

BEYOND THE BOYS CLUB:
DOES THE GENDER OF AN ELECTED OFFICIAL HAVE ANY EFFECT ON
LEGISLATIVE STAFF?

A Thesis

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Abstract
of
BEYOND THE BOYS CLUB:
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Staff-member relationships can determine the success or failure in any office and can have a profound effect on public policy within the state legislature. Existing literature has studied the effect of leaders' management style within a business setting, as well as within an elected office setting. However, little research exists when dealing with the perspective of legislative staff. Hans J. Ladegaard studied male and female management styles in a Denmark, global business corporation. He determined that there were two very distinct interaction styles with the leaders and their staff between each gender, but it is unclear if that finding applies in the California setting. I believe it is important to study the legislative staff of elected men and women in the California state legislature to see if there is a difference in leadership styles between both a male and female elected official.

I used multiple data sources for this this thesis. My primary data was obtained through an electronic survey administered to Assembly and Senate staff. I supplemented the survey with face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of legislative staffers to allow for further conversation and analysis in my research. Support staff included receptionists, schedulers, legislative directors and aides, capitol directors, as well as chiefs-of-staff who work closely with the elected officials. Through the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a statistical analysis program, I analyzed the data through simple analysis tools such as frequency distributions, cross tabulations, as well as calculations of chi-square statistics.

Gender may not be as significant as it once was. My results show me that in general legislative staff seems to be relatively content in the workplace whether working for a male or female member. However, there are hints of differences between the sexes with respect to specific aspects of member-staff relations. Overall, this research provides enough evidence that the relationship of legislative staff and the effect of gender of the elected official deserve further exploration.

_____, Committee Chair
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

It has been just over a hundred years since the passage of women's suffrage in California. Winning the campaign on the ballot with a mere 3,587 votes proves that women have come a long way in their fight to be actively involved in today's democratic process (MacGregor, 2011). Since 1975, the percent of women occupying state legislative offices has increased from 8% to 22% (Reingold, 2000). Aside from the gender of an elected official, it is important to take a careful look at the history of California's state legislature. This thesis will further study the gender of legislators in California and the relation to their respective legislative staff.

The Question

For my thesis, I was interested in determining if a legislator's gender has any effect on his or her staff. Specifically, I wished to test, "Does the gender of an elected official affect legislative staff in any way." I expected legislative staff to be more satisfied working under female legislator's compared to working under males. This expectation came from the assumption that women tend to be more personal with their staff and more organized overall, however this thesis will help to determine and answer this question further. My methodology contained the tools necessary to evaluate this question from both an electronic survey and additional personal interviews in further detail and will be explained later in this paper.

A gap exists within existing literature relating to the study of legislative staff. Through this thesis project I will be able to contribute to the field of studies surrounding

gender of elected officials and their legislative staff. Separately, the two subjects have an extensive body of research, however there is limited literature surrounding the two combined. In addition to assessing the validity of my central hypothesis, I remained open to other findings unrelated to gender that might emerge from my survey and interviews that will provide additional insight to this topic.

The Role of Term Limits

Before 1990, there were no term limits on California state legislators and constitutional officers. Specialized interest groups had close working relationships with the elected officials, while working to convince members to vote on legislation that would benefit their individual interests. Powerful lobbyists took advantage of the power they accumulated over time.

One of California's most influential members of the Assembly, Speaker Willie Brown, was the root of the public outcry and was a large part of the reason for the term-limit initiative. He served thirty years in the Assembly, eight of those years he served as Speaker. Many of Speaker Brown's legislative staff relationships were key assets in effecting policy changes in California from 1964-1995 (Richardson, 1996).

The Role of Legislative Staff

Legislative staffers today have a completely different role than they did before 1990. With the passage of term limits, staffers have logged more years working in the state legislature than the elected officials themselves. A 1994 study by C. DeGregorio found that professional staff now outnumber the elected members of Congress with a margin of 75 to one. Although no similar study has been done in the state of California,

term limits may give way for the potential of such a study in the future. With Assembly Members given only a maximum of three two-year terms and Senators a maximum of two four-year terms, California legislators must quickly master many policy topics. This limited termed environment is much different from Speaker Brown's time in office.

Staff must remain educated on the ever changing issues in the State of California as well as maintain relationships with industry stakeholders both within the Capitol as well as outside special interest groups and the general public. When newly elected Assembly Members and Senators take office, they have the initial task of hiring their team that will work alongside them. For many legislators, the task of recruiting and hiring employees is a stressful challenge because many have never owned businesses or run organizations. Others are experienced and have already secured whom they will hire.

The importance of staff-member relationships can determine the success or failure in any office and can have a profound effect on public policy within the state legislature. Existing literature has studied the effect of leaders' management style within a business setting, as well as within an elected office setting. However, little research exists when dealing with the perspective of legislative staff. Does the legislator's gender make a difference for legislative staffers? A 2010 study conducted in Denmark by Hans J. Ladegaard studied male and female management styles in a global business corporation. They were led to believe that there were two very distinct interaction styles with the leaders and their staff between each gender.

The characteristics of male and female members differ in so many ways and combined with the limited amount of time the staff and elected official have to work

together, gender could have a large effect on the staffer's attitude towards the elected official for whom the staffer works. I believe it is important to study the legislative staff of elected men and women in the California state legislature to see if, given the term limited environment, there is a difference in leadership styles between both a male and female elected official. I am also curious whether or not there is a difference on staff's preference in the gender of the elected official for whom they end up working.

Methodology

For this study, I plan to gather primary data obtained through an electronic survey administered to Assembly and Senate staff. In addition, I will follow up with face-to-face interviews to a representative sample of legislative staffers to allow for further conversation and analysis in my research. For this study, support staff will include receptionists, schedulers, legislative directors and aides, capitol directors, as well as chiefs-of-staff who work closely with the elected officials. Through the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a statistical analysis program, I will run the data through simple analysis tools such as frequency distributions, cross tabulations, as well as calculations of chi-square statistics based on my survey questions. Some of the characteristics that the survey will ask the staffer about themselves and their respective member are: gender, age, years working in the Capitol, why they work at the Capitol, and a few attitude questions which will portray how the staff views the male or female member for whom they are working.

Because of the political work environment of legislative staff, the survey will not include any names of the respondents nor the elected official for whom they work. I hope

to be able to see a correlation between gender and staff noting that there is a difference in working for a female or male elected official. In addition to gender, my survey will test other variables in order to provide significant, valuable results to the existing body of research.

Summary

This chapter has focused on providing an overview of what this thesis will be addressing as well as an explanation of the question that the research seeks to answer. The objective of this research is to answer the main question using the results of the electronic survey and personal interviews I conducted. I will analyze the results to form a conclusion and follow with recommendations for the next steps for these fields of research. The rest of this paper will provide an overview of the existing literature, the methodology of the study, the results and finally, a conclusion with recommendations.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a vast amount of research surrounding women in elected office as well as a great deal of research on the topic of legislative staff. With the two topics combined, however, there is minimal to no research. After reviewing relevant literature surrounding the gender of elected officials and the affect it has on legislative staff, I have decided to address each of the ideas separately because of the lack of research that exists with the combined subjects. I will begin by highlighting the research that has been completed on the role gender plays in elected officials and then follow up with the existing studies that deal specifically with legislative staff. The models and studies provide guidance for future research regarding elected officials and their staff. Throughout the review, I will organize my research into the most common themes that I find for these two subjects and follow with a combined effort to link the two with relevance to my thesis.

GENDER OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Women in elected offices have dramatically increased since initial data found by the Center for American Women and Politics. Nearly 17% of Members of Congress are women, up from just 3% in 1979. Does the gender of the elected officials matter when discussing their leadership potential? Before examining the role of gender in leadership, it is necessary to define leadership. Existing research on leadership, more often than not, comes from the business communications and organizational sciences (Holmes 2005). Holmes defines leadership as, "...the ability to influence others" (Holmes, 2005). In

relating leadership to gender and elected officials, I will separate the relevant literature into three general ideas: leadership styles, barriers for women, and education.

Leadership Styles

A 2010 professional management study conducted in Denmark by Hans J. Ladegaard studied male and female management styles in a global business environment. The study was part of a large-scale study on organizational communication. Ladegaard believes that there were two very distinct interaction styles between male and female leaders and their respective staff, according to his findings that he cites by Holmes (further explained below). The empirical study observed four different leaders and analyzed the conversations that took place between the ‘leaders’ and their ‘staff.’ Ladegaard found his hypothesis to be true, and additionally found existing obstacles for women leaders in the workplace. This study will not apply universally across elected leaders because of the differences between Denmark and the United States of America, the small sample size of only four people, and the fundamental differences between the public and private sectors. However, Ladegaard studied “leaders” separated by gender, which is similar to the study that I will be conducting and it is therefore relevant to these topics.

Ladegaard’s study uses the leader as the dependent variable and records an entire day’s conversation of the leader with his or her staff. Researchers analyzed the conversations in depth, focusing on differing management styles between genders. With the leaders voluntarily participating in the study, the awareness of the researcher may have influenced the subject’s behavior, a third party researcher may have removed or

minimized this bias. By focusing on the actual behavior of the leader, this analysis provides direct feedback on the management styles of the four individuals. While it would take more time and resources to record more than four individual leaders in this business environment, it would be helpful to see the interaction of additional leaders or record the interaction with staff over more than one day to provide a more balanced study. The interaction of both male and female managers provided valuable insight into how genders converse with their respected staff; however, the study did not specifically spell out the differences in leadership style as clearly as others, such as Janet Holmes (2005).

Holmes (2005) is a widely recognized author in the gender-based leadership field. She has not only found that men have dominated leadership roles for years, but she outlines different interaction styles between men and women, many of them very similar. Among women leaders, Holmes found that interaction styles with staff included the following characteristics/behaviors: facilitative, supportive feedback, appealing, indirect, collaborative, minor contribution (in public), person/process-oriented, and affectively oriented. On the contrary, Holmes found men's interaction styles to be competitive, aggressive, confrontational, direct, autonomous, dominate (public), task/outcome-oriented, and referentially oriented.

Additional literature suggests similar findings without minimizing women's leadership capabilities, but simply acknowledging the way they women and men interact with their staff is different in nature. Holmes studied women's leadership roles in New Zealand where women have served as Chief Justice and Prime Minister, in addition to

ranking positions in both business and government roles. Holmes highlights that women can demonstrate flexibility as leaders while maintaining the best interest of the organization they represent. Holmes previous research provides extensive evidence that women leaders in a variety of workplaces negotiate their way through interactions with people of all levels and all backgrounds. Moreover, women leaders uphold team relationships and pay attention to each person (Holmes, 2005).

Similarly, Shefali Patil measured the effects of contextual and situational factors on employee's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards female managers in traditionally male-oriented jobs (Patil, 2008). She found that female managers identified better with female employees, and if a female was in a male dominated organization, the female identity would be less. Through her two experimental studies, she studies the perception of a female manager and its impact on another female and then the perception of a female manager as it impacts both male and female. The second study by Patil reveals interesting findings relevant to gender as she surveys participants on male and female performance. Patil found that when male and females were in an equal role, "...successful females were attributed more often as being 'lucky'..." compared to successful males (Patil, 2008). This leads into the next theme outlining the research that exists on barriers for women in elected office.

Barriers for Women in Elected Office

The differences in the way a leader of either gender interacts with his or her respective staff can not necessarily be the only reason we have fewer elected women officials than we have men because many other factors affect the percentage of elected

women. However, the Eagleton Institute of Politics show that existing barriers is a prominent reason for low levels of women in office. The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at the Eagleton Institute of Politics gathered data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census as well as elected official sites to combine statistics surrounding women in elected office. From 1979 until 2011, the percentage of women elected to their respective state legislatures increased from 10% to 23.6%. Such an increase proves that if there really are any barriers to women getting elected to office at least some improvements have definitely been made since 1979. USA Today states that the United States is behind in regards to the amount of women in politics. The article further suggests that women are too busy upholding both careers and the majority of household responsibilities and do not believe that they could actually win an election.

Joelle Schmitz with USA today, states that women are up against some clear disadvantages since men make up nearly 83% of Congress and incumbents win more than 90% of the time (Schmitz, 2011). In addition, the disadvantage structurally for women in the United States infers that they are unlikely to achieve equality in the coming years with women represented in Congress by only 17% (Schmitz, 2011). In the United States, women and men are eligible to run for any eligible open seat in Congress, given the constitutional parameters of residency as well as other parameters not relevant in this review. In comparison to other countries, the United States currently has no structure in place to secure more women in elected office, according to findings by Schmitz in USA Today. India requires 30% female representation and France requires 40% female representation. Could there be a way for the United States government to encourage more

women to get into public office similar to the way in which India and France did, and would this in fact, be what the United States needs?

An associate professor of political science and women's studies at Emory University, Beth Reingold's interests came as a follow up to the 1998 California and Arizona elections in which women in elected offices reached record levels. Reingold's (2000) study of women, found that simply increasing the number of women in public office does not increase the overall power (both economic and social aspects) of government (Reingold, 2000). She suggests that although women solely based on gender alone do not make or break a great leader, we can in fact learn from what women's attributes and characteristics contribute to successful leadership. Reingold's research also found that women may be better leaders representing women on women's policy issues. Although her research found benefits to leadership from the female gender, it does not suggest that women are the best representatives on women's issues, but that further education may also contribute to their success as leaders.

Education

Education level is found throughout literature as a key independent variable when studying leadership across fields of research. Specific to gender, education is seen to pay off financially as the level of his or her education increases. The U.S. Census Bureau presented findings of the 2008 average monthly earnings for full-time workers over the age of 25. Women, regardless of their level of education, earn less than men. Women with a professional degree made \$106,711 annually, compared to men holding a professional degree's average salary of \$120,873, a 13% difference (US Census Bureau,

2008). Unfortunately this study does not account for seniority and it combined public and private workers in the final results. While the census bureau does not analyze level of education with salary, there may be a difference in both salary and leadership depending on what those women in elected office choose to study in college, or if the elected women in office even hold a college degree.

Similarly, Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) studied men and women through the use of a MRI scanner. They specifically analyzed images of blood flow to various parts of the brain. “The findings were that men’s activity was confined to the left temporal lobe, associated with listening and speech, and women’s activity occurred in both temporal lobes, although predominately in the left-the right side of the brain, associated with understanding abstract concepts” (IUSM, 2000).

Whereas this study is not specific to those men or women holding elected offices, it may suggest that the interactions with staff of each gender may be due to the techniques of ‘listening’ and using each side of his or her brain. IUSM stated that the brains of aging men and women have significant structural and functional differences as well. This research will bode well when I study the relationship of legislative staff and their respective elected official for whom they work for to see if the age and level of education of their boss can be attributed to how well they seem to “listen” to their staffers. In addition, the average age of women entering elected office is 50 according to the Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics University (CAWP) because of the various stages women go through dealing with motherhood at an earlier age and at the age of 50, Rutgers suggest that women’s family responsibilities have lessened.

The transition to the second part of this study is a reflection of how legislative staff perceive the elected official they work for as well as the general public. Linking the gender of elected officials and the effect on staff is reason for this study; however, general literature on legislative staff will be important to identify themes in existing literature of staff relevance to elected officials.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Legislative staffers within an elected official's office are similar to others staffers in an elected constitutional officers office, or even an elected Sheriff's office, but there are many differences that are specific to legislative staffers. Legislative staffers, are termed "generalists" due to the nature of the job. Given the current term limited environment that exists in California's State Legislature, legislative staffers have more power than the elected officials themselves prior to the passage of Proposition 140 in 1990 which will be expanded upon below. Studies will measure the value that staff holds within the legislative process. These studies use various electronic interviews, face-to-face interviews, observation of behavior, recorded interactions with the elected officials and their staff, as well as comparisons between different state legislatures and the United States Congress and their respective staff.

Power of Legislative Staff

A recent study conducted by Katerina Robinson looked at the relationship and power dynamic between legislative staff and their elected officials. This study is not specific to the gender of the elected official; however, the findings that relate to the amount of power that staffers have today is relevant to my thesis. Robinson used a

comparison between the California Legislature and the Illinois Legislature in her study. Illinois does not currently have any term limits for their elected legislative officials, as California does.

Robinson's methodology was through the use of an electronic, online survey in which only twenty-three subjects actually responded. In addition, a much more lengthy interaction dealing with the responsibilities of staff using eighteen face-to-face interviews of the highest paid staff in the California State Assembly and State Senate was part of her methodology. From here, she was able to separate the staff who worked as legislative staffers before 1990 and after. This method proved the hypothesis and showed a positive correlation between staff power and term limits using Illinois as the control state and confirming that staff salary is a good determinate of staff worth. Robinson conducted her face-to-face interviews first and followed up with the online survey to complete before or after the face-to-face interview. She had participants of the initial survey fill out the online version and also passed it along to the coworkers she interviewed if they were interested. Overall, there were 18 interviews with the highest paid staff, three in leadership positioned offices, and sixteen of them had jobs residing in Assembly offices. Similar to Robinson's study, C. DeGregorio was able to conduct nearly twice as many personal interviews at the congressional level and dealt specifically with staff involvement in Washington D.C.

For my study, salary will be irrelevant but still recorded as a potential variable affecting gender and legislative staffers as it is a way that one could measure the value of staff as perceived by the elected that they work for. Salary may be one way to measure

how one is valued in an individual elected office, but there are other factors that contribute to how a staffer feels valued.

DeGregorio conducted a study that focused on professional committee staff as policy making professionals in the United States Congress. He found that the professional staff now outnumber the elected officials by more than 75 to one (DeGregorio, 1994). With more legislative staffers than elected officials, she studies the level of power granted to congressional staff and whether or not it is too much. DeGregorio was curious about what gives the staffers the power they hold within the elected office. Staffers can't author legislation without member consent, they move bills through the legislative process. Legislators, not their staffers, get the political credit.

Whereas Robinson's study focused on personal staff of the elected official's office, DeGregorio focused on committee staff in his interviews of both the Senate and House of Representatives. DeGregorio's methodology includes a randomly chosen sample to administer a survey to. The survey was 90 minutes including many open-ended questions in order to facilitate an insightful discussion of each question being asked of the congressional staffer (DeGregorio, 1994). The survey asked about individual attributes of the staffer, demographic characteristics, and contextual characteristics of all 43 participants. The author did not attempt to take into consideration the view of the elected official. One would think that the boss of any employee may have a different view of the work characteristics of any one of their employees compared to the way staff would view themselves. DeGregorio's view of staff power correlates with the next theme found

within the literature surrounding legislative employees and that would be of the length of time a staffer has worked within the legislative process.

Tenure of Legislative Staff

The length of time a staffer spends on the job working for an elected legislative official does play a role in shaping the individual and their effectiveness to the elected official. DeGregorio found that the House cohorts are older than their Senate counterparts and tend to have more years of experience working, even though the House is known to staffers and others as the lower of the two houses of government. The uni-variate analysis by DeGregorio through the use of the interview answers from each participant. My research adds to DeGregorio's work by studying the congressional staffer's reason for choosing to work on Capitol Hill in the first place. Surprisingly, there was an overwhelming response by 39% of the staffers for having, "...an abiding commitment to improve the policies that Congress promulgates" (DeGregorio, 1994).

Robinson found that the longer the staffer had been working in the California legislature, the more they were getting paid, and therefore the more valuable they are to the elected officials and other staffers. DeGregorio didn't mention salary in any of his analysis of congressional staffers, although he may have not had public access to such data in 1994 as easily as Robinson had in 2010. If the limited time that an elected official has in office has anything to do with their limited power to get things done, then it is important to note the tenure of a legislative staffer in California as it outweighs their respective boss plays a large role in why there has been an increase in power since the early 1990s.

Policy Research and Staff Recommendations

Power and tenure of legislative staff lead into the final theme of policy research and staff recommendations. As outlined in Chapter 1, a great deal of staff responsibility within an elected office, whether at the state level or on Capitol Hill, deals with conducting policy research and making recommendations to the elected official. The online survey conducted by Robinson found that the staff in the California State Senate and State Assembly consider themselves to have a “high expertise” on the policy areas they analyze and make recommendations to the legislators on. Conversely, when asked the level of expertise that the elected official with whom they work for had on the subject, the staffers said, “moderate to low expertise.” A unique perspective would be to survey or interview the elected official on how they would view the role of staff in their office. It would be hard to ever get an honest reaction on their opinion due to the subjective nature that the political environment places on anyone in an elected office.

Much of Robinson’s study dealt with the passage of term limits on California legislators and how it has affected the power that is now in the hands of staff who hold more years of experience. In addition to the results of her survey, she was able to obtain a vast array of research surrounding staff in general and found that members are resistant to relying on staff, but inevitably realize they have no other option. In many cases, Robinson’s research leads us to believe that some of the staff that she had personal interaction with were committee consultants in which case they do, in fact, have a far different role. The role is mostly different in cases that deal with personal staff due to the fact that they are able to specialize in researching and analyzing legislation in one

particular field. In addition, personal staff wears many hats by covering a vast array of policy areas at the same time in order to be prepared to brief their boss on upcoming votes in committee and on the floor.

School of Natural Resources and Environment released a study, based on collaborative work with elected officials, on how offices can best get involved with issues facing Congress. Congressional staff can, relate to legislative staff at in California as members expect them to do many of the same day-to-day operations for the elected for whom they work. In this project, Chadwick and Yaffee describe the bulk of the interaction congressional staffers will have with Members of Congress to be with members of their staff in both their Capitol and district offices (Chadwick and Yaffee, 2004). Additionally, they found that congressional staffers are broadly educated and informed, mostly “generalists,” rather than subject-matter experts. Exceptions do exist in certain cases; however, these authors paint a clear picture of the value of staff in Congress. For a constituent to approach a Congressional representative about an idea, whether that idea is an environmental policy agenda or simply a complaint about an existing policy, the first step in reaching out to the elected officials is to go through their staff.

In reviewing the relevant literature for both gender of the elected official and specifically researching the legislative staff, I have found that the combination of the two subjects would pose a very interesting study. The lack of research on these subjects as well as my personal interest in furthering the research is why I have chosen to study gender of elected officials and the affect it has on legislative staff. If the hypothesis fails

to find gender having any effect on legislative staff, then I will conduct a further analysis in order to find additional factors influencing either subject.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This study primarily seeks to determine the effects that a legislator's gender has on staff in the California State Assembly and California State Senate. Additionally, I explored other factors that may influence how legislative staff members experience their jobs. To measure these effects, I administered a survey to legislative staffers. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the role of staff as they relate to the elected legislator that are working for, measure their perception of satisfaction throughout their office, determine the level of assumed responsibility, and view the level of challenge in their current working environment.

In addition, I conducted face-to-face interviews with legislative staffers to discuss their role in the office as well as their level of satisfaction with their boss and overall working environment. I do not know of any similar study. Researchers have analyzed the role of gender in the behavior of elected officials as well as the role staff play in the legislative process, but the link between the two remains unknown. My hope is that this study will allow researchers in the public policy field to take the role of gender and legislative staffers to a new level and be intrigued by the results.

Rationale for the Survey and Interview Approach to the Research Question

My decision to conduct a survey and subsequent interviews was an easy decision because legislative staffers already are assigned to each of the elected representatives to whom they work for. I could not conduct a classic controlled experiment because I would not be able to control and test different office placements as they are already in their

working environments. Instead I am analyzing their existing situations and drawing on their past experiences. I could not assign staff to different male or female legislators because it is not in my capacity as a researcher, and in addition, there are not existing secondary data sets out there to analyze. In order to conduct this study, I needed more systematic data that I would be able to receive from non-directed filed research. In addition, I felt that the face-to-face interviews would provide additional insight into what people may not say in an electronic survey.

General Information about the Survey and Personal Interview

This study relied on self-administered electronic surveys which I supplemented with face-to-face interviews with selected participants. I developed the questions for the survey after reviewing relevant literature and consulting with my thesis advisors. After finishing the electronic survey and face-to-face interview questions, I submitted them to the Public Policy and Administration Department at California State University-Sacramento State for approval. The Human Subjects Committee found that the survey and interview would pose no apparent risk to the respondents, deeming it both safe and appropriate to administer. I also obtained approval to administer the survey from Greg Schmidt, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Senate Rules Committee and Jon Waldie, CAO of Assembly Rules Committee. Schmidt and Waldie also provided permission to use Assembly and Senate staff lists for the purpose of the study.

SurveyMonkey served as my means for administering the survey and collecting basic data results. SurveyMonkey is as a professional online survey tool for not only researchers, but company marketing departments as well as other political, business, and

academic institutions (surveymonkey.com). As for the face-to-face interviews, I scheduled individual meetings with each person and gave them a maximum of 30 minutes to discuss the research questions.

Sample Frame

I administered the survey to 332 legislative staffers in the California State Legislature. Because of the large number of legislative staffers (approximately 1,600), the lists were in alphabetical order, however the Capitol staff are not separated from the committee staff or district staff. After going through the list of Senate and Assembly staffers line by line to remove the committee and district staffers, the survey was emailed to every other person from this final list. The survey was sent through my personal email on November 2, 2011, giving each respondent two weeks to participate (until November 16, 2011). Roughly 23% of the approximate 1600 total legislative staffers received email messages inviting them to participate in this study. A follow-up email was sent to those respondents approximately one week prior to the close date for the survey. After the electronic survey closed, the face-to-face interviews began on November 17, 2011

20 legislative staffers were asked to take place in a personal interview ranging in title from chief of staff to general office receptionist. The interviews took place after the online survey time lapsed and they took place over a three week period from February 27 to March 16. The timing to conduct the personal interviews the weeks following a big legislative deadline was strategic in order to get time with legislative staffers who could best contribute.

During interim recess for the legislature each fall, it is common for staff members to take vacation at this time. This lack of staffer attendance during this time may increase the potential for bias because the sample of those surveyed will not be a full population of legislative staffers. In addition, if staffers recognize my name as the researcher in charge, it may affect their decision to respond. Similarly, this same bias could affect the face-to-face interviews. The likelihood of the respondent knowing who I am and agreeing to be interviewed is higher than those respondents whom I have never met. The biases discussed, as well as other biases, are explained in the concluding chapter.

Survey and Interview Questions

The electronically administered survey questions were general in nature to make them easy to answer and to increase the response rate of the participants. Most of the questions were closed-ended, requiring only that participants check a box. The survey included only one “open-ended” question for the respondent to add any additional information about his or her current boss and working environment.

The interviews were not meant to be used as a follow up, but merely another tool to get further information of the reasoning behind the survey answers. In total, 75 legislative staffers responded to the electronically administered survey. 20 personal interviews followed.

The electronically administered survey consisted of five major components: personal characteristics of legislative staff, tenure at the California Legislature, current boss’s personal characteristics, current office satisfaction level, as well as anything the respondent would like to add. To assess if there were differences across houses of the

legislature regarding the relationship between gender and staff, the first question specifically asked if they currently work in the Assembly or Senate.

Table 1. Summary of Survey Questions

Question Number	Subject of Survey Question
1	Assembly or Senate
2	Gender
3	Ethnicity
4	Age
5	Staff tenure in legislature
6	Reasons for working here
7	Gender of boss
8	Ethnicity of boss
9	Political affiliation of boss
10	Decision influence in office
11	Experience working for opposite gender of current boss
12	Satisfaction with current working conditions
13	Satisfaction with daily work load
14	Satisfaction with challenge of responsibility
15	Relationship with co-workers
16	Anything additional to add

Nine of the 16 questions seek to answer the primary research questions. The seven additional questions provide a more in-depth analysis on legislative staffers aside from gender, and include demographic data needed to track the individual. The questions arise from a review of existing research and prior studies on the two subjects, as well as by consulting other authors who conducted similar surveys. Furthermore, these questions attempted to determine if the respondent (legislative staffer) is affected by the gender of

his or her current boss and if not, to see if any additional existing factors, such as race or working environment, will have an effect.

The face-to-face interviews have a conversational focus, with the goal to make each of the legislative staffers feel as comfortable as possible. A face to face interview allows the interviewee to deal with any questions or complexities that may arise during the interview and therefore can offer guidance alongside of asking the questions to the legislative staff. In addition, a face-to-face interview has the respondent's full attention and can take more time than the online survey allows.

A total of eight questions seek to generate a conversational meeting with the interviewee and not merely a question and answer session. While not all of the questions will provide needed feedback in many of the interviews, additional insight into the lives of the legislative staffers and their perception of their current boss will provide useful data and will be important to obtain. Table 2 outlines the subjects of the questions that each personal interview will ask.

Table 2. Summary of Interview Questions

Question Number	Subject of Interview Question
1	Current job duties in office
2	Tenure working in legislature
3	Satisfaction working in current office
4	View of staff's role in the legislature
5	If the staffer has ever worked for opposite gender, was there a difference
6	Staff knowledge vs. elected office to get things done
7	Feeling of fairness of compensation for the work
8	Describe your ideal boss

Staffers were generally more inclined to discuss something in more detail if they did not see me writing vigorously on my notepad, therefore it will be important to transcribe my notes with further details into a computer document shortly following the actual interview. If needed, I will seek permission from the legislative staffer regarding further information or clarification on something that was mentioned that I plan to expand on in this paper.

Survey Analysis

Survey Monkey provided simple summaries of the results for each of the electronic survey questions I asked. To go beyond this summary information, I also created a data file to use in a statistical analysis program. The statistical analysis software used to obtain the results for analysis was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). After entering the data into SPSS, I used simple data analysis tools such as frequency distributions, cross tabulations, as well as calculations of chi-square statistics. Because the interview results are subjective, I did not enter them into the data base. Therefore, the results from the interviews will be mentioned in both the results and conclusion chapters.

Possible Limitations to Methodology

Within any methodology, it is important to address the potential problems that may lead to misleading results. It is always the fear that the person responding to the survey does not understand the question you are asking. Without the researcher's presence, it is impossible to be sure the questions are clear to the respondent. It may also

be difficult to prevent distractions that may occur when the respondent speaking. This distraction could result in a misunderstanding of the underlying meaning of the question when the respondent is not fully engaged.

In any political environment, respondents may be hesitant to answer questions about themselves or their respective bosses because they fear retribution from candid replies. Stating that the survey or interview is completely anonymous may address this fear and prevent the written information from leaking out. But it may still be difficult to be sure the respondent is answering each question truthfully.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology used in the study as well as an explanation as to why the use of an electronic survey and face-to-face interview were the best tools to properly conduct the research. The concluding chapter will further explain the potential limitations that exist within this methodology. The next chapter is the heart of the thesis: a summary of the results obtained through my online survey and personal interviews with legislative staff.

Chapter IV

SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter addresses the initial hypothesis which seeks to determine if the gender of a legislator influences legislative staff and their perception of their work and its environment. I will address this topic through analysis of my own quantitative data gathered from the electronic survey and with the qualitative data obtained from my personal interviews in the next chapter. I highlight and explain the main themes that arise from the survey results below. The results begin with the initial analysis that was conducted through SPSS. From here, further explanation and speculation continues with additional insight to digest. The following chapter will link the findings of this survey and explain results of the personal interviews to the original hypothesis question at the beginning of this thesis.

I drew from a relatively large volume of data for this chapter and was very pleased with the substantial number of responses I received. A total of 75 legislative staffers participated in this survey (of the total 332 it was administered to) for an overall 23 percent response rate. One of the 75 responses contained missing data therefore this respondent was eliminated from the SPSS analysis completely; therefore the total respondent in the analysis is out of 74 responses.

The results in this chapter will begin by describing the survey population of participants. From here, I will continue to use SPSS to conduct a bivariate analysis of the primary causal question (legislator gender's effect on staff). Lastly, I will move to a more

in-depth analysis of data relating to the key hypothesis by adding control variables to test for additional effects of my independent variables on legislative staff.

What Does the Survey Tell us About Legislative Staff?

Many questions in the survey describe the demographics of both the legislative staff that will answer the questions as well as demographics of their respective bosses. I begin by organizing the background information of the survey population below and conclude with explanation for further analysis of the primary variables.

Key Gender Related Facts for the Sample:

- Of the 23 percent of respondents, half (or 39) of them have previously worked for bosses of an opposite gender of their current boss.
- There were 52 male legislative staffers that chose to complete this survey (compared with only 22 females).

Age Distribution within the Sample:

- A majority of legislative staffers were under the age of 40, and 26 or 35 percent of them were between the ages of 20-30.
- 43 percent or 32 of legislative staffers who responded to the survey have been working in the legislature less than 5 years.

Key Ethnicity Related Findings for the Sample:

- A total of 49 legislative staffers were of the Caucasian ethnicity (66 percent of respondents)

- Their bosses were similar in terms of ethnic make-up (48 of the bosses or 64% of the total were Caucasian).

Additional Findings for the Sample:

- Nearly 90 percent (64 members) of legislative staff surveyed say they are moderate to very influential over decisions made in their respective offices.
- Roughly 32 of the legislative staffers surveyed said that they were working in the legislature for reasons of a personal policy agenda.
- A Majority of legislative staffers have worked in the legislature 9 years or less (67 percent).

This finding suggests that the legislative staffers as a whole are not working in the legislature for a lifetime career. With respect to their level of influence and satisfaction, you could say that majority of them view themselves as very influential in the office and seem to be satisfied under the gender of the boss they choose to work for, but these views are hardly uniform.

Table 3. Survey Frequency Data of Legislative Staff

Age	Respondent Count
20-29	26
30-39	23
40-49	12
50-59	8
60 & older	5
Total	74
Years in Legislature	Respondent Count
Less than 5 years	32
5-9 years	18
10-19 years	17
More than 20 years	7
Total	74
Reason to work here	Respondent Count
Personal policy agenda	32
Goal of elected office	4
Money/benefits	10
Relationship with boss	8
All reasons above	1
Other	35

Additional tables that summarize the demographic data can be found in the appendix at the end of this paper. Further analysis will be done using SPSS to explain significance in variables and test the effect gender has on the satisfaction and contentment of legislative staff.

Main Hypothesis on Gender and Legislative Staff

I began with the hypothesis that the gender of the elected official will have an effect on the overall satisfaction and contentment of legislative staff. The preliminary analysis in SPSS shows that about twice as high a proportion of respondents with a female boss indicated an excellent level of contentment as did those with a male boss

(42% versus 21%). For me to determine the strength of contentment, I used the chi-square test (referenced in table below) which is a statistical hypothesis test used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies in each category. In addition, chi-square tests are helpful to test the goodness of fit between the observed and expected as well as test the null hypothesis using the variables numerical values. It was necessary to re-code the variable describing, “level of contentment” with workload in order to have higher totals of respondents for the three categories. The new coding gives three choices of contentment which are also highlighted via percentages in the table below: excellent, good, fair or poor.

Table 4. Contentment of Legislative Staff

Level of Contentment	Male Boss	Female Boss
Excellent	21%	42%
Good	63%	44%
Fair or Poor	17%	14%
N	24	50

Chi-Squared = 3.3, $p < .20$

Similar to the hypothesis test above for level of contentment, testing the overall satisfaction level of legislative staff, I will also use the chi-square test to detect the goodness of fit between the observed and expected results based on the null hypothesis. The data shows respondents working under a female boss appear to have a stronger overall satisfaction of work than their colleagues working for male legislators (54% versus 33%). The table below shows this observation of a higher satisfaction of staffers under female leadership. Contrary to the highest level of overall satisfaction though,

staffers under female leadership also seem to express a greater level of fair or poor satisfaction in comparison to those under male leadership.

Table 5. Overall Satisfaction of Legislative Staff

Level of satisfaction	Male boss	Female boss
Excellent	33%	54%
Good	54%	26%
Fair/Poor	13%	20%
N	24	50

Chi-Squared: 9.0, $p < .10$

Within the 16 question survey, I attempted to address “work satisfaction” using three different questions that were asked towards the beginning of the survey. The three questions rated the legislative staff’s satisfaction with current working conditions, contentment with daily workload, and satisfaction with the level of challenge in assignments given. Throughout this analysis, I utilized each of the three questions against other characteristics to test for significance. With the main independent variables being the gender of the elected official, I also tested the relationship and role of bosses’ ethnicity and bosses’ political party, but did not find any significance here. Following the initial analysis, I plan to utilize these other independent variables as “control” variables to again ensure that all levels of analysis for legislative staff have been tested.

Based on my initial analysis, I can see that there appears to be a relationship between the level of satisfaction and contentment in an office with the gender of the staffer’s respective bosses. My next step will be subjecting the hypothesis to further testing by adding more variables to each analysis. Adding control variables may validate my initial results, or may suggest my initial conclusion is in need of modification. I plan

to criticize my findings above and take the tests a step further. Continuing with the use of chi-square tests, I will determine if the null hypothesis can be accepted or not. In many cases, when I do not find significance the findings will not be presented, but the results will still affect my overall conclusions in testing the original hypothesis.

Subjecting Hypothesis to Further Tests

Based on the information found in my initial SPSS analysis, it was important to include additional control variables that may effect on my key independent variables. I began further tests using the political party affiliation against bosses gender and staff's satisfaction. My results show that political party affiliation of the boss has no effect; therefore, my next step was to change the control variable to age with staff contentment being the dependent variable and bosses gender the independent variable. The results of this analysis show that there is in fact a slight relationship (43% compared to 16%) between the legislative staffers between the ages of 20-29 and their contentment under male leadership for the highest level of contentment. The table below shows this relationship.

Table 6. Overall Contentment of Legislative Staff Ages 20-29

Overall Contentment	Male boss	Female boss
Excellent	43%	16%
Good	29%	63%
Fair/Poor	29%	21%
N	7	19

Chi-Squared: 8.0, $p = < .02$

It is necessary to note that although staffers ages 20-29 seem to fare strongest contentment under male leadership, the number of staff in this age group is very low and

ideally to show true significance the number of content staffers would be much higher. Additionally, given the thirty-five percent of staffers in this age group, no other age seems quite as satisfied under a particular gender of leader.

After using the control variable of legislative staff's age, I decided to use the boss's race which was keyed as white or non-white to give higher frequencies in this category. I included staff satisfaction of work as the dependent and again, bosses gender as control. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to support a relationship with the variables listed above, so naturally, I decided to revert back to bosses gender as the main independent variable.

Next, I tested staff satisfaction of work as the dependent and added a control variable of years spent working in the legislature. My initial thought that there would be a stronger level of satisfaction among those staffers who have more years of experience; however again, I found no significance. I then re-coded the years in the legislature variable into two categories: 5 years or less experience, and greater than 5 years' experience. Later, I also used these two categories to describe the varied levels of experience for my personal interviews.

Following a meeting with my thesis advisors, I used the same test above, but used the newly coded years spent working in the legislature and found a hint of satisfaction that exists, but with the low frequencies, still not enough to conclude significance. Using the same control variable, I then included age as the dependent variable since it was significant in earlier tests and bosses gender for the independent. Unfortunately there was again no significance to report.

After repeated attempts of statistical analysis in SPSS using the chi-square tests determining the goodness of fit, I was determined to find more significance in my survey data to prove my hypothesis. I thought it would be interesting to see if the ethnicity of the legislative staffers had any effect on the satisfaction within the office and the gender of the boss they currently worked for. I found that there was almost significance, but not strong enough to claim. It may be that additional survey results given more time would help to validate this claim using the variables above. With little significance to report from the initial survey results, I then conducted the personal interviews over a period of two weeks. Many interesting findings came of these interviews and not always along the same lines of the results that stemmed from the electronic survey results. The next chapter will focus the results of the interview and how they contribute, if at all, to the survey results. The chapter will finish with interesting findings worth reporting in this thesis and that may contribute to future research topics to study.

Chapter 5

PERSONAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

This chapter introduces findings from personal interviews that contribute to my overall thesis results. The personal interviews were with twenty legislative staffers from positions ranging from executive assistant to chief of staff. The first ten interviews reflected my established relationships with other legislative staff members. Interviewees had a mixture of backgrounds: Senate/Assembly, male/female, Republican/Democrat, as well as varying years of experience in the building. Following the first ten interviews, the remaining interviews were with senior legislative staff recommended by my professors (in most cases more than ten years of experience) and other staffers whom I knew with less than five years of experience. The variety provided a balanced sample.

Originally, the goal of the personal interviews was to contribute additional qualitative explanation to the electronic survey results. I originally planned to conduct only ten personal interviews. After the first set of interviews, I quickly realized that I was finding differing responses between the survey and interviews. At this point, I met again with my advisors and decided to do additional interviews to see if there would be any stronger evidence to add to my survey findings compared to my initial interview sample. As it turns out, I found very interesting information in each of my interviews and with these results it is necessary to include the survey and interviews explanations in separate chapters. This chapter explains the main differences that legislative staff observes between male and female members for whom they work. I will conclude the chapter with further interesting information generated from the interviews that is not necessarily

relevant to the topic of gender, but relevant to the opinion of legislative staff being studied, and conclude by answering the research question that initiated this thesis.

I asked nine questions in each personal interview. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the first question is specific to the role of legislative staff, and the second question immediately turns the focus to gender of the elected official for whom the staff member works. Specifically this question asks, “Have you observed any differences in how male versus female members engage with their staff?” This question is really the key reaction I focused on for the personal interviews hoping to get results contributing to legislative staff’s stronger satisfaction when working for a female compared to a male. Three sharply different perspectives emerged from the interviews: working for females had a negative effect on their working environment, working for females had a positive effect, or gender had no effect on legislative staff workplace satisfaction.

Female Boss’s Negative Effect on Staff

After the results of the survey, I went into the personal interviews hoping to use the time with legislative staff to seal the hint of stronger satisfaction that I found from the survey in that under female leadership, staff is happier. Within the first set of ten interviews, at least six staffers suggested that working for a female has a negative effect on staff. Two interesting opinions came about from these six staffers. First, the story that women are more distant with their staff came up more than once. Men focus more on office camaraderie and personal relationships with staff.

Secondly, these same staffers felt that women are more hot headed than men. Even those staffers that had never worked for a female member of the Assembly or Senate, but based on rumors and stories from colleagues, felt that women, "...tend to be more emotional, hot-headed, therefore difficult to work for." Another staffer suggested that hot-headedness existed because of the steps that women have to take to be elected. Each of these opinions may stand alone, or both stand as specific gender differences.

One staffer noted that when a female staffer works for a female legislator it may be even more difficult. Consequently, this staffer suggested that females working for females have conflicting agendas and overall it is very hard to work for a female. She noted that female legislators seem to have an attitude about them, making it hard for staff to deal with them in a working environment. The "authority" she said that they carry about them has female members looking down on other females within their office. Women have not always been respected by their male counterparts in the same fashion as they currently are in the Senate or Assembly. This assumption is why one staffer stated that women can be their own worst nightmare as they feel they have to be tough and ruthless to their staff regardless of the level of respect they receive in Sacramento.

One Assembly staffer who has been in the building for well over twenty years had a very negative perception of working for females in the Capitol. She feels that men are more comfortable in their decision making because they have more confidence and a higher level of personal security that comes from self-confidence. In her opinion, women have a hard time being a part of an office and team as the elected official. Interestingly enough, she considers herself a feminist and continues to mentor young women hitting

pitfalls in their careers, yet has terrible experiences under the leadership purview of women. All in all, she had some horrible experiences under female leadership and just can't understand why women treat other women so poorly in the Capitol. Her current job working for a male is the best experience she's had in over twenty years.

Taking political party into effect when discussing staff's happiness working for a female or male leader was something I hadn't really considered until one staffer suggested that female Democrat members are harder to work for than the Republican women members. Historically she felt that there has been more liberal females working in the legislature than there have been conservatives and perhaps with more time the negative stories surrounding women leaders would be similar in both political parties. Similarly, before the required sexual harassment training, this staffer noted that women are less tolerant when having to put up with their staff now, compared to before the training.

Most of the interviews were with staffers assigned to a member's personal office; however, in some cases there was overlap of those staffers who had previously worked for a committee or in the district office for a member. In one of these cases, the staffer saw definite differences between male and female members and their interactions with staff, quickly stating that, "...females are more difficult to work for." He continued on, saying that women have more personal requests and require a certain way for staff to present an issue to them rather than men's preference of just giving them the information that was asked of staff. His belief was that women have a feeling of injustice because before they had to break through real barriers to get here and no matter how far they have

gotten, they believe men still have the image that women should not necessarily be here. The feeling that female members have to outperform others (even staff) to prove themselves reflects negatively on staff.

I found some of my responses to this second question about the effect of gender to be alarming because regardless of how simply the question was stated, staff began by describing experiences working for women first. Perhaps this experience is because they are the “newer” gender to leadership in California’s state legislature or perhaps a stigma surrounds women in the Capitol as members. Even my second set of interviews featured conversations with four legislative staffers who had negative comments about female bosses.

One staffer I thought was going to go in a different direction started by telling me that women simply get a bad rap in the legislature as elected leaders. She then started to explain to me that in her personal experience, it is much easier to work for a male than a female, but spelled out the differences in both male and female personalities, not calling out one gender or another. To this staffer, women follow the rules more and she really felt that females working for females are more compatible because they are more nurturing and aware of how they present themselves. She did note that the media scrutinizes women more than men and therefore, more pressure is on women to act and lead in a certain way. It is much easier in her eyes for a man to tell a woman what to do, but not necessarily vice versa. She stated that men are historically used to being taken care of by females.

An interview with a younger male staffer suggested that women get a bad rap as elected officials in the legislature. Staffers and other elected officials alike believe that women's priorities are expressed differently than men's because of their role and family obligations. Women who have younger children at home seem to be looked down on because they are away from their kids, but men get "a pass" for these same family obligations. Although this young staffer has yet to work for a female of the Assembly or Senate, he did note that men still have much more power than women. This staffer also acknowledges term limits have brought in more females, so maybe this difference will soon change. Whereas his opinion of elected women leaders was not completely negative as others above suggest, he believed that some of the "crazy female" stories he has heard in his three years at the Capitol may be simply a way for females to get attention by exasperating relations with staff. The rest of the legislative staffers take note and now have an engrained opinion of women leaders.

Female Boss's Positive Effect on Staff

As noted in the chapter two literature review, there may in fact be gender differences in leadership styles whether in the business setting or among elected officials. This section will share stories from the personal interviews conducted where staffers attribute female bosses to have positive effects on the staff work experience and environment.

Some interviewees indicated that females are more social and nurturing than men. Additionally, more than one staffer mentioned that women seem to be more interested in how policy affects people's personal lives so they have to harden themselves when they

get here. Females are more detail oriented and tend to focus their legislative priorities based on specific policies affecting people. Under one staffer's experience working for a female, women are more interested in how people will "feel" or be affected by the policy on an individual level rather than the bigger picture for the state and nation. Contrary to women, he felt that men are more focused on the bigger picture and not as concerned about the small details regardless if they're hurting someone's feelings.

One staffer who has worked for both a female and male member of the Assembly has been very positively affected by a female member. Her first male boss operated with more of a top-down structure when leading the office and everything had to go through the proper chain of command. She reported directly to the chief of staff, not the member. Under the leadership of her current female boss, this staffer feels female members go out of their way to get to know staff on a personal level, they pay attention to who handles what committee/bill assignment, and simply seem to care about staff in a different way than men. In addition, staff opinions seems to matter more with a female, whereas a male would just use it as a "source" and continue looking elsewhere for further information. Women members took staff's information as fact and trusted the source without feeling the need to search for further expertise.

Perhaps the most overarching comments came from a male who was the longest standing staffer in the Capitol whom I interviewed. He had over 35 years of experience and noticed a significant difference in how male and female members engage with their staff. He believes that female members treat their staff more positively than male members as a whole. This staffer's specific example reflected his children's medical

problems and how his female boss took this aspect of his personal life into account. Immediately upon interviewing with a female member, he was reassured that family came first and to always makes sure to take care of his family life first and work second. The first female member whom this staffer worked for had a daughter with special needs so when his children had medical problems, she was quick to sympathize and insist he take the time to help his family. Another boss this man has had is a lesbian with no children, yet she still seems more sympathetic to his family needs than male members he's worked for in the past. His experience under male leadership was for a man of the old school mentality where staff is responsible for more personal things; however he did note that today's times have changed and that is not as much the role as staff now as it used to be.

No Gender Difference Effect on Staff

I was surprised at how many of the twenty did not feel there was a difference in their working environment and satisfaction as legislative staffers due to gender. A great deal of the responses simply felt gender had no effect on job satisfaction. Many attributed their overall satisfaction to other factors.

Many staffers in my first 10 interviews expressed not having enough experience under their current boss (whether that be male or female) to determine a significant difference in gender leadership. Instead they would attribute any difference that may exist to just a personality difference and nothing more. Even a few of the responses I received that pointed out differences in leaders' genders still noted that this opinion may be a product of personality differences and not merely the gender of the elected official.

One staffer whom had only worked for males did point out that there was no difference at all that he has observed and every day is different as a legislative staffer whether you're working for a male or female.

In my second set of interviews even fewer staffers saw a gender related difference. Again, staffers who had only worked for females or only worked for males could not always answer the questions in black or white terms. Instead they were inclined to say that they were not prepared to make a fair judgment on gender of the elected official. Surprisingly one man (even with a follow-up question) simply answered that he had observed, "...nothing at all" as far as differences in how male versus female members engage with their staff which was the simplest answer I received.

Another staffer noted that there used to be many discriminatory differences for elected female officials versus the opportunities that are there today for women. She has only worked for one female over the twenty years she has worked in the Capitol, and believes even the horror stories she has heard working for females are less applicable now. Noting that women communicate differently than men, she works well with both genders and believes that instead of a gender difference in their relationships with staff, it is just a member by member issue and personalities will always differ in how they interact with their personal legislative staff.

Most legislative staff have heard of specific member-staff horror stories; however, only one staffer believes that different leadership styles exist. Of the one man and one female this staffer had worked for there was nothing else to note and far as he was concerned, it is not a gender issue. He stated as clearly as any staffer, "Gender has no role

in legislative staff and there is no difference at all.” As he continued, he mentioned that women make better overall managers when dealing with staff matters, such as chiefs of staff, but on the member level, gender has no role. My very last interview of the twenty was a legislative staffer who had worked for multiple members of the Assembly. She simply stated, “I never paid any attention to management styles of gender. I instead pay attention to the quality of a chief of staff and how much experience they have when I go to work for them.” As certain staffers could attribute their working environment to an issue of gender, others saw no link whatsoever.

OTHER INTERESTING INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The main goal of the personal interviews was to add additional insight to the survey results regarding the effect that the gender of the elected official has on legislative staff; however, the interviews also provided a much broader opinion of legislative staff working in the Capitol. I believe that this information will be useful both as interesting findings for this thesis, but more importantly for future research on the study of legislative staff. These additional findings will provide opinions of how the role of legislative staff has changed since term limits were established, give staff’s opinion of salary and benefit compensation, and also suggest ideal traits that legislative staff likes to see in the legislative offices where they work.

Changes in Legislative Staff’s Role since Term Limits Were Passed

Regardless if legislative staffers started working in the legislature before term limits passed or after, they unanimously agree that institutional knowledge has been lost from the elected officials. Members working on particular issues for years soon find

themselves termed out, leaving them no time to follow through with their passions. In addition, staffers agreed that the term limited environment in California's legislature gives more power to staff and lobbyists who now enjoy more longevity than elected officials. Staffers raised frustration with staffers holding institutional knowledge which translates to "power" in the fact that staffers are not the ones elected and they are not accountable to the voters, yet in many cases staff makes the big decisions for the elected members. A mere six or eight years in the Capitol does allow enough time to develop expertise. The policies involved and in some cases members do not seem to care as much about the long term impacts, but more importantly about their short term legacy.

A few of the staffers whom I interviewed who had more than ten years of experience also noted that personal staff are now much younger than they used to be. Nevertheless, these young staffers get roles and titles in offices with much less experience than staffers in the past. A long term staffer pointed out the stress and anxiety that has come with term limits for staff who have to quickly adjust to a new member. In just a few short years go out and be on the market for a new job once again. These thoughts can take away from the current job by being too focused on the uncertainty of a job in the future. One staffer who suggested that term limits actually cut down on staff salaries because there is much more turnover; therefore new members can get away with paying their staff lower salaries.

Staff's Opinion of Salary and Benefit Compensation

All twenty staffers interviewed felt that benefits given in the Senate and Assembly are more than fair and in some cases, the benefits may even be too generous. Aside from

benefits though, I received differing views from Democrats versus Republicans, Senate versus Assembly, and experienced versus inexperienced staff regarding the salary amounts. It seemed to be common knowledge that Republican staffers were paid less than Democrat staffers, but as most of them mentioned, this salary difference is because the Democrats are currently in the majority. Surprisingly a few experienced Senate staffers denied any difference in political party affiliation salaries, but also noted that they really weren't aware of what their counterpart in the opposite party received.

Nearly all of the twenty staffers whom I interviewed noted that Senate staffers receive higher pay than their Assembly colleagues. Years of experience played a large role in higher salaries for those working in the Senate to most people's belief, however the setup of how slots are handled for staff also seem to work from a larger budget than in the Assembly. I will note that those interviews with staffers in the Senate tended to have more years of experience cite their longevity as justifying their higher salaries.

Some argued that legislative staffers are overpaid. A few Republican staffers who saw themselves as public servants argued that staff should not expect private sector salaries. Further, lower status staffers complained about their lower salaries.

Staff noted that more experienced people received higher salaries. Older, more experienced Senate staffers received higher salaries and expressed more job satisfaction. I experienced frustration in more than one interview that there are no criteria set up in the Assembly for members to hand out staff salaries. Members can give whatever they want to whomever they want. This tactic by members resulted in many very unhappy staffers who do not get paid enough to do what they do. It was known that the salary system in

place is not fair. One chief of staff whom I interviewed specifically referenced the Assembly salaries as “horrid” and explained that it is “hard to keep anyone around here of any quality.”

Ideal Traits for Legislative Staffers to Work Under in an Office

Legislative staffers are slightly different than other office employees although they do also work in a small space for long periods of time and deal with multiple personalities throughout their day. What are different for staff in the office of an elected official though is constantly changing environments and the political and legislative processes that can stir up any office at any given time. Other working environments may have similar characteristics if there is a high turnover of bosses every few years similar to elected officials held to term limits or even those new start-up firms that face such uncertainty. It was common to hear in many interviews that knowledge of the legislative process is desired by at least the chief of staff so there was someone in each office to go to with quick questions. The most important inner office trait that I took out of the interviews was good, solid communication. This framework applied to teamwork, camaraderie, open discussions, trust, and a good mix of males and females.

Staffers want to be trusted when asked to do something by their respective member and not feel that they are undermined when they present the information. Many staffers did not know specific office structures that would be ideal for them, but when given options of a chain-of-command or flat structure, most all chose a flat structure where each of the staffers worked in a team environment. This trust may be unique to political offices in which your ultimate goal is to make the boss look good and be

prepared at all times. Reliable, trustworthy staffs who are dedicated to the cause seemed to be favored and be ideal conditions for staff to work. Supportive work environments as well as flexible schedules for working parents described additional perquisites in a member office for staff to work for. With a positive working environment, it is possible to draw the most out of each individual's capabilities.

The above insight that came from the personal interviews for this thesis may not directly tie into the gender and legislative staff themes as originally intended. However, these observations may contribute to existing research and open the door for possible new research that may be on the horizon. The concluding chapter will focus on the overall questions guiding the thesis, specifically focusing on legislative staff and gender of the elected official as posed by the question at the beginning of this study.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the central research question. I will identify any bias toward the electronic survey or personal interviews. I will present the research findings as well as my recommendations. I will also present suggestions for potential research in future analysis. Lastly, I will reflect on research prior to this thesis as outlined in chapter 2 and the impact it will have on future literature surrounding legislative staff and gender of the elected official.

Findings Related to Question Guiding This Research

The question laid out in the beginning of this thesis is, ‘Does the gender of an elected official affect legislative staff in any way?’ As noted in chapter 2, there is a gap in literature relating to the study of legislative staff. This thesis researched the above question and answered it through data analysis and personal stories from interviewees to arrive at helpful conclusions. At the outset I determined regardless of whether my original hypothesis was supported or not, I would remain open to additional findings from the survey and interviews that would provide interesting information to report.

Based on my analysis of the electronic survey results, followed by the personal interview results, I found no conclusive evidence that the gender of an elected official has a significant overall effect on staff in terms of work satisfaction. While Ladegaard’s empirical study found two very distinct interaction styles between male and female leaders and their respective staff, this thesis is an addition to his research by expanding the conclusion to the leader’s effect on staff. Early in my survey analysis, I found hints of

stronger satisfaction among legislative staff working for female members. When I added control variables to the analysis, the effect disappeared. The resulting effect was not significant enough to explicitly make a conclusion based on the survey data.

The diverse findings between the survey and the interviews, although not exact, still show enough evidence that gender has some specific effects on legislative staff. My challenge was the varying responses that were collected from the interviews and how the responses did not necessarily contribute directly to my survey findings because the responses were so mixed. The survey results showed a hint of stronger satisfaction under females as mentioned, but were inconclusive moving into the interviews. With the mixed interview results, it was difficult to discern if the same hints were found from the interviews giving their varying responses. At this point, I picked up on other findings and was able to consider toward my analysis as they were interesting enough to report. The next section will highlight any potential research bias that existed in this research that may be avoided in future analyses before addressing the implications that came from this research.

Potential Research Design Bias

Although some of the research design may have a small amount of bias, I believe the majority of it was unavoidable. When I began organizing my list of potential candidates to submit the electronic survey to, the lists of legislative staff that I received approval to use contained hundreds of Capitol and district staff. Not every staffer listed on these lists, obtained from Assembly and Senate Rules Committees, were relevant participants that I was seeking to interview to answer my thesis question. I had to go

through both the Senate and Assembly staff lists in order to eliminate all staff that did not work at the capitol and in a member's office. In many cases the classification of staff did not always match their business card job title in both the Assembly and Senate; therefore, there may be unavoidable bias when a staffer was omitted from the original survey distribution. It was challenging to go through the more than 40 pages of staff names and classifications, but I do not believe there was any other way to obtain a comprehensive list of legislative staff that was as specific as I needed.

In addition to omitting potential participants, bias may exist within the design of my personal interview correspondence. Originally I planned to randomly solicit staffers to interview, but in the end I interviewed those with whom I had a working or personal relationship. Regarding the staffers that I didn't have this relationship with, my research advisors gave me recommendations and suggestions to interview, rather than making a cold call, requesting that they speak with me. If I had more time, I feel that additional interviews with those staffers with whom I had no affiliation could have contributed to my results and provided additional insight, but there is no way to be sure. Although there may be bias with this research as highlighted above, I do not feel that it significantly affected my results in the analysis.

Implications

My survey results are subjective because men and women legislators may influence their staff's satisfaction with their working conditions, but the level of this difference is not clear. It was my hope that the research gathered from the personal interviews would strengthen the hints that I found from the survey results, but the results

are not definitive enough to reach solid conclusions. The unclear and differing results between the surveys and interviews makes me cautious in my conclusions.

The personal interviews provided very interesting information and opinions of legislative staff even if the interview results didn't coincide with my survey results. Some staffers aligned their opinion of the effect gender has on legislative staff with the original hint I found from analyzing the survey data. The twenty staffers whom I interviewed do not allow me enough significance to report any level of satisfaction without using caution.

I believe that my results may be a reflection of history changing with more women in the legislature now than before. Had this study taken place twenty years ago, the results might have been more significant because the number of women in elected offices were fewer. Gender may not be as significant as it once was. My results show me that overall legislative staff seems to be relatively content in the workplace whether working for a male or female member. Perhaps certain member tendencies and personal stories contribute to something other than gender as having the larger effect on legislative staff. Of the three categories that stemmed from the personal interview questions regarding differences in male and female members, those staffers that felt there was no difference at all between gender of the elected official may actually reflect the future of legislator staff relations.

Although the findings of main hypothesis were inconclusive about the overall effect of gender, I was still able to find other interesting findings, especially from the personal interviews. A good example of an interesting finding would be the effect of

gender on how much latitude staff are given to attend to family issues. Being unable to determine any gross differences of staff satisfaction under the leadership of male or female members though, I could not definitively conclude with all of the research I compiled for this thesis. The hint of stronger satisfaction beneath female leadership that I initially found using the survey data and some of the interviews that also may contribute to my findings forces me to use caution in my findings based on my main hypothesis. I do feel that this thesis will contribute to the general body of literature on this subject and it is my hope that further research will expand upon the hints I found early on in my survey analysis. Given the dated information found from obtainable research, the minimal significance of gender's role on legislative staff's work satisfaction will contribute to the body of research while also leaving room for further studies down the road.

Future Research and Recommendations

I am hopeful that my survey will open the door for future research. Expanding the electronic survey to include more questions that focus more specifically on gender may be one way to strengthen the methodology and tighten the potential findings. It may be that gender truly does not have an effect on legislative staff's workplace satisfaction, but perhaps the role of gender in other aspects may provide for additional exploration. One example of further exploration would research if male and female legislators relate to family issues differently. Another might be to explore the average age women enter politics and determine if age has any role when dealing with legislative staff. An idea that came from one of the personal interviews that would be worth looking into would be the

amount of time female legislators spend outside of the Capitol after regular hours. Specifically time spent at receptions with lobbyists and other members of the Legislature would be interesting to compare across genders. These are just a few examples of gender specific topics that emerged from my interviews that may provide possible direction for future research.

Some interesting differences came up in the personal interviews that would be candidates for future research such as the question about the fairness of salary and benefit compensation for legislative staff. In addition, exploring both legislative staff and gender of the elected official in further depth for a doctorate dissertation may be relevant and interesting. The results from this thesis are worth looking into at a deeper level.

APPENDIX A. ELECTRONIC SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your influence over decisions made in your legislative office?
 - a. No influence at all
 - b. Moderate influence
 - c. Very influential
 - d. Other

2. Have you ever worked for another member of the opposite sex of your current boss?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. How would you rate your satisfaction with current working conditions in your office?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor

4. How would you rate your contentment with your daily workload?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor

5. How satisfied are you with the level of challenge in the assignments you are given?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor

6. How do you fare in your relationships with your immediate co-workers?
 - a. Very well
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor

7. Is there anything in addition you would like to add to summarize your current job as a legislative staffer?

Leave BLANK space for option to "fill in" additional comments.

8. Do you work for the Assembly or Senate?
 - a. Assembly
 - b. Senate

9. Gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

10. Ethnicity?

- a. Hispanic
- b. Caucasian
- c. African American
- d. Asian
- e. Other

11. Age?

- a. 20-30
- b. 30-40
- c. 40-50
- d. 50-60
- e. 60 or older

12. How many years have you worked as a member of 'staff' in the CA legislature?

- a. <5
- b. 5-9
- c. 10-19
- d. >20

13. Why do you choose to work in the legislature?
- a. Strong attachment to personal policy agenda
 - b. Goal of running for elected office someday
 - c. For the money/benefits
 - d. Personal relationship with the elected official
 - e. All of the above (a, b, c, and d)
 - f. Other
14. What is the gender of your current boss?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
15. What is your current boss's ethnicity?
- a. Hispanic
 - b. Caucasian
 - c. African American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Other
16. What is your boss's political party affiliation?
- a. Republican
 - b. Democrat
 - c. Independent/Decline to state
 - d. Other

Disclaimer: This survey will remain completely confidential and only used for purposes of my master's thesis. If you would like me to send a copy of the aggregate results, please contact me at heidiljensen@yahoo.com. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B. PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Record personal information before/after face-to-face interview such as; gender of staff and their boss, the ethnicity (if obvious), political affiliation, etc.

1. Drawing on your professional expertise, have you seen any changes in legislative staff's role since term limits were passed?
2. *(knowing the gender of the current boss)* Based on your professional experiences, have you observed any differences in how male versus female members engage with their staff?
3. As a personal staffer the CA Assembly/Senate, do *your* professional relationships with key players and knowledge of the process help you do your job and make your boss work more efficiently?
4. Do you feel that legislative staffers are fairly compensated for the work they do by the annual salaries and benefits given?
5. What traits do you see an ideal Senate/Assembly personal office's to work in?
6. What is your role/job title as a legislative staffer in this office?
 - a. Leg, scheduling, office manager, Chief, political aspect, etc...
7. How many years have you worked in the Capitol?
 - a. Has all of that time been in the Senate/Assembly?

8. How has your overall experience been during your time spent as a legislative staffer?
 - a. Very positive, learned a lot, ready to move on, etc...
9. Who is your former boss (if not already revealed from question 2)?

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