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Résumé de l'article

Jusqu'à présent, la littérature relative au devoir de représentation syndicale n'a pas tenté de mettre en évidence les distinctions entre les interdictions générales d'agir avec arbitraire, avec discrimination, avec mauvaise foi et avec négligence grave. Cet article a pour objet de démontrer la portée différente de chacune de ces notions en présentant un cadre d'analyse des obligations qui découlent du devoir de représentation syndicale. Deux catégories d'obligations sont identifiées et analysées : les obligations spécifiques à la fonction de représentant et les obligations liées à l'intensité de la représentation.

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Sex Differences in a Pink-Collar Occupation

Gerald Hunt

This study compared men and women clerical-secretarial workers in one public-sector institution. Just 7% of the workforce was male, and they were concentrated mainly in the clerical job classifications. Men were found to be less committed to the occupation than women and reported a greater sense of occupational choice. Women tended to find the work more personally meaningful than men, and men were somewhat more likely to find the work trivial and tedious. Both sexes were extremely discontent with their developmental and promotional opportunities. The implications of these findings for employment equity initiatives and additional research are discussed.

Are there differences in the experience of men and women in relatively low status, female-dominated, non-professional, clerical-secretarial occupations? We know that occupations are segregated by gender, and that female-identified jobs are associated with low pay, power and prestige. We also know that females tend to be a disadvantaged minority within a range of male-dominated occupations, and that males are often an advantaged minority within female-dominated professions, even when objective factors such as age, education level, motivation and technical competence are taken into account (Kanter 1977a; Game and Pringle 1983; Armstrong and Armstrong 1984; Reskin 1984; Cohn 1985; Gutek 1985; Reskin and Hartmann 1986; Northcott and Lowe 1987; Peitchinis 1989; Bradley 1989; Mackie 1991; Morgan and Knights 1991; Armstrong and Armstrong 1992). By contrast, we know much less about sex differences in non-professional occupations, such as clerical-secretarial work, that are female-dominated. This gap is unfortunate because slowly changing perceptions of appropriate gender roles, along with economic

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restructuring, high unemployment rates, a shift in jobs away from the primary and secondary sectors, and the movement of more women into male-identified jobs have been cited as factors that could lead more men to search for work in a range of female-dominated occupations (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987; Mackie 1991). Even though such a trend is not yet evident in any significant way, if it does begin, it will be important to understand the gender dynamics that might come into play if more males begin to engage in female-dominated jobs. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of sex differences in all occupational categories will greatly assist policy makers in the design of effective anti-discriminatory and employment equity initiatives. Toward this end, this paper reports on a study focusing on sex differences in what is quintessentially a female-identified, non-professional occupation, the so called "pink-collar ghetto"of clerical-secretarial work. The study was limited to workers within one large, public-sector, educational institution — the University of Toronto — as a way of minimizing differences that might occur between sectors and organizations.

SEX AND OCCUPATIONS

In virtually every country, there are significant differences in the sex composition of occupations with resulting sex-based inequality. In Canada, for example, 74% of the female labour force is located in five occupational grouping noted for low wages, status and prestige, and limited opportunities for career advancement, whereas males are found in a much wider range of jobs, and are especially dominant in occupations and professions associated with high pay, prestige, and power (Mackie 1991:208). As one observer notes,

> Evidence reveals that years of education and other objective characteristics do not account for the power, pay and prestige differences among [male and female-dominated] professions. In short, for the professions sex counts (Armstrong and Armstrong 1992:118).

Researchers have found sex inequality occurs not only between, but within occupations and professions. A growing number of studies reveal that male-dominated occupations are internally differentiated in ways that favour males and disadvantage females (Harlan and O'Farrell 1982; McIlwee 1982; Walshok 1981; Holm 1982; Deaux and Ullman 1983; Marshall 1984; Martin 1986; Kaufman 1989; Williams 1989; Loscocco 1990; Armstrong and Armstrong 1992). Women employed in jobs as diverse as law, medicine, construction, engineering, management, truck driving, mining, and the military, tend to be found in the least powerful roles and lowest paid jobs, in spite of similar educational qualifications, skills, commitment and motivation. Many of these women also report higher evaluation standards, less access to social

and institutional support systems, less status and authority, reduced opportunities for promotion and advancement, and increased incidence of sexual harassment. Although there is evidence to suggest that the situation may be improving, especially in occupational categories such as middle management (Falkenberg 1988; Burke 1991), the general consensus is that women continue to encounter unfair employment discrimination when they confront the prevailing norms to do with gender and work.

Likewise, researchers have found that female-dominated professions are internally differentiated in patterns that favour males. Even though female-dominated professions are associated with lower pay, power and prestige than male-dominated professions, men, as a minority group, appear able to secure the best of what professions such as social work, teaching and nursing have to offer. In Ontario, for example, 70% of elementary teachers are women, yet less than 19% of principals in public elementary schools, and only 17% of supervisory officers, are women (French 1990; Armstrong and Armstrong 1992). Similarly, male social workers are much more likely to be found in supervisory and administrative jobs, and in general are better paid than women, even when educational levels are taken into account (Cummings 1981; Carniol 1990). Similarly as well, male nurses are clustered disproportionately in administrative and managerial roles, and appear able to forge advantageous social relationships with powerful stakeholders such as male doctors, and are more likely to be singled-out for special treatment in terms of educational, developmental and promotional opportunities (Brown and Stones 1973; Gans 1984; Williams 1989).

In other words, women in male-dominated occupations appear to confront a "glass ceiling" (Morrison, White, Van Velsor 1987) reducing their chances of gaining higher status roles and better paying, senior appointments. Men in gender-atypical professions, on the other hand, do not experience such a ceiling, and in fact appear able to leapfrog their female peers in gaining access to jobs and roles at the top of the hierarchy.

To date, there has been very little detailed research comparing the experience of men and women in lower status jobs such as those in the pink-collar ghetto. Although there have been several excellent studies highlighting the experience of women in clerical-secretarial jobs — Pringle's (1989) study of Australian secretaries and Kanter's (1977) study of American secretaries for example — these studies have not focused on sex differences. From these studies we know that clerical-secretarial work typifies contemporary power and gender relations in that the work these women do is generally devalued, often includes demeaning and degrading domestic chores for their male superiors, and has a short, dead-ended career ladder. These studies, however, have not probed in much detail the differences that might take place for men

working in this stereotypical female work-world: is their experience better, worse, the same? The lack of detailed investigation focusing on sex differences in this occupational arena probably stems from the fact that there has been a pressing need to scrutinize women's work from the perspective of women themselves, along with an urgent requirement to understand and correct the problems women and minorities encounter in gaining access to higher paying, more influential occupations, not to mention the fact that so few men currently engage in lower status, female-identified work. (Nevertheless, for the reasons outlined earlier in the paper, it is an important area for research.)

One source of information specifically comparing men and women in female-dominated, lower status jobs comes from large-scale national surveys (D'Arcy, Syrotuik, and Siddique 1984; Mottaz 1986; Lambert 1991). The results of these surveys reveal that men and women within lower-level, female-dominated occupational categories have comparable levels of education, especially when age is taken into account, and that the sexes have similar scores on standard attitudinal measures such as job satisfaction, motivation and commitment, even though there is evidence to suggest that men and women may use difference factors and attributions when making their assessments. This survey data, however, must be viewed cautiously as it is not occupation-specific. Mottaz (1986) for example, uses the less than revealing categories of "upper-level" and "lower-level" occupation. Also, the data is derived from very large samples of workers, drawn from a heterogeneous mix of industrial and public sector employers. Unfortunate as well, is the fact that these studies provide no information about whether the similarity in job attitudes and values between the sexes leads to similar or different occupational outcomes.

A somewhat more revealing and helpful study considered clerical workers in the Canadian Public Service (Swimmer 1990). This study found that males were more likely to be promoted, even when education and other qualifications were held constant. The occupational grouping used for this study, though, included all of the many jobs and job levels coded as "clerical" in the Canadian government bureaucracy, making a detailed assessment of sex differences in more classically female-identified job categories difficult. Also, the study was limited in that it did not explore other important dimensions of work experiences beyond promotion patterns, and the conclusions were based on data from the early 1980s, thus providing little insight into the potential impact of recent antidiscriminatory initiatives.

In sum, the research on sex and occupations comes together in concluding that men and women are segregated within and between occupations in ways that reproduce sex inequality. Although there appear to be only minor differences in the educational qualifications, attitudes, skills, and technical competencies that men and women bring to a given occupation, males appear

to be advantaged in terms of pay, power and prestige. The research reported on here set out to discover if the experience of men and women in a low status, pink-collar occupation conforms to the broader set of conclusions regarding sex and occupations.

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research was to undertake a survey comparing the male and female clerical-secretarial workers in one organizational setting. As a starting point, I undertook an exploratory study involving informal interviews with a number of clerks and secretaries at the University of Toronto in order to isolate the sorts of questions and issues that would be most relevant for a larger survey. The women I talked to found it almost impossible to compare their experience against men because so few of them had ever worked with a male peer; males, on the other hand, were very aware of their minority status, and had ample examples to illustrate their views. Most of these men believed they had no significant advantage or disadvantage compared to women, with a couple of notable exceptions. Some men perceived a subtle tendency for others to "over-compensate", albeit in a positive way, when dealing with them, and that they were "respected" more than women. Most of the men believed that they were required to do fewer of the routine tasks such as filing and typing, but more of the male-stereotyped tasks such as heavy lifting. While their opinions were divided about the degree to which there might be sex-based discrimination during hiring, all of the men felt that the job of personal secretary was much less open to men than to women. Many men, and a number of the women I interviewed, were of the view that the most important area of sex differences would be linked to attitudes, and suggested that women would be more likely to be committed to the occupation and satisfied with the work.

As a result of this exploratory inquiry, five aspects of work experience emerged as areas where important sex differences might occur — occupational commitment, motivation, job satisfaction, quality of the job, and organizational commitment — and, along with standard demographic data, these dimensions became the basis of a larger survey.

Subsequently, in late 1991, I undertook a survey of full-time workers in the job classifications of Clerk-typist, Clerk, and Secretary at the University of Toronto. For the survey, I sent a questionnaire through the campus mail system to all of the 71 males and to 211 females in these job classifications (one in four of the 844 women in these jobs were randomly selected). Respondents completed the questionnaire anonymously and the response rate was 66% for males and 63% for females, with a nearly equal percentage of completed questionnaires from within each job classification.

In addition to collecting demographic data, the questionnaire presented 39 statements requiring a response along a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire also included three open-ended questions asking respondents to describe the most important factors that had led them to pursue the occupation, the most important factors contributing to their staying in the occupation, and anything negative or positive about their work or occupation that they wished to add. Additional demographic information was collected from the Human Resources Division of the University.

Distinctions Between Constructs

Occupational Commitment. This category included six questions designed to assess how committed respondents were to the occupational category, including questions about long term commitment to a clerical-secretarial career.

Motivation. This category was designed to draw a general picture of respondent's motivation to do the work, and included questions related to experienced meaningfulness, intrinsic motivation, and experienced responsibility. All of the questions in this category were drawn from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman and Oldham 1975; 1980).

Job Satisfaction. In addition to a general question concerned with overall job satisfaction, the questionnaire included specific statements covering satisfaction with job security, pay and fringe benefits, personal growth and development opportunities, co-workers, amount of challenge, promotions, and working conditions. All of these questions were drawn from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman and Oldham 1975; 1980).

Quality of the Job. This category assessed the quality of the job with a view to measuring perceived on-the-job discrimination. The questions asked respondents how they felt about the treatment they received from others, and whether or not they found their work had any special or unusual benefits. In particular, I was interested in discovering if males and females perceived different treatment from supervisors or from the people they did assignments for (faculty, administrative bosses, students, etc.), and whether or not they perceived differences in such things as the flexibility of working hours and assignments.

Organizational Commitment. Distinct from occupational commitment or job satisfaction, organizational commitment has to do with a worker's involvement in and identification with the organization as a whole. Questions in this category were drawn from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, Porter 1979; Brooke, Russell, Price 1988), and queried respondent's acceptance of organizational goals and values, long term desire to

maintain membership in the organization, and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization.

RESULTS

The data generated by the survey was analyzed in three different ways. First, a statistical analysis of the demographic information and of the responses to questions within the five work categories was undertaken. Since this analysis involved multiple t-testing, the Bonferroni method of determining significance was employed to keep the overall type I error probability at 5% (see Tables 1-3). Second, the percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing (on the 5-point scale) with each statement on the questionnaire was computed. Also, in order to explore the potential impact of age, the individual responses were analyzed with an age control (under 30 years of age). The percentage of affirmative responses to specific questions where sex differences were most pronounced is shown in Table 4. Third, the responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed for themes and commonalities, and this data was assessed for sex differences.

TABLE 1

Gender Classification of Clerical Positions

Class	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
Clerk-typist	113	11.5%	88.5%
Clerk	347	15%	85%
Secretary	505	2%	98%
Total	965	7%	93%

TABLE 2

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

	Males	*Females*	*Level of Significance*
Age:			NS
Mean	35	38	
Modal Range	24-32	30-36	
S. D.	11.5	10.5	
Salary:			Significant
Mean (000)	$279	$316	
S. D.	37.5	53.6	
Job Classification:			NS
Clerk-typist	15.2%	5.3%	
Clerk	50.0%	28.6%	
Secretary	10.8%	58.7%	
Unidentified	23.9%	7.5%	
Marital Status:			NS
Single	59.6%	36.6%	
'Coupled'	40.4%	63.4%	
Education:			NS
9-13	27.7%	33.3%	
Non University	27.7%	41.7%	
Undergraduate	31.9%	22.7%	
Graduate degree	12.8%	2.3%	
Organizational Tenure (years):			NS
< 3	48.9%	35.3%	
3-5	27.6%	14.3%	
> 5	23.4%	50.4%	
Job Tenure (years):			NS
< 3 current job	73.9%	53.4%	
3.5 current job	8.6%	21.8%	
> 5 current job	17.3%	24.8%	

Notes:

1 NS = Not signiflcant

2 Level of significance calculated at 5% using tbe Bonferroni formula for multiple t-tests

TABLE 3

Work Experiences of Males and Females

Category	*Males*		*Females*			
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*p-value*	*Level of Significance*
Occupational Commitment	2.8	0.65	3.2	0.76	0.0039	S
Motivation	3.9	0.76	4.1	0.81	0.19	NS
Job Satisfaction	3.4	0.59	3.5	0.70	0.39	NS
Quality of the Job	3.4	0.64	3.4	0.73	0.62	NS
Organizational Commitment	3.9	0.65	3.9	0.77	0.79	NS

Notes:

1 Mean on a scale of 5
2 NS = Not statistically significant
3 S = Statistically significant
4 Level of significance calculated at 5% using the Bonferroni formula for multiple t-tests

TABLE 4

Affirmative Responses to Specific Survey Questions

	Men	*Women*
I find the work I do on this job to be personally meaningful to me	47% (37%)	66%(64%)
Most of the things I have to do on this job seem trivial to me	6% (30%)	10% (9%)
I find the work I do to be tedious	59% (60%)	45% (53%)
Overall, I am satisfied with my job	36% (31%)	50% (60%)
Overall, I am satisfied with the promotional opportunities	11% (5%)	21% (18%)
Overall, I am satisfied with the growth and development opportunities	37% (30%)	44% (44%)
I am treated well by the people I do work for	78% (74%)	77% (71%)
I am respected by the people I do work for (faculty, superiors)	86% (83%)	70% (66%)
I believe that clerical-secretarial work will be a temporary occupation for me	68% (70%)	44% (56%)
I expect to be doing clerical-sec work most of my working life	20% (20%)	45% (34%)

Note: This table shows the percentage in agreement with these statements by sex. The figure in brackets shows the percentage of respondents 30 years of age and under who agreed with the statements.

Similarities

The results suggested that respondents were united in feeling ambivalent about their work life. On the one hand, the mean scores for the various work categories measured, as shown in Table 3, indicated that a clear majority were committed to the organization and felt motivated. On the other hand, the overall results suggested that these same workers were less than content with their job and work environment. What emerged was a picture of a workgroup with very high regard for the institution, but with extreme dissatisfaction for some aspects of their actual job.

Over 80% of the respondents of both sexes indicated they were proud to work for the organization, an institution many characterized in open-ended responses as a "highly desirable", "prestigious", and "high status" employer. Many of these employees made specific mention of such perks as tuition wavers, relatively good job security, good medical and dental benefits, reasonable pay, and the potential for interaction with interesting, intelligent people as factors contributing to their strong positive feelings about the institution. Interestingly, several respondents specifically indicated that the University was a setting they perceived to be less sexist and heterosexist than other types of organizations, and that it was one where they were "treated like human beings". Many workers also noted that the departmentalized and college-based character of the organization was a plus, suggesting that the resulting smaller work units were ones in which they could, as one worker put it, "develop a sense of autonomy and independence over a whole function such as maintaining student records for the college".

Although the overwhelming majority of respondents clearly liked the institution, many of these men and women proved to be discontent with their actual job. In a general statement asking about overall job satisfaction, just 36% of the men and 50% of the women answered in the affirmative (these figures increased to 60% for younger women, but fell even lower, to 31%, for younger men) (see Table 4). While this suggests that men tended to more dissatisfied than the women, the point has to be made that *both* sexes reported an alarmingly high level of dissatisfied with their job. In exploring the set of questions to do with job satisfaction in more depth, it became clear that these workers were fairly satisfied with such things as job security, pay and fringe benefits, co-worker relationships, and working conditions (satisfaction scores on all of these measures were at least 70%, nearly identical for men and women, and with very little change when controlled for age), but that they were extremely dissatisfied with their developmental and promotional opportunities. As shown in Table 4, only 37% of the men and 44% of the women were satisfied with their developmental opportunities, and a scant 11% of the men and 21% of the women indicated that they were satisfied with their promo-

tional opportunities (the percentages fell to 5% for younger males and 18% for younger females). Clearly, there was a perception amongst this work group, one equally apparent to males and females, and extremely pronounced in younger workers, that this work site conformed to the prevailing stereotype of clerical-secretarial work as being dead-ended, and lacking a sufficiently well developed career ladder.

Reinforcing this picture of specific rather than general discontent, many respondents chose to write at some length, in responding to the open-ended questions, about their frustration with the lack of development and promotion opportunities. Respondents of both sexes noted the absence of opportunity not only within the clerical-secretarial job classifications, but also the lack of opportunity to progress within the broader range of administrative and managerial occupations within the organization. Typical of the comments that were made are the following:

> I would like to have more input and consideration for a better position. I feel I have no say in the matter and that I am stuck — there is no where to go once you are slotted into the clerical class, even though I hold an MA. (male clerk)
>
> I am unable to attend workshops and seminars for professional development because they occur during peak hours and there is no provision to cover the office. I would be willing to attend such things if they were offered evenings or weekends, but they are never scheduled in a way that encourages clerical staff to attend — and no one makes a point of helping you attend. (female clerk-typist)
>
> There are no personal growth and advancement opportunities in this type of job. Bosses aren't concerned about us and see as just being here year after year after year, while they are always thinking of changing jobs and getting ahead. They seem to take for granted that secretaries will always want to be secretaries. I had one boss whose idea of helping me get ahead was to make me his 'new' secretary when he got a promotion. (female secretary)
>
> Too much emphasis seems to be placed upon the current level of the applicant as opposed to realizing what she can offer. As a secretary, it is difficult to change job categories without going backwards salary-wise. (female secretary)
>
> Promotions are given for all the wrong reasons — because someone fits a minority category for example. There is no effort to assess people and help them gain skills so that they might be successful in the wider university job market. There is a sense here that clerical workers don't want to ever do anything other than clerical work and that, in my experience, is not true, for men or women. (male secretary)

In sum, these workers came together in finding the University of Toronto a good place to work in terms of benefits and prestige, in finding most of the day-to-day aspects of their job satisfactory, and in feeling a fairly high level of motivation to do the work. At the same time, many of these workers resent very much the fact that they are in an occupational category with few

developmental or promotional opportunities. Some people expressed negative views about the institution and their work, suggesting for example that the University could be "cold and impersonal", or that their job lacked "sufficient variety", but overall these sorts of complaints were very much the exception rather than the rule.

Differences

Statistically significant sex differences were found in two categories: salary and occupational commitment (see Tables 2 and 3). Detailed analysis of individual questions, however, revealed several important trends demarcating the experience of men and women.

Overall, sex differences were found in five areas; first, in the kinds of jobs these men and women occupied. As shown in Table 1, just 7% of this workforce was male, and the highest percentage of men were located in the somewhat variegated clerk-typist and clerical classifications, as opposed to the secretarial classification where only 2% were men. These differences mirror the sex composition of clerical-secretarial occupations in the wider labour market, and may also reflect the fact that clerk and clerk-typist jobs are somewhat less readily identified by gender stereotypes, in contrast to the prevailing image of secretarial work as unequivocally "women's"work, or as Kanter (1977b) aptly put it, the work of a "corporate wife".

The strength of the gender stereotype surrounding secretaries was also reflected in the open-ended responses. Many men believed that the job of personal secretary was virtually closed to them, especially a couple of men wrote, if the secretarial job was with a male boss. Two of the respondents who were already male secretaries wrote that their situation was unique, one of them suggesting that his situation was closely linked to the fact that he had a "very progressive, feminist, female, boss", who "actively tries to be nonsexist in making appointments to her staff".

There was no particular evidence that clerk and clerk-typist jobs were internally segregated in ways that favoured or advantage males. The job titles provided by respondents implied no such a trend, and the percentage of men at each salary level within each classification conformed to the overall sex composition. For example, about 15% of the clerk I, II, III, and IV jobs were held by males, the same percentage as for male clerks overall.

A second pattern of sex differences emerged from within an analysis of the demographic data (Table 2). The fact that females tended to earn more money than males proved to be statistically significant, probably reflecting the fact that there were more women in the higher paying secretarial job classifications, and that women as a group had longer organizational and job tenure

(thus, more likely to have benefited from annual increments in salary). In addition, males tended to be younger, better educated, and more likely to be single, even though these differences were not sufficient to produce statistical significance.

A third difference between men and women had to do with their attitudes to the work. Although the overall categories of motivation and quality of the job did not produce significant differences, detailed analysis of individual questions within these constructs suggested that women were more likely to find their work personally meaningful, and that men were more likely to find the work trivial and tedious (see Table 4). 66% of the women reported finding their work personally meaningful compared to 47% of the men — a gap of 19% that widened even further to 27%, for younger workers. Men were also more likely than women to find their work trivial, especially in the younger group, and 60% of the men, compared to 45% of the women, felt that their work was tedious (in the younger group, though, the gap to do with tediousness closed somewhat in that the percentage remained the same for males but rose to 53% for women).

The fourth and most dramatic difference between the sexes had to do with occupational commitment. Although the statistical significance within this overall measure was borderline, a detailed analysis of individual questions provided a more dramatic picture of sex differentiation. As shown in Table 4, 68% of the males, compared to 44% of the females, a gap of 24%, perceived a clerical-secretarial occupation to be temporary. And, even though the gap closed somewhat for younger men and women, it remained high at 16%. Similarly, only 20% of the men, compared to 45% of the women, a gap of 25%, indicated that they expected to be doing clerical-secretarial work in the long term, and even though the gap narrowed with younger workers, it remained high at 14%.

The strength of the findings that males tended to be less committed to the occupation was borne out in the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Interestingly, many men chose to emphasize in their comments that the work was temporary or part of a holding pattern, while women were much more likely to express the view, for better or worse, that clerical-secretarial work was what they would be doing in the longer term. A female clerk, for example, indicated:

> I took the 4 year commercial in high school . . . when I came out of public school most average people were expected to take 4 year commercial, not a great choice maybe, but it is what I do for a living.

A male with the same job classification, on the other hand, wrote:

> A clerical job is sufferable for about 2 weeks max, which is probably about as long as I can fool myself into thinking this is what I do for a living. I'm here for the security and money.

Similarly, a number of men indicated that clerical-secretarial work provided a convenient and stable bridging mechanism to achieve other goals. One man wrote, "I am, in fact, a writer . . . I leave this job at 5 and begin my real work", and another revealed, "I play in a jazz band which pays nothing . . . this job, although not very exciting, gives me the freedom, time, and security I need to do other things."And, in a somewhat related vein, several men indicated that clerical-secretarial work afforded them a way of surviving without being in the "fast-lane"of a typical male career. One male clerk-typist, for example, wrote, "why am I doing this work? I don't have to carry a brief-case or wear a tie and the job ends at 5 pm — that says it all!" As well, a number of men were of the view that they would have career and occupational choices if and when they might wish to exercise this option. For example, one man indicated that when he needed more money he intended to "branch out", and another man indicated that clerical-secretarial work at a University provided stability during the recession, and was the sort of occupation one could "come back to if other things didn't work out."In rather stark contrast, not even one women expressed these sorts of attitudes or expectations to do with occupational flexibility.

A final difference between these men and women was in their perception of how they were treated by the people they did work for (faculty, students and administrative superiors). Although no statistically significant differences were found in the overall quality of the job measure, an important trend did emerge in response to one individual question within this category. As shown in Table 4, more men (86%) than women (70%) felt "respected" by the people they did assignments for, with only minor adjustment in the younger group. Although the percentage was fairly high for both sexes, there was a sex gap of 16% for this question. In other words, it would appear that despite their lower commitment to the job, and their shorter tenure in it, men more than women were of the view that they were respected which may serve to underscore the feminist argument that female workers, regardless of the work they do, are more likely to have a sense of being taken-for-granted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper began by asking if there were differences in the experience of men and women in a female-dominated, relatively low status, non-professional occupation. The findings of this study of clerical-secretarial workers leads to the conclusion that the answer is yes, but the results suggest

that these differences occur in a pattern that is unlike that found in other occupational groups. Studies of sex differences across a spectrum of male-dominated occupations and female-dominated professions find men and women to have very similar occupational inputs (education, skills, attitudes, motivation, commitment, etc.), but different, sex-biased, outcomes (females being segregated in low paying jobs with lower status, power and prestige). The sex differences found here, however, suggest that workers in non-professional, female-dominated jobs differ primarily in terms of their attitudes to the work and occupation, with little evidence to suggest the presence of sex-biased discrimination.

The men in this workgroup were more likely than women to approach the work with a perspective of occupational flexibility (and within a gendered labour market that favours males they are probably correct in making this assumption). Given their perception of more career flexibility, combined with the fact that clerical-secretarial work is thought not to be suitable for men anyway, it was perhaps not very surprising to have found that the majority of these men thought of the work as a temporary career, nor to have found a pattern suggesting men experienced the work to be less personally meaningful than their female peers. On the other hand, women, it can be reasonably assumed, would be much more likely to view this type of work as legitimate for their sex, and many of them probably realize, realistically, that they have limited occupational choices. In light of these "realities" women may be more content with, or at least resigned to, the occupation, and perceive it to be one that provides a relatively secure job environment in which to imagine a long-term career. As well, women, more so than men, might view pink-collar occupations as job settings with predictable hours and infrequent overtime, thus easing the complications of scheduling domestic chores such as child rearing and household maintenance, factors that might be important enough to women to compensate for negative aspects of the work. While men might also appreciate the relatively regular and predictable hours that this type of work can offer, the evidence here is that men used this "free" time to pursue other sub-careers or simply to maximize their leisure time, rather than because they felt constrained by occupational choice or by domestic duties.

Thus, while males may value some of the same "benefits" of the occupation as do women, especially in the short term when they might be in between occupations, taking a break from the rat-race, or waiting out the recession, they appear not to perceive themselves to be constrained if and when they might choose to change or upgrade careers. Women, on the other hand, may have long-term commitments to domestic duties (many more were "coupled"), and less a sense of career options, especially ones that do not require extensive delegating of child rearing, leading them to make a stronger and longer term commitment to the work. It should be noted, however, that the sex

gap to do with occupational commitment did narrow for younger workers which might signal a trend amongst younger female clerks and secretaries to perceive a somewhat wider set of options and choices than their older female peers.

Most men worked in the lower paying clerical jobs, and overall were paid less than females — outcomes that also need to be understood within a broader context. That these men were at the lower-end of the pink-collar job hierarchy and pay scale, probably relates to the fact that men tended to be somewhat younger, with less organizational tenure and lower commitment to the work, rather than to sex-biased discrimination. If these men approached the occupation with a long-term commitment, and strong desire to scale the job ladder, perhaps their outcomes might more closely parallel, or even exceed, that of their female peers. Nevertheless, the fact that some men felt very strongly that secretarial jobs were not open to them should be noted. If this is the case, then organizations do need to take steps to be certain that hiring criteria are the same for men and women and take steps to eliminate bias that is based purely on the sex of the candidate. At the same time, when selecting employees, organizations are clearly within their rights to question candidates of both sexes about their overall commitment to the job and institution.

Both sexes reported an alarming level of dissatisfaction with their promotion and development opportunities. Again, this suggests an occupation with inadequate developmental opportunities and inadequate succession planning, rather than one in which there is a systematic gender bias influencing who gets ahead. Unfortunately, this lack of human resources planning initiatives mirrors a long-standing complaint of clerical-secretarial workers that their work is dead-ended with too few opportunities to grow and develop (Pringle 1989), once again reinforcing the need for a rethink and improvement. Important to note as well, is the fact that younger workers of both sexes felt this gap in opportunity even more strongly than older workers, and these are precisely the category of worker that organizations should be nurturing for future leadership roles. What these findings highlight is that younger workers as a group may be less willing to accept the sorts of conditions and restraints that have for too long been part and parcel of pink-collar occupations.

The study was based on an assumption that perceptions reflect an important degree of reality. At the very least, perceptions reflect what people believe to be true, and provide a good indication of the basis on which they will take action. Nevertheless, subsequent research incorporating observation, in-depth interviewing, and systematic review of personnel records would be useful adjuncts to this type of inquiry. Also, other important sources of potential difference, such as race, were not explored. Subsequent research should attempt to incorporate these dimensions.

Given this study was based on one relatively progressive, public sector organization, different results might emerge in other sectors and organizations. As a result, it provides a data base on which to initiate additional research, especially projects designed to build-upon the data generated here. It would also be of interest to compare the experience of men and women in other non-professional, female-dominated occupations, such as day care workers and air-line attendants, to see if similar or different patterns become evident.

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Différences entre les sexes chez les cols roses

Cette étude vise à vérifier s'il y a des différences entre hommes et femmes dans des occupations de bureau et de secrétariat, à statut relativement bas, généralement occupées par des femmes. Même s'il y a des preuves que les femmes tendent à être une minorité désavantagée dans la panoplie d'occupations dominées par les hommes et que les hommes tendent à être une minorité avantagée dans les occupations à majorité féminine, tout en tenant compte de facteurs objectifs tels l'âge, la scolarité, la motivation et la compétence technique, il y a eu, jusqu'à maintenant, très peu de recherches comparant l'expérience des hommes et des femmes dans les occupations non professionnelles à majorité féminine. Cette recherche se concentre sur les différences entre sexes dans cette occupation féminine non professionnelle par excellence, surnommée le « ghetto des cols roses », le travail de bureau et de secrétariat. L'étude se limite à une grande institution d'éducation du secteur public, l'Université de Toronto, de façon à minimiser les différences possibles dans les comparaisons entre secteurs et organisations.

L'envoi d'un questionnaire à tous les hommes (71) et à 211 femmes (une sur quatre des 844 femmes dans ces emplois, choisie au hasard) dans les corps d'emploi de commis-dactylo, commis et secrétaire s'est soldé par un taux de réponse de 66 % pour les hommes et de 63 % pour les femmes. En plus de l'information démographique usuelle, ce questionnaire, comportant 36 questions, collige de l'information eu égard aux attitudes en cinq catégories : l'engagement dans l'occupation, la motivation, la satisfaction, l'implication dans l'organisation, et trois questions ouvertes. Les données ont été analysées de trois façons différentes. D'abord, une analyse statistique de l'information démographique et des réponses aux questions des cinq catégories précitées a été effectuée. Ensuite, le pourcentage des répondants en accord ou en désaccord (échelle de 1 à 5) avec chacun des énoncés du questionnaire a été établi. Afin de connaître l'effet possible de l'âge, chacune des réponses individuelles en contrôlant l'âge

(moins de 30 ans) a été analysée. Enfin, les réponses aux questions ouvertes ont été analysées par thèmes en tenant compte des différences de sexes.

Unanimement, les répondants ont conclu que l'Université de Toronto est un bon endroit où travailler en termes d'avantages et de prestige. Ils ont également une grande implication envers l'Université de Toronto en tant qu'institution. Cependant, ils sont unanimement malheureux quand à leurs perspectives de développement et de promotion. En effet, seulement 37 % des hommes et 44 % des femmes se sont dits satisfaits de leurs perspectives de développement et un maigre 11 % des hommes et 21 % des femmes se sont dits satisfaits de leurs perspectives de promotion. Ces résultats sont encore pires chez les plus jeunes.

Des différences entre les sexes sont apparues quant au type d'emploi, au salaire, à l'engagement professionnel et au traitement de soi par les autres. Alors que seulement 7 % de ces personnes sont des hommes, on les retrouvent surtout dans les classifications de commis dactylo et de commis et seulement 2 % d'entre eux occupent des postes de secrétaire. Les femmes gagnent plus cher et sont plus susceptibles de trouver leur travail plus satisfaisant. Les hommes, de leur côté, ont plus tendance à trouver leur travail insignifiant et pénible et sont nettement moins impliqués dans celui-ci. L'étude conclut que les différences observées entre les sexes dans ce groupe relèvent plutôt des attitudes que chacun apporte au travail que de la discrimination basée sur le sexe.

Le niveau alarmant d'insatisfaction exprimée par les deux sexes eu égard à leurs perspectives de développement et de promotion, surtout chez les plus jeunes, suggère qu'il s'agit ici d'une occupation caractérisée par une planification de remplacement inadéquate plutôt qu'une discrimination sexuelle systémique quant à l'avancement. Cette conclusion reflète une vieille plainte du personnel de bureau et renforce encore le besoin pour une meilleure planification des ressources humaines dans ce domaine.

Cette étude a examiné une organisation relativement progressiste du secteur public. Répéter cette expérience dans d'autres secteurs, par exemple, dans les garderies ou chez les agents de bord dans l'aviation, serait intéressant. D'autres genres de différences, telle la race, devraient aussi faire l'objet d'études subséquentes.