Advancing Theories of Women and Leadership in "The Role of Applied Theory for Women and Leadership Research and Practice."

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The Role of Applied Theory for Women and Leadership
Research and Practice

TRACKS: Leadership Scholarship; Leadership Development

Keywords: Theory, Women, Leadership, Advancing Women, Research

Session Chair
Ann Austin

Session Description (up to 60 words)
Applied theories are relevant and used in the world, but understanding how they are created, evaluated, and used is not always obvious. This session seeks to make explicit how theory can be used in women and leadership research and practice. Panelists will describe their research topic or practice issue, and then highlight how theory contributed to their work.

Session Abstract
This session offers attendees a rare opportunity to explore and critique how theories are used to understand, research, and develop women and leadership. Usually theories are presented and debated on their merits and drawbacks. In this session, the focus will be on exploring how theories are actually used in the real world and how the theories can potentially carry within them much of the structural and cultural inequalities found in many societies. Session attendees will leave the discussion armed with a clearer understanding of how using theory uncritically to develop, understand, or research women and leadership can perpetuate gender imbalance in leadership.

The first paper provides a general foundation for understanding how theories are used, specifically in the context of women and leadership. This presentation initiates the call for gender-specific theory development and introduces the idea of “calling” for women and leadership theory. The second paper builds on the call for gender-specific theory development and offers an in-depth critique of recognized identity theories. In addition, this presentation examines how theories are used to justify decisions, and how these decisions can reflect the existing imbalances in power and authority within societies. The third paper provides a call for gender-specific theory by describing and detailing how gender-specific theory should be used for understanding, developing, and researching women and leadership. Specifically, the presentation explores the concept of motivation and how it relates to women’s aspirations relative to leadership. Finally, the fourth presentation builds on these themes of motivation and self-concept, as well as gender role congeniality, in examining when and how women negotiate, and how different approaches to negotiation can help foster more successful outcomes. Combined, the presentations introduce theory and the role of theory in women and leadership in order to
build a broad consensus for gender-specific leadership theories. Without these theories, much of the existing imbalance between men and women with regard to leadership will remain.

**Panelist 1: Advancing Theories of Women and Leadership**

**Author**
Susan R. Madsen

**Short Description (up to 40 words)**
This presentation provides an overview of the state and importance of women and leadership theory and how this theory can be used in scholarship and practice. This panelist will also briefly describe how leadership calling theories have contributed to her work.

**Abstract (500-1000 words)**
The demand for insights about effective leadership has increased throughout time. Yet, Nohria and Khurana (2010) have argued that this demand has largely been met in recent years by popular writers (e.g., consultants, journalists, popular leaders, nontraditional business school academics). Nohria and Khurana stated, “It is easy to enumerate the flaws of this genre of leadership literature: It seldom conforms to the norms of the scientific method; it employs casual and sometimes self-serving empirical evidence; it is rarely grounded in any well-established theoretical tradition. In short, it lacks intellectual rigor. However, in the absence of a credible alternate body of literature that is conducted with greater rigor while still being relevant and useful to practice, academics should not complain. We have what we deserve” (p. 5). Thus, it continues to be critical for the leadership field to be built upon solid foundations that are based on rigorous research and theory building. Although there are many existing leadership frameworks, models, and theories, many lack the multidimensionality and flexibly to provide today’s researchers, leaders, and leadership practitioners with the fundamentals they need; they are either out of date or do not adapt to the volatile, constantly changing global and economic environments.

Now, if we add gender to the equation, the state of women and leadership theory appears be even more inadequate. The majority of the rigorously developed leadership theories that are currently available were actually developed by men and are based on male-normed assumptions (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). According to Jogulu and Wood, “All of the theories reviewed depicted leadership implicitly or explicitly as a male prerogative, and the minimal numbers of women in management during the respective periods confirms that the role of management was largely seen as a male domain” (p. 345). In fact, the first edition of Stodgill’s Handbook of Leadership in 1974 “underscores this view. It ignored any gender theme in its review of leadership, and women were simply overlooked as having any potential as leaders.” (p. 345). The facts, however, support the notion that there are many differences between men and women, in terms of the ways they lead, the ways they develop leadership, and hence the way effective developmental opportunities for women need to be designed. Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011) noted that “Practitioners and educators lack a coherent, theoretically-based, and actionable framework for designing and delivering leadership programs for women” (p. 476). The bottom-line is that there is clearly a gap in the literature in terms of individual and organizational leadership theories that
focus on women. Thus, we are not able to answer important leadership questions confidently and the demand for insights about women and leadership continues to increase.

This presentation seeks to provide an overview of two key areas: (1) the importance of theory; and (2) how theory can be utilized in women and leadership research and practice. The session will begin by outlining the state of women and leadership theory more generally, as noted in the previous paragraphs. Next, it will present the importance of theory in leadership and leadership development followed by an overview of how theory can be useful in women and leadership scholarship and practice. In conclusion, some specific information and examples will be shared that focus on progress on leadership calling for women.


PANELIST 2: Identity Theory & Women Leaders: Questioning Gender Neutrality

Keywords: Identity, Identity theory, Women leaders

Author
Julia Storberg-Walker

Short Description (up to 400 words)
Most recognized identity theories espouse to be gender neutral. However, gender neutrality is rarely if ever obtained. This session identifies various inequalities in identity theories and suggests that gender-specific theory building is needed for advancing women and leadership.

Abstract (500-1000 words)
Early research on identity seemed to be asking questions that addressed how and why people separate themselves from others. This early research focused on prejudice, stereotyping, and conflicts within groups (see Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Berkowitz, 1962; Sherif, 1966). According to Tajfel (1974), these early studies were conducted to understand the minimal conditions in which a person would discern differences between people (specifically, between an ingroup and an outgroup).

We know a lot about identity. Identity is a term signifying difference (Tajfel, 1974) and meaning (Van Maanen, 1978; Weick, 1995). Identities are fluid (Ibarra, 1999) and we create them to reduce the uncertainty about where we stand in a group (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufman, 2006). Identities are intimately connected to what we do as professionals (Pratt et al, 2006: Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and are emergent sensemaking strategies we use to create consistent beliefs about ourselves and our work. Contemporary research on identity continues to
Identity as a construct has been criticized as being essentialist (see, for example, Braidotti, 2011a, b); it is no longer conceived of as a static or unified construct (Kram, Wasserman & Yip, 2012). In other words, how one identifies her- or himself can change over time based on developmental stage (Arnett, 2000). Studies have found identity to emerge in different forms (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) and to be a function of one’s organizational image (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Identity research is related to self-categorization theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992) and is connected to how one justifies decisions and behavior (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Identity scholarship has also contributed to a wide range of issues including family conflict (Amato & Keith, 1991), mental health (Meyer, 2003), and social change (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). However, despite these new strands within the identity literature, the concept seems to remain tethered to its early scholarly roots in the stereotyping process: according to a search using Web of Science, one of the most highly cited articles on identity is titled “A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance,” published in The American Psychologist (Steele, 1997). Notably, our human habits of stereotyping are so ubiquitous that they even can influence our career decisions, performance, and intellectual roles.

This presentation deconstructs key identity theories used to understand leaders and leadership development in order to illustrate the mis-specification of gender within the theories. In other words, the position suggested here calls into question the use of identity theories and identity constructs without explicitly recognizing the structural and cultural inequalities that influence identity and identity development. Instead, the use of gender-specific identity theories are needed in order to fully represent the existing structural and cultural barriers to women and leadership.

Panelist 3: Women’s Leadership Development: The Role of Relational Responsibility in an Emerging Theory
Keywords: Female, Women, Leadership Development, Relational Leadership

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Short Description (up to 60 words)
Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011) have described “leadership development as an identity transition” (p. 489). Relatively, this session presents a theory for women’s leadership development, with particular emphasis on motivators (e.g., “relational responsibility”) for women to advance into senior-level leadership.

Detailed Abstract (500-1,000 words)
A series of articles in the September 2013 issue of Harvard Business Review (HBR) focused attention on the array of biases that continue to hold women back from considering or entering leadership roles. Among the factors related to this pattern, as addressed in the HBR cover story authored by Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb (2013), are theoretical implications related to “the often fragile process of coming to see oneself, and to be seen by others, as a leader” (p. 62).

While studies continue to document the underrepresentation of women in positional leadership across the U.S. (Lennon, 2013), persuasive evidence mounts regarding the importance of equipping and advancing more women into leadership roles. For example, research by Helgesen and Johnson (2010) identified three important perspectives that women bring to leadership (broad scale noticing, satisfaction day-by-day, and the social fabric of the organization), advocating that organizations are healthier and more productive when both male and female perspectives are embraced. Similarly Turner (2012), in Difference Works: Improving Retention, Productivity and Profitability through Inclusion, provides strategies for companies to benefit from the different perspectives that men and women bring to leadership. Supporting the value of women’s leadership to organizational health are the results of a recent international survey of 64,000 individuals in 13 countries (Gerzema & D’Antonio, 2013). These researchers reported that approximately two-thirds of respondents agreed “the world would be a better place if men thought more like women” (p. 8); regarding preferred leadership style, “…our data show that many of the qualities of an ideal modern leader are considered feminine (p. 11).

Despite the importance of advancing more women into leadership roles, relatively little consideration has been given to theory-building related to women’s leadership development. Gilley, Shelton, and Gilley (2011) proposed a model for the leadership development process, but
focused on actions of the mentor or human resource professional rather than of leaders themselves. Of import to this presentation is the theoretical work of Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013), who suggest three strategies that can beneficially support women’s advancement into leadership positions, among them anchor women’s development efforts in a “sense of leadership purpose rather than in how women are perceived” (p. 63).

A review of the literature in the field of psychology identified only one theory that specifically addresses the motivators for individuals to pursue leadership positions. Chan and Drasgow’s (2001) Motivation to Lead (MTL) theory is described as “an individual-differences construct that affects a leader’s or leader-to-be’s decision to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affect his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader” (p. 482). MTL theory proposes that individuals are motivated to lead by general cognitive ability, personality, and values. Clearly, additional research attention on the motivators for women to consider and to pursue moving into higher-levels of leaders would be beneficial to the field.

The research presented in this session explored the motivators for women to consider moving into higher levels of leadership as well as what factors affirmed or deterred their leadership aspirations. Using the constructivist grounded theory advocated by Charmaz (2006), this study involved sixteen women who had been nominated as emerging leaders by administrative leaders at their home college or university. Both the cultural context of the researchers and the phenomenon being studied informed the research design and analysis of data.

The model of women’s leadership development and related theory that emerged from this study reflect that the participants were initially motivated to consider or advance into higher levels of leadership for three primary reasons: (1) perceiving a sense of relational responsibility that emerged from dedication to personal connections with individuals who were positionally above, alongside, or even below the person considering leadership advancement; (2) responding to an internalized awareness of calling and giftedness for leadership, typically around a cause that was viewed as important to the participants; and/or (3) responding affirmatively to encouragement received from a mentoring relationship and/or role models who either explicitly or vicariously “spoke potential” into the life of the emerging leader.

In particular, this presentation will focus on the motivator of “relational responsibility” as a factor in whether high-potential women consider and/or choose to pursue higher levels of leadership. Our data analysis concluded that the concept of relational responsibility typically took one of three forms. First, several participants described their advancement in leadership as representing a response to the direct request of an individual (usually a supervisor) who sought out and affirmed that the individual’s leadership capacity was valued and needed by the individual and/or institution. Second, many of the participants reported that they moved into higher levels of leadership out of a desire to serve the institution in broader ways. This finding is consistent with the perspective of Fritz (2012) that leadership praxis involves taking on the labor of care for a broader community of persons and focusing on providing long-term sustenance for institutions; in fact, Fritz has written directly on the concept of “relational responsibility” as a factor in the fabric of organizational life. Third, in the context of the faith-based institutions represented in this study, relational responsibility was frequently described in terms of being
obedient to one’s relationship to God, including the use of gifts and abilities that were given for the benefit of the broader good.

In addition to examining these three motivators for women to move into higher levels of leadership, the leadership development theory that emerged from this research recognized the impact of organizational culture and self-awareness in shaping leaders’ experiences and effectiveness. Leaders’ awareness of their calling and giftedness, personality, and identities interacted with their environment to provide the backdrop for the leadership development process. The interplay between context and identity cannot be considered separately; rather, they are interdependent. While it should be noted that neither organizational culture nor one’s identity is permanently fixed, the participants’ stories demonstrated the influence of these factors on their leadership journeys.


**Panelist 4: Women and Negotiation: Bridging Theory and Practice**

**Authors:**
Jennie M. Giron
Michelle C. Bligh

Keywords: gender role congeniality, negotiation, self-worth
This presentation explores why women frequently do not negotiate, and how women can be educated to utilize more effective strategies to help them increase the frequency and quality of their negotiations, so that they have equal opportunities and commensurate pay.

Negotiations are often necessary to increase pay and professional status. Unfortunately women do not negotiate as often as men (Babcock, Gelfand, Small, & Stayn, 2006; Babcock & Laschever, 2007; Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007), are not as successful when they do engage in negotiations (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993), and often face negative repercussions from engaging in a negotiation (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007). Research shows that not only do women receive lower pay than men (Keaveny & Inderrieden, 2000; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013), but that negotiating initial salary offers may increase initial pay and help to alleviate this pay discrepancy (Gerhart, 1990). Since this initial discrepancy is compounded over time, initial salary pay negotiations are important levers for narrowing the gender pay gap. Therefore, understanding strategies to become more effective negotiators is crucial to helping women successfully improve their negotiation outcomes and thus their professional and financial success.

Research suggests that males are eight times more likely to negotiate initial job offers than females (Babcock & Laschever, 2008). In a study of starting salaries of Carnegie Mellon recent MBA graduates, male graduates’ salaries were 7.6% higher, or almost $4,000 on average, than those of female MBA graduates (Babcock & Laschever, 2007). This disparity was due to the females’ reluctance to negotiate initial salary offers, with only 7% of females attempting to negotiate the initial offer, as opposed to 57% of males (Babcock & Laschever, 2007). Another study looking at negotiation strategies during a simulated negotiation found that women negotiated lower salaries due to setting lower salary goals and using fewer negotiating and influencing tactics than men, despite previously being trained in the same tactical negotiation strategies (Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993).

These findings underscore the need to better understanding why women do not negotiate, and perhaps more importantly, how women can be educated to utilize more effective strategies to help them increase the frequency and quality of their negotiations, so that they have equal opportunities and commensurate pay. One such negotiation strategy where women seem to succeed is when they negotiate for someone else (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Building off this finding, we examine how the perceptions of who will benefit (self vs. others) impacts negotiation effectiveness. Based on theories of gender role congeniality (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau, & Makhihijani, 1995) and theories of self-worth and perceptions of competence, we argue that negotiation outcomes will be better when women are primed to focus on how others will benefit from the negotiation in the context of a first salary job offer.

Theories of self-worth and competence are particularly relevant to understanding how women approach negotiating. Specifically, one important factor that has been found to lower women’s likelihood of negotiating is prior experience or fear of receiving negative consequences for engaging in a negotiation. Backlash typically occurs when gender norms are broken (Rudman, 1998). Prescriptive gender norms indicate appropriate gender behavior for men and women
Research on gender roles and stereotypes denote that men are believed to be more agentic (self-asserted and independent) than women, while women are viewed as more communal (unselfish and concerned for the welfare of others) than men (Eagly, 1987; Parks-Stamm, Heilman, & Hearns, 2008). Moreover, in a study where participants were asked to provide characteristics of either an effective male or female leader, strength was more commonly associated with male leaders whereas sensitivity was more commonly associated with female leaders (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, Reichard, 2008). For women, negotiation can be viewed as a norm-violating behavior because it involves self-promotions and assertiveness - agentic qualities - which are expected behaviors of men but not women. Women who advocate on their own behalf are frequently seen as self-promoting and competent but not likable (Powers & Zuroff, 1988). Moreover, women who push for what they want often experience negative backlash as they are branded as pushy, demanding, difficult, high maintenance, or not a ‘team player’ (Babcock & Laschever, 2008).

Previous research also indicates that lower perceptions of self-worth seem to play an important role in explaining why women fail to engage in negotiations. In studies looking at men and women’s perceptions of worth, Barron (2003) found that 85% of men and only 17% of women attributed their worth to themselves and stated that it was up to them to make sure that their company pays them what they are worth. However, when the statement was reversed to read, “My worth is determined by what my company pays me,” 83% of women versus 15% of the men agreed. Researchers have discovered that men have a higher internal locus of control, meaning that they attribute successes and failure to themselves, whereas women have a higher external locus of control, meaning that they attribute their successes and failures to outside forces, such as fate and luck (Rotter, 1966; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1997). These studies combined shed light on the notion that women may place too much power in the hands of others when it comes to determining what they get paid, and hence, what they are worth.


