Employment status and the attitudes and behavior of higher status women volunteers, 1975 and 1992: A case study

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationships between employment status and women's attitudes toward and participation in a higher status voluntary service organization. Data were gathered in 1975 and 1992 from a sample of chapters of the International Association of Women (a pseudonym). The 1992 sample included three percent who reported a racial or ethnic identification other than white. Drawing on several theoretical perspectives, we expected to find differences in the attitudes and level of participation of employed versus non-employed members that would have important effects on organizational functioning. However, few differences in the attitudes of members employed full time, part time, and not in the labor force were found in either 1975 or 1992. There were, however, differences in behavior. Employed members reported spending much less time on organizational activities and were less likely to assume leadership roles, but these differences diminished between 1975 and 1992 as employed women became numerically dominant in the organization, suggesting that the growing presence of employed women in IAW led to the development of informal norms and new policies about the amount of time members should devote to the organization and a corresponding loss in the total number of volunteer hours devoted to it.

Keywords: Employment | Volunteerism | Women | Labor force

Article:

The movement of women into the labor force has been described as the "single most outstanding event of our century" (Ginzberg, 1976). Numerous studies have documented the effects of women's entry into the labor force on work organizations, the family, schools, the media, and other institutions. Yet we know almost nothing about how women's growing labor force participation affects another type of organization which has played an important part in the lives of women in the United States--voluntary associations.

Volunteerism emerged as a significant activity for women during the industrial revolution, when higher status women, largely excluded from paid work, were encouraged to make voluntary activity a key part of their lives (Harris, 1978). As volunteers, they developed and used talents for planning, leadership, and administration in ways that posed no threat to their husbands' dominance or traditional family roles, while socializing with peers and validating their status through community service (Ostrander, 1984). For some, participation in higher status organizations became an "invisible career" (Daniels, 1988). Higher status women continue to be greatly overrepresented among the numerous Americans who participate in voluntary activities and belong to volunteer organizations (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1994), but their increasing entry into the labor force (Fuchs, 1988) raises questions about the place of volunteerism in their lives and the future of organizations to which they belong (Statham and Rhoton, 1986). Employed women may have less time for volunteering, and their predispositions toward volunteer work may be different from those of women outside the labor force, producing conflict and strain in organizations that have traditionally been outlets for women's volunteer work.

Several national surveys (Edwards, Edwards, and Watt, 1984; Kingston and Nock, 1992) compare the time employed and non-employed women devote to voluntary associations and the types of organizations they join. However, no national survey examines women's attitudes toward voluntary association participation by employment status. Nor are there case studies of specific organizations that compare the attitudes and behavior of their members.

This research helps to fill these gaps through a case study of a large, higher status women's volunteer organization studied in 1975, when employed women were a minority, and again in 1992, when they were a majority. In both years, we compare attitudes and behaviors with potential impact on the organization's policies, goals and effectiveness among members who work full time for pay, work part time, and are not in the labor force to determine what differences existed and how they relate to changing organizational policies, practices and effectiveness. Such research is theoretically and practically strategic because many voluntary organizations have a growing majority of women with paid jobs among their members.

EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Despite the paucity of previous research, four theoretical perspectives imply that employment affects women's orientations toward and participation in volunteer organizations.

Role Overload occurs when one's roles require more time and effort than one has for them. Employed women often face serious difficulties juggling employment, household, and family responsibilities (Hochschild, 1989), which may affect their volunteer participation as well. Role overload may be reduced by devoting less time to voluntary associations or avoiding the demands of leadership roles. Most previous research indicates that employed women belong to fewer associations than non-employed women (e.g., Edwards, Edwards, and Watts, 1984; Statham and Rhoton, 1989; Kingston and Nock, 1992), but a few studies find no differences

(e.g., Schram and Dunsing, 1981). Research also indicates that they devote less time overall to voluntary associations (Schram and Dunsing, 1981; Statham and Rhoton, 1986). Other responses to role overload could include less tolerance of inefficient procedures and of activities that divert attention from the business at hand or fail to offer a clear return on time invested. Such responses could have important implications for the satisfaction of employed members, for organizational conflict and for organizational effectiveness.

Gender Role Attitudes are less traditional among employed women than among those without paid jobs (Statham and Rhoton, 1983; Bianchi and Spain, 1986). Thus, employed women might be less satisfied in organizations traditionally dominated by women not in the labor force and might prefer different types of volunteer activity. Previous studies indicate that employed women are more politically active (Near, Rice, and Hunt, 1980) and have more memberships than do non-employed women in instrumental associations, such as political and economic organizations (e.g., Gustafson, Booth, and Johnson, 1979; Edwards, Edwards, and Watts, 1984); however, these studies show no differences by employment status in memberships in expressive associations. Non-employed women might also prefer activities congruent with traditional female roles, such as working with children or in cultural activities and might place more emphasis on the interpersonal rewards of membership.

The Spillover Perspective focuses on the relationship between work and non-work pursuits. Spillover exists when individuals' work and non-work roles have the same characteristics, allow them to meet the same needs and draw on the same abilities (Rosseau, 1978; Kabanoff, 1980; Staines, 1980). Spillover implies that higher status women would apply patterns of action from the managerial and professional occupations they most often occupy to their volunteer work. They might be more interested in efforts to influence government or business, seek opportunities to exhibit competence and mastery and plan and implement activities, and be more apt to emphasize efficiency in organizational administration. The life experiences of women outside the labor force could influence them to be less assertive, avoid leadership, and accept the status quo. Employed members might have difficulty fitting into organizations dominated by non-employed women, and conflicts could develop over goals, operating procedures and leadership. Despite extensive research in other institutions, only Meissner's (1971) study provides support for the applicability of spillover to voluntary association activity.

The Compensation Perspective, the opposite of spillover, suggests that employees seek non-work experiences with opportunities missing from their work (Kabanoff, 1980; Staines, 1980). Volunteer work could thus provide non-employed women with opportunities to lead, administer and participate in community affairs (Ostrander, 1984; Daniels, 1988). Conversely, women in upper status careers might seek opportunities not available at work, such as directly serving persons in need and developing warm ties with other women. They would avoid leadership roles and seek a more relaxed organizational climate. These hypotheses have been tested rarely, although Jenner (1982) found that employed volunteers were more likely to see voluntary participation as a supplement to a primary life role, while non-employed volunteers more often

made the volunteering a primary career in itself. Several studies (e.g., Daniels, 1988) also explain the significant contributions of a handful of "supervolunteers" by suggesting that volunteer careers can substitute for paid ones.

THE ORGANIZATION AND THE STUDIES

The International Association of Women (a pseudonym) is a higher status women's volunteer organization, comprised of about 200,000 members in 300 chapters, mostly in North America. Its purposes are to develop its members' potential for volunteer service and leadership, contribute to community change, and promote volunteerism. Local chapters pursue these goals by: (1) training members to better understand the community and serve as leaders in volunteer activity; (2) raising funds for community programs or agencies; (3) providing volunteers for community projects, and (4) operating their own service projects. Recently, the central organization and some local chapters have initiated efforts to influence public policy in areas of concern to members. Relatively few chapters have paid administrators, though most have clerical assistance. A Board of Directors, which typically includes officers and chairs of major committees, governs each chapter. An elaborate committee structure handles fundraising, community projects, member recruitment and training.

Most new members enter IAW in their 20s or 30s. In 1975, women were "invited" to join IAW after being recommended by several current members. By 1992, however, membership was officially open to any woman with a commitment to volunteerism. After a short probationary period, which includes training about the organization and the community, recruits become full members. By middle age, they are assumed to be ready to operate independently as community leaders, so most choose a reduced role, paying dues without formal participation.

We were asked to study the organization in 1973 after presenting several workshops on volunteer motivation and retention at IAW regional and national meetings. In 1990, we accepted a request to undertake an update. Both our 1975 and 1992 samples come from probationary and active members of North American chapters selected using a stratified random selection based on chapter size and region. Pretests in 1973-1974 in seven local chapters (not included in the sample) suggested that chapter size was closely related to the complexity of the chapter's organization and to differences in the opportunities and rewards offered to members. All 12 chapters selected in 1975 agreed to participate then, and again in 1992. Because most of the organization's growth between 1975 and 1992 had occurred in the South, a thirteenth randomly selected chapter from this region was added in 1992 to better represent the membership at that time. The chapters ranged from 57 to 486 members in 1992 and are located in metropolitan areas ranging from just under 100,000 to several million.

Questionnaires were administered by the researchers at general membership meetings. Absentees received mail questionnaires. The response rate in 1975 ranged from 72 to 90%, with an overall rate of 81% (N = 1829). The 1992 response rates were between 53 and 97% (with only one

chapter below 60%), for an overall rate of 74% (N = 2403). Lengthy semistructured interviews were also completed with five officers in each chapter in 1975 and with the 25 of the 26 top two officers (usually president and president-elect) of the 13 chapters in 1992.

The modal respondent was married (92% in 1975 and 80% in 1992), in her 30s (75% and 70% respectively), and a mother of one to three children (78 and 65%). In 1992, 97% were white and reported no minority ethnic affiliation (questions not included in 1975). In 1975, 75% were college graduates, and 35% had completed at least some graduate work. By 1992, the percentages had increased to 86 and 44%. In 1975, 90% of the respondents with full time jobs were business owners or held managerial, professional, or technical jobs. In 1992, 96% held such positions. Ninety-nine percent of spouses in 1975 and 98% in 1992 were also in these occupations.

In 1975, 16% reported full time employment, while 17% worked part time. The total, 33%, was well below the 55% for U.S. women 25 to 44 in 1975 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1979). Fifty percent of members under 30 were employed, compared to 27% of those over 35. At that time, there was a great deal of concern and debate about the admission of working women into LAW. Women working outside the home were referred to as "professional" members to distinguish them from "regular" members, and task forces were studying how best to incorporate them. Some members were uncertain about whether employed women could be successfully integrated into the organization at all. Half agreed with or were uncertain about a statement that admitting employed members would "alienate nonemployed members" and 27% agreed or were uncertain about whether their chapter should admit only working members who could "meet the same obligations and experience the same rewards" as non-employed members. Many members also resisted accommodating the needs of employed women to hold meetings at night. Our interviews with officers, the majority of whom did not work for pay, also revealed much apprehension about the effects of admitting employed women.

By 1992, 47% of members were employed full time and 20% part time. This remains below the 75% rate for all women 25 to 44 (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1992), but members more closely resembled the general population. Younger members remained more likely to be employed (85% of those under 30, compared to 62% of those 35 and over), but the gap had narrowed. Most importantly, employed women had become the majority, and the distinction between "regular" and "professional" members had disappeared. A few chapters held "duplicate" day and night meetings, with the latter far better attended, but most held all meetings at night. Work requirements for maintaining membership had been relaxed and scheduling had become more flexible. Many chapters had recently elected their first President with a full time job, signaling the movement of employed women into leadership positions. Nevertheless, some officers expressed concern that the restricted participation of employed women imposed greater demands on the most active non-employed members.

FINDINGS

The theoretical perspectives outlined above, as well as the organizational folk wisdom of 1975, suggested that differences between the attitudes and behavior of women in the labor force and those not working for pay might make the former's integration into IAW difficult. By 1992, this integration had in fact occurred, if for no other reason than the overwhelming preponderance of employed women among potential members, although some concerns remained. But how real were the differences between employed and non-employed members in 1975 and 1992, and what were they? Did they concern attitudes, behavior, or both? Did employed and non-employed members became more alike as the percentage of the former increased and the organization modified its structure and policies to accommodate to their needs and interests?

Table I helps to answer these questions by comparing the responses of women who were employed full time, employed part time, and not working for pay in both 1975 and 1992 on a wide variety of relevant attitudes. Social and organizational change made it impossible to make the 1992 questionnaire an exact replica of the 1975 version, but we carried forward as many items as possible. We focus here on zero order relationships because these are what the theories and organizational folk wisdom predict.

Reasons for Membership

All four theoretical perspectives suggest that employed women would emphasize somewhat different reasons for membership, although they sometimes differ about specific predictions. To determine how different employed and non-employed women actually were, we asked respondents to rate the importance of a list of predispositions that they might hope to satisfy through membership in voluntary associations (Bonjean, Markham, and Macken, 1994). Contrary to our expectations, no important differences by employment status were found in either 1992 or 1975 (Table I, panel A). Employment status explains more than one percent of the variance in only one of 39 comparisons. More importantly, the differences are too small to be of substantive import. Only one exceeds .3 on a four-point response scale, and only eight exceeded .1. Thus, contrary to both theory and organizational folklore, the effects of employment on what members hope to gain through their participation are too small to affect organizational goals or operating procedures, or to produce much conflict.

Table I. Mean Responses to Attitudinal Items by Employment Status

Table I. Mean Responses to Attitudinal Items by Employment Status, 1992 and 1975

	1992				1975			
	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2
A. Importance of Outcomes of Participation								
Encouraging Positive Community Change[a]	2.5	2.5	2.5	.00	2.2	2.1	2.1	.00
Working with Cogenial, Interesting Women[a]	2.3	2.4	2.4	.00	2.4	2.4	2.4	.00
Helping Disadvantaged Groups[a,g]	2.3	2.3	2.3	.00	1.9	1.8	1.9	.00
Training for Self-Development[a]	1.9	2.0	2.0	.01**	2.2	2.3	2.2	.00
Identifying or Pursuing Career-Related Interests[a]	1.2	1.2	1.1	.00	1.5	1.6	1.4	.01**
Interesting Activities to Escape Job or Home Routines[a,h]	1.6	1.7	1.9	.01**	.9	1.4	1.6	.07**
Fulfilling Expectations of Family and Friends[a]	.7	.9	.8	.01**	.7	.8	.8	.00
Training to Develop Leadership and Administration Skills[a]	1.7	1.7	1.7	.00	2.2	2.2	2.2	.00
Prestige from Membership[a]	1.0	1.0	1.0	.00	1.0	1.0	1.0	.00
Opportunity to Develop Friendships[a]	2.3	2.3	2.3	.00	2.1	2.1	2.1	.00
Identifying and Acting on Community Problems[a]	2.2	2.2	2.3	.00	2.2	2.0	2.0	.01**
Associating with People Who Can Help Own or Husband's Career[a,i]	.9	.8	.7	.01**	.8	.6	.5	.01**
Influencing Public Policy[a]	1.8	1.7	1.7	.00	—	—	—	—
Exercising Leadership and Administration Talents[a]	1.7	1.7	1.7	.00	1.9	1.9	1.8	.00
Improving Self by Following Other Members' Examples[a]	1.5	1.5	1.6	.00	1.4	1.4	1.5	.00
Organization Revises Priorities and Policies to Keep Up with Change[a]	2.0	1.9	2.0	.00	—	—	—	—
Work in Efficient Organization[a]	2.3	2.3	2.3	.00	2.2	2.3	2.2	.00
Able to Choose Activities to Spend Time On[a]	2.4	2.5	2.5	.01**	2.4	2.3	2.4	.00
Organization with Minimum Friction Among Members[a]	2.0	2.1	2.1	.01**	1.9	1.9	1.9	.00
Acquiring Knowledge About Community[a]	2.1	2.0	2.2	.00**	2.3	2.1	2.2	.00*
Raising Funds for Worthwhile Causes[a]	2.0	2.1	2.1	.01	—	—	—	—
B. Overall Satisfaction and Involvement								
Self-Expression Measure[b]	.70	.73	.75	.02**	.71	.75	.78	.03**
General Satisfaction with Organizational Participation[c]	2.6	2.8	2.8	.01**	2.2	2.6	2.8	.04**
Certain to Remain Active Member Until Reaches Age Limit[c]	2.7	2.8	2.8	.01**	2.6	2.8	2.9	.01**
Expects as Much of Organiztion as When Joined[c]	2.5	2.5	2.6	.00	2.6	2.6	2.7	.00
Does Less Work in Organization than Could[d]	1.5	1.4	1.4	.00*	1.6	1.5	1.4	.01**
Thinks of Dropping Membership[d]	1.2	1.3	1.1	.00**	1.2	1.2	1.0	.01**
C. Satisfaction with Specific Outcomes of Participation								
Encouraging Positive Community Change[e]	2.1	2.2	2.2	.01**	1.8	2.1	2.0	.01**
Working with Cogenial, Interesting Women[e]	2.4	2.5	2.5	.01**	2.5	2.6	2.7	.01**
Helping Disadvantaged Groups[e,g]	2.1	2.1	2.1	.00	1.8	2.0	2.1	.01**
Training for Self-Development[e]	2.0	2.1	2.2	.01**	2.0	2.3	2.3	.03**
Identifying for Pursuing Career-Related Interests[e]	1.8	1.9	2.0	.01*	1.7	1.8	1.9	.01*
Interesting Activities to Escape Job or Home Routine[e,h]	2.3	2.3	2.4	..01**	2.2	2.4	2.5	.02**
Fulfilling Expectations of Family and Friends[e]	2.3	2.2	2.3	.00	2.4	2.4	2.5	.01*
Training to Develop Leadership and Administration Skills[e]	2.0	2.1	2.1	.01**	2.0	2.2	2.3	.03**
Prestige from Membership[e]	2.3	2.3	2.3	.00	2.4	2.5	2.6	.01*
Opportunity to Develop Friendships[e]	2.3	2.4	2.4	.01**	2.4	2.5	2.6	.02**
Identifying and Acting on Community Problems[e]	2.0	2.1	2.1	.01**	1.9	2.0	2.0	.00

Table I. Continued

	1992				1975			
	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2
Associating with People Who Can Help Own or Husband's Career[e,i]	1.9	2.0	2.1	.01**	2.0	2.1	2.3	.02**
Infuencing Public Policy[e]	2.1	2.1	2.1	.00	—	—	—	—
Exercising Leadership and Administration Talent[e]	2.0	2.1	2.2	.01**	1.9	2.2	2.3	.03**
Improving Self by Following Other Members' Example[e]	2.1	2.2	2.2	.00*	2.1	2.3	2.3	.02**
Organization Revises Priorities and Policies to Keep Up with Change[e]	2.1	2.2	2.3	.01**	—	—	—	—
Work in Efficient Organization[e]	1.8	2.0	2.0	.01**	2.0	2.1	2.2	.02**
Able to Choose Activities to Spend Time On[e]	2.0	2.1	2.2	.01**	2.0	2.3	2.4	.03**
Organization with Minimum Friction Among Members[e]	2.0	2.0	2.0	.00	2.3	2.3	2.3	.00
Acquiring Knowledge About Community[e]	2.2	2.3	2.3	.00	2.3	2.3	2.4	.00
Raising Funds for Worthwhile Causes[e]	2.3	2.4	2.4	.00	—	—	—	—
D. Importance of Community Issues								
Criminal Justice[f]	2.1	2.1	2.1	.00	1.4	1.5	1.4	.00
Economic Well Being[f]	2.3	2.3	2.2	.00	—	—	—	—
Education/Public Educaion[f,j]	2.5	2.5	2.6	.00*	1.3	1.4	1.5	.00
Adult Health and Mental Health[f]	1.8	1.8	1.8	.00	—	—	—	—
Adult Education[f]	1.9	1.9	1.9	.00	—	—	—	—
Environment/Quality of Environment[f,j]	2.1	2.2	2.2	.00*	1.1	1.1	1.1	.00
Child Health and Mental Health[f]	2.3	2.4	2.4	.01	—	—	—	—
Child Welfare[f]	2.5	2.6	2.7	.01**	2.0	2.1	2.1	.00
Urban Revitalization[f]	1.5	1.4	1.4	.01*	—	—	—	—
Adolescent Issues[f]	2.1	2.1	2.2	.00	—	—	—	—
Cultural Enrichment[f]	1.5	1.4	1.4	.00	.5	.5	.4	.00
Women's Issues[f]	1.9	1.8	1.9	.00	—	—	—	—
Citizen Involvement[f]	1.5	1.4	1.4	.00*	—	—	—	—
Aging[f]	1.8	1.7	1.7	.00	—	—	—	—
Race and Ethnic Relations/Minority Groups[f,j]	1.7	1.5	1.6	.00*	.4	.5	.5	.00
Substance Abuse[f]	2.1	2.2	2.2	.00	1.0	.8	.9	.00
Work and Family Issues[f]	1.9	1.9	1.9	.00	—	—	—	—
Health and Welfare Services[f]	—	—	—	—	1.0	.9	.9	.00
Public Awareness of Community Services[f]	—	—	—	—	.4	.5	.4	.00
Quality of Municipal Services[f]	—	—	—	—	.3	.2	.2	.00
Coordination of Voluntary Activities[f]	—	—	—	—	.4	.4	.4	.00
E. Attitudes About Community Activism								
Organizations Should Contribute to Community Without Changing System[c]	1.6	1.6	1.6	.00	1.5	1.3	1.4	.00
Welfare Services in Community Adequate[c]	1.6	1.7	1.7	.00*	1.8	1.9	2.0	.00*
Organization Should Lead Community as Catalyst for Change[c]	3.2	3.2	3.1	.00*	—	—	—	—
Organization Should Attempt to Influence Public Policy[c]	3.1	3.0	3.0	.00**	—	—	—	—
F. Attitudes About Membership Diversity								
Finds It Hard to Accept Minorities as Equals[c]	.4	.5	.4	.00*	.9	.9	.9	.00
Organization Should Reflect Community's Racial, Ethnic and Religious Makeup[c]	3.0	3.0	2.9	.00	—	—	—	—
Org. Needs Members of Different Backgrounds to be Effective[c]	3.2	3.1	3.1	.00*	—	—	—	—
Admissions Criteria Should Include Status and Income[c]	.3	.3	.3	.00	.4	.6	.6	.00*

Table I Continued

	1992				1975			
	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	Eta^2
G. Gender Role Attitudes								
Working Mother Can Have as Warm and Secure Relationship with Children as Nonworking[c]	3.2	2.8	2.7	.05**	—	—	—	—
Preschool Child Likely to Suffer If Mother Works[c]	1.1	1.5	1.8	.08**	—	—	—	—
Some Jobs Are Inappropriate for Women[c]	1.3	1.6	1.6	.01**	2.1	2.2	2.4	.02**
Woman Should not Expect Same Freedom of Action and Movement as Man[c]	.5	.6	.7	.01**	1.0	1.0	1.1	.00
Helping Husband's Career More Important than Own Career[c]	.4	.7	.8	.04**	—	—	—	—
Husband Should Have Say in Marriage[c]	—	—	—	—	.8	1.1	1.2	.02**
Women Are More Emotional and Less Logical than Men[c]	—	—	—	—	1.0	1.2	1.2	.01**
Opposes Female President[c]	—	—	—	—	1.3	1.4	1.6	.01**
Time for Women to Protest Injustices They've Faced[c]	—	—	—	—	2.5	2.4	2.3	.01**
Woman Should Use Own First Name vs. Mrs. on Organizational Correspondence[c]	—	—	—	—	2.3	2.1	1.8	.02**
H. Perceived Role Conflict								
Major Organization Assignment Requires More Time and Energy than Member Has for It[c]	1.6	1.6	1.5	.00	1.7	1.3	1.2	.03**
Organization Responsibilities Require Time Member Would Rather Spend with Family[d]	1.6	1.9	1.8	.03**	1.5	1.6	1.5	.00
Organization Responsibilities Require Time Member Would Rather Spend with Friends[d]	1.3	1.3	1.1	.02**	—	—	—	—
Organization Responsibilities Require Time Member Would Rather Spend on Other Volunteer Work[d]	1.1	1.2	1.1	.00	—	—	—	—
Major Organizational Responsibility Causes Conflict with Other Preferred Activities[d]	—	—	—	—	2.6	2.5	2.4	.01**

[a]Response Alternatives (coded 0 to 3) = makes no difference; makes some difference; important; extremely important; see Bonjean, Markham, and Macken (1994) for complete item working.
[b]See Bonjean, Markham, and Macken (1994) for computation of self-expresssion measure.
[c]Response Alternatives (coded 0 to 4) = strongly disagree; disagree; uncertain agree; strongly agree.
[d]Response Alternatives (coded 0 to 3) = never; rarely; sometimes; frequently.
[e]Response Alternatives (coded 0 to 3) = completely unsatisfied; barely satisfied; satisfied but could be better; completely satisfied.
[f]See Markham and Bonjean (1995) for complete 1992 item wording; 1992 Response Alternatives (coded 0 to 3) = rarely unimportant; moderately important; highly important; critically important; 1975 respondents ranked 4 issues they considered most important from 4 (highest importance) to 1; items not ranked are coded 0.
[g]1975 Wording = handicapped, underpriviledged or disadvantaged.
[h]1975 Wording = housework.
[i]1975 Wording = "my husband's."
[j]1992 Wording/1975 Wording.
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

Overall Satisfaction and Involvement

All four perspectives suggest that employed members might be less satisfied because IAW's organizational structure and culture were created by and for women not in the paid labor force. Especially in 1975, when employed women were a minority, differences in their discretionary time and predispositions might have led to less satisfaction. To test this hypothesis, we examined several global indicators of satisfaction and commitment (Table I, panel B). The first is a

measure of overall self-expression in organizational participation constructed from respondent ratings of the importance of the specific outcomes of participation items in panel A of Table

I and the level of satisfaction with each (Bonjean, Markham, and Macken, 1994). The remaining entries are single items designed to tap satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results for 1992 show differences in hypothesized direction, but they are weak, with the largest explaining just two percent of the variance. As hypothesized, four of the six relationships are stronger in 1975 than in 1992, but only the relationships for self-expression and general satisfaction are substantively noteworthy. Changes in meeting schedules, work requirements, and other policies between 1975 and 1992 may have made participation easier for employed members. In any event, employed members differed only modestly from others in their satisfaction and commitment in 1975, and even less in 1992.

Satisfaction with Specific Organizational Outcomes

Small differences in overall satisfaction and commitment among women with and without paid jobs could conceal larger differences in satisfaction with specific aspects of participation. The theoretical perspectives discussed above suggest a number of areas where such differences might appear. But, in fact, there were no noteworthy differences in 1992 and few in 1975 (Table I, panel C). Employment status fails to explain more than one percent of the variation in satisfaction for any predisposition in 1992. In 1975, employment status never explains more than three percent of the variance, and it explains one percent or less in half the comparisons. In both years, the slightly lower overall satisfaction of employed members apparently rests on slightly lower satisfaction in many areas, not sharply lower satisfaction in a few, as the theoretical perspectives would suggest. Differences large enough to significantly affect the organization do not exist for any item at either time.

Table II. Hours Devoted to IAW Activity and Board Membership by Employment Status, 1992 and 1975

	1992		1975	
	Hours Devoted to IAW Weekly			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employed full time	3.6	3.4	3.3	2.5
Board member	8.3	6.4	5.6	4.4
Non-board member	3.1	2.5	3.1	2.1
Employed part time	4.4	4.5	5.3	5.3
Board member	8.2	6.6	9.9	9.9
Non-board member	3.7	3.7	4.3	2.9
No paid employment	5.1	5.9	5.4	4.6
Board member	11.2	9.7	9.2	7.2
Non-board member	4.0	4.1	4.7	3.4
Percentage Serving on Chapter Board				
Employed full time	9		7	

Employed part time	15	17
No paid employment	16	16

Importance of Community Issues

Much chapter activity centers around community service activities, so differences in the importance employed and non-employed women attach to specific community issues could have major implications for the organization. The gender role, compensation, and spillover perspectives all suggest that employed and non-employed women would differ in the importance they attribute to such issues, but respondents' ratings of the importance of various problems revealed almost no differences (Table I, panel D). Employment status failed to explain more than one percent of the variance.

Orientation Toward Community Change and Membership Diversity

Two issues with important implications for chapters' goals and community role that received much attention between 1975 and 1992 were the extent to which chapters should intervene actively in community affairs and seek a membership more diverse in ethnicity and life style (Johnson, 1993). The spillover, compensation and the gender role approaches all suggest differences in the experiences and preferences of employed and non-employed members that might differentiate their views about these issues. But, as shown in Table I (panels E and F), employment status has no important effects on opinions about these issues, as explained variance is always nil.

Gender Role Attitudes

The central prediction of the gender role perspective is that members not in the labor force will hold more traditional attitudes than employed members. Its other predictions hinge on this assumption. All of the 1992 gender role items (Table I, panel G) are significantly related to employment status, but two of the associations are very weak. There are stronger relationships between employment status and the other three, two of which concern the well-being of children of employed mothers. We were able to carry forward only two of the seven 1975 questions to 1992 because the others (also used in national surveys in the 1970s) produced protests about sexist questions in our pretests. Both this reaction and comparisons of 1975 and 1992 means for the items that were carried forward suggest that members became more liberal over this period. Because the items that produced the strongest relationships in 1992 were not included in 1975, it is impossible to determine whether the differences between employed and non-employed women actually became more pronounced. Nonetheless, only the two 1992 items about the effects of mothers' employment showed large enough differences to suggest a clear divergence of opinion.

Perceived Role Overload

The role overload perspective suggests that members with paid jobs are more likely to experience role conflict as they try to make time for their voluntary organization commitments in already busy schedules. Four questions from 1992 and three from 1975 are used to test this hypothesis, with two items carried forward (Table I, panel H). In sharp contrast to our expectations, employed women in 1992 do not report much greater role conflict. Employment status is significantly related to only two of four items, and in the strongest relationship, those working full time actually report the *least* role conflict. In 1975, one item shows a moderate difference, but the other two do not.

Hours Devoted to IAW

One logical explanation for the absence of greater perceived role conflict among employed members is simply that they devote less time to the organization than do non-employed members. Indeed, the mean number of hours per week respondents devoted to IAW activity differed greatly by employment status in both 1992 and 1975 (Table II). In 1992, members who were not employed averaged 5.1 hours of lAW activity weekly, while those working full time averaged 3.6 hours, almost 30% less. The 1975 difference between members without paid employment (5.4 hours) and those working full time (3.3 hours) was an even more striking 39%. Unlike the substantively trivial differences in member attitudes in most of the preceding analyses, the substantively and statistically significant gap between the activity of employed and non-employed members has major implications for IAW's operating procedures, effectiveness and goal setting.

Most of the 1992 differences stem from the greater tendency of women without paid employment to make IAW a major life activity. Thirteen percent of them reported spending ten or more hours a week on IAW activities, compared with five percent of those employed full time. Excluding these "supervolunteers" makes the difference in average hours volunteered much less striking. The mean is 3.0 hours among those with full time jobs and 3.3 for those not in the labor force. The difference between hours of IAW work by employed and non-employed women in 1975 was much more broadly based. When the 1975 analysis was limited to women who spent less than ten hours per week on IAW work, a full one hour difference per week remained between those employed full time (3.0 hours) and those not employed (4.1 hours).

Comparing the mean hours spent on organizational activity in 1975 and 1992 suggests that the shift from a primarily non-employed to a predominantly employed membership led to changes in norms about hours of work expected. Convergence in amount of time spent occurred mainly because those not in the labor force--with the exception of a minority who continue to make the organization a major life activity--became much more like the new majority of members, employed women.

Board Service

Successful voluntary associations depend heavily on the commitment and time investments of their board members (Pearce, 1980). Role overload theory and interviews with chapter officers suggest that women with paid jobs would have less time to serve and would avoid or be excluded from such positions. As Table H indicates, members without full time jobs are more likely to occupy leadership roles. Sixteen percent of 1992 respondents who are not employed, compared to nine percent of those working full time, served on their chapters' boards and the gap was even greater in 1975: 16% of the non-employed, but only seven percent of those employed full time, were board members. Moreover, in both years, employed board members devote less time to IAW than do non-employed board members (Table II).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We began with the question: how pervasive and important are the effects of higher status women's employment on their attitudes and actual participation in an international higher status women's organization? Contrary to conventional wisdom within IAW and extant theory, this first comprehensive investigation of differences between employed and non-employed female voluntary association members reveals no pattern of widespread, substantively important differences in *attitudes.* Employed women did report somewhat lower satisfaction in 1975, but these differences diminished by 1992. They also reported more liberal views about gender roles in response to some items in 1992, but a different set of items in 1975 showed smaller differences. Overall, however, it is clear that the attitudes and preferences of the employed members were not very different from those not in the labor force in either 1975 or 1992.

In contrast to the attitudinal data, we found very important differences in *behavior,* especially in 1975, and significant *changes* in behavior since that time. In 1975, the relatively small number of members employed full time averaged two hours of IAW activity per week less than non-employed members, and the differences were broadly based. In 1992, the difference had declined to 1.5 hours, but it was now primarily due to the efforts of a handful of "supervolunteers," few of whom were employed. For most members, the lower participation level of employed members evidently had become an informal norm, which was legitimized by formal changes in most chapters' rules and procedures. Employed women were also much less likely to hold leadership positions in 1975. While the gap between the percentages of employed and non-employed women on boards diminished between 1975 and 1992, the non-employed remained about 1.5 times as likely to serve on the board in 1992.

None of the four theoretical perspectives emerged from our study unscathed, although the role overload model receives some support. Our test of this perspective was not optimal because we lack data about women who might have dropped out of IAW or never joined because of conflicts between IAW and work obligations. This might well restrict the range of role overload suggested by our data. Nor did we have any information about the amount of time employed women devote to other voluntary associations, such as business or professional associations. Nevertheless, the perspective correctly predicts that employed women spend less time on organizational affairs and

are less likely to be officers. On the other hand, the absence of greater *perceived* role conflict among employed women is consistent with the role overload perspective only if one assumes employed women succeed in reducing their IAW effort or other obligations enough to make their role overload equal to those of non-employed women. It appears that many of them did, but most non-employed women also reduced their level of effort as well. Furthermore, the hypotheses about how role overload might affect other attitudes--such as a greater emphasis on efficiency among employed women--were not supported.

The other three models fare even less well. The gender role model is supported only by the moderate differences in employed and non-employed women's responses to three gender role attitude items in 1992. Its predictions about different reasons for participation and ratings of community issues were not supported. Nor are the compensation or spillover hypotheses well supported.

From a more practical perspective, the smaller number of hours that employed women devote to the organization and the changing norms and rules which decreased number of hours expected and available have major implications for IAW and other voluntary organizations. Should this trend continue, the viability of higher status women's organizations may come to depend increasingly on a diminishing core of very hardworking "supervolunteers." In 1975, the 11% of members who volunteered ten hours a week or more contributed 31% of all the hours devoted to the organization. By 1992, the "supervolunteers" comprised only nine percent of the membership, but their time contribution was 34%. If they continue, such changes could also lead to conflicts over the allocation of tasks within chapters and perhaps difficulty in recruiting members for leadership positions.

It is easy to see why employed women devote fewer hours to the organization and are less apt to hold leadership positions, but harder to explain why there are so few *attitudinal* differences between them and members without paid employment. One possibility is that the life experiences and orientations of currently employed and currently non-employed women are less different than one might at first suppose. Practical concerns about questionnaire length prevented us from exploring the complex issue of work history fully; however, studies of women's labor force participation (e.g., Fuchs, 1988) imply that most 1992 IAW members who were not currently employed probably held a paid job at some point in the past, that some probably had been employed in the recent past, and that others were likely to be contemplating a return or first entry into the labor force. Similarly, some of those currently employed full time were probably anticipating a change to part time work, while others were probably expecting to leave the labor force.

This interpretation suggests that currently employed women would be less likely to make major time commitments to IAW because the *immediate* demands of their jobs precluded them. Attitudes, on the other hand, might be less differentiated because the overall labor force experiences of the two groups were not that different. In other words, in an era in which the great

majority of young women have at least some work experience—and many have had a great deal, those who are currently employed may not have undergone socializing experiences very different from those not presently in the labor force. While quite plausible for 1992, this interpretation is not as persuasive for 1975, when rates of employment for IAW members suggest that few non-employed women had extensive experience with paid work. Future research on this topic could test these explanations and elaborate on them by gathering data on members' employment histories.

Another plausible explanation is that selective recruitment and selection of members into the organization produce a membership with a relatively limited range of attitudes. IAW is a well known organization in almost all of the communities in which it has chapters, and it recruits (whether intentionally or not) mainly women from the business-oriented segment of the upper middle class and the politically moderate segment of the upper class. Women from the educationally elite "new class" of professional women, whose political orientations are typically liberal, as well as the wives of men in these occupations are considerably underrepresented (Markham and Bonjean, 1995). Women who are not comfortable with IAW's orientations or those of its members may simply never join, devote minimal effort to the organization, or decide on an early exit. The homogeneity created in these ways may simply override differences in attitudes that might result from employment status in a broader sample of the female members of all voluntary associations.

Our earlier analysis of members' rankings of the importance of community issues provided some support for this explanation. Recent recruits reported views almost identical to more senior members, and there was strong evidence for general homogeneity of membership attitudes (Markham and Bonjean, 1995). Not only employment status, but also occupation, race, religion, membership, age, education, marital status, and age of youngest child all had only scattered and very modest effects on members' responses. This suggests that both the employed and non-employed women who chose to join IAW are those with backgrounds and orientations similar to current members and that similarities produced by common socialization and class subculture may simply override any differences associated with employment status.

Our data, drawn from a randomly selected sample of IAW chapters, provide relatively clear answers about the impact of employment status in IAW. Beyond IAW, they are most directly relevant to many other women's community service organizations, especially those with higher status members. Additional studies are needed to determine whether the pattern found in IAW exists in other types of higher status women's organizations, in women's organizations with relatively homogeneous membership from other classes, or in organizations with more broadly based memberships. Nevertheless, these first longitudinal case study findings from a higher status women's organization shed considerable light on how many women's organizations and other organizations with heavily female membership have managed to adapt to the entry of women into the labor force with some sacrifices, but less dislocation than might have been expected.

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