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Gender, Bureaucracy, And Democracy: Careers And Equal Opportunity In The Public Sector (Contributions In Women's Studies)



Synopsis

This useful collection of case studies of women in Arizona, Texas, Utah, and California state bureaucracies is a cooperative comparative venture among authors asking similar questions about obstacles to and facilitators of women's career advancement. The editors proceed from the proposition that bureaucracies should be democratic. More specifically, they submit that proportional representation of women in bureaucracies will result in public policy that is more in women's interests than policy produced by predominantly male bureaucrats. The authors find support for this proposition; female bureaucrats are generally more supportive than male bureaucrats of public policies responsive to women's needs. The case studies also illustrate how the status of women in state bureaucracies is dependent on gubernatorial electoral politics. Choice While a number of researchers have focused on female employment at the managerial level, this book is the first to deal specifically with advances made by women in obtaining high-level positions in state government. Using questionnaire data from several southwestern states, Hale and Kelly examine the extent to which equal opportunity has become a reality for women in state and municipal civil service careers. In two introductory chapters, Hale and Kelly develop the theoretical perspective and conceptual framework on which their analysis is based. They identify and discuss interrelationships of gender, democracy, and representative bureaucracy as well as the individual factors that promote and impede the career advancement of women. The findings of case studies undertaken in Arizona, Texas, Utah, and California are presented in separate chapters. Variables treated in the studies include career mobility, success, and satisfaction; employment behavior; perceptions of barriers to advancement; sources and types of support; domestic responsibilities and constraints; and childhood and professional socialization. The final section of the book summarizes the results of a separate study on work force trends, labor pool availability, and hiring and firing rates in 93 southwestern cities. Providing new information and a model for further research in the field, this book will be of interest for courses or independent work in women's studies, public policy, social change, political science, manpower studies, and public administration.

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