Advancing Research on Women and Leadership: Developing an HRD Scholarly Agenda

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Clearly, the topic of developing leaders is of utmost importance in all contexts and it is particularly important for the HRD discipline: over 1,400 journal articles in AHRD journals have the word ‘leadership’ as one of their subject terms.¹ Almost monthly the front cover of the Harvard Business Review has ‘leadership’ boldly displayed, either as the main article or as a supporting news brief. Scholarly research abounds, and there are many leadership frameworks, models, and theories contributing to the quantity of research articles. Unfortunately, however, the diversity of ideas and the explosion of interest has generally not focused on an underlying problem in the leadership literature, namely that the majority of the theories and research studies were designed by men and are based on male-normed assumptions (Jogulu & Wood, 2006).

There are many scholars attempting to resolve the problem; not only for leadership at the executive or corporate level (see, for example, Sheryl Sandberg), but also for leadership writ large—community, village, politics, etc. Practitioners are also involved, and are taking steps to improve the leadership pipeline for women. Many strategic leaders and managers (men and women) are particularly concerned with developing women for leadership roles. Women are needed to move into positions of influence within these various settings throughout the world, and they must be prepared. Yet, the numbers of women leaders have plateaued in the last decade and there are still many questions unanswered. There is an immediate need for studies and theory building efforts related to a host of research questions focused on women and leadership.

This session will provide attendees with a forum to discuss, collaborate, and co-create potential agendas for women and leadership scholarship. This includes leadership and leadership

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¹ Academic Search Complete, Business Source Premier, and ERIC database search.
development for women within the United States, in international settings, and globally as well. The opportunities, challenges, and issues related to this type of scholarship will be discussed, as well as the need for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The session will be modeled after an upcoming “Women and Leadership Theory Colloquium” that will be held in May, 2014. At this event, 70 women from around the world will gather to collectively ‘move the needle forward’ in terms of advancing women and leadership theory, research, and practice. At this event, five leadership perspectives or focal areas will be represented: 1) identity; 2) calling or purpose; 3) second-generation gender bias; 4) power; and 5) intersectionalities. Attendees at the session will choose the focal area of most interest and work with other like-minded scholars and scholar/practitioners for portions of the session.

The goals of the session are: 1) to create new or energize existing collaborative research networks; 2) to begin an intentional, focused, and sustained women and leadership research agenda; 3) to critically discuss the balance between advocacy and research; and 4) to identify potential publication outlets (such as an Advances special issue) for disseminating research and amplifying findings into the practitioner community.

Session Agenda:

• Introductions and Welcome
• Discussion of male-normed assumptions and how they impact women and leadership research
• Introduction and description of the five leadership perspectives; participants select the perspective of most interest
• Break out groups work together to discuss potential HRD research on women and leadership from their particular focus area
• Break out groups presentation and Q&A
• Discussion of balance between advocacy and research
• Discussion of publication outlets
• Break out groups work together to create a plan for collaborative research
• Break out groups report out plan
• Closing and next steps

There will be a sign in sheet at the door for participants who want to join the emerging research network will be connected. This innovative session will offer a convenient, informal way for AHRD members who share research interests in women and leadership in any setting and world region to find one another and to develop a sense of community and purpose around this interest.

During the advocacy discussion, a recent publication, *The Asilomar Declaration and Call to Action on Women and Leadership*, will be shared; it highlights declarations, calls to action, and critical areas of research in five related areas: a) equality in power and decision making, b) expanding leadership development worldwide, c) helping girls and young women become leaders, d) advancing women in leadership, and e) critical areas of future research. Other resources and opportunities for research and publishing will also be highlighted, including plans for various volumes of a new books series on women and leadership. Future collaborations, networking, conferences, and additional opportunities will also be discussed.
Session Presenters:

**Susan R. Madsen** is the *Orin R. Woodbury Professor of Leadership and Ethics* in the Woodbury School of Business at Utah Valley University. She has also been heavily involved for many years in researching the lifetime development of prominent women leaders. She has personally interviewed a host of women presidents, U.S. governors, and international leaders and has had two books published on her results. She has done related research in the U.S., the Arab Gulf countries, China, and Slovenia. Susan has also published over 60 articles in scholarly journals and presents often in local, national, and international settings. She has presented her findings in NGO sessions at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. She is the founder of the ILA Women and Leadership Affinity Group, the AHRD Leadership Special Interest Group, the Utah Women in Higher Education Network, and the Utah Women and Education Project. Susan has received numerous awards for her teaching, research, and service, including being recently recognized as one of the 2013 “30 Women to Watch in Utah” by Utah Business Magazine. Her related research interests focus on the lifetime leadership development of high profile women leaders, leadership purpose/call, leadership identity and aspirations, and work-life integration. She is currently a co-editor of the new book series titled “Women and Leadership” and is currently a co-editor of the first three volumes (e.g., women and leadership in higher education, women as global leaders, and women and leadership around the world.

**Julia Storberg-Walker** is Associate Professor of Workforce and Human Resource Education at North Carolina State University. She is a recognized scholar of theory building research, and has published extensively on theoretical and conceptual development for applied disciplines. She adopts a critical lens and incorporates a variety of qualitative research strategies to her work. In addition to receiving multiple awards, including the Early Career Scholar Award
(2011) from the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), and the World Institute for Action Learning’s Global Innovation Award for Excellence (2013), Julia is serving as Associate Editor of *Human Resource Development Review*, and will be assuming editorship in 2014. She has served in a variety of leadership positions, and was recently elected to the International Leadership Association’s Women and Leadership Affinity Group’s Executive Leadership Team. Her current research is focused on the intersection between leadership, gender, and social entrepreneurship. She is particularly interested in critically examining what has been called the feminization of leadership as a response to global challenges, and how social entrepreneurship can be a vehicle for political, cultural, and economic equality.

**Kristina Natt och Dag** is pursuing her PhD in the Workforce and Human Resource Education Program in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Adult and Higher Education at North Carolina State University, where her area of research interest is authentic and ethical leadership. She will be graduating in Spring 2014. Kristina holds a Master in Human Rights from Lund’s University in Lund, Sweden and her topic of interest there was Muslim women. Some of her studies in Human Rights included the revolutionary Moroccan law, which provided women same legal status as men in 2004 as well as the French ban on religious symbols in the public space, targeting Muslim women. She has been working in the field of training and organizational development in the corporate as well as the non-profit sector, with emphasis on leadership. She also taught Human Rights and Humanitarian Law to new volunteers joining the Swedish Red Cross as part of the mandatory introduction class to the organization. She is a scholar-practitioner member of the AHRD as well as of the ILA, and provides consulting services within organizational development and leadership development to organization in the USA as well as Europe.