

Shaping Leadership Culture to Sustain Future Generations of Women Leaders

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Women have always been leaders in and outside of organizations, yet they remain underrepresented in the highest leadership positions. The radical adult education stage approach is applied to the contemporary leadership context to address complex challenges of social role perceptions in societal and organizational responses to contemporary women's leadership. The role of ethical leadership is explored for overcoming barriers, creating new leadership realities, collaborative partnerships, and emergent leadership competencies at the individual, organizational and societal levels in order to sustain the next generation of women leaders.

“If ethics is not the engine of success, in the train of growth, it sure is a guard, with a flag, which may be green, or at times red” Priyavrat Thareja

Women bring considerable talent, experience, and educational background to leadership in industry today. Despite that fact, we do not see them represented in the top leadership positions. Organizations ordinarily aggressively vie with each other to recruit and promote these candidates. However, whether we are talking about countries, Fortune 500 companies, governments, healthcare, or other service industries, there is clear evidence of a real and persistent disconnect between the obvious qualifications (educational preparation, workforce presence, and managerial experience) and the presence of women as top leaders (McKinsey & Company, 2012).

Women's leadership is sometimes problematic as an embodied form of leadership that presents potential risk. Senge (2006) points out that women leaders are “...people who do not come from the traditional centers of power but from the cultural, economic and demographic periphery...” (p. 367) thus, they can immediately engender mistrust and unfavorable judgments by observers who may be unconsciously predisposed to disqualify top candidates from being recruited, promoted, or selected for leadership positions. Sinclair (2005) points out “Leadership is a bodily practice, a physical performance in addition to a triumph of mental or motivational mastery” (p. 388).

Thus, as leaders, women increase the level of complexity across all dimensions of leadership. They continue to present a challenge to organizational search committees as the ongoing underrepresentation of women in chief or executive (C-level) level positions suggest. In the quote that began this article, Thareja (2013) presents an apt metaphor for what this work proposes to accomplish: it seeks to raise the rarely spoken about ethical red flag of women's continued, but unexplainable, under-representation in top leadership positions.

Therefore, this article's primary purpose is to undertake a cross-disciplinary examination of social role theory (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Moss, 2008), gender and leadership theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly &

Carli, 2007; Hoyt, 2013), leadership ethics theory (Ciulla, 2004; Greenleaf, 2002; Johnson, 2012, Tavanti & Werhane, 2013; Kennedy & Kray, 2014; Northouse, 2013; Price, 2004), and adult education theory (Elias & Merriam, 2004; Freire, 1970; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). The exploration of ethical leadership theory will be integrated with adult education theory as facilitators for overcoming challenges and barriers in the leadership context. The strategies proposed to address the identified perceptions and barriers to women as leaders will be proposed from these perspectives, highlighting the roles adult education and ethical leadership can or need to play in shaping contemporary leadership culture and the development of the next generation of women leaders in a more inclusive leadership environment and culture for women.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

There is currently some resistance to women as leaders in top positions. This resistance to women's leadership can be attributed to conflicting values, roles, and power dynamics consciously or unconsciously perpetuated by ingrained stereotypical reactions. Research has shown that a plausible reason for these reactions is that people are trapped in bodily performances by wider relations of power and discourse (Sinclair, 2005). They are played out in gender regimes (appropriately masculine and feminine performances), class-based assumptions (shop floor versus managerial masculine performances), and around socially and culturally constructed taboos (Sinclair, 2005, p. 388).

Thus, when women take on leadership positions, they are in effect operating outside of their socially prescribed roles in ways that can result in "disruption, and contestation, resistance and experimentation" (p. 388), with traditionally held normative roles and expectations. What research rarely addresses however, is the imbedded ethical dilemma that presents itself with the intractable under-representation of women leaders in top positions, in light of the research that is to be presented. The author begins with plausible reasons for this phenomenon, beginning with a brief look at social role theory (Eagly, 1987) which provides further insight and understanding from a societal and gender based perspective.

Social Role Theory

One plausible reason for the slow change in the organizational culture is that western culture has gender-based roles and expectations that are largely contradictory to the idea of women as leaders (Eagly, 1987; Moss, 2008). Consequently, when men and women alike have negative reactions to women as leaders, the cause runs deeper than what is immediately evident. Eagly (1987) has spent several decades analyzing and explaining the significant influence that social norms exert on social behavior. Her seminal work on social role theory brought four salient considerations to the forefront that present a foundation from which to view the challenges women in leadership face. First, she wrote, that men and women behave differently in social situations, taking on roles specified and expected by the society in which they are a part. Secondly, the primary emphases of women's roles are related to domestic, home-making or relational tasks; for men, the roles are public, work-related, or agentic.

Third, the occupational roles that women are expected to fulfill are not only different from men's, but they are lower in positional power and status. Fourth and finally, those women who operate or seek to step outside of those roles are faced with pressure to conform that hinders their progress in the achievement of agentic roles and behaviors. These role expectations are socialized into the psyches of the society at large, are passed down from generation to generation, and influence the behavioral and decision making processes of individuals (Eagly 1987; Moss, 2008). In organizations these expectations can also influence the perceptions of who could (or should) lead: "not only are the decision makers influenced by the stereotypes that disadvantage women in the leadership role, but they may succumb to homosocial reproduction, a tendency for a group to reproduce itself in its own image" (Hoyt, 2013, p. 359).

Leadership and Social Role Theory

The nature of leadership practice also influences the very perception of the roles that are appropriate for certain individuals. For example, Moss (2008) indicates that individual roles can be considered

flexible depending on context and responsibility: “work roles, such as leadership positions...might override... gender roles and reduce gender differences” (para. 5). On the other hand, Moss also indicates that “individuals might question the capacity of women in particular positions, such as leadership roles” (para.7), because of social role expectations. Holding a leadership position can require specific behaviors of the leader that supersede social role expectations.

So, Eagly and Johnson (1990) assert that “when social behavior is regulated by other, less diffuse social roles [a leader’s] as it is in organizational settings, behavior should primarily reflect the influence of these other roles and therefore lose much of its gender stereotypic character” (p. 249). Thus, a position of authority can serve to mitigate the perceptions of gender stereotypes. Whereas under the usual circumstances social role prescriptions can prevent women from being nominated for promotions, and women showing agentic traits can be seen as unappealing or cold; there’s the possibility that the currently-held conceptualization of leadership can reduce the prevailing perceptions and behaviors (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Rudman, 1998). It is the statistical evidence that currently held conceptualizations of leadership still have not resulted in the mitigation of long-held perceptions of women’s leadership that raises the ethical issue in leadership.

THE ETHICS OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership scholars contend that ethics is a vital component in leadership practice. One points out that “ethics is located at the heart of leadership studies” (Ciulla, 2004, p. 4.) Another confirms that “ethics is central to leadership because of the nature of the process of influence, the need to engage followers in accomplishing mutual goals, and the impact leaders have on the organization’s values” (Northouse, 2013, p. 428). It is noteworthy then, that many of the leadership theories and books relegate their discussion of leadership to single chapters, a few sentences, or nothing at all. There is rarer discussion when the discourse addresses ethics in relation to women and leadership. Two leadership theories, specifically, include a direct or explicit link to the ethical responsibilities of leadership: transformational or transforming leadership (Burns, 1978, Northouse, 2013, Heifetz, 1994), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002).

Transformational Leadership

In his description of the transformational leadership approach Northouse points out that “leaders can initiate, develop, and carry out significant changes in organizations” (Northouse, 2013, p. 199), and that they, as “social architects... make clear the emerging values and norms of the organization” (Northouse, 2013, p. 200). Another critical aspects raised by a much earlier proponent of transforming leadership, Burns (1978) in his book *Leadership*, proposes that transforming leaders engage in facilitating their followers’ movement toward moral responsibility in the practice of leadership. They function as “moral agents” with “end-values such as liberty, justice and equality” (Ciulla, 2004, p. 15).

What Heifetz contributes that is so aptly applicable to the challenges of women’s leadership today is that “leaders use authority to get people to pay attentions to the issues, to act as a reality test regarding information, to manage and frame issues, to orchestrate conflicting perspectives, and to facilitate decision making (Heifetz, 1994, p. 113). The author believes that this authority further extends to preventing the denial of freedom and the equal rights of others in the workplaces they lead. It is these facets of the leader that will take on a vital role in the needed change in organization culture that is required.

Servant Leadership

With servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), in contrast, the movement is away from the leader-follower interaction and focuses in on the responsibility, decision making and action in relation to the organization; corresponding to Northouse’s (2013) stated purpose of transformational leadership to move followers to a higher standard. According to Greenleaf one of the essential capabilities of a leader is their foresight: “a better than average guess about what is going to happen, when, in the future... a failure to make the effort at an earlier date to foresee today’s events and take the right actions when there was

freedom for initiative to act” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 39). He further argues that “the failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an ethical failure” (p. 39).

Leaders with foresight would, for example, would note the persistent trends of the under-representation of women in top leadership positions. The current homogeneity of top leaders across business, government, education and religious sectors could arguably be termed an ethical failure. To finalize it, the test of servant leadership is: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they *while being served* become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27), or in this case the organization? Thus, it is the responsibility of incumbent leaders, throughout the processes of leadership development and succession planning, to be open to moving beyond the limitations of prevailing mental models that would block their ability to take initiative and act with foresight or to initiate strategies to develop female high-potential followers for the future strategic benefit of the company as a whole.

Ethical Decision Making

The decision to hire a woman as a top leader in a company or country can become an ethical decision if the decision maker’s principles do not hold value in the leadership of women. To assist with the challenges and complexity of ethical decisions that individuals or leaders can be faced with. Johnson (2012) presents several approaches to ethical decision making: First, the Utilitarian approach, which focuses on doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Second, Kant’s Categorical Imperative, where decision makers decide what’s right despite the consequences. Third, Rawl’s Justice as Fairness, where decision makers seek to balance freedom and equality. Fourth, the Confucian approach, where building healthy relationships are paramount; and fifth, the Altruistic approach where concern for the other and the ethic of care are central to the process (Johnson, 2012, pp. 19-31).

All of these various approaches have potential application for the resolution of the dilemma of women’s leadership. Yet, Kant’s categorical imperative in its simplicity presents an immediate inquiry about the ethics of women’s under-representation in top leadership positions, since current leadership practice gives evidence contrary to the Kantian premise that “what is right for one is right for all” which is based on fundamental moral and human rights considered to be universal, equally distributed, and cannot be given or taken away (Johnson, 2012, p. 25). The masculine criteria of leadership does not foster universality, or equality, and it has most certainly been withheld, though this practice is slowly changing. This complacency, or maintenance of the status quo, becomes unethical behavior on the part of leaders in that it can cost the company its profits, and reduce the benefits to shareholders according to Tavanti and Werhane (2013). The research done by Catalyst, (2008) quantifiably confirms this, as their findings indicate that companies that have women in top leadership positions see a 33% higher return on investment if they have more women leaders in their top positions than their counterparts without women leaders.

In Peter Senge’s insightful work, the *Fifth Discipline* he contends that “the first or second generation of women in senior executive positions have to be ‘more like men than the men,’ in order to prove that they are ‘real leaders’ by the masculine criteria that are still dominant” (Senge, 2006, p. 368). The hindrances and obstacles that follow are those that have been experienced by the first generation and contemporary women leaders, and they shed important light on what might still be actually happening as society and organizations transition into a more inclusive leadership culture. Naturally, given that women are visibly different from the masculine embodiment of leadership that has prevailed from early trait theories to today’s prevailing leadership personas, this transition will not come without challenges and struggles. Nevertheless, organizational culture must change in response to the increase of female workers and the inevitable rise of women to leadership positions (McKinsey & Company, 2012). As one studies the issue, the question arises: what exactly is it that needs to be changed? A look at the state of leadership and the barriers that currently exist will provide some specific areas of change that will be required.

CONTEMPORARY STATE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

According to the literature, actual barriers against women as leaders are in place, and many experience role conflicts and tensions as they take on leadership roles (Evans & Breinig Chun, 2007; Shyns & Sanders, 2005; Sinclair, 2005). For the purposes of this discourse, it will be assumed that the educational and experiential qualifications have been met or exceeded. One could argue that women have increasingly had opportunity to assume leadership roles in an ever broadening range of disciplines, fields, and organizations. Generally, that is indeed true. However, the paucity of those who have had opportunity to make it, as well as the protracted pace of their advancement, is the intriguing and concerning phenomenon. There is ample historical evidence that women can and have successfully and effectively lead countries through times of turmoil, challenge, and transformation. Well-known leadership icons such as Golda Meir, Bhenazir Bhutto, Eva Peron, Margaret Thatcher, and Angela Merkel are powerfully clear examples of such leadership. These women have undeniably demonstrated their competency, skill, and effectiveness on world stages.

Women's Leadership Capability and Effectiveness

Highlighting the effectiveness of women's leadership is critical because the focus of the discussion goes beyond leader competencies to address areas that are usually subsumed within a competency paradigm. The discussion on social role theory addressed this in part; the specific barriers that follow this section will identify several non-competency related concerns that have significant impact on women's leadership opportunities. Even if women were to simply 'lean in' to their ambitions, as Sandberg and Scovell's (2013) book encourages them to do, they would be doing so in the face of underrepresentation, prejudice, challenges to their authority, second guessing, insubordination, ongoing vulnerability, unnaturally high or conflicting expectations, and those who would force them in line with the status quo they are destined to change (Evans & Breinig Chun, 2007; Shyns & Sanders, 2005; Sinclair, 2005). The research further supports "social costs and backlash experienced by women when they promote themselves or are competent in positions of authority" (Hoyt, 2013, p. 357). In the end, it really is about attitude and perception because, "being out of role in gender-relevant terms has its costs for leaders..." (Eagly & Johnson, 1990, p. 248). To add scope and context, a brief review of the literature on women's leadership effectiveness follows.

Women's Leadership Effectiveness

Ultimately, leaders are judged by their perceived effectiveness. A meta-analysis revealed that when we speak of leadership effectiveness we are reminded that it is "contingent on features of the group or organizational environment" (Eagly & Johnson, 1990, p. 249); and that "women's leadership styles were more democratic than men's even in organization settings" (p. 249). Later research conducted by Dubrin with over 1800 male and female managers identified some differences between men and women's leadership skill tendencies: women were "rated higher on relationship-oriented leadership skills" while men were "... rated higher on task-oriented leadership skills" (Dubrin, 2007, p. 125). However, the findings indicated that on "overall [leadership] effectiveness, the sexes were perceived the same" (Dubrin, 2007, p. 125). Additional research on the effectiveness of women's leadership confirms that although women are less likely to negotiate or promote themselves for leadership positions, "...women are no less effective at leadership, committed to their jobs, or motivated for leadership roles than men." (Hoyt, 2013, p. 358). The research in the Catalyst (2008) further confirms that corporations do better when women are in senior leadership positions and on their boards. It is important to establish women's leadership effectiveness and ability at the outset because it sets up an important premise for examining the challenges, tensions, and inconsistencies that will be highlighted in the following discussion of barriers.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

In Fortune 500 companies, the top of the leadership ladder is precarious, lean, and scarce for women (McKinsey & Company, 2012). Scholars agree that a range of obstacles exist: for the sake of clarity, only a few relevant to understanding the complexity of women's leadership will be highlighted here. Research suggests that informal organization barriers (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007; Evans & Breinig Chun, 2007; Lips & Keener, 2007; Shyns & Sanders 2005), lack of access to relevant social networks (Olsson & Walker, 2004; Nanton, 2009), and entrenched perceptions of women (Eagly & Johnson, 1990) can result in negative workplace ramifications. Yet women such as Carly Fiorina and Andrea Jung are powerful examples of strong proven leadership effectiveness across male and female dominated industries.

Nonetheless, the persistent reality is that women have not been able to attain leadership positions at the rate one would expect. "While the number of women entering management positions continues to increase; women remain underrepresented at the senior executive level" (Olsson & Walker, 2004, p. 244). This trend is so clearly evidenced across industries and business sectors alike, the inequities so pronounced, that the term "glass ceiling" has been used to describe the "... invisible, yet quite impenetrable, barrier that serves to prevent all but a disproportionately few women from reaching the highest ranks of the corporate hierarchy, regardless of their achievement and merits" (Lampe, 2001, p. 346). More recently, Eagly and Carli (2007) present the metaphor of a labyrinth to describe the challenges encountered all along the way of women's advancement to leadership positions.

Hillary Clinton's losing bid for the U. S. presidency in 2008 is an example with both adult education and leadership implications. It illuminated a classic and sobering reminder that this trend is still prevalent today. Clinton's subsequent position as Secretary of State simultaneously acknowledged her prodigious leadership capability and competency even as it illuminated the significant barriers to women and leadership that yet remain. The glass ceiling remained intact between the tried and proven relationship-oriented position of Secretary of State, in which women have so far been allowed to lead and have proven themselves effective, and the ever elusive position of the Presidency that has yet to be won. Clinton's vivid words accurately depict what happened:

Although we weren't able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it, ... And the light is shining through like never before, filling us all with the hope and the sure knowledge that the path will be a little easier next time. (Cilizza, 2013, para. 7)

America's boardrooms and executive offices have seen a similarly perplexing and persisting pattern of organizational leadership emerge. Furthermore, when women do arrive at the top, many find that they are not equitably compensated, and that the positional reward is anti-climactic in relation to the struggle to get to the senior executive level (Evans & Breinig Chun, 2007). The ubiquitous barriers in place that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in the executive or chief level positions of companies and nations are the biggest aspect of leadership of culture that needs to be reshaped to develop and sustain the next generation of women leaders. The work of re-shaping the leadership culture will result in "individual embodied practices [that can positively] interrupt systemic power" (Sinclair, 2005, p. 388).

Perception Barriers of Women's Leadership Effectiveness

The discourse on women perception barriers faced by women aspiring to be leaders, calls attention to the reality that "women may tend to lose authority if they adopt distinctively feminine styles of leadership in extremely male dominated roles. Women who survive in such roles probably have to adopt the styles typical of male role occupants" (Eagly & Johnson, 1990, p. 248). Fletcher (2001) confirms that they disappear from the attention of co-workers and male-oriented colleagues because of leading as women. Though they may be well-qualified, they are not necessarily at the forefront when promotions are discussed. Their disappearance from the sight of co-workers and selecting officers is likely because they

have neatly fit into the gender role stereotypes for supportive rather than leadership positions. This sets up a conflicted existence for aspirant women leaders as they also need to learn how to hurdle or circumvent existing barriers within leadership culture.

Conflicts and Consequence Barriers of Women's Leadership

Experiencing “social disapproval, gender role strain, being judged less likeable if they promote their own competence, needing to continuously prove themselves, and balancing work and family are tension points not felt by male counterparts in organizations (Lips & Keener, 2007, p. 564). Additionally, informal organizational barriers “like behavioral forms of discrimination, may be invisible, difficult to pinpoint, covert, and cumulative in impact” (Evans & Breinig Chun, 2007, p. 57) in higher education. Others highlight the complexity created with the simultaneous expectations of women to behave like leaders on the one hand, and to remain feminine on the other, even as they are punished for their femininity. In other words, “the more women violate the standards for their gender, the more they may be penalized by prejudiced reactions that would not be directed to their male counterparts” (Barbuto, et al. 2007, p. 72). Because these roles are prescribed, stepping away from them or operating in a manner that is counter to the expectations can create a significant challenge for the woman as leader.

Barrier of Leadership as Unfeminine

In the face of these additional consequences, some women abandon their aspirations for leadership because it is perceived as unfeminine. Tension develops in women as they assume leadership roles, if “leadership is viewed as unfeminine” (Lips & Keener, 2007, p. 564), and the antithesis to the essence of who they are. They further contend that “people are more tolerant of dominant behavior in men than in women,...women receive more penalties for dominance than men do” and the reward/cost ratio is not favorable to them (p. 564). The cost can also be perceived as being too high due to difficulty with subordinates who challenge the required dominant behavior of women as leaders (Heilman et al. 2004, Rudman, 1998). So some high-potential candidates make the determination that no compensation is worthy of this stress. Thus, the perception of leadership as unfeminine becomes one of the covert organizational barriers causing women a loss of economic value (Lips & Keener, 2007).

Barrier of Abandoning Career Ambitions

The response to the cumulative effect of barriers can cause some well-qualified women to choose to walk away from their aspiration to be leaders (Fels, 2004). Collective wisdom, as a result, is that women are not ambitious, or that they are not interested in leadership roles. Contrary to this assumption, in an insightful study of women who had walked away from their dreams, Fels sought to examine whether women truly lacked ambition for leadership positions. Findings suggested that women did not lack ambition, but that they lacked “an evaluating, encouraging audience” (Fels, 2004, p. 3) which, according to Fels, must be present as such recognition is critical for fostering the development and mastery of skills. As these women are consistently presented with negative evaluations coupled with lack of encouragement, they become de-motivated in their quest for leadership positions and take themselves out of the running.

A recent study juxtaposes another intriguing reason for women's opting out of leadership positions: that “women, more than men, find ethical compromises unacceptable” (Kennedy & Kray, 2014, p. 52). This unwillingness to compromise their ethical values to gain status and recognition has potentially also contributed to their lack of advancement. In businesses where that might be an issue or concern, “if women forgo profits in favor of ethics, they may produce fewer economic returns and garner less influence and recognition than men within business organizations, at least in the short term” (Kennedy & Kray, 2014, p. 57).

A cumulative effect begins to emerge as just these few barriers are identified. The consequences are knowledge drain in organizations, continued under-representation, and increased job dissatisfaction. According to Evans and Breinig Chun (2007) and Shyns and Sanders (2005), covert and invisible barriers can be the underlying cause for what can be occurring in organization search committees as well.

Because such actions are covert or invisible, they ultimately result in many highly competent women, potential leaders, being prevented from advancement opportunities and compensation that are more readily available to men.

These barriers are significant to the women who are hindered by them, for at least two reasons: first, candidates unaware of the barriers may attribute their negative experiences to other more tangible things, including their performance. Second, because these barriers are not easily identifiable, it becomes more difficult for women to remove these obstructions to their career advancement. There is salient economic value linked to informal workplace barriers as they can translate into women's salary inequities, lack of promotions, or even promotions without appropriate salary compensation and marginalization from critical networks (Evans & Breinig Chun 2007; Nanton, 2009; Shyns & Sanders 2005).

Social Networks Barriers

Women can also be blocked from access to beneficial social networks (Nanton, 2009). Career advancement is so often linked to social networks that a brief examination is warranted, even necessary. For instance, "executive culture is constituted as a male domain," framed as "corporate masculinity" (Olsson & Walker, 2004, p. 244). This can have a negative effect on women along two fronts. First is in relation to status and power by association. Women can be marginalized from status, power, politics, and informal social events, making them outsiders to critical networks that create career advancement benefits as they are not associated with these powerful networks. Second, in relation to positioning. Women are positioned at a disadvantage when they compensate by creating their own less powerful networks with limits placed on their involvement in decision making, their social mobility, and career advancement (Nanton, 2009).

Conflicts of Role Expectations

Another conflict-ridden aspect of role expectations is related to women's work-life balance. Gender role expectations continue to persist even though many women bring home a bigger paycheck than their partner (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Inch, McIntyre, & Napier, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2012). McKinsey & Company point out that these role expectations have influence on the lifestyle and career choices of women. Personal challenges, increased tension, stress, and conflict occur when women as leaders "are both primary breadwinners and primary caregivers" (McKinsey & Company, p. 6). Women are pushed to integrate both roles: some choose to "hold themselves back from accelerated growth" (p. 7). While some organizations have sought to address this work situation, movement to make these organizational changes lags behind the growing needs of women as leaders, as company response is often reactive rather than proactive (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

From a practical organizational perspective, women are traditionally placed in assistant, secretarial, support, and or relationship-oriented management positions which reduce the odds of their advancement to leadership roles (Hoyt, 2013; McKinsey & Company, 2012). Inch, et al. (2008) point out that "...constantly being aware of being a woman in a man's world, having to prove themselves to others, and having to work harder and be better than their male counterparts" (p. 21) also serves to prevent women's advancement to senior management positions. This is exacerbated by the lack of women in senior management positions who can either hire in more women, serve as mentors, or at minimum serve as examples of those who have mastered the hurdles of their leadership interactions and developed a "professional style with which male managers were comfortable" (Inch et. al., p. 21). Quite often these women collectively suffer in silence. They believe that they are the only ones with that problem. The guilt and shame of it all keeps them silent and isolated.

Brookfield (1987) from a critical thinking perspective observed that "most personally problematic situations do have some social dimension to them" (p. 61): "Perceiving the connection between personal troubles and social forces leads to social as well as individual change" (p. 59). So it is vital to the leadership culture change process for women to not only see their problem as part of the socio-cultural context that both creates and supports it, but to move beyond this recognition to dialogue, talking about it publicly and in organizations. In so doing, they can collaborate on questioning "prevailing, predominantly

white male modes of knowledge, the generation of alternative perspectives and framework of interpretation, and the collective attempt to create new ways of thinking and living” (Brookfield, 1987, p. 60).

However, many women in the public sphere are not yet at this place when it comes to leadership issues. Thus, women are largely left with having to prove their capability to lead, without having the benefit of role models who have successfully learned to navigate the organizational environment and scale the hurdles presented to them. Because organizations and nations still continue to struggle with accepting women as leaders, there remains critical learning and research to be done in this area. Proposed changes that will be required need to occur at several levels in the organization, and even across society, for it to be truly effective, meaning that learning and change also needs to occur. How can today’s organizations effectively and strategically respond with formal and informal leadership development strategies that take into consideration the complexity of the leadership context for female high-potential candidates without jettisoning all of the problems at the feet of women? It is here that adult education and ethical decision making in various forms can take on a significant role in shaping leadership culture.

ETHICS AND LEARNING FOR SHAPING LEADERSHIP CULTURE

One of the unique things about women’s underrepresentation in top leadership positions is that it is not something that is unique to one country, or one business alone. As was mentioned earlier, some countries and companies have shown ability to elect and select women for the top leadership roles. The women who take on these leadership positions, naturally, are under much pressure and lead with skill under great difficulty in a workplace context that is not always friendly or accepting (Insch, et. al., 2008). The dynamic interactive relationship between leader and follower is premised on perceptive judgments, and behavioral responses by both parties that can result in either the success or the failure of the experience of leaders and followers the interaction and resulting decisions are interdependent. This interdependent interaction and movement toward progress goes beyond just the leader and follower, out to the organization and its culture, to the global leadership context, according to Seidman (2011):

All progress now depends on How. We have entered the Era of Behavior. Of course our behavior has always mattered, but in today’s world, it matters more than ever and in ways it never has before. We live in a more connected and interdependent world. Yet we tend to speak about the world in amoral terms. The single most profound implication of an increasingly interconnected world is that it has rendered us ethically, if not morally, interdependent.” (para.1)

It is also in this situated context that the leader-mentor can work to shape organizational culture to be more inclusive of the needs of women leaders as their needs are articulated and expressed: they are then functioning as social architects and transformational leaders (Northouse, 2013). It is this aspect of the leader-follower interchange which is influenced by the mental models shaped by the societal, cultural and professional normative expectations that we will now explore. The discussion will begin with the role that adult education could play through the appropriate philosophical approach, recognition of the forms of learning that best apply to this leadership development context and the adult education practices that most efficiently facilitate the needed organizational change in perspective and practice.

The Role of Adult Education

The proposed approach for shaping leadership culture to be more inclusive of women’s leadership involves adult education and learning. From an adult education perspective, the philosophical approach as the entity that undergirds actions, decisions, and behavior is *Radical-Progressive*. The rationale for this blended approach speaks to the problematic complexity of women’s leadership; and a fundamental need to change organizations and society. This complexity is culturally influenced with oppressive overtones as evidenced by social role theory and the organizational barriers previously discussed. The radical

philosophical approach, as well as Freire's theory, "challenges the status quo" and "stands outside of the mainstream of adult education philosophy" because it is one where "radical changes to society" are proposed (Elias & Merriam, 2004, pp. 147-148). They point out: "Most educational philosophies accept given societal values and attempt to propound educational philosophies within those value structures. While progressives...attempt to utilize education to reform society, it is only the radical critics that propose profound changes in society" (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 147).

Additionally, there is recognition that "individual liberation and societal liberation are closely tied together..." (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 156). This connects to Brookfield's assertion that individual crises are usually linked to societal crises. The goal for education in Freire's (1970) radical adult education theory is radical conscientization: "...where dialogue and social activity are essential to the learning process, and descriptive of human and social consciousness (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 156). Elias and Merriam (2004) outline four levels of consciousness. The lowest level *intransitive consciousness*, which involves a "culture of silence" and a preoccupation with the most basic needs, much as would be the case when a woman keeps silent at injustices because she is new and really needs the job, not yet relating her oppressive present to the historical context. So she blames herself, or attributes it to just her luck. The second level is *semi-intransitivity*: here the "individuals have internalized negative values that the dominant culture ascribes to them (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 156). These women will put themselves down; believe that they really do not qualify, or concede that they are best when working for, supporting, or emotionally dependent on someone.

Third is the *naïve transitiveness* level, where the people, though still maintaining the culture of silence, "begin to experience their reality as problem" (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 156). At this point the woman begins to recognize the problem that exists, and may even criticize and pressure when she experiences being passed over, for example, but because she still is in the culture of silence, when she is given a plausible reason it will be accepted even though it is manipulative. This manipulation can be coercive through the use of harassment, hostile work environments, threat of future opportunity, or even overt communication that women do not make good leaders. The woman capitulates and reverts to frustrated silence until the next similar occurrence. It should be noted at this juncture that there may be women leaders in place who are in the first three stages, still bound by the code of silence for very different reasons. Some because they are first and have no one to talk to, others because they are now too busy watching their back and defending their selection to position in the first place, given that they are leading in unchanged and or unaccepting organization and socio-cultural environments.

The final stage is *critical consciousness*. This is when the individual has experienced conscientization "marked by depth in the interpretation of problems, self-confidence in discussions, receptiveness, and refusal to shirk responsibility" (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 157). At this stage of dialogical critical consciousness the women are able to recognize discrimination, make the related connections, and are self-confident enough to initiate a "radical denunciation of dehumanizing structures, accompanied by an announcement of a new reality to be created" (p. 157). They engage in "a rational critique of the ideology supporting these structures" moving to "praxis, the authentic union of action and reflection" (p. 157). Thus according to Freire (1970), conscientization, is an open social activity; dialogic in that it facilitates the breaking of the silence. It is because of the social nature of conscientization that the author proposes social learning for shaping leadership culture.

Application of the radical adult education philosophical approach to the issue places women's contemporary leadership as being in the conscientization process. Having more recently arrived at the critical consciousness stage, a large percentage of women are still in the second and third level stages of semi-intransitivity and naïve transitiveness. Initial analysis would confirm a problem with the needed emancipation of women as leaders, and the requisite shift in leadership and organizational culture. Thus the articulation of the new reality has not yet been finalized: consensus on the announcement yet remains in the dialogical stages. Thus, adding to part of the dialogue and discourse on what the new reality could look like is an underlying goal of this chapter. The radical adult education philosophy presents "both a theory and a method for cultural and political change" (p. 163) in a situated context that is social and oppressive. The adult learning that is required involves the raising of awareness: what Freire terms as

conscientization. It will also require a re-education of society, organizations, and men with new words, idioms, and practices. The new knowledge is applied and results in the emancipation and empowerment of the formerly oppressed group because “knowing is inseparable from deciding to do something in reference to the knowledge” (p. 166). The goal is a social movement that results in increased equity in that community of practice.

The *progressive* approach premised on “education as socialization and...enculturation” (Elias and Merriam, 2004, p. 61), is significant to women’s leadership challenges in that it is learner focused: “centering upon individuals and their needs” (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 65), “... adjusted to the learners, to the problems they need solved, to the situation confronting them” (p. 66), and based in the “personal experiences” (Elias & Merriam, 2004, p. 68) of the learner. Thus this philosophical approach can, for example, facilitate the awareness of unethical decision making and behavior, a breaking of the silence, and recognizing and learning new ways to address some of the workplace barriers that are created and encountered. The salience of this approach, according to Elias and Merriam, is that it is extensive and “not restricted to schooling, but includes all those incidental and intentional activities that society uses to pass on values, attitudes, knowledge and skills” (2004, p. 61). It is also inclusive of the “work of many institutions of society: family, workplace, school, churches, and the entire community” (p. 61). All the essential arenas of society where the perspectives and cultural expectations described in social role theory must be mitigated, re-learned and re-shaped.

The Role of Ethics

It is here that understanding how leadership ethics (Ciulla, 2004) can also play a significant role in changing organization’s leadership culture. Northouse (2013) points out, the ethical component of leadership requires a respect, nurturing development of the women and valuing of their difference. Thus one of the major ethical leadership challenges to be addressed is the fight against complacency or the acceptance of leadership inequality in the workplace (Tavanti and Werhane, 2013). Earlier scholars portend that one of the sources of “ethical failures of leadership is success itself. Successful leadership can make for complacency and less of a strategic focus” (Price, 2004, p. 130). “Some people still today choose the comfort of the status quo over change, even when they acknowledge that there is something unfair about the paucity of women leaders in organizations” (Tavanti and Werhane, 2013, p. 23). In so doing they are failing to exercise the foresight that Greenleaf (2002) calls for in leaders.

Principles-Based Ethical Decision Making

Practically speaking, use of Kant’s principles-based categorical imperatives (Johnson, 2012) to establish standards for decision-making, as a structural framework –if upheld- for both action and measurement of effectiveness would be a starting place for movement in the right direction. The imperatives or duties are considered to be categorical; obeyable without exception. This is not to say that there will not be competing duties or priorities, however, the approach fulfills the ethical requirement of equality of access for women to top leadership positions as a start. And, all organizations with women who are qualified for top leadership positions are implicated. There are two salient premises with concomitant questions supporting the Kantian approach to ethical decision making. First, what is right for one is right for all; would I want everyone else to make the decision I did? Second, treating humanity as an end, inclusive of the fundamental rights to dignity and respect; is my decision disrespectful or denying the other person’s human value and potential? (Johnson, 2012, pp. 24-25).

This basic checklist for decision making does not answer all of the complexity in organizations, but it provides a framework that is measurable, which, with the use of awareness training, can be developed into a decision making process, promoted throughout the organization, used to evaluate hiring decisions, and rewarded in the organizations for measurable change to occur at the organizational culture level. As leaders begin to exercise foresight, their behavioral decisions in these aspects must be strategically assessed so that the inferior roles to which women have been socialized and assigned can be changed to more agentic leadership roles if they so desire. Another value that this brings is self-reflection, so that as leaders they will not fail to act on the knowledge –while they have the freedom to act (Greenleaf, 2002).

For instance, Price (2004) argues that failures in ethical decision making are not based on the leader's cognition or volition only. The biblical example of the "Bathsheba syndrome" is used to illustrate that "the volitional account of human immorality will not be sufficient to explain the ethical failures of leadership" (Price, 2004, p. 130). What is known to be the 'right thing to do' is not always what is done. There can be a disconnect supported by the leader's power or authority, complacency or the status quo, that precludes their ability to clearly see the ethics of their decision making and behavior, which can be perceived to be inconsequential because of the leader's position. It was the educative story used by Nathan the prophet as he recounted David's actions to him, hypothetically, which not only served to affront David's sense of justice; but alerted him to how his powerful position had resulted in unexamined ethical decision making that was consequential and quite detrimental to his people, self, and his kingdom. It is hoped that the presentation of the social role perceptions, the barriers, and the ethical red flag of information will translate into an educative or learning experience for incumbent contemporary leaders, which propels them into action.

Social Learning and Women's Leadership Development

Two forms of learning in particular are appropriate here in a holistic approach to women's leadership development. Social Learning is an integrative view of the adult learning that occurs from observing other's behaviors in social settings. In the leadership development context in particular, "knowledge transfer of tacit knowledge occurs through socialization with others" (Merriam, Cafarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 179). Merriam et al. contend that "by observing others, people acquire knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes" (2007, p. 288). Leadership development therefore involves a form of learning that is clearly described in social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 2001), which occurs in a situated context which prepares aspirant high-potentials for their anticipated leadership opportunity.

The presence of a leader-model to guide the developing protégé fits clearly into this adult learning theory. The learner has a model they observe; they internalize their observations, reinforce that learning with feedback, and reproduce the learned behavior in the appropriate situation and time. Two of the essential points of social learning theory are that learning can be vicarious and can occur without immediate evidential demonstration of such learning. The other is that social learning is context based (Bandura, 2001). Vicarious learning (observed but not personally experienced) can be knowledge high potential or aspiring candidates acquire from the observed experiences of their predecessors, which can result in recognition of barriers, role conflicts, or abandoned career aspirations.

For women as leaders, there are also what the women learn about the company's ethical decisional orientations is transmitted through social learning experiences. Their ability to internalize and appropriate the ethical identity of the organization can be hampered by mismatches in ethical values or ethical values gaps (Kennedy & Kray (2014); which, if they are insurmountable will prevent the transfer of learning and translate into a rejection of that form of decision making. It is also through the social learning process that the organization's shared social identity (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013) is inculcated.

Situated learning Theory and Women's leadership Development

Because social learning is context based, another important form of adult learning occurs as described by situated learning theory. In this instance, Lave (1988) points out that situated learning needs to occur in a specific context where the learned behavior is required and appropriate. Lave holds that the learner is part of a community of practice (the organization) where the beliefs and behaviors to be appropriated are defined. Starting out at the periphery of the community of practice learning, engagement and development cause them to become deeper parts of the community, increasing their expertise, and proximity to ethical compromises. The social identity of the group is further divulged as they learn how to enact that identity in various contexts. When women are part of the in-group they are more likely to be considered as cohesive with that group (the value of social networking, (Nanton, 2009) and as a result of that perception they would more likely be better candidates for selection when the opportunity arises.

In the leadership development context, the candidate starts out at the periphery as the new recruit. Over time, as they demonstrate their potential and competency to the group and are selected for leadership development and mentoring, they become deeply invested in the community. One of the key points that Lave raises early on is that situated learning is primarily incidental. In the leadership development social learning experience, however, situated learning is not only deliberate, but the knowledge the mentor-expert transmits to the candidate is occurring in the context of the workplace they will potentially be called to lead, behave, and make decisions (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The knowledge is best acquired through social interaction and collaboration within the community of practice and between the mentor, the protégé, and others.

Social Capital Networks for Learning and Career Advancement

In the organization, women engaged in leadership development initiatives are developing, or are already connected to networks that are institutionalized and durable enough for them to engage in and learn specific norms and behaviors that translate into beneficial relationships and recognition for them. The networks provide access to resources “through affiliations, contacts, and services allowing them to gain knowledge and information essential for achieving their goals” (Nanton, 2009, p. 14). They also become communities of practice where collaboration can occur and the place where upcoming projects or anticipated organizational changes, behavioral criteria or advancement opportunities, and other benefits. These networks further provide increased bargaining power and exposure to accepted ethical decision making practices to the women in such well-connected networks.

Leadership development and learning experience “within a collaborative context of social networks enhances, rather than diminishes, the learner’s self-determination and ability to self-manage...” two critical characteristics leaders are going to need (Nanton, 2009, p. 16). The mentor-model also becomes a lynchpin of their protégé’s networks, contributing to the development, need for connectedness and sense of belonging (Nanton, 2011). Therefore, as part of the social learning environment, it becomes important for women to have membership in, and belong to, social networks where they can develop and add to their behavioral repertoire the behaviors acceptable to male managers, where they can demonstrate their competency in collegial settings so their abilities do not pose a major threat, and where the perceived differences (behavioral, ethical, or cultural) that can hinder their future opportunities can be reduced. A brief conceptual look at the leadership context and community of practice in which the social and situated learning are taking place follows.

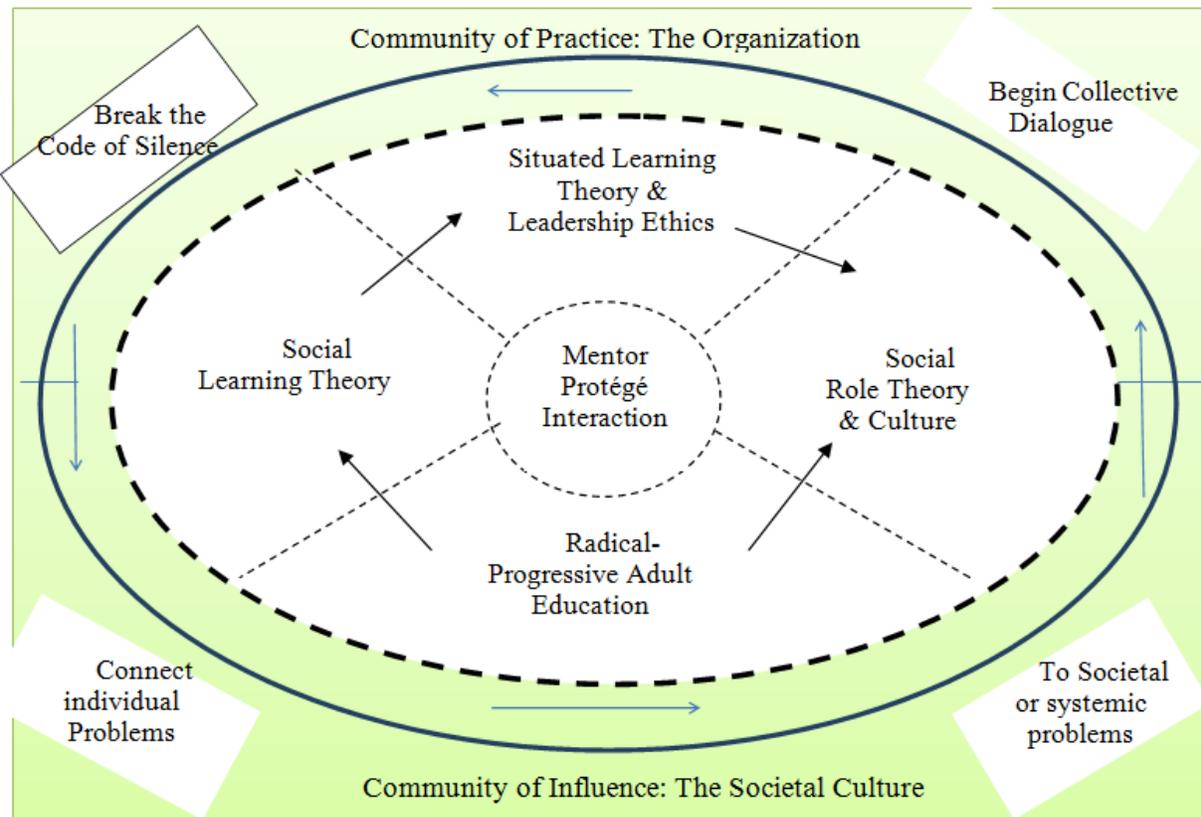
CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

From an adult education perspective both social learning and situated learning are context based. Leadership development occurs in both a relational and organizational context and is situated in a relational and cultural context. Social role theory (Moss, 2008) prescribes basic gender roles for both the relational and cultural context. It is understandable then that any push toward a changing of those prescribed roles, even in a workplace context, would be met with strong resistance on several fronts. While the organizational context is often mutually agreed on by employees under a common goal and vision, the gender role assumptions or expectations are not so easily categorized or linked to the emergent organizational needs of women leaders.

It is in this dynamic social learning space, conceptualized in Figure 1, that trust or mistrust, synergy or conflict is sensed and acted on by the leader and follower. And it is this dynamic space on which we will focus attention for transforming leadership culture. In this invisible yet permeable interactive space, the author proposes, that connection and commitment are developed, leadership of the other is validated and both leader and follower walk away perceiving that they have developed (mostly sub-consciously and cognitively), decision making skills, self-regulation and self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Nanton, 2011). Figure 1 provides a conceptual view of the social learning situated context and theoretical framework, and how the organizational context, societal and cultural contexts can potentially interact.

The protégé is learning within a situated leadership development context and developing skills to be practiced in a similar future situated context. It is in this space that leader identity is shaped through the modeling of the leader-mentor. This powerful interchange, in part, determines whether the protégé will accept the leader’s social identity (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013), their ethical standards of behavior, and by extension their leadership practice. The observation of consequences to the leaders’ behaviors and decision making, coupled with reinforcement, determines whether the protégé will internalize and adopt that behavior. Here is also where collaborative dialogue can occur, that new strategies can be developed to address identified problems, and that the culture of the organization can be re-shaped to be more inclusive of women leaders. Some of these proposed strategies and implications will be described next.

FIGURE 1
CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY OF LEARNING AND PRACTICE



ADULT EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Top priorities for 21st century organizations are to develop and sustain viability, competitiveness, agility, product quality and service excellence. Diversity and women’s leadership have been linked to increases in all these areas. Dubrin (2007) challenges top management to increase awareness and sensitivity to “the need for more diversity in choosing successors” (p. 475). High-potential candidates, particularly women in leadership in collaboration with top management, can help usher in a new generation of women leaders who have the freedom and capacity to lead as women in their most natural ways (Senge, 2006; Inch et al. 2008). These candidates will no longer be overlooked, nor will they ‘disappear’ (Fletcher, 2001) once the leadership development process experience is over, because their leadership style preferences and behaviors will have been legitimated throughout the company.

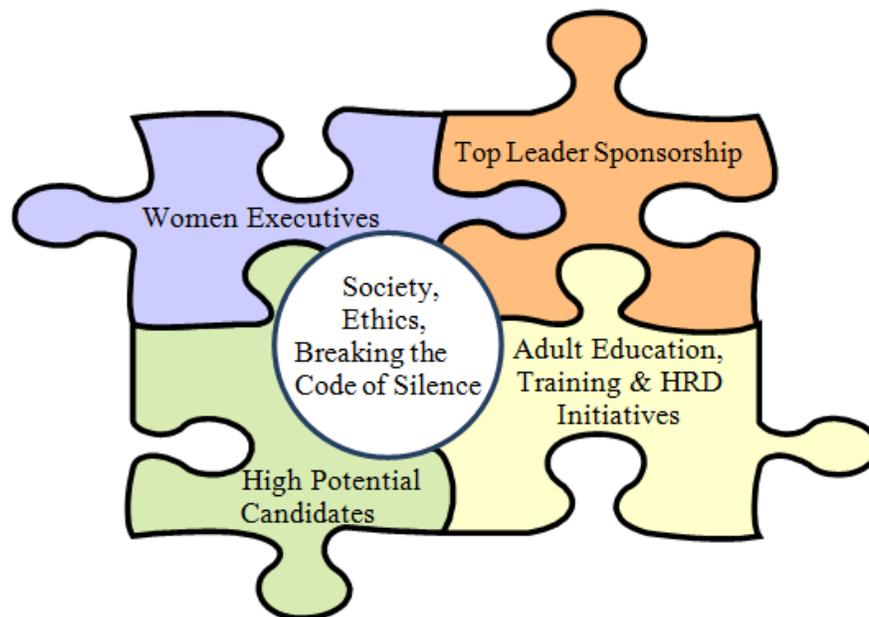
How can this happen when the current climate is still resistant and oppressive? As women leaders in organizations seek to shape the path to a new organizational leadership culture, they will also need to develop a new bridging or transitional leadership style which includes 1) agility for adjustment to the dynamic situational context that presents itself; 2) fluidity of selection and movement between a durable accepted (or newly acquired) repertoire of behaviors; 3) creativity for developing this new form of leadership that bridges both new social role requirements and organizational expectations, while demonstrating the competencies and skills to lead effectively and authentically as they remain true to their personal, gender and ethical principles.

The goal is to ensure that this new leadership culture and climate will not include untoward personal cost or sacrifice, and that barriers to equity or opportunity will be eliminated. Given that it is clearly apparent that both organizations and society need assistance in achieving these transformative goals of inclusion and change, the following learning and practice strategies are proposed for shaping contemporary leadership culture to one that is more inclusive of women as leaders.

STRATEGIES FOR INITIATING CHANGE IN PERCEPTION & PRACTICE

The proposed strategies have been connected together as puzzle pieces that must fit together to provide a holistic picture for effecting and sustaining synchronized, lasting change in contemporary societal (and organizational) perception and practice. The four identified parts to this puzzle are organizational and individual initiatives embodied in the roles of adult education and leadership ethics, required action for top leadership or male sponsors, women executives, and the aspiring high potential candidate.

**FIGURE 2
CRITICAL ROLES FOR CHANGING PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE**



The challenges in women's leadership are undergirded by the social role prescriptions of society, therefore the strategies for overcoming them must employ an approach that seeks to change the societal and workplace perceptions that fosters those challenges, and provide new knowledge and solutions for resolving individual problems and experiences within both contexts. Next, two overarching actions need

to occur to make room for the pieces to effectively come together: First, breaking the code of silence and reaching the level of critical consciousness that would cause women to engage in open dialogue with each other and the organization. Second, that there is movement beyond just dialogue to action that is responsive to the changes that are needed. The radical adult education approach described by Elias & Merriam (2004) can be employed to bring awareness and change leadership culture through critical consciousness of the players; the progressive adult education approach focuses on solving the problem of changing society's perceptions and expectations specific to the needs of women as leaders.

The recent Shriver report (2014) presented thought provoking information with salient relevance for this chapter's focus. It reported "trends re-shaping the American landscape" and included a comprehensive examination of "American attitudes about the role of women in today's world" (Shriver Report, 2014, p 7). The expectation, is to "spur a national conversation about what women's emerging economic power means for our way of life" (Podesta, 2014, p. 7). This is the type of conversation that can break the code of silence for women in general about the transformation that has already begun to unfold and the need for responsive action to what is now known in society and in organizations. It may also ultimately result in a raising of ethical standards in organizations as a means to attract and retain more women leaders.

Adult Education Strategies

Beginning with the role of adult education in focusing on removing the presenting barriers and work toward developing, implementing, and evaluating best practice strategies for women's leadership development. Knowing what works and what does not will go a long way toward holding each party accountable and challenging those organizations that lag behind, while still rewarding those that have made changes.

The Human Resource Development arm of adult education plays a significant role as a powerful and strategic driver for conscientization and change by using social learning methods for on-the-job training, observation, coaching, mentoring, and growth assignments. Building on prior experience, knowledge and skills, a more transactional and explicit experience is created, which, when linked to appropriate incentives, can reduce the perceptual barriers (Dubrin, 2007). Introducing diversity initiatives can raise awareness of the organization's formal and informal practices that systematically keep women out of leadership positions. At the basic level, training in the human resource recruitment, selection, and compensation must be strategic to ensure that there are enough qualified women in the pipeline so that they are available for the leadership development and placement in promotion openings (Petroni & Colacino, 2008). Kennedy and Kray (2014) would add that the conscientization also include ethics training, selecting leaders with high ethical standards and emphasizing ethics as part of the company's core culture.

Another critical component is that salary inequities are addressed and monitored to counteract demotivation. Practical and attitudinal perspectives be acknowledged if organization would remove the challenges of the labyrinth and the barriers of the glass ceiling. Increased focus on recruiting more women to leadership development programs and mentoring can be purposive, leading to more women leaders at the executive level with selections based on equity and qualifications and not based on gender (Hoyt, 2013).

Finally, developing formal or informal mentoring relationships, whether cross-gender, cross-cultural, or same gender, will purposively create the ideal context for the processes of social and situated learning. This constitutes strategic relational, collaborative and context based learning that has potential for effecting real leadership culture change. They also serve to create vital social networks that facilitate career advancement. Training throughout the company (including for executives) that addresses sensitivity to and awareness of the prevailing mental models and practical ways to reframe them is critical.

Top Leader's Sponsorship

Lasting change in organizations is initiated from the top down (Kotter, 1996). Accordingly, the second critical piece of this puzzle is the leaders' sponsorship behaviors bolstered by an in-depth understanding and awareness of the prevailing perceptions and ethical values. This would be exceptionally helpful to the candidate's ability to navigate the complexity of her leadership development process in the organization. Such sponsorship would help remove the barriers that currently exist while serving as a catalyst for social re-structuring of company culture to where women's leadership development can flourish. Ethical leader-sponsors and male colleagues will need to actively contribute to the needed change as both servant leaders with strategic foresight, and as agentic transforming leaders that eschew current complacency by refusing to maintain current status quo (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013).

As social architects, sponsors can hold employment and promotion decision makers to a higher standard of morality, working to develop a company culture where ethical compromises do not jeopardize women leaders' career advancement as they move up in the organization (Kennedy & Kray, 2014). Given that they still hold the positions women aspire to, and can lead by implementing positive reinforcement and putting related workplace incentives in place that will exponentially increase the likelihood of desired behaviors, while ensuring that equal opportunity for women is not thwarted (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013). Executive sponsorship is a powerful driver for organizational and leadership culture change. As ethical leaders they "take into account the purposes of everyone involved in the group, [are] attentive to the interests of the community and the culture" (Northouse, 2013, p. 437). If needed, executive coaching can become an invaluable method to shape individual and group attitudes and behaviors, positively initiating and sustaining changes in approach for the next generation of women leaders.

It also would be essential to hold executives accountable for following through on the succession plan, moving beyond merely completing the social learning cycle to actually placing qualified candidates as the openings come up (Petroni & Colacino, 2008). It will take innovation and commitment to ensure that fairness is practiced throughout the organization. Organizations can also link corporate reward systems and/or executive bonuses to succession initiatives in order to communicate the seriousness of the required changes. Women's skills and competencies would be more prone to recognition when attention is paid to objective and equitable evaluations of their work (Fels, 2004), and they would be encouraged to move into leadership positions.

Women Executives

The third puzzle piece is finding powerful advocates and mentors for the aspiring leader candidates. As executives they have successfully made it through the glass ceiling and have learned how to navigate or circumvent the barriers and gender role challenges. As mentor-models, they can foster consciousness and facilitate the development of effective skills and career trajectories in aspiring women. They can consciously work on not being characterized as "Queen Bees" (Drexler, 2013) by erecting new barriers in the way of strong and promising candidates: and in so doing, they can affect the situated learning that needs to occur and hinder the re-shaping of the leadership culture. Women executives can also tactically or inadvertently perpetuate the status quo; the very unethical practices and challenges that women currently face as aspiring leaders (Tanenbaum, 2002).

Women leaders can "take it upon [themselves] to change, expecting [their] followers to do the same," becoming an ethical leader who "embodies her personal values, expects the same from those around her" (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013, p. 28), and "continually tests those values against social norms, organizational consistency, and outcomes (Werhane, 2007a, p. 433). Yes, this is a challenging responsibility for many as they are often still working out their own situations. However, they are in a prime position now as part of the leadership in-group. They can "choose colleagues and successors that are similar to themselves (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013, p. 29), working with sponsors to identify and mitigate some of the challenges they have faced for others that follow, thereby refusing to collaborate with the system that is already stacked against them.

Through social learning they can facilitate, evaluate, and provide active follow-up and feedback in the areas where the aspirant's social learning processes are not strong. They have a crucial role in breaking the code of silence by sharing their stories and experiences, contextualizing it in both the organization and society. This normalizes the aspirant's experiences by connecting their individual problems to broader societal problems. Through strategic social networking, other women leaders, the organization and even community groups need to partner together to reduce the wage and hiring gap for women workers and push the agenda for women's leadership progress and organizational cultural change across all sectors.

Female executives can serve as advocates to motivated selection panels as well as for better work-life balance in organization practice, while being models of fair distribution of promotion rewards and diversity in the succession talent pool. They can also help reduce some of the challenges by purposively mentoring and developing potential candidates in the behaviors accepted by the organization. They can facilitate understanding of leadership complexities, and coach candidates on choosing the right social networks so that they are linked to key relationships and related opportunities for advancement to leadership positions (Nanton, 2011; Insch et al. 2008).

The High-Potential Candidate

This last piece of the puzzle is one of the most critical ones. Candidates are urged to take strategic ownership of their careers to stop the still prevalent self-perpetuating cycles. This will require either personal leadership or the ability to be sufficiently self-aware to self-lead, self-adjust (self-regulate), self-encourage, and shift to make the best out of every presenting situation (Bandura, 2001; Ramsey & Schaetti, 2011). With their new knowledge, women must shift from supportive roles to being assertive in managing their career advancement by the choices they make to take leading roles. It would also be vital for them to pre-emptively identify and recognize where there are mismatches between their strongly held ethical principles and values and those of the organization's policies and decision making practices so that these differences can be addressed.

Candidates must be proactive in connecting to critical formal and informal social networks and leveraging or re-negotiating their current network memberships for career advancement (Nanton, 2011). These networks also need to include supportive learning and dialogical communities where awareness is created, with self-confidence developing as the women learn to interpret and address their experiences in light of the social context in which they work (Brookfield, 1987; Elias & Merriam, 2004; Wenger, 1999). They must be proactive in their organizations about addressing their needs as leaders and candidates for leadership positions. It is in these communities that the silence is broken, and courage to re-shape leadership and societal culture is born. Furthermore, candidates need to take responsibility for being well-informed, for being insistent in salary negotiations, self-confident, persistent in self-promotion and awareness of ethical gaps between them and the organization.

CONCLUSION

Leadership effectiveness is not ultimately the real issue facing women in leadership. There is too much evidence in business, industry, and across the world to the contrary. The perception of women's leadership capability, driven by prescribed social roles, is at the crux of the problem; which in turn causes conscious and unconscious barriers to be erected between women's aspirations for leadership and their actual opportunities to lead.

Three main things need to occur if women are to fully realize the possibilities for change in leadership culture: the code of silence must be broken, women's individual leadership problems need to be consciously connected to the broader societal (and organizational) problem, and incumbent leaders in organizations need to collaboratively engage in strategically changing the social architecture of the organizations culture. Foresight and exercise of the Kantian duty of treating women candidates with respect, imbues worth and value for the difference they bring to the organization. Only then can there be any hope for the second wave of the women's movement to reach its crest, with women fully equal in terms of wages, inclusion and access to leadership positions. Only then can the leadership and societal

culture be changed to one where women can thrive as we all benefit from what they have to offer, and the red flag be changed to green.

A positive and permanent by-product is that “retaining more women may have positive ethical consequences for business organizations. As women occupy positions with authority, they may “improve the ethical standards of the organizations in which they work, if they can maintain these standards on the way up the hierarchy” (Kennedy & Kray, 2014, p. 57). Transitioning to this form of ethical leadership in the organizational context is still in progress; so in the meantime, contemporary women leaders will need to be integrated and agile in the workplace: with fluidity of movement between the best behavioral characteristics of both men and women. This new form of leadership that bridges social role expectations and organizational expectations, while demonstrating competency and effective leadership and remaining true to their gender and values will become the future norm for sustaining women’s leadership.

The needed changes are great and will take concerted effort on all fronts. Women’s collaborative, purposive action can change the socio-cultural environment through their vote in the larger social context, for example. Similarly, women in leadership can effect significant change in the leadership culture within their organizations with persistent, confident, collective purposive action to change the persistent inequality in leadership practice. However, the foundational pieces need to be put in place with urgency (Kotter, 1996). It is the urgency that propels action: organizations that proactively remove the burden of proof for women through conscientization will become more viable and effective in 21st century.

Adult education is a primary essential factor as facilitator of the change agents in this process. Ethical organization leader sponsorship, women executives and of course the aspirant candidates must work together for effectiveness of the proposed strategies. Addressing the issue on all fronts moves beyond the rhetoric and research to action that signals what could well be the cresting next wave of the women’s movement, not just for equality of *entry* into the workplace, but for *equality of access* to the leadership positions they have earned. It will initiate a fundamental shift in organizational perceptions of women’s leadership capability, the legitimization of their leadership, ultimately the re-shaping of organizational culture to one that is inclusive of diversity and economic viability. In so doing, the next generation of women leaders will be strengthened and sustained, and the culture of leadership will have been fundamentally changed to include them well into the future.

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