

The "Masculine" Organization
and
Professional Women:
An Exploratory Study of the Factors
Influencing the Rejection of the
Masculine Organizational Ethos
by Professional Women

by
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submitted in Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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THE "MASCULINE" ORGANIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE REJECTION
OF THE MASCULINE ORGANIZATIONAL ETHOS BY PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

BY

SHARON F.L. HUNTER

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research was to conduct an exploratory study to examine the attrition of professional women from organizations. Factors both within and outside of the organization were addressed to determine their influence on women's decision to leave their careers. The data were collected from 23 professional women through focus group interviews. The results were sorted using the Ethnograph computer program and analyzed using content analysis. Factors affecting attrition rates of professional women were examined within the context of phenomenological theory. The guiding assumption of this research was that organizational structures in our society are "masculine" and as such participate in an ethos not shared by the majority of females.

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General Introduction

Historical Perspective

Throughout history, women have worked to support their families (Nieva & Gutek, 1981). However, after the Industrial Revolution, women's work and men's work became segregated into two separate domains, with women designated to work inside the home, doing what Greenglass (1982) called invisible work, and men designated to work outside the home (Nieva & Gutek, 1981). This separation of women's and men's work was a culture-specific phenomenon and not a universal pattern (Larwood & Wood, 1977).

This pattern persisted in Canadian society until the 1940s when increasing numbers of women started participating in Canada's labour force (Statistics Canada, 1986). The influx of women into work outside of the home at that time was largely due to the shortage of available male workers who were serving in World War II from 1939 to 1945 (Statistics Canada, 1986).

To the surprise of many, and despite the opposition of some (Nieva & Gutek, 1981), women's participation in the labour force continued to increase even after the war was over. By 1970 the participation of women in the total Canadian work force was 38% and by 1981 this figure rose to 53% (Statistics Canada, 1985). A growing number of women are now employed full-time in the labour force (Greenglass, 1982).

Ginzberg (quoted in Kammerman, 1980) has referred to the entry of women into the labour force as "...the single most outstanding phenomenon of the 20th century..." (p.7). Although women have always worked, it is a relatively modern circumstance

to have both women and men simultaneously working outside of the home (Piotrkowski, Rapoport & Rapoport, 1987). Implications of this influx of female workers are just beginning to be understood (Lee, 1980). For example, if women had not been employed outside of the home, Canada's Gross National Product would have been sixty billion dollars less per year (Health & Welfare Canada, quoted in Hunsley, 1989). As Kingsbury (1987) stated, women working outside of the home saved the economy of the '70s.

Current Situation

Although the preceding figures may seem to indicate equality in work achievement levels between men and women, the figures are somewhat misleading in that the type of work performed by women is not specified. From 1901 to 1971, over 50% of women in the labour force were employed in traditionally female-dominated occupations such as office workers, clerks, dressmakers, teachers and nurses. Most of these occupations are characterized by low status, low pay (Greenglass, 1982; Statistics Canada, 1987) and low prestige (Bernard, 1981). In 1979, one-third of the women in the labour force were employed in clerical occupations.

The majority of men in the labour force are employed in traditionally male-dominated occupations, including professional occupations. In contrast to a job, professional occupations typically have high educational standards, high status appeal and high levels of pay. In accordance with the operational definition used by Statistics Canada (1987), a professional occupation in this study will be identified as one in which 45% or more of the persons employed in that occupation have attained a bachelor's

degree or a higher degree from an accredited university. Thus, such traditionally male occupations as management, law and medicine, as well as such traditionally female occupations as nursing and teaching, are classified as professions (Statistics Canada, 1987).

From 1976 to 1985 there was an increase in the number of women entering the traditionally male-dominated professions (Dumas, 1986; Gray, 1983; Greenglass, 1982; Mandelbaum, 1981; McBroom, 1986). In the 1981 Canadian census, 6.6% of all managers were women as compared to 2.7% in 1971. In 1981, 15.5% of all lawyers were women as compared to 5.2% in 1971, and 17.4% of all physicians were women as compared to 10.7% in 1971 (Statistics Canada, 1987). Women represented 11.4% of all positions in the male-dominated professions in 1971. By 1981, 18.6% of the positions in male-dominated professions were occupied by women (Statistics Canada, 1987).

Although the overall participation of women in the labour force is increasing, and particularly within male dominated occupations, these gains are negligible in the upper echelons of organizations. Women represent a minority of upper-level managers and white-collar professionals (Adam & Baer, 1984); elite positions associated with the most decision-making power (Greenglass, 1982). There are also indications that women are still experiencing more difficulties in attaining top-level positions than their male counterparts. For example, although women comprised 73% of employees in Canadian banks in 1988, they

comprised just 2.4% of senior management positions (Winnipeg Free Press, Dec 11, 1988).

Tedeschie (1986) reported that just 1% of all senior executives are women. In the Canadian federal civil service, over 97% of all positions are held by men (Maynard, 1984). Morrison, White and Van Velsor (1987) reported that in the United States, only 1.7% of corporate executives in the Fortune 500 companies were women. In 1976, less than 1% of all directors on Canadian boards of directors were female (Greenglass, 1982). In essence, then, the decisions in this country are being made by representatives of only half the population.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the attrition rates of professional women from their organizations. Factors both within and outside the organization were addressed to determine their influence on women's decisions to leave their careers. These factors were examined within the context of phenomenological theory using focus group interviews with professional women who have left or changed their careers. The subjects' comments were analyzed via content analysis using a computer program to sort the data.

Review of Literature

Identified Problems

Research in the area of professional working women has been prolific in the 1970s and 1980s. Most researchers have focused on the problems women face as they attempt to advance and become accepted within professional organizations (Davidson & Cooper, 1983).

Strain between home and work lives

One such problem identified by several researchers as being detrimental to professional women was conflict between home life and work life (Abramson & Franklin, 1983; Davidson & Cooper, 1986; Gray, 1983; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Pines & Kafry, 1981; and Taylor, 1986). Gray (1983) found that 77% of the sample of married female doctors, lawyers and professors reported experiencing strain between their home life and their work life.

One of the primary reasons suspected for this strain is that our society is suffering from a cultural lag in which women are still held largely responsible for child care, household chores and other family concerns and relationships even while they pursue full-time outside employment (Broschart, 1978; Cheeseman, 1985; Davidson & Cooper, 1983; Gilbert, Holahan, & Manning, 1981; Graddick & Farr, 1983; Maynard & Brouse, 1988; Morrison et al., 1987; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Pendleton, Poloma & Garland, 1980; Statistics Canada, 1985; Toman, 1983; Wallis, 1987; Walsh, 1977; White, 1984; Winnipeg Free Press, 1988, July 11).

Societal expectations decree that women should be more involved with their families than should men. Rosen and Jerdee

(1973) found that managers expected women to give priority to family concerns when home life and work life interests conflicted. Men were expected to do the opposite. Thus, non-work demands tended to affect women more than they affected men (Morrison et al., 1987). As Mandelbaum (1981) stated, "Men, unlike women, usually do not have to consider the effects of marriage and paternity upon their career behaviors" (p.10). Thus, women's career advancement may be thwarted if employers automatically assume that the family has precedence over careers for female employees (Greenglass, 1982).

Discrimination

Sex (or gender) discrimination or sexism, the unfair treatment of an individual based on gender rather than ability, was identified as another barrier that professional women must overcome while attempting to advance their careers (Bernikow, 1984; Davidson & Cooper, 1986; Terborg, 1977). This type of discrimination can include overt or covert sexism (Davidson & Cooper, 1983), differential treatment and expectations (Frake, 1984; Maynard & Brouse, 1988), as well as the exclusion of women from the camaraderie of relationships with male peers (Devine, 1987; Fenning & Schnegg, 1984; Morrison et al., 1987). Professional women also face the specific and overt discrimination of being paid lower wages than their male counterparts for equal work (Greenglass, 1982; Taylor, 1986).

Previous research has indicated that another type of discrimination facing professional women advancing their careers is solo status (Aranya, Kushnir & Valency, 1986; Morrison et al.,

1987). Solo status involves being either the only or one of a few members of a particular gender or race within a group (Crocker & McGraw, 1984). Solo status contributes to the isolation of professional women and identifies them as token women, in essence, representatives of all women (Davidson & Cooper, 1983; Morrison et al., 1987). As token women, their actions are scrutinized and often typecast into female-stereotyped sex roles (Collins, 1988; Devine, 1987; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Larwood & Wood, 1977).

This contributes to increased frustration and pressure for professional women to perform better than their male counterparts and to avoid making mistakes (Davidson & Cooper, 1983; Kanter, 1977a; Maynard, 1989). Women must often overcome preconceived ideas that working women are ineffective (Morrison et al., 1987; Tung, 1980) and subsequently avoid any traditional sex role behaviour that may confirm these ideas (Hemming, 1985). Thus, as Morrison et al., (1987) stated, "...women must be better than men and also better than the stereotyped view of women" (p.56).

Absence of female role models

The absence of female role models is another obstacle that professional women face in the workplace (Fenning & Schnegg, 1983). Morrison et al., (1987) identified mentorship as the most critical factor essential for success of executive women. Professional women are often lacking the senior direction and support that is available to their male counterparts (Davidson & Cooper, 1983). This contributes to feelings of isolation, frustration and resentment as professional women are left on their

own to succeed or fail (Richbell, quoted in Davidson & Cooper, 1983).

Sex role conflict

Sex role conflict is a barrier identified by researchers that faces women wanting to establish professional careers (Broschart, 1978). Terborg (1977) stated that women pursuing professional careers are pressured to abandon female sex role characteristics and adopt male sex role characteristics in order to be successful.

However, professional women are the recipients of conflicting messages about appropriate sex role behaviour; they are expected to retain certain feminine characteristics and discard others that are considered disruptive to the organization. Rarely are these sex-role expectations made explicit (Morrison et al., 1987). Thus women, but not men, must attempt to perform according to implicit standards (Walsh, 1977). This creates conflict within the individual as she must re-align her notions of what constitutes gender-appropriate behaviour (McBroom, 1986). This conflict is heightened by the fact that women often are not supported in their nontraditional career choice by their families.

Consequences: Attrition

The cumulative effect of these barriers seems to be additional stress and frustration experienced by women in organizations. Unnecessary stress and frustration produced by these barriers leads to negative experiences at work which affect employees' satisfaction, physical health and emotional health (Barber, 1988; Pierre, 1986).

One indication of this stress is the attrition rate, or the reduction of personnel due to resignations, of professional women from organizations. Traditionally, women have been more likely than men to interrupt their careers temporarily for childbirth and childrearing (Greenglass, 1982). However, a more permanent pattern of attrition is now being recognized. Professional women who generally regard their career roles as salient (Del Vento Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Graddick & Farr, 1983; Gray, 1983) and who have invested a great deal of time, energy and money to attain their professional status are terminating careers.

This study necessarily draws on popular literature as a primary source of information about the phenomenon of egression among professional women because some information was unavailable through scientific journals. The recent rise in attrition rates of professional women has been noticeably neglected in scientific research efforts. Increasingly though, popular media sources have brought attention to the issue of professional career abandonment by women (Morrison et al., 1987). This literature has highlighted women who have, for all intents and purposes, achieved success in their chosen profession and who then decided to leave their professional organizations (Abramson & Franklin, 1983; Bernikow, 1984; Taylor, 1986; Toman, 1983).

Although largely discounted by scientific scholars as unreliable and sensation-seeking, popular literature has the unique ability of pointing to current trends in our society and is the most readily accessible medium by the public (O'Neil, 1980). Popular literature has also been utilized by several researchers

to provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study (Bowen, 1988; Buono & Kamm, 1983; Crouter, 1984; Kanter, 1977a; Keown & Keown, 1985; Morrison et al., 1987; Voydanoff, 1980).

In training a future professional, organizations make a financial and psychological investment in the individual which is expected to be repaid through the service of the employee in subsequent years. Attrition of professional women is a problem because it represents a substantial human capital investment that is lost by these organizations (Morrison et al., 1987). Maynard & Brouse (1988) referred to this organizational loss as "...an executive brain drain..." (p.34). Attrition of professional women results in a direct economic cost that must be borne by the organization. The organization will yield a substantially lower return on its investment (Bowman & Gross, 1986) since new employees must be hired and trained; a process that drains organizational reserves and resources.

Organizations need also be concerned about the attrition of professional women because the proportion of male workers is decreasing due to longer periods of educational training, earlier retirements among men and longer life spans of women (Greenglass, 1982). Thus, organizations will increasingly turn to women to fill positions. Professional women may also end up paying for these attrition rates in the sense that organizations will view women as a higher risk investment. Attrition rates of female employees may fuel the fire behind the argument that women should not be allowed limited access to upper positions (Mandelbaum,

1981). Greenglass (1982) noted that employers provide better training for men because they assume that women will have an intermittent career. Obviously, this has implications for women's future advancement opportunities.

Abramson and Franklin (1983) found, in their survey of female lawyers, that only 60% of the women who started in private practice in 1974 remained active nine years later. From 1974 to 1982, there was a 40% attrition rate among female lawyers in private practice compared to a 3% growth rate among male lawyers in private practice.

In Manitoba, figures from the Law Society of Manitoba in 1988 revealed that almost 30% of female lawyers were not actively practicing their profession. This was double the rate of that for male lawyers. In British Columbia, (Brockman, 1990) female lawyers are leaving the profession in greater proportion than male lawyers. The attrition rate for female lawyers in British Columbia in 1990 was 19%; the attrition rate for male lawyers in British Columbia in 1990 was 11%.

Taylor (1986) reported a 30% attrition rate among female MBAs who received a degree in 1976. Thirty-four percent of the female MBAs who received their degree at the University of Pittsburgh between 1973 and 1982 dropped out of the labour force at some point. The research, which was non-longitudinal, did not indicate if these women stayed out of the labour force permanently. Female graduates of the MBA program at Pace University in New York displayed similar attrition rates. Of those women who graduated between 1976 and 1980, 21% were not working full time. The figure

for men, at 1%, was dramatically smaller. Taylor (1986) reported that one out of every four female managers in the United States were leaving the organization.

Walsch (1977) noted that female physicians tended to drop out of active practice for periods averaging 4.8 years, more than double the male physician average of 2.1 years. In 1970, the American Medical Association reported that 18.1% of the 25,401 licensed female physicians were inactive as compared to 5% of the 308,621 licensed male physicians (Mandelbaum, 1981). Collectively, these numbers seem to represent a growing exodus from top level positions within organizations among professional women.

A Phenomenological Perspective

The Theory

The research for this paper was conducted within a phenomenological framework. Phenomenology is a school of thought concerned with the subjective experience of everyday life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) that attempts to understand human behaviour from the actor's point of view (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

In this view, society and its institutions such as work, school, family and religion as well as values, norms and roles are the by-products of human interaction. Institutions come to be associated with certain meanings that are produced through human interaction and maintained through language. These socially produced meanings tend to 'act back' upon the producers in such a manner that they are experienced as objective reality. Human interaction helps to develop meaning which in turn is passed on to successive generations. Together, these shared meanings combine to form the culture of a society or an organization.

The important issue relative to pheomenological theory and to this research is the effect of these socially generated meanings on the conduct of members of society. The shared meanings come to be known as reality and as such they constitute the 'truth' of the society. Thus, if males are 'known' to be different than females in ways that affect their abilities, then these differences are real. As Thomas (1928, p. 572) noted, "It is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct - if men [sic] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences".

The guiding assumption of this research was that organizational structures in our society are masculine and as such participate in an ethos (definition of reality) not shared by the majority of females. The issue is not whether these masculine definitions are right or wrong; it is sufficient to state that they exist and as such are real in their consequences. Women are unable to fit into the male definition of the organizational structure since they lack the socialization provided exclusively to males (Greenglass, 1982).

Culture can be defined as the shared set of values, beliefs and expectations that influence the behaviours of individuals and groups within organizations (Bowen, 1988; Reimann & Wiener, 1988). Within the organization, this shared set of beliefs and expectations is manifested by symbolic devices such as rules of behaviour, rituals, communication styles and specialized language, and relationship norms, all of which are based upon the experience of males (Reimann & Wiener, 1988; Stead, 1985). It incorporates the unwritten rules of how to play the 'organizational game' or how to succeed within the organization (Kilmann, Saxton & Serpa, 1985). Thus the behavioural alternatives allowed the individual within the organization are limited to those espoused by the cultural milieu (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

There is always the possibility that several subcultures of meaning will develop and flourish within the larger culture (Kilmann et al., 1985; Reimann & Wiener, 1988). A sub-culture, or a sub-universe of meaning, in essence is a sub-division of the dominant culture. Berger and Luckmann (1966) stated that;

"Subuniverses of meaning may be socially structured by various criteria - sex, age, occupation, religious inclination, aesthetic taste, and so on" (p.85).

The effect of the subuniverses is that now there are several, possibly contradictory, meanings about the world, not just the one definition promoted by the dominant culture. This increases the likelihood of conflict between the subcultures and the dominant culture which can develop into a cognitive segregation of the subuniverses. Thus, theoretically it is possible to have females, as one subuniverse within the organization, segregated from males, another subuniverse.

As the subuniverses develop, they become increasingly specialized and esoteric. Thus, unless individuals are "...properly initiated into their mysteries..." (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.87) they cannot become members of the subuniverse. The problem facing the members of the subuniverse then, is to keep outsiders out and insiders in. Thus, the meanings of the subuniverse must adequately dissuade outsiders, by whatever means, from wanting to become insiders. At the same time, it must remove any temptation that might sway insiders from wanting to become outsiders.

Males and females in our society are raised with very different role definitions. These differential patterns of socialization create subuniverses of meanings within our society, often referred to as gender subcultures. As a consequence of these divergent role expectations, males and females come to experience the world very differently. For example, Bernard

(1982) referred to the male marriage and the female marriage. These differential sets of meanings create two very different subuniverses. Phenomenologically speaking, one can argue that males and females in our society live in two different worlds.

Gender based subuniverses of meaning continue to exist and are hypothesized to be at the base of the conflicts being experienced by females as they enter the work world as defined by males. Aga (1984) found that male workers viewed female workers as invaders attempting to enter an exclusively male domain. Greenglass (1982) noted that women workers are viewed as trespassers in the men's world. Bernard (1981) stated that males distanced themselves from females and took concrete action to cement this separation and exclusion of females. This can be done in several ways including psychologically through the development of language, symbols and mannerisms which are 'foreign' to would-be incumbents, and physically through the establishment of male domains or 'hang-outs' like the all-male club.

These are vivid illustrations of how one subuniverse effectively dissuades outsiders, in this case females, from becoming insiders of the subuniverse. Morrison et al., (1987) likened this process to prospective applicants attempting to gain membership to an exclusive club. These applicants are reviewed against established criteria, and if lacking any required characteristic (background, race, gender), are refused admittance.

Each subuniverse develops its own definition of reality and attempts to impose this definition upon other subuniverses. The subuniverse with the most power will have a better chance of

imposing its definition of reality upon weaker subuniverses. The weaker subuniverses will not necessarily be required to abandon their definition of reality, but they will be required to acquiesce to the dominant subculture's definition. Thus the weaker subuniverse's definition of reality, while not eradicated, must go underground. Members of the weaker subuniverse may be forced to adopt aspects of the dominant subuniverse that define their world. In our society, traditionally, males have possessed more overt power than females and thus their subuniverse and definitions of reality have prevailed within organizations and society at large.

Berger and Luckman (1966) theorized that socially constructed knowledge is involved in maintaining these subsets of meaning within a larger culture. The subuniverses must be 'carried' by a particular collectivity, in this case based on gender, which continuously produces the meanings which become objective reality. These conclaves of meaning become inaccessible to outsiders. The beliefs embraced by the dominant subuniverse may be such as to account for why those outside the dominant subuniverse ought to be excluded.

Specifically, outsiders may be defined in such a way as to account for their exclusion. Relative to the argument being advanced herein, the male world of meanings includes definitions of what females are all about, what they are capable of doing and not capable of doing. Most importantly, they are not 'insiders'. Professional women then are afforded a marginal status as a minority group within the larger group; they are female and they

are professionals; the norms of which may be mutually exclusive at times (Mandelbaum, 1981).

The Organization as Masculine

The organization itself as an institution contains at least two different subuniverses of meaning: the male and female gender subuniverses. The male gender subculture is also the mandate for organizational behaviour within the larger organizational culture (McBroom, 1986). As such, the organizational ethos automatically favours males (Henning & Jardim, 1977) as it embraces the traditional male sex role. Bernard (1981) stated that the "...capitalist-industrial economy was overwhelmingly a male creation, operating on principles established by men and therefore reflecting a male style of relationship" (p.217).

If the organization itself can be classified as 'masculine', it comes as no surprise that traditional males fit the organizational mold better since they inherently understand it. Since the organization favours males, females face difficulties, such as those outlined earlier, in adapting to the male subculture that pervades the organizational culture. This male-dominated environment can often be hostile towards women. Thus the common denominator behind the stressors of strain between work and family, discrimination, absence of female role models and sex role conflict could be attributed to the organization in its masculine form.

Thus, although women have been 'allowed' to participate much more widely in the organization, they are still not an integral part of the male subculture (Abramson & Franklin, 1983). This is

because women bring with them to the workplace their own meanings and definitions and, as Bernard (1981) stated, women remain within the boundaries of their own subculture.

The Organization as a Traditional Family

It is argued that the male and female subuniverses of meaning within the organization are clashing more vigorously now because of gender role changes in our society. When males earned all of the family income, they also held most of the family power. Now that women are earning part or all of the family income through outside employment, the traditional balance of power is upset (Aga, 1984; Greenglass, 1982).

James March (quoted in Bernard, 1981) made an analogy between women in the masculine workplace and the situation of immigrants. When women arrived at masculine corporations, like immigrants, they tended to be assimilated and began to practise the customs of their adopted culture. However, women tended not to be completely assimilated into the male organization because they remained entrenched within their own subuniverse or culture. As such, they never really became 'Canadian citizens' or 'males'.

In the same vein, an analogy can be made between the masculine organization and the traditional nuclear family in North American society. The masculine organization upholds traditional gender roles. Women are attempting to compete in a world designed by and for professional men who assumed that the 'little woman at home' would handle all extraneous demands (Friedan, 1986; McBroom, 1986). This assumption is no longer tenable because fewer than 10% of families now fit this family pattern (Kingsbury, 1987).

If professional women had been offered the support of someone to attend to family demands (that is, a 'stay-at-home-wife' as had many of their traditional male colleagues), perhaps they would have been better equipped to compete in the male work world. This discrepancy was noted as early as the 1920s when one writer observed that "...the modern woman labors under the handicap of not having a wife" (quoted in Walsch, 1977, p.275). Women have not had someone at home to tend to the everyday details of housekeeping and childrearing. Since the household support is not currently available to women without incurring high costs, they have to contend simultaneously with career and familial obligations. Therefore, they have not been able to compete equally with their male colleagues who are less encumbered by such familial duties (Mandelbaum, 1981) and who are emotionally supported at home (McBroom, 1986).

The traditional nuclear family in our society was patriarchal, with the male assuming instrumental and functional roles and the female assuming expressive roles (Parsons & Bales, 1955). Although this family form today seems archaic and dysfunctional to some members of our present society, it served the purposes of society at that time. As long as males fulfilled their expected role and as long as females fulfilled their expected role, there was little or no conflict.

The same phenomenon occurred within the organization. Traditional familial roles were incorporated into the organization as well. Males assumed the role of the patriarch; the leader, the boss, the decision maker. Females allowed into the organization

assumed the role of the supportive wife, fulfilling the needs of her employer. Thus women were responsible for clerical work and menial tasks, such as making and fetching coffee. In essence, they were 'support staff', not colleagues.

Greenglass (1982) noted the parallel between the role ascribed to female employees and the role of the traditional wife. Both positions are designed so as to create a "...supportive and worry-free atmosphere so that the man can tend to his 'important work'" (p.184). Notably, both positions are subordinate to men (McBroom, 1986).

Thus, although the two subuniverses of meaning were present in the organization, they coexisted and complimented one another as in the traditional family. Problems arose when traditional gender roles, which gave more power to men, began to give way to modern gender roles which espouse equality between men and women. As gender roles changed there was no longer a close fit between women and the masculine organization. As professional women adopted modern sex roles, most were no longer capable or willing to fulfill the traditional role of wife within (or outside) the organization. This resulted in increased conflicts between professional women and the masculine organization.

Professional women are increasingly unable or unwilling to internalize the male subuniverse which dominates the organization. In essence, then, the increased attrition rates among professional women is analogous to a divorce between marital partners. Professional women are beginning to divorce themselves from the organization which is a male ethos they can not or will not

understand. The problem basically involves a clash between female socialization and values and the male organizational culture with its masculine rules of career advancement (Schwartz, 1989).

Directional Hypotheses

General Directional Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that a primary contributor to the attrition rates among professional women is the conflicting subuniverses of males and females within the organization. The conflict is not necessarily between males and females but arises because the organizational culture embodies the masculine role.

Insofar as females are unable or unwilling to apprehend and claim for themselves the traditional male gender role, there will be conflict between them and the organizational culture. It is proposed that this conflict arises out of the inherent differences between the traditional male gender role, which is also the organizational role, and the modern female gender role.

Specific Directional Hypotheses

It was proposed that at least three specific aspects of the masculine organization contributed to the attrition of professional women. These were the lack of awareness of links between work and family, the depersonalization of the workplace and invisible barriers to advancement. Given that this research was exploratory in nature, the hypotheses were designed to be directional hypotheses only, that is, hypotheses that would serve to guide the research and the questioning route and that would

provide insights to develop future hypotheses that could be supported through causal or correlational inferences.

Awareness of links between work and family

The first factor hypothesized to contribute to attrition rates among professional women was the masculine organization's lack of awareness or deliberate avoidance of the links between work and family. Traditionally, organizations in our society have been dominated by what Kanter (1977b) calls the 'myth of separate worlds'. This myth encompasses the belief that; "...work life and family life constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds, with their own functions, territories, and behavioral rules. Each operates by its own laws and can be studied independently" (Kanter, 1977b, p.8).

The masculine organizational ethos actively promotes the myth of separate worlds by denying the interdependency of work and family (Voydanoff, 1980). This separation is viewed as essential if the organization is to survive and flourish (Kanter, 1977b).

Even in the 1980s, the worlds of work and the family are seen as mutually incompatible if one is to achieve success in the professional realm (Evans & Bartolome, 1980). Voydanoff (1980, p.489) stated that male executives "...have been expected to be 'good family men' without having family obligations infringe upon work role responsibilities". The organizational ethos assumes that the work role is central in the lives of male workers (Kanter, 1977b) so the workplace is not designed to fit around family obligations (Nieva and Gutek, 1981) .

The male worker has typically and traditionally understood this separation without qualification (Cheeseman, 1985). For this reason, there appear to be fewer conflicts between traditional males and the masculine organizational environment since traditional males do not admit to having obligations outside of the work environment. The traditional male role and the masculine organizational role are so similar that there is little opportunity or reason for conflict.

Male workers report little spillover from their family to their work (Crouter, 1984) since they have been socialized to focus attention on work concerns (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). In order to be successful, the masculine organizational ethos demands compartmentalization of work and family. Traditionally, males, and the females who emulated them, have bought into this system and given priority to their work roles (Morrison et al., 1987; Fryor & Reeves, 1982). They equated success at work with a total commitment of the self to the organization (Mandelbaum, 1981). McBroom (1986) stated that the separation of work and family is an accepted truth by males who have never felt it necessary to challenge this idiom.

An adoption of the masculine organizational ethos' belief in the myth of separate worlds, by males or females, is costly (Morrison et al., 1987). It requires the employee to give low priority to family, spouses/partners, and friends. Kane and Parsons (quoted in Keown & Keown, 1985) found that 63% of the women executives surveyed said that success within the masculine organization required the abandonment of marriages, family and

friends. Women are expected to give work first priority in their lives and to place family a distant second if they wish to succeed within the organization (Morrison et al., 1987). These concessions to their job and the masculine organizational ethos are extremely costly and painful. Many professional women are questioning the legitimacy of these demands (Maynard & Brouse, 1988) and many no longer wish to conform to these expectations (Baum, 1987; Morrison et al., 1987).

It seems that some professional women are unwilling to segment their lives into independent spheres. They are not as willing as the males historically preceding them to accommodate themselves to the demands of the masculine organizational ethos (Maynard & Brouse, 1988). Professional women are attempting to integrate work and family to achieve a more balanced life (Maynard & Brouse, 1988).

Women view work and family as equally enriching, fulfilling and important (Cheeseman, 1985; Faver, 1981). This tends to create a conflict for women as this integration of work and family is in direct opposition to the masculine organizational ethos. Whereas the traditional male has adopted a strict segregation of these areas of life, the modern female allows much more imbrication of the two domains. The result is that the woman is more likely to be perceived as a less efficient and loyal worker according to the unwritten standards of the male subculture within the organization. In fact, women must actively limit their non-work concerns if they are to avoid jeopardizing their career (Morrison et al., 1987).

Instead of conforming to the male work ethos, professional women seem to be attempting to work by new rules. When these rules are not accepted by the masculine organization, many professional women seem prepared to abandon the organization (Baum, 1987).

Professional women who leave the organization have not defined the work role as their central or only source of intrinsic satisfaction relative to other adult roles as perhaps have traditional men (Del Vento Biebly & Biebly, 1984). Women who leave may be more healthy in the sense that they are able to advance beyond the primacy of the work role to integrate all aspects of their lives despite external organizational pressure to do otherwise. Therefore, it was hypothesized;

1. that the egression of professional women from organizations is positively associated with the lack of recognition by the masculine organization of the links between work and family.

Depersonalization of the Workplace

A second aspect of the masculine organizational culture that may affect attrition of professional women is the depersonalization of the work environment supported by the masculine organization. This depersonalization can incorporate many different elements. One such element concerns the restriction of the expression of the individual's emotions and feelings within the organization. Not only does the masculine organizational ethos attempt to segregate work and family, but it also attempts to segregate aspects of the individual's personality

considered dysfunctional to the work role, such as emotional expressiveness.

Emotional expressiveness is defined as dysfunctional because the work world is traditionally viewed as successful only because it typically is depersonalized (Kanter, 1977b; McBroom, 1986; Supler, 1984). It is expected that if individuals wish to express an emotion, it will be done outside of the workplace, usually within the family. If an emotion must be expressed within the workplace, it should be done according to the norms of the masculine organization which proscribes acceptable rules of behaviour. These rules forbid crying as a mode of expression (McBroom, 1986; Mernit, 1988).

This may create a problem for some female workers because one allowable way of expressing emotions for women in our society is crying. This behavioural response to feelings of anger and frustration is not tolerated by an organizational culture dominated by the definitions of masculinity (Mernit, 1988). A top complaint of women executives in a Business Week survey (quoted in Kanter, 1977a) was that the behavioural expression of emotions was tolerated from males, in the form of anger, but not from females, in the form of crying.

Children are taught appropriate gender role behaviours, including the expression of emotions, from birth (Balswick & Peek, 1971). Females have been socialized to deal with their feelings and emotions in different ways than have males. Young boys are socialized to avoid any feminine displays of emotion, such as crying (Balswick & Peek, 1971). Instead they are taught to

express sadness, anger and frustration in masculine ways such as through displays of aggression or complete repression of the emotion itself. Men experience the same emotions as women (Colwill, 1982; Williams, 1982) and yet for men, tears are not considered as appropriate a response as is anger (McBroom, 1986; Phillips, 1985). Emotional expressiveness in men is not tolerated by the dicta of the traditional male gender role in our society (O'Neil, 1980) unless it conforms to male standards.

Males typically view anger, which symbolizes dominance, as a more suitable expression of their emotions. Crying by males in our society signifies a feminine response and therefore is felt to denote weakness, emotionality, passivity, immaturity and a lack of power (Jourard, 1963; Mernit, 1988; O'Neil, 1980). Thus, for males, crying represents a threat to their masculinity (Jourard, 1963).

The condoned expressions of frustration in the masculine organization, such as anger and aggression, are more familiar to males since they have been socialized to react to frustration in this manner. Females are socialized to deal with frustration in ways which are not allowed within the organization. For females, tears are one alternate expression of frustration that is not always available to males (Supler, 1984). The emotions of professional women, and men, are subjugated to the organization's approval. McBroom (1986) stated that women are therefore unable to fully express their emotions which can lead to disillusionment with the organization and their subsequent withdrawal.

The depersonalization of the organization through "emotional bondage" or the restriction of stereotypic emotional reactions to incidents of stress, anger and frustration, such as crying, is not likely to be identified as a motivator for leaving the organization by the women jumping off the corporate ladder. Instead, these women will most likely attribute their leaving to more popularized causes such as discrimination and work/family conflicts. These conflicts are familiar to women and their employers and tend to be more accepted, or expected, as a legitimate reason for leaving the organization. Therefore, it was hypothesized;

2. that the egression of professional women from organizations is positively associated with the depersonalization of the workplace ethos advocated by the masculine organization.

Invisible Barriers

A third factor hypothesized to contribute to the attrition rates of professional women involves invisible barriers to advancement and recognition of merit. Morrison et al., (1987) termed this phenomenon the 'glass ceiling' - a barrier that prevents women as a group from rising above a certain level within organizations. Invisible barriers, as a form of discrimination, became an issue only after women ceased fulfilling the traditional "wife" role within the organization. This type of discrimination is more subtle and underground since overt displays of discrimination are less tolerated in today's society due to

legislation concerning sexual discrimination and harassment (Greenglass, 1982).

When women assumed the traditional "wife" role within organizations, there was no need to establish invisible barriers to curtail their advancement. Although the women who assumed the "wife" role at work were prevented from aspiring to management levels and received substantially lower wages, this was not discrimination in the sense that women were victimized. Rather, this type of behaviour was normalized within the auspices of the traditional family, both within and outside of the organization. Women were permitted into the executive suite only as subordinates, not as equals.

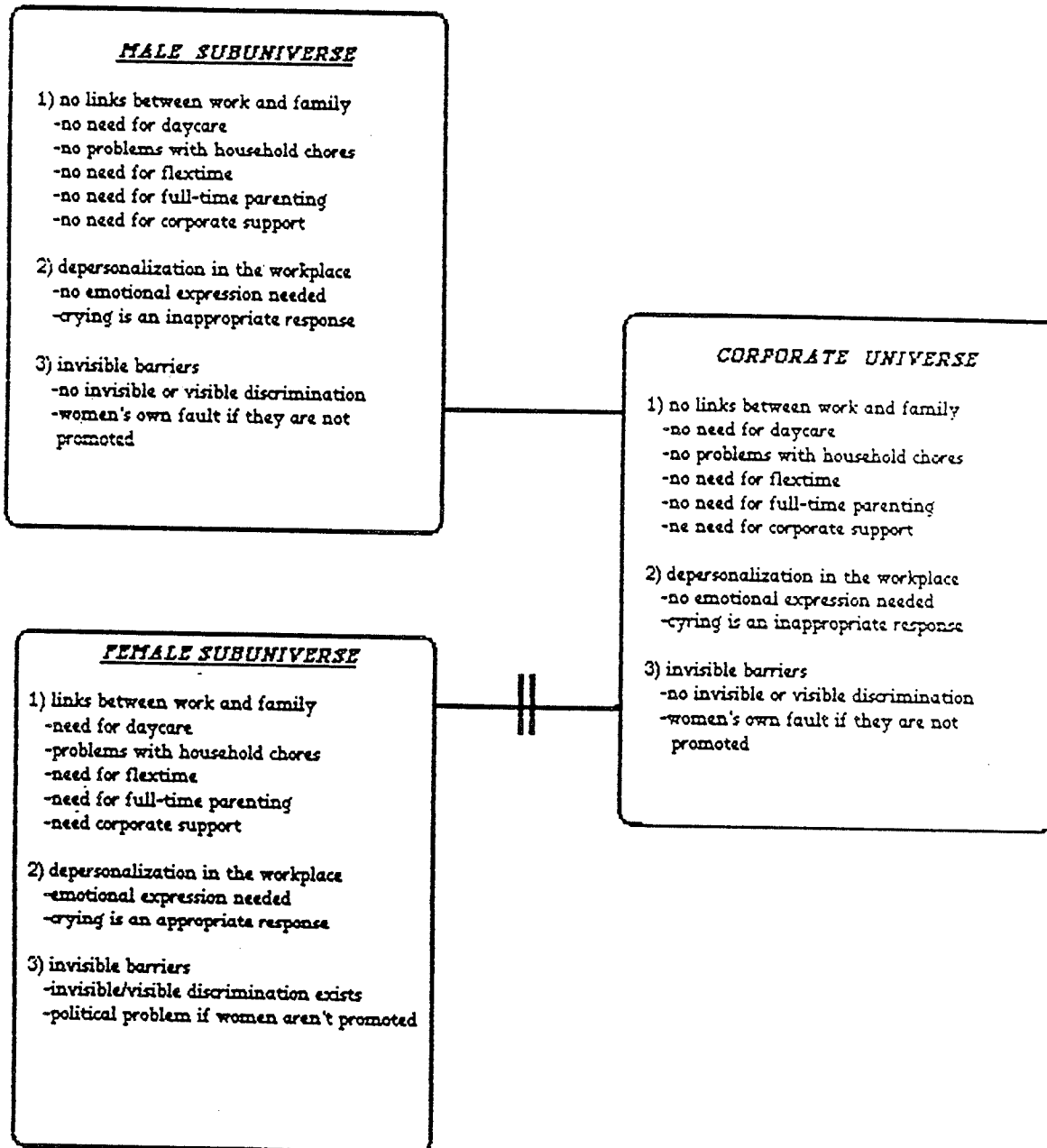
However, professional women today are less willing to assume the role of traditional wife in the organization. Instead they aspire to the role of the modern wife where equality between the two partners, in this analogy, the women and the men in the organization, is the norm.

Because women aspire to this new role, they are experiencing a subtle, almost invisible type of discrimination which prevents them from reaching the top echelons of their organizations. On the surface, the masculine organization appears willing to grant women equality, but in reality, women are still expected to fulfill the traditional wife role. Since the skills of these women are not recognized formally through promotions and pay increases and since the top-level positions are still clearly not attainable, they become discouraged with the organization and they drop out. Therefore, it was hypothesized;

3. that the egression of professional women from organizations is positively associated with the invisible barriers within the masculine organization which prevent them from fully utilizing their skills and from advancing to top level positions.

Figure 1

SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENDER BASED SUBUNIVERSES OF MEANING



Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to conduct an exploratory study, using a phenomenological approach, to identify possible contributing factors relevant to the egression of professional women from organizations. Phenomenologists typically use qualitative methods since these methods help the researcher to see the world as the subjects define and see it and not as the researcher would like to see it (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). In-depth information can be obtained from a limited number of subjects using qualitative methods. Therefore, this study utilized qualitative research in order to identify more precisely the specific factors affecting the attrition of professional women.

By synthesizing available popular literature and scientific literature, this exploratory study was expected to yield insights for other researchers to conduct additional research on a more representative sample. Taylor (1986) stated that most organizations are unwilling to change aspects of the organizational environment that contribute to the high attrition rates among professional women because they lack the data on the problems and the current situation of professional women. Obviously, exploratory research into this area of enquiry is necessary, not only to maximize investments made by organizations, but also to maximize the work experiences of professional women.

In order to provide information with the least amount of bias, it was decided to forego the face-to-face interview or questionnaire method. The major disadvantage of these two

qualitative methods is that individuals typically respond to pre-determined questions which are artificial and may preclude additional, original thoughts and responses of subjects. As well, these methods tend to reflect the preconceived biases of the interviewer through either oversight or omission (Krueger, 1988).

A third disadvantage is that these methods exclude the effects of group dynamics on the opinions and development of meanings among respondents (Krueger, 1988) as the questioning occurs in isolation. Thus for the purposes of this research, which is exploratory in nature, the qualitative method of focus group interviews seemed most appropriate.

Focus Group Interviews

Definition and Description

Krueger (1988) defined a focus group as a "... planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment" (p.18). An implicit assumption underlying focus groups is that individuals with a particular problem or a similar situation will be more willing to discuss that problem with other individuals who share that same problem or situation (Bellenger, Bernhardt & Goldstucker, 1979). Thus, group interaction is a dynamic and integral instigator that generates in-depth insights into individual and group behaviour and thoughts that may not be accessible outside of the group process (Morgan, 1988).

The permissive group environment encourages individuals to express thoughts and feelings that may be unattainable through other methods (Krueger, 1988). The purpose of the focus group is

to foster and encourage self disclosure among participants thereby obtaining qualitative information from a limited number of people (Krueger, 1988).

Methodological Issues

As with any research method, focus groups have particular strengths and weaknesses that must be recognized before the method is utilized. As Wells (1979) stated; "...any way of gathering information is a series of compromises" (p.11).

Some of the advantages of utilizing a focus group are that it provides in-depth information, has high face validity, is relatively low in cost, provides fast results, allows the researcher to use more subjects than in other qualitative types of research, and allows the moderator to probe the answers of respondents (Krueger, 1988). Focus groups are flexible and especially useful for generating hypotheses when little is known about the phenomenon under study (Wells, 1979). Focus groups were utilized for this research to provide information about egression from organizations as the subjects experienced and defined it.

The group process inherent in focus groups is stimulating and may encourage participants to express more ideas and to interact more with one another resulting in a dynamic exchange. Since the discourse is recorded, it can be analyzed in more detail after the focus group has terminated (Bellenger et al., 1979).

Some of the disadvantages of using the focus group method are that it requires carefully trained moderators, it must be conducted in a suitable setting, the subjects are difficult to recruit, and the data may be more difficult to interpret than data

generated through quantitative studies (Krueger, 1988). The responses of participants may be inhibited by the mere presence of the group (Wells, 1979).

The selection of group participants is typically nonrepresentative and therefore limits generalizability of results, as is the case with face-to-face interviews (Bellenger et al., 1979). There may be problems with the credibility of the discussion if one person attempts to dominate the discussion and/or if an ineffective moderator influences the discussion according to preconceived biases (Biel, 1979). The greatest danger in using focus groups is that the moderator can easily influence the results either during the discussion and/or while interpreting the discussion. The results of focus groups are difficult to quantify and consequently, statistical analyses can rarely be conducted.

The disadvantages notwithstanding, focus groups are a valid form of research if they are used to study a suitable problem area. Thus, despite the limitations, focus groups are the best alternative among other equally flawed research methods to explore the issue of egression from organizations among professional women.

Sample and Composition of Groups

Description of Sample

The qualitative research consisted of utilizing the focus group method with 23 professional women divided into four groups, each with 4-10 women, including female lawyers, physicians, managers, teachers and nurses who were trained and/or employed in

their profession and who then left, or were in the process of leaving, their respective organizations. These professions were targeted because focus groups work most effectively when the group members are as similar as possible (Bellenger et al., 1979). These professions, which represent both traditionally male-dominated professions as well as traditionally female-dominated professions, share several characteristics. For example, women in professional occupations tend to view their work role as a primary and central role. Thus the choice to abandon this role was expected to be more pronounced among women in professional careers than among women who do not view their work role as primary (Tiedje, Wortman, Downey, Emmons, Biernat, & Lang, 1990). It was decided to include female-dominated occupations in order to determine whether there were differences in reasons for leaving one's profession depending on whether the women were in traditionally male or traditionally female occupations. Seventeen of the women were from traditionally male occupations; law (10), medicine (1), management (4), and science (2), while six women were from traditionally female occupations; teaching (3) and nursing (3).

The subjects ranged in age from 29-66 years of age. At the time of this study, eighteen of the women were married and five were single. Five of the women were childless, four had no children living at home at the time of the study, three women had one child at home, ten women had two children at home and one woman had three children living at home. The ages of the women's children ranged from six weeks to forty-two years old. All of the

subjects were residents of the City of Winnipeg at the time of the study.

These women had remained in their professions from 1-19 years before deciding to leave or change professions. The mean length of time the women stayed active in their profession before deciding to leave or change was 5.9 years.

Subject Selection

Subjects were contacted through the use of a snowball sample technique. Use of this method precludes randomization, generalizability and representativeness, but was justified in this case due to the specific characteristics required in the subjects. In addition, active solicitation of potential subjects occurred via the Business and Professional Women's Club of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba Alumni Association, the Law Society of Manitoba, the Manitoba Medical Association, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba. Short descriptions of the study were sent to these organizations as well as to newspapers, television programs and Y-Neighbour groups in an effort to contact potential participants (Appendix A).

All subjects were asked to voluntarily contact the researcher who then recorded their name and phone number (Appendix B). The researcher also contacted potential subjects that were referred by others and those identified as candidates by their professional organizations. Each prospective subject was screened during the telephone conversation to ensure that they fulfilled the prescribed requirements: the participants selected were trained and/or worked in their occupational fields and they shared the

common characteristic of having dropped out of their profession or of having changed their careers. Due to difficulties in obtaining a sample, women who left their organizations and subsequently returned as well as women who had never left their organizations, but were considering leaving, were included as participants.

During the initial telephone conversation, potential participants were asked to choose a date to attend a discussion group. After the telephone contact, participants received a personalized letter confirming their suitability for the study and confirming the date of the focus group (Appendix C). This date was further confirmed by telephone the day before the scheduled focus group to remind participants of the session and to ask if they still planned on attending (Krueger, 1988).

The sessions occurred in the meeting room of a business in the City of Winnipeg. This type of facility was chosen because it minimized the chances of being interrupted or distracted (Krueger, 1988). Although it is usual for focus group participants to be paid for their time, up to one hundred dollars per person (Krueger, 1988), it was decided to forego payment for these participants. Since this study was not backed by a corporate sponsor, funds were not available to pay each participant. Also, since the purpose of this study was to conduct exploratory research and not designed to conduct market probes, it is argued that remuneration was neither expected nor required. Even with the lack of financial incentives, the subjects were highly motivated and participated out of interest and for the opportunity of talking with women who shared similar experiences.

Participants were compensated, in a sense, by receiving a summarized copy of the results of the research.

A few days after the completion of the focus group, subjects were phoned personally by the researcher to thank them for their participation in the study (see Appendix D). At this time, they were also asked if there were any additional thoughts or ideas they wanted to add to their previous statements (Bellenger et al., 1979).

Research Design

Krueger (1988) stated that the size of the group must be small enough so that each member has the opportunity to contribute and large enough so that a wide range of perceptions and thoughts can be expressed. He recommended between seven to ten people per focus group interview. The focus group interview typically lasts one and a half to two hours. This time frame has been established as sufficient time to develop rapport and in-depth discussion among participants (Bellenger et al., 1979).

Morgan (1988) recommended that about three to four focus groups be conducted in order to provide adequate data to answer the research question. For the purposes of this research, four focus group interviews were conducted; each with 4-10 participants.

Data Collection

In order to facilitate relevant data collection, the moderator developed a questioning route consisting of open-ended questions (Appendix E). Usually the questioning route consists of 5 to 6 questions which are memorized by the moderator (Krueger,

1988). Before the focus group began, the moderator called participants' attention to the tape recorder. The tape recorder was used to capture everyone's comments and participants were therefore encouraged to speak one at a time (Krueger, 1988).

The moderator provided instructions and a brief introduction to the topic for the group participants (Appendix F). The job of the moderator was facilitated by the presence of an assistant who took detailed notes about the conversation of the participants. The moderator also took brief notes, but only as a prod for further discussion (Krueger, 1988).

At the end of each session, participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire requesting demographic information (Appendix G). Once the questionnaires were completed, participants were free to leave the session.

Upon the completion of each focus group, the moderator and the assistant immediately debriefed and compiled a preliminary summary. This summary consisted of brief observations and impressions using the tape and notes taken during the session. The notes of the session were checked to ensure that information was included on any changes in the questioning route, participant characteristics, descriptive phrases or words used by participants as they discussed the key questions, themes, subthemes among similar participants, descriptions of participant enthusiasm, new avenues of questioning that should be explored in future groups and the overall mood of the discussion (Krueger, 1988).

Data Analysis

The taped interviews were transcribed into written format and analyzed using content analysis. Following the process outlined by Krueger (1988), the analysis of data consisted of the following steps: a) gathering the preliminary reports, tape recordings, questioning route, demographic information and typed transcripts of the discussion, b) reading all of the summaries in one sitting, c) making notes of trends and patterns, d) reading all typed transcripts and marking sections that related to each question in the questioning route and noting quotable participant comments, e) preparing a summary statement that described the discussion and identified themes across groups and between respondents f) producing an analytical report that highlights key findings and selected comments.

As reported by Holsti (1969) the use of open-ended questions, such as those utilized in the questioning route tend to be best analyzed by applying content analysis. Content analysis is "...any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Carney, 1979, p.5). Krippendorff (1980) noted that content analysis, "...has evolved into a scientific method that promises to yield inferences from essentially verbal, symbolic or communicative data" (p.20). In content analysis, the data do not automatically fall into categories. Instead, they are placed there by the researcher and/or judges according to the themes identified by the researcher.

The method used to simplify the content analysis of the data was the Ethnograph computer program (Seidel, Kjolseth, & Seymour, 1988). Using this program, one begins the content analysis process when the researcher comes into contact with the data. Once in contact with the data, the researcher notices certain patterns and begins the process of tagging those patterns for "...later retrieval and more intensive analysis" (Seidel et al., 1988, p.7-7). This process is called "code mapping". In code mapping, the researcher followed the steps outlined in the Ethnograph program manual which primarily involved obtaining a printout of the numbered version of the data. This version was read and patterns and themes were marked in the margins of the text (Seidel et al., 1988).

Using the Ethnograph program, code words were used to identify segments of text that formed patterns. The comments were classified into broad categories related to the ideas outlined in the directional hypotheses in order to identify common themes. In addition, other barriers identified by these professional women were explored as themes. This was done in order to discover unexpected themes and gain new insights not identified by the pre-established conceptual framework (Seidel et al., 1988). The nature of the coding process allowed several themes to be labelled as potentially important for the analysis of the data. For the purposes of this study, a theme represented a thought process or viewpoint which can be viewed as a coherent whole (Carney, 1979).

The responses of the women were then coded in a pre-test using a list of themes as guidelines by a panel of judges on a

small sample of the data in order to detect unworkable categories. As a result of this pre-test, some themes were abandoned while others were revised. The themes within each focus group were then coded by the judges again. The judges agreed on category assignments 80% of the time (assessed through simple frequency counts). Where disagreement occurred, consensus was arrived at based on discussion by the judges. Once agreement on the themes was established, the themes were categorized and sorted using the Ethnograph program. The Ethnograph program relieved the researcher of the mechanical complications in sorting a large number of responses so that the researcher was free "...to devote more time and attention to the critical interpretative aspects of qualitative data analysis" (Seidel et al., 1988, p.1-2). The program was not created to interpret the data. The program designers avoided this function because it was felt that the program would then "...be likely to unduly control the analytic process" (Seidel et.al., 1988, p.1-2). Thus, the researcher was responsible for analyzing and interpreting all data. The computer program simply offered an efficient alternative to the task of managing all collected data. Although it was not expected, differences between the women due to their respective professions were analyzed.

Results

No additional information emerged from the demographic sheets filled out by the participants (see Appendix G) or from the follow-up telephone calls to the participants (see Appendix D). There were a total of thirty-one theme/sort codes that were used to code 498 responses of the subjects in the four focus groups. The operational definitions of each theme/sort code are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Ethnograph Themes (Sort Codes)

<p><u>Male World;</u></p> <p>ENTRANCE -references to difficulty in entering the male work world (discrimination, reluctance to hire, denied promotions, failure to promote)</p> <p>COMRADE -references to male camaraderie in the organization (the old boys' club), the exclusion of women from decision making and after-work interaction</p> <p>IDEOLOGY -references to the male work ethic (total commitment to the job, competitiveness, achievement, promotions, aggression, and the idea that a good worker is not a full-time parent)</p> <p>TRAINING -references to women feeling unprepared for the male work world due to different socialization experiences (i.e. women feel un-aggressive)</p> <p>TRADFAM -references to the organization acting as a traditional family with the women doing the menial work within the organization</p>	<p><u>Decision to Leave;</u></p> <p>GUILT.W -references to guilt experienced as a consequence of the decision to leave the organization</p> <p>FEAR -references to uncertainty about the future after the decision to leave or as a component of the decision process itself</p> <p>DIFFICULT -references to the difficulty in making the decision to leave the organization</p> <p>SATISFIED -references to feeling satisfied in having made the decision to leave; felt relief in having left the organization</p> <p>RELATION -references to relationships that suffered as a consequence of the career; a factor that affected the decision to leave</p>
<p><u>Work Conditions;</u></p> <p>HOURS -references to the excessive hours required by the organization</p> <p>STRESS -references to the stress caused by the career as being unacceptable; feelings of being tired and run-down while involved with the career</p> <p>FULFILL -references to either the career being unfulfilling or to the fact that the women are now doing something that they find more fulfilling</p>	<p><u>Parenting;</u></p> <p>CONFLICT -references to conflicts between being a person/parent and working; demands of the job versus demands of the family and/or self</p> <p>COMMIT.P -references to being committed to parenting and/or family matters</p> <p>GUILT.P -references to guilt felt over the commitment to career and inability to devote more time to parent and/or partner role</p> <p>BALANCE -references to the need to, or having achieved, balance between work and family roles</p>
<p><u>Society and Women;</u></p> <p>PRESSURE -references to felt pressures to work outside of the home; perception that working at home is demeaning</p> <p>OPTION -references to the fact that women feel they have the option to leave their careers, an option not as readily available to men</p> <p>EMOTIONAL -references to emotions having to be expressed in the workplace in an acceptable "male" form (such as anger); women regarded as being too emotional or fragile to work</p> <p>PREGEXC -references to pregnancy being an acceptable excuse to leave one's profession</p> <p>BIOLOGY -references to biology as being relevant in the organization or in the decision to leave the organization</p> <p>TRAD.X -references to traditional expectations of women and men</p>	<p><u>Support;</u></p> <p>COLLEAGUE -references to the lack of, or presence of, collegial support in the organization</p> <p>FAMILY -references to the lack of, or presence of, family/partner support while involved in the organization</p> <p>"WIFE" -references to the perceived need for a "wife" or support person at home to care to the details of everyday family concerns (cooking, cleaning, child care etc.)</p> <p>ECONOMY -references to economic factors that influenced the decision to leave</p> <p>FRIENDS -references to the lack of, or presence of, support from friends</p> <p>WOMEN -references to the lack of, or presence of, support from women in the organization</p>

Note: Only capitalized words are themes or sort codes.
All other words are general categories used to organize the themes.

As discussed earlier, the themes were developed according to the directional hypotheses and also according to relevant ideas that were identified by the women in the focus groups. Some of the themes (i.e. Ideology, Trad.X and Relation) fit into one or more hypotheses so the percentages do not equal one hundred. Table 2 illustrates the themes/sort codes and the correspondence to the directional hypotheses, the decision to leave, and other information that emerged from the data.

The themes that corresponded with directional hypothesis #1 were; Balance, Commit.P, Conflict, Family, Friends, Guilt.P, Hours, Ideology, Relation, Stress, Trad.X, and Wife. These themes accounted for 49.19% of all coded responses. The themes that corresponded with directional hypothesis #2 were; Emotional and Fulfill. These themes accounted for only 8.03% of all coded responses. The themes that corresponded with directional hypothesis #3 were; Colleague, Comrade, Entrance, Ideology, Trad.Fam, Trad.X, Training and Women. These themes accounted for 29.11% of the coded responses.

The themes that did not correspond with the conceptual framework, but which emerged out of the data, accounted for 21.08% of the coded responses. These themes were; Biology, Economic, Option, Preg.X, and Pressure. As well, there were several themes that emerged that dealt solely with the women's decision to leave their professions. These themes were; Difficult, Fear, Guilt.W, Satisfied, Uncertain and Relation and accounted for 11.64% of the total responses coded.

Table 2
Ethnograph Themes and Corresponding Categories

Themes	H-1	H-2	H-3	Decision	Other
Balance	X				
Biology					X
Colleague			X		
Commit.P	X				
Comrade			X		
Conflict	X				
Difficult				X	
Economic					X
Emotional		X			
Entrance			X		
Family	X				
Fear				X	
Friends	X				
Fulfill		X			
Guilt.P	X				
Guilt.W				X	
Hours	X				
Ideology	X		X		
Option					X
Preg.X					X
Pressure				X	
Relation	X			X	
Satisfied				X	
Stress	X				
Trad.Fam			X		
Trad.X	X		X		
Training			X		
Uncertain				X	
Wife	X				
Women			X		

Table 3 and Table 4 summarize the frequency counts of the sort codes in three different ways; the overall frequency counts, frequency counts as a function of each individual focus group and frequency counts as a function of each profession represented in the sample.

Table 3
Total Frequency Distribution and Frequency Distribution
among the four Focus Groups

Theme/ Sort Code	Total N	Focus Group			
	= 498	#1 (n=8)	#2 (n=4)	#3 (n=5)	#4 (n=6)
Balance	18	6	1	5	6
Biology	15	7	3	2	3
Colleague	10	6	2	0	2
Commit.P	32	10	11	8	3
Comrade	5	3	2	0	0
Conflict	32	10	8	11	3
Difficult	8	5	3	0	0
Economic	17	3	11	2	1
Emotional	2	0	0	1	1
Entrance	20	3	7	5	5
Family	9	5	2	1	1
Fear	2	0	0	0	2
Friends	1	0	1	0	0
Fulfill	38	4	16	17	1
Guilt. P	6	5	1	0	0
Guilt. W	6	3	0	0	3
Hours	19	8	3	4	4
Ideology	67	25	8	20	14
Option	38	11	7	10	10
Preg. X	4	2	1	1	0
Pressure	31	13	7	8	3
Relation	9	0	5	0	4
Satisfied	26	13	6	3	4
Stress	15	6	4	2	3
Trad.Fam	7	3	0	3	1
Trad.X	19	5	4	7	3
Training	10	2	1	1	6
Uncertain	7	3	1	0	3
Wife	18	5	9	1	3
Women	7	3	0	3	1

Table 4
Frequency Distribution among the Six Professional Groups

Theme/ Sort Code	Profession					
	Lawyer (n=10)	Manager (n=4)	Science (n=2)	Physician (n=1)	Teacher (n=3)	Nurse (n=3)
Balance	12	3	0	2	1	0
Biology	6	0	5	0	2	2
Colleague	3	1	2	0	0	3*
Commit.P	16	6	1	0	6	3
Comrade	3	0	2	0	0	0
Conflict	21	1	2	1	5	2
Difficult	2	2	3	0	1	0
Economic	4	2	5	0	5	1
Emotional	2	0	0	0	0	0
Entrance	11	0	5	0	3	1
Family	5	0	2	1	0	1
Fear	1	1	0	0	0	0
Friends	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fulfill	17	1	5	0	10	5
Guilt.P	6	0	0	0	0	0
Guilt.W	2	2	0	1	0	1
Hours	9	2	1	4	1	2
Ideology	37	4	10	8	4	4
Option	19	4	4	1	7	3
Preg.X	3	0	0	0	1	0
Pressure	17	1	0	0	9	4
Relation	6	0	1	0	2	0
Satisfied	8	5	2	0	7	4
Stress	6	2	2	1	2	2
Trad.Fam	1	1	1	0	2	2
Trad.X	7	0	3	1	3	5
Training	8	0	0	0	0	2
Uncertain	4	1	0	1	1	0
Wife	11	4	1	1	1	0
Women	4	0	1	1	1	0

*There was one additional comment in this theme group that was unidentified.

Table 5 illustrates the theme/sort codes in order of frequency. Several of the theme/sort codes do not appear to be very important as the number of references to them is quite small. In fact, as can be seen in this table, fifteen of the thirty sort codes accounted for 81.27% of all coded responses. This suggests that some of the theme/sort codes were not important factors in these focus group discussions.

Table 5
Themes/Sort Codes in order of Frequency

Theme/Sort Code	N	% of Total N
Ideology	67	13.45%
Fulfill	38	7.63%
Option	38	7.63%
Commit.P	32	6.42%
Conflict	32	6.42%
Pressure	31	6.22%
Satisfied	26	5.22%
Entrance	20	4.01%
Hours	19	3.81%
Trad.X	19	3.81%
Balance	18	3.61%
Wife	18	3.61%
Economic	17	3.41%
Biology	15	3.01%
Stress	15	3.01%
Colleague	10	2.00%
Training	10	2.00%
Family	9	1.80%
Relation	9	1.80%
Difficult	8	1.60%
Trad.Fam	7	1.40%
Uncertain	7	1.40%
Women	7	1.40%
Guilt.P	6	1.20%
Guilt.W	6	1.20%
Comrade	5	1.00%
Preg.X	4	0.80%
Fear	2	0.40%
Emotional	2	0.40%
Guilt	1	0.20%
Friends	1	0.20%

There were seventeen themes/sort codes that were mentioned across all four focus groups, that is, one or more subjects mentioned that theme/sort code in each of the four focus groups that were conducted (see Table 6). These were Ideology, Fulfill, Option, Commit.P, Conflict, Pressure, Satisfied, Entrance, Hours, Trad.X, Balance, Wife, Economics, Biology, Stress, Training, and Family. These themes/sort codes accounted for 85.07% of all coded responses (N= 498).

Table 6
Themes/Sort Codes Common to all Professional Groups

Theme/Sort Code	N	% of Total N
Ideology	67	13.45%
Fulfill	38	7.63%
Option	38	7.63%
Commit.P	32	6.42%
Conflict	32	6.42%
Pressure	31	6.22%
Satisfied	26	5.22%
Entrance	20	4.01%
Hours	19	3.81%
Trad.X	19	3.81%
Balance	18	3.61%
Wife	18	3.61%
Economics	17	3.41%
Biology	15	3.01%
Stress	15	3.01%
Training	10	2.00%
Family	9	1.80%
	424	85.07%

There were six themes/sort codes (see Table 7) that were mentioned by representatives in each of the male dominated professions (Lawyers, Managers, Scientists, Doctor). These were Ideology, Option, Conflict, Wife, Hours, and Stress. These themes/sort codes accounted for 31.30% of all coded responses (N=498).

Table 7
Themes/Sort Codes Occurring in all Male Dominated Professions
(Lawyers, Managers, Scientists, Physician)

Theme/Sort Code	N	% of Total N
Ideology	59	11.84%
Option	28	5.62%
Conflict	25	5.02%
Wife	17	3.41%
Hours	16	3.21%
Stress	<u>11</u>	<u>2.20%</u>
	156	31.30%

There were fourteen common themes/sort codes (see Table 8) that were mentioned by representatives in each of the female dominated professions (Teachers and Nurses). These were Fulfill, Pressure, Satisfied, Option, Commit.P, Ideology, Trad.X, Conflict, Economics, Biology, Entrance, Stress, Trad.Fam, and Hours. These themes/sort codes accounted for 21.22% of all coded responses (N=498).

Table 8
Themes/Sort Codes Occurring in all Female Dominated Professions
(Teachers and Nurses)

Theme/Sort Code	N	% of Total N
Fulfill	15	3.01%
Pressure	13	2.61%
Satisfied	11	2.20%
Option	10	2.00%
Commit.P	9	1.80%
Ideology	8	1.60%
Trad.X	8	1.60%
Conflict	7	1.40%
Economics	6	1.20%
Biology	4	0.80%
Entrance	4	0.80%
Stress	4	0.80%
Trad.Fam	4	0.80%
Hours	3	0.60%
	106	21.22%

Of the thirty-one themes/sort codes that were identified, there were only five that appeared in all four focus groups and across all professional groups. These were Conflict, Hours, Ideology, Option, and Stress.

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory research was to identify factors that influenced the egression of professional women from their organizations. The guiding assumption to this research was that the male and female subuniverses of meaning within organizations were clashing as females were increasingly rejecting the male work ethos. It was proposed that three specific aspects of the masculine organization contributed to the attrition of professional women. These were the lack of awareness of links between work and family (directional hypothesis #1), the depersonalization of the workplace (directional hypothesis #2) and invisible barriers to advancement (directional hypothesis #3). The data from the four focus groups reinforced directional hypothesis #1 and directional hypothesis #3, but there was very little evidence to reinforce directional hypothesis #2. In addition, a variety of other factors not encompassed by the directional hypotheses emerged from the data. These additional factors have implications for future research with professional women.

Directional Hypothesis #1

The first directional hypothesis stated that the egression of professional women from their organizations was positively associated with the lack of recognition by the masculine organization of the links between work and family. This directional hypothesis was reinforced by the comments of the women; 49.19% of their comments referred in some way to this hypothesis.

There were several statements that illustrated that these women were seeking a balance in their lives between work and family and that they rejected the traditional male commitment to work to the neglect of the family. These women were consciously attempting to find a workable balance between work and family commitments which in essence, defied the traditional male work norms. These women were not prepared to forfeit their family for the sake of advancing within the profession.

"My family life has to be in line with my expectations and devoting all my time to my career wasn't going to allow time for my family - to get the balance that I wanted." (Lawyer-10)

In a sense, they seem to have internalized a different set of values from those promoted by the male organization. They were not willing to work the long hours required by the profession in order to advance their careers. This is in direct opposition to the view held by traditional males in the organization who typically had no qualms about working long hours.

"Also, I think, why kill yourself? Why beat your head against a brick wall? And for me, I really don't buy into the twelve hour day. Life is too short. When you get discouraged, your health goes on the line. I suppose we need to not glorify and buy into it as much." (Management-4)

"A lot of it is just hours and giving up everything you want." (Physician-1)

"Well, even not having a family, I just wasn't prepared to put the kind of hours into a law practice that would have been demanded." (Lawyer-5)

"I think for me I can certainly share the twelve hour days and the seven days a week which was one of the things that did me in." (Nurse-1)

"...did I want to spend eighteen hours a day doing this - was that what life was going to be all about?" (Lawyer-8)

"So for me the major factor was the stress level and the amount of work that I would have, the hours that I would have had to spend when I wasn't prepared to do that when I have a small child." (Lawyer-1)

Balancing work and family was extremely important to these women. And yet, oftentimes, the compromises that were formed were unsatisfactory to all parties involved. The women mentioned that they felt burnt out trying to maintain excellence at home and at work.

"If you want to have children, you balance it. It's very vital to have that balance. But I think, because of [being] a woman, you have got to up that balance because you have expectations on you that you have to

look after the children, have an outside career and look after your health and all those things. So it's difficult." (Lawyer-10)

When it became obvious that these trade-offs were not working, many of the women traded in their executive status for what they perceived to be a better personal and family life (Morrison et al., 1987). As they saw it, there were few other alternatives available to them. For many of them, the only recourse to obtain a satisfactory balance involved the abandonment of their careers. This allowed them to spend more time and effort on their families and on themselves, which had been precluded by their work responsibilities.

"For me to stay full-time, the whole profession would have to be different. I guess I just wanted a different lifestyle than other doctors." (Physician-1)

"And now I am working part-time and I'm still doing the motherhood thing and I guess I'm lucky - I've got the best of both." (Management-3)

These women seemed to have attempted to fulfill the role of "SuperMom" - a role in which the woman is to achieve at work and at home - but then decided that it wasn't worth the effort. This realization came slowly to many of the women and not until they had tried juggling work and family responsibilities.

"...being a mother is much harder than working but combining the two is just deadly. No matter what you do you feel like you are always making the wrong decision..." (Lawyer-1)

"You have to try and accept yourself and accept your own limitations. Or that's not even necessarily a limitation - it's just an understanding of how much you can do." (Teacher-3)

These women expressed conflict between their work lives and their home lives which was not expressed by corporate males even a decade ago and still rarely expressed by males today. The women found that this need to achieve a sense of balance between work and family was not supported by the corporate ethos. This is a finding that has been supported by other researchers. Morrison et al., (1987) found that the women in their sample also reported a lack of support as they tried to achieve this balance between work and family. The women in the focus groups had made a conscious choice to curtail work responsibilities in favour of family responsibilities, an antithetical position taken by the masculine organization.

"Then you try to go back from a 150% commitment to a 100% commitment, then you're rocking the boat."
(Lawyer-1)

Despite the fact that they were not supported by their organizations in their decision to leave, these women still opted

in favour of abandoning their careers. They were more concerned with fostering familial and personal relationships than they were with advancing up the corporate ladder. Promotions and the accompanying pretige were still coveted goals, but not as important as other goals in their lives. Some of these other goals were identified by Morrison et al., (1987);

"...a number of executives are torn between working and - in the larger sense - living. They want to have children, spend time with their husband, support their parents, build friendships and do other things that they postponed to reach the level they did" (p.151).

The women in this study also indicated that these goals were important to them;

"Basically it's a choice between career and other life." (Lawyer-2)

"And I'm not prepared to sacrifice the family part at this stage for the professional life." (Lawyer-6)

This choice between work and family was not supported by the organizational ethos because, as stated by Morrison et al., (1987), women in organizations "...who were given an opportunity to fill a high-level position were expected to put the job first, family second (if at all)" (p.63). Although this fit very nicely with the expectations of the organization, it did not fit in with the expectations of the women themselves, the result being

conflict between the women and the male organizations in which they worked.

"I mean, just because I have a profession doesn't mean that I didn't want to have hands-on responsibility for my kids." (Lawyer-3)

This trade-off was not without its costs, however. Since this type of action was not endorsed by the organizational ethos, these women often found themselves out of the race, in a sense. They were no longer considered to be on an equal basis with their male colleagues who had devoted themselves completely to the organization. Instead, they fell a notch on the organizational ladder because of their decision to leave.

"...but I wouldn't be a senior partner of my firm with my decision to spend more time with my kids, because you have to put in the years and you have to put in the hours to move up the corporate ladder in the firm...but they wouldn't make me a partner now if they didn't feel I would give them 100% commitment."
(Lawyer-1)

"...you can't drudge up the ladder professionally if you've got kids. Maybe part-time work and parenting are alright. But my husband works and I would question his being able to parent." (Lawyer-8)

"...a woman isn't really encouraged to take time off to raise her children, she's expected to do that on the side somehow." (Nurse-2)

The conflict these women felt between work and home often centered around their commitment to their families and the relationships they were having with other people in their lives. It became obvious through the focus group discussions that relationships were extremely important to these women. In fact, the lack of relationships or the perceived poor quality of relationships were often cited as factors that influenced their decision to leave their organization.

"It was the relationship that I really felt strongly about. I was very concerned about the cost on it."

(Lawyer-7)

"The emotional costs and relationship costs - I was near divorce two or three times." (Lawyer-2)

When these women were not able to devote time and energy to maintaining and fostering relationships, they tended to experience feelings of guilt. This was particularly true in terms of their relationships with their families. The women felt guilty that they were not devoting enough time to their families.

"I felt a lot of guilt, even today when I was working in my basement and my son was going to the park with our babysitter. And I said, 'Are you going to the park?' and, he's eighteen months old, 'Ya', and I

said, 'O.K., go to the park' and he lifted his arms to the babysitter to take him and ohhhhh... I felt a twinge today and yet I had a good day at work, I liked what I was doing, I had a good day, and I still have this guilt that I'm doing something wrong." (Lawyer-1)

They seemed to have very high standards in regards to the upbringing of their children. Perhaps it was these standards that also influenced them to leave. The women seemed to have internal expectations about how their children should be raised and the environment they should experience. When alternate caregivers did not reach this standard, the women were distressed, often distressed enough to question their commitment to work. They often made the decision to take over caregiving responsibilities themselves to ensure that it met their standards. They also had very high standards for themselves as parents. They expected a great deal from themselves in terms of fulfilling the parental role. When they perceived that they were falling short in this role, they devoted themselves to it full-time.

"I considered having a nanny and going that whole route of getting all the household help for support. But, decided that that wasn't going to satisfy my needs in relation to my children. And there simply wasn't time to do that and practice law." (Lawyer-4)

"And I've often wondered...how working parents can do this. How they can go out, and how they can travel, how can they be involved in the seminars and the

evening meetings and throw themselves into your career at the extent of what's happening with these kids? If you're the kind of personality, if you're professional, then you're going to be professional in the way you study with your kids and hands-on stuff."

(Lawyer-3)

"I don't know how people can think it's possible for a woman to put in eight hours and then come home to two little kids. I don't know what's left to give to the kids. Then you're just a housekeeper." (Teacher-2)

These women also expressed a desire to be at home with their children, experiencing things with them as their children grew. Perhaps their decision to leave work and remain at home with their children was more for their own sake than for that of the children. Several of the women who had children voiced a need to be with their children and their families.

"I think children are a time for enjoyment. When they come home with that first dog or something, you really have to be there. Two hours later when you come in from work, it's not the same, you know, that spontaneity from your child is gone. And no money in the world can replace that. You know, their first steps or their first word. Nothing can replace that. And I think alot of women who aren't home regret it later because you can't go back in time." (Science-1)

"I guess I'm in a euphoria, but I still need to be with my children." (Teacher-2)

Another problem in the overlap between work and family for these women, was their self-declared need to have a "wife" or support people at home. They sensed that if they had had someone doing the traditional wifely duties, such as cleaning, cooking, and caregiving, that they would have been better able to manage the stresses between work and family responsibilities. As it was, without this household support they were actually working at two full-time jobs; one outside of the home, and one inside of the home.

"I think I'd have to say help on the home-front. I don't think as a teacher I was earning enough to afford a full-time nanny or housekeeper or that sort of thing. So it was either I do everything myself or I do nothing." (Teacher-3)

"...for men, it's sometimes easier, because they have their wives and their mothers doing their laundry and so on." (Lawyer-7)

"I'd like to go home and have someone make me a meal."
(Science-2)

"I would need more emotional support, like a wife at home to look after me, more financial support, to have my meals ready for me." (Lawyer-7)

This lack of a 'wife' or household support not only affected their performance at home, it also affected their performance at work because they were not able to devote themselves completely to the organization. Instead, they also had to balance family concerns. Traditionally, males have had a full-time wife at home to see to the needs of the family. This allowed them to devote themselves to their work unencumbered by familial responsibilities. Traditional men have managed to be so successful within the organizational milieu because their wives assumed familial responsibilities (Friedman, 1988). Modern working women do not have this luxury. As Friedman (1988) stated:

"Men are seen as bringing more than one full-time person to the job, since their wives are viewed as an additional asset. Women, in contrast, are seen as bringing less than one full-time person, since their families are viewed as a distraction" (p.77).

Traditional expectations of the roles of males and females in our society also placed additional stress upon these women as they attempted to achieve balance between their work and home lives. Although a majority of women are now working outside the home, it is still expected that they will also maintain the responsibilities of running the household and of caring for the children. Basically, this means they are holding two full-time jobs. Women in the focus groups expressed awareness of the fact that some of these residual beliefs about male and female roles at work and at home affected them and their decision to leave the organization.

"We're a dual career family and that really is the problem because when it comes right down to it, I was the primary caretaker." (Lawyer-3)

Overall, the women expressed a need to achieve balance between work and family. When the organization did not support them in this endeavor, they choose to leave the organization. They slowly came to the realization that they were not super-women, capable of having and doing it all.

"...children do take a great deal of time, they are alot more demanding that I thought a child would be. And I find that I can't have it all." (Lawyer-6)

In addition, they stressed the importance of being an active parent for their children and of being an active participant in relationships with others. Some of the women felt that working both outside and inside the home could be achieved, while others felt that it could not, given the restrictions in our present society.

"I think motherhood and having a career are incompatible." (Lawyer-9)

Much of the data supported the hypothesis advanced by Schwartz (1989). Schwartz proposed that there are two types of working women; 'career-primary women' who put their careers ahead of familial concerns and 'career-and-family women' who desire to pursue careers while at the same time actively participate in the rearing of their children. Schwartz (1989) stated that many of

these women, "...are willing to trade some career growth and compensation for freedom from the constant pressure to work long hours and weekends" (p.71).

Most of the subjects in this study seemed to fit this pattern identified by Schwartz (1989). Their careers were important to them, but they left because their organizations did not allow them to have an equal commitment to their family and to their personal relationships. Schwartz (1989) stated that organizations that allow women to leave lose the initial investment they made in training them and they also lose because these women could become motivated middle managers. In fact, many of the women in the focus group stated that they looked for a lesser commitment from their organizations, such as flex-time or a shorter work week, but were unable to find them. As such, they came to the conclusion that they had to leave their organization in order to satisfy their needs in relation to their families. Many of the women felt that they would not return to work because their organizations were not open to the idea of allowing them to be committed to their families as well as to the organization.

"No, I wouldn't go back to work, it's too demanding...I don't think I could work full-time and have the stamina to function normally." (Management-1)

Directional Hypothesis #2

The second directional hypothesis stated that the egression of professional women from organizations was positively associated with the depersonalization of the workplace ethos advocated by the masculine organization. Specifically, this referred to the restriction of emotions within the workplace, especially behavioural expressions of emotions that have traditionally been associated with women, such as crying. The women in the present study did not identify this factor as an important influence in their decision to leave. There were a few references to emotions in the workplace, but not enough to warrant further development of this directional hypothesis.

"I've discovered now how to use my intuition in my work in balance with my emotions and products as well. But it's not really acceptable in that profession to do that." (Lawyer-10)

A more notable finding in relation to this directional hypothesis was that women found the depersonalization of the workplace as a whole unacceptable, not just the repression of emotions as unacceptable. They seemed to reject the entire ethos, not just one aspect of it.

"I didn't find it a terribly satisfying profession."
(Lawyer-6)

The information that emerged out of the focus groups, suggested that these women were looking for something more out of

work; they did not want to just put in their eight or more hours and go home. They wanted to be fulfilled and satisfied in their work roles. If they could not achieve this sense of personal satisfaction and if they were not fulfilled in their work roles, they made the decision to leave their organizations.

"...I'm totally drained of anything in that field that I enjoyed." (Science-2)

Most of the subjects indicated that they would return to their organizations only if they could experience personal fulfillment in it. They indicated that they would only return to work if it offered them some intrinsic rewards such as satisfaction and fulfillment.

"It's our time to go out and actually enjoy the work. A lot of women you find they go to work and they're trying to juggle everything and they're not even happy at work. At times they just have too much to cope with." (Science-1)

"I think I'm ready to look for something that's fulfilling but I don't want it to cut into my personal time too much. I'm going to look for something that I want to make a career out of that I really enjoy and that I'm not just doing it for the money. It's going to be something that I want when I go to work."
(Teacher-1)

"Now I find that I'm not emotionally available for my niece. I'm too exhausted; now I'm working towards personal fulfillment and for my niece - financial, emotional and personal relationships." (Lawyer-2)

This striving for self-fulfillment by women in their work endeavors was also noted by Schwartz (1989) who hypothesized that women's traditional role has taught them to strive for quality in what they do, for example, in relation to the upbringing of children.

"This traditional focus may explain women's continuing tendency to search for more than monetary reward - intrinsic significance, social importance, meaning - in what they do. This too makes them more likely than men to leave the corporation in search of other values" (Schwartz, 1989, p.67-68).

This rejection of the organizational ethos in favour of personal fulfillment was noted among several of the women. Subjects in all four focus groups mentioned the importance of fulfillment in their work environment. It appears that women are entering the male work world with a different set of values from those of traditional males. These differing expectations are causing conflict between women and the male organization to the extent that women are choosing to leave organizations in pursuit of personal fulfillment.

Directional Hypothesis #3

The third directional hypothesis stated that the egression of professional women from organizations was positively associated with the invisible barriers within the masculine organization that prevented them from fully utilizing their skills and from advancing to top level positions. There were several comments that emerged from the focus groups that reinforced this directional hypothesis. The women's comments referred to the lack of collegial support, problems with entering the field and dealing with the ideology present within the field, traditional expectations of women and men, socialization differences between men and women and problems between women and women in the field.

A primary factor affecting the decision of these women to leave organizations had to do with the ideology of the male organization that promoted stereotypes about men and women, that supported the old boys' club and that excluded women from establishing equal, reciprocal relationships with their male colleagues.

"...one of them was lack of peer support; it was a very lonely position up there at the top. I never really felt that I had anybody I could turn to when things were falling apart." (Nurse-1)

"I think that it was a male world with its own culture. I found it was something that was very difficult to crack." (Lawyer-7)

"Never make it, especially for women. You have to be so totally male-oriented." (Lawyer-2)

"The good times in my job were really rare. I need more self-esteem to go back. I would need more buzz from my work peers and superiors. It's such an archaic system right now." (Lawyer-7)

Several of the women noted that they had a disadvantage in obtaining merit for their work as compared to their male colleagues. Often, this bias was instigated by the males themselves, at other times, it was a symptom of the male organizational system itself.

"And I have been consistently shoved out of jobs, sabotaged in getting my degree, sabotaged on my job, had my thesis and data base stolen. And it's the same small group of men perpetrating the same actions. If you're a woman, and you're smart, and you're good at what you do - you're dead meat." (Science-2)

"I articulated with a firm that was all men and pretty conservative, but I think they wanted a woman working there. So I think that was why I was hired to articulate and I could've stayed on there and that would have been part of it - the token female." (Lawyer-5)

"My disadvantage where I am - it's just being a woman period." (Science-2)

This inherent bias against women within organizations prevented them from aspiring to the top levels of management and from attaining merit for their work. This resulted in a deadlock and stagnation in the organization which frustrated these professional women. Morrison et al., (1987) referred to this phenomenon as the 'glass ceiling'. This sense of frustration at the lack of advancement was another factor that influenced their decision to leave their organizations.

"It's like I can't even get in the door and the organization has no commitment to ensuring that I have a long enough term of employment to become indeterminant. They deliberately dead-end you, just before your five years are up, give you a one month break in service and you're behind. So there's no advancement - I'm not even in the door - all I've got is like, one big toe in the door. Forget about the glass ceiling inside the door; I can't even get past the door. And I've been with my current organization for nine years." (Science-2)

The women made reference to the fact that they were also dead-ended in their professions simply because males continue to dominate the workplace. As such, the males tended to reap more of the tangible benefits of work such as promotions, prestige and wages. This also served to increase the frustration these women felt with the male organization; an organization that rewarded males for conformity to the organizational standards while

ignoring the contributions of its women workers. The women in this study were not content to adopt that organizational mentality and therefore opted out of their professions.

"I think the medical profession is partly the male domination, which is definitely still there, but there are females who can fit into it if they are willing to put up with the garbage." (Physician-1)

"Even though the nurses are doing the majority of the work in the hospital, the status, prestige, honour and respect goes to the doctor." (Nurse-1)

"There weren't women in the higher echelons though. The women are all the teachers; the workers." (Teacher-3)

"But there is still the old-fashioned attitude that the doctor is still head honcho ... so although there are many more nurses and most nurses are women, we still don't have the power because of the male role of the doctor. So even though there are less of them than there are of us, they still have the power; they still have the final say. They decide what happens most often." (Nurse-1)

As discussed earlier, the organizational ethos tends to closely fit the expectations of traditional males while it is in direct opposition to the expectations held by modern females. Not only do males and females have differing expectations of the

organization, the organization expects different things from its male and female workers. The women in the focus groups indicated that the standards for men and women in the workplace differed. It seems that increased performance and consistency in one's work was expected from the women but not necessarily from the men. Again, this was a factor that influenced women's decision to leave the profession.

"So you have to be better and you have to work twice as hard to prove that you're twice as good or just as good." (Lawyer-1)

"...somehow the women are still carrying more of the load than the men even though they're both equal."
(Physician-1)

"But I still find that women have to be better. You have to be not just good, you have to be much better...you still find that a man can get away with some things - they are part of the old boys' network...I find that you have to be better than a man in my profession to get their respect and if you falter at all they zero in on you and they think it may be your hormones and stuff." (Lawyer-1)

"We had to work twice as hard [as the men] but I felt that we had to be totally consistent, too. We had to have a consistent line, we couldn't waiver off that line...the men were allowed to fluctuate if their sales were up or down, that was acceptable, but I had to have an even keel. Which meant I had to travel further, maybe solicit harder, really know the latest innovations in the chemical world. A lot of the journals would come in from Germany so I then had to spend time trying to practice my German so I could understand what these new books were about, whereas the men - they were quite willing to wait for the translation to come out - but I had to get that information then and now because if I didn't, my sales line would fluctuate. So I found it very hard."
(Science-1)

"The men would sometimes get by because it was the old boy network or it was their dad's firm. Again, it comes back to women have to work harder and you know that they're going to be more thorough..." (Lawyer-1)

This corresponds with what was reported by Morrison et al., (1987) who found that female executives were expected to have more strengths and fewer weaknesses than their male colleagues. These researchers also found evidence of differing organizational expectations for female and male workers:

"...women often have to meet the demanding performance standards set for executive men while being seen as outdoing the men in areas where women are traditionally perceived as weak (eg. commitment, toughness, career risks)" (Morrison et al., 1987, p.48).

Because of these unrealistic expectations placed upon them in the organizational environment, women increasingly are opting to abandon the organization.

Another disadvantage affecting women's advancement in careers was that they were not included in the old boys' clubs within organizations. These refer to the informal associations or networks formed within organizations between groups of people. In these cases, the groups consisted of males, in which females were excluded. In some cases, the men themselves excluded the women while in other cases, the wives of the male workers fostered this alienation between male and female workers. As discussed earlier, this prevents women from forming informal allegiances among co-workers that could serve to advance their careers.

"In the field, all I can say is that it is very much an old boys' club..." (Lawyer-2)

"...there's alot of socializing that goes on and it is very hard for a lone woman or a few women with male whose - their wives automatically assume that you are after their husbands at Christmas parties and what have you. They assume that if you had to go on the

road with their husbands there had to be something going on even regardless that you were happily married yourself or whatever. So I found that I had to keep my distance, you know, which meant that they thought I was anti-social because I wouldn't go to the social gatherings after work or I didn't go out and have a drink at lunchtime or I didn't always opt to go on business trips because I knew it would cause more trouble if I went than if I chose to stay and work."

(Science-1)

Traditional expectations of men and women also served to act as an invisible barrier to women's entry to and advancement within organizations. The women noted that often they were not taken seriously by their contemporaries because their abilities as professionals were doubted because they were female. The male organizational ethos advocates the view that women are incapable of functioning as competently as men. The falsity of this view caused misunderstandings between men and women and resulted in considerable frustration for the women attempting to act professionally within their organizations.

"...I think the work throughout of women is discounted. The crown attorneys didn't take you seriously, the judges didn't take you seriously."

(Lawyer-7)

"You'd be speaking to another lawyer and there would be so many 'dears' and 'sweethearts' or 'Are you the

secretary?'...I used to interview clients and take particulars and go through all of the information and they used to say to me, 'So now when do we get to see the lawyer?'" (Lawyer-6)

"...and they always thought they were talking to the secretary and they really were embarrassed that they weren't talking to the secretary and they would have to backtrack and there's your edge. Or else they think you are so sweet, you know, 'Hello, dear' and I'd say, 'Hello DEAR' and they'd kind of ease off as though, 'Well, she's a pushover and then you'd 'oomph' - stick it to them; you'd have the advantage and you oppress your point - just because they misunderstood, they thought, 'Well, because she wears a skirt that she doesn't have a brain' and I often out-negotiated people on that point simply because they just took me for granted and you should never take us for granted."
(Lawyer-1)

"And I had to fight hard to get the job in the first place because one of the things asked me was, 'You're going to get pregnant and leave anyway.' And I said, 'But if I'm the best qualified for the job then I feel that I deserve it.' I went back two or three times for an interview and then afterwards discovered that maybe some of the males only had to go once. I decided after that that I wasn't going to lay down. I

decided on principle that I wanted that job."

(Science-1)

"And every firm that I articulated for had this notorious female that they always put up as the example of the woman who got pregnant and then abandoned the firm. And this was their reason for not hiring another woman, this notorious woman, and every firm had one."

(Lawyer-6)

Traditional expectations of men's and women's roles in society at large, and not just within the organization, also influenced these women to leave their careers. Traditional expectations of men entail that they will secure outside employment in order to provide for their families. Traditional expectations of women entail that they will remain in the home to provide care to their children and their husband. While these traditional expectations are slowly giving way to different lifestyles in work and family (Kingsbury, 1987) their influence is still pervasive and influential in our society. This influence of traditional expectations was often instrumental in the decision of these women to stay at home.

"So when I announced that I was having a baby they automatically assumed that I would stay home because that's the way it has always been in the generations before." (Science-1)

"But at that point it really seemed like we want one of us home with the kids. So then who quits their job? And guess who? I was the one that quit, in spite of the fact that I always loved my work. I looked forward to going in the morning, I looked forward to coming back from holidays and going to work. He didn't like his work, but I was the one that quit to stay home with the kids." (Nurse-3)

"...and it was part of our decision we both realized we were more traditional than we thought and we both wanted it to be the mommy who would stay home more than the daddy..." (Lawyer-1)

"...usually the husband's the one who's expected to maintain the career path." (Lawyer-4)

"About the same time that I discovered the women's movement, a few years back, he discovered that this should affect men too somehow. And he began to feel very keenly, even before our children left home, the responsibility of bringing home the paycheck. And, 'Hey, (Nurse-3), how come we can't share this; why did it have to be me, why can't it be you?' And I kind of, at some points, wanted to throw up my hands in horror and say, 'My God, that's what I wanted years back then and didn't get - I would've loved it then.'" (Nurse-3)

"If there was a conflict in the evening, I would always have to, and continue to, defer to my husband and yet why, I don't know. I suppose it's practically all we ever learnt." (Lawyer-3)

Socialization factors were also cited by these women as playing a large role in their decisions regarding their careers. Some mentioned the fact that if they had been brought up differently, socialized as are traditional males in our society, that they would have had different aspirations and expectations of themselves and they would have been better prepared to handle themselves in the male work world. Instead, these women were socialized to adopt the traditional female pattern of behaviour which tends to limit behaviours alternatives such as career choices.

"During which I applied for law, which I'd always thought as a kid, 'If I were a boy, I'd be a lawyer.' But as a girl, I had never really considered it."
(Lawyer-4)

"I think part of it, I'd have to be, I mean, in fact be brought up differently...I wonder if men are happier than women because they 'can do anything possible' and they aren't limited by their sex."
(Lawyer-7)

"I guess it's partly my own failing but I also would have had to have had a different upbringing. I needed

more of a sense of self - I was so insecure and self-effacing." (Lawyer-8)

The lack of appropriate models in the male work world also had a negative effect on these women. Most of the models in the field were male, and the women in this study had difficulty in adopting these behavioural stances because they were in opposition to their own values. Again, this is evidence of the expectations of the male organizational world clashing with the expectations of its female workers. This lack of appropriate role models meant that these women were responsible for paving their own way in an ethos made up of male ideals.

"...there's the lack of role models, which also makes it difficult. I mean, who do I want to model myself after...?" (Lawyer-7)

"...the role models that did exist in criminal law, for example, were the stereotypes of how you destroy a witness on the witness stand. I mean all of those models are very male." (Lawyer-7)

There was also some evidence that where senior women were available to act as role models, they were unable or unwilling, for whatever reasons, to do this. Thus, some of the women experienced a lack of support not only from the males in the organization, but also from the other women in the organization. Others did not find this to be the case.

"I sometimes find that women are their own worst enemies. That rather than spare somebody else the pain that they've gone through, they'll just say 'Well, I went through it. She can find her own way through the system.'" (Teacher-3)

"I don't think I've ever found that. I'm always amazed at how well women work together because you hear these stories." (Lawyer-4)

Decision to Leave

Many of the women referred to the feelings and reasons they had for leaving the organization. It became obvious in this study, as in the one done by Morrison et al., (1987) that opting out of one's career was a decision that was very difficult to make. The women referred to difficulty in making the decision and the fear and uncertainty they felt when they finally did leave their careers.

"I'm caught in that dual thing. Like, 'Damn you, you're not pushing me out' but at the same time, I'm burning out." (Science-2)

"I was very scared when I left my career - the unknown is scary. To step out into who knows what - that's pretty scary." (Management-4)

"I think that's a decision that sort of gnaws at a lot of us. It's a very major thing, whether you stay at home with your children or change professions for

whatever reasons, you sort of gnaw it and after, I think as Management-2 mentioned, you still sort of look at the want ads as they come out every week-end."

(Management-3)

Several of the women also noted that they felt guilty about leaving their careers, especially since they had worked so hard to attain rank and respectability within their organizations. Many of the women expressed concern that if they had only persisted longer in their struggle, they may have overcome the barriers and conflicts between work and family obligations.

"So there is a bit of guilt there. I sense that, you know, I spent those years learning that and I should be doing it somehow - I should be fitting it in or doing it part-time." (Lawyer-8)

"I guess you always feel that guilt as though you just gave up somewhere - you just didn't push hard enough." (Physician-1)

"At the time I felt terribly guilty and was trying to do something else at the same time and felt that it wasn't enough. I felt that I should be the super-mom too." (Management-2)

"But there is also a fairly large part of me that feels like you do <referring to Lawyer-7>, sort of the road not taken and I often question as to the fact that I didn't give it enough of a chance, that I

should have challenged it more - for a couple more years - to really see whether it had all the negative feelings about it that I still carry in my gut. I can still pull them out ten years later." (Lawyer-8)

However, the overwhelming response of these women in reference to their decision to leave was one of satisfaction. Although the decision to leave was difficult to make, and although they felt fear, uncertainty and guilt as a result of the decision, most of the women reported satisfaction and few regrets with the decision after it was made. Leaving their organizations was seen by many of the women as the only alternative to alleviate the conflicts between work and family, that is, the conflicts between their differing expectations and the expectations of the male organization.

"It makes our life much less stressful, there was time for everybody; myself, my husband, my children, it's just much better." (Nurse-2)

"I sweated over the decision before I made it - as soon as I made it I knew it was the right one."
(Management-1)

"I'm happy to be out of the system. I'm in control. I call the shots. I realize it was sort of drift sort of thing, but a positive drift."(Management-4)

"...I do feel good about it, because I was very unhappy where I was and I was having alot of tough

problems and I think they were caused by stress."

(Lawyer-9)

"...then finally the time comes when you know you've made the right decision and you're happy about it and no matter what want ads or whatever friends say or whatever, you've made the right decision - you feel good about it and I felt good about it for all this time and I'm glad I did it and as I say, I'm back into writing and I'll work as little or as much as I want at it but still the decision was made and it was the right one for me." (Management-3)

Some of the other women displayed some sense of growth in maturity as a result of making such a difficult decision that was oftentimes not supported by their colleagues, superiors, family and friends. In making the decision to leave their profession, they seemed to have gained insights into their own personal lives and their own sense of priorities.

"But I don't regret it. It gave me the backbone to go on to face other things in my life. I think every experience that you have is good." (Science-1)

Other Findings

In addition to the data that reinforced the directional hypotheses and the data that referred specifically to the women's decision to leave their professions, there were data that came out of the focus groups as a function of the interaction of the participants that were not accounted for by the directional hypotheses. Regardless, this information is still important for future research efforts in this area. The two most frequent references concerned women's option to leave their careers and the contradictory pressure against them doing so.

The women in the focus groups noted the fact that they were willing and able to leave their careers in pursuit of other goals such as personal happiness and satisfaction. However, they recognized that their male colleagues were not as free to do this, perhaps because they have too deeply internalized the masculine ethos embraced by organizations in our society. Schwartz (1989) suggested that men do not see the option of leaving one's career, even for a minor period of time, such as after the birth of a child, because such behaviour would be viewed as a betrayal of commitment to the organization even if the company allowed for paternity leave.

"Women have the option of having a baby and taking their maternity leave; it's more acceptable for a woman to make a career change than for a man. And I find that definitely is the case." (Lawyer-1)

The women in this study seemed to find this lack of choice among men a state to be pitied. It would seem that these participants viewed the option to leave one's career as an advantage of being a woman in our society. Traditional societal expectations decree the acceptability of a woman staying at home, but not so for a man. Maynard (1989) stated that male bosses do not understand why a man would choose to stay home even if the company offered paternity leave. Men who do choose to stay at home are viewed with suspicion and regarded as effeminate.

"...I think that one of the major advantages of being a women in our profession is that we do have choice; whereas I find that most of my male colleagues will not consider a career change even though they may be unhappy or very unhappy because they've got the burden - men are expected to do it. (Lawyer-1)

"It's socially acceptable still for women to back off their careers and be more concerned about home. It's just easier, I think, for women in that situation just to back off than for men." (Management-4)

"No, I've spoken to many of my [male] colleagues who would like to try something else, but they just can't - they don't have the courage." (Lawyer-1)

"...I know quite a few women, that I went to law school with, who aren't practicing and not necessarily to stay home and raise a family. They're just doing

other things and the men aren't, and yet they [the men] don't seem to like it any better - they seem tragic." (Lawyer-5)

It seems then that women are freer to abandon their careers in pursuit of other goals without serious repercussions from society that perhaps men would experience. The women in this study did not appear to be as committed to their organizations as perhaps are traditional men. Instead, when they experienced conflicts between organizational expectations and their own expectations, they felt compelled to abandon the source of their frustration; the organization.

"And so the room is there for me to go back if I want to. It's just that I don't know if I want to."
(Lawyer-7)

"I went out and found a good life for myself and I was offered a job and I said, 'I'm sorry, I'm too busy - I can't go out to work, I have too much else to do.' So I had the opportunity, but I couldn't take it because I was too busy. I thought that it was really nice that I could say, 'I'm sorry I have too many other things in my life to go out to work now, but maybe later.' But I also have the confidence that I felt if I wanted, when my children are older and they were in school, that I want a new career for myself, I can go back out to school and I can follow a path for myself because I don't feel that's over or whatever. I'm

past it. I don't feel that - whereas at one time I felt my life was over and now I know it's just beginning. I could start again whenever I choose."

(Science-1)

Schwartz (1989) explained this greater freedom of women to leave their careers by illustrating that women traditionally have been socialized to see themselves as free. Even when women stayed in the home full-time, they were autonomous and able to make their own decisions. When their children left home, they were free to do what they wanted with their lives.

"To the extent that this tradition of freedom lingers subliminally, women tend to bring to their employment a sense that they can choose to change jobs or careers at will, take time off, or reduce their hours" (Schwartz, 1989, p.67)

Perhaps as work and family patterns continue to adapt and change to modern expectations, men as well as women, will become freer to exercise options in their choice of commitment to work and family. However, at present, males seem to be more restricted in their behavioural patterns than are females when it comes to experimenting with alternate lifestyles.

Although these women felt free to leave their careers, and did so, they also noted non-traditional societal pressures that were against them leaving the organization. They noted that family and friends attempted to pressure them to return to work using a variety of tactics. This pressure to return to work

surprised many of the women because they were expecting the traditional pressures for a women to stay at home to preside in society.

"I'm happy with that decision. But other people can't deal with it. But he [referring to her physician] says this is women's liberation, you should be able to have a choice now. He says it is the great irony that when we are supposed to be able to choose to stay home full-time or work full-time or part-time or have kids or not have kids, he says it's ironic that now we're being slotted into these roles where people are expecting super-mom and super-women all the time."

(Lawyer-1)

"Don't you find that the tide is completely turned now if you want to spend full-time at home as opposed to working part-time or full-time out of the home or if you want to be in the home full-time, people don't understand anymore?" (Lawyer-1)

"One of my colleagues isn't working at all. We are all kind of surprised, she doesn't have a child, she doesn't do volunteer work and she's just not working at all and it's very surprising to all of us. I find that it has switched from your situation to people who are not coming back. It's not 'if you're coming back', it's 'when'". (Lawyer-1)

"It is presumed that you will work; you will either work full-time or part-time, but that you will work and if you don't, people think of you as being odd."

(Lawyer-1)

The pressure to return to work came from a variety of sources including family, friends, acquaintances and even from the women themselves.

"And he [referring to her father] was horrified that I was giving up this career that I had worked towards for so many years. I worked my way up in the hierarchy and now I'm just going to throw it all away. My family was very concerned about what I was doing. I think they thought I lost it there for a while. They came around." (Nurse-1)

"I've dealt with a lot of guilt about that and I felt inadequate for a few years after I stayed home with my children that I wasn't going back to work. I had friends who played on me that I wasn't fulfilling myself by not going back to work. 'And what does Nurse-2 do at home all day' and I had a friend actually say to me that it must be very boring staying at home." (Nurse-2)

"I find too, that I think when you have quite a bit of education and training in a particular area, outsiders put quite a bit of pressure on you to use it. They

say, 'Oh, of course after all of those years.' And you might not want to, but people are saying, 'Oh, well of course you should or you will forget it. Oh, of course you should be using it; oh yes, you wouldn't want it to go to waste.' Well it wasn't a waste, I wanted to do it, I did it, and if I don't care to practice - that's my business. But somehow that pressure's going in the other direction than you expected - for women used to be expected to stay at home, and now they're also coming at you from the other side, saying, 'No, get out.'" (Lawyer-4)

"As my children age...I feel like a fair amount of pressure on me, I'm imposing it on myself, that I should be doing something already..." (Lawyer-6)

"There's always a sort of feeling that you're being left behind by people who are moving ahead."
(Lawyer-5)

The women also made several references to economics and how it has affected their lives and their decision to leave their careers. Some women found that the issue of economics positively affected their decision to leave their careers because they had the second income of their husbands to fall back on to ensure the continued economic viability of their family.

"...I wouldn't have been able, or it would have been very difficult to quit. But, having my husband

working made the decision easier. I found that having a second income allows me to do what I want."

(Management-4)

"I know that when I was married it was easier for me to consider a career change because I had some other second income there that backed me up. I'm scared shit, excuse the language, of making a change now; of being unemployed." (Science-2)

"I didn't have to worry about who was going to pay for the bread and butter, so that was the key for me - I was able to do whatever I wanted." (Lawyer-10)

Other women referred to the fact that economic factors operated against their working in a profession because it was costing them too much money to work. Often it cost them more money to work than what they were making in salary even though they were engaged in professional occupations, typically associated with higher levels of income.

"It was costing me money to go into work." (Lawyer-3)

"But the tax laws...you either have to be out there making alot of money as a wife and mother or forget it about it - it's not worth your while doing something part-time, financially it's not feasible."

(Teacher-2)

The lack of disposable income as a direct result of the decision to leave their careers was also a factor mentioned by some of the women. This decrease in income was a very real consequence of their decision, however, the women still expressed satisfaction with their original decision to leave although it meant that they could not exist at the standard of living they had earlier.

"I'm very happy with my decision other than the fact that money is a little bit tight on one income with two children. I would like to have a little bit of recognition in the tax laws, sort of society's view - I mean everybody's gung-ho to have universal publicly funded daycare, but for women who stay home to raise their own children, there's nothing." (Teacher-2)

There were also several references to the fact that biology, or biological sex, was a factor that influenced these women in their work lives. Some referred to the fact that their biological sex and traditional expectations of their biological sex interfered with their work duties. For example, men in the organization would blame a woman's mood or performance at work on her monthly period.

"...I thought to myself, 'I would rather be with a man at this stage' where I felt I could hold my own because if you get too bad they tend to think it is the time of the month or if you take a day off it is the time of the month. If they are rude to you on the

phone, that is acceptable; but if you are rude back they always have an excuse." (Science-1)

Other women referred to biology as a major factor in their decision to leave their professions simply because females are the only sex capable of childbearing. This biological function, for many women, interfered with their professional lives and the climb up the corporate ladder.

"I think that our society has now moved far enough to credit women with the role we must play in childbearing; to give them the breaks, to understand that, 'Yes, you have the uterus - you have to have the baby. You have the breasts, you have to nurse the baby and we understand that and we're not going to dock you or degrade you or pass you over for promotion because of that and we know you have to have the kids so we want to make a long term commitment with you and when you're ready to come back, we will be ready to have you on the basis that will make you happy.' I mean, that's an ideal world. I think we are moving towards it and there have been great strides in certain professions, but we are not there yet."
(Lawyer-1)

"Well, the childbearing responsibilities were a disadvantage." (Lawyer-10)

The other reference to biology attested to the fact that some of these women were aware that they were approaching an age when it would soon be biologically impossible to conceive a child. For those women who wanted children, then, this factor influenced their decision to leave their organizations. Bearing a child took precedence over achievement within one's profession because of the time limit on having a child.

"Now I'm getting beyond the biological age to have a child. It's a very difficult decision to make."

(Lawyer-7)

Another interesting finding that emerged from the data was that some of these women viewed the biological function of bearing children as an excuse for leaving their profession. For many who were unsatisfied with their professional organizations, becoming pregnant was a socially acceptable exit from a career they no longer desired. Obviously, this is an escape from the drudgery of one's career that at present is less available to males.

"And some people in my profession like to have a child as an escape from the practice of law and that happens very often." (Lawyer-1)

"And I had already decided to resign but fortunately I could resign with honour because I was pregnant again. So, 'Why are you leaving?' 'Well, I'm pregnant - too bad.' And I was so glad." (Teacher-2)

"If you have a child, that's almost an excuse."

(Lawyer-1)

Comparisons among Professional Groups

Comparisons were done among the six professional groups represented to see if there were differences between traditionally male dominated professions and traditionally female dominated professions and to see if there were concerns unique to a particular professional group. There were not as many differences between women with traditionally male occupations and women with traditionally female occupations as was expected, a fact which may attest to the reliability of the factors identified as contributors to the decision to leave organizations. Women in both types of occupations experienced many of the same problems and challenges. For example, women across all professional groups mentioned concerns about conflict between work and family, hours required of one involved in a profession, the ideology inherent within organizations that serves to alienate and discriminate against women, the stresses associated with working and the option they felt they had to leave their professions.

Despite the fact that the four focus groups contained a mixture of male dominated and female dominated professional representatives, a majority of the themes were mentioned in each group. This attests to the similarities of issues that all professional women face in their lives. The length of time a woman had spent in the organization before deciding to leave was not an intervening variable. This again illustrates the commonality of issues affecting professional women. Even some of

the participants seemed surprised at the similarities between themselves.

"Ya, it's been neat hearing about other women. I'm struck by the similarities in terms of, well especially, in relation to the needs of family and how much that affects our lives this way." (Unidentified comment at the end of the third focus group)

Limitations of the Study

Given the amount of interaction allowed the moderator in focus group interviews, it is quite possible that a degree of bias was injected into the questioning route and into the discussions. The moderator was conscious of this possible bias and made every effort to eliminate it but the questioning route does reflect the ideas presented by the directional hypotheses. It should be noted that the moderator did not unduly influence the direction of the discussion in the focus groups. The similarities across focus groups suggest that moderator bias was not a factor since so many issues were discussed in all four groups without prompts from the moderator. It was impossible to completely eliminate moderator bias, however, and this is a factor that may limit the reliability of the results.

The lawyers were the only group that mentioned feeling guilty in regards to the amount of time and effort they gave to their parenting role. This group also produced more comments illustrating their commitment to parenting. As such, they were also the group that indicated the highest degree of felt conflict

between their work roles and their family roles. Entrance into their field and training for the profession were more visible concerns of this group. They were also the only group to refer to the emotional aspect involved with their work roles. These differences may be accounted for simply by the higher number of subjects represented by this professional group (n=10).

There were considerable differences in concerns raised by the Physician when compared with the other professional groups. Several of the themes that were concerns of other subjects were not mentioned by this subject. However, this is more a function of the small representation of this profession (n=1) than it is of differences between this profession and the other professions represented in the groups.

Guidelines for Future Research

The results of this exploratory study suggest that there are several avenues of research that should be investigated in order to add to our knowledge of women and work. The next step would be to develop new instruments to be used on larger samples to study the prevalence of the findings from the directional hypotheses in other populations of women.

Extraneous factors not addressed by the directional hypotheses in the present study could be examined to determine their influence on women's decision to leave organizations. For example, factors such as income, religion, social class, ethnic background, the partner's situation, the employment of one's mother, may also be positively associated with the attrition of professional women from their careers.

As well, several of the unexpected themes that emerged from the data, including Biology, Economics, Option, Preg.X and Pressure, could be explored further in other focus groups to determine their utility in explaining the phenomenon of attrition rates among professional women.

Further research is needed in this area because the employment of women outside the home is a trend that is likely to continue in our society (Kingsbury, 1987). Although culturally based attitudes towards women and work are slow to change, it is imperative that they do so because the attrition of professional women results in a direct loss to organizations. Women will increasingly make up a larger proportion of the available work force in North America and if their contributions are limited by the male ethos prevalent within organizations, then these valuable human resources will be wasted (Morrison et al., 1987).

A more optimistic future can be ensured if organizations are willing to adopt policies that are more in line with the wants and needs of their female and male employees. More research is needed in this area to persuade organizations that changes and innovations such as;

"...flexible alternatives in the scheduling and hours of work, extended maternity [paternity] leave provisions and benefits, paid personal days for child and family responsibilities, information and referral services, relocation assistance, diverse educational programs, and even corporate child-care programs" (Bowen, 1988, p.183)

are economically and socially meaningful and necessary for the future. Perhaps if changes such as these were incorporated into organizations, women would no longer feel the need to choose between work and family because they could better balance the demands of both.

Conclusion

The information that emerged from this study and the findings of other research seem to indicate that the attrition of women from their professional organizations is associated with the male ethos inherent within organizations in North America. The decision to leave one's profession is painful and difficult and the results of such a decision, for both the individuals and the organizations involved, are still largely unknown. In the near future, choices between work and family may be made by both men and women. In fact, some literature has noted a trend among fathers to abandon the traditional male organizational ethos in favour of spending more time with their families (Maynard, 1989). Perhaps we are witnessing a changing work ethic for both men and women that allows people to choose a suitable balance between work life and family life.

Until work environments change to account for the needs and contributions of women, the attrition rate among professional women is unlikely to decrease. Women, and increasingly men, will continue to make the decision between their personal lives and their work lives, giving preference to priorities not advocated by the traditional male organization. Maynard (1989) stated that the "...signs point to a changing work ethic - one that prizes family

harmony over perks and power" (p.46). The search for a more balanced life may begin to involve male workers as much as it presently involves female workers.

In the meantime, male and female workers exist in an uncertain state as our society adjusts to changing expectations. Until a new definition of reality within organizations is reached, women will continue to make decisions that will hasten this rebirth.

"I'm sure that we'll continue to make the right choices as long as my son doesn't turn out to be a degenerate when he is sixteen and hates me because I went to work when he was a baby." (Lawyer-1)

Companies will be required to question the assumptions that define their work cultures as they relate to women and nontraditional men. Workers are begin to demand more satisfaction and flexibility from organizations (Carr, 1988). If these new demands are to be successfully integrated into the organizational ethos, it will take the combined efforts of female and male workers and employers capable of empathizing with the conflicts of family life and work. Perhaps then, workers, regardless of gender, will be able to maximize their full potential as human beings both within the family and at work.

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Appendix A

date

To Whom It May Concern:

In order to facilitate the collection of data for a Master's of Science thesis, the assistance of several organizations and individuals within Winnipeg is required to help locate potential subjects. If possible, please circulate the following information among your colleagues and within your organizations:

A Master's of Science student in Family Studies is conducting a research project on the attrition of professional women from organizations.

Professional women who have left their careers, who are contemplating leaving, or who have changed careers will be interviewed either individually or in discussion groups in order to identify contributing factors.

If you fit the criteria above, or if you know someone who does, I would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about the possibility of your participation.

Please contact Sharon Hunter at (204) 832-5653 or 474-9225.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above phone numbers.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sharon Hunter, B.H.Ecol.

Appendix B

Telephone Call

Name of participant:

Date of call:

Address:

Phone number:

Referred by:

Session date:

Hello (name of participant). My name is Sharon Hunter and I'm calling from the University of Manitoba. Your name was given to me by (name of referral).

I'm doing my Master's thesis on the attrition rates of professional women from organizations. I'm looking specifically for women who have left or changed their careers. I understand that you fit this criteria. Is that correct? (If so, continue).

I am organizing discussion groups to discover what factors influence this decision. I wonder if I could interest you in attending a discussion group with other women who have left their careers? (If so, continue).

There will be discussion groups on four different dates (May 8, 10, and June 5, 12). Which session would you prefer to attend? (record answer above). The sessions will take place at Ash Temple Limited, 615 Erin Street at 7:30 p.m. I will be sending you a letter confirming this invitation. To which address would you like me to send the letter? (record above).

If you need help with directions or if you need to cancel, please phone me at 832-5653 or 474-9225. In addition, if you know anyone else who might be interested in participating in this study, please give them my name and telephone number.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix C
(based on Krueger, 1988,p.105)

(date)

(name and address of participant)

Dear (name of participant),

Thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in a discussion of your work experiences. The discussion will be held at (Ash Temple Limited, 615 Erin Street) on (date). The discussion will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will last approximately an hour and a half.

Since I am talking to a limited number of people, the success of the discussion depends on your cooperation. Your attendance at the discussion is anticipated and will aid in making the research project a success.

The discussion you will be attending will be a forum of professional women in the community who have left their careers or who are seriously considering leaving for whatever reasons. We will be discussing causes of these changes and factors that influence such a major decision. I look forward to hearing about your experiences and thoughts on this subject.

This is strictly a research project and no sales or solitations will be made. Each participant is guaranteed confidentiality and will receive a summary of the results upon the completion of the research. If for some reason you find you are not able to attend the discussion, please call me as soon as possible. My phone number is (204) 832-5653 or 474-9225.

I look forward to seeing you on (date of session).

Sincerely,

Sharon Hunter, B.H.Ecol

Appendix D
Follow-up Telephone Call

Name of participant:

Date of call:

Address:

Phone number:

Date of session attended:

Hello (name of participant), it's Sharon Hunter calling about the discussion group you attended on (date of session). I'm phoning to thank you for your attendance and participation. I found the evening very enlightening.

Now that you've had a few days to think about the discussion, are there any comments you would like to add? (if so, record below).

Thank you. As soon as the research is completed, I will be sending you a synopsis of the results. Should I send it to (confirm address). Thank you once again for your participation.

Appendix E
Questioning Route

- 1) Please tell us about your former position within your organization.
- 2) What were the circumstances within your organization that might have contributed to your decision to leave?
- 3) What were the circumstances outside of your organization that might have contributed to your decision to leave?
- 4) Of the conditions that we've just discussed, could you comment on any that were related directly to the fact that you are women?
- 5) What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman within your former organization?
- 6) What were the costs and benefits within your former organization? Give examples.
- 7) In what ways do you think you now feel differently about your decision to leave, as compared to when you made the decision?
- 8) What is the likelihood of your trying to return to a similar position in the future?
- 9) Are there any other comments you would like to add to this discussion?

Appendix F
Introductory Comments
(based on Krueger, 1988, p.25)

Good evening. My name is Sharon Hunter and this is my assistant (name). I'd like to welcome each of you here this evening and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to participate in our discussion of professional women. We are attempting to gain information about the attrition of professional women. We have invited you to attend this evening in order to share your perceptions, ideas and experiences.

You were selected to participate in this group because you have certain things in common that are of particular interest to us. You are all professional women who have established careers within your respective organizations and you have all decided to leave or change these positions.

As we discuss the attrition of women from organizations, remember there are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. We are just as interested in negative comments as positive comments because at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

If we tend to get off track, someone will usually pull the group back to the topic of professional women. If the group runs out of things to say, just remember that what we're interested in is your decision to leave and the factors that influenced that decision. We are here to learn about your experiences.

Before we begin, let me remind you of some of the ground rules for this evening. This is strictly a research project and there are no sales involved. We're tape recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. So please speak up - only one person should talk at a time. If several are talking at the same time, the tape will get garbled and we'll miss your comments. I will also be taking notes to prompt myself of other topics to discuss as will (name of assistant). Please do not let the tape recorder or our note-taking interfere with your discussion.

We will be on a first name basis tonight, and in our later reports there will not be any names attached to comments. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Our session will last about an hour and a half, and we will not be taking a formal break. The restroom is (state location) and refreshments are on the table. Feel free to leave the table for either of these or if you wish to stretch, but please do so quietly.

Before we begin, do you have any questions? We've placed name cards on the table in front of you to help us remember each other's names. To begin, I'd like you to introduce yourself and tell us about your former position within your organization (proceed with questioning route).

Appendix G
Demographic Information

To assist with the analysis of data, please fully complete the following questionnaire;

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Present age:

Present marital status:

Present number of children living at home:

Present ages of children:

Title of former profession:

Number of years in former profession:

During your former position, what was your marital status?

During your former position, how many children were living at home?

When did you leave your former position?

Why did you leave your former position?

What is your present position?

How long have you been involved with your present position?

How is your present position similar or different to your former position?

Have you or are you planning on returning to your former position in the future? Why or why not?