The Current Status of Women Leaders Worldwide

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**Gender and Leadership Research: Aspirations, Identity, Status, and Developmental Experiences**

*Chair: Susan R. Madsen, Professor of Leadership & Ethics, Woodbury School of Business, Utah Valley University*

This symposium is based on four chapters in the newly released Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership. It offers current research on four differing elements of women and leadership: 1) an overview and analysis of the most current data on the status of women in leadership; 2) a gendered variation in access to and use of typical developmental leadership experiences; 3) a critical review of leader identity literature; and 4) gendered differences in aspirations to lead.

**The Current Status of Women Leaders Worldwide**

*Elizabeth Goryunova, Assistant Professor, Leadership and Organizational Studies, University of Southern Maine*

*Susan R. Madsen, Professor of Leadership & Ethics, Woodbury School of Business, Utah Valley University*

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This presentation provides an overview and analysis of the most current data around the world on the status of women in leadership roles, particularly in politics and business. We utilize extensive information obtained from scholarly, industry, government, and global organizations’ resources to highlight critical findings about the status of women in political leadership, as well as those serving on corporate boards and in an executive/management capacity. We conclude with a discussion on gender parity advancement, challenges, and predictions.

**Gender Differences in Developmental Experiences**

*Cathleen E. Clerkin, Senior Research Faculty, Global Research and Evaluation, Center for Creative Leadership*

*Meena Wilson, Executive Director, Genpact Centre for Women’s Leadership, Ashoka University*

This presentation uses the Lessons of Experience (LOE) framework to explore gendered variation in access to and use of typical developmental leadership experiences including assignments, relationships, training, hardships, and personal experiences. Our review suggests that women’s leadership disadvantages are twofold: Women are overlooked for critical job experiences that would prepare them for senior management, and the developmental experiences that women do obtain do not carry gravitas in organizations. Implications and future directions for practice and research are provided.

**Women’s Leadership Identity: Exploring Person and Context in Theory**

*Wendy Fox Kirk, Assistant Professor, Business Administration, Weber State University*

*Constance Campbell, W. E. Carter Distinguished Professor of Business Leadership, Management, Georgia Southern University*

*Chrys Egan, Associate Professor, Communication Arts, Salisbury University*

In this presentation, we will provide a critical review of leader identity literature, focusing on the relative roles of person and context. Three key points will be discussed including the nature of identity, why it matters for women’s leadership, and the usefulness of some of the major existing theories. The recognition that both gender and identity are socially constructed leads to the suggestion that useful theory should address both person and context, with some explanation of how the two interact.

**Women’s Leadership Aspirations**

*Lynne E. Devnew, Online Faculty & Senior Research Fellow, School of Advanced Studies, University of Phoenix*

*Ann M. Berghout Austin, Director & Professor, Center for Women & Gender, Utah State University*

*Marlene Janzen Le Ber, Chair & Associate Professor, School of Leadership and Social Change, Brescia University College*

*Mary Shapiro, Trust Professorship of Leadership Development, School of Management, Simmons College*

In this review of existing research we sought to better understand why women’s aspirations for leadership might be lower than men’s aspirations for leadership as a partial explanation for why there are so many more men than women in leadership positions throughout the world. A theoretical framework, informed by the work of Singer (1989) and Stead and Elliot (2009), was developed to organize the complexity and systems aspects of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual constraints of women's leadership aspirations.