

Breaking the Ceiling: Are Female City and Town Managers Rising to the Challenge?

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Dedication Page

In loving memory of my stepmother, Pamela Callaghan-Nau.

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Abstract

Women's labor participation pattern in the private sector has been a matter of national concern for decades. However, the public sector has not received the same amount of attention. This honors thesis is a qualitative study of female city and town managers along the east coast. The coast was divided into three regions: northern (CT, NY, and NJ), central (PA, DE, and MD), and southern (VA, WV, NC). The data collection method consisted of 16 structured face-to-face/telephone interviews. The purpose of this research is to analyze women in managerial roles and the barriers and discrimination that they may have faced. By addressing these relationships, this study attempts to discover if the phenomenon of women "opting out" or following the "mommy track" is true for these participants and if so, what were the factors that helped versus hindered this process? Obtaining the answers to these questions will hopefully assist in the continuation of women's progress in attaining more local government management positions. Independent variables such as age, education, family, gender discrimination, and the glass ceiling were examined to determine whether or not they were associated with the participant's labor participation (the dependent variable). Family, gender discrimination, and the glass ceiling influenced the dependent variable noticeably whereas age and education were not as significant. According to the information gathered from the sample, the answer to the overarching question in the title, "Are female city and town managers rising to the challenge?" is: yes, they most certainly are rising to the challenge. The majority of the females in this study balanced their career and their family life and dealt with discrimination without exiting the labor force, contrary to the literature on female managers in the private sector.

Introduction

“Traditionally, the vast majority of top leadership positions in both the USA and throughout the world have been held by males rather than females. Even though there is an increasing number of women who enter the workforce and an increasing number of managerial positions, women’s access to leadership positions remains limited.”

Twenty Years Later: Explaining the Persistence of the Glass Ceiling for Women Leaders,
Birgit Weyer 2007, 482.

Birgit Weyer describes how the glass ceiling has continued to affect women and their ability to advance in their careers despite the large amounts of progress that the United States has made toward women’s rights. To this day, women are still struggling to access leadership positions both in the public and private sector. This study will focus on the public sector and the labor participation patterns of town and city manager positions. In order to understand these reasons for certain patterns, it is important to examine factors such as age, education, work experience, family life, and gender discrimination instances. By assessing female city and town manager’s feelings regarding the subject matter, we will be able to more accurately recognize common themes that will assist in making predictions for the women of the future who might desire an upper-level position in local government.

The purpose of this research is to observe and analyze several relationships in order to address two questions: why do some women decide to leave their managerial position and what influential factors help versus hinder this process? I initially asked myself these questions when I was deciding whether to become a lawyer or a public administrator. Originally, I was interested in becoming a criminal defense attorney but soon realized it was not a good fit for me. While conducting these interviews with the female town and city managers, I was able to see that

public administration is the profession I want to pursue when I graduate. However, I quickly learned that the glass ceiling, equality, and gender discrimination were not as easy to comprehend as one might think. Therefore, I embark on my investigation with a comprehensive review of the literature that is essential for understanding the difficulties that a female town or city manager faces daily. I begin with defining what a town and/or city manager is and their duties. I then proceed to discuss management styles, marital status and children, work-life balance, gender stereotypes, gender or sex discrimination, sexual harassment, glass ceiling, equality, pay gap, and the trends and patterns that we have seen up until now. This was accomplished by reviewing previous studies that have addressed similar research questions. I anticipate that this literature review will frame the investigation of my research question in a historical and sociological fashion.

Following the literature review, I explore the research design of this study, which involves data collected through one-on-one interviews with female, human subjects. These interviews were either face-to-face or by telephone. All of the dependent and independent variables studied in this investigation are based on the results of the interviews and were analyzed through Recursive Abstraction. This method will be discussed in detail in chapter one, “Methodology”, and is performed for each of the three substantial chapters and the results are analyzed in depth. I chose this method in order to understand the factors that may potentially contribute to or correlate with helping females into a city or town manager position as well as aspects that hinder them from progressing.

The results of the first part of the qualitative analysis, “Background and Family”, are presented in chapter two of this study, which include the topics of age, education, work experience, and family. Following chapter two are detailed personal experiences of gender

discrimination and sexual harassment in “Discrimination and the Glass Ceiling”, which makes up chapter three. Chapter four, “The Future”, discusses the interviewee’s projections for the future based on a culmination of everything from chapter two and three.

By understanding the determinants of why females remain in their town or city management position versus leave, more light can be shed on the public sector. It can then be established what needs to be fulfilled in order to make those women who are thinking about leaving, want to stay, as well as inspire young women to pursue leadership in local government. Prior to beginning this investigation, I hypothesized that a woman, who enters a town or city manager position at an older age with grown children, is less likely to experience discrimination and is more likely to handle the demands of the job than a younger woman with young children.

In order to deter women from leaving management positions in local government while at the same time encourage young women to enter the profession in the United States and throughout the rest of the world in the future, we as researchers and analysts must be able to understand and recognize the patterns and relationships that connect age, education, work experience, family, gender discrimination, and the glass ceiling.

Review of Literature

Introduction

With the influx of women entering the workforce in the past 50 years, there has been a great deal of research conducted in order to determine the progress that women have made in acquiring managerial positions in the public and private sectors. This study will focus solely on the public sector. The purpose of the research is to determine how far women still have to go until the glass ceiling is officially broken. The following topics will be examined in order to infer why there is still resistance to women in leadership positions and help present possible solutions to assist more women in their quest to rise to the top. First, one should be familiar with the definition of a city or town manager and the responsibilities required by the job.

What is a City or Town Manager?

Many citizens most likely do not have a clear idea of what city or town manager's job consists of or might confuse it with the duties of a mayor. Based on a 1985 survey of 527 mayors, city managers, and other executives in US city government, Ammon and Newell (1989) show the roles of local government executive officials, an analysis of time allocation patterns, and an explanation of variations in their work. Executives are described as individuals having major responsibility for establishing organizational climate, goals, and broad structure (10). City managers, like mayors, must consider the "big picture" - goals, climate, and environment – as well as internal processes (11). In particular, Ammon and Newell express how cities require the leadership of a chief executive who can present issues to the community and gather public support. In a council-manager city, the city manager instructs the city staff and is a full-time

employee while a mayor is part-time and may have only a few staff resources. The city manager can fairly easily assume the role of community leader while the mayor is an elected official (56).

Management Styles

Not only are there notable leadership differences between managers and mayors, more specifically, there are gender differences in management styles between male and female city and town managers. One portion of the literature describes the possession of agentic characteristics versus communal characteristics as the major difference between men and women managers while other literature mentions transactional characteristics versus transformational characteristics as an explanation.

Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) make the claim that because masculinity is associated with agentic/instrumental characteristics such as competitiveness, task-structuring, and assertiveness, whereas femininity is associated with communal/expressive characteristics such as helpfulness, expressiveness, and consideration, it is important to distinguish among the types of situations where men and women may differentially emerge as leaders (305). A female city or town manager might therefore be more concerned about the feelings of her subordinates than a male city manager or town manager who may be more interested in getting the job done first.

Similarly, Powell and Graves (2003) have considered the differences in gender characteristics as a possible explanation for the divergence in leadership styles between men and women managers. These two authors deem that the most influential concept in leadership studies is the distinction between transformational and transactional styles of leadership. Burns, an author referenced in Powell and Grave's study, defined transformational leaders as ones who

“engage” with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (195). This definition of transformational leadership is important to note because it is more congruent with the interpersonal characteristics associated with female leaders than the aggressive and hierarchical characteristics associated with male leaders (196-197).

Marital Status and Children

In addition to the transformational or communal characteristics that separate women from men in terms of their management style, whether the woman is married or single and whether or not she has children further distinguishes her from other female managers as well as male managers. Since the 1900's, more and more women have entered the workforce in general but more specifically; more have entered management positions in local government. Men continue to hold the majority of manager positions but women have increased their participation significantly. Some women, depending upon their marital status and/or the age of their children if they have any, seem to have a direct correlation to time spent in the workforce. According to Moe and Shandy (2010), the percent of married women who have children under 18 and participate in the workforce dipped slightly from 73 percent in 2000 to 72 percent in 2003. The largest declines in labor force participation occurred for married mothers of infants, whose participation dropped six percentage points (from 59 percent to 53 percent) between 1997 and 2000, and fluctuated with no clear pattern between 53 and 55 percent through 2007. When they looked at college-educated mothers, who had higher than average labor participation rates, the decline was even steeper. The participation rates of these married mothers of infants fell seven percentage points from 71 percent to 63 percent between 1997 and 2005 (23). If a woman's

children are either infant or toddler age, she usually is required to take more time out of her work to care for them, unless she hires a full-time nanny. As children become older, they become more self-reliant and the mother can go back to working more hours at her job.

Work-Life Balance

The phase of life in which a female city or town manager is in has a great deal to do with determining the rest of her personal life. The majority of women tend to get married and have children when they are in their 20's and 30's. Some women may do it earlier while others may do it later. Some women end up deciding to do one of the two while others do neither. Whatever their choice and however old they may be, female city managers face the probability of taking time off of work, temporarily dealing with a stressed schedule, or possibly making other arrangements. Evidence of this concept is found in Davidson and Burke's (2004) literature where they cite that historically, women's labor force participation by age is represented by an 'M' curve. Women enter the labor force, leave to care for their families, and then return to work later in life (195). While other authors do not doubt that Davidson and Burke's pattern of women's labor is fact, they do contend that the popularity of this explanation may, at least in part, be a result of society's stereotypical view of women as homemakers (Barreto, Ryan, Schmitt 2009, 155).

In concurrence with Davidson and Burke, Powell and Graves (2003) believe that there are points in a woman's career where she will exit and re-enter the labor force. They do not necessarily call it an "M Curve" but rather acknowledge that it can follow any sort of pattern. They claim that at in any point in a woman's career, she may choose to place a greater emphasis on work or on family, or she may strive to achieve a balance between the two. If she emphasizes

one role now, this emphasis may be part of a life plan that anticipates a future emphasis on the other role. These decisions regarding parenthood are inescapable for those women who feel that their biological clocks are running out and want to have children. As a result, they feel compelled to incorporate motherhood into their career path. This simple fact is what frequently separates the men from the women because fatherhood is less likely to constrain or halt a man's career and therefore, they do not plan around it (187, 201).

There are many different types of families in the United States. In order to better understand a woman's decision pattern in reference to her work-life balance, the type of family situation she is currently functioning in should be examined. Some of these can include parents who are married and work together to raise their children, parents who are divorced but still work closely to raise their children, divorced parents who do not heavily rely on one another to raise their children, single parents with little to no help raising their children, etc. Powell and Graves (2003) discuss this matter in detail. They state that in order to understand the intersection of work and family, we also need to consider the nature of the employees' family lives. If family life were fully determined by three variables – marital status (married or single), parental status (children or no children), and employment status of the spouse (employed or not employed) – six different combinations would result: 1) Single, no children; 2) Married, no children, spouse employed; 3) Married no children, spouse not employed; 4) Single, children; 5) Married, children, spouse employed; 6) Married, children, spouse not employed (199). Each family situation requires a different approach to work-life balance. Some situations are easier than others such as being married with children. It is extremely important to mention for the purpose of this thesis that the particular female leaders who were interviewed for Halpern and Cheung's (2008) book all concurred that a supportive husband is essential. They declare that support from

the husband includes not only sharing the household chores, but also the emotional support, encouragement, and coaching for their career development (212-213). Later on in chapter two of this study, we will examine the participant's family situations and determine whether a supportive husband was a large factor in their lives.

Traditionally, women are thought of as the caregivers for the family while the men are usually assigned the worker role. According to Halpern and Cheung (2008), when work and family are treated as separate domains of life, we assign these two distinct roles to women and men in order to keep them aligned with the traditional sex roles where men are the breadwinners and women are the bread bakers (9). If one looks back to the previous paragraph where Powell and Graves' discussed six possible family combinations are discussed, Halpern and Cheung's claim may not necessarily hold validity for every individual woman. A woman with children and a supportive spouse, yes; a single woman with children, maybe not. These traditional roles for women and men have been relatively common throughout history thus far. However, in the past 50 years society has been transforming and therefore these roles have begun to significantly change as well. Now, this cultural norm of women's role as the primary caregivers collides with the competing role of the ideal worker (Moe and Shandy 2010, 72). This is due to the large increase of women entering the labor force. Now, many women are no longer considered the primary caregiver because either they share it with their husband in order to maintain a career or they bear the burden of fulfilling both roles on their own.

Not only does marital status and children matter when discussing work-life balance, but also the stability of a female's career. Some women may have the same job for ten or more years while other women may jump from job to job every couple of years. When speaking specifically about female city or town managers, the above statement is very applicable because the position

is appointed and not elected. Therefore, a female city or town manager technically never knows when she will not be working in that location anymore. She is employed at the will of the council and the citizens. Point being is that work-life balance transforms over time. Moe and Shandy (2010) pronounce that these various transformations can include anything from not being employed for pay at all, to freelancing part-time from home, to now working part-time in a job for which the woman is overqualified but that allows her to check her work at the door at the end of the day (87). Later on in chapter two, we will see what type of hours the women in this study put in and how that worked in conjunction with their husband's work (if they had one).

There is a considerable amount of literature describing how the typical two-parent family manages to balance their work with their personal lives. Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) make the claim that there are three ways in which men and women can deal with potential conflicts between work and family roles. First, they can minimize their involvement in one role. For women, this often involves cutting back on family commitments. Second, there are plenty of women who simply choose not to have families or to minimize their involvement in the family. Third, there are plenty of men who choose to become "house-husbands." Nevertheless, if the choice is to minimize the centrality of one role, it is a reasonable guess that women will minimize work in favor of family whereas men will minimize family in favor of work (178-179). This is where the phrase, "mommy track" comes into play because it succinctly summarizes the polarizing concept about women and work. The alternative and admittedly slower-paced career track is intended as a way of retaining talented women who might otherwise leave high-pressure jobs when childcare responsibilities are added to an already overly full day (Halpern and Cheung 2008, 7). Therefore, a woman who is constantly making the sacrifices to maintain the work-life balance for her family will benefit from the mommy track. Unfortunately, while it can be a

positive thing for the woman's day-to-day functions, it can also attach a seriously negative stigma to her career status in the eyes of employers.

A two-parent family can decide that neither one of them will be minimizing their role too strongly, but rather that each parent will bear an equal part of the responsibility in raising their child or children. According to Halpern and Cheung (2008), to do this successfully, the two parents can both carefully determine how much time they would spend on various tasks, and leave work at a predetermined time so they would have time with their family (51-52). On the contrary, this may not be as simple to achieve in reality as it sounds on paper. Obviously, the rhythms of job demands vary. In two-earner families, these two sets of demands increase exponentially. At the same time, children's needs shift from year to year, from month to month, from week to week, from day to day, and, as anyone who has made a trip to school to pick up a vomiting child shortly after dropping her off can testify, from hour to hour (Moe and Shandy 2010, 97).

Aside from solutions such as minimizing roles or making significant sacrifices, women may have another option called work-family programs. Some organizations offer this in the private sector but it is unclear as to how much it has extended into the public sector. Therefore, how much female city and town managers can benefit from such a program has not been determined. Nevertheless, these work-family programs are designed to help employees meet their family-related needs while maintaining high levels of performance. Such organizations, which are called "family friendly organizations", show greater concern for employees' lives outside of work and are less inclined to make unreasonable demands on a routine basis (Powell and Graves 2003, 184). This kind of program would be a great help to women trying to balance their work with their children, especially the single women who receive less help.

Opting out, or quitting their careers to go home, is something that certain women choose to do to help the work-life balance. A large amount of literature has found that opting out is rather prevalent and some authors provide reasons as to why women choose this route. Later in chapter two, we will be examining whether opting out is also prevalent with the participants in this study. Moe and Shandy (2010) say that the reasons the women in their study gave for resigning their jobs varied, but all conveyed the sense that when push came to shove, time with their families trumped work (21). Leaving work to care for your children is not necessarily negative, however, sometimes women are treated unfairly in the job market as a result. Moe and Shandy argue that instead of treating women who quit their jobs to raise a family as nonessential to understanding work in America, that we should appreciate the ways in which these women's stories highlight crucial aspects of the realities of combining paid work with raising children (23). The women are not always the ones to opt out either. Sometimes the husbands decide to become stay at home dads, which has become a small, but growing, trend (33). They do this because they want to help their wives flourish in their careers by putting their own careers on hold. In chapter two, we will discover if opting out was prominent for the females in this study or if their husbands (if they had one) were the ones to opt out.

Gender Stereotypes

Regardless of whether we like it or not, the first thing that someone notices about others is whether they are male or female. These automatic categorizations have much to do with acts of gender discrimination. Many people do not even realize that they are gender stereotyping because they are not aware of what it actually is. Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000)

define gender stereotypes as socially shared beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of men and women in general that influence our perceptions of individual men and women (42).

As for the United States, gender stereotype assessments seem to have shown remarkably consistent results because many authors use the same descriptive words for men and for women each time. Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) describe women as affectionate, attractive, charming, dreamy, emotional, flirtatious, and sentimental. Men are often described as aggressive, assertive, dominant, handsome, masculine, strong, tough, rational, and realistic (47).

Interestingly enough, the stereotypes for women are strongest when younger women are involved. Older men perceive older women as more active, hardy, involved, and stable than themselves (51). Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt (2009) state that categorization by sex evokes mental associations, or expectations, about men and women. Two sets of beliefs are predominant: the communal and the agentic... women usually possess the communal qualities such as affectionate, helpful, gentle, and soft-spoken. In contrast, agentic beliefs pertain to assertion and control. Men usually exhibit these qualities such as aggressive, ambitious, dominant, self-confident, and forceful as well as self-reliant, self-sufficient, and individualistic (23). Similarly, Powell and Graves (2003) claim that males are commonly believed to be high in “masculine” traits such as independence, aggressiveness, and dominance, and females are commonly believed to be high in “feminine” traits such as gentleness, sensitivity to the feelings of others, and tactfulness. These different gender qualities influence how people react to others’ behavior in work settings. Some gender differences represent beliefs held by a large proportion of the population (37). In chapter three, we will see if these feminine traits hold true for the 16 female city and town managers interviewed for this study.

Looking at the aforementioned descriptors for males in the previous paragraph, it makes sense that our stereotype of what a leader is overlaps substantially with the male stereotype. Female managers, especially successful ones, are viewed as a “different type” of woman, according to Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000, 303). Calling those female managers a “different type” of woman may even be the nice way of saying it, according to Powell and Graves (2003). They claim that in addition to associating men more than women with the managerial role, it is also common for women managers to be considered bitter, quarrelsome, jealous, and obsessed with the need for power and achievement. These terms conform to the notion of “bitch” which is often used to express reactions to high-powered career women (136). A proposed solution to this issue is simply putting those people with that opinion in direct contact with or proximity to women as leaders, which may serve to dispel stereotypes about whether women belong in leader roles (142).

One might ask, what are the effects of gender stereotyping? Why should we care? Well, research has repeatedly demonstrated that men are more likely to be hired for professional and management positions than similarly qualified women (Cleveland, Stockdale, Murphy 57). Due to these gender stereotypes, fewer women are being hired for upper-level positions than men. Aside from hiring, promotions are also an issue. This is because women are stereotypically perceived as less competent and are less likely to be promoted or are promoted at a slower rate than men with the same qualifications according to Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (42). Another effect of gender stereotypes is for some women to avoid certain positions altogether. They may choose careers that do not involve the added burden of disproving cultural stereotypes (Barreto, Ryan, Schmitt 2009, 126).

Gender or Sex Discrimination

Gender discrimination comes in many forms. It can be subtle or blatant, small or big. Sometimes, some women are not even aware that it has happened to them because they are not sure what it is. In the broadest sense, sex discrimination occurs when a person is or people are treated unfairly in the work context because of their gender (Crosby and Stockdale 2007, 3). Powell and Graves (2003) agree with this definition and also define sexism. The term sexism refers to prejudice displayed toward members of one sex, typically women. Sexism, like prejudice in general, is usually assumed to represent a negative attitude (46). Not only should one be aware of the definition of discrimination and related terms, but also to know the different forms that these things come in so that we can recognize it when the time arises.

Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) say that while discrimination can take a very overt form such as the refusal to hire women into certain jobs, in most instances gender discrimination involves the degree to which the workplace is open to versus resistant to the participation of women (158). Powell and Graves (2003) explain that overt forms such as not hiring a female occur because decision makers have a general tendency to devalue the qualifications of female applicants (85). Sex discrimination may also arise from the decision makers' prototypes of the ideal applicant and those are sometimes specifically linked to one sex. When the tasks required for job performance are mostly masculine, the prototype will be masculine and men will be seen as more likely to succeed. For example, the requirements of managerial positions may include stereotypically masculine behaviors such as making tough decisions or competing for scarce organizational resources. As a result, decision makers' prototypes for such positions may emphasize masculine traits and male applicants may be seen as better suited for the job (Powell and Graves 2003, 83-84).

One might wonder how a woman deals with gender discrimination such as not being hired or her fellow employees being resistant to her working there. Halpern and Cheung (2008) suggest that women do not need to think about the daily hassles as discrimination, but just deal with whatever comes along, more like a problem to be solved. Such an approach will keep women from boiling over when asked to bring the coffee or when there is a sexist comment (14). Later in chapter three, “Discrimination and the Glass Ceiling”, we will discover whether or not the participants in this study experienced discrimination and what methods they used to deal with the issues.

Sexual harassment

Just like stereotypes and discrimination, sexual harassment is a term that not everyone is able to clearly define. This is also the same reason that some women do not realize that they have been sexually harassed. Neville (2000) defines sexual harassment as something sexual that happens at work that should not happen unless you clearly want it to happen and even if you want it to happen, it still should not happen if others at work do not want it happening in front of them. What constitutes “sexual” is subject to change (2). The U.S. EEOC’s guidelines state that sexual harassment can be unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment (Powell and Graves 160).

The term covers a broad range of behaviors but usually people think about it in its most extreme and obvious form – a woman being pinned up against the wall by her obnoxious and tyrannical boss. But definitions can change when individuals begin to interpret the definition on a personal level based upon their own circumstances (29). It is often said sexual harassment is

“in the eye of the beholder.” It is not whether you think it is sexual harassment; it’s whether the other person – the one it’s happening to – thinks it is harassment (79). Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) offer some additional examples of sexual harassment ranging from sexual jokes and teasing that are aimed at debasing female audiences to inappropriate sexual advances to threatening to job security to gain sexual access (148). Other examples that Neville (2000) mentioned were male employees wearing ties with a penis displayed on it for casual dress day, having sex in the ladies room, showing porn films as a prank to open up a meeting, putting jock straps on female employees’ desks, drawing breasts on the photographs of the head shots of the director of public relations, and for standing on a toilet seat and peaking over to the next stall to watch the only female chemist from the lab go to the bathroom (76-78).

Some females may be able to endure such sexual harassment without being affected too much and continue working in their jobs. However, not everyone reacts the same way to sexual harassment and some may have behavioral outcomes. According to Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000), a substantial number of acknowledged targets reported adverse employment effects such as poor working conditions, diminished opportunities for advancement, and job changes. Losing one’s job or quitting out of frustration were also reported (234). Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt (2009) concur by saying that even at low frequencies, sexual harassment has been linked to job dissatisfaction, which in turn leads to work and job withdrawal, including turnover (178).

It is not accidental that sexual harassment concerns are associated with the glass ceiling. Women are particularly at risk for being sexually harassed when they encounter men who are threatened by their emerging power and status in spheres that have traditionally belonged to men (Barreto, Ryan, Schmitt, 171).

The Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling has been described as “a barrier so subtle that it is so transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up the management hierarchy” (Cleveland, Stockdale, Murphy 2000, 312). The word *ceiling* implies that women encounter an upper limit on how high they can climb on the organizational ladder, whereas *glass* refers to the relative subtlety and transparency of this barrier, which is not necessarily apparent to the observer (Barreto, Ryan, Schmitt 2009, 5).

Snyder (1993) speaks to what are not causes of the glass ceiling and also what “solutions” will not break it. The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) defines the glass ceiling as the composite of artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified women from advancing upward in their organization into senior management level positions (97). Snyder maintains that the glass ceiling is still almost as impenetrable as ever. Things that do not cause the glass ceiling include women having lower self- and organization-referent attitudes, women choosing family over careers, and women not possessing the same leadership skills as men. This contradicts most of the other literature. In particular, many more men than women tend to be characterized as transactional leaders – that is those who influence subordinates through a series of transactions, or exchanges of rewards for performance or punishments for noncompliance. Women, on the other hand, are much more likely to be characterized as transformational leaders – that is, those who attempt to transform subordinates’ own self-interest into the common interests of the group or the goals of the organization (101). Similarly, in their first study in 1999, Fox and Schuhmann performed a national survey of over 500 men and women city managers in the United States. They found that female managers are more likely than male managers to possess a management style that relies on citizen input.

On the other hand, something that may show to be promising in the breaking of the glass ceiling is mentoring of female city managers. Fox and Schuhmann (2001) completed a nationwide study of female and male city managers and claim that women are underrepresented in the field of city management when compared to their peers in the private sector. Women only hold 11% of city manager positions. The authors explore the importance of mentoring in the public sector and not just the private. Mentoring may help explain the slow inclusion of women into the field of city management who are interested in acquiring top-level positions (381-392).

According to Barrett and Davidson (2006), the last three to four decades have seen a rapid increase in numbers of women in the workplace worldwide, with more women also entering managerial ranks. However, despite legislation in many countries aimed at furthering women's capacities to move to the top of their organizations, the phenomenon of the 'glass ceiling' persists (1). Similarly, Duehr and Bono (2006) express that In the United States, the number of women in the managerial and professional ranks has steadily increased...although the numbers are larger today than ever before, the progression of women into executive positions continues to be slow (815).

Freeman, Bourque, and Shelton (2001) discuss the clash of male dominance and women's character in regard to the glass ceiling. They say that given the longstanding male monopoly at the higher ranks of business, politics, professional life, and sport, combined with the problematic nature of female leadership in our culture, it is not surprising that women have encountered glass ceilings in their quest for positions at the top of their fields (4). In other words, men historically have a certain controlling demeanor that has proven to disagree with women leaving their traditional lower-level roles.

Weyer (2007) also believes that women's access to managerial positions is limited by the glass ceiling. She specifically mentions ways in which this problem can be solved. In order for the glass ceiling to be shattered, it is necessary for social structures to change. In particular, women have to be assigned greater social significance and general competence. The difference in status and power between male and female employees and leaders has to be reduced if more women are to take on top leadership positions in corporations and the public sector (494).

Eagly and Carli (2007) disagree slightly with the previously mentioned authors on the subject of the glass ceiling. They claim that times have changed and the glass ceiling metaphor is now more wrong than right. For one thing, it describes an absolute barrier at a specific high level in organizations. There have been female chief executives, university presidents, state governors, and presidents of nations. However, at the same time, the metaphor implies that women and men have equal access to entry-and midlevel positions. This is not always the case. The image of transparent obstruction also suggests that women are being misled about their opportunities, because the impediment is not easy for them to see from a distance...the glass ceiling fails to incorporate the complexity and variety of challenges that women can face in their leadership journeys. In truth, women are not turned away only as they reach the penultimate stage of a distinguished career. They disappear in various numbers at many points leading up to that stage (64).

A glass ceiling is unfortunately not the only thing that women who are in managerial positions must worry about. There is also something called a glass cliff that Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt (2009) discuss. Women who pass through the glass ceiling are more likely than men to confront a glass cliff, such that their leadership positions are more precarious than are those of their male counterparts (156). This is due to the fact that women usually have additional children

or family responsibilities that may affect their work schedule. The glass ceiling, a barrier that keeps women from attaining top-level positions is yet another contributing factor as to why women are not considered entirely equal to men in the workforce.

Equality

Kellerman and Rhode (2007) tend to agree with Barrett and Davidson. They say the facts are frustratingly familiar. Despite almost half a century of equal opportunity legislation, women's opportunities for leadership are anything but equal. To be sure, the situation has improved significantly over this period, particularly if leadership is broadly defined to include informal as well as formal exercises of authority. By that definition, the percentage of women in leadership roles is substantial and is increasing dramatically. Women also hold positions of power in a wide range of government, nonprofit, and religious contexts. But they are still grossly underrepresented at the top and overrepresented at the bottom of the most influential leadership hierarchies (1-2).

A relevant study was completed by Radin (1980) who surveyed 62 women from three different levels: those in upper level positions, those in middle management, and those who were young, entry level professionals. While this is an earlier study, it is very important to the field because it acts as a benchmark that we can look back on to determine if progress has been made. In the study, the women were asked to identify skills needed to aid job effectiveness and upward mobility, specify problems they have encountered on the job, describe training/development opportunities available and which one was "ideal". This study is an important contribution to the body of literature because it digs deeper for the answer to the old question: Why are there more

men than women in upper level government positions? by providing personal accounts of select women (52-60).

Paralleling closely with my own contribution to the literature, Szymborski (1996) completed a personal profile of a female city manager in Georgia. Peggy Merriss was encouraged to go to her first Georgia city managers' annual conference by her boss, City Manager Curtis Branscome in 1984. There were only two other women there. She took over her boss's position of city manager in 1993. In 1996, she attended that same conference she first attended in 1984 to find that there were more than 25 women there. Merriss thought that things seemed to be progressing because the numbers were growing (11).

The Pay Gap

Along with pay differences, in an analysis of 2000 census data, Miller (2009) shows that the gender pay gap is different in the private sector than it is in the public sector. The private sector does not display glass ceiling or sticky floor effects while the public sector does. A sticky floor occurs when women cannot seem to escape from lower-level positions. In particular, the public sector has a distinct sticky floor effect that describes the female to male pay discrepancy. Females have lower hourly rates of pay than men across the entire earnings distribution (52). Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) also deem that women are significantly underpaid compared to men in the same positions and with the same level of qualifications (147). One explanation to unequal earnings is an unequal division of labor at home according to Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt (202). Halpern and Cheung (2008) go into more detail by saying that the real difference in wages between women and men is the difference between women with children and women without children. Mothers earn much less than women without children, whose salaries

are often close to those of men with comparable qualifications and jobs. Thus, the gender wage gap is really a mommy wage gap (12). Some portion of the difference can be explained by the fact that many women take time out from paid employment to care for newborn children and sick family members, and when they return to work, they are more likely to work part-time or fewer hours in full-time positions than men (Halpern and Cheung 16).

Baker (2003) found that females are underrepresented in general. Although, he wanted to specifically examine the top-income quintile of law school graduates. What he wanted to find out is whether it was due to the “glass ceiling” or “sticky floor”, self-imposed limitations regarding employment. He found that being female did not significantly reduce one’s probability of making the top-income quintile once other factors such as hours of work and experience were taken into account. His findings directly contradict the large body of glass-ceiling literature and support the sticky-floor model (695-711).

Trends

Bowling, Kelleher, Jones, and Wright (2006) examine trends of the amount of female access to government positions as well as the strength of their presence in those positions. The authors extend previous literature by focusing on top executive posts in American state governments. They examine the presence of women agency heads in all fifty states from 1970 to 2000. Authors found that 1) women face fewer blockages in securing top posts – the glass ceiling is cracking; 2) women’s access to peak executive positions springs from more solid educational, career, and organizational foundations of “floors”; 3) lateral career movements are penetrating the “walls” surrounding traditionally male-dominated agency types (823-836).

Using an alternative approach to studying trends in representation of women in state government, Llorens, Wenger, and Kellough (2007) refute the majority of the literature found in regard to the lack of women employed by the government. Using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey, they found that women are generally overrepresented in state government employment relative to their civilian labor force representation within a state (397-413). Women at the local government level were not discussed.

Mentors

The term "mentor" typically describes a "relationship between a younger adult and an older, more experienced adult who helps the younger individual learn to navigate the adult world and the world of work" (Halpern and Cheung 2008, 37). In order for mentoring to be successful, the mentee's watch leaders and what they do right and wrong. They should try to model themselves from the leader's best qualities (38). Later in chapter four, "The Future", we will discover if the participants in this study think that mentoring is important or not. In Moe and Shandy's (2010) study, the oldest women were pioneers because they carved out a new space in the world of work for other women (27).

Conclusion

While there is a plethora of literature about gender discrimination, stereotyping, and the glass ceiling, much of it is in regard to the private sector. There is not as much literature about those topics in regard to women in the public sector. My unique contribution to this body of literature involves narrowing the focus by specifically looking at women in the public sector and determining whether or not they are rising to top-level positions. I will also examine portions of

the east coast of the United States, which is different in that most of the literature uses surveys of the entire United States or solely surveys European countries. Unfortunately, due to the sampling method, the reader will not be able to generalize the results for all females in public management along the east coast from the data collected from personal face-to-face and telephone interviews with the participants. However, these interviews are very unique in that they give personal accounts of women's journeys to acquire upper level positions, what it is like to be a woman working as a public manager, and their predictions of the future for female employment in government.

Chapter 1: Methodology

The central goal of this thesis is to examine the status of women in local government along the east coast of the United States. The main research questions at hand are: *how do certain barriers and discrimination influence women in managerial roles? What factors help versus hinder this?* Some subsequent questions that will be covered include: *Why did some of the women remain in their position throughout their struggles while others left? To what degree, if any, are they discriminated against as a result of their gender? What are the feelings of the female city or town managers toward the glass ceiling? What do these female city or town managers predict about the future for women who desire to be in upper-level management?*

For the purpose of this paper, the definitions of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, gender stereotyping, the glass ceiling, etc that were provided in the literature review will be used for the rest of this study. The objectives of this study, are to provide (1) an investigation of the reasons for the lack of women in local government; (2) an assessment of the female city and town manager's feelings regarding the subject matter and; (3) predictions for women in the future that desire a city or town manager position.

The approach to human subject research in this project employed structured, verbal, face-to-face interviews and/or telephone interviews (depending upon distance to travel) with one female city manager and one female town manager from selected states along the east coast of the United States. Although, after some research, I found that in some states there might not be one of each. For example, Connecticut did not have any female city managers. In the end, a total of 16 females were interviewed instead of the projected 18 because only one female was

interviewed in North Carolina, West Virginia, and New Jersey. There were more than two females interviewed in a few states to make up for the difference.

The reasons that only the east coast was chosen for the study included: (1) the degree of familiarity with the area of the United States due to living in Connecticut and traveling to Virginia for school; (2) the time requirements and cost of traveling to the face-to-face interviews; (3) the east coast was a more manageable sample size (with only nine states) compared to the entire United States (with 52 states) and; (4) the regions each contained three states in order to keep sample sizes equal and comparable.

The east coast was divided into three regions: northern, central, and southern. Within each region, three states were selected. The northern region included Connecticut, New York and New Jersey out of convenience and because they are considered to be in New England. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts were not included in this region because the sample size would have been too large and they were also too far to travel to. The central region included Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland because geographically they appear in the center of the coast if you consider Connecticut, New York and New Jersey to be the north. The southern region included Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina out of convenience as well because of distance to travel. South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida were not included in this region because they would have made the sample size too large and they were too far to travel to. Accordingly, the goal was to have 18 interviews (depending upon the response rate) when I was finished.

The specific females from each state were selected by a combination of cluster sampling and convenience sampling. Cluster sampling is self-explanatory in that my respondents were selected based on area clusters. It was cheaper to cluster participants in order of distance to travel

because of the cost of gas. This way, a sampling frame listing all elements in the target population was not necessary. However, there are some disadvantages to cluster sampling such as the reliance of sample estimate precision on the actual clusters chosen. On a positive note, my clusters themselves were not biased. I did not draw inferences about the population of each town or city that I was sampling from. My sampling method also had convenience sampling qualities. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from the part of the population that is close to hand. That is, my participants were selected because they were readily available and convenient. Due to the fact that I used such a sample, I cannot make generalizations about the total population of female city or town managers as a whole from each state from this because it would not be representative enough. Nor can I make generalizations about female city and town managers along the east coast as a whole, or for that matter, the entire United States.

It was thought before the beginning of the interview process that there was a big difference in amount of responsibilities between town and city managers due to the size of the population. However, after the interviews were completed, it was found that population size does not determine whether a locality is a town or a city. Some cities are smaller than towns and some towns are larger than cities. For this reason, town managers do not assume fewer responsibilities in their job title and therefore, there are not many significant differences between city and town managers. The reason that certain females were chosen from each state varied. In some states such as Connecticut, New Jersey, and Maryland, no city female managers existed. In Connecticut and Maryland, that problem was taken care of by finding an additional female town manager to make up for the lack of city female managers, therefore increasing the sample size so that it remained even with the other states. In New Jersey, there were no additional female

managers to interview, which may have caused bias because the sample was not entirely representative. In contrast, Delaware and West Virginia did not have any female town managers, so two female city managers were interviewed instead. All of these gaps in available participants may have affected the validity and reliability of my research.

I used the interview guide prepared for by my Institutional Review Board Request Form to collect my data, which consisted of 25 questions. All 25 questions were not necessarily asked for every interview because some of them were not applicable or the participant answered them within another answer. The interviews followed the guide as close as they could but they were not always completely structured. The majority of the interviews employed a relaxed conversation style. The women tended to answer questions more in depth when a rapport was built. For instance, depending upon a participant's answer to a question on the guide, I might ask a subsequent question that was not on the guide. Some interviews were shorter than others. The length of an interview ranged anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes depending upon how much the participant had to say and how well we interacted with one another. The interview question guide is provided on pages 122 to 125 as an appendix.

Another important factor that could have affected the validity and reliability was interviewer bias. Unintentionally, I may have asked questions in the ways that I wanted the answers without letting the participants answer objectively. In other words, leading questions may have been asked to elicit the desired answers. I do not think that this decreases the validity of the research significantly, however, because the participants could not simply make up instances of discrimination to support their claims. Their stories are told on the spot and are truthful accounts of the troubles they have had to overcome. Another unrelated bias that may have occurred is the difference between telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews. Some

women may have felt more comfortable “hiding” behind the telephone and indulged more information than the face-to-face interviewees who were sitting in front of me. On the other hand, the face-to-face participants could have felt more comfortable talking to me because they were able to actually look at me and see who I was. The telephone participants may have been skeptical about who I was and did not impart as many details to me as they would have face-to-face. All of these biases were recognized during the interviewing and analyzing processes and were minimized as much as possible to avoid completely invalidating the data. One last specific issue that was encountered was that there was not a female town manager available in New York. There was a town with a female town supervisor who I included in my sample, which is very similar to a manager in that they are both the chief executive officer of the town. The difference, however, is that a supervisor is an elected position whereas a manager is appointed.

The different variables that were examined when analyzing all of the interviews included the age of the female city or town manager, whether or not she had children to care for, whether she was single or married, her management style, the type of government she worked in, and the time periods in which she was a manager or involved in local government. If there was discrimination mentioned in an interview, other variables were also looked at such as the position of the discriminating male and his age.

The data collected via face-to-face interviews was collected using a voice recorder and then was later transposed by hand into a Microsoft Word document. If the city or town manager could not meet face-to-face, a telephone interview was substituted. The methodology included creating a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for the purpose of organizing the women’s contact information, one female city manager and one female town manager from each selected state along the east coast. It was decided, according to distance to travel, which female city and town

managers would participate in the telephone interview and who would participate in a face-to-face interview. These female city and town managers were contacted via e-mail or by telephone and the face-to-face or telephone interviews were scheduled. I either traveled to their town or city for face-to-face interviews or simply called the participant for the telephone interview. For all of the face-to-face interviews, a voice recorder was used because none of the females objected. For the majority of the telephone interviews, the voice recorder was also used next to the telephone with the speaker phone on. The one exception was the first telephone interview, where I was not sure if the sound quality would be good enough because I had not done any prior test runs. Instead, this interview was typed directly into a Microsoft Word Document. Due to the fact that most average people cannot type as fast as someone speaks, this interview was not as complete because it was typed in short hand, or summarized.

The face-to-face interviews were transcribed from the voice recorder into a Microsoft Word Document. Performing data analysis was the next step of the process, which was the more difficult part. If one crucial piece of additional information was needed for all of the interviews, the interviewees were contacted via e-mail to retrieve it (they agreed to answer any lingering questions in the future if needed). If there was only missing information from a select few of the interviews, those interviewees were contacted via e-mail as well.

I initially categorized the respondents based on their answers into three main groups: female managers in the northern region of the east coast, female managers in the central region of the east coast, and female managers in the southern region of the east coast. Within each group, I wanted to further categorize the respondents into two subgroups for each of the three main groups: female city managers and female town managers. Based on my qualitative analysis, I then wanted to cross-reference the subgroups across the main groups and recorded the

similarities and differences. It was then decided that this was not an appropriate categorization process to use and so another method was chosen.

The data collected from the interviews was instead qualitatively analyzed by examining trends within the answers to the interview questions using a technique called Recursive Abstraction. This is an analysis that does not utilize coding but rather summarization. My interview transcriptions were read and re-read to look for common themes. The majority of each individual transcription was not used because it did not prove to be relevant. The common themes became my main topics and my datasets were formed: Age, Education, Work Experience, Family, Gender Discrimination, The Glass Ceiling, and The Future. These overarching datasets were then summarized into long hand written paragraphs. Those summaries were then further summarized into hand written charts with a few sentences per participant. Those charts were then summarized into an even shorter version with only a few phrases per participant. The end result was a more compact summary that was easier to manage and comprehend. Without those stages of summarization, it would have been difficult to accurately discern each dataset. While Recursive Abstraction seemed to be the best data analysis method for this study, it does have its flaws. There is frequent criticism that those final summarizations or conclusions are very different from the raw data in its original form. However, this is most prevalent when a researcher begins with poor summaries. My initial summaries were overly thorough and therefore should not have yielded an inaccurate final report. I did this by documenting the reasoning behind each of my summary steps and citing examples from the data (where statements were included and where statements were excluded) from the intermediate summary.

It was then carefully determined how to incorporate the interviews into the thesis and how they should be used in comparison to the previous literature in the field. The purpose of this

method was to predict what the future looks like for women in management in the concluding statements. When discussing each participant, pseudonyms were used to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality. The names of the towns or cities in which they worked, the schools they attended, and their children were excluded from the direct quotations and discussion as well because the participant's identity could be discovered by association. The websites that were visited to acquire the contact information were not included in the "References" page because that would have breached confidentiality as well. Upon the completion of the thesis, thank you e-mails were sent out to all of the participants for their time and consideration. Along with the e-mail, a digital copy of the thesis was attached for them to be able to read if they desired to do so. The data collection phase began on or about May 11th 2009 and concluded on or about December 15th 2009.

This thesis summarizes the findings concerning females in local government management positions. Ideas that were reported from each respondent included: 1) the degree to which females have a presence in upper-level management in local governments; 2) the degree to which they are discriminated/not discriminated against because of their gender; 3) the feelings of the female city or town managers toward the glass ceiling and if it is present within their government; 4) the opinions of the female or town managers about the future for women who desire to be a city or town manager. Now we will move onto chapter two, where we will learn more about the 16 participant's backgrounds and their family situations.

Chapter 2: Background and Family

In today's society, many women have proven that yes, they can do it all. A woman does not necessarily have to do one thing or another; she can fulfill multiple roles in her life. For example, a woman can be a wife, a mother, and a city manager simultaneously. In this chapter, we will examine what types of effects the variables of age, education, work experience, and family have on a female town or city manager. By examining these variables, we should be able to determine to what degree a woman's background and personal life positively or negatively affects her career as a manager in government. Certain interviews will be taken into account according to the aforementioned variables and compared to other interviews in order to discover common themes. To conclude, these common themes will then be compared as a whole across the three regions: northern, central, and southern.

Age

In the northern region, five interviews were performed. Two of these interviews, a small town in Connecticut and a city in New York, were done face-to-face while the other three, a second town in Connecticut, a town in New York, and a township in New Jersey, occurred over the telephone. When analyzing these five interview participants, their ages ranged from 35 years old to 65 years old but the majority of the females tended to be in the 40 to 50 age bracket. They were analyzed and separated into two different age groups: 1) "Young" or 45 years old and below; 2) "Old" or over 45 years old.

A woman interviewed from one of the two towns in Connecticut named Wanda, is somewhere between 50 and 65 years old. She actually retired two weeks after our interview. The

other interview in Connecticut in another small town was with a woman named Rebecca and she was about the same age as Wanda. In New York, Becky and Farrah were interviewed from [City] and [Town] respectively. Becky is between 35 and 50 years old while Farrah is between 40 and 55 years old. This brings us to New Jersey where Veronica was interviewed from a township who is between 45 and 60 years old. The majority of the participants from the northern region were in the older age bracket except the two women from New York. Becky is on the younger side because she has two young children and still plays the role of 'mommy'. Farrah is a little older than Becky and has children who are late high school and early college aged. She still has some child responsibilities but not as many as Becky. All in all, the ages of the women in this region should be considered because it determines where they are in their career: in the middle or toward the end. Most of the women were coming to the end of their career and did not currently have child responsibilities so they spoke about the past when they were younger and their children were younger.

In the central region, six interviews were performed. Five out of six of the interviews were done face-to-face while only one, a town in Pennsylvania, occurred over the telephone. This interview also would have taken place face-to-face but due to scheduling conflicts, it could not occur. When analyzing these six interview participants, their ages ranged from 25 years old to 65 years old but the majority of the females tended to be in the 40 to 50 age bracket, similar to the northern region. The youngest woman in this region, as well as in the entire study, was the participant from a city in Pennsylvania named Nancy, who was between 25 and 35 years old. The woman interviewed in the Pennsylvania town on the other hand, named Beatrice, was 58 years old. In Maryland, Barbara was interviewed from a very small town as well as Chelsea from a slightly larger town. Barbara was between 50 and 65 years old and Chelsea was not far behind

her in the 45 to 55 range. Delaware consisted of two interviews: one in a city with Shannon and the other in a very small city with Nina. Both of these women were somewhere between the ages of 50 and 65 years old. In general, the central region turned out to be a wider range of ages in comparison to the northern region due to an outlier, Nancy from Pennsylvania. Aside from her, most of the participants were in the older age bracket. So again, most of them were at a later point in their career and had to rely on their memory to speak about their work experience and work-life balance issues. Nancy on the other hand, did not have any information to contribute in the arena of work-life balances because she was too young still to have those types of responsibilities.

In the southern region, five interviews were performed. Two of these interviews, the two towns selected from Virginia, were done face-to-face while the other three, the city in Virginia, the city in West Virginia, and the city in North Carolina, occurred over the telephone. When analyzing these five interview participants, their ages ranged from 25 years old to 65 years old but the majority of the females tended to be in the 40 to 65 age bracket. The woman interviewed in one of the two towns in Virginia named Dolly, was somewhere between 25 and 35 years old, the youngest participant from the southern region. Within the state of West Virginia, I completed one telephone interview with Sandy who is a city manager and is between 50 and 65 years old. I did not have a second interview for this state due to a lack of response rate. In North Carolina, only one interview was completed as well also due to a lack of response rate. However, my interview with Helen, who is in her early 40's, proved to be very resourceful and provided a sufficient amount of data due to the fact that she could provide current information on her work-life balance issues because she has small children. The interviewee's age from this region ranged all over the place. Dolly from Virginia obviously had a lot more to talk about than Sandy from

West Virginia because of their huge age difference. Dolly could go into strong detail about work-life balance because she is currently in the thick of it with her young son. Sandy however, has children that are grown.

As a variable, age just determines where the woman currently is in her career. This is a variable that the participant cannot change unlike work-life balance, which is discussed later in the chapter. An older woman close to retirement is obviously going to have different priorities and problems than a younger woman just beginning her career. These two groups are simply at different stages in their life, which ties into how much education they have received as well as how many years of work experience they have under their belt.

Education and Work Experience

The types of education of the 16 participants were categorized into four different groups based on the degrees received: High school, Associates, Undergraduate, and both Undergraduate and Graduate. Two of the women received only a high school diploma while two other women received a two-year associate's degree. An overwhelming majority of the women in the study received at least an undergraduate degree if not both an undergraduate and a master's degree.

While interviewing Genevieve from Virginia, I found that she is between 45 and 60 years old and does not have a degree. Below Genevieve speaks about how she wished she had continued with her education but no longer views this as a viable option. This is very similar to Dolly, another participant who will be referred to later in this chapter. Genevieve recounts her experience below.

When I left [Town] and they hired [Name], they gave him a significant amount more money than they gave me. When they hired me, I took less than what my predecessor was making because I was insecure. Was it because I was a woman or was it because I didn't have the piece of paper? I don't know for certain if he had a degree but if I had to guess, I

would say he did, which makes a difference. Well, it does to a point... I have been doing this for eight years so I am at the point in my career now where I don't think I need one. At the beginning, I could see where it would. They just very recently hired someone else making a significant amount of money and who has a degree but very little experience.

In Genevieve's opinion, it cannot be said for sure that the sole reason for the discrimination she experienced was because she is a woman. It might be the fact that she "does not have the piece of paper" or that she has less experience than the other men that worked before her and after her. Therefore, Genevieve does not really consider her smaller salary as a gender discrimination issue because there could be other reasons for that decision.

Genevieve has six years of work experience between the previous town and the present. She recounts in the following excerpt the reason why she decided to leave [Town] was because of political issues that she did not agree with.

I actually lived here before I took this position. Moved to [Town] when I took that manager's position and then I moved back to [Town]. I was an assistant manager before that and actually town clerk before that. So I kind of worked myself up in that position. I started in 1990 and I got the manager's position in December of 2000 and was there until December of 2004. I came here January of 2005. There were some political issues going on in [Town] and actually it's interesting reading this (points to my interview question guide). A lot of this is "N/A" and "No" for this town but I would have answered it differently over in [Town].

Genevieve has worked in two different localities, which makes up her entire work experience. Genevieve left the first town where she worked for good reasons. She ran into issues as well when she was working in [Town] prior to her current town where the council and other staff were doing certain things that she did not approve of. This is spoken about in more detail in chapter three.

Similar to Genevieve from Virginia, Barbara from Maryland did not receive an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree but she still managed to acquire her upper level

position as a town manager. She regrets not continuing her education because she is always “eager to learn” but thinks it is too late now to go back. She feels it is not necessary anymore because of the years of experience she has acquired. Barbara claims that she is “an exception to the norm” because she did not receive any further education beyond high school. She is not boastful about this fact because she actually wishes the opposite. Barbara worked her way through the ranks and did what was expected to get the job done. Barbara consistently takes part in training classes and stays in contact with various agencies in all branches of government. In her own words, “Obtaining a degree is definitely on my “bucket-list” said Barbara.

Barbara has never worked in other municipalities outside of [Town] but does possess many years of experience within [Town] government. Chelsea has a similar number of years of experience but in a few different municipalities in Maryland other than [Town]. Her work experience is offered below.

I came on board in January, I just ran for County Commissioner but I’ve been in the municipality for over 20 years in different towns all in Maryland. Administrator in two other towns and I worked in the county government, so I have a lot of municipal and government experience.

As for Barbara’s work experience, she started out 14 years ago. She recounts, “I worked here at the local bank, at the Tower, and was hired originally to a position that was called assistant to the town manager which was basically a secretarial position, and I worked my way up through various positions.”

Those two participants that received an associate’s degree include Beatrice from a town in Pennsylvania and Chelsea from a town in Maryland. Beatrice spoke about the average tenure of a city or town manager and her plan to retire in two years. It was interesting to see that it is not necessary to have a degree in public administration and sometimes not even an undergraduate degree. Beatrice states, “I actually just have an associate’s in accounting.” She said that she was

strong with numbers and that skill assists her with a lot of the budgeting and financial work that she must complete weekly.

Chelsea furthered her education after high school but not in immediate succession. She had to complete her education in stages. This was largely due to financial constraints as well as other issues. Chelsea also did study public administration. She literally fell into the profession due to business administration and a part-time job that she had taken for a source of income.

I went back to school later on in life. I didn't go to college till I was 35 years old. It took me ten years part-time and this was while I was unemployed. I was going to school part-time at a community college for my associate's degree. I was on a program where because I was laid off, they re-trained me. I mean I could type barely, hardly anything at all. My neighbor said one day, "I'm going to take a word processing course" So I went and loved it. I went and talked to my professor and said, "I would love to continue but I can't afford it". We marched right up to the financial aid office and they paid for my schooling, my books, everything. I almost had my associate's degree and I saw a job in the paper for a part-time clerk. I passed the test and got into the county. I was there for a few months, and unfortunately the district manager was killed in a severe car accident and I was approached to apply for the job. I was only there for six months. And that's how I got into government and the rest is history.

Chelsea is a prime example of how it is not entirely necessary, as we have been finding so far in the central region, to get a degree in public administration to be a town or city manager. She had the determination to get a degree in business administration and through that and work experience, was able to move up within the town government.

While education may not be the deciding factor in whether a woman acquires a city or town manager position, some work experience usually helps a council decide in favor of an applicant. Beatrice describes below her experience in local government.

I was hired in May of 1990 as the office manager for the municipal authority. At the time, the recycling program was run by a nonprofit organization and a part of my job function was to do their books and payroll for them. In the mean time, the town took over the program. In October, they asked me if I would consider being their recycling coordinator. Then I left the authority and moved over to the town. I ran the recycling program and

recycling center for 12 years. Then the town administrator left. Our director of finance moved into that position. I moved up to town hall and did the finance job. Then the new town administrator was let go and I was doing both the finance and the town administrator's job. I took over the town administrator's job in 2002 and as needed was also filling in for finance.

While Beatrice did not originally work in public government in her early years right after school, she did end up working in Pennsylvania local government for 20 years afterward. Prior to local government, Beatrice had odd jobs such as working in a sewing factory and also as an accounting assistant in a hospital. In local government, she worked in a few different roles including office manager, finance director, and recycling coordinator. With this multitude of experience, she was sufficiently prepared for the town manager position.

Five of the women, Sandy from West Virginia, Shannon from Delaware, Nina from Delaware, Farrah from New York, and Dolly from Virginia, went beyond an associate's degree and received a four year undergraduate degree in an array of subject areas. Sandy from a city in West Virginia is between 60 and 75 years old and has an undergraduate degree and many years of experience. In the following excerpt, she describes what she received her degree in as well as how she applied for her current job twice and why she thinks that she was not hired the first time.

I actually have a teaching degree with a double major in general science and chemistry, and a minor in library science. The council had felt pretty strongly that there should be a degree in public administration involved, and I think that probably was the reason I didn't get it the first time. The thing is, when they bring in somebody from the outside, it takes them almost a year to get up to speed: as in knowing the community, knowing what has been done before, and not stepping on the wrong toes, etc. With me, I already knew what the job was because I had been watching it for ten years.

Sandy mentions that what she believes to be an important factor in succeeding at a job in government is that you are familiar with the state and the locality. It is difficult for a council to bring in a candidate that is from across the country and is not familiar with how the particular

town or city operates. She felt as though she was not hired the first time around because she has a teaching degree in science and chemistry and they were looking for a candidate with a degree specifically in public administration. However, Sandy felt that she had a leg up on the competition the second time around because of the familiarity she had with the city versus the other competitors that did not. Sandy does not possess a variety of other work experience outside of her current city. Before acquiring her position as city manager, she worked under the previous city managers as the payroll clerk, funds clerk, and the office supervisor.

I've had my position for a little over three years. I absolutely love it. I've been with the city one way or another since 1992. First as recorder, then working full time for them since 1995. I got to work for some other city managers and you know a lot of times you think, well I'd do this different or I'd do that different but I'm just glad to get the chance to be able to do this job. I've never worked for another city.

While she has not worked for another city, Sandy worked in three different roles for approximately 11 years prior to assuming her present position as city manager. She is a prime example of when an employee is loyal to a town or city, they have a good probability that they will move up in the ranks.

Shannon from Delaware is close to 65 years old because of the 20 years that she has being the city manager of [City] and 28 years total of general city manager experience. Nina is closer to being in the 50 to 60 age bracket. She began working for the city of [City] in 1984 as the clerk and tax collector when she was in her mid 20's. Both of these women were very young when they began their career in local government because they were fresh out of school. Shannon believes that her degree in accounting was a large part of how she got the city manager's job. Below, she recalls what the competition was like for the job.

There were five of us internally that they looked at and we had to compete. I ended up being the one that was selected. I think it was the strong financial background because I have an accounting degree. Some of the others did not have degrees that were in the

competition, a lot came from the recreation background, so I think it was the stronger accounting background that gave me the edge.

Conversely, Nina did not receive a degree in accounting. Instead, she got a bachelor of arts in communications. She was not sure what she wanted to do but as it turns out, her degree has helped her a great deal in local government. Another great example that a four-year degree in public administration is not necessarily necessary but that other degrees are proven to be useful. Nina said, "I have often thought about going back to school for my master's, either in public or business administration, but have not gotten around to that yet." She knows from observing other officials that it consistently "gives you an advantage throughout your government career".

Nina obviously believes that an education is a very valuable thing that is helpful when pursuing a local government job. She did not need a public administration degree necessarily but does desire to get her masters in the subject area. Her slew of experience in elected positions as well as appointed positions in other cities and towns besides [City] seems to be what makes up for the lack of public administration education, which is discussed below. She discusses in detail her first ten years of experience as a town clerk and tax collector.

When I first started as town clerk and tax collector I was 25 years old; very young, and I was a department head. Most people didn't know what to think of me and everybody that worked for me was older than I was; some old enough to be my mother or grandmother. My mother had just gotten off the town council so there were many people who thought I only got the job because of her. As a matter of fact, the town council did everything they could not to hire me and to try to get someone else to take that job. No one else wanted the job because it was an appointed job and if the political people changed on the board then you would get un-appointed whether you did a good job or not.

In another part of the interview, she spoke about her most recent experience, which was the past four years in [City].

I interviewed all over the country for different jobs very much like this when I decided I wasn't going to run for re-election in my job up in New York. I came in number two at a

lot of places which doesn't do you any good. I came in number two to a lot of internal candidates, which I found very interesting. I have served in my hometown local government for 22 years; 12 years as elected. That job up there was very different than a lot of other jobs. The title is technically township advisor but it is the same thing as a mayor because you are the highest elected official in the community. I tell most people I was the mayor because it is more understandable and it is still descriptive of exactly what the job is. I had done that for a long time and I was at the point where I had to decide if I was going to run again for a seventh time. I didn't have any trepidation that I would have probably been successful as I had been very fortunate and worked very hard in conjunction with that. But it was a very, very big job...much different in a very big town.

As one can plainly see, Nina possesses the credentials to make it through the competition for countless hiring selections and is very desired by many different localities across the United States. She has put a lot of time and effort into her career and it has definitely paid off. Nina knows how to market herself in the job market very well and therefore had many other options besides [City]. Regardless, she feels as though she has made the right decision. This information is divulged below.

I turned down jobs in Arizona and North Carolina. I had interviews set up in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Florida, North Carolina. They were flying me out. Again, that was right about the time that I was going to stop. There was an interview that I was supposed to go for in New Jersey that I canceled because I took this job. I don't want to be boastful but I have a pretty good looking resume. I get a lot of interviews from my resume and then it's up to me. It's like a tri-fold brochure and I print my picture out in color...it's almost like a campaign brochure, which nobody does but it does stand out. God, I really don't even desire to leave here but I had sent out some resumes at one point when I was here. It had been a while since I had done that and I got a lot of interest right off the bat with just the few that I sent out. I get a very high percentage of calls just from my resume. I have many substantive items that people are looking for in managers. I think there was one down in South Carolina that got 400 resumes and they whittled them down to 14 and I was one of the 14 out of 400.

Nina had interviews in about nine different states prior to assuming her position in her present city in Delaware. As mentioned above, in one state she made it into the last elimination round

when competing with 400 other people! Shannon approached a career in local government unintentionally unlike Nina. She sort of just “fell into it” as described below.

I really wasn't planning on a career in city management. I came to work for the city because I had been in the automobile business working six days a week down at the beach. I was burnt out and did not want a job with a lot of hours again, so we all know, government employees don't work very hard, or very long, so I came to work for the government. I was their director of finance before I was promoted to assistant city manager. The city manager was a senior and he was about to retire, and came to me and suggested I apply for it. I didn't think I was really ready for it and the advice he gave was, “Well if you don't get it you are never going to get it.” So I just went for it, and I figured the worst that could happen would be I would get fired, and if I got fired I could go look for a job. So that's how I became city manager, I really grew up with it.

Later on in my interview with Shannon, she goes more into detail about her work history in [City] and her 30 or more years of experience in other roles besides her current city manager position. Shannon also expresses how glad she is that she ended up in public government even though it had not been her original plan:

It was actually an accounting friend of mine, who worked down at the beach for the city, who called me and asked if I would consider going there to put an application in. And then one of the councilmen here happened to work with me in the automobile business, and so basically I came down, did the interview and they hired me right on the spot...I actually came on in the accounting section and I worked there for one year before I got promoted to the director of finance, and then I worked there for four years before I got promoted to assistant city manager. And I wasn't there very long only like a year, year and a half and then this opportunity came up...to be honest I don't think I could've found a better career choice. I've been here for 32 years, and I've been city manager 28. You have to be flexible, you have to keep current. If you don't keep current I think you could lose pace very quickly. You have to read a lot and you have to engage with a lot of other folks.

It is safe to say that both of these women from Delaware have a wealth of experience. Nina has had a bit more of a variety of experience because she has worked in many different cities and towns while Shannon has remained in the same city for the duration of her career in local government.

Farrah from New York received her undergraduate degree in Human Resources. She has worked in the public sector but in elected positions, which is slightly different than a city or town manager position and should be noted while reviewing the data from her interview. She has been a town supervisor for 18 years, which makes her the longest sitting supervisor thus far in her town. Aside from being a town supervisor, Farrah states that she possesses other local government experience. “I was the clerk of the [Name] County legislature in [City], New York. There were 35 people on that staff. I also ran for councilwoman for six years.”

Dolly from a town in Virginia does not have a master’s degree and only has a few years of work experience because she is young. Dolly recounts how she wishes she had furthered her education after she received her undergraduate degree. “I wish that I did but at the same time, I don’t wish I did enough to commit myself to going back to school. I think it would definitely give you a leg up, absolutely. I think I have found that you can get to same place without it. It might just take a little longer.” Speaking in terms of work experience, Dolly does not have much because she just began her career in June of 2009. Below she discusses where she worked prior to the town she is in currently and then she goes onto compare the two.

Before I was here, I was assistant to the city manager in [City]. It was very different. Just because of the size of the city. We had so many more resources in [City]. [Name] provided tremendous economic benefits as far as revenue and resources go for the city. And we just don’t have that here. It feels like I have to do a lot more with a lot less. I think the council’s respect for the form of government was less blurred in [City]. Most of the council members there were professional individuals who had full time jobs. That’s the case for some of them here but others...they’re retired and they don’t really do anything except for town council. In most places, the mayor may or may not have an office in the town hall or city hall. If he does have an office, he might be in once or twice a week. When I was in [City], the mayor came in when he had to sign a check. Here, our mayor is retired and he is in the office every day from nine to five...

Dolly expresses that working in her first assistant job was a very different experience than her present town manager position. The council was a bit more respectful and the mayor did not

have as strong a role as the one in her present town. Here we can deduct that the type of government and its officials are large influences on the work environment and whether or not a woman can move up in positions.

The last category, those women who decided to pursue a graduate degree after receiving their undergraduate degree, consists of six participants, which is the largest category yet. Wanda from Connecticut, Becky from New York, Veronica from New Jersey, Nancy from Pennsylvania, Natalie from Virginia, and Helen from North Carolina comprised the six participants.

Wanda from one of the towns in Connecticut, was a public administrator for a total of 24 years and actually resigned two weeks after we had our interview together after being the town manager for the past six years. Prior to that, she worked in another town in Connecticut for seven years as their first manager, in a city as their deputy city manager, and a town as an assistant, and in North Carolina for a small period of time. Wanda got to where she is today with a decent amount of education. She attended both undergraduate and graduate school after high school which is exhibited in the following quotation: “I have a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. I have two masters: one in public administration and the other one is in criminal justice.”

Becky from New York did not receive an undergraduate degree in public administration but in another area. Becky said in her interview that, “My bachelor’s is in commercial recreation and my master’s is in public administration.” Becky has held her position in [City] as city administrator for about 15 months. Prior to [City], she worked in Connecticut for five years and in New Jersey for about 15 years. In the following excerpt, Becky explains in more detail, what types of positions those were.

In New Jersey, I was a community development specialist in [Township]. Assistant to the administrator in [Township]. I was the assistant administrator in [Township]. I was first a

team leader and then the director of the local government budget program for the state of New Jersey. I was the town manager in [Township], New Jersey. Then I went to Connecticut and was the town manager in [Town]. I spent about a year and a half as the grants director for [City] public schools and then came here.

As one can plainly decipher, all of Becky's prior work experience has been appointed positions in the public sector. Veronica attended undergraduate school and then worked for a while and then decided to return to school to complete her master's in public administration. In addition to being the township manager of [Township] for the past two years, Veronica affirms she has also worked in four other states totaling 26 years including, "I worked for the state of Illinois, County manager of [Name] County in Michigan, special assistant to the CAO in [Name] County in Maryland, town manager of [Name], Rhode Island."

While Beatrice from Pennsylvania, who was mentioned earlier in regard to associate's degrees, is at the end of reign and thinking seriously about retiring, the other manager that was selected to interview in Pennsylvania was at the other end of the spectrum. Nancy is between 25 and 35 years old and is just beginning her career as a public administrator. She had only been involved in public government as a finance director for a few years before becoming city manager.

I predicted that Nancy's education would be exactly the same, if not similar to Beatrice's education because she had been a finance director previous to becoming city manager but I was proven wrong. Nancy states, "My master's degree is in public administration, with a concentration in financial resources management." Obviously, according to preceding quotation, an undergraduate degree in public administration is not necessarily required but some do possess one.

While Beatrice has years of experience and wisdom, Nancy has only been a city administrator in her current city in Pennsylvania for two weeks (at the time of the interview).

Prior to that, she was interim administrator and finance director. Nancy has acquired a decent amount of experience in the short time that she has been involved in the workforce as portrayed below.

I was interim administrator for about nine months and I was finance instructor for about three years. I initially did not express interest in the job. And it's funny because I was going through your paperwork...my former boss, was, I believe a 62-year-old man. Retired military, [Name], very by the books, and when, well I went to [Name] University, at graduate school, and they're affiliated with our US Army War College in [Borough]. So I took a lot of classes with Colonels. And I know how they are and their personalities, and I've always had the highest respect for them. You know, I mean, they were the best group of people I ever worked with. But he was a very manly man, you know, he was also very religious and very conservative, and I think he may...I think he may have had issues with women.

Nancy has always worked in public government and has always worked in the [City] municipality. Natalie is from a very large city and is the third and last participant from Virginia. She is between 60 and 65 years old and is looking to retire within the next few years as shown below.

I had originally indicated privately to the council that I had planned to retire in 2010. During this year, and during my performance evaluation last month I was asked to consider to stay so I've made a three year commitment...I'll be 65 then. And that will help me enough, but you know it's not contracted so either of us could decide that the three years is too long as well. But for now my plans are to stay another three years.

Natalie has an impressive resume with two different degrees and a multitude of experience. According to the city's website, Natalie graduated high school early at the age of 16 and then received a BS degree in both English and Sociology. Later she received a master's degree in Public Administration. In addition to traditional education, she also has taken numerous postgraduate leadership and business management courses, and she is a certified MBTI facilitator (cite website).

Not only does Natalie have an impressive educational background, but she also has many years of work experience in many different localities. She has been the city manager of her current city for 11 years. Prior to this, she was the city manager for a city in California for five years and before assuming that role, she had been the assistant city manager for five years. Preceding that city in California, Natalie was the deputy city manager and chief of staff for another city in Virginia, the first female appointed to such a position in that city. In addition to her deputy city manager duties, Natalie served as the interim director of public safety. She first began in [City] as the Director of Personnel in 1979. In 1982, she was appointed by the Virginia governor as the first female to be State Director of Personnel and Training (cite website). In total, Natalie's career in public government extends over a period of 36 years. Below, she explains in more detail about some of those years in those different localities.

I don't have a contract I serve at the pleasure of the city council. Say that they like for me to resign, but I think that it's a matter of working in partnership with the elected officials, and understanding what the community needs and priorities are, and then trying to respond to those. I've been able so far, to do that to their satisfaction. I tend to stay most places for quite a while; I was in [City] as city manager for five years, and chief assistant manager for five; for a total of ten. Then in [City] for ten years as well.

Later in our interview, I asked Natalie if she could please compare some of the different localities she worked in to get a sense of why she stayed in some places longer than others. It turns out that she believes that the government's ideology has a large influence in how it functions. In particular, she discusses the difficulties that a conservative government presents and how she handles it.

From a community standpoint, I would say that [City] is more conservative in their philosophies and value system, than California, and you might expect that. Actually, I'd say [City] is even more conservative than [City], which I was surprised by because the larger segment of our population being somewhat transit, because of the army and the universities that I would have thought it would have been more liberal. But we are conservative here, our views on things and approaches; we believe that less government

is better government, so we try to layer a lot of things. Internally, the organization, when I look at staff and what have you, I think it also is the same. I find that the staff here I sometimes have to really encourage them to take more calculated risks. I don't advocate for making risky decisions but we have to be innovative. Given our financial constraints, and I find that our staff here is a little more resistant to that than the staff in California.

Helen, from a city in North Carolina, is in her early 40's and has an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in city and regional planning. In total, Helen has 16 years of local government experience, which includes more than four different positions. According to the city's website, Helen is one of the two assistant city managers and has been in that position for about three years. Prior to coming to her current city, she was the planning director for [Name] County, which is also in North Carolina. However, for the purpose of this study, we will be focusing on the position she had before working in [Name] County when she was the town manager of a different town in North Carolina (cite website). Helen discusses the general details about her time as a town manager and how it compares to her current position. "I was the manager from 2002-2005. So about two and a half years total. I think the two positions have different duties. The biggest difference is just the reporting relationship to council versus in my role now I report to the city manager. Little bit different." After being a town manager for about three years, Helen has a decent amount of experience to be able to report how being an assistant city manager is different. She points out that the two positions are different simply because they have different ranks and therefore different duties. As a town manager, she had a close relationship with the council and had people reporting to her. Now, she is the one who is reporting to a city manager. Below she explains the reasons for why she left her previous job in a different city in North Carolina and moved to the town where she was town manager.

My move from [City] to [Town] was kind of a roadblock in progress. There my boss basically...I put things together in the department in one way, and he was hired after that and he changed a lot of things and I just didn't feel like I could make progress there. So

that's why I left and decided to interview to become the planning director of the different town, and [Town] is right there, so...

As one can see, her move to the town where she was manager was not because her previous boss in the other city had an issue with her being a woman. There were not any discrimination issues mentioned. The real reason was that they disagreed with how that government should be run and she felt as though she could not make any progress. Helen wanted to go somewhere where she felt as though she was making progress.

Education and work experience depends largely on the previous section on "Age". The age of the participant usually correlates heavily with how much work experience they have. The majority of the women that are younger in the study have less work experience but not necessarily less education. Beatrice from Pennsylvania is in the older age bracket and has more than 20 years of experience but only has an associate's degree. Conversely, Nancy, the other participant from Pennsylvania is fairly young with only a few years of work experience but has both an undergraduate degree as well as a master's degree. Education seemed to be a large influential factor in most of the 16 participants. One woman even mentioned that she knew the man that worked there prior to her, made more than her most likely because he had a degree and she did not. Barbara from Maryland even went as far to say that obtaining a degree is definitely on her "bucket list", meaning that she has seen the need for a degree past high school and wishes she had gotten one. Degrees and work experience are not the only helping and hindering factors on a woman's career in local government. Whether she has children or not and whether she has a supportive husband or not are very important to consider.

Family

Two cases in particular stood out against the rest in regard to family. Nina from a small city in Delaware and Wanda from a town in Connecticut were the only two participants out of 16 who did not have any children. Ironically, they are both in the older age bracket and so they are not planning of having children in the future. While Nina has not had children to care for during her career as town manager, she does have a husband whom she has to factor into her career decisions. Below she discusses how not having children may have helped her get certain jobs because the town or city council determined that she would be able to be more committed than another woman who had children.

It's just my husband and me and we don't have any children. If I interviewed for a job with another woman and they were like "Well we might hire this woman with just the husband or we might hire this woman with three kids..." But if it's a man with a family, they might even pay him more because "Oh, he's got a family to support." When I was of childbearing age, I had a big variety of women friends who were all having children. I thought to myself for whatever reason, "Once this woman has her first child, she's going to stay home and this other woman who is career oriented is going to have a child and then get daycare and come back to work." It was almost always the opposite and I think it's because the women who are so focused and really "go get em" and everything at work, they shift their focus to their child...It also depends on whether you are single or not. I'm sure when I was single I worked a lot more...for my whole married life, I don't feel like we have had an enormous amount of time together. Since I have come here, I probably have tried to curtail it a little bit, not that I am not giving them 110 percent (because I really feel that I do). My husband still has his job in [City], where he telecommutes to from our house here in Delaware...So now, I might only stay until six o'clock instead of eight o'clock. I am trying to go away on vacation tomorrow so I could stay now until I leave mid-day tomorrow to get work done but you can't do that, you just can't. Sometimes you just have to say, I'm done.

In Nina's opinion, it is not only the fact that there are children involved when applying for a job in local government. It is more so that the person applying is a woman. She says that a man with children would not be looked down upon. In fact, they might even pay him more because he has a family to provide for. In Nina's mind, what it boils down to is that an employer believes that it

is the woman's job to stay home with the children and not the man's and this engrained belief is what deters an employer from hiring a woman with children before a man with children. The employer's engrained belief however is not held without convincing evidence. Nina mentioned that when most of her friends were pregnant, that they did not return to their jobs at all or maybe only came back to do part-time work. An employer wants an employee who will commit and be there to work and so therefore, taking a chance on a woman at child-bearing age is a risk to them. Aside from the discussion about men versus women and children versus no children, Nina declares that she does not see her husband as much as she would like. Prior to her current city, she worked longer hours but has now realized that she can cut back without putting in less effort. Again, another pattern emerged when Nina spoke about how her husband works from home and telecommutes to his job up north. She said that it helps that he has a more flexible schedule than hers because they can spend more time together than if he had to commute to work. Later, this same significant component is also mentioned by Shannon from the other city in Delaware.

Wanda from Connecticut also does currently have a husband who she has been married to for many years. However, she feels as though she never gets to see him because of the size of her workload. Below, Wanda explains that family conflicts were not the reason for her decision to resign but that the workload and number of hours were actually the main reasons.

I'm leaving this job for good and I may get out of the profession because you know what, I don't want to deal with the hours. I'm so tired from the hours. I have found myself in the last few years very resentful. I would be going to another meeting after work and everybody is walking their dog. I was getting angry...saying I don't want to do this anymore...I just want a change...just to have a life! Right now I just need a break. You know, I may go back into it again but we will see.

Wanda, while she has done an excellent job for many years, believes that being a town manager requires too many hours and she does want to do it anymore. She did not even have the added

struggle of juggling a child's schedule with her work schedule. Two other participants, aside from Nina and Wanda, were considered out of the ordinary when compared to the majority of the women on the topic of family. Both Beatrice from a town in Pennsylvania and Dolly from a town in Virginia had one or more children but do not have a supportive husband. This does not necessarily mean that the husband is non-existent, just that he was not considered a helping hand in raising the children. Beatrice, who is older as mentioned before, has children who are grown up now that she is very proud of. She speaks about them below and the obstacles that she had to overcome with them when she was young.

I was a very young mother. I did not finish high school. I got my GED. When I was working at the sewing factory, I knew I did not want to do it forever. So I started taking night classes. It took me a long time to get a two-year degree because I had my two children at home and I was a single parent but I was bound and determined. When my son turned 16, he went to live with his father. So I had my daughter and she wanted to go to college and luckily through student and federal grants, loans, the Pell grant, and my turning vacation and sick pay in for dollars and stuff like that, we got her through. What really held me back was that I didn't have the money for the courses or a lot of the time my cars were broken down and I couldn't get back and forth. So it was a combination of things but my children were good they didn't mind me going to school. So it was just a matter of getting there technically...I knew I needed financial security. I knew I needed to have a good job with constant income and insurance.

My first impression of Beatrice was that she is extremely hard working and determined. She raised her children without much help from her husband at the time. He was not around much. This was the first time that a participant in the study said that. The majority of the women in all three regions revealed that it was the help of their husband that got them through the difficult times of balancing work with their personal life. Beatrice, on the other hand, pretty much did it all by herself. While her children were mostly grown by the time she began her career in public government, Nancy did express that the work-life balance issue presented itself in her previous

work in accounting. She even based a job choice on the money and benefits it would provide to her children because she had to pay for her children's schooling.

Aside from her difficulties at previous jobs, Dolly from Virginia also faced difficulties outside of work in her personal life. Dolly is brand new single mother with a one and a half year old son. However, she is not married and therefore does not have the support of a husband that all of the other women in the study have mentioned as being important. She divulges this below.

I will say from my experience is that it can go both ways. It can be from the employer or the women's perspective. There was a girl that was under me who I supervised that when she got pregnant, she just wanted to come back part time and wasn't interested in moving up because she wanted to stay home and that's completely fine. I think if when I had my son I had been married and my husband had a lot of money, that may have been what I decided to do but it wasn't the case for me.

Dolly expresses how she misses her 15-month-old son while she is at work and wish that she could spend more time with him. She does have a very flexible schedule, which was also mentioned frequently by other women in this study, but she still has to attend late night meetings, which keep her away from home. While she does not have a husband, she is not without support. Her mother helps a lot when Dolly must work late and she said that that is partially what makes it possible for her work the hours that she does.

It's a very difficult balance to maintain as far as my personal desires go but also as far as work schedule goes. I have been very, very lucky in my previous position and in this one. I've had the ability to have a very flexible schedule. My mother is not working so she would come up three days a week and watch him for me and I had a nanny that I hired to watch him the other two days. When I moved here, I talked my brother and sister-in-law into moving in with me and they watched him. They have three little girls also. So I have been very fortunate because for evenings like tonight when I have this late meeting I don't have to worry about him. But I think about it every day when I leave him. Every day when I come home, the highlight of my day is walking through the door and he runs up to me and gives me a great big hug and I wish that I could be there more but I'm the only person earning income. I work at least one night, sometimes two or three. Any time I'm not here, I certainly have comp time or I make up the hours or whatever. I still am

afraid that because I'm a woman and my excuse is...not excuse, but my reason is my son...that it makes it easier for them to criticize that action...

In Dolly's case, she has flexibility in her work hours and uses comp time but since she has only been there a short while, she does not want to abuse that privilege too much with coming in late in the mornings so that the council notices and says, "Well why the hell aren't you getting to work until ten A.M.?" Since town and city manager positions are appointed, the council could technically use Dolly's absences from work against her, which she is afraid of. She says the fact that she does not have a husband at home with her son is "by far the biggest challenge.

The outlier for the age variable is also somewhat of an outlier for the family variable. While Nancy from Pennsylvania has a decent amount of experience in her career, she is the only one in the study without a developed personal life. This is not necessarily a bad thing or a good thing. Nancy is simply younger than all of the other participants. Therefore, she is not married and does not have children. One might assume that she works more to fill her free time. On the contrary, in Nancy's spare time, she enjoys spending time with her friends on weeknights and on weekends.

Surprisingly, according to the rest of the 11 females in the study, they all had one or more children and raised them with the help of a supportive husband. I found this strange due to the high divorce rates that we have in this country.

Rebecca from Connecticut initially switched over from the private to the public sector because she already had similar experience being a clerk. She was a clerk because the job was not too demanding in that she had time to spend with her children. Rebecca mentions that the duties of town clerk, both in [City] and in [Town], were not too overwhelming and that she was capable of balancing her job with her personal life at home. She says that her supportive husband was a necessity in achieving this work-life balance. Currently, Rebecca has three adult children

and four grandchildren and has managed just fine working in her position. In the following excerpt, she explains how she has accomplished this and how she has defined her job.

You have to put the time in. You have to have a spouse that supports you, which I am lucky to have. You also have to know how to keep a balance. I have to know when to go home and be a wife and a mom. It takes some juggling but it works. For a while there, I was putting in so much time that my secretary got a phone call from my oldest daughter to see if she could make an appointment to see me. Then you know to step back. But if you work it carefully...it all comes down to knowing how to balance it all out and keep it in perspective.

Rebecca feels as though she handled her career and her children well through the art of balance and help. Becky and Farrah from New York dealt with work-life balance issues in the past as well as currently today. Becky currently has two school-aged children that she has to keep in mind when she navigates her work schedule. On the morning of our interview, she was actually a few minutes late to work because of a day care issue. In the following quotation, Becky speaks of different types of obstacles in her job that affect work-life balance and how she handles them.

I think it would be great to have a part time job anywhere but I don't think it's terribly realistic in this kind of job. There are residents that want to see you and staff that need to see you and governing body members that expect certain things. It's just the way it is. Although I will say that having these types of jobs does give you some flexibility so if I have a daycare issue in the morning, I just come in later. It's not a big deal. If I want to go to my kid's performance or something, I go. It's not hour for hour. I don't say, Jeez I got out of here at 8:30 p.m., so I'm not coming in till whenever tomorrow morning. There's just sort of an innate flexibility. Part of that depends on what type of governing body you have or mayor you have. But I think it should be that way because the demands are so great that it is unfair to not have it be that way.

Aside from the key factor of a supportive husband that was discussed previously in the Connecticut interviews, Becky also adds that a flexible staff and governing body help her maintain a balance between her personal life and her career. Farrah's children, who are young adults now, were a big influence on her career when they were born in the 1980's and throughout the 1990's when they were growing up. She states that,

I left county government in 1983 and gave birth to my son. I became a stay at home mom then. In 1986 when my daughter was born, one of the councilmen on the town board passed away due to a car accident. I wanted to seek the position to be able to get back in government part time. My husband is a court judge. We act together as a team.

Farrah did not remain a stay-at-home mother for long after her two children were born. In fact, she went back to work part time almost immediately. She also feels that her husband was a huge support in making the work-life balance successful. One might say that her husband possessing a similar interest in public government may have made it easier to relate to Farrah's demands at work.

Veronica from New Jersey possesses the experience necessary to succeed as a township manager. However, she mentions below how it probably would not have been possible without the support and flexibility of her husband and strangely enough, her strategic spacing of the different periods throughout her life in the past 20 years. Veronica states, "In my case, my husband retired after I started back to school and got my degree in public administration. So he worked up until then and retired. He is older than I am and so it worked out well. He didn't mind moving and I didn't mind, so it worked out fine." Veronica has five grown children who are scattered all over the country. When they were growing up, she was doing something completely different for work and she therefore, did not find that work-life balance to be a struggle. However, Veronica does admit that if she had been a township manager while they were young, that that would have "put a little kink in her plan". When the 'mommy track' was discussed, she agreed that it has the ability to negatively affect a woman's career but she does not let that kind of thought discourage her. Veronica says that a person "...can look forward to seven distinct careers in their lifetime and if that's the case, and you know you can kind of space things out."

It seems as though her husband not holding a full time position at the time aided Veronica in the process of making strides in her own education and career. Also, she was not in public

government at the time that her children were of school age and she claimed that this was why she did not have as much trouble maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Now she can afford to work longer hours and take on more responsibility because her children are grown and out on their own.

In addition to education and work experience, Barbara and Chelsea have families that have been a large part of their career decisions. Both women have two children that are in their late teens and early 20's. Below, Barbara explains her family situation and the issues that she faced when they were a little younger.

This is my second marriage. I've been married 18 years. I have my daughter who is 26 and my husband and I have a son together who is now 16, and then my stepchildren. I have a stepdaughter, who is 25, and a stepson who is now 22. I have two grandchildren, one is eight and one is 17 months.

When they were younger, Barbara found it difficult flexing her time between work and her children. However, she states, "But the one thing that I can say is a positive, by working locally, is that I have the advantage of being close by and if I need to leave I can. Versus if I were down the road or if I had to travel or something like that versus being nearby and working in your town, your community, there are a lot of advantages, and that's one of them." Speaking on the matter of childcare and job issues, Barbara contemplated different life adjustments to maintain the balance like leaving work early or coming in late. Below, she recalls one specific instance:

Well there was a time, I can't remember how long ago it was, that I had requested to cut back to four days a week. They accommodated my request, and I have never had an issue with any needs. They've always been met and everybody here is pretty open with their requests and they're pretty much all accommodated.

Barbara found that living close to her job was the key to success when attempting to balance her career and her time with her children. The absence of a commute made it easier for her to drive her children to school as well as other after school activities. Although simply living nearby did

not solve the problem of accommodating her family simultaneously with her job. Barbara also mentions in the above excerpt that the fact that her bosses and co-workers were so flexible with her need to cut back her hours, was a huge help when she felt pressured by life's demands. Similarly, Chelsea has two children, now 18 and 21, and has had difficulties in the past with trying to balance work with her personal life as shown below.

[Town] made me an offer I couldn't refuse. We already had one daughter that we had adopted when she was three and at that time she was eight. We were in the process of adopting two boys, five and six. I said, "You know I am in the process of adopting..." and they said, "We will be flexible with you." We always wanted a family and my family should have come first when I was in that job and it didn't. They didn't force me. It was a 40-hour week but you also have a lot of meetings on top of that. So I was working an average of at least 50 to 60 hours a week. It was okay the first year or so. You know, they get situated in the school and stuff. But after three years, it was so difficult because they didn't know who "mommy" was at that point. Amongst all of the meetings you are missing their lives. So finally after three years of that, we decided that I was going to stay home. It was the best thing I ever did. I stayed home for four years while they were in middle school and I substitute taught and then I jumped back into it. I am the type of person who can let my job very easily take over my life which is good for an employer but isn't good for your family life. Men don't have to stay home with the kids. Most men don't have to work and then come home and cook and take care of the family but my husband was very helpful. He helped me with everything. It was hard between both of us juggling. So as a woman, it is that maternal thing. But here I am and this is all I ever wanted you know and I have these kids and they want to go to soccer and they want to go here. And we have a planning and zoning meeting and they have their band concert and you want to go! And it's their awards ceremony and you can't go... You know, 40 hour weeks and we expect you to be here from nine to five plus all of the meetings. You have a lot more than everyone else in the office. If I didn't have anything going on I might leave a couple hours early but my things always hit when I had important things going on. I love this job because I have the flexibility. I wish I had this job when my kids were younger.

Chelsea wanted her to children to be her first priority in her life. At the beginning of her career, that was difficult because there was less flexibility. As mentioned above, there were instances that it got so bad that her children kept wondering where their mother was. Fortunately, this did

not remain the case for forever. Chelsea eventually cut back her hours and has more time with her children now.

Age, education, and work experience are definitely not the only factors that have influenced Shannon's career as town manager in Delaware. She has loved ones in her life that influenced most of her decisions up until now. Shannon has been married for many years and has a daughter in her mid 20's. Below, Shannon discusses how much she relied on her husband's support in helping with their daughter while she was at work. Her daughter is currently 24 years old but back when Shannon began her career, she was only about two or three years old.

It would've been more difficult had my husband not given tremendous support. If he hadn't been the care provider at nights it would have been very, very difficult. He's a self-employed electrician...that made it a lot easier. He could flex his schedule a lot more than I could, especially at the beginning of the career...I'm more flexible now. I've just been really fortunate. By living in town, I could just go home and we had day care provided at our home by a family member fortunately. So between all of us, all of the family and my husband we were able to make it work.

The essential component that needs to be stressed in Shannon's case is that her husband is self-employed and her family was very helpful. She emphasizes that if it had not been for her husband's flexible work hours, the juggling of their daughter and their careers would have been much more difficult. It was because her husband could be at home more that she could continue working longer hours. Her family also provided daycare services which is a luxury that not every working mother has. If her husband had had a job similar to Shannon's when she first started out as town manager with her hours not being as flexible or if those family daycare services were not provided, things may not have run as smoothly. Another key factor she mentions is that she lives very close to her job. She could go home if there was an emergency or a scheduling issue with her daughter's activities. Similarly, it was mentioned earlier that Beatrice from a town in

Maryland, also said that the close proximity to her job was an important factor in the success of her work-life balance.

Shifting back over to Genevieve from one of the two towns in Virginia: she has two children who are in their 20's as well as one grandchild. While her children do not affect her work hours now, they did in her first job in [Town] when they were younger. Genevieve discusses below how she managed to balance her children and her career and the other factors such as her lower-level position at the time, the managers, and her husband that affected in the process.

My oldest son was eight or nine and my younger son was a year old. Even though I wasn't in an upper management position then, that's when I started getting very busy working long hours and it just kind of continued on. So yeah it was difficult...I would come in on a Saturday...my "then" manager was very good about letting the kids come to the office. My husband was very supportive of the job especially during those years when I was coming into the upper management and really making that transition...putting in a lot of hours and trying to get to that next level. So I did put in a tremendous amount of time and he was very, very supportive of that.

Even though she was not a town manager back when her children were young, Genevieve still had a job that was very demanding with its hours. New managers came in and changed the way the locality functioned and the new manager was really accepting that Genevieve had young children and allowed them to come to the office with her when it was necessary. In addition, Genevieve also had a very supportive husband who helped with the raising of their kids. This is contrary to Dolly's situation where she does not have a husband but consistent with the majority of the other states in the other two regions that also had supportive husbands.

When it comes to the subject of family and how she balanced her career and her personal life when she was younger and had children, Natalie from a city in Virginia shows the same pattern that has held true for almost every participant in this study: Natalie had an extremely

supportive husband that helped with the raising of their children. In fact, he basically forfeited his career so that Natalie could pursue hers, as discussed below.

I had a very unusual situation in that I had a marvelous husband who gave up his career for mine, and we sort of reversed roles. He was a department director and decided that he didn't want to go beyond that. In deference to my career, he was willing to relocate three times for me. Kids were sick he'd stay home when it wasn't fashionable, so I could work and not feel guilty. So I had a very unusual situation. I was married for 40 years, my husband just passed away last year...he was just a great guy. I worked the whole time. I had my first child when I was a senior in college, and I started working right after. Sometimes my husband would bring them to the council meetings so they could find out what's going on, if I went to a conference the whole family went and we made a little vacation out of it. So they've always been a little involved in my work. When my son was three weeks old they started bringing work to me while I was still on my maternity leave and then they would pick it up. It was because I wanted to go back to work, I couldn't stand just being at home and not involved. So we talked about it and he was okay with it.

The unique thing about Natalie was that she was extremely eager to get back to work after each of her three children was born. She even describes that she was bored at home only three weeks after her son was born. Her maternity leave was not even finished and she had the office bring work to her home for her to complete. Natalie never felt the need to keep her work separate from her family life. She had her husband bring her children to council meetings so she could see them on weeknights as well as to weekend conferences so that they could all be together. The help of her husband was essential in the success of keeping not only a work-life balance, but also making the extra effort to continuously keep the two entities intertwined so that she did not have to choose between one or the other.

Sandy from the city in West Virginia was not alone in her journey in public government. She has two children who are grown now but who were younger at the time when she began her career. Below she explains how timing is everything and she now has the time needed to perform this job now that her children are out in the world forming their own families.

My children have grown...33 and 35, and I've got grandchildren, two little girls that are six and four. So it's a good time of life. I think that's why this works for me right now, it's a good time for me to have gotten this because my husband just retired, and nobody desperately needs me to take them to soccer practice or to do the many things that women still have to do. I've always been the type of person that tried to be everything to everybody, and this is a particularly good time in life because my kids are self-reliant. When you have those kinds of demands and the demand of the job, you always feel guilty no matter where you are. It is like a constant guilt feeling. I have worked since my children were about five years old. You feel bad because you leave work early when there was still something to do but you had to go to the kid's band rehearsal. It's difficult to be productive when a little piece of your mind is always somewhere else.

Sandy does not specifically say that her husband was supportive but they did work as a team.

Back then, she felt as though she had to do everything and be everywhere and could not accept help to get the job done. This is why she worked in payroll and funds or as the office supervisor for those 11 years before finally becoming the city manager. Sandy states that now because she is older and her children are no longer relying on her to drive them to after school activities and all of the other duties that parents must perform, she has the time that is required to be in the upper-level position. She could not have performed as the city manager effectively back then because of her personal life at home.

Lastly, Helen from North Carolina is in her early forties and has two young children whom she needs to devote her attention to on top of her job. She goes into more detail in the next excerpt about the problems in the past that she had with her boss and also how children and family influence a man's career very differently than it does a woman's career.

He had a wife at home so he could work all hours of the day. He could work late at night, and his schedule was very flexible because he did not have child responsibilities. My husband was out of work, but working part time so he was limited in what he could do to help. At the time my children were one and three, baby age. I could not be available day and night to stay late at work and that was a problem. I couldn't work as long as him because of family responsibilities while he could invest 15 hours. So that was part of what made me want to shift to a different job. You were at the mercy of the organization that you worked with. There were some that were fairly well balanced and then some

were a lot more stressful and hard for someone who had a family. That is why I took a few steps back and went to the smaller city. If you chart my career path, that's one where you probably go, wow why did she do that? My children were in daycare when they were younger which is what most double job couples do, so we had our time with them in the evening. But if they got sick, it was just something you had to factor into your life. I tried to juggle that, but I reached my limits with that particular job and boss...I was 35. That happened in 2002.

In Helen's opinion, her boss at her job in [City] could work longer hours than she could because the roles were reversed. He had a wife at home that took care of everything that was related to their children while for Helen it was the opposite. She was the one that had to handle raising her two children, who were babies at the time, on top of also working full-time. She physically could not be at work the nights that her boss was working late and therefore did not get as much done in the same amount of time. This was the sole reason that she decided to leave that job and went to work in the other town. To Helen, working at an organization for a long period of time with family responsibilities depends on the size of the town or city and how that organization functions and whether it offers flexibility. If it is a larger city, there tends to be more stress and there are a lot more demands on an employee that might make them leave, as was her experience in [City]. Fortunately, there is the option of moving to a smaller city or town with less pressure and stress and therefore, more time is allotted for the family. Since Helen's husband also worked full-time when the children were young, they sent the children to daycare so that they could both work during the day and see them at night. However, a lot of the time Helen did not see her children at night due to council meetings and other requirements. This was too much for her to handle and was another factor in her decision to leave [City]. By the time she reached that town and became town manager, her children were in elementary school and that made scheduling a little easier. To conclude, Helen claims that she has often thought of moving back up to a town or city manager position but thinks that if it were to happen, it would be in about ten years. This is

because by that time, her children will be adults and off on their own and she can focus her time solely on her career.

Conclusion

As stated previously, the majority of the women in this study were found to have at least one child or more as well as a supportive husband. This a very important trend to consider because these women had the help of their husband when they were trying to balance their work schedule with time with their family. The special cases mentioned at the beginning of the section, those women who did not have any children, those women who did not have supportive husbands, etc, are the women who struggled a but more than the majority. The women who did not have children were not required to find a balance between work and personal life. Those women who did not have supportive husband had to find other sources of help to raise their children, which is an added aggravation. In short, those women without children could work more and put more time into their careers, those women who did not have supportive husbands usually could not put in as much time as those women without children or those with a supportive husband. Lastly, the majority of the participants, those with the supportive husband, reported that they could maintain a healthy work-life balance consistently through the years.

When we examine each of the three states in each of the three regions and of course the three regions against each other, we discover many interesting things. For example, almost every woman except for Beatrice from a town in Pennsylvania and Dolly from a town in Virginia has a very supportive husband who helped out with the children so that she could maintain her career simultaneously with her family. Beatrice and Dolly struggled with work-life balance quite a bit more than the other 14 women in the study because they did not have that help. Another pattern

that was found dealt with whether the participant had children or did not have children. 13 out of 16 women had at least one child or more. Wanda from one of the two towns in Connecticut, Nancy from a city in Pennsylvania, and Nina from one of the two cities in Delaware, were the only three participants that did not have children. These three women obviously had an easier time balancing work with their personal life because they did not have that extra responsibility. Both Wanda and Nina however, complain that they do not get to spend enough time with their husbands, which constitutes their struggle in having a stressed work-life balance. Nancy is still young and does not have the worries of children or a husband at home. Lastly, the majority of the women had at least an undergraduate degree and usually also a masters degree. Only two of the participants, Barbara from one of the towns in Maryland and Genevieve from one of the two towns in Virginia, did not pursue any further education beyond high school. Out of the other 14 participants, their degrees spanned across a variety of areas of study such as sociology, commercial recreation, human resources, accounting, business education, communications, english, teaching, and political science. None of the participants actually possessed a bachelor of science in public administration. Those that had any public administration education acquired it in graduate school by attaining a master's degree.

In chapter three, we will delve further into the lives of these 16 participants and discover if they encountered any gender discrimination and if so, what type of discrimination and certain details about the experience. Along with examining particular issues of gender discrimination, the glass ceiling will also be heavily discussed and what opinions the participants have on the matter.

Chapter 3: Discrimination and the Glass Ceiling

A matter where someone feels uncomfortable, subordinate, or inferior in the work environment should not be taken lightly and most definitely should not be ignored.

Discrimination is a problem that has gained national attention. Gender discrimination in the workplace is a problem that has gained national attention. It is an issue that has the potential to either discourage women from continuing their career or make them a stronger person as a result. As a whole, most of the women encountered some type of gender discrimination while only a few could say that they were lucky enough to have experienced none. In addition to gender discrimination, each participant had a distinct opinion on the glass ceiling and discussed whether or not it has been a barrier in their career. At the end of this chapter, we should be able to infer the answer to the important question: Does gender discrimination discourage female town and city managers or does it push them to be inspired and rise above? The chapter is divided into two main sections: “Discrimination” and the “Glass Ceiling”.

Discrimination

Gender discrimination can come in many different forms. For example, a male might make inappropriate verbal remarks, sexually harass, exclude from work related or unrelated activities, or any other number of things. Females also can and have discriminated against men but for the purpose of this study, we will solely be focusing on males discriminating against females. In this study, many of the participants could recount a specific issue with a particular man whom she worked with. She might have had issues with many different men because she has worked in a multitude of places over a long period of years. Or it might be that she has felt a

small amount of subtle discrimination from most men that she was worked with along the way. There are two big overarching categories that the participants fall into: “Experienced Discrimination” or “Did Not Experience Discrimination”. At a total of 11 participants, the “Experienced Discrimination” category is recognized as the majority while only five of the participants make up the “Did Not Experience Discrimination” category. Within these two umbrella categories, there are a few common themes found regarding the different types of gender discrimination, which are discussed below.

Experienced Discrimination

Historically, the majority of leadership positions have been dominated by men. For example, the United States has yet to have a female president. Wanda from Connecticut and Nancy from Pennsylvania have run into men who believe that women just simply do not belong in upper-level management positions. These men tend to claim that management is a job for a man and that women cannot do the job as well as them.

Wanda can recount an instance that she came across with a particular gentleman while she was town manager, the fire chief. Below, Wanda discusses the issues that occurred with the fire chief “...not that it would ever be admitted...”

A lot of it was me being a female. He felt that females shouldn't be in top positions. We bucked heads right from the beginning. I think it was more that he wanted the world and I would say, “No you are not getting it.” There were many fights that we had and finally he resigned because I just could not work with the guy. I could not do it.

With 24 years of work experience and being at the age where she is retiring, Wanda has only run into one issue of gender discrimination with a fire chief. Other than that, she has “never really run into that that much” in her profession. She believes that the reason that the two of them “bucked heads” from the beginning was due to the fact that she was a woman. The fire chief

liked the idea of maintaining control and having things his way and Wanda was not going to step down and let that occur. He was trying to see how much he could get away with but Wanda was not going to say yes to everything. She fought her way through the issues that the two of them had and eventually she won. This little bit of gender discrimination that Wanda had to deal with did not discourage her from continuing her career. She did not cower to the fire chief's controlling nature but instead stood up to him and used it as a learning experience.

The man who was city manager a couple years ago while Nancy was the finance director also discriminated against her in similar ways to Wanda's fire chief. When he decided to leave the position, Nancy was excited because she thought he was going to speak with her about taking over after he was gone. What actually occurred was quite the opposite. He said to her, "I think you are a terrific finance director, your capital budget is the finest piece of budgeting I've ever seen. You have education experience behind you but I don't think that you should apply for the city manager job. That's a job for a man." Nancy was so flabbergasted by this remark that she could not believe he had actually said it out loud. In her own words, she was "...kind of dumfounded..." He was not the reason that she did not initially apply for the position. The city had to appoint her as interim administrator to run the city while they were advertising the position and conducting a search. In the manager's opinion, he thought she would be fine "as interim administrator until they found someone else..." but that she "...wouldn't be able to handle this job," referencing the city manager position.

While the two instances of gender discrimination that Wanda and Nancy were verbal and obvious, sometimes it is just a feeling that is not so easily spotted. Veronica from New Jersey thinks that the people whom she currently works with are all extremely respectful and polite and has never encountered any type of discrimination with them. However, when she first came in,

she had to perform negotiations with the police bargaining unit "...and there was nothing ever said but there was just an attitude that she wasn't going to be able to stand up to the job." The police had an attitude against Veronica right when she came in because she is a woman. Veronica backs this statement up when she says that type of behavior is "...not unusual for law enforcement to think that way of a woman..." Veronica was used to this type of discrimination from this group of men and so it was not anything that concerned her too much and she took care of it quickly and is now working very well in her position.

An additional example that Veronica could think of was when she worked in Illinois overseeing a fiscally distressed city and the city manager, who was a male, had a very big issue with Veronica working with him. He wrote a letter of complaint to the state that said, "To put a woman in that position was just absurd and then for it to be a white woman on top of that? What was the state thinking of? A woman can't handle this kind of job especially a white woman." Again, here is a perfect example of gender discrimination where a man feels that a woman is not capable of being in a management position, which he voiced in writing. While the above examples are powerful, the last example is the most extreme. In a different city than where she is presently, Veronica was to be appointed the permanent chief administrative officer but she did not get it in the end because she did not receive a majority vote from the council. When one of the council members was asked why he did not vote for her he said, "Because there are too many women in city hall now as there is. We shouldn't need another one." Yet again, Veronica did not let this gender discrimination discourage her but used it as a building block to make her stronger and smarter. She learned that she would run into these things from time to time but not to let it get to her and rather laugh it off.

The aforementioned councilman wanted to keep a certain gender balance in city hall. He did not want the women to have the majority and maybe this was because he thought that if the women outnumbered the men, they would possess more power. Veronica is not alone when it comes to running into issues with a council. Farrah from New York also ran into problems with councilmen thinking that men must always maintain the majority. A while back in 1986, she was working under an all male board where the average age was 65 years old. The age of the board members is specifically mentioned because Farrah strongly believes that the age of the man has a lot to do with the presence of gender discrimination. She stated, "They were not happy when I decided to run. They didn't want a woman. One of the councilman said, "A woman on this town council?! Over my dead body! And she's pregnant?!" At that time, Farrah could not believe that he would say something like that. She did not let the statement affect her mentality but instead, "dug her heels in." Farrah deems the discrimination to be unintentional and attributes it entirely to the older generation of the council members. According to her, it is simply, "...the older train of thought." It is for this reason that she was able to erase the experience out of her mind and ignored the questions that she was asked once she was in her position such as, "Who is making your dinner? Who is taking care of your kids?" Farrah presumes that it is just a fact of life that she cannot change so she does not waste her time worrying about it but instead focuses on being a strong leader.

Sometimes discrimination is purely just about a lack of respect. Some men do not believe that women deserve to receive the same amount of respect as them. Some men feel as though they do not have to listen to what a woman says because they do not know anything. Rebecca, who is from the other town in Connecticut, experienced issues with a particular man, the director of facilities, who did not want to listen to her.

He occasionally can't hide his chauvinism. You will say something to him and you know that he is not going to do it. He's like, "You're a female, and I don't have to listen." He's given a little guilt and when it's not working, you call him up and say okay I gave you your chance and you were wrong and you are doing it this way. Nine times out of ten you leave him so he is apologizing for not listening in the first place. I think that his biggest problem is he just feels that men can always do it better than women. I have watched him with his wife, I've watched him with his secretaries, and he is a Neanderthal.

Rebecca also possesses a "take charge" kind of attitude like Wanda from Connecticut. She feels as though the director of facilities did not listen to her because he believed that men are better than women. Rebecca does not allow the disrespect to occur frequently though because she disciplines him. A blatant act of disrespect occurred in Pennsylvania against Beatrice from her town council. In the most recent years, the town council has been comprised of three females and four males, which had not always been the case. Beatrice recounts that when she first began, there was only one female and six males. This past year, an issue came up "...about a federal purchasing program that was not being used correctly by one of the departments which is mostly male." She brought it to the attention of the council "and they just kind of laughed it off." Beatrice was furious and she said, "This is not laughable." She wanted to voice her concern to the council so that they were aware of what was going on and also so that she would not get in trouble later for knowing something illegal was occurring and not reporting it. Beatrice felt that the council did not take her seriously enough and did not get the impression that they were even listening to her. This is why she wrote everything down that was said in the conversation so she had the documentation later in case they tried to blame her. Partially due to the aforementioned example, Beatrice therefore feels unrecognized and inferior because of the fact that she is female. She pronounces, "I do believe there are times that I am not recognized because I am a woman...I truly believe that some of my suggestions would be taken if I were a male."

Reasons as to why a man feels as though he can disrespect a woman can range anywhere from feeling resentful toward her to deciding that she is unqualified for the job or simply he is uncomfortable with her. Dolly from Virginia gives an example of resentment when she discusses the leadership at her police department. She says, "...I can tell whether they will admit it or not, that they have some resentment about answering to a woman especially one my age."

Barbara from Maryland has worked with the same mayor throughout her career in her current town. At first, when she was the assistant town manager, the mayor "...was not so comfortable with her moving up to the position." When the job was being advertised, this made Barbara feel as though she should not apply so she did not put an application in. She said to the council, "...based on my feelings, and not knowing what the mayor wanted, that I decided I wasn't going to apply." Barbara almost let the mayor's attitude toward her get in the way of her progression. The council did not approve of the mayor's actions and "...they decided to re-open the application period, and extend and re-advertise..." so that she could apply. Barbara ended up getting the promotion and not her 13 other competitors whom were all male. Unfortunately, the story does not close there with a happy ending. The mayor "set guidelines" for her and "...wouldn't even start her at the beginning salary" of the pay scale. Barbara recalls, "...I had to be re-evaluated in six months, to reach certain goals, and I met those goals, and then get re-evaluated a year later to get the rest of my pay..." Before her, the town managers reviews were performed in front of the council but the mayor specifically does Barbara's himself. She did not let this discrimination affect her work and she followed his "guidelines" and complied with the reviews. Interestingly enough, a few weeks prior to our interview, she received a very good review from him and a very nice pay increase. This leads Barbara to believe that they "...are finally on the same playing field." She has proven herself with what she needed to do "...as far

as he was concerned.” Barbara is another great example of how some women will not allow gender discrimination to dampen their spirits; they push forward past the experience and grow stronger as a result.

This next type of gender discrimination requires a tremendous amount of strength to surmount. Pregnancy discrimination, while not prominent in this study (only one female was affected by it) is one of the most sordid types of gender discrimination. The participant, Dolly from Virginia is a young single mother, as mentioned in chapter two and has been discriminated against consequently. The city manager in the previous city that she worked in did not promote her into the assistant city manager position because she was pregnant at the time. She recounted,

A good example close to my heart is when I was in [City] (which is one of the reasons I started looking for another job), the position for assistant city manager came open and I was made assistant to the city manager. Some places do it and some places don't. It's what they do for someone who they would like to have in the assistant city manager position but would like them to have a little more experience first. The city manager told me that he would like to see me in that position for a while and then he would eventually turn it into an assistant city manager position. Then I got pregnant and I wasn't married and when he decided to go ahead and fill an assistant city manager position that we had talked about on several occasions (this is one of the reasons that I am glad you are not using names here because I would be hesitant to say this if that was the case), he actually said to me, "Let's wait and see how you do as a single mom first". I had been there five years and had heard him make comments before about unwed mothers. Personal and religious beliefs I think. So it didn't surprise me but at the same time, I guess I wasn't really prepared for that.

Prior to this instance, Dolly had never really run into any blatant issues of gender discrimination. The man described above is white, in his late 40's, and married with children. Dolly was not surprised because she knew the city manager's opinion on unwed mothers. Nonetheless she was not prepared for his negative comments and behavior because she had never experienced anything that blatant up until that point. She attributes his discrimination to his personal and religious beliefs. Dolly was deeply affected by this encounter and while it was probably not the

sole reason for her leaving that city, it heavily contributed. Connecting back to the original question, Dolly did not get past this instance of discrimination and in essence, that city manager won. Dolly left and he no longer had to “put up with” a single mother. However, Dolly only gave up in that city; he did not discourage her to the point that she got out of the profession.

In addition to the discrimination mentioned above, Dolly also has experienced a slight amount of sexual harassment from a current council member “...who is a very friendly guy but on several occasions when he has seen her, has kissed her on the cheek...” and she knows that if she was a guy, “...would not have happened.” A guy usually gives a pat on the back or something to that extent. It is not that the kisses make her feel uncomfortable or that the harassment is “...intentional at all...” but she thinks that others might view it as unprofessional and that for him; it is simply “50 years of learned experience.” Dolly states, “I wouldn’t want my professional career looked at in a certain way because of somebody else’s actions.” It is difficult for women who are very personable and bubbly to know what to say when things such as this happen. When talking to co-workers, whether they are male or female, Dolly tends to put her hand on their shoulder and because of the man who kisses her, she says, “Maybe I shouldn’t do that anymore.” While Dolly’s sexual harassment experience was not necessarily awful, another participant from Virginia unfortunately had a few terrible incidents, which will be discussed in detail below.

Sexual harassment is one of the most well known forms of gender discrimination. Many recognize it as inappropriate touching or suggestive language. While these are two examples of sexual harassment, there are many other forms that are not as physical. Natalie from a city in Virginia is on the verge of retiring and so she has many years of work experience that she could call upon for specific instances of sexual harassment. In her early years, when she first began her

career, some of the men in the office would pull sexual pranks on Natalie. She says they were “Things we would probably call now sexual harassment.” For example, Natalie states that, “One day, I came into my office and someone had attached a picture of genitals to the mouthpiece of the phone.” If a man had been in the position, a prank such as that may have had less of a probability of occurring. This kind of behavior made Natalie feel isolated and lonely. She did not let it get her down though. Another time, Natalie said she could “...remember walking into a room and the air conditioner was on in the middle of winter to, you know, so they can see your nipples through your blouse, you know, silly stuff.” Natalie had to deal with sexual harassment such as this throughout the first half of her career. Since then, there has been a lot of progression for women and Natalie is older and wiser. She proclaims, “...I don’t allow the air conditioner now, no. But it was pretty lonely there for a while.”

There is one more illustration of gender discrimination that also put Natalie on the outside and unable to participate professionally because she is a female. She was not “...asked to go to a state conference because the policy was you shared rooms if more than one employee went...” She was going to be required to share a room with a male employee because she was the only female. They made up some excuse that another employee had been there longer and so they were taking him instead and they said, “...we can't afford an extra room.” They were essentially punishing Natalie because she was female and they did not feel comfortable sharing a room with the opposite sex. Natalie did not let this stop her from attending, however. She found her own room and paid for it herself and went. Natalie endured these three negative experiences and did not give up on her career in local government. There were times that she was lonely and maybe thought about quitting, but she persevered and is presently a very well respected city manager.

Some gender discrimination involves a man focusing solely on a woman's appearance and not her capabilities in the workplace. Genevieve from a town in Virginia had to let the Chief of Police go from a place that she worked and admits that she probably did not do it in the best way and she could "...have done it better." Nevertheless, she wanted feedback from the council on how they perceived the occurrence and she remembers asking the mayor, "Well how do you think I did? And he commented on the way that I was dressed that night." How she was dressed is irrelevant to her quality of performance when firing an employee. Genevieve found this to be very interesting because she had worked her way up from clerk into the position and "...forever felt like she was trying to prove herself." She believes that the councilman's inappropriate comment was due to a combination of two things: "...her lack of a degree and the fact that she was a woman." Genevieve was disrespected and unappreciated in her job where the discrimination took place. Needless to say, when an instance such as the one mentioned above occurs, it does not usually encourage a woman to excel. Genevieve, on the contrary "...has a very strong personality..." and has "...zero tolerance with stuff like that." In summary, whenever Genevieve does not feel appreciated or respected, she does not let it bother her because she is a strong woman who does waste her time acknowledging such behavior.

While Nina from Delaware has never felt resistance from her male counterparts because she is a female and she can't do the job right, she has experienced the verbal form of gender discrimination both indirectly and directly. The first instance was in her previous job with a "...terrible, terrible police chief; absolutely, positively prejudiced; bigoted, unbelievable against women." He was hired by the manager before Nina and was a retired city police officer. When Nina came to be in the manager position in this locality, she said, "...I heard that he was always going around saying 'Oh that skirt'...I mean literally, derogatory...which is actually against our

policy. You know, sexual discrimination or sexual harassment or just discrimination in general.” Nina was surprised and upset at this remark and knew that she had to discipline him saying “...derogatory comments about a person because of their sex, religion...” are not tolerated by her personally and they are also against the locality’s policy. Nina could have tried to ignore the police chief’s comments and look the other way but she is not that type of person. When something that is taking place is incorrect, she ensures that it gets resolved in the appropriate manner. Nina deems that his discriminatory behavior was not solely due to the fact that she is a woman because he was “an Archie Bunker type...,” meaning that it was “...his personality.” She continues by saying, “I think that we could prove that older men who grew up in a different era have different attitudes. Some of them, not every single one of them, have different attitudes about women than younger men who are more enlightened.” This particular instance occurred in 1995 or 1996 and at that time the police chief was about 55 years old. She agrees that he was not that old but explains that they “...have some people who have been around the city a long time and worked under different circumstances...” than most other people who are younger than them. Aside from the “Archie Bunker” police chief that called her a “skirt”, there was another prominent instance of gender discrimination that Nina was forced to conquer.

The issue of age comes up quite frequently when there is a situation where the boss is younger than his or her employees. An older person usually has a real complex about answering to a person that is much younger than them. Nina says, “...there were a lot of prejudices with me being a very young woman...” When Nina took a job as a department head in a locality when she was much younger, there was an issue of discrimination with the public works department head, who had many people working under him. She had been there maybe a week and he had

been there quite a while and so they were not familiar with one another yet. He was hosting a meeting across the hall from Nina and she recounts,

He came to me in the morning and said, “I’m hosting this group and I was hoping you could make coffee for the group.” (She laughs). I am a pure department head to this guy, and like I said he’s got people. I know for a fact that because I was a young woman that he thought I should do that for him and I think it was a little test for him to see how I would react; if I would do that for him and how much control he could have over me even as a department head. I have got news for you: I did not make coffee for him. That was my first experience with him and it was downhill from there.

Nina did not succumb to the public works department head’s act of discrimination. She put her foot down just as she did in the previous case with the police chief. Nina states, “...you get these little experiences” and she decides to run with them and as a result, learns a great deal that she has used in the future when dealing with a difficult situation. A small portion of the participants in this study have never really been exposed to these “little experiences” like the abovementioned women but they do mention other problems they encountered.

Did Not Experience Discrimination

While the following group of women to be discussed did not necessarily directly experience gender discrimination, they mention other issues that they believed to be prominent such as age, pay differences, and management style. In addition, one of the women mentions an issue of pregnancy discrimination that happened to a female co-worker of hers, which is believed to be significant enough to mention.

Just recently discussed in the previous section with Nina from Delaware, the issue of age seems to show itself quite frequently in local government and especially with females. Becky from a city in New York is in her mid to late 30’s or early 40’s and was therefore pretty young when she began her career. She has not experienced any discrimination because she was female

and believes that age is the more pertinent issue. Becky states, “I think the only thing that I have really noticed in 20 plus years is when I was younger, I always felt it was...here is this younger person being my boss. I have always thought that age was more of an issue than being a female. I really have never felt that being a female is an issue.” As said before by Nina from Delaware, it is difficult for an older person to report to someone who is younger than them, regardless of sex.

In addition to issue of age, the pay gap was mentioned in two of the interviews. Both Chelsea from Maryland and Shannon from Delaware believe that there were noticeable differences in pay more so than instances of gender discrimination. Chelsea has never had a male make any verbal comments but feels that salary discrimination exists and illustrates this when she says, “No one would ever say, “Because you’re a woman...dadada...Now, like I said, I can always see the salary thing. I have always felt that maybe if I was a male I would have gotten more. I mean, not here because they only have so much money.” Chelsea knows for a fact that the man who managed the town before her made more. She is “...not sure how much...” but knows that she “...does not make as much.” Similarly, Shannon deems that pay was an issue that came up in the past. She explains, “I think early on pay was an issue. Because I think sometimes pay, at least early on...it’s not that way today...but I think in the beginning years, females were not considered to be of the same work their male counter part did was...” Things have changed for the better for Shannon and the surrounding area in Delaware. In the reviews that they have done recently, the salary for a female in one town or city is very competitive to what a male in a different town or city is making. This is exactly why she can justify saying, “Well I know I’m making more than some of my counterparts okay?! Who are male!” Aside from noticing differences in pay, Shannon was not confronted with any other gender issues in her work. She believes that there were probably things said about her behind her back but “...nothing was said

directly in front of her.” Back in the 80’s there were small issues between her and people who competed against her for the job but they were not serious enough to hinder her performance. As for the mayor, council, or other elected bodies, she never felt they discriminated because she was a female. She and the mayor “have had their differences” but has never felt slighted or disrespected in any way.

Moving away from pay gaps, management style was also mentioned as a substitute for gender discrimination. Due to simple biological differences, men and women have different personalities and qualities that determine their style of management when in a leadership position. Women tend to be more nurturing and caring while men tend to be more oriented toward goals and bottom lines. Sandy from West Virginia attributes management style to be the explanation for any issues that male and female city or town managers face instead of gender discrimination. According to her,

If a man has a strong management style he's decisive, if a woman has a strong management style she's a bitch. Unfortunately, that's still how people perceive the situation. I don't tend to let it bother me too much if that's how they care to perceive me. The job and getting the task done is more important than how I'm perceived.

Some women are small and soft spoken but as for Sandy, she describes herself as “...a fairly imposing woman...” who is very tall, which according to her is a positive quality because she thinks “...a physical presence helps somewhat.” On the contrary to being a tall imposing woman, Sandy “...used to be shy but that has changed with the job.” Now she is considered an extrovert which is very surprising to her that she has changed her management style. At the same time, she is “...very good at allowing others to speak their mind and give opinions...” but everyone knows that she makes the final decision and “...they respect that.” In fact, she has “a fantastic relationship” with each one of her 21 male supervisors but she does not hesitate to say that “...they know who the boss is.”

Throughout the entire “Experienced Discrimination” section, we spoke mostly about direct discrimination where a male has gender issues with the particular female who is a participant in this study. Helen from North Carolina observed just this on two different occasions: once between two female department heads and the mayor and the other time dealt with the planning director and elected officials. In the first situation, a female department head was looking to hire a female planning technician, which involved some inspections and zoning on job sites. Helen remembers the mayor commented, “You can't hire that little girl into that position.” This is due to the presumption that a planning or zoning technician is historically a man's job because it can involve hands-on work and is not an office job. This leads Helen to believe that with him, “...it was just a generational thing” and this played large role. Aside from the mayor discriminating against that potential new hire, Helen feels as though the planning director “...constantly received discrimination; not from other people, but from the officials, a couple of elected officials...” because they saw her work pattern due to “...the fact that she was a single mother.” Sometimes, the woman had to go do different things away from the office because she did not have help at home and Helen was “...very supportive of that...” and unfortunately “caught a lot of flack” for her not being at her desk as much as the other employees. In summary, Helen states, “So I think that person got a lot of negative comments made about her just for that reason; being a single mom.” With the exception of observing these two instances of gender discrimination between men and other women, Helen has not experienced any herself. She proclaims, “...I don't feel like there's any gender discrimination here...” but that issues between males and females are more due to differences in “personality types.”

To conclude, gender discrimination can be direct or indirect. Some men discriminate against females due to a lack of respect while others think they are unqualified and cannot handle the job. These are just a couple of the many reasons as to why verbal discrimination or sexual harassment occurs in local government. This can deter a woman from performing her job and can sometimes have even worse effects. The glass ceiling is another factor that hinders women from progressing in their position and can act as a serious barrier.

The Glass Ceiling

As stated previously in the literature review, for the purpose of this study, the U.S. Department of Labor's (1991) definition of the glass ceiling will be used. The glass ceiling is: "The composite of artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevents qualified women from advancing upward in their organization into senior management level positions" (97). The 16 participants in the study were all asked what their opinion is on the glass ceiling. Their answers can be categorized into three sections according to common themes: 1) The glass ceiling has only been cracked; 2) The glass ceiling has been broken (with possible "pieces" remaining) or; 3) The glass ceiling has been shattered and no longer remains.

Described in further detail, the "Cracked" category holds the women who believe that the glass ceiling is still solid with only a few "stress cracks" and that only a small amount of progress has been made for women in the workforce. The "Broken" category possesses the participants who think that the glass ceiling is vaguely existent with only "pieces" remaining but is still in the process of being completely shattered. These participants think that decent progress has been made for working women. The "Shattered" category includes the smaller number of participants who believe that the glass ceiling has been sufficiently broken to the point that it is

now completely non-existent. Additionally, for some in this group, the glass ceiling was never an issue for them. The majority of the women fell into the first two categories, “Cracked” and “Broken”, with six participants in each. The remaining four women comprised the third category, “Shattered”.

Cracked

Included within this category are seven participants. There did not appear to be any clear patterns in terms of the geographical distribution. Farrah from New York states, “As Hilary Clinton said, there are a bunch of dents but we are not where we should be.” As far as Farrah is concerned, the glass ceiling has only been dented to the point that there are ‘stress fractures’. She supports this statement by discussing wages and the issue of the pay gap. For example, Farrah began her career making \$30,000 dollars a year with benefits included and now makes \$76,000 dollars a year with health care and is given a government owned vehicle to use. However, her particular town has a \$13 million dollar budget with 1,300 employees during the year and only 200 employees during the summer. She believes that, “There is definitely a glass ceiling. Women still make less.” Farrah is the only participant in this category who bases her belief about cracks in the glass ceiling on pay differences.

The rest of the participants in this category provide other reasons as to why they believe that the glass ceiling is cracked. Two of these women, Veronica from New Jersey and Genevieve from Virginia, discuss the raw numbers and the ‘presence’ of women in public administration careers as possible explanations. Veronica has a very strong opinion in the matter: “...I have been in it 25 or 26 years and in that time, the percentage of women who are in the top management jobs was only about two percent ...it is now at seven or possibly eight

percent...you know that tells me the ceiling is still there.” She thinks that it is easier for women to be managers than men because the job “requires so many facilitation skills, mediation, etc. And I won’t say all, but it seems to me that most men are ‘my way or the highway types’.” While this may seem like positive attributes for women who desire to assume a management position, the five percent increase does not match the 51 percent of the population. If women possess better facilitation skills than men as Veronica states, then one might question why there has not been a more significant increase of women in city or town manager positions. It could possibly mean that the glass ceiling has only been cracked yet not broken.

Genevieve belongs to the Virginia Local Government Manager’s Association as do most other managers in the state. She uses her membership to this organization to support her belief that there has been a large increase of women in city or town manager positions. Genevieve recounts, “...we get together twice a year and what I have noticed over my eight years is that there are more and more women...younger women.” While she does not provide exact percentages as Veronica did above, she still can say for a fact that there has been a substantial increase of female managers in Virginia but not a dramatic increase. This helps explain Genevieve’s opinion on the glass ceiling: “I’d say we have cracked it. I don’t think we have broken it.” While both of the aforementioned participants agree that the glass ceiling has only been cracked because there have not been dramatic increases of female presence in city and town manager positions, the following participants offer different possibilities.

Aside from the persistence of pay gaps and minute percentage increases of females in top management positions, the ideology of a town or city or its predominant religions might have an effect on the glass ceiling. Nancy from Pennsylvania strongly supports this notion because she is forced to experience ideology and religion constraints on a daily basis in her city. Nancy states,

“It’s funny because everybody is a democrat around here, but they are very conservative, it’s not like up in the northeast...very traditional.” She believes political affiliation to be one of the walls that women hit when they are trying to advance in their career. Nancy gave an example of how her city has only had one woman serve on council and she said this is “...primarily because there are no Republicans...” Nancy herself is a Republican and is not shy about her choice. While she is not afraid to hide it, she does know that it could affect her acceptance by council and by the citizens and so she “might change it.” While there are indeed plenty of female Republicans in the United States, they do not prove to be common in Nancy’s city. Therefore, ideology can be considered a factor in her case of the glass ceiling but cannot be generalized for the entire state of Pennsylvania or any of the other states in this study.

Returning to our original question from the beginning of the chapter: Does gender discrimination discourage female town and city managers or does it push them to be inspired and rise above?, political affiliation struggles are not typically considered “gender discrimination”. However, in this instance, political affiliation is a factor that is holding women back from acquiring seats on a city council...it is considered a barrier. Similarly, gender discrimination is another type of barrier. Although political affiliation is not acting as a discouragement to Nancy continuing her career as a city manager in Pennsylvania, it is strong enough for her to consider changing herself and her beliefs to keep her job. Therefore, to answer the second part of the question, this barrier is also not inspiring Nancy to rise above. Religion also ties into political affiliation. Before, Nancy mentioned that an overwhelming majority of the city are conservative democrats who are very religious. “...if they’re not Catholics, they’re something Protestant; but a lot of religious people.” She claims that this is how the entire region is and it is very tough. Interestingly, the combination of those two religions and that political affiliation makes for an

extreme challenge that female managers must face. It is not to say that most women are not religious, instead that most religions harbor different discriminatory perspectives.

Part of the problem that needs to be clarified is that wages and representation differentials are caused by the glass ceiling whereas politics and religion can contribute to its maintenance. Cracking the glass ceiling is not only concerned with those factors. It is also about the demanding hours that the city or town requires. We must face the facts: to be in a top management position, you have to put the time in. Shannon from Delaware articulates this point quite well when she says, “The city, a community, has to have so many hours of you being there to run things. I think that may hold people back from stepping up to work, and be willing to be considered for the management position.” In the end, it does not matter what the person’s gender is; they must be “willing to put in the hours”. While Shannon believes that women are just as capable as men to work the hours required, she also mentions that “...more women are starting to retire whether it is for children, or for other reasons.” This statement reverts to where work-life balance was heavily discussed. The majority of the participants were lucky enough to have a very supportive husband when their children were young which afforded them capability of continuing to work the required amount of hours. In concurrence with Shannon’s previous statement above, most of the participants in this study were capable of putting in the hours and a few were not. This is a good example as to why Shannon believes that the glass ceiling “has a big crack” but she does not believe that “we’re all the way through” yet.

Up until now, all of the different factors that have helped to explain why in some women’s eyes, the glass ceiling is only cracked, have been somewhat complex. This does not necessarily have to be the case. The lingering glass ceiling can also be explained by two very simple goals that have not yet been reached: 1) The point where a woman can “walk into a room

and people don't pay attention" (Natalie from Virginia) and 2) The point where a woman feels sufficiently respected in her position (Beatrice from Pennsylvania).

Natalie believes that when a woman walks into a room that "people see a woman first"... "and then they look at confidence and what have you..." and this is precisely why the glass ceiling is only cracked and not broken. Natalie does not let this issue discourage her even remotely, which answers the original question presented at the beginning of the chapter. Natalie sees gender discrimination issues as a challenge or obstacle that she must overcome. In fact, she actually uses her gender to her advantage to elicit a man's attention initially with her looks and charm and then proceeds accomplish what she needs to accomplish. In short, Natalie does not take gender discrimination to heart because her view is that "...it's the person on the other end that's got the problem, and I don't have time to help them with their problem. I have to do what I need to do which is get through..." As one can plainly see, in Natalie's career gender discrimination has inspired her to be a fighter who pushes through and rises above.

Going back to the issue of respect, any person regardless of their gender might feel slighted if they get the feeling that they are not being respected by their subordinates. This is a common misconception. For true, genuine respect, a city or town manager would have to earn it. Beatrice from Pennsylvania felt that she received this type of respect from only certain people as displayed below.

I don't think I have shattered it. I do feel that I have people outside of the organization that respect me. They respect my opinion. They appreciate my assistance. More so than I get "in-house". So, outside looking in, I think I may have cracked it a little bit but inside the organization, I don't think I have.

Beatrice feels that the citizens, whom she serves, respect her and her efforts. However, the people who she works closely with such as the council or department heads do not respect her in the same way. Beatrice was not receiving the same amount of respect from each group which she

uses as justification for the glass ceiling only being “cracked a little”. Maybe if the “in-house” people showed a little more respect as the people outside the organization, maybe she would believe that the glass ceiling is more than just cracked, but that it is broken.

Broken

Interestingly enough, as the glass ceiling becomes more and more dismantled as we delve further, the amount of participants that fall into each category shrinks. The women who believe that the glass ceiling has been broken (with possible pieces remaining) amounts to five. The distribution of participants in terms of the three regions is a bit more skewed in this category in comparison to those in the “Cracked” category. There are three women from the central region, two from the southern region, and zero from the northern region. Geography would be a factor to consider when contemplating why these particular women who believe that the glass ceiling is still in the process of being completely shattered. However, since the sample was not random, it is not possible to make these generalizations.

Both Barbara and Chelsea from Maryland believe that over time, women have made substantial progress. Barbara is not sure in exactly what time period that this occurred but she does know that “women are on the rise”. She makes this claim due to her daily observations when she works with different agencies, municipalities, and counties. In her words, “I deal with a lot of women that are lead people, or head people in these agencies, so I think that apparently they’ve become more interested in their government...” This is not to say that women were disinterested in government previously but just that there has been a noticeable increase. Women are also making an effort to excel in government as well. Chelsea thinks “...we broke through in the 80’s” because she jumped from being a clerk in 1986 to becoming a district manager in 1987.

Being promoted so quickly "...was a break through there back then", according to Chelsea. While this is evidence of important progress and also part of the reason why Chelsea deems the glass ceiling to be broken, "...we are not where we want to be", which indicates that the glass ceiling is not yet completely shattered.

Paralleling with the discussion in the previous section about differences in salary by Farrah from New York, the pay gap is also a common theme found in this section as well. Chelsea says that, "I always felt back then though that our salaries weren't the same as the males. I mean you could see, very definitely...it was different." She believes that differences in salaries only occurred back then and now things are different. However, this might just be due to the fact that every town or city is different from the next. Nina from Delaware still believes to this day that women make less than men, not just in the past. She states, "I have never been under the impression that if I went for a job and a man went for a job and they liked us both, that if they offered it to me, they would offer me a little bit less money than they would the guy." Nina strongly believes that gender has a great deal to do with pay and is partially why she believes that the glass ceiling is not completely shattered and that it still exists in less obvious ways in local government. When making comparisons between a man and a woman and salaries, one must know everything there is to know first about their work experience. If it is found that the male has more work experience than the female, the woman cannot legitimately claim that, "...gee this negative thing happened to me because I am a woman because people are prejudice against me because I am a woman. If I had been a man, this wouldn't have happened", according to Nina.

Unlike most other professions in this time of economic hardship, it has been estimated that 80 percent of local government manager positions will be opening up throughout the country

over the next five-year period. A generation of “baby boomers” will be retiring in the next ten years according to Dolly. She views this future occurrence as very beneficial to young people interested in public administration, especially females in relation to the glass ceiling. “I think that will definitely create some significant opportunities for everyone but particularly for females. It’s definitely still there to some extent. I would not say that it’s gone.” These tremendous job openings could be the next step in progress for females breaking the glass ceiling completely. The odds are better that women will be filling these management positions just as much as men will be due to the simple fact that there will be so many vacancies. However, this does not mean that the glass ceiling will be shattered just because the presence of women in local government manager positions will be increasing. There is another factor to consider that may continue to hold women back according to Dolly. It is something that women cannot change because it is their biology. They “...have the ability to have children and that is always going to be in the back of people’s minds”. However, this should not be looked at as negative, according to Sandy from West Virginia.

She maintains that, “Women don’t need to be changing themselves into men.” According to her, the glass ceiling “...is still there to some extent” but is not sure that getting too far away from those traditional female roles is such a good idea. It is perfectly fine that men and women are have different qualities and it is something that cannot be changed. While women want to become equal to men they may not want to take on masculine traits and sacrifice having children to be able to develop their career. In Sandy’s opinion, “...the kind of wisdom that women have is different from the wisdom that men have. There is intuitiveness about the wisdom of a woman, generally, that you don’t find in a man.” The previous quotation is not designed to attach any negative connotations to men, and at the same time, it is also not designed to be an utterly

positive attribute of women. The wisdom and intuitive nature that women possess unfortunately makes them “the nurturers” and it makes them “think of others first”. This is a quality that cannot be erased from a woman’s biology because women are the gender capable of birthing children. Most men have the potential to be very good fathers to their children but they can never have that nurturing instinct that women do according to Sandy.

Sandy also believes that men are more aggressive beings and they “...generally have a plan; I'm going to get my degree within this many years, I'm going to do this, then I'm going to reach this pinnacle, and I'm not too sure that if we get women to do that and to be that, that it won't have other impacts on our society that won't be good”. Sandy sacrificed her career to have her two sons and would not have it any other way. This is clearly a case of “timing is everything”. Sandy is between 50 and 65 years old and has been a city manager in West Virginia for only a short time, as mentioned in chapter one. She believes that if she had gotten the position when she was younger, that that would have changed the way her life turned out. To sum it up, “...there are some wonderful things that only women are capable of...” but the glass ceiling might remain partially broken and not shattered because women “...may never achieve those kinds of goals, on a mass basis, that men achieve”.

Shattered

This category is considered the minority opinion because it only consists of four of the participants: Rebecca and Wanda from Connecticut, Beck from New York, and Helen from North Carolina. While this is a smaller sample, one can still observe that the distribution of participants is largely skewed in regard to the three regions. Three of the women are from the northern region while the fourth woman resides in the southern region. Zero of the participants

were from the central region. Therefore, geography may be a factor to consider when contemplating why these particular women believe to have either never experienced a glass ceiling or that the glass ceiling has been shattered. According to the numbers, the majority of female city and town managers from the northern region have had zero encounters with the glass ceiling and is therefore why they believe it to be shattered.

Both participants from Connecticut believe that women should not be afraid to showcase their talents in the field of public administration and show people what they can do because this will help them get into management positions. Shattering the glass ceiling is as simple as the way a woman feels about herself and how she portrays that to others. Wanda from Connecticut claims,

I think if you can show your talents, I mean especially in this field...that is really what they are looking for. There are not a lot of managers. They are either retiring or the assistants do not want to become managers...so there is not a lot of real talent out there. So as long as you can show that you can do that job. I do not see a real problem.

Wanda has no doubt that women have completely shattered the glass ceiling as long as they can display strong and desirable qualities in the workforce, which in reality is not that difficult.

However, this fact does have the possibility of not holding true outside of Wanda's area. She is not sure "...that in other parts of the country...it would be the same" because New England tends to be pretty open to ideas and different types of people than other parts of the country.

Regardless of location, "...you have to prove yourself no matter what," according to Wanda.

The only thing that is important when competing for a job is "who has the talent and the background". Wanda emphasizes that it is not about gender; females competing against males. When the municipality or council is hiring and looking at potential candidates, they are looking for "who can do the better job" for the town or city, says Wanda. She bases these assertions on

the progress that she has seen since she began her first job in 1984 up until now. Back in the 80's things were very different than they are now as Wanda portrays below with a specific example.

If somebody called and asked a question about roads, they did not want to talk to me because what would I know? It is really funny. But if it was social human services or something, yeah then I would know. So I felt it more back then, that you had to prove yourself. You do not get to see that as much now.

Wanda is not alone in her beliefs. Rebecca also thinks that it is necessary for women to display their skills and abilities for everyone to see. However, she cautions that a woman has to be careful when she does this because it can be taken the wrong way by males. To quote Rebecca directly, "Aggressiveness and assertiveness come off as bitchiness. You have to be very careful not to get portrayed as that. Because that creates, in my opinion, the road blocks." Therefore when proving oneself, she says a woman must do it with "...intelligence, firmness, and grace." All in all, Rebecca obviously has not been too aggressive or too assertive because she has not hit any "road blocks". In fact, the glass ceiling "...hasn't been there" at all for her in regard to differences in salaries or benefits. Nevertheless, Rebecca "...had to work harder and smarter..." but she does not think of this as a hardship that she had to go through but something that every woman in local government must do to succeed.

Some of these qualities that Rebecca claims that are required for a woman to shatter the glass ceiling may just be her personality and the way that she does things. One woman can have a competitive style of leadership while another can take a more reserved approach. It all depends on what they feel comfortable with and what works for them. In both Rebecca and Wanda's case, they have a "take charge" kind of attitude as do a handful of the other participants and this style seems to work well for them because they deem the glass ceiling to be non-existent.

Becky from a city in New York is considered the outlier of the study as well as for this category in regard to her experience with the glass ceiling: she has had none. She might "...have

just been lucky and never experienced it” because of the areas she has worked in and the type of people she has worked with or maybe it is due to something else. Even in general she has not really seen the glass ceiling much “in the government arena with friends and colleagues.”

According to Becky, “It just isn’t something that we have sat around and said “Geez because I’m a woman, I can’t do such and such...” Most of the participants from the central region or the southern region had at least one instance that they could recall when they had experienced the glass ceiling. One might make the claim that Becky is the outlier because she is from New York and as Wanda had said, New England “...is more open.” However, the other participant from New York, Farrah, who was discussed earlier in the chapter, only believes the glass ceiling to have dents because there are still gender differences in salaries. So here we have two women from the same state that is supposed to be “more open” and one thinks that the glass ceiling is shattered while the other thinks that it is only cracked. Therefore, one cannot legitimately make the claim with enough evidence that the nature of a state (conservative or liberal) is the sole indicator of opinions on the glass ceiling.

The last participant who falls into the “Shattered” category is Helen from North Carolina. Helen deems the glass ceiling to be non-existent as well where she is presently working. While “...most of the managers are men,” she strongly believes “...that there could easily be female city managers and there wouldn’t be a problem.” Helen does feel that a gender balance must be maintained and for that reason there should be no limitation as to how many females can be managers at one time. For example, her current city has three female members on council right now out of a total of seven members and she thinks that there could most definitely be more in the future if women show an interest and run for the position. In summary, Helen states that, “...I

don't think that there's a men's club and the women aren't invited..." and that is her precise explanation as to why she believes that glass ceiling to be shattered in her city.

Conclusion

After discussing the individual cases of gender discrimination of the participants in this study, the original question can now be answered: does gender discrimination discourage female town and city managers or does it push them to be inspired and rise above? The 11 participants who made up the "Experienced Discrimination" category discussed many different experiences including but not exclusive to: 1) male city managers informing Nancy and Veronica that "it's a man's job" and females cannot handle it; 2) councils ignoring Beatrice's concerns while being outraged at the idea of Farrah becoming manager; 3) a male city manager not promoting Dolly because she was pregnant and; 4) sexual harassment incidents by male coworkers against Natalie. Some of these women put their foot down and stood up to the man, most knew that they were being discriminated against but conditioned themselves to excuse men's inappropriate behavior and moved past it, and a very small number of women relocated. For example, Wanda put her foot down against a fire chief and he decided to resign, Nancy and Veronica allowed the city manager's inappropriate comments and learned to "laugh it off", and Dolly let the city manager "win" and she moved to a different position in a different town.

As for the glass ceiling, the majority of the participant's felt either that the glass ceiling is still solid with only a few "stress cracks" and that only a small amount of progress has been made for women in the workforce or that the glass ceiling is broken with only "pieces" remaining but is still in the process of being completely shattered.

In chapter four, “The Future,” it will be discovered what the participants predict the future to look like for women in local government. Looking back at the culmination of common themes found in relation to work-life balance, gender discrimination, and the glass ceiling, predictions might include seeing an increase of female managers, a lull in progress, or something else entirely. However, with this array of different opinions of future activity for women, the majority of them prove to be positive.

Chapter 4: The Future

Many young women desiring to pursue a career in local government will be asking themselves where they might be in their career in the next five to ten years. They will wonder whether or not the glass ceiling has actually been shattered and if gender discrimination finally ceases to exist. The responses to these thoughts will give those young women a better idea of the amount of resistance, if any, that they will face as they attempt to move up into management positions. According to the participants in this study, the future for females in local government looks one of three ways: dismal, promising if certain stipulations are met, or truly promising. Only one participant proposes that the future looks dismal, six participants think the future looks promising if certain stipulations are met, and nine participants deem the future to be very promising for young women entering the profession.

A Dismal Future Ahead

There could be a multitude of reasons for forecasting the future for young women in local government as dismal. One of those reasons might be that it is believed the glass ceiling is not cracked or broken enough to let women through to those upper level positions. This explanation removes the blame from women and places it indirectly on societal norms and men. Wanda from Connecticut, on the contrary, puts the women at fault for their own future as well as the nature of the job. She states, "I think the harder thing for the future of women managers is going to be that the assistants aren't moving up." Wanda believes that her job is pretty grueling and understands why women would not want to move up. She does not have negative feelings toward them or hold a grudge because, "Who wants 24-7? Who wants to work a tornado? Who wants all those

political-you-knows?” The assistants are able to see the managers struggling with all of this and the suffering that comes as a result. This is not a positive or attractive quality for a job to have and most definitely does not encourage young women to strive for that position. Wanda deems that “...it’s going to show its numbers soon...” Other opinions are not as gloomy or depressing. A large part of the participants suppose that the future for young women desiring to attain a local government management position looks promising as long as certain requirements are met or particular issues do not influence too strongly.

A Promising Future But Not Without Stipulations

Most people usually cannot achieve a desired goal without at least a few conditions applied. In this study, the participants suggest that women will be moving up into management positions in local government as long as: 1) They are qualified; 2) The ideology of the town or city is not completely Republican; 3) The women truly want it; 4) They have the tools; 5) We stop focusing on the past so much; 6) This tough economy dissipates and; 7) Their partner has a flexible schedule if they have children. Most of these stipulations are within the woman’s control while some are out of her control. For example, those stipulations that can be controlled are one’s qualifications and their desire to pursue the career and those that are not necessarily in a person’s control are the town or city’s ideology and the present state of the economy.

Veronica from New Jersey does not feel as though when she leaves her current position that it is more likely for another woman to take over than a man. She states, “I don’t think its going to make any difference. They will choose whoever they think is best for the job. I think that’s unusual but that’s the way I think it’s going to go.” In Veronica’s opinion, gender is no longer an issue when a council is looking at two candidates for a city and town manager position.

The extent of their schooling and the number of years of work experience, according to Veronica, will determine who is more qualified for the position, not whether the applicant is a man or a woman.

Similarly, Barbara from Maryland also predicts the next ten years to be promising for women. She says, "I'm hoping basically that now people are looking at qualifications, and not anything else. It's who's going to get the job done." While Barbara affirms that qualifications and not gender will be the sole factor when women are being considered for a management position in the future, she worries about the political ideology of the town or city. In her town specifically, this has shown to be a struggle "Because the mayor is a profound Democrat..." but there is also a delegate who "...is a profound Republican..." Aside from those two individuals, Barbara mentions that, "A lot of the leadership that governs our district is Republican." Since it seems as though the majority of the leaders in her town are republicans, this could mean less acceptance of women into the town manager position because republicans tend to be more conservative while democrats tend to be more liberal. Unfortunately, political ideology is something that is out of the control of a female so all that she can do is hope that she has impressive enough qualifications and can show that she is capable of performing well.

Not only do women have to be qualified for the position, they also must show that they really want the position. Again, this is an example of something that is under a female's control. She decides how much effort she puts into a job search and interview process. Obviously, if a woman is simply applying for a city or town manager position because she can, that is going to be seen by the employer and that woman will be less likely to get the job than a woman who is extremely competitive. When asked whether or not the United States will see a continued progression in the next ten years for females in local government, Shannon from Delaware

stated, “I think if the women wanted it to, it’s theirs to get.” As long as the women are not discouraged by the long hours and amount of work, they will be able to move into those upper level management positions. The glass ceiling, discrimination, and any other gender related issues will no longer impact women acquiring jobs according to Shannon. She relates this to her years of experience from when she began her career to now. When comparing those two times, Shannon absolutely sees a huge difference because in the past, there were more males in management positions. There were some struggles between her and some male counterparts but they have since become a “working team”.

In addition to simply wanting it, females must also have the “tools” to achieve a management position. This can include a multitude of things such as education, work experience, etc. Nancy from Pennsylvania has a clerical staff of women who have two year degrees in a variety of areas such as business, art, and dental hygiene; all unrelated to local government. She seems to think if any of these females want to move up in the future, they would have to go back to school first. Nancy states, “You know if they were interested and they were like, wow, I’m feeling a lot of passion for the local government, you know I think I want to go to school and get a degree in political science, and maybe see about advancing...So I think if they wanted to...they would need to have more tools at their disposal.” In other words, Nancy believes that it is possible for women like those in her clerical staff to move up to be a city or town manager but they would need to return to school first and get a more pertinent degree or further their education.

For the future of women in local government to be promising, maybe significant progress is not necessarily required. It is possibly as simple as just a decrease in discrimination. Less verbal comments from men or behavior that makes a woman feel inferior. Natalie from Virginia

is partially unsure that the future looks completely promising. She hopes that "...from a reduced discrimination standpoint..." that yes, the future is promising. However, she worries about another external influence that is out of the control of the female: the economy. Below, she portrays her concerns.

I worry though just because of our changing economy that it's going to become more difficult. So but all things being equal, if we can get through the shortage of labor market, the economy becoming new and different, then I think from, you know, a reduced discrimination standpoint, there will be opportunities for women and minorities that were not there when I entered the profession in the 70s.

Natalie prescribes that if females can survive the tough economy and its effects on the job market, that they will have a promising future full of new opportunities that she had not been lucky enough to encounter when she began her career.

On the contrary, economy is not seen as an issue in Helen's eyes from North Carolina. In fact, she thinks that more and more women are continuing on in school to get their MPA and this will help them get jobs. She even recently met a young woman who is graduating from NC State and is completing a fellowship with the mayor and wants to be a manager. Helen thinks that "...there are a lot of those out there and we'll do just fine."

After meeting the young woman from NC State as well as many others, Helen claims, "I think there is going to be a wave of MPA graduates who go into the workforce..." While this is an extremely positive factor for women attaining a job and therefore a promising future, there is a small stipulation. Helen is unsure of what the trend is for females going into management positions because she thinks that "...family does play a part, it just does." Referring back to the section about family in chapter two, whether or not a woman has children and/or a husband, makes a very large impact on her work-life balance. When Helen was in her early 20's and thinking about getting married, her parents told her "...that someone in the family has to have a

more flexible schedule, that's just going to make it a much better family life." Helen doubted her parents at first and wrote off their advice as incorrect. Over the years, she thought about their advice and believes now that she should have listened. However, she is not trying to imply that it has to be the woman who stays home with the children. According to Helen, "...it could be the man; there are lots of ways that can work out."

Ironically, Nina from Delaware had participated in a small study in the 1980's (which was not available) when she was a town clerk, which is very similar to this study. Comparing these two studies is a very good resource to see the progression that has occurred over the past 30 years and can also help serve as an accurate predictor of the future. "...The premise of it was: Town Hall, White Man's World; and their argument at the time was that most all the people in the department head, in the elected official, and the higher up positions of all the local governments in the region were men mostly...and why is that?" The purpose of the study was to interview people to discover whether there were any women out there pursuing a career in local government and why there were not more women. Nina was featured in the article and was described as "...an intense and enthusiastic woman who would probably be able to go far in government." The other women who worked in Nina's department with her said, "We are in a bit of a different generation than our boss and so we are not up for wanting to break the glass ceiling and moving up and everything but we really see a future for women like her". Nina finds this funny because it is kind of a "self fulfilling prophecy" and that it is quite interesting that she participated in that article in the 80's and is being interviewed now in 2009 on the same topic. This brings us to Nina's philosophy on the future for women in local government based on past occurrences. She thinks that women "...have made such unbelievable strides in such a teensy, tiny amount of time..." in a world that has been historically male dominated for hundreds of

years. It is for this reason that Nina believes that it is going to take time and that we cannot expect it to happen instantly. She states, “I don’t want to say that we should be patient and complacent because I don’t believe that but I think that we should have real expectations about how long it is going to take to even out.” She is not trying to be negative, but by talking about the glass ceiling and discrimination in the 1980’s article and now again in 2009; we are not making any progress. Nina proclaims that we cannot “...keep going back to continuing to point out that these things still exist.” If they in fact, do exist, we need to stop simply talking about it and actually take action and move toward changing for the better. We need equality for both men and women but we cannot do that if we are constantly focusing our attention on the past. We need to look forward more than look back. Whether gender discrimination is still going on or not, we should try ignoring it a little bit and that will help us move past it and into a promising future.

A Promising Future Ahead

What makes it possible for women in local government to have a promising future? One answer to that question is simply female supporting females. A woman on council is usually more likely to endorse a female candidate for the manager job than a male candidate if their qualifications are equal. This was found across two participants: Rebecca from Connecticut and Genevieve from Virginia. Rebecca feels as though she has opened the gates for females by her being the first female manager in her town. She believes this to be true because she has “...nine elected officials who are both male and female. And they are very open-minded when it comes to hiring people.” Not only does Rebecca have an accepting council, she is also seeing a large increase of females desiring a spot on council or other elected positions. She says, “I’m seeing

more and more females run for the elected offices; more interest. And that, in itself, opens up the door for females because females do support females...My greatest advocate was a female on the town council.”

However, Genevieve proves this notion to be false because she has experienced the same progress down in the southern region. She states, “. . .I mean one of things that helps here is I’ve got four females on my council. So they look at me as an equal, they don’t look at me as a female.” Again, this council seems to have an equal gender ratio, which Genevieve also believes to contribute to their open-minded nature. Neither Rebecca’s nor Genevieve’s believe their councils would decide not to hire a female for the town manager position just because of gender. She would have to be less qualified than the other applicants for the council to dismiss her. The fact that these two participants have a fair council that does not discriminate based on gender, is very promising for females entering into local government because we will most likely be seeing more and more councils following this same trend.

With this increase in females on council, it follows that there is most likely going to be an increase in female city and town managers. For example, if one were to look on-line in five to ten years to find female city and town managers for a similar study, they would have less trouble locating them. Becky from New York hopes that the above statement is true. She says, “I’ve seen a definite difference in the last 20 or so years that I have been in it. When I first got in there and went to my first monthly manager association meetings, you know, it was myself and one friend of mine who was female who was in the field.” Compared to the past, there are now more and more women entering the field. Becky noted that aside from her female friend, the rest of the people at those monthly manager association meetings were 40 to 50 year old men but “. . .now it really is different. . .”

Similarly, Beatrice from Pennsylvania has these feelings about the progression of women. However to her, it is not solely about the numbers. She reasons that women possess different traits than men that will allow them to advance. She states, “I would hope that it progresses. I actually do believe that women are better at multitasking. They can do more with less and they deserve the respect that they bring to an organization, whether it be public or private.” Beatrice designates women’s ability to handle multiple problems at once and to stretch their resources as far as possible as motives to hold them in high regard. Chelsea from Maryland has not experienced any gender discrimination as mentioned in chapter three and also agrees that the future of women in local government looks promising. She proclaims, “Oh yeah! I think we are definitely going up.” Chelsea has never really encountered any issues in the town in which she works and for that reason does not foresee women running into any road blocks. Both Beatrice and Chelsea are confident that females have a promising future ahead of them.

As you might recall from chapter three, Dolly from Virginia spoke about the future for young women in local government in the next five years. She said she has heard that it has been approximated that about 80 percent of administrators and managers in the United States will be retiring. This is why Dolly believes that “...there are going to be a lot of open positions...” which will “...definitely create some significant opportunities for everyone but particularly for females.” While Dolly attributes the retiring of an older generation of managers to the success of females moving up in the ranks, the last two participants in this section feel differently. Farrah from New York and Sandy from West Virginia truly believe that by being the first or one of the few female managers, that they have opened the gates for other women in the future. They feel confident that it is much more likely for a female to take over their position once they decide to leave of retire.

There is no doubt in Farrah's mind that there are plenty of women who desire to move up into upper management positions. She believes that the past is in the past and, "...there is only forward." If you recall from chapter two, Farrah is the only participant that is in an elected management position and not an appointed management position like the rest. She was included because she has had a lot of experience in local government and there was a lack of response of appointed managers in New York. Farrah's term will be up two years from now and she forecasts who has a strong probability of taking over if she were not to be re-elected. "If I left to go to another position, I feel very confident that the other women in the department will run for my office." Sandy from West Virginia also feels that she has opened the gates for females in the future. She feels that she has done this by changing the attitudes of the citizens in her town toward a woman in management rather than a man, as stated below.

I hope that I've been a good example, I hope that I've shown that this town, that is more elderly people, and of course in their minds they have more a male role model, when they think of leaders, I hope that I've shown them that a woman can be the same, if not more of a greater caliber leader, and I'd hope that...other women beyond me would take a look at this job and think about becoming a city manager, or leader of this kind.

Sandy hopes that the skills and qualities she has displayed while working as a city manager has shown the more conservative citizens that women are just as capable as men in upper level positions. Also, she hopes that she has been an inspiring example for future women who are considering taking on that kind of responsibility. Sandy deems that she has already begun to do this because the city has several community development initiatives going on that women are becoming more involved where men are not anymore.

Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter the 16 participants were split up into three different groups. One participant believes that the future for females in local government management looks dismal because the job is so grueling and demanding that the assistants will not be moving up. The second group, which consisted of seven participants, predicts the future to be promising as long as certain stipulations are abided by such as the woman is qualified as well and she really has to want it. The last group, which consisted of eight participants, foresees the future for females as very promising and thinks this because councils are becoming more open-minded by having more female members, many managers are older and will be retiring in the upcoming years, and that women have shown they are just as capable as men and that future women will see this as inspiration and feel confident in pursuing a career as a city or town manager.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to analyze women in managerial roles and the barriers and discrimination that they may have faced. *How do certain barriers and discrimination influence women in managerial roles? What factors help versus hinder this?* These research questions were answered from the data that was analyzed in chapters two through four.

In regard to age and family, the older participants discussed how they may work now more than when they were of child bearing age because they no longer have those extra responsibilities. The younger participants with children could not work as many hours as those female city or town managers who have grown children. The participants who had children did not follow the typical “M curve” or the “mommy track” discussed in the literature. In other words, they did not decide to “opt out”, or quit their career to go home to care for children. They all took only a few weeks off after the birth of the child and then promptly returned to work. Instead, some of the husbands decided to “opt out,” which is an up and coming trend according to the literature.

When work-balance became tough, some women decided to cut back to fewer days or hours of work per week. Only one participant stayed home for multiple years to raise her children and then returned to the workforce because she felt as though she would not have been able to perform effectively juggling both at once. The other important thing to mention in regard to the variable, family, is that almost every woman has or had a very supportive husband who helped out with the children so that she could maintain her career simultaneously with her family. Only a couple participants struggled with work-life balance because they did not have that help. Education and work experience did not have the same effect on women leaving their

managerial position necessarily. However, certain participants felt that a lack of further education did prevent them from rising to the top as quickly as if they had a degree past high school.

The participant's individual accounts of gender discrimination were examined to determine whether or not the negative occurrence discouraged them or if it pushed them to be inspired and rise above. The 11 participants who experienced discrimination went through various problems with male coworkers, male city or town managers, and council members. However, it was found that 10 out of 11 of those participants either put their foot down and stood up to the man and used it as a learning experience or knew that it was happening but conditioned themselves to excuse the inappropriate behavior and essentially ignore it. These women handled gender discrimination instances in an ideal fashion as described in the literature: like another problem to be solved instead of allowing it to hassle them. Such an approach helped them from boiling over when asked to bring the coffee or when there was a sexist comment. A few participants were able to endure sexual harassment without being affected too much and continue working in their jobs, just as the literature had predicted. Only one participant recalled an instance of discrimination that made her leave that locality and move to another. Not many diminished opportunities for advancement, job changes, quitting, withdrawal, or firing was mentioned.

As for the glass ceiling, six participant's felt either that the glass ceiling is still solid with only a few "stress cracks" and that only a small amount of progress has been made for women in the workforce and six thought that the glass ceiling is broken with only "pieces" remaining but is still in the process of being completely shattered. Only four women felt that the glass ceiling is completely shattered and it is therefore, non-existent. With that being said, it may be inferred that

the majority of women believe that the glass ceiling has been a barrier in moving up to the managerial position quickly (similar to education and work experience). However, it cannot be said that it was a factor that directly caused them to leave their position or that the lack of it helped them achieve their position faster.

Looking into the future for females in local government management, only one participant believed that it looks dismal because the job is so grueling and demanding that the assistants will not be moving up. Seven participants predicted the future to be promising as long as certain stipulations are abided by such as the woman has to be qualified as well and she really has to want it. The majority saw the future for females as very promising and thought this because councils are becoming more open-minded by having more female members, many managers are older and will be retiring in the upcoming years, that women have shown they are just as capable as men and that future women will see this as inspiration and feel confident in pursuing a career as a city or town manager.

To conclude, no matter how old the participants were, what their family situation was, whether they had been discriminated against, or how they felt about the glass ceiling, the majority of them never left their managerial position for a significant amount of time. While this finding cannot be generalized for all female city and town managers along the east coast due to sampling methods and size, one can still say that yes, these particular women are rising to the challenge of breaking the glass ceiling.

Appendix

Interview Guide for Female City and Town Managers

1. What is the title of your position?
2. What are your prescribed duties in this position?
3. How long have you held the position?
4. Have you had previous experience in local government?
 - a. If so, where and for how long?
5. How would you compare that local government to the one in which you are presently working in reference to the ratio of women to men and its behavioral environment?
6. How did you become aware of the opening for this position?
7. What were the hiring procedures, if any, for this position?
8. Using the following categories, how might you rate the level of competition in acquiring the position (if known)?
 - a. High
 - b. Medium-High
 - c. Medium
 - d. Medium-Low
 - e. Low
9. Do you know if your competitors were mostly male or female?
10. How many women versus men are in your department now?
11. Once you had officially acquired the position, did you receive any discriminatory behavior from the other employees?

a. If so, describe an instance.

12. Do you feel as though their behavior was in regard to their belief that you lacked the qualifications?

a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Undecided

d. Disagree

e. Strongly Disagree

If “Strongly Agree” or “Strongly Disagree” was selected as an answer, please explain why.

13. Do you feel as though their discriminatory behavior was non-intentional?

a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Undecided

d. Disagree

e. Strongly Disagree

If “Strongly Agree” or “Strongly Disagree” was selected as an answer, please explain why.

14. How would you describe the morale in your present work environment?

a. Very Good

b. Good

c. Barely Acceptable

d. Poor

e. Very Poor

If “Very Good” or “Very Poor” was selected as an answer, please elaborate on why you chose that answer.

15. Are there any other women who possess other upper level positions in your government?

16. Do you feel as though you have an appropriate level of respect in your position?

a. If not, why?

17. Do you feel as though you have the same respect that your other fellow male employees do?

18. Have you ever experienced a problem with a male employee?

a. If so, what was the problem and how did you resolve it?

19. Do you feel as though your fellow male employees feel resentful toward you?

a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Undecided

d. Disagree

e. Strongly Disagree

20. Do you think that the male employees feel they deserve your position more?

21. Do you feel as though you deserve your position?

a. Or do you believe there is someone else more qualified?

22. Do you feel as though now that you have acquired your position, you constantly have to maintain excellent performance to keep the job?

a. If so, why? If not, why not?

23. Do you feel as though there is a lack of women desiring to move up into upper management positions?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
24. Do you think that the “glass ceiling” is still in place?
- a. Or do you think that women have broken through it?
25. According to your experience with coworkers in local government thus far, do you think that more women will be entering positions of power or will it remain dominated by men?
- a. Why do you think this?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS INTERVIEW

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**City and town websites were visited for contact information but were not cited to protect the participant's confidentiality

**My 16 interviews were not cited to protect the participant's confidentiality