Women in the Workforce: Problems and Perspectives

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Introduction

Most of the world economies are gradually getting out of recession, but over the next three decades this recovery is predicted to slow down. Among several factors contributing to economic deceleration is the aging population. In her Dimbleby Lecture in London on February 3, 2014, Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, made an alarming statement: "In 30 years time, there will be about two billion more people on the planet, including three quarters of a billion people over the age of 65. By 2020, for the first time ever, there will be more old people over 65 than children under 5 " (Lagarde, 2014).This is particularly true of the "graying" countries of Europe, China, and Japan. "They will face growth precisely at a time when they need to take care of a retiring generation—people who have contributed to society and expect, as part of the social contract, to be provided with decent social services as they move into their twilight years" (ibid.).

One of the ways to mediate labor shortage in the aging countries is a wider inclusion of women in economic life. It is common knowledge that girls and women are still not allowed to fulfill their potential—not just in the developing world, but in rich countries too. "The International Labor Organization estimates that 865 million women around the world are being held back. They face discrimination at birth, on the school bench, in the board room. They face reticence of the marketplace—and of the mind" (ibid.). Gender inequality takes various shapes in different countries and different business environments, and in the developed countries it is not so much about women's participation in the workforce, but about their contribution to it and ensuing recognition in terms of promotion to the positions of leadership and higher responsibility.

This article focuses mainly on the latter aspect of labor demographics, namely the reticence of the labor market towards women at its top end, "the board room," as Lagarde has put it, and some factors that contribute to this reticence. Specifically, it deals with issues of traditional gender and role socialization of women as powerful inhibitors of women's upward career mobility, and practices and policies that, on the contrary, are designed to boost it. The analysis of organizational (corporate, institutional) discrimination, which comprises the so-called "glass ceiling," is beyond the scope of this paper though it is also a very powerful detrimental factor. Legally, in the US, gender equity is strictly maintained following the passage of seminal legislation in the 1960s that prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of gender and other factors (e. g., Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).However, discrimination is still present; it has acquired the most subtle and covert forms, specific for each occupation and more difficult to observe.

The basic assumption undergirding this paper is that the intellectual, cognitive, and psychological capabilities of women are equal those of men. Therefore, the subordinate position of women in the soci-

ety and its institutions is the result of certain social processes and factors rather than female innate inferiority. It is also assumed that professional equity irrespective of gender should be among the major democratic principles all modern societies should adhere to.

A Glass Ceiling

A glass ceiling is a political term used to describe "the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements" (*Federal Glass Ceiling Commission*, 1995). First coined in 1984 by Gay Bryant, the former editor of *Working Woman* magazine, the term in the 90's was mainly used in reference to "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions" (Bollinger & O'Neill, 2008). The recognition of the covert, insidious discrimination against women in the workplace started "The Glass Ceiling Initiative" formed by US Labor Department to investigate the low numbers of women and minorities in executive positions (ibid.).

Ever since numerous policies and regulations were established to counteract the gender discrimination not only in the United States but worldwide, yet the situation still remains largely unchanged. Thus, in 2010, women made up 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force, but they comprised only 10 percent of senior managers in Fortune 500 companies, less than 4 percent of the upper ranks of CEOs, presidents, and executive vice presidents, and less than 3 percent of the top corporate earners" (*Women in the Labor Force*, 2010). The situation in Japan is even more defective with regards to women - only 48.5% of women participate in the labor, Japan's women labor force participation rate being one of the lowest among OECD countries. With regards to the upper level positions the index is also disturbing: in 2009-2010, 10.5% of managerial employees in private corporations were women; in corporations with more than 30 employees, women occupied 5.0% of section chief level positions and made up only 4% of CEOs (*Catalyst*, 2012). According to *Economist*'s "The Glass-Ceiling Index," which measured the best and worst places to be a working woman among industrialized nations, Japan, together with South Korea, is at the bottom of the index: "Too few women there have jobs, few senior managers or board members are women and pay gaps are large—in South Korea, at 37%, the largest in the OECD. If, in the UN's words, 'equality for women is progress for all', both countries have a long way to go" (*The Glass-Ceiling Index*, 2014). Still, the most impressive contrast between men and women is revealed by their participation in political decision-making: percentage of women's seats in national parliaments is really striking: only 17% in the Unites States and 11% in Japan. Finally, gender inequality in education, a traditionally dominant sector of female employment, where women and men are assumed to be "playing on a level field," deserves special consideration. Women in American universities, being the majority of students (57 percent of total college enrollment), account for 41 percent of total faculty at public and 35.1% at private institutions. However, they dominate at the lower ranks of instructors (55%) and lecturers (53%). Further up the picture changes — the higher the rank the lower is the percentage of female faculty (women make up 48% of assistant professors, 41% of associate and 28% of full professors. Also, they make only 39.9% of chief academic officers and 22.3% of school presidents) (*Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Issue*, 2013). Furthermore, in spite of all Affirmative Action policies, aver-

age faculty salaries for women still lag behind those of men (women's salary in the rank of professor constitutes 87.6% of men's one). In comparison, in Japan, women make only 16.7% of all faculty members at universities (all ranks and positions included) and only 13.0% of women are in research, which is well below the national target of 30% by the year 2020 (*Catalyst*, 2012).

Thus, the effect of glass ceiling is quite evident from the above data, but the mechanism of it is difficult to identify since bias and discrimination are deeply embedded not only in the organizational structure, but also in socio-cultural norms and attitudes. Indeed, "even the women who feel [the glass ceiling's] impact are often hard-pressed to know what hit them" (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Numerous researches on the barriers, which put women at a disadvantage in moving up the career ladder, show that the phenomenon of glass ceiling is not a product of corporate culture alone; society at large and the way it treats women is heavily responsible for the existence and perpetuation of this notorious discrimination.

What Holds Women Back

A considerable amount of research into the peculiarities of personal, psychological, cognitive and professional development of women has identified two major groups of factors pertinent to women's inferior position in the workforce. The first group comprises inhibitors of an internal nature, while the second pertains to external barriers in the social, cultural, or organizational/institutional environment.

Among the group of internal variables acting as barriers to female career formation the most powerful is socialization - that women throughout their lives are socialized into certain roles and behavioral patterns and that these patterns are different from those into which men are socialized. According to the researchers of the "internal-barriers school," traditional socialization develops and reinforces in women dependence, compliance, lack of competitiveness and ambition, fear of success, striving for nurturing, and compromise. This socialization may preclude the development of self-efficacy and independence in women and contributes to their lack of competitive spirit and aspiration for positions of authority and greater responsibility (Jones & Montenegro, 1983).

The second group of factors comprises external - societal and institutional - barriers to female upward mobility, which are assumed to create the glass ceiling. A number of researchers who investigated this phenomenon showed that many organizations perpetuate a veiled discriminatory policy towards women, which impedes their promotion to top positions. This research has documented the exclusion of women from professional networks, the insufficient support women receive via mentoring and role-modeling, and gender-biased practices of hiring and promotion (Shakeshaft, 1986; Li, 2014; *Women in the Workplace*, 2013).

Though both of these schools of research approach the problem of women's lack of career aspiration from different angles, their findings support each other. Together they create a comprehensive picture of the vicious circle that women experience in their career development. On the one hand, the conflict and ambiguity of women's roles resulting from traditional socialization interfere with their career progress and aspirations, which shortchanges their competitiveness for positions of power. On the other hand, irrespective of the effort and sacrifice women have made, the glass ceiling of external barriers reinforces their internal constraints, which come about as a result and function of the lack of opportunity.

There is one more school of thought that looks at the factors influencing female career aspirations

by applying different conceptual models integrating internal and external factors. This approach is best summarized in the three models proposed by Lyman and Spiezer（1980）with relevance to academia, where women equal men in qualification. The "women's-place model" is based on the assumption that the absence of women in positions of leadership in colleges and universities is due to the differential socialization of women and men, i.e. women learn to be nurturing rather than aggressive, to be led than to lead themselves. The "discrimination model" points to those institutional patterns in the hiring and training of administrators that encourage the promotion of men rather than women. The "meritocracy model" maintains that the most competent people are chosen to move up the administrative ladder; therefore, men are assumed to be more competent administrators. Application of these models to education allowed the authors Lyman and Speizer to conclude that the women's-place model and the discrimination model together provide the best framework for understanding why women remain in teaching while men move into administrative positions.

Whatever school of research is taken, they all agree on one finding: traditional long-standing socialization of women significantly influences their life and career choices, both internally and externally. In the growing strive for equitable representation of women in official decision-making positions, top administrative posts and positions of increased responsibility, this factor deserves a particular attention.

Socialization and Its Role in Women's Life

The definition of *socialization* presents certain difficulties because there are many ways to define it depending on different theoretical approaches. However, in general, socialization is understood as the acquisition of the qualities necessary for participation in group life. It occurs as a result of conscious efforts on the part of the society to teach new members or as a result of efforts（both conscious and unconscious）on the part of the individuals to emulate the behavior of others. There are various types and contexts of socialization, the earliest and perhaps the most significant one being gender socialization.

Gender Socialization

Gender socialization plays an important role in the development of a person's identity and successful career development. According to research, early childhood gender socialization assigns a certain set of traditional roles and behavioral patterns which males and females follow in all aspects of their lives. Grambs（1976）emphasized that the sex-role stereotypes, which are pervasive in culture, have produced generations of persons who operate, as they must, within the frameworks and limitations of their own socialization. Specifically, they operate to limit women's aspiration for any professional and occupational activities traditionally perceived as male.

The inference derived from many developmental theories is that the socialization women receive in their early lives is crucial for their future professional performance and career success. It may operate as a constraint against the empowering influences encountered during adult life（White et al., 1992）. The way parents treat their children may be the most important factor of all in the creation of sex stereotypes（Peters, 1994; Polavieja & Platt, 2010）.

The considerable amount of research comparing the early experiences of young girls to those of boys points to the emergence of one critical difference - girls are treated more protectively and they are subjected to more restrictions and controls; boys receive greater achievement demands and higher expec-

tations. Also, the need for affiliation, for establishing, maintaining, or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person is more associated with feminine than with masculine personality stereotypes and is deemed extremely important for women (*Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 1984). Thus, in her concept of "fear of success," Horner (1972) emphasized affiliation as being dysfunctional to women's success. She prophesied withdrawal from competition and leadership as germane to women because these behavioral patterns are not socially approved in women and may threaten their affiliation with relatives and peers. In contrast, Hoffman (1972) rejected the notion of the need for affiliation as being necessarily dysfunctional. He suggested that the fear of success would operate only if achievement goals are incompatible with affiliation goals. He argued that women are not afraid of excellence at school because this kind of success is approved by their parents. In adult life, on the contrary, professional and career aspirations and success of women may not be supported by their important others who view these as incompatible with female social and family roles. Therefore, as was suggested by his research, women may not aspire to professional excellence and career advancement not because of the fear of success per se but because it may threaten them with the loss of affiliation.

Indeed, numerous findings indicate that the differential treatment of the two sexes reflects in part a difference in goals (Olivares & Rosenthal, 1992). With sons, socialization seems to focus primarily on directing and constraining the boy's impact on the environment. With daughters, the aim is to protect the girl from the impact of the environment. The boy is being prepared to mold his world, the girl to be molded by it (Crouter et al., 1995).

Gender socialization received by women at home is further reinforced by schools. It is often said that our schools reflect our society, that the values, which the community or the country accepts, are those values that are taught in schools. Analyzing the way socialization is enhanced at school, many authors (Williams, 1993; Streitmatter, 1994; etc.) showed that as the result of the sex typing experienced by young girls at home, they enter school already somewhat compliant and passive although a pattern of underachievement in females begins five years later than in boys, and girls aspire and achieve until the sixth grade, at which point they develop a conception of how limited their role in life will be. In this role, there is little room for their high aspiration and achievement and the "why bother" attitude takes over (*How Schools Shortchange Girls*, 1992).

School socialization is also indicated by research as a good predictor of future occupational and career choices of women. The expectations of teachers and parents have a strong effect on the education of girls. There is some evidence that teachers'beliefs regarding the relative appropriateness of science and math for boys and girls are more influenced by sex-role stereotypes than they are by students'own perceptions. Thus, instead of liberating young girls from narrow expectations, the educational setting often reinforces stereotypes about gender-appropriate behavior, interests and occupations (Ginorio, 1995).

Research also indicates that the educational experience of women at colleges and universities is a further stage of gender socialization. A. Astin (1994) pointed out the tendency of colleges and universities to reinforce, rather then counter, gender stereotypes. Crompton and Sanderson (1986) suggested that many professional qualifications acquired by women are gender-related. Earlier research on the professional orientation of American undergraduate and graduate female students (Durchholz & O'Connor, 1975) indicated that more than 53% of female students head for training in traditional areas of

"women's work." Fields such as English, foreign languages, developmental and school psychology have become "occupational ghettoes for women" (Richardson, 1974, p.17). These areas are often over-supplied and almost always poorly paid. Still the traditional societal stereotyping and a serious lack of career guidance result in continuing entrance of women into the fields where they will end by competing against each other for a limited number of positions (Youn & Zelterman, 1988).

Recent findings indicate a certain positive shift in this orientation. According to the 2009 report of the American Association of University Women, business has become number one choice for both women and men. Now business degrees comprise18% of all degrees awarded to women, nearly twice as much as the No.2 most popular major, health professions and clinical sciences. But "despite more women moving into this field of study, there is a continuing gender imbalance in the majority of undergraduate college majors. Engineering and computer science remain overwhelmingly male (No.3 and 4, respectively for men) while women continue to dominate "soft" majors such as education, psychology and English (No.3, 5 and 9, respectively)" (*Forbes*, 2010), thus perpetuating the traditional "occupational ghettoes." A similar situation is documented for Japan, where in 2010, 66.5% of university students in the humanities were women compared to 10.9% in engineering. In addition, 26.8% of women were in social science fields (*Catalyst*, 2012).

Thus, through early socialization, strategy-oriented behavior and self-assertion is reinforced in boys since childhood while in girls parents and schools foster approval-seeking behavior, the latter being much less suitable for career advancement (Hicks, 1993). As the result of this, girls, as they are molded into roles of women, are endowed with a self-fulfilling prophecy due to which they avoid activities where they presume discrimination (Halaby, 1979). Thus, gender stereotyping does more than deny access to boys and girls of a wide variety of behaviors and activities that would make their lives richer and fuller. It is perceived as the major hindrance to female ascension to the top of the career ladder and career success.

Role Socialization

Although the fundamental social inequality of women no longer impedes their entry into the labor force, it does perpetuate a role conflict. Generally interpreted as the problem of combining family and profession, the role conflict has a far more insidious effect. Viewed in a broad way, it is the result of confrontation between relatively static culturally generated perceptions of female "place" and the dynamics of social reality. Change in the former invariably lags behind the latter and accounts both for the early gender socialization and later role socialization of mature women.

"Home is the girl's prison and the woman's workhouse," wrote George Bernard Shaw in 1903 (Shaw, 1955). The significant bulk of research shows that this is still so. Conventionally, the concept of career has been reserved for men. For women it was traditionally assumed as hazardous for marriage and motherhood because, unlike merely holding a job, a career requires relatively high personal commitment (White et al., 1992). No wonder that in Japan, with a highly conservative view on the role of women, their labor participation rate drops for the age group of 35-39 years old, indicating that women tend to leave labor force when they get married or give birth to a child (*Catalyst*, 2012).

Paradoxically enough, education, in its very essence devoted to the service of new generations, is the most hostile to a societal institution of propagation of those generations -- family. It has been shown

that marriage has a positive effect on a man's chances of finishing college and a negative effect on a woman's chances (A. Astin, 1978). At the professional stage as well, the majority of male faculty and administrative staff report full compatibility of professional and family life and significant supporting influence of the latter. At the same time women, due to their generic family obligations, face well-documented difficulties in attempting to gain full representation on the faculty of colleges and universities and adequate, competitive professional performance (Simeone, 1987). As was noted by Hochschild (1975), the university in particular seems to have been designed for the "married family-free man" (p.73).

One aspect of the family problem, which precludes women from seeking and aspiring for promotion, is limitation on their geographic mobility. Biklen (1980) pointed out that in spite of available opportunities, women most often chose not to take jobs in a different from which they live community and consequently their access to career positions is limited. Openness to mobility is increasingly important in career building in today's marketplace, thus, with married women's mobility being constrained, they are losing on many opportunities for advancement.

The second detrimental aspect is the amount of family responsibilities, which women carry out at home. Although the contemporary feminist movement, as indicated by Simeone (1987), has challenged the division of labor within the home and workplace, women are still expected to take primary responsibility for the well-being of the home and family. Whether women and men accept, reject, or modify this expectation, it still has an impact on their careers and their lives (Acker, 1984).

The third, most important, aspect revealed by the research as an important contributor to female underrepresentation in the top positions is the role of childbearing and childrearing in the lives of women (Wenzel & Hollenshead, 1994). These authors indicate that as many as one fourth of the women who earn Ph.D.'s drop out of their professions, permanently or temporarily, to rear families. The research of women faculty provided by Phillip (1993) showed that even if there was family leave policy in the academy many women would be afraid to take it out of fear that the leave time would hamper their careers. There is an old joke that captures the dilemma faced by women academics - women should have their children in the summer (Phillip, 1993, p.43).

Priority of the maternal role over the vocational one is extensively emphasized by the research integrating relevant biological and psychological issues. Thus, Fuchs (1988) declared an inextricable biological bond between mother and child, which is destined to curtail women's economic activity. Parsonian sociology of functionalism (Parsons, 1965) states that female employment produces conflict for women between their families and careers, and this in turn is considered to produce a destructive effect on the husband and family. Gender socialization inseparably relates femininity to motherhood, therefore the way one performs as a mother is socially evaluated along with and most often above one's professional success. Aware of the role expectation imposed on them, women under the circumstances of conflicting interests will most definitely pursue the interests of the family at the sacrifice of their own careers and professional development (Benshoff, 1993).

Recent findings in the United States show, however, higher level of career persistence of women with children. Hunter College professor Pamela Stone concluded from her study of 54 female high achievers, recruited mostly from alumnae of four selective colleges and universities, that the women pursued their careers an average of 11 years; 60% worked well past the birth of their second child. Still,

fully 90% of these high-potential women are leaving their careers to care for their families, but not because they were pushed out or chose family duties over their career aspirations. Mostly, it happened because workplace problems and long hours led to their ultimate frustration of combining both. Two-thirds of those who left tried part-time work but found it problematic; since they'd been putting in long weeks, part-time tended to mean 40 hours of work for 20 hours'worth of pay (*Women in the Workplace*, 2013). Family obligations were also reported as harmful for career advancement by other research:

For example, a company's norm of routinely cancelling or setting up last-minute meetings and expecting their employees to be available at all times, a seemingly innocuous practice, disproportionately affects women since women oftentimes bear more responsibility for the home and childrearing, and therefore have more demands on their non-working time. As a result, women who work set hours are excluded from informal networks and miss out on important conversations; they are also perceived as less committed to their job than their male counterparts (Li, 2014).

With respect to this last explanation of the reasons why women vanish from top of the career ladder the findings of the research are not consistent. Some relate women's career success to the degree and assistance these women get from the members of their families (Bernard, 1974). However, most of the research into the division of domestic labor (White et al., 1992 ; Hochschild, 1989) is not supportive of this idealistic belief and reveals that in general the partners of successful women do not share with them household chores or child care. Indeed, recent data on time spent per day on housework and childcare by husbands with children under six, show that men in the USA spend just 3. 13, while men in Japan only 1. 0 hours (*Catalyst*, 2012).

In summation, the overwhelming bulk of research emphasizing the significance of role socialization in the lives of women roughly divides into two schools of thought. These schools serve to perpetuate the status quo either by means of the "natural order" philosophy or by arguing the rationale of role distribution by its most suitable compliance with the social order. The first approach accentuates women's primary physical role as child bearers and nurturers leaving out other social functions as subsidiary and irrelevant to the physiological one. The second buttresses the rationality of the traditional social division of responsibility - public roles for men, private for women - by the argument that the pattern of a female providing support for the male at the head of the household of which she forms a part has been well-proved by the centuries-long development of mankind (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988).

Does it really mean that the glass ceiling is a given and women are destined to be blocked by it just because they were born women? Fortunately not, if we think of the great strides women have made in the last fifty years in terms of their participation in the workforce. And even there are still few of them in the top echelons of power, more and more of them are gradually getting there: looking at the aggregate percentage of women in the top administrative positions, such as legislators, senior officials and managers, we see 43% of women in the USA (however, only15%in Japan) (United Nations, 2014). The progress is incredibly slow, as since 2000 the percentage of women in the national parliaments of Japan and the US has increased only by 3% (from 7% to 11% in Japan, and from 13% to 17% in the US) and is still offensively low (ibid.). But the progress does take place, and there are certain factors that are reported to facilitate it by counteracting traditional socialization.

What Helps Women to Break through Socialization

While the research on the negative impact of traditional gender and role socialization on women's career development and aspirations is much more numerous, there is still a significant amount of studies that reveal certain empowering factors. Thus, some literature indicates that gender socialization alone does not determine individual vocational development (White et al., 1992). H. Astin (1984) pointed out that if socialization alone determined work expectations then there would be little change; once set, expectations would remain stable. In addition, little social change would occur. The same values would be handed down from generation to generation with little variation. Social and individual change does occur, however, propelled by what H. Astin (1984) called the structure of opportunity. By the structure of opportunity Astin meant economic conditions, the family structure, the job market, the occupational structure, and other environmental factors that are influenced by scientific discoveries, technological advances, historical events, and social/intellectual movements. Socialization and the structure of opportunity are interactive. Socialization is claimed to limit change in the structure of opportunity, while the structure of opportunity influences values transmitted via socialization and has a potential to transform it.

First, research engaged in analyzing different types of child-parent relationship indicates the existence of certain types, which facilitate the development of an early sense of independence and self-efficiency in women. Thus, the survey of successful women by White and her colleagues (1992) indicated that most of their subjects reported poor relationship with their mothers and strong identification with fathers. This affiliation allowed girls to follow a different developmental pattern including activities and orientations designed primarily for boys. On the other hand, and not contrary to the preceding finding, research (Marshall, 1984) has also proved that a strong maternal figure may provide a positive feminine role model thus helping girls develop an appreciation of their own feminine strengths and abilities. Tangri (1972) supported this by her finding that mothers of achievement-oriented females fostered emotional independence rather than dependency. Moreover, in Kelly's (1983) study, the mothers of powerful women were also powerful, whereas the fathers attained little career success and wealth. Thus, basically it is not the gender of a parent who the girls affiliate with that matters, but rather the nature of opportunity suggested by the most influential parental figure.

In this respect, maternal employment is one of the most extensively studied and consistent correlates of a girls'career orientation. The focus on the role of the mother in women's career development is based on the assumed importance of the same-sex parent in influencing development. Daughters of employed women are found to have less stereotyped views of feminine and masculine roles than daughters of homemakers (Hoffman, 1972).

Summing up these findings, it is possible to infer that there are two patterns of family socialization, which bear empowerment for the female career development. In the families with traditional sex−role distribution, empowerment is derived from the girls' stronger affiliation with their fathers who engage their daughters in the activities usually reserved for sons. In the families with strong maternal personality, encouragement comes from the girls'identification with powerful feminine role models.

More recent study by Polavieja and Platt (2010) also shows that the effect of early gender socialization is not preordained and the mechanisms involved in the intergenerational transmission of sex-

typical preferences are more complicated. The researchers found that sex-typed occupational aspirations amongst British children aged between11and15are significantly affected by their parents. Parental influences on occupational preferences operate mainly through three distinctive channels: 1) the effect that parental socio-economic resources have on the scope of children's occupational aspirations, 2) children's direct imitation of parental occupations, and 3) children's learning of sex-typed roles via the observation of parental behavior. Depending on different variables along these channels, gender socialization can bring different results.

Within the socializing environment of formal education, research consistently identifies the empowering experience of single-sex educational institutions. Thus, all-women colleges are reported to be constant suppliers of women "achievers" (Spencer & Bradford, 1982; Tidball, 1976). Also, the most important finding for higher education was the highly significant correlation between the number of female faculty and the number of female achievers, which led Tidball to the following conclusion: "Women teachers as role models for women students are a critical ingredient of a college environment that turns out talented women" (p.389).

Also, as more women move to the top of the corporate world, the number of role models, such as Christine Lagarde, for instance, is increasing, providing greater empowerment for younger women. This can be seen in the growing proportion of female students choosing degrees in business, as was shown above.

In a similar way, the structure of opportunity changes the effect of the role socialization through family and marriage. Thus, Nye (1974) reported that the research is not completely consistent in ascertaining the deleterious effect of female employment on the family. Richardson (1974) and Wright (1978) found little or no relationship between the occupational status of women and the stability of their marriages. Moreover, as was discussed above, maternal employment produces a positive influence on adolescents, especially daughters. Research of the last two decades, reflecting the increasing participation of women in the labor force, does not any longer perceive career and marriage as an alternative choice, but is rather concentrated on how these two spheres are combined in women's lives (Northcutt, 1991).

The balance of career and family with the successful accumulation of many new roles is perceived as an increasing tendency among working women. In academia, for instance, contrary to current folklore, which maintains that the academic careers of single women resemble those of men more closely than do the careers of married women, the study by H. Astin (1978) demonstrated that the careers of men and married women are actually more similar with respect to educational preparation, field of study, and publications. Moreover, a growing number of studies on women in academia, find that married women with or without children publish as much or slightly more than single or childless faculty women (Astin & Davis, 1985). Similar findings pertain to the corporate world, where performance reviews show that mothers were not seen as significantly less competent and committed (*Women in the Workplace*, 2013). Also, in late 2011, consultants Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman analyzed the 360-degree leadership-effectiveness evaluations of more than 7,280 executives, which had been filled out by their peers, bosses, and subordinates. The analysis revealed that at every management level, the women were rated higher than the men— and the higher the level, the wider the gap (NB: At the same time, the data showed, the higher the level, the higher the proportion of men). Not only were the women judged to be

superior in areas where they are traditionally thought to excel, such as developing others and building relationships, but their ratings were significantly higher, statistically speaking, on 12 of the 16 traits Zenger and Folkman had identified, in more than 30 years of research, as most important to overall leadership effectiveness (ibid.).

Though the findings about working women's role conflict are counterintuitive they nevertheless dent the common belief that family and children are the principle obstacles hindering the performance and promotion of women. Simeone (1987) supplied several possible explanations for this seeming lack of consistency. One theory is that those women who are most likely to allow their domestic responsibilities to interfere with their work have been sifted out before they reach higher career ranks - either by dropping out voluntarily or by receiving less active support and encouragement in their career moves. Thus, only those married women who are willing to put their primary effort into their careers are able to survive in more demanding positions. A second explanation, not in opposition to the first one, is that married women with families are able to keep their productivity up to the same level as single women, but at enormous costs to themselves. One could speculate that these women devote huge amounts of time and effort to their domestic and their professional lives, leaving little or no time for activities not immediately related to either world. There is yet another argument here - that single women have as many burdens as married with children but no spouse to help share tasks at even a minimum level - she must do everything herself. Also, because society sees her as having no family responsibilities it expects more in terms of other community service, service roles at the institution and within her own extended family. For instance, elderly parents expect more from the single career daughter that they do from a married one, as it is perceived that the latter is less flexible as her time goes to husband and children. Finally, there is an explanation that many of married working women simply do not accept the traditional female role of full responsibility for domestic activities, or that those who accept responsibility are aided by husbands, children, relatives, or hired help.

Thus, unlike the past research, which was unequivocal about role conflict, much of the current research, mirroring changes occurring in society, perceives the ability of women to combine work and family. Modern women may perceive multiple roles as not only creating new conflicts, but also as creating new satisfactions (Nieva, 1984). The most important inference, which should be made from the evident change in traditional role socialization, is that role conflict is not a generically inherent destiny of career women. Applying different coping mechanisms (compartmentalization, delegation, prioritization, etc.) women manage to be equally successful in both settings (White et al., 1992).

Also, there is a certain composite of personality components, such as career centrality, locus of control, need for achievement and self-efficacy, that can significantly contribute to career success. High self-efficacy beliefs enhance expectancy of success in administrative roles. A strong internal locus of control acts to increase the expectancy that rewards are contingent upon the behavior, rather than upon external factors such as luck or fate. High need for achievement is moderated by self-efficacy beliefs and motivates individuals to achieve success (White, et al., 1992). It is along these lines that the transformation in women's positions in the workplace can be achieved and the web of traditional socialization be dispersed.

Conclusion

There is an overwhelming evidence that women, instead of being worthy participants in the shrinking workforce, are held back, especially in the upper segments of organizational structures, by the complicated and covert composite of the glass ceiling. Among the factors that deter women from moving upward is the traditional paradigm of female gender and role identification. It is a very powerful detriment, but as research shows, not an ultimate predictor of women's career success and their professional and leadership potential.

With gender socialization, the changing family dynamics opens new venues for women, and as more and more of them step out of the traditional pattern by utilizing different components of the structure of opportunity. The first cracks in the glass ceiling may be made in early childhood by girls who avoid, defy, or ignore traditional female socialization, which is increasingly witnessed by research.

Role socialization is, however, even more persistent and insidious than the gender one, and it is not within the foreseeable future that the distribution of family responsibilities is going to change. However, many women do find ways to incorporate traditional roles into the new pattern of professional achievement and career success and do not any longer hold the burden of family duties as a legitimate excuse to abstain from aspiring for successful career. Thus, many ways women grapple with the issues of role socialization is a further factor in cracking the glass ceilings.

Together with organizational/institutional socialization, all three models of socialization reinforce stereotyping perpetuated for centuries by society and its culture and are indeed a powerful and complicated mechanism of channeling women into traditional psychological and behavioral pattern. Even though there are a considerable number of factors within this disempowering scheme, which work against socialization and enhance those components of gender identity, which are considered to be good predictors of women's career success, the glass ceiling is still strong.

It is imperative that society should address all restraints of female development, primary traditional socialization, to allow women to realize their potential to the full. Coming back to Lagarde's message about the state of modern economy, it is very appropriate to finish the paper with her words: "'Daring the difference', as I call it—enabling women to participate on an equal footing with men—can be a global economic game changer. We must let women succeed: for ourselves and for all the little girls—and boys—of the future. It will be their world—let us give it to them."

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