

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 850

CE 045 437

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TITLE Entrepreneurship for Women: "Escape from the Pink Collar Ghetto." Occasional Paper No. 121.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 18p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center Publications, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 (OC121--\$3.00).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Administration; *Business Education; Economic Development; *Economic Opportunities; Educational Benefits; *Educational Needs; *Employment Patterns; *Entrepreneurship; *Females; Labor Market; Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; Small Businesses; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

The role of small business and entrepreneurship in today's economy is well documented. Entrepreneurship and small business ownership are an especially attractive option for women. Women have been seeking an escape from traditional, low-paying, dead-end jobs by choosing entrepreneurship at a rate five times faster than that of men. Women now own almost 26 percent of small businesses in America, and the number of female-owned firms in the United States rose 75 percent between 1977 and 1983. Over 91 percent of female small proprietorships fall into the categories of service, retail, finance, real estate, or insurance compared with 73 percent of all sole proprietorships. Education has a key role to play in educating women in the skills and the options of business ownership from the time they are young girls. Programs are especially needed in the following areas: management education (the operation of the free enterprise system, basic business skills, math and risk taking, and money management); marketing, particularly selling and negotiating skills; and business capitalization and financial management. Although federal, state, and local policymakers have already begun to recognize the potential of entrepreneurship as an economic development resource for women, the message has been slow in reaching educators. It is especially important for educators to develop better career orientation material that reflects the rapid labor market changes taking place, to introduce more female role models with high-growth businesses as speakers, and to develop case studies and materials featuring female business owners. (MN)

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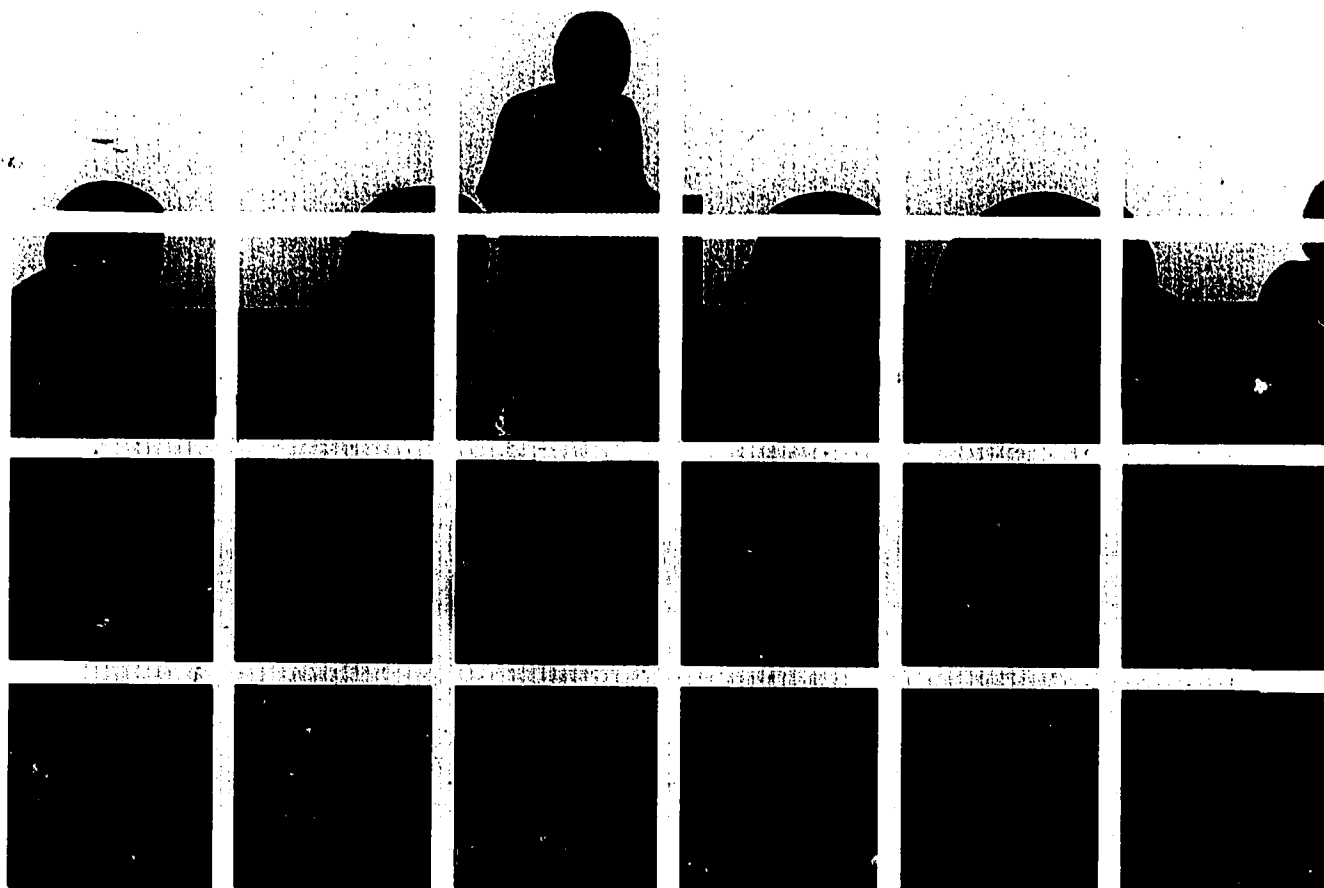
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Occasional Paper No. 121



CE-045437



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**ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR WOMEN:
"ESCAPE FROM THE PINK COLLAR GHETTO"**

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1986

FOREWORD

The role of small business and entrepreneurship in today's economy is well documented. Various studies have shown that over half of new hires in recent years work at companies with fewer than 100 employees. New business start-ups more than double the number a decade ago.

Entrepreneurship and small business ownership is an attractive option for women. Speaking at an entrepreneurship forum here at the National Center almost 2 years ago, Charlotte Taylor spoke of the tremendous increase in the number of women-owned businesses and estimated that 1/5 of all businesses in the United States were women-owned. That number is getting higher, as women are choosing self-employment at five times the rate for men.

Vocational education provides an excellent opportunity for fostering the development of entrepreneurs. Research shows that of all educational programs, vocational education is the one that contributes most positively to the creation of entrepreneurs. According to the National Center's analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey Youth database, we know that male vocational education concentrators (males who take at least three courses per year) are about eight times more likely to be self-employed than other high school graduates between the ages of 17 and 33. However, the experience for women is different. Women who took secondary vocational education are seldom self-employed. This is not likely a result of having taken vocational education courses, but rather of traditional socioeconomic patterns.

Charlotte Taylor received a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Rutgers University and a Masters of Business Administration with honors from George Washington University. Currently she is president of CTA Management Group, a firm specializing in business planning for smaller companies, research and evaluation, and training design and delivery.

She has served as executive director of the President's Task Force on Women Business Owners, directing a staff of 50 in a 9-month task force that identified problems facing women in small business and made recommendations to the President for policy changes. Other employment has included a position as senior associate for Hay Associates, a large, international consulting firm in Washington, D.C., and as project coordinator for the national Tourism Resources Review Commission.

Charlotte Taylor is the author of various articles and books and has received many awards and honors, among them serving as a member of the White House Conference on Small Business. Also, she has been a featured columnist for *Working Women* magazine.

On behalf of The Ohio State University and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, I am pleased to present this seminar paper by Charlotte Taylor.

Chester K. Hansen
Acting Executive Director

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR WOMEN: "ESCAPE FROM THE PINK COLLAR GHETTO"

The movement of women out of the ranks of employees and into the ranks of employers is a subject that is near and dear to my heart—according to Karl Marx, out of the ranks of being merely the "tools of Capital" and into the ranks of being the owners of capital through the creation of their own enterprises. This paper addresses the movement that I call "escape from the pink collar ghetto."

What is this pink collar ghetto? It is those traditional, low-paying, or no-paying jobs in which women have been trapped because of their sex. The impact these dead-end jobs have on creating a new entrepreneur phenomenon in this country—and the impact this phenomenon is having on our country's future is the central theme of this paper.

I bring several perspectives to light with this discussion. One perspective is as a woman whose personal career symbolizes this entrepreneurial phenomenon. The second perspective is as a business owner whose firm specializes in entrepreneurial development. My company, CTA Management Group Inc., is one of the few companies in the country with a nationwide entrepreneurial development program. Our New Enterprise Training for Profits (NET/PRO) training system is used by businesses in nine U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. Over 4,000 people have used the NET/PRO process to explore business ownership as a career option and to start an enterprise. Although my vocation is helping all people start successful enterprises, my avocation—and my passion—is spurring women on to set their business and personal sights higher so that they will start larger, more profitable businesses.

A third perspective is as the woman who designed and directed the first intensive analysis of the status of women business owners in America for President Carter. The study included an analysis of the problems women face as well as the potential they present to the U.S. economy as creators of income, jobs, and tax revenues.

In 1980, when I wrote my first book, *Woman and the Business Game: Strategies for Successful Ownership*, I predicted that a business revolution would occur in this country. I predicted that unless the women who had been inspired in the sixties and seventies to replace mere jobs with careers were allowed to move ahead and become the "fair-haired boys" of the corporations, they would become the "new immigrants" in the business world. They, like the immigrants of the 18th and 19th centuries, would take to the marketplace with their pushcarts and start their own enterprises, all because they were not allowed access to the white, Anglo-Saxon mainstream.

The basis for this prediction came not only from my Presidential Task Force experience but also from my own perspective as one for whom the feminist revolution opened the doors to options, yet whose frustration came from swimming upstream against blatant and latent discrimination to achieve those options. Betty Friedan spoke at my college graduation and revolutionized how women like me viewed career options. I knew that I was experiencing what other women were experiencing. Therefore, I predicted we would see a radical explosion in the number of women

jumping off the corporate career track to start enterprises. I represent the profile of today's typical new entrepreneur; I am over 40. At age 30, I went back to graduate school to get an MBA; after a relatively successful career as a journalist. I started my enterprise over frustration with the discriminatory reality of corporate America. I, like thousands of other women, decided that the trip up the corporate ladder was not worth the climb. I traded beating my head against the corporate wall for beating my competition in the marketplace.

The most interesting part of this profile of the new entrepreneur is that I am female. I am a woman whose career illustrates why we are having a "quiet revolution"—the change in the gender composition of the ownership of capital in America.

Today, the basic American dream of owning your own enterprise is no longer just for males. It is also a female dream. And the fact that women are making this dream come true is making revolutionary impact on our economy. I am just one track of the revolution—a corporate woman working for the rewards of the marketplace. The much larger track is of women escaping the pink collar ghetto of low- or no-paying jobs and those reentering the work force after a career at home. In fact:

- Women are starting business ventures at a rate five times faster than men.
- The number of women-owned firms in this country rose 75 percent in the 5-year period between 1977 and 1983.
- Annual revenues from women-owned businesses are estimated at greater than \$40 billion a year, based on 1977 census data, with net revenues of \$6 billion.
- Over 3.1 million businesses are owned by women in the United States. Their business receipts increased at an average annual rate of 10.6 percent during the last 10 years.
- Women own almost 26 percent of the small businesses in America, up from 4.5 percent in 1972.

What do these figures indicate in real economic terms? They indicate that women now own and operate one-fourth of the businesses on Main Street, U.S.A.

These women are not hobbyists. They are vital contributors to the economic fabric of our country. A recent study conducted by the National Association of Women Business Owners of its members found that the average receipts of its members were \$425,000 with 25 percent owning businesses with revenues in excess of \$800,000. The latest statistics from the Small Business Administration (SBA) indicate that women not only represent the fastest growing sector of U.S. entrepreneurs, but that their firms have the highest growth and expansion rate (6.9 percent compared to 3.7 percent for male-owned businesses). The overall growth rate nationally from 1977-1982 was twice as fast as that of all firms.

These statistics mean that the "Ma and Pa" shop, where "Pa" owned and operated the business and "Ma" did the books and worked at the cash register (often for no pay), is extinct. Today "Ma" not only operates, but owns and controls the shop, negotiates the bank loans, and deals with suppliers. She is putting the American dream into reality; taking the risks to reap the rewards of our free enterprise system. And she is doing this at five times the rate of men. Some statistics point up the fact that for every five women now entering the work force, three will start an enterprise.

Why is this phenomenon revolutionary? In the Industrial Revolution we saw the replacement of manpower with machinery; in the Work Force Revolution we saw the replacement of "man" power with "woman" power; and now, in what I term the Entrepreneurial Revolution, we are seeing the replacement of men as the owners and users of capital, by women. It is a revolution that is going strangely unrecognized by the male business community and the educational community. That is why I call it a quiet revolution. However, its impact will not be quiet. It will cause major changes not only in the work force, but in the way work is done. I believe it is the women business owner community, not the male community, that will be the pioneers in new work innovations, such as flextime, child care, and employee ownership of companies.

What we are witnessing now in our economy is the feminization of entrepreneurship in America. It is the result of two other feminizations—the feminization of the work force and the feminization of poverty.

We know about the feminization of the work force. The fact that women now make up almost 44 percent of the civilian work force and have accounted for 65 percent of the growth in this labor force from 1960 to 1984 comes as no surprise. Nor does the fact that almost 55 percent of American women are either employed or looking for work. Indeed, the business world has awakened to the fact that these working women are different than Rosie the Riveter who put down her hard hat and picked up her apron when the boys came home. They are not leaving their work stations and desks just because they have a child.

The lesser known fact concerns the feminization of poverty. There are now 10 million female-headed households, 35 percent of which live below the poverty line. A recent study by the Joint Economics Committee on American family living standards painted a more dismal picture when they looked at the poverty rates of families with children. Almost half of the female-headed households with children were below the poverty rate compared to 10 percent of those families headed by two parents. In a recent book *The Divorce Revolution*, a standard study of 3,000 cases indicated that when a divorce occurs, a woman and her children's standard of living immediately decreases by 73 percent, whereas their ex-husbands' enjoyed a 42 percent increase.

Both of these trends, coupled with the fact that American women still make only 60 cents for every one dollar men make, are causing women to choose ownership as the best career option.

If you look at the risk/reward ratio of owning your business versus being employed in the United States today, the majority of American women have far less to lose and more to gain through ownership than the average male. The average woman can jump off a job or career ladder, start an enterprise, and probably go back to the same career ladder with a better resume than she could ever have earned by moving up through the corporate ladder. The downside of the risk is much greater for the average man who, being at a higher level on the ladder, risks not being able to return to that ladder.

In a way, the fact that women are in the "pink collar ghetto" means that they have very little to lose and very much to gain by taking a risk on their entrepreneurial spirit. Women, just like the early immigrants, are realizing that ownership can be an alternative route into the economic mainstream. Women need not face a lifetime in a pink collar ghetto of traditional female occupations that have little earning potential, and/or promise of upward mobility.

The rate at which this phenomenon is growing is also being fired by many other societal trends. These include—

- the seeds of aspiration planted by the feminist movement;
- the increased educational level and work experience of women;
- the need for two incomes to support families caused by inflation and current life-styles;
- the uncertainty of marriage security, as almost every other marriage ends in divorce;
- the recent recession where women, as the last into the work force, became the first laid off and the last rehired; and
- the passage of the Equal Credit Law in 1974, which loosened the barriers to capital.

However, it is difficult to pinpoint which factors have had the most impact. When the first study was conducted for President Carter's Task Force on Women Business Owners in 1977, statistics from 1972 showed that 4.6 percent of the enterprises in America were women-owned. Today, over 13 years later, the proportion has swollen to 26 percent.

These trends indicate that the typical small business owner can no longer be assumed to be male. They show that the basic American dream of owning a business is not gender-specific. Women and men are increasingly deciding to take risks in the marketplace in order to reap the rewards and benefits of our free enterprise system. However, women face different problems than men in starting enterprises. Real and systemic discrimination continues to impact on the ability of the average American woman to enter the entrepreneurial game and on her choice of the scope and scale of her business.

It is interesting to note that despite this astounding surge in the number of women choosing ownership as a career option, the same real and systemic discrimination that forces women to enter traditional female jobs is causing women to cluster in businesses that reflect the same pink collar ghetto characteristics. Just as working women are clustered in traditional job categories (i.e., clerical, teaching, and so forth), women business owners are clustered in the traditional categories of retail and service business.

Over 91 percent of the female sole proprietorships fall into the categories of service, retail, finance, real estate, or insurance, compared to 73 percent of all sole proprietorships. This fact in itself would not be serious, since the service sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in our economy. However, what is serious is that these businesses tend to be in typing, not data processing services; in boutiques, not in the retail chains; and in real estate agencies, not in real estate development companies. Indeed, a 1980 study on sole proprietorships found that 73 percent of all such women-owned firms (compared to 58 percent of all firms) had gross receipts of under \$10,000 and 48 percent (compared to 33 percent) had gross receipts of \$2,500 or less. Despite the fact that this picture may be skewed because the statistics do not catch the larger businesses that are incorporated, they do reflect a pattern of inequity.

The question remains: Are women escaping the pink collar ghetto of the labor force only to face the *same* ghetto in the marketplace?

It is difficult to know the cause of this trend. It is a little like trying to discern which came first, the chicken or the egg. Certainly education is a factor. We do not know if women are going into these businesses because these are the businesses with which they are most familiar and wish to run, or if they are choosing the route of least resistance and starting traditional female businesses because they are both easier to capitalize and gain acceptance for the marketplace. It still is harder to buck the system and to go into a less traditional business with a higher growth potential.

The average woman enters the entrepreneurial game with a greater handicap than a man because of her sex and education. Women, on the average, have not grown up with entrepreneurial role models or a history of entrepreneurial business activities. Experts say these experiences contribute to new venture creation and entrepreneurial success. Whereas the average male may have experimented with the concept of making money through a paper route, the average woman was never a "paper boy," at least not until recently. In addition, most little girls' playmates grow up to be housewives and/or lower level employees, not business owners and managers. Little boys, on the other hand, have playmates who go into a wider variety of occupations, including ownership.

Women, on the average, enter the marketplace competition for capital to start their firms with a weaker hand. All lending institutions judge potential loans by the five C's of credit: collateral, credit, community standing, capacity to pay back, and managerial capability. Systemic discrimination and the average women's position in the business community has severely impacted on her ability to capitalize her business. Studies show that very few women in America earn over \$25,000. This low earning power severely limits the ability of women to provide the collateral or equity that lenders look for to support a loan. In addition, traditional family roles mean that woman's earnings will probably go into the family budget rather than her own investment portfolio. She is also hampered by a banker's perception of her ability to pay off a substantial loan should the business go under due to her low earning potential. We cannot forget that it was only in 1974 that the equal credit laws were passed that made it illegal for bankers to take other factors, such sex or child-bearing, into consideration in denying credit. Even today, many women, although they work, handle the family finances and pay bills, have no personal credit rating because their rating runs to Mrs. John Doe and not Mary Doe.

Women on the average enter the business community with little specific knowledge and work experience that are applicable to their business. This again is the impact of real and systemic discrimination. Women still only hold 22 percent of America's administrative or managerial jobs despite the fact that they make up over 52 percent of the work force.

Women on the average have difficulty marketing their businesses to the male community. They still indicate the need to fight the male perception that their businesses are hobbies rather than serious enterprises, or that they get their contracts because they are cute, rather than competent. To answer the question Do Women need special programs and special assistance in starting and growing their business?, the answer is an unqualified yes.

The Presidential Task Force that I directed produced a report documenting this need. This report entitled *The Bottomline: Unequal Enterprise in America*, was not a "soft" report. It clearly outlined problems of overt and systemic discrimination that were keeping women out of the mainstream of our American economy as entrepreneurs and business owners. We found that barriers existed in all of the areas necessary for business success. They involved problems with access to money, access to markets, and access to management education.

It is this last factor that makes the message I bring so important. Education is the key to the solution of this last problem. In my research, and in my work today with women who own enterprises, I have found that it is their educational upbringing that is their biggest handicap to entrepreneurial success. And this is not just the case for women alone, it is equally true for men, though to a lesser degree. The reality is that our school system does little to prepare women to be the owners of enterprises. It only teaches them how to work for others and it tends to push them into the "pink collar ghetto" of traditional female jobs.

Educators are the key to future change in this area. Change made in the classroom grows exponentially in society. The history of race relations in this country is an important example of this. The role education plays in the patterns of future business ownership in our country is key. If we educate young girls in the skills and the options of business ownership, then the role of the government in equalizing opportunities will be needed less. If you inform young women *and* men about this newest feminine phenomenon, the new women business enterprise movement, then many of the barriers to capital and markets will be lowered. It is this male perception of women entrepreneurs as hobbyist and not serious business owners that women business owners must constantly fight.

The major areas of need for programs are as follows:

1. Management education, particularly in—
 - understanding how the free enterprise system works,
 - basic business skills,
 - math and risk taking, and
 - handling finances.
2. Marketing, particularly in the skills of selling and negotiating.
3. Business capitalization and financial management.

Federal, state, and city policymakers have already recognized the powerful economic development resource of women in new venture creation. Over 21 cities and 5 states now have women business owner programs. They recognize that women who are more highly educated, better trained, and more committed to careers than ever before can be a major entrepreneurial force. I directed the study that led to the creation of a National Policy for Women Business Enterprise and the establishment of an Office of Women Business Enterprise at the Small Business Administration. This national policy has recently been affirmed by President Reagan.

Yet, if we look at traditional education systems, it is obvious that the message is not reaching educators. They do not recognize the important role that they could play in stimulating this important career alternative. The potential role of entrepreneurial education and career awareness is exceedingly important for these reasons: to assist women in viewing entrepreneurship as an effective work alternative, to assist women in setting their business sights higher, and to assist young men in realizing that women business owners are not hobbyists but important components in the United States' economy.

Some key steps in this direction would be—

- the development of better career orientation material that reflects the radical changes taking place;

- the introduction of more female role models as speakers, particularly more that own their own high growth businesses; and
- the development of cases and materials featuring women business owners.

In conclusion, we must get the message out so that change can occur, so that little girls have choices, and so that those that have the courage can climb over the weeds of that pink collar ghetto.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Charlotte Taylor

Question: We see women entering business school at Ohio State, but not in the entrepreneurship area. Can you comment on this?

I think most women getting MBAs are doing it as a capital investment. They want to get a good return on that investment. That means a job at a corporation as a first step; entrepreneurship may be the second step. Men see entrepreneurship in a different way—a logical first step.

Question: I recently went to a seminar for women entrepreneurs. A financial advisor, one of the two that presented the seminar, stated several times that if you want to start a business, expect to work 60-80 hours a week, and expect your marriage to fail. You were saying just the opposite. Would you comment on that?

Well, I wasn't saying that you could work 60-80 hours and that your marriage wouldn't have trouble. I was saying that many women are married. Over half of the women who own businesses are married. That was a 1978 statistic. I think now it's probably even more than that, as men get more supportive of women's careers. I will say that many are not married to the man they were married to when they started their business; it is often a radical change when the woman is no longer at home to cook dinner. When I talk to young women I always point out, and it's also the same for men, that this is not a sole career choice. Entrepreneurship is a family choice. This is particularly true in the first 1-3 years of any business' growth. The decisions need to have total family support and need to be talked out in order to have it work, because you won't be able to work 9-5 in the beginning of your enterprise.

Question: A couple of questions. I would like to know the two states that have these women business owners programs that you mentioned.

The Michigan Office of Economic Development in Lansing has funded the first program for women business owners (having a major programmatic budget.) There is also an office of Women Business Owners in Louisiana that is in the state purchasing department to assure that women get a fair share of contracts. In addition, there are other offices and legislative occurrences happening. The state of New York has instituted legislation that targets a percentage of all state contracts to female entrepreneurs. The state of Maryland has a minority and women enterprise goal, as does the state of Massachusetts. So we are starting to see some activity occurring for women of the same kind of targeting that occurred 10-15 years ago for minorities. There is also increased interest in Europe, particularly in France, Ireland, and England. I will soon be attending a conference that will bring women who have been active in the United States and Europe in the area of enterprise development to discuss these issues.

The French were interested in entrepreneurship as a way to help the worker in their economy become independent. In England, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, stimulating new enterprise has been a platform plank for a long time. Those two countries and Ireland are the ones

I know of that are doing the most work in looking at programmatic functions to help women business owners. There's also an associateship of International Women Business Owners that has 17 country chapters. What is interesting in the international perspective is that this group was started in France after World War II. It was started because many of the women after World War II inherited businesses. Many men had been killed in France and Germany and women inherited fairly large scale businesses. The complexion of international women business owners members is totally different than the American members, which tends to be younger and more service-oriented. We will send a delegation over to this conference this year from the National Association of Women Business Owners. Last year our government sponsored the First Women Business Owner Trade Mission.

Question: I wanted to comment that there is a women's resource center in the state of Ohio. Melody Bean is the director. They have very excellent materials, they speak everywhere, and they even started a welfare women's business enterprise.

There's another model out of Minneapolis called WEDCO, Women's Economic Development Operation. They're helping low-income women start and operate businesses as a way out of the welfare trap.

Question: I read recently about the entrepreneurship activities within corporations, a strong drive to create the entrepreneurial drive within corporations. And then there's the small business entrepreneurs. Would you comment on that?

My firm specializes in closely held companies. What we find is small business owners beating themselves up because they don't manage like big companies. And then we find large companies trying to get back their adolescence, trying to learn how to be more entrepreneurial. The terminology you read a lot about is "intrapreneurship." I think it's a different kind of entrepreneurship than starting and operating a business. The internal politics and climate and the risk-reward ratio is much different. What I think is common in both is marketplace vision and innovation. How this is played out depends on the environment, the support systems, and the climate. In the small business entrepreneurship arena you focus on amassing the resources you need and using those resources in a limited market area. In big business you have the resources. The problem is how do you cut through the bureaucracy to be able to take the risks with the resources that you have. When you're on your own, you can take any risk you want, but you don't always have all the resources. That's the balance.

Question: I understand there is a movement within the banking community to move more women into operating banks for women. On the west coast I understand there are some enterprises such as this. I'd be interested in any comments you might have on that particular movement. Also, what has been the role of, or what do you see the role of the Small Business Administration as it relates to women going into business?

On the women bank movement, I wasn't aware that that was a new phenomenon. We have had a whole series of women's banks, and there are some women's banks that grew out of the predecessor to the equal credit laws. They started getting their charters in the 1970s when it was difficult for women to get credit from traditional male institutions. In that period, seven more banks were established. There were banks that were women-owned and women-controlled. In other words, the assets were owned by women. What you're talking about may be a marketing idea to target women, but where the assets of the bank are not owned by the women. I think that's the difference in the true women-owned banks where women do control the assets and lending base of banks.

Other banks may start women's divisions in the same sense they may have a consumer credit division. It is an approach to a new market that they see. The big benefit of the women's bank in the 1970s was that they showed the traditional banking community that there was an untapped consumer market among women who were working and who had their own incomes.

The Small Business Administration started an office of Women Business Enterprise that is still operating, but it is usually fighting for its budget. The biggest action is at the field level where they have a representative at each field office whose duty was to target women business owners, and provide assistance and outreach to them.

Question: I think you know that we're very interested in how vocational education might be involved in helping entrepreneurs in general. Looking at the equity issue of entrepreneurship and targeting for some of the populations, we feel a particular need to have some additional awareness and help. You deal with a lot of entrepreneurs in your work and I'm curious to know whether you have a sense of different educational backgrounds contributing to the motivation to start their own business between males and females. Do males come from a higher or lower educational level when they start their own businesses than females?

The 1978 task force did do a survey and got some answers on the personal profiles. It showed that women business owners were very highly educated. Many were college educated. Dr. Taylor and I were talking about this ratio of the male vocational education students versus female, and it may be that some of the traditional male trades are more adaptable to ready entry into entrepreneurship, while the traditional female trades are not. Young girls just don't see that if they learn to type, that skill translates into a business. It's more of an abstract leap than in some of the traditional male trades like plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work. That may be a cause.

I think there are two tracks occurring in this phenomena. One is the track of women like me, who are on a traditional male entrepreneurial track—get lots of work experience, returned to school for a graduate degree, get all the cards punched and then find out it's really not the ticket you thought it was going to be. These women become dissatisfied and decide to take their risk in the marketplace. These are the women who are not tracked in most studies. These are the women who own corporations that are adequately financed and are in the growth industry trends. The second track are women returning to the work force after leaving families or women who never entered into the work force. These women may be less educated and experienced and fit the "immigrant" stereotype here in the sense that they are taking their skill and experiential energy to the workplace. This is the much larger track of women in the statistics. This is also the track that I feel vocational education can impact greatly.

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