly, Hale and Kelly assert, the higher proportion of male mentors was because there were fewer women in the executive level in the state bureaucracy. The women executives in the SES, for the most part, as is reflected in their statements, highly valued the work and the help of individual mentors and the significance and magnitude of their impact in their advancements to the SES ranks. Particularly interesting is the pattern of comments written by these respondents regarding the role of male mentors in their career advancement. The following comments, expressed by many of the respondents, reflect the composition and essence of their valuation.

Having a broad base of experience, having courage, an exceptionally supportive spouse and parents, not having a fixed career path, having good coaches along the way.

....I also had several male mentors, most of whom selflessly advanced my career.

Terrific mentor early in career. Being in the right place at the right time.

Long association with stable program mentors in early-mid career.

I had a [unreadable] of male mentors who helped me through the system.

strong mentors, both male and female; experience with failure at various points in my career; a strong personal value system; creditability integrity excellent speaking and writing skills; support at home.

I have mentors who advised me on career development. All were male because there were no females in senior positions.

My chief help has been from male mentors.

I had a strong mentor. I am intelligent, hardworking, mature, personable.

... supportive male mentors, loyalty, ability to get along with others.

Independence, Good male mentors (there were no females).

Having a strong and patient mentor..

Worked for one of the best managers in government for 18 years. He was my mentor...

My managers have recognized my abilities and accomplishments. I have been blessed with outstanding male mentors (usually my immediate boss and the levels above his). I have worked harder than any male in my organizations to achieve my current executive status. My husband has supported me in every way.

Learning from the mentors.

Male mentors and promoters.

Strong support system. Powerful mentors.

**There is no limitation as to who or from where the mentorship evolves.**

**Despite the perception of poor relationships between political appointees and careerists in the government (Maranto, 1993), one respondent found support from a political appointee. She wrote:**

**While I worked on the Hill for 1 ½ years as an APSA Congressional Fellow. I generally have had a lot more support from political appointees than male career civil servants.**

### **Mobility and Flexibility**

**In the Personal Perception and Awareness category, the “importance of being flexible” in the SES women's career advancement was the highest agreed of all the statements. Almost 94 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that flexibility had been important in their careers (Table 4.5). In the open-ended statements, one of the more frequently cited career advancement experiences was mobility and flexibility. One executive, in her comments, expressed the following as the most significant personal attribute contributing to her achieving the SES status:**

**Tolerance, patience with persistence, flexibility, a philosophical attitude, intuition, ability to "read" people and influence them in subtle ways.**

Remarks in the open-ended statements by the respondents indicate that moving from one position to another or from one organization to another was common among SES women. This is reflected in the following statement:

My willingness to accept new responsibilities, to take on new experiences, to leave a comfortable environment in order to learn and grow. In short my flexibility and desire to never stop growing.

Although SES women were not asked about their entire career history, comments from respondents suggested that women in the SES have varying career patterns. Some of the executives moved around and up throughout their career, within one organization.

Movement locally in center to gain experience. Letting bosses know you're interested in advancement in Mgmt. Willingness to move to DC for HQ experience.

Willingness to take new assignments that broadened my experience and control base. Personal integrity and willingness to confront issues and make decision.

Some of the SES women had moved from one agency or department to another department and from one position to another position in order to learn the organizational ropes, accumulate experience, and to find mentors.

Ability to make decisions - most important! willingness to move to gain experiences (especially geographical relocation). Ability to be firm, but flexible. Ability to see the big picture.

The third career pattern involved women who moved to positions or locations in which others were not interested. One respondent attributed her advancement to:

My willingness to relocate to areas where others were hesitant, i.e., New York City, Miami, East Orange, N.J., Chicago.

While open-ended statements indicated that some of the respondents moved around, in a variety of settings and worked in different agencies to gain experience, others advanced by relocating to other cities:

The ability to relocate, accept new jobs inside and outside of my current organization and accept new challenges (e.g., move outside of "comfort zone"). Also important is the desire to seek-out new challenges and to grow professionally.

Flexibility, luck, willingness to take on diversified assignments.

Geographic mobility, hard work , integrity, common sense, sense of humor, intelligence, education, super interpersonal skills and organizational skills, ability to get things done, "can do" attitude.

A reputation of high professional competence and the willingness to move, take changes, stretch, and risk.

Willingness to move geographically for advancement. I had a strong mentor. I am intelligent, hardworking, mature, personable.

Ability and willingness to take on new jobs, including relocating, often without an immediate promotion. Working as long and as

hard as necessary to get the job done. Being a "hand on" manager who has been closely involved with my staff.

Flexibility, willingness to relocate, determination.

Geographic mobility, conceptual and analytical skills enthusiasm.

Flexibility; tolerance of ambiguity; just do it attitude; ability to cut thru BS and get to the point, move forward; decisiveness; clarity of vision; team play.

Flexibility to take any opportunities without preconceived notion of where I wanted to go.

### **Hard Work**

In many organizations advancement and success is perceived to be a function of friendship links, dependence, and sponsorship. While SES women strongly recognize the value of mentoring and networking, in discussing what personal experiences and personal attributes contributed to their advancement, the majority felt that they had to work harder than men to get ahead.

Studies of achievement-oriented women (Hale & Kelly, 1989) suggest that women, do not identify hard work and their own ability as the main factor for their success as often as men. Rather, they credit other factors such as luck and forces beyond their control for their achievements. For many female executives in the federal government, however, advancement to the SES is viewed as being

influenced significantly by classic work ethics; "hard work," devotion to job, and persistence. This notion is shown both in their level of agreements with the statement in the career advancement experience and in their open-ended comments. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement in the survey: "I, as a female, have to work harder to get ahead." The results support the findings of Hale and Kelly (1989), as well as those of Newman (1993). In the study of women executives in the state government of Arizona, Hale and Kelly found that women, more often than men, rated hard work as one of the most important factors in their success. The results also support the findings of Newman's study (1993) and the suggestion by Kanter (1977) that women feel that they have to work harder and out-perform their male counterparts in order to succeed.

In describing the links between their current status as an executive and their personal experiences and attributes, many women reported that their hard work had a great impact on their career advancement. One woman SES member expressed that "willingness to work as much it takes to get the job done right" was the most important attribute in reaching her current executive position.

Some respondents expressed the views that they achieved recognition by undertaking difficult projects which others were not willing to undertake. By performing well on these special projects they achieved visibility:



Undertaking major projects or organizational initiative and completing them successfully...so successfully that there can be no question about my capability to deliver results. This, however, can be very threatening to others. For example, I undertook a project which had been tried and abandoned three times over a 10 year period and successfully completed it on schedule. I have also undertaken many other projects which had been declared "not possible" for a variety of reasons and completed them successfully.

The willingness to take on "impossible" challenges and produce results. A strong belief in the value and abilities of my subordinates and the ability to lead them to achieve their best.

On the whole, female executives view hard work as a significant characteristic and major contributor to their achievements in the hierarchy of the federal government. The following statements illustrate this sentiment:

I have worked harder than any male in my organization to achieve my current executive status.

Intelligence, loyalty, willingness to work hard.

Visibility, hard work; not allowing personal issues to take priority over work.

Hard work, outstanding performance, relating well to coworkers.

Courage, loyalty, creativity, flexibility, and lots of hard work.

Hard Work excellent writing skills, supportive male mentors, loyalty, ability to get along well with others.

Intellect energy, willingness to work very hard, help from good people.

Hard Work, Perseverance, Inner Self-Confidence.

Intelligence, hard work, earning respect of immediate superiors and subordinates.

### **Chance and Luck**

While female executives view hard work, devotion to their job and organization, and availability of mentors as significant forces in achieving the top ranks in the hierarchy of the federal service, the role of luck, or more precisely, "being in the right place at the right time", combined with higher education and proper skills, is recognized as important by many of the respondents. Their beliefs in the role of chance affecting their destiny is illustrated in the following statements:

Ability to think ahead;...being in the right place at the right time.

Being at (sic) the right place at the right time; reputation as a producer, can-do attitude....

...be in the right place at the right time and take advantage of it.  
Believe I am smart as the rest and behave accordingly.

Integrity, intelligence, honesty, a strong sense of loyalty to those who work with me, and being at the right place at the right time.

A strong sense of loyalty to those who worked with me, and being at the right place at the right time.

Hard work; luck;....

Competence and some creative luck.

I believe a sense of humor is a plus...very fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time (luck).

Comments by the respondents show that the female executives were aware of their capabilities, strengths and deficiencies. Some indicated that they were at the right place at the right time, nevertheless, they knew their abilities to accomplish the job, and hence they were able to seize the opportunity. They worked hard, and learned what was required to get the job done and made it happen:

Take my job seriously, but not myself in the job (i.e., I am not my job) Seize the moment. Learn from my experiences and don't make the same mistake twice. Be in the right place at the right time and take advantage of it. Believe I am as smart as the rest and behave accordingly.

Willingness to take new assignments that broadened my experience and control base. Personal integrity and willingness to confront issues and make decisions. Seizing opportunities for advancement, even though I felt that I wasn't quite ready. Capability to support organizational goals. Ability to put the right people in the right jobs - match capabilities and interest with position requirements. Continued formal education.

**Summary:** Female executives in the SES possess individualistic goals and characteristics. They view themselves as intelligent, hard workers, educated, and

competent who are able to take on challenging assignments and succeed. This is reflected in their rankings of the statements related to their career advancement as well as open-ended comments and remarks. Nearly 84 percent of the respondents believed that they used their intuition as a tool to benefit their organization. The analysis of the data reveals that the SES women considered mentors enhanced their career advancement. Eleven percent received mentoring from other females and 80 percent mentored other females. Almost 90 percent felt they were comfortable as a coach and teacher. Nearly one-third reported managerial support and mentoring relationship with their superiors. Some reported having one mentor and others had more than one in different stages of their career. The reports on the open-ended statements by the respondents showed that some had male mentors who contributed to their career advancement.

Many felt they had accomplished something, and others worked hard and long. To succeed in their career, some had to take risks and embark on difficult tasks. Being flexible, moving from one agency to another and from one position to another helped SES women to accumulate experience, and learn the organizational ropes. Open-ended comments revealed that willingness to move, both locally and to other geographical locations was instrumental in their advancement .

Almost 80 percent of women executives felt that had to work harder than their male counterparts in order to advance in their careers. The data supported

studies of Hale and Kelly (1989) and Newman (1993) of women administrators in Arizona and Florida state governments that, women feel, in order to succeed, they have to work harder than men.

### **The Strategies to Get Ahead**

Reaching the SES rank in the federal government is and will continue to be the objective of many women federal employees. The path to advancement in government, unlike the private sector, as Downs suggests, is not based on the monetary values of an employee's contribution to the organization's ultimate output. Bureaucratic organizations, rather, consider their efficiency and merits only in relation to social functions, (the functions which are valued by people outside the bureau); and the form of organizations which carries those functions. (Downs, 1967). Bureaus carry out many different social functions, operate in different types of environments, and exhibit different types of behavior. Meanwhile, depending on the executive type, those who pursue upward mobility in the bureaucratic organizations will seek different ways to achieve their ambitions.

In Section II of the questionnaire, respondents were given 20 statements suggested by the literature as a means of getting ahead. This section included an adaptation of Downs' (1967) theory of how specific types of officials (i.e.,

climbers, conservers, advocates, zealots and statesmen) in their efforts to increase or secure their power, prestige, and income would behave. The agreement or disagreement of respondents with statement provided general information on the type of strategies used by the SES women in their attempt to increase their power, authority and prestige. The respondents were asked to identify to what degree each statement described their strategies for career progression. A Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The mean ranks for each statement are presented in Table 4.7. The highest level of agreement was found for the following statements: "Keep in mind the good of the whole organization, not a particular unit," (with a mean of 1.52), "please my superiors," (with a mean of 1.83), and "be sensitive to the long run," (with a mean of 1.88).

The responses to the statements in Section II indicate that the women executives use mixed strategies to get ahead (Table 4.8). The highest percent of agreed statement (i.e., keeping in mind the good of whole organization) followed by the "being sensitive to the long run" suggest the willingness of the women executives to promote policies which do not benefit the officials personally, but rather may profit their bureaus in the distant future. These characteristics are described by Downs (1967) as representing advocates' behavior.

The third most-agreed statement (80 percent agreed or strongly agreed) by the respondents was "pleasing superiors," indicating a psychological predisposition

characterized by Downs as climbers. "Promoting broad policy goals" ranked fourth followed by "favoring innovation" both representative of advocates' behavior. The data suggests that the SES women, in their attempt to get ahead, demonstrate the flexibility by using different types of the official's path to promotion. Consequently, women's psychological predispositions demonstrate a combination of the idealistic tendencies of advocates and assertiveness and confidence of climbers.

**In Summary**, women executives used various strategies to get ahead. "Keeping in mind the good of whole organization", and "being sensitive to the long run" received the highest level of agreement (88 percent and 83 percent respectively). These characteristics are identified by Downs as principle behaviors of advocates. The third highest level of agreement was found for "pleasing superiors"; statement that is linked with behavior of climbers. The findings suggest that women executives, in their attempts to advance, would demonstrate the behavior of advocates and climbers in their strategies to get ahead.

**Table 4.7**  
**Strategies To Get Ahead**

<b>Strategies To Get Ahead</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>STD DEV</b>
Promote Broad Policy Goals	281	2.09	0.92
Pleasing Superiors	284	1.83	0.83
Favoring Innovation	283	2.11	0.89
Organization Jumping	283	3.46	1.10
Antagonizing Superiors	283	4.14	0.89
Add New Functions To Job	281	2.37	0.97
Follow Rules When Making Decisions	282	3.53	0.89
Expanding A Few Policies	279	2.27	0.80
Isolating Self From Being Influence by Others	283	4.19	0.87
Not Actively Seeking Promotion	281	3.86	1.03
Promoting Specific Policy Goals	283	2.25	0.88
Opposing Changes in Status Quo	284	4.55	0.65
Seeking Outside Support	282	3.56	1.07
Score High on Objective Standards for Promotion	276	2.60	1.16
Be Sensitive To The Long Run	282	1.88	0.87
Follow Narrow Set Of Interests	284	4.29	0.78
Avoiding Change To Get Ahead	284	4.60	0.62
Change Organization Structure to Try New Ideas	283	2.60	0.89
Increase # of People Supervised	284	3.22	1.02
Keep in Mind Good Of The Whole Organization	284	1.52	0.77

\* Low mean indicates tendencies toward agreement with the statement.



**Table 4.8****Rankings Of Strategies To Get Ahead By SES Women**

STRATEGIES TO GET AHEAD	% AGREE	% NO OPINION	% DISAGREE
Remember good of whole organization; not particular unit	88	10	2
Be sensitive to the long run	83	11	6
Please my superiors	80	16	4
Promote broad policy goals	69	26	5
Favor innovation	66	22	8
Try to expand a few policies	64	29	7
Promote specific policy goals	63	31	6
Add new functions to the job	59	28	13
Score high on objective standards for promotion	48	31	21
Change the organization structure to try our new ideas	48	38	14
Increase the total number of people under my direct supervision	22	40	38
Jump from one organization to another	21	26	53
Spend a great deal of time/energy seeking outside support	18	27	55
Stick firmly to the rules when making decisions	13	29	58
Not actively seek promotions	10	22	68
Antagonize superiors if needed to bring about change	6	15	79
Isolate myself from being influenced by others	3	17	80
Follow a narrowly defined set of interests	3	10	87
Oppose any changes in the status quo	1	6	94
Avoid change	1	5	94

## **Executive Behavior**

Studies suggest that cultural forces in society (Kanter, 1977) or in an organization (Bayes, 1991) mold the manager's behavior. Successful women who choose nontraditional careers (i.e., male-dominated) are generally expected to have leadership characteristics traditionally viewed as male's (Bayes, 1991; Cantor & Barnay, 1992). They are expected to be ambitious, dominant, aggressive, risk takers, competitive, independent, rational, and logical. The majority of the SES women, however, were comfortable with being an executive and a woman. One respondent wrote "There is little precedent for female SES people in the jobs I have occupied; therefore, I am expected to act like a man. I refuse."

The literature associated with executive behavior presents several theories: 1) social formation and societal structure (Epstein 1988)--the notion that women have certain capabilities which result in a self-fulfilling prophecy by being grouped in "women's occupations" which do not require male traits. 2) organizational culture (Bayes, 1991)--symbolic and negatively valued women's trait; 3) organizational structure (Kanter, 1977) --unequal distribution of power and opportunity are the most frequently cited theories. Other studies suggests that behavioral characteristics are determined by the nature of the organization (Lowi, 1990; Newman, 1994). Finally, Downs' theory (1967) suggests that the pure self-interest (i.e., climbers and

conservers) or a combination of self-interest and altruistic loyalty to other values which benefit their bureaus or society as a whole, (i.e., advocates, zealots, and statesmen) are factors which motivate officials. These interests incorporated with psychological predispositions inherent in an individual's personality, the nature of position, and perception of attaining their goals will determine the behavior pattern of officials. This study focuses on Down's theory in presenting the behavior of women as SES executives.

Respondents were asked to identify and match their executive behavior with one of the five statements which represented the five types of officials in Downs' theory. In their role as SES members, a vast majority of respondents (92 percent) viewed themselves as loyal to their organization in a broader sense or to society as a whole and were motivated by the issues that they believed best served their organization or national policies. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (66 percent) characterized their executive behavior in their present positions as what is classified by Downs as *advocates* (loyal to broader policies or concepts). Twenty-seven percent of respondents considered their executive behavior as *statesmen* (loyal to society as a whole). Less than two percent identified their executive behavior as *conservers* (seeking to retain their power); nearly seven percent characterized their behavior as what is identified by Downs as *zealots* (loyal to narrow policies or concepts); and less than one-half percent are identified with the behavior of *climbers* (Table 4.9).

The data supports Rosener's theory that women are interactive leaders who provide support, cooperation, and service to other people. It also supports the theory that women are transformational leaders who, through regards for broader goals, transform their own goals and aspirations into organizational interests and objectives (Rosener, 1990). They do not need to resort to their power in order to lead (Loden, 1985).

**Table 4.9**  
**SES Women Reported And Preferred**  
**Executive Typology For Self And Superiors**

<b>EXECUTIVE TYPE</b>	<b>REPORTED BEHAVIOR</b>		<b>PREFERRED BEHAVIOR</b>		<b>PREFERRED FOR SUPERIORS</b>	
	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Climbers	1	.4	1	.4	1	.4
Conservers	5	1.8	0	0	1	.4
Zealots	13	4.7	9	3.4	13	4.9
Advocates	185	65.9	148	56.1	162	61.6
Statesmen	76	27.2	106	40.2	86	32.7
<b>n</b>	280	100	264	100	263	100

Although respondents were not asked to identify the type of agencies with which they were associated, the subjects' loyalty to organizations or society may be due to the nature of bureaucracy and the type of policies administered by their organizations. Bayes (1991) suggests that organizational culture mold the managerial style and behavior of the individual. Kanter (1977) asserts that the organizational structure, rather than the gender of the individual, influences and forms the managers' behavior.

When these women were asked which executive type they would prefer for themselves and for their bosses, the responses were slightly different between the executive type they prefer for themselves and the type they would like for their superiors. Table 4.9 shows the type of executive behavior these women would prefer to possess and deliver. Not all 66 percent (184) of respondents who reported their perceived executive behaviors as advocates would prefer this kind of executive conduct. On the whole, fifty-six percent of all the respondents would prefer to be advocates, 40 percent would select executive behavior characterized as statesmen as opposed to 27 percent who perform statesmen's behavior in their current positions. Nine percent choose behavior associated with zealots, and less than one percent prefer climbers' behavior. While almost two percent of the respondents considered their behavior as conservers, none would choose behavior associated with conservers.

To determine the links between executive behavior performed and executive typology preferred, the responses of these questions were cross tabulated. Table 4.10 demonstrates the behavior types exhibited by women executives, behavior pattern they would prefer to display, and the difference between the percentage of reported and preferred executive type. Seventy-five percent of reported advocates, comprising 53 percent of all respondents, preferred the advocate's behavior, while seventeen percent (31 out of 185) of the reported advocates would select the behavior of statesmen. One advocate would prefer climbers behavior and two of them selected the typology associated with zealots. Over 93 percent of the reported statesmen prefer to perform the same traits. Only one woman who characterized her behavior as statesmen would prefer to perform the advocates' behavior.

The reported executive behavior exhibited by the SES women and the behavior they would select show that an overwhelming majority of women executives in the American federal government are "mixed motive" individuals concentrated in two classifications of executives: advocates and statesmen. They are either loyal to their organizations and motivated by ability to influence policies concerning the organizations or tend to be loyal to society as a whole and motivated by the capacity to influence national policies and actions. Furthermore, when they have the choice to select the executive type, they prefer to be advocates or statesmen. This is consistent with earlier studies by Baker (1990) and Lemons

(1990) who found that, in the United States, women have been involved in promoting a wide variety of social issues and have played a key role in policies that required governmental involvement in social betterment and welfare.

**Table 4.10**

**Contrast Between Reported And Preferred  
Executive Behavior Among SES Women**

Reported Behavior	Frequency	Preferred Behavior					
		Climber	Conservers	Zealots	Advocate	Statesmen	Percent Reported
Climbers	1	0	0	0	1	0	.4
Conservers	3	0	0	0	1	2	1.2
Zealots	13	0	0	6	5	2	5
Advocates	173	1	0	2	139	31	66
Statesmen	72	0	0	0	1	71	29
Total Preferred	--	1	0	8	149	106	--
Percent Preferred	--	.4	0	3	56	40	--
Percent Reported	--	.4	1.2	5	66	27	--
% Preferred Less % Reported	--	0	-1.2	-2	-10	+13	--

Almost three percent would prefer behavior associated with zealots compared to almost five percent who perceived they are exhibiting this behavior in their



current position. Less than one percent prefer executive behavior linked to climbers, and finally while almost two percent perceived their behavior as conservers, none of the female executives selected it. This data suggests that more women executive prefer statesmen's behavior than they currently reported performing. Almost thirteen percent more women executives who reported their behavior as statesmen would prefer to adopt this behavior. There are, however, 10 percent less executives who reported their perceived behavior as advocates chose this typology.

The findings in Table 4.10 suggest that executives may have two types of behavioral characteristics: 1) behaviors which describe their psychological attributes associated with their current positions or the organizations; and 2) their behavioral inclination associated with their characteristics. Downs' theory (1967) may explain the discrepancies between performed behavior of the SES women and their preferred executive type. Downs suggests that three factors determine the particular type of executives in a bureau; 1) psychological predispositions inherent in their personality; 2) nature of the positions occupied by executives; and finally, 3) the prospect that executives can in fact achieve the objectives associated with the official types of which they are psychologically inclined.

The difference between the perception of executive behavior and what they would like can be explained by Downs' (1967) assertion that executives will demonstrate the behavior patterns of the type to which they are psychologically

predisposed unless the limited definition of their official position or perception of impossibility of achieving the objectives and goals associated with that type would constrain them from doing so. Downs (1967) further suggested that if these executives can alter the constraints or move to other positions with no limitations or restraints, they will return to behavior patterns consistent with their psychological inclinations. As a result, there are more SES women who would perform statesmen's behavior if the requirements of the type of agency and their position did not create any constraint.

Women executives have almost the same behavioral preference for their superiors as they would for themselves. Respondents were asked to identify the executive type they would prefer for their managers. Table 4.11 demonstrates the preferred executive behavior for SES women and its link to their choice of behavior for their superior. Almost 62 percent of SES women would prefer advocates as their bosses. Nearly 33 percent would rather have superiors with characteristics of statesman. Five percent prefer zealots and less than half a percent favor climbers or conservers. The data indicates that the majority of women in the SES prefer superiors, who like themselves, are considered mix motive officials particularly a combination of advocates and statesmen.

As Table 4.11 demonstrates, the majority of the advocates (77 percent) prefer the same type of behavior for their superiors, while almost 18 percent of

them would rather have a statesman as a boss. Almost 75 percent of statesmen choose the same and 20 percent of statesmen favor advocates for their superiors. The data suggests that women executives in the SES would like to see the same type of executive behavior in their superiors as they exhibit themselves.

As Bayes (1989) suggested, the characteristics of the organization, the culture, mission, and political position of the agency, and the commitment of the superiors to organizational or national policies are all important in structuring the path of growth to the executive positions for women. Consequently, women's chance of growth depends on the survival of bureaucracies in which they work and commitment of superiors to the same values. When the psychological predisposition of superiors is similar to those of women executives, there would be no constraints to revert the executives behavioral pattern. Furthermore, social comfort may provide another explanation to interpret the respondents' choice of behavior for their superior. In organizations, individuals tend to be most comfortable with those like themselves (Rizzo & Mendez, 1990). As a result, women executives, in the absence of other women executives, may be most comfortable with superiors who think and behave like them.

**Table 4.11**

**Executive Type Preferred By SES Women**

**For Self vs. Superiors**

<b>EXECUTIVE TYPE PREFERRED FOR SELF</b>			<b>EXECUTIVE TYPE PREFERRED FOR SUPERIORS</b>				
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>FREQ.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CLIMBERS</b>	<b>CONSERVERS</b>	<b>ZEALOTS</b>	<b>ADVOCATES</b>	<b>STATESMEN</b>
Climbers	1	.4	0	0	0	1	0
Conserverers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zealots	9	3.5	0	0	4	5	0
Advocates	147	57	0	1	5	115	26
Statesmen	102	39	1	0	4	38	59
% Preferred for Superiors			.4%	.4%	5%	61%	33%
% Preferred for Self			.4%	0%	3.5%	57%	39%
% for Superiors less % for Self			0%	+.4%	+1.5%	+4%	-6%

**In summary**, the behavioral characteristics of women executives tend to be identified as advocates. The majority of the SES women actually exhibit (66 percent), prefer to display (56 percent), and would rather see their superior to display (62 percent) behaviors associated with advocates. The executive behaviors linked with statesmen was the second choice of the respondents. This suggests that the broad interest of women, within their profession, is more in organizational or societal issues and policies than individualistic concerns. Almost ten percent less SES women who display advocates behavior would prefer this typology while 13 percent more executives who reported their behavior as statesmen would choose this behavior.

### **Barriers to Career Advancement**

The 287 SES women, who have reached the elite group of government executives, have seen, experienced, and perceived, at some time or another, factors that acted as constraints to their career advancement. Respondents were given 20 statements that have posed as barriers to their career development. Statements were ranked from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The respondents were asked to identify to what degree they agreed or disagreed with each statement as being a barrier to their career developments. The mean rank and standard deviation for the responses to the statements are presented in Table 4.12. The most strongly agreed-

with statements were "My job itself is very pressuring" (with a mean of 1.99), followed by "Unconscious male behavior in ways that exclude females" (with a mean of 2.24), and "..expectations regarding how female employees should resolve home-career conflicts" (with a mean of 2.32).

The literature suggests that gender and family obligations are perceived as barriers to women's journey to the top (Flanders, 1994; Freeman, 1990; Hale & Kelly, 1989; Stivers, 1993). What barriers did these 287 SES women executives experience on their way to becoming members of the senior executive service in the American federal government? The question was addressed by studying responses to the statements in Section IV of the questionnaire--barriers to advancement-- (see appendix A). Both positive and negative experiences/statements had a role in formulating the perception of barriers to career advancement by SES women. The responses to the statements determined what factors the executive women have perceived as a barrier to their career advancement.

**Table 4.12****Barriers To Career Development  
Of SES Women**

VARIABLE	N	MEAN*	STD DEV**
Stereotype Limits Career	286	2.93	1.23
Female Ability To Lead males	284	2.62	1.16
Peers Are Uncomfortable Working With Females	285	3.60	1.10
Unconscious Male Behavior that Excludes Females	283	2.24	1.10
Preferred Travel Treatment For Females	283	4.67	0.64
Female Traits Not Valued In Workforce	278	2.95	1.11
Viewed by Peers as Aggressive	284	2.59	1.20
Strong Disciplinary Actions Favored For Female Employees	277	4.03	0.89
Equal Consideration For Promotion Is Myth	284	2.59	1.22
Readily Offered Career Development Opportunities	284	2.59	1.23
Lack Of Organizational Concern For Female Careers	284	2.93	1.13
Expectations For Resolve Home Career Conflicts	281	2.32	1.03
Sexual Discrimination In Public Sector Regarding Hiring	280	3.35	1.15
Job Pressure Is A Barrier	281	1.99	1.00
Under Pressure To Perform Because Of Role Model	285	2.36	1.13
Pressured By Family & Work Demands	282	2.58	1.28
Attributes Success To Help From Higher Managers	284	2.76	1.26
Inability To Adapt Causes Being Thrown Off Course	282	4.57	0.67
Own Self Interests Leads One Astray	283	3.44	1.49
Sexual Discrimination In Promotion	283	3.44	1.49

\* Low mean indicates stronger tendencies toward agreement with the statement.

\*\*Larger standard deviation for these statements suggests more extreme responses about the mean.

Responses from the women executives suggest that they have experienced a number of attitudinal and systematic barriers in the public environment.

The statements of perceived barriers experienced are grouped in three categories: sociopsychological, structural barriers, and human capital. These categories have been identified by the research literature as factors hindering the career advancement of women (e.g., Newman, 1993). The above groupings is based on the definition of each statement and its linkage to each of the categories of barriers/facilitators. The grouped statements in three categories of barriers to advancement are listed in Table 4.13.

**Sociopsychological Barriers:** The following five statements fall in this category: Female role stereotype, perception of females ability to lead, peers uncomfortable working for or with women, lack of regard for female traits, and stereotype of the female manager. Negative perceptions of a woman's capacity for managing is inherent in public agencies. The literature, to a great extent, is negating the notion of differences in managerial ability based on gender (Newman, 1993). Kanter (1977), Epstein (1988), and more recently Bayes (1991) concluded that society, organizational positions, and/or the culture of the agency were more determinant of management styles in an organization than any supposedly inherent gender differences. Although the views presented by Kanter (1977), Epstein (1988), and Bayes (1991) renounce the traditional definitions of effective management, the data



**Table 4.13**

**Categories Of Barriers To Career Development  
Of SES Women**

<b>TYPES OF BARRIERS</b>	<b>% AGREE</b>	<b>% NO OPINION</b>	<b>% DISAGREE</b>
<b>Sociopsychological Barriers:</b>			
Being viewed as aggressive.	55	20	25
Female's ability to lead males.	52	23	24
Stereotype and perception limiting careers.	41	25	34
Female's traits not valued in the workforce.	36	30	34
Peers uncomfortable working with female.	17	25	58
<b>Structural Barriers:</b>			
Male behavior which exclude female.	64	22	14
Under pressure to perform being a role model.	61	21	18
Expectation regarding solving home-career conflict.	60	27	13
Being offered career development opportunities.	52	27	21
Equal promotional consideration in public sector is a myth.	51	25	24
Attributing success to support from managers.	49	21	30
Little organizational concern for female's career	35	32	33
Sexual discrimination regarding promotion.	33	13	51
Sexual discrimination regarding hiring.	25	27	48
Strong disciplinary action favored for female employees.	4	23	73
<b>Human Capital Barriers:</b>			
Job is very pressuring.	77	15	9
Under pressure because of family obligations.	50	24	26
Inability to adapt causes to be thrown off course.	1	6	93
Self and other women's interests lead me astray.	1	3	96

in this study suggests that the work environment of SES women is conducive of the perception of negatively valued women's leadership qualities. The findings of this study support a research review by Van Fleet and Saurage (1984) that there is a substantially low perception of managerial ability of women among public administration professionals. More than half (52.5 percent) of the respondents felt apprehension among employees regarding their ability as a female to be a leader. More than one-third believed that their feminine traits were not valued in the workforce. More than 40 percent believed that gender stereotype had hindered their advancement. Many respondents expressed their feeling about gender stereotype in statements such as the following:

Innate attitudes of male colleagues in field of international relations; old school is too chivalrous to treat women objectively.

Perception problems- I am 5'2" blue eyed blonde and have had difficulties with the dumb blond syndrome. I must constantly prove and reprove my self to new supervisors while others are more readily accepted.

A [corporate] world dominated by favorable white males which does not accept women as competent line managers.

...Overall, stereotyping of females appear to be the most prevalent barrier and the one most difficult to overcome.

I think the barriers have been very subtle. Since white males usually are making the decisions, there is a pro white male bias rather than an overly anti-female bias. The "white male" is assumed to be the standard of excellence. The more minorities and women act "white

male-ish" the more they are accepted. In a group discussion, for example, when white males talk everyone listens no matter how insane their comments are...

Male supervisors who had not viewed women as equals or capable of leading....

Many respondents believed that sex-role stereotyping was displayed as discriminatory behavior toward women's advancement. They believed that the males did not believe women had the ability to lead an organization, passed them over for promotional and training opportunities, and discriminated against them for being a female. More than 50 percent felt that they did not get equal consideration for promotion. One in four (25 percent) believed that they had been discriminated against in hiring, and almost one in three (32.2 percent) believed that they had personally experienced sexual discrimination concerning promotion in the public sector.

The negative attitudes toward women also manifested themselves as male behaviors toward networking. The literature suggests that access to informal, collegial networks is crucial for career advancement (Kanter, 1977; Rizzo & Mendez, 1990). Nearly two-thirds (181) of the respondents indicated that they have been excluded from informal interactions with their male colleagues. Several respondents, in their open-ended statements, indicated that among other factors, the "old boy network" is alive and well and the lack of networking with "males" has

been a hindrance in their path to the top. One respondent wrote that she experienced in different organizations a "culture of promoting collegiate association which generally excluded females." Another respondent wrote that "Strong male networks within organization through which they promote one another and disallow objective judgments of capabilities" had been the barrier to her advancement. Not surprisingly, 83 percent of the women executives identified their positions as a male-dominated occupation. This finding supports Rizzo and Mendez's (1990) assertion that informal organizations commonly leave out individuals of the opposite sex which generally constitute women. They assert that in most work organizations white men are the predominant and most powerful group. The entry of females and minorities, being different than white men, into the white male's informal network presents a threat to the culture of the work group. Exclusion of females, solely based on their gender, Brass (1985) suggests may represent the efforts of those in dominant positions to maintain the existing levels of comfort. Considering the dominance of the high level positions by males, it would be difficult for women to be accepted in informal male-dominated networks. The following are some of the respondents' reflections of their perception of barriers:

Being a female if I hadn't been at the right place at the right time--and not being part of the "boys network" which is still a problem as we speak.

That you have to be tough and macho to do a job. The good ole boy network will not accept females.

The "old boy" network.

Don't brag on my accomplishments enough. Avoid direct confrontation when possible. Females don't have access to informal networks--can't be one of the boys yet can't use traditional female interactive techniques.

I think it is more difficult to network in a male dominated workforce. The kind of personal relationships that one should build are difficult to form without attendant gossip about such personal relationships being romantic in nature.

Most of the above barriers were more prevalent in the early part of my career--throughout the mid-eighties. Unconscious male behavior which excludes females is still the biggest barrier.

There are also similarities with the study of executive women in the California government, in which, Hale and Kelly (1989) found that women consider their exclusion from networks a negative factor in their career advancement.

Coping with male-dominated organizations has been an awkward experience for some SES women. Many women minorities believed that being a female and a minority had been a double barrier:

Being a black female administrator in an organization dominated by white males with scientific or science-related backgrounds.

In addition to being a woman I believe race has been a barrier.

Stereotyping of male executives that female minority executives should be confined to a particular occupation, EEO, women's minority issues.

Race discrimination, sex discrimination, my introversion.

My race has clearly been a barrier in addition to my gender. Overall, stereotyping of females appear to be the most prevalent barrier and the one most difficult to overcome.

In discussing barriers to advancement, some executives expressed how their selection to the SES and promotions through-out their career had been smooth, prompt, and without difficulties. Although some walked into an organization with education or background which did not fit the type of or nature of the organization, they succeeded, nevertheless, despite of these adversities and did not feel a barrier:

I have held eleven positions during my career path. I have not been selected for two positions that I applied for during my 29 years, so, I feel there have been no barriers.

During 7 years with a national public accounting firm and 30 years with the SEC, the only barriers to my announcement have been limitations of my own ability.

Very few; most significant barrier is lack of a scientific or engineering degree in an agency which has a predominately scientific mission.

None, I have risen from a GS-4 co-op student steadily to SES in 15 years.

I have been enormously fortunate in working in very supportive environments (perhaps also in selecting them?). I have felt no barriers

None, I have been fortunate in working for supervisors who have valued accomplishment without regard to sex.

I have been fortunate to have been in an agency (EPA) which actively promotes human resource issues. My biggest barrier has been my own lack of total confidence to go for the next objective.

As I reflect on it, my career advancement has been relatively smooth and promotions occurred on a somewhat accelerated course. Thus advancement itself had few if any barriers; however, adjustment to increased authority and power could have been less transitional in various phases if I had had more relevant experience and training.

I have progressed rather smoothly from staff position manager to office director. The perception that I was very young to become an office director was much more of an obstacle than being a woman.

**Structural Barriers:** The literature suggests that the work environment and organizational climate steer women's career movements (Bayes, 1991). The culture of the organization can be critical to the upward mobility of women (Bayes, 1991; Kanter, 1977). In order to examine issues pertaining to women's perception of statements linked to structural barriers, the study utilized Newman's (1993) Models of career advancement barriers and facilitators. This conceptual model suggests that career advancement is a consequence of individual, sociopsychological, and organizational variables. These variables (factors) are linked to three models: human capital (education, training, ability, hardwork, family constraints, and skills), sociopsychological (sex-role socialization and stereotype, negative perception of

managerial skills of women, limiting self-concept), and systematic (sex segregation, lack of role model, limited training, lack of mentor and networking) models. The following statements were grouped in the category of structural or systematic barriers: availability of mentors, promotional opportunity, inclusion in high power networks, availability of training, role model and sexual discrimination in hiring.

The data from this study suggests that there are systematic barriers to advancement of women. The attitudes and beliefs of the women suggest that there is an attitude by male colleagues and male peers that women are not able to do the job. The higher ranks of federal service in the United States are represented by a profile of positions that have been predominantly male in past decades. Some respondents expressed the culture of their work environment in the following statements:

Women are not always taken as "seriously" as men. Potential is often easier to identify in men.

I believe being in a technical agency that being young, female and a non engineer (I am a math major) has sometimes been difficult.

The good old boy network is alive and well. If you don't either try to be one of the boys or a mindless female, you're resented. Management fosters this attitude. Promotions and opportunities, particularly in the SES, are limited by a lack of female mentoring and networking. As a female SES outside of Washington, I feel truly alone.

Lack of mentors-both men and women. Lack of development by boss (1984-1989).



Lack of mentoring, lack of managers ability to communicate if problems exist.

Constant organizational change with no organizational memory. Male dominated environment-women always have to prove themselves.

The open-ended statements show that SES women frequently regard their experience and struggles with feminine perceptions and stereotypes as barriers to their career growth. One female executive reported that her male colleague feared allowing a female to represent the organization in briefing presentations because of the "expectation that a female cannot do the job as well as a male, will collapse into an emotional state, or does not have sufficient stamina to carry the day." Another executive wrote "Men are allowed to "break the rules", i.e. take "short cuts" in their careers. Women must have their "ticket punched" for all jobs up the ladder."

Some found themselves battling with being labeled "too young" (The SES women in this study are five years younger than the overall average SES member) . One respondent said that her relative youth at the time of her advancement became an obstacle to her promotion and raised questions of her ability to be a senior SES member. Other executives shared this sentiment and wrote:

Early in my career it was a distinct disadvantage to be a young attractive female intent on being promoted for my ability...."

The perception that I was very young to become an office director was much more of an obstacle than being a woman.

## **Human Capital**

**Family Obligations:** One of the common findings of studies of women's career advancement is the importance of family obligations and its role in women's career growth (Cole, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Stanley, 1989). A study by Stanley (1989) suggests that the women administrators at higher levels are less likely to have traditional domestic responsibilities because they are more likely to be divorced or single and more likely to have less dependents at home. Nevertheless, Stanley emphasized that family responsibilities are viewed by women, more than men, as significant career constraints.

This study found that a great number of SES women felt that their career advancement was hindered by family obligations. It was reported earlier that more than 62 percent of the respondents were married and almost 60 percent had children. Half of the respondents felt that there were often conflicts between their family obligations and their work demands. In their open-ended statement, respondents also confirmed that family obligations have been barriers to their growth:

**I often feel pressure by trying to meet family obligations along with work demands.**

**Relocation vs. family considerations.**

**The burdens of both home and family have led me to restrict the opportunities offered.**

**Balancing the roles of executive, wife and mother.**

**Conflict with family obligations.**

**Primary obstacle -- Combining family and career.**

**Responsibilities at home.**

**I can not always work the long hours (required of any executive) because of home responsibilities.**

**The women in the SES share the same experiences with other women executives. In a national sample of women administrators in different states, Hale and Kelly (1989) found that almost half of the women administrators had children at home and they that had difficulties juggling work and family obligations. The heavy work load and long hours were often in discord with participatory family life, unless child rearing and other home responsibilities are shared or, to a great extent, delegated to the spouse. One respondent said "because of my feelings about my family obligations I have in effect held myself back at times." Being married and having children became barriers when advancement required relocation. One**

women who did not want to relocate to advance, wrote "... I have not regretted this choice but there is no question that others, mainly men or women without children, were able to apply for positions for which I was not "qualified" because of my inability to move from place to place."

**Self confidence:** Some respondents identified their own unwillingness, lack of self-confidence, and/or overall insecurities prevented them from asking for or pursuing executive position opportunities, or participating in powerful networks. One women executive wrote, "In retrospect it was my own lack of self-confidence that caused me to be cautious in seeking promotional opportunity. My supervisors had to talk me into growth opportunities on a number of occasions." Other respondents reflected:

Initially (1st 6yrs.) my own reluctance to promote myself, since my 1st advancement, however, there has been little need to do so, once I surfaced from the mass, I seem to have new jobs thrust upon me.

Timid, immature, sometimes emotional.

The only barriers to my advancement have been limitations of my own ability.

My own hesitation to take risks.

Unwillingness at first to travel to metropolitan area where higher level positions were more readily available.

**Lost drive/ambition.** Nothing to do with gender issues in the work place.

Insecurities and/or their lack of self-confidence have been identified in other studies as factors or experiences which women felt had presented barriers to their career advancement (Hale & Kelly, 1989).

**Job Pressure:** The data indicates that job pressure can be of great significance in encouraging or discouraging women from moving to managerial/executive positions. Three of four respondents (77 percent) felt that the pressuring job was a barrier to advancement. Sixty-one percent felt that they were under pressure because they played the part of successful "role models." This reflects the attitude of SES women and represents internal, rather than external, barriers.

**In summary:** The career advancement of women in the federal service is a consequence of a multitude of components and factors. Overall, the data for the SES suggests that while women have advanced into higher ranks of federal bureaucracy in the past decade, it is far from being a representative bureaucracy. Women in the SES, share several similarities with characteristics and experiences of other women administrators reported in other studies. Some of the most important similarities are that their numbers are few compared to men, are predominantly caucasian,

generally highly educated, have conflict with family responsibilities, and are comparable in age (Bayes, 1989; Hale & Kelly, 1989; Kavar, 1989; Little, 1994; Morrison, et al., 1986; Stanley, 1989). Review of the personal attributes and experiences contributing to career advancement of SES women reveals that they feel they have to work harder than men to advance. This finding is parallel to those of Hale and Kelly (1989) and Newman (1993) on women executives and advancement.

One of the most notable characteristics of SES women is their high level education. Among the factors that they realized and/or experienced in terms of their importance in facilitating career advancement were mentoring, networking, and mobility and flexibility. There is little mentoring available to SES women from other female executives, and most reported mentoring had come from males. Respondents had strong feelings that they were excluded from networking by their male colleagues. The results support Kanter (1977) and Rizzo and Mendez (1990) who suggest that women are commonly excluded from men's networks and interactions at higher level managerial ranks.

An overwhelming majority of the SES women are characterized as what is known by Downs (1967) as mixed-motive officials, combining their own interest and altruistic loyalty to other values. Most of them perform, and would prefer for themselves (as well as their superiors) behavior characterized as advocates--being loyal to a broad organization. In the distant second, they associated their executive

behavior as statesmen, characterizing themselves as loyal to the society as a whole. While the majority choose advocates' behavior (i.e., favor innovation, long-run outlook, promote broad policy goals), to secure and gain power, 80 percent said that they would please their superiors. This strategy is identified by Downs (1967) as behavior of climbers (i.e., executives motivated solely by self-interest). It is tenable that, as an advocate, this behavior of SES women is to secure more resources and win support to have a notable effect on policies or functions to which they are loyal.

Taken together, the findings suggest that while the respondents worked in diverse environments or agencies, many have experienced common barriers. Family obligations, being left out of networks, discrimination in hiring and promotion, and sex-role stereotypes translate into dominant barriers to the career advancement of women in federal service.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

This study examined the personal and behavioral characteristics of a sample of women executives who are members of the Senior Executive Service of the United States federal government. The study is based on a survey of 287 women who provided input on their personal attributes, career experiences, leadership style, and barriers they encountered on their way up to the executive level in the SES.

### **Summary of Findings**

The results of the present study support the view that there are common characteristics for women executives. The majority of the respondents shared common traits, strength, and experiences which have affected their career advancement. They identified common values and behaviors in their personal attributes and strategies as well as constraints and supports in their move up to the executive ranks.



The findings show that women SES members have completed levels of educations that are as high as or higher than the overall SES members. Twenty five percent had earned a Ph.D., 35 percent had completed a Masters' degree and 18 percent had been awarded a degree in law compared to the general SES population with only 18 percent having earned a Ph.D., 35 percent a Masters', and 15 percent M.D. and J.D. These statistics underscore the level of education and training among SES women and the importance of an advance degree for women desiring progress to executive positions in the government hierarchy. The significant role of higher levels of education to the advancement to the executive rank was expressed by many of the respondents.

Women in the SES have indicated that their gender has created potential career barriers in the federal government. The perceived barriers to advancement have taken the form of attitudinal assumptions and systematic patterns, stereotypes, and behaviors. The majority of the SES women indicated that they believe that they have faced stereotypes in their job environment that create doubts as to their abilities to perform their jobs, their ability to lead men, and that they have been excluded from networking and have faced limitations in their career mobility. Studies have suggested that these types of perceptions can negatively affect women's self-confidence, effectiveness and would result in lower levels of job satisfaction. As a

result of these barriers, women may be less inclined to seek advancement opportunities in the federal government.

Minority women, which comprise less than 10 percent of the SES women, indicated that they have encountered double obstacles: the barriers mentioned earlier and the added barriers of being a member of a minority. The findings support the results of a Merit System Protection Board (1992) study which suggested that the rate of promotion of minority women, has been lower than that of non-minority women with the same qualifications.

The respondent SES members, on average, were found to be younger and had fewer years of service in the federal government than the general SES population. The average number of years in the executive position was five years. The overwhelming majority of SES women indicated that they were Caucasian followed in turn by African Americans and Hispanics. This finding was not surprising since it is consistent with the findings of other studies involving women executives in federal and state governments (Bayes, 1989; Hale, Kelly, & Burgess, 1989; Stanley, 1989). Women in the SES were also very likely to be married (60 percent) and to have children (62 percent). Almost 38 percent of the women in the SES were single or divorced and had less of the dilemmas associated with family responsibilities since they did not have traditional family lives.

Some of the self-declared attributes that characterize these women executive respondents are: 1) their strong commitment to get the job done, 2) their flexibility, and 3) their strong sense of humor. In their career advancement to the top, these SES women were prepared by a high level of education and strong ambitions. They indicated that have had to work as hard or harder than their male counterparts and capitalized on the opportunities on their way to the top. The following statements examples illustrate their beliefs:

I have worked harder than any male in my organization to achieve my current executive status.

...be in the right place at the right time and take advantage of it.  
Believe I am smart as the rest and behave accordingly.

While some of the respondents reported that they were at the right place at the right time; however, their ability to recognize and seize the opportunities was facilitated by their knowledge of their strengths and weakness in performing the job. This should not be surprising given that past research has shown that hard work and job commitment were necessary prerequisites for career advancement for women.

Coaching and guidance from mentors, were found to be valuable tools for career advancement. Most of those who had received mentoring had worked under males mentors, were quite comfortable having a male as a mentor, and thought that their mentors' help had aided them in their career advancement. These mentors advised, supported, recognized, and helped advanced women's career. It is not

surprising that a minority of the women executives in the SES reported having been mentored by a female (11 percent). The presence of fewer women executives in the SES could certainly explain why only a small number of the respondents indicated that they had been mentored by women.

These findings are, for the most part, compatible with the literature on mentoring and women's career advancement. The literature suggests that mentoring is an important factor for women in terms of career mobility and advancement (Kanter, 1977; Kram, 1985). The present study, however, dissents from the reported studies that suggest that women have difficulties establishing mentor relationships with men and also suggest that individuals are drawn to similar gender or type for mentoring. For example, Kram (1985) study found that women are likely to feel discomfort and experience social distance from male mentor. Additionally, it would be difficult to deal with public perception of women's relationship with male mentors, the sexual pressures and anxiety associated with it.

Studies have found evidence in the private sector of the exclusion of women from the men's network. This was echoed in the responses of these women executives in the government. A significant majority of the respondents (64 percent) indicated that they had been excluded from networking with men which had made it more difficult for them to advance their careers. They felt that the "old boy network" was alive and well in the federal government which resulted in fewer

women being promoted to the senior ranks. The exclusion of women from the male network may be a subtle prejudice which can result in the discriminatory promotion of fewer women.

These SES women are “mixed-motive” officials who are loyal to both their organizations and policies affecting their organization and the general welfare of the society, This would be characterized by Downs as positions of “advocates” or “statesmen” (see page 71 for more detailed discussions of Downs’ categorization of bureaucratic executives). Downs suggests that different type of bureau, depending on their social functions and internal dimensions, will be dominated by specific type of officials. Furthermore, each type of officials exhibit behavior pattern distinctive to that particular type of official. These SES women indicated that they exhibited certain behaviors in their strategies to grow. The reported behaviors which are, based on Downs’ theory, linked to both advocates and climbers. As a result, these respondents tend to be flexible in their abilities to shift types in order to get ahead.

Despite their advanced educational levels and professional training and expertise, these SES women indicated that they are still experiencing gender-based barriers to upward mobility. They appear to believe that childbearing, child rearing and other family responsibilities have constrained their career development. The family responsibilities and career roles for women are viewed by human capital

theorists as mutually exclusive. The family constraints these SES women faced inhibited their ability to relocate geographically when it was required for promotion.

For those women who are interested in achieving SES status, the findings of this study should be encouraging. More than ever before, and at a faster rate than in the private sector, the gates to top administrative ranks and executive positions are opening to women. There are, however, key requirements, and common traits among these female executives. In sum, advanced educational degrees, and experience in different positions seem to be expected. Flexibility, and a sense of humor are common, and to work hard and have the ability to seize opportunities are certainly crucial.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study used only one round of survey and the SES women respondents did not receive any follow-up reminder or questionnaire. Furthermore, there was no personal interview or direct contact with the subjects. Consequently, there was no clarification or explanation of the questions or responses. The comparative study of sub-groups in this study was restricted because of the characteristics of the sample. Statistical models to test the significant difference between sub-groups in "marital status" (i.e., married, divorced, single), "race and ethnicity" (i.e., Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics), "educational level" (Bachelor's degree, Master's

degree, Ph.D. degree) and "educational field" (science, business, public administration) categories would not have provided logical results because of very low observations in some of the sub-groups.

### **Implications for Theory**

The SES women here reported using various strategies for career advancement. The majority of the respondents identified "concern for the good of the whole organization", "being sensitive to the long run", and "pleasing superiors" as the three most important of these strategies chosen. These mixed strategies are a blend of two types of behaviors. Being "concerned for the good of the whole organization" and "sensitive to the long run" are described by Downs (1967) as the principal behaviors associated with advocates, while "pleasing superiors" is a trait associated with climbers. Consequently, it appears that fraternized strategies, used by these SES women to get ahead, are a combination of behaviors linked not only to the idealistic tendencies of advocates but also the assertiveness of climbers. The findings of the study suggest that the characteristics of executives identified by Downs (1967) for different types of officials are not as pure and exclusive as Downs has suggested or that his categorizations need refinement. It is certainly reasonable to expect that some refinement would be needed in the 28 years since the original categorization were completed. Considering that the overwhelming majority of

women have entered the executive positions only in the past decade, it is conceivable that Downs theory (1967) of executive behavior is more a reflection of the behaviors of male executives since in the 1960s executive positions were almost exclusively occupied by men.

Downs' view of the officials' behavior as the model of executive typology for the federal bureaucracy undoubtedly had considerable merit for some period. Nevertheless, it was not without its ironies. Clearly, Downs' executive typology, at the time of its writing, was ethnic and gender-biased. In the light of institutionalization of Equal Employment Opportunity, and more rigid standards, the American federal bureaucracy has moved to reduce the bias and has increased the participation and the numbers of women and ethnic minorities in the executive positions. Consequently, characterization of executives behavior, would seem only appropriate when all socially diverse group are considered. The findings of this study suggest that the Downs' categorization of executives may need to be expanded to include new type of executives who display behaviors of two different types of officials. Furthermore, This study allows for an improved formulation of Downs' theory of executive behavior. The behavioral characteristics of officials are determined by the nature of organization, as Downs suggests, and by the gender of the executive.



As Downs specified the attributes of different type of executives, Rosener (1991), in her theory of differing managerial style, discussed the contrast between the behaviors of male and female executives. In her theory of differing managerial style Rosener (1991) suggests that women use transformational leadership. The transformational leadership style was conceptualized by James McGregor Burns (1978) and later developed by Bass (1985). The theory suggests that women, more than men, use: 1) an interactive managerial style, 2) do not resort to power in order to lead, 3) share authority and information, and 4) through respect for broader goals transform their personal goals into organizational goals. The findings of this study seem to support Rosener's (1991) contentions. While this study focused on SES women exclusively, in their statements, many of the respondents characterized their behavioral styles as loyal, patient, flexible who relate to their colleagues and influenced people in subtle ways. Almost all respondents indicated that they respect and appreciate their subordinates and only 57 percent used their power or status in reaching their objectives.

Human capital theory (as espoused by Becker, 1985) suggests that the problems of the advancement of women are due to lack of investment in education and training because of family responsibilities. Further, women with family or children have been perceived to be less committed to their job (Mincer & Polachek, 1974). These perceptions, studies suggest, may have been a strong barrier to

women's career advancement (Kelly, 1991). If lack of advancement of women to the SES ranks is due to family obligations, one would expect that women in SES positions would be free from family responsibilities (i.e., to be unmarried or have no children). In this study, however, it was found that more than 60 percent of the women respondents were married or had children and there were indications that these women in the SES were heavily committed to their jobs. While in a few cases women reported that they delayed their own promotion because of their family responsibilities, their potential for advancement was not perceived to have been affected by their family constraints.

Studies of women managers suggest that women start their careers with lower expectations and many advance in their career further than they either imagined or expected (Fortune, Sep.18, 1995; Fuller & Schoenberger, 1991). Furthermore, research on effective managerial style, has shown that male managers perceive themselves to be risk takers, independent, and aggressive, while women build on interpersonal relationships. Contrary to expectations, the results of the survey in this study indicate that SES women have indeed taken risks, which have apparently paid off for them.

### **Practical Implications**

In examining the data in this study, it is clear that while few SES women hold positions in technical or scientific fields, the majority of the women executives in the federal government serve in administrative jobs. Positions associated with science are mostly occupied by men. This means that men constitute the majority of the professional positions in the SES. Unless there are programs to promote the study of science, technology and computers for women, starting in high schools and continuing into the colleges and university level resulting in a larger pool of women with professional degrees and education, men will continue to dominate these ranks. Women who are without technical and scientific educations, consequently, would be out of contention for professional positions in the SES. Those females seeking advancement to executive positions should recognize this phenomenon. They should create the opportunity and become a part of a larger pool of qualified candidate by pursuing studies in the field of science and technology. Without bringing professional women to the SES club, significant segregation of SES women and men will continue indefinitely.

Second, human capital barriers have created constraints to women's advancement. This study found that many SES women perceived that there were

conflicts between family roles and their career. The problem of dual roles for women continues to be an obstacle for them. Policies which are tailored to exclusively male environments are no longer practical and fair, considering the changes in the gender mix in the public and private work environment. Programs such as flexible work hours, parental leave, and extended child care should be implemented to further accommodate the family needs of the women employees of government. Any strategy to reduce the pressure of family obligations would be beneficial for women seeking the upper GS ranks. These policies should be proactive to accommodate the future needs of society.

Third, barriers linked to sex-role socialization and stereotype should be eliminated. The findings of this study showed that more than one-third of the SES women agree that female traits are not valued in the work environment. Policies should be implemented and organizational culture should be promoted to encourage and value diversity. The lack of success of women to achieve higher executive ranks, is often linked to their feminine traits (i.e., being cooperative, compassionate, sympathetic, and emphasizing on interpersonal relationships). Feminine traits should not be viewed negatively, and must not equate with vulnerable characteristics. Nevertheless, they have had a negative effect when women have tried to penetrate into an environment of executives that is dominated by men and is accommodating masculine traits. In this setting, attempts by women

should not concentrate totally and exclusively on changing men's attitudes. An effective administrator realizes the difficulties and challenges of overcoming resistance to change. Many men in executive ranks of the federal government hierarchy may succumb to legal pressure to accept women and traits or qualities associated with female executives. But, changes, if imposed, won't have the same effect and won't be as productive as if they resulted from voluntary acceptance. Until there are more females in the executive ranks, women may need to change or adapt to accommodate the male environment. This is not to suggest that women should copy men, but it is advised that women should recognize that the process of achieving success is more difficult for women. Some of the possible ways for women to get around these obstacles are as follows: commitments to common values, avoiding negative statements, demonstrating capabilities to do the job, letting the superior know their ambitions, and never underestimating or underselling themselves. Furthermore, women who are seeking executive ranks in the federal service, are required to develop executive competency by acquiring executive skills and having knowledge and attitudes to apply their skills.

The data indicate that SES respondents felt that mentoring has been a major contributing factor to their career advancement. this finding is consistent with the findings of Kanter (1977), Kram (1983), Kram (1985), and Fagenson (1989) who found that mentors were a predominant factor for individual career advancement. If

mentoring significantly contributes to the career advancement of women, agencies and departments could create opportunities to increase mentorship for women. Women themselves can create an opportunity for a mentor relationship by reaching out to peers and superiors who can and will help them with their career growth.

These SES women were more likely to perceive their career success as related to working harder than their male counterparts. Working hard brings recognition and visibility. While visibility may not by itself guarantee advancement to the executive level, it still remains an important factor in career growth. Given the common career advancement disparities between men and women, potential SES women could aggressively pursue assignments or positions or activities that bring high visibility.

Clearly, one of the biggest impediments to women's advancement is their limited presence in the GS 13 - 15 levels which would be a prerequisite for a career move to the SES. Women first should focus on finding or creating a channel from lower GS levels to GS 13 - 15. The current advancement of women is partially rooted in passing the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation and affirmative action. Government policies surrounding these laws should expedite this process. Classic discussions supporting the government's effort to promote women and minorities underscore the following arguments: (1) it is important to make up for past and present discrimination practices by enhancing the representation of the

victimized groups; (2) it creates a more equitable distribution of wealth, and (3) it elevates and develops the dignity of historically oppressed people (Baldwin and Rothwell, 1993).

Finally, plans and strategies used by women to pursue SES positions, no matter how innovative and clever or intelligent, and no matter how much consensus the researchers and scholars have about effectiveness of these strategies, will have little or no guarantee of implementation if there is not a powerful personal commitment by women to put them in action and keep up even when their efforts do not produce success in the beginning. Consensus of opinions can be a guideline, but it is not a prescription to advance women to the SES. Choosing the right strategy is a major dilemma especially when, in the culture of organizations, there are not clear set of standards that are agreed by all members of the organizations. Consequently, in the absence of clearly defined standards, generally accepted guideline should be used as a foundation to show their capabilities of upholding values respected by all members of the organization.

### **Policy Implications**

Policy recommendations for women's advancement should include reducing and eliminating barriers to the top-level positions as well as the implementation of

representative bureaucracy in all General Schedule levels in the federal government. The majority of women are conglomerated in the lower GS ranks and men are still in the overwhelming majority at the SES level. To accomplish an equal representation of women, eliminating barriers, and facilitating women's advancement significant changes must be made.

One way to increase the pool of candidates for the SES is to forecast the number of executives needed for each department or agency, followed by training individuals to become part of the pool in coming years. Second, a systematic use of mentors and mentoring to identify, recruit, support, train and most importantly compensate competitively and retain talented new entrants to the federal service will be helpful. If women are hired but not retained, or lost to more lucrative jobs in the private sector, they will never reach the higher level positions. New entrants replace the ones who leave the federal jobs.

Executive education in the United States almost exclusively is concerned with training and preparing individuals for private businesses. In addition, many universities offer specialized programs (i.e., executive MBA), seminars, workshops, and certificate programs designed for private business executives. Many large firms also have their own training programs to fill the gap and supplement courses offered by universities by supporting universities or creating their own training schools. Specialized courses devised for executives in the SES to



teach all aspects of government operations should be offered with the support of the federal government by more universities. These programs, particularly, should search out and encourage the attendance of women to increase the pool of qualified women candidates in the upper ranks of the government. Bureaucratic environment, as Borchers (1982) suggests, influences the opportunities for women. In the existing agencies or bureaucracies, Borchers (1982) found that advancement opportunities for women are controlled by established white men in middle-level management, while in newly founded organizations, women have more opportunities to occupy middle-level managerial ranks. This suggests that discriminatory patterns are more present in established agencies than in newly created ones. Gender discrimination at work is known to disadvantage women disproportionately. Laws and policies against gender discrimination should facilitate further advancement of women into higher career levels.

Any implication of this SES study for policy may not materialize unless there is a true commitment to equal opportunity for women, and governmental forceful action to eradicate gender discriminatory practices by the public and private sector. The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 should provide the needed incentive for more representation of women in higher echelons of the government. The laws and legislation, by themselves, can not create an ethic of equal opportunity. Therefore, there has to be a robust and steady enforcement of the

legislation by the government, and furthermore, this process must be educational and must develop a new standards of behavior by agencies. Changing long established inequitable employment practices, to fair and equitable practices, like other changes, may take as long as it is allowed. Hence, it is very crucial to stipulate a timetable for agencies to achieve gender equity in employment.

### **Further Research**

This study, like other studies, raises many questions for additional research. First, further research should attempt to reach the entire population of the women SES in order to confirm the composition and the demographic information on marital status, race and ethnicity, and educational field and also include male SES members. This should facilitate a study to find out if there is a significant difference among SES women with different marital status, ethnicity, and educational fields. Further, to compare if significant difference exist between men and women in the SES. Second, this study could be complemented by getting more information from the SES women themselves. This can be done by including additional questions and statements to the survey. For example, question regarding male mentors should be included to compare women who received mentoring from men with those who were mentored by other women. Third, questions should be asked regarding the type of agencies or department in which these SES women serve. Researches

suggest that organizations are not created equal (Newman, 1994), and that the nature of organization or the type of agency determines the behavior of executives (Downs, 1967) and predicts the pattern of career advancement (Lowi, 1985). This can be beneficial to understand if the nature or structure of the organization affect the behavior and career advancement patterns of these executives.

It is recommended that longitudinal studies to be done so that generalization may be made regarding the traits, characteristics, experiences, and strategies for career advancement of the SES women. Characteristics of women can be an overriding importance in their career advancement. Human capital factors, such as education, experience, and skills; behaviors such as loyalty, hard work, flexibility; the nature, type, and size of the agencies, the political leadership can all be important factor in women entry to the executive ranks. This research should be used as a benchmark for further longitudinal studies to determine the extent to which some or all of the these variables would be present in the future studies.

Additional research should be concerned with how the growth of women in SES positions could undercut other minorities such as African American males and Hispanics. Furthermore, research on the turnover of women in government may shed some light on the problem of the representation of women in higher GS positions.

Further research should replicate this study with a sample of male SES members in order to determine if there are similarities or contrasts between leadership style, experiences and attributes, perception of barriers, and strategies of male and female executives in the federal services.

Further qualitative and quantitative studies of SES women is recommended , using this study as a framework, to determine if strategies, executive behaviors, and personal traits of the SES women can be formulated and be used as a model for career progress as well as the development of women to the SES ranks.

The number of female executives in the federal government has increased from 11 percent to 16 percent between 1991 and 1994 (MSPB, 1992; Office of Executive Policy and Service, OPM, 1995) representing an almost 50 percent increase. Is the glass ceiling coming down? Has it been circumvented? Is this a trend in representative bureaucracy? Further research on the elements contributing to increased number of women in the SES should shed light on these questions.

Women have reached the executives ranks in the federal government in greater numbers and higher proportions than in the private sector, nevertheless, one may expect to find some degrees of similarities in promotional activities, barriers, and attitudes in the government and private sectors. A comparative study of advancement of women in government and private sector is recommended to investigate the similarities and differences.

Other research should examine the differences between the characteristics of those women executives who had mentor relationships and those without mentors. Studies have suggested that individuals who become proteges have stronger needs for power, achievement, and affiliation (Fagenson, 1987; Kram, 1983; Kram, 1985). Furthermore, research should examine how the departmental or agency's culture, norms, and processes help and encourage or restrain effective mentoring.

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# EXECUTIVE FEMALE SURVEY

**PURPOSE:** This survey has been devised to collect information concerning your experiences and observations as a successful female executive. Your responses will enable us to gain a better understanding of how females achieve executive status, as well as provide you with the recognition you deserve. Several categories of questions have been identified. All information will be treated confidentially.

## Section I: Career Development Experiences

The statements below refer to personal experiences and personal attributes that may have enabled you to reach your current executive status. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with these phrases by checking the corresponding blank.

	Strongly Agree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Disagree 5
I have been mentored by other females throughout my career.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I mentor younger females.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have learned to use power and status to reach my goals.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I can be firm without showing irritation, frustration or anger.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I, as a female, have to work harder to get ahead.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I respect and appreciate my subordinates.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have experienced being right but not winning.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have the courage, conviction and ability to seize opportunities and make it happen.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have experienced that a sense of humor is a must for rising females.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My intuition is a tool which I use intelligently to benefit everyone in my organization.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am comfortable as a teacher, coach and facilitator.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My managers have recognized my accomplishments.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My organization has a strong support system for all female employees.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Adequate training for new jobs is available to me.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I can change course quickly and effectively for the good of the organization.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Flexibility has been important in my career.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

What personal experiences and/or attributes do you feel have been most important in reaching your current executive status?

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## Section II: Strategies To Get Ahead

Below is a list of things that are often recommended to get ahead, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by writing the corresponding number in the blank.

THE WAY TO GET AHEAD IS TO:	Strongly Agree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Disagree 5
Promote broad policy goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Please my superiors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Favor innovation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Jump from one organization to another	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Antagonize superiors if needed to bring about change	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Add new functions to the job	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stick firmly to the rules when making decisions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Try to expand a few policies	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Isolate myself from being influenced by others	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Not actively seek promotions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promote specific policy goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Oppose any changes in the status quo	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spend a great deal of time and energy seeking outside support	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Score high on objective standards for promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Be sensitive to the long run	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Follow a narrowly defined set of interests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Avoid change	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Change the organization structure to try out new ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Increase the total number of people under my direct supervision	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Keep in mind the good of the whole organization, not a particular unit	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Section III: Executive Typology

Below is a list of executive types which research has identified to be most prevalent. Please read each of the following descriptions carefully and specify which type best describes your behavior as a manager by checking the appropriate letter. (Check only one)

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) tends to be concerned with self-interests, more so than the interests of the organization; and are motivated almost entirely by power, income, and prestige.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (B) tends to be most concerned with convenience and security within the organization; seeks to retain the amount of power, income, and prestige you already have, rather than to maximize them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (C) tends to combine self-interests and altruistic loyalty in promoting a narrow range of policies or concepts; they seek power for its own sake and to effect the policies to which you are loyal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (D) tends to be more loyal to the organization in a broader sense; seeks power to have a significant influence on policies and actions concerning the organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (E) tends to be loyal to society as a whole; desires to obtain power necessary to have a significant influence upon national policies and actions; you are altruistic because your loyalty is to the "general welfare" as you see it.

### Section III: Executive Typology (Continued)

PLEASE LOOK AT THE LIST AGAIN AND SPECIFY WHICH TYPE:

(Write the appropriate letter in the space provided)

\_\_\_\_\_ you prefer for yourself as an executive.

\_\_\_\_\_ you prefer for your manager.

### Section IV: Barriers To Employment

The statements below refer to factors that may have posed as obstacles to your career development. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Stereotyping and preconceptions of female roles have limited my career.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
An uneasiness in the workforce about females' ability to lead males.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Peers are uncomfortable working with me because I am a female.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Unconscious male behavior in ways that exclude females.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I feel that females should receive preferential treatment regarding travel requirements.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Female traits are not valued in the workforce.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am viewed by my peers as aggressive.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strong disciplinary actions are favored for female employees.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
The perception that females get equal consideration for promotions in the public sector is a myth.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have readily been offered career development opportunities.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Little organizational concern for the career of females.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Managers have different expectations regarding how female employees should resolve home-career conflicts.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sexual discrimination in the public sector regarding hiring.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My job itself is very pressuring.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am under pressure to perform because I play the part of a successful "role model".	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I often feel pressured by trying to meet family obligations along with work demands.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I attribute much of my success to, help from higher managers.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
At work my inability to adapt causes me to be thrown off course.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In my job, my own self-interests and those for other women often lead me astray.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have personally experienced sexual discrimination regarding promotions in the public sector.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In reviewing your career path, what factors/experiences do you feel have presented barriers to your advancement?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Section V: Managerial Support

In this section we are interested in knowing whether or not you receive support from your manager regarding your career development. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements by placing a check in the corresponding bank.

	Strongly Agree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Disagree 5
My manager takes the time to learn about my career goals and aspirations.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My manager cares about whether or not I achieve my career goals.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My manager keeps me informed about different career opportunities in the organization.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My manager makes sure I get the credit when I accomplish something substantial.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My manager gives me helpful feedback about my performance.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
My manager gives me helpful advice about improving my performance.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Section VI: Ethics

In this section we are interested in your experiences regarding ethical conduct in the workplace. Please check the blank that corresponds with your level of agreement.

	Strongly Agree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Disagree 5
I have been asked by an elected or appointed official to change a decision for reasons that I felt were ethically inappropriate, representing "special interest" interference in administrative processes.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have experienced pressure to change a decision at the request of an elected or appointed official which I regarded as inappropriate or possibly illegal coercion.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have been asked by a career manager to change a decision for reasons that I felt were ethically inappropriate, representing "special interest" interference in organizational processes.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I have experienced pressure to change a decision at the request of a career manager which I regarded as inappropriate or possibly illegal coercion.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please rank the following ways to control ethics in the public sector from most effective (1) to least effective (5).

- \_\_\_\_\_ making the punishment for unethical behavior greater than the reward.
- \_\_\_\_\_ setting an example of ethical behavior by top management.
- \_\_\_\_\_ publishing a clear code of ethics for all employees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ setting up training programs to sensitize employees to situations that could require ethical choices.
- \_\_\_\_\_ publicly rewarding employees for ethical conduct.

Please provide any additional comments concerning ethical matters that you would like to share \_\_\_\_\_

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## Section VII: Career Factors

1. Indicate how important the following factors were in your decision to enter the federal government.

- a. Benefits
- b. Stability of employment
- c. Work type
- d. Friends working for federal government
- e. Spouse/companion working for federal government

Very Important  
1 2 3 4 5  
Not Important At All

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Below is a list of factors that appear to be important in making career decisions. Please rate the importance of each in your decisions.

- a. Spouse/companion's reaction/opinion
- b. Spouse/companion's career
- c. Children
- d. Elder care
- e. Personal independence

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Research has shown that officials pursue many goals. Listed below are a number of goals that officials pursue. Please indicate how important each of these goals are to you.

- a. power
- b. money income
- c. prestige
- d. convenience
- e. security
- f. personal loyalty
- g. pride in proficient performance at work
- h. desire to serve the public interest

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. \_\_\_\_\_

## Section VIII: Career Satisfaction

In this section we are interested in knowing your overall satisfaction level with your current executive position.

1. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your progress toward:

- a. Meeting overall career goals.
- b. Meeting goals for income.
- c. Meeting goals for advancement.
- d. Meeting goals for the development of new skills.
- e. Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with your career?

Very Satisfied  
1 2 3 4 5  
Not Very Satisfied

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Having achieved a high level of success, what are your future goals and aspirations? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section IX: About Yourself

In this section we ask you for some information about yourself and employment history. Please fill in blanks and check the most appropriate response.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Marital Status:  
\_\_\_\_\_ divorced  
\_\_\_\_\_ married  
\_\_\_\_\_ separated  
\_\_\_\_\_ single  
\_\_\_\_\_ widowed

Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnic Category:  
\_\_\_\_\_ asian american  
\_\_\_\_\_ black american  
\_\_\_\_\_ caucasian  
\_\_\_\_\_ hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ other

## Section IX: About Yourself (Continued)

Highest Level of Education Completed:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> no college         | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> some college       | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Law degree       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree  |   |

Major Field of Study for the Highest Degree Held:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> business    | <input type="checkbox"/> public administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> education   | <input type="checkbox"/> science               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> social science        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> humanities  | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____           |
- (specify)

What was your approximate total family income in tax year 1990 (before taxes).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 80,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> 200,000 - 299,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 81,000 - 99,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> 300,000 or more   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100,000 - 199,999 |  |

How many years have you worked for the Federal government? \_\_\_\_\_ years

Did you enter the Federal government at the Senior Executive level? Yes ☐ No ☐

How long have you been in the Senior Executive Service? \_\_\_\_\_ years

Of the total number of employees you supervise what percentage are: \_\_\_\_\_ females \_\_\_\_\_ males

Do you consider your job to be a:

- ☐ predominately male occupation.
- ☐ predominately female occupation.

Are you currently located in the Washington D.C. area? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please tell us how you have achieved your current, high-level management position. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How long do you expect to remain in this position before looking for another position?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> currently job seeking | <input type="checkbox"/> 37 - 48 months                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 6 months    | <input type="checkbox"/> 49 - 60 months                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 12 months         | <input type="checkbox"/> plan to retire from this position |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 - 24 months        | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 36 months        |  |

Please return the questionnaire within five days in the enclosed, self-addressed postage prepaid envelope.

TO: Dr. Loretta Cornelius  
Old Dominion University  
College of Business and Public Administration  
Norfolk, Virginia 23529-0224

*Thank you for participating in our survey.*



May 28, 1991

Dear Female SESers,

You and your female colleagues in the SES have quietly achieved executive status with very little acknowledgement, despite the coverage your counterparts have received in the private sector. I want to help correct that shortcoming.

During my tenure as Deputy Director at OPM in the early 80's I had the privilege of meeting and working with many of you. At that time I recognized the significant contributions you were making. I welcome the opportunity to direct some research on how you have achieved your status, but I need your help.

The Office of Personnel Management is only involved in distributing this questionnaire by means of a blind mailing, but I am responsible for the cost of the mailing.

However, it is you who will make the difference. Please take the 20-30 minutes required to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope hopefully within the next week. I assure you complete anonymity.

My colleague, Wolfgang Pindur, and I expect to publish the results of this survey within the next six months. The findings will also be provided to OPM, again with complete anonymity.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. My best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Loretta Cornelius

LC:lt

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

**Ahmad Mashayekh was born January 7, 1949 in Teheran, Iran. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management from the University of South Florida in 1976. He received his Master of Business Administration from the University of North Florida in 1977.**

**Ahmad has been an educator, financial consultant and has been involved in the research and evaluation of different social programs. His publications and research, among other areas, have been focused on social issues regarding higher education financing, post secondary education for low income student, and gender wage differential in the federal government.**

**Ahmad is currently teaching Economics at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Florida. He is also teaching Budgeting at the Graduate School of Business of Webster University. Furthermore, he maintains a record of productivity and service to the community.**

**Ahmad has been the recipient of the Constant Fellowship Award in 1992-93 and 1993-94 at Old Dominion University. He is a member of Omicron Delta Epsilon, Honor Society of Economics. He has served as Vice-President and Treasurer of the College of Business and Public Administration Ph.D. Association.**