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Women in management: reflections and projections

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Abstract

Purpose – A major barrier to women’s progress in management worldwide continues to be the gender stereotyping of the managerial position. The purpose of the paper is to examine how this “think manager – think male” attitude has changed over the three decades since the author’s initial research and to consider the implications of the outcomes for women’s advancement in management today.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper reviews the author’s research, first conducted in the 1970s and replicated in the USA and internationally, on gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics.

Findings – The overview reveals the strength and inflexibility of the “think manager – think male” attitude held by males across time and national borders. Over the last three decades corporate males in the USA continue to see women as less qualified than men for managerial positions. Internationally, the view of women as less likely than men to possess requisite management characteristics is also a commonly held belief among male management students in the USA, the UK, Germany, China and Japan.

Practical implications – Women’s continued progress depends on recognizing the intractable nature of these negative attitudes and continually seeking ways to ensure that these attitudes do not derail their success. The need to maintain and expand legal efforts is discussed. An argument is also made for challenging the “corporate convenient” way of working and restructuring managerial work to facilitate a work and family interface.

Originality/value – Based upon three decades of research, the paper highlights the importance of maintaining and increasing efforts to ensure that women advance to positions of power and influence in organizations worldwide.

Keywords Women, Leadership, General management, Gender

Paper type Viewpoint

Improving women’s participation in leadership roles is part of the struggle to enhance the rights, freedoms, and opportunities of all women globally. The advancement of women into positions of power and influence in organisations is essential if women are to achieve equality of opportunity worldwide.

Global statistics compiled by the International Labor Organization (ILO) indicate progress is being made in many countries. In a study of women’s managerial status in 41 countries for which internationally comparable 1998-1999 data were available, Wirth (2001) found that in nearly half of the 41 countries, women typically hold between 20 and 30 percent of legislative, senior official, and managerial positions. These countries include: Austria, Germany, Greece, Israel, Peru, and Singapore. In 16 of the 41 countries women hold between 31 and 39 percent of such jobs. These countries include New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, and the UK.

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On the other hand, in a few countries, such as the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka, women hold less than 10 percent of legislative, senior official, and managerial positions. In Wirth's study, internationally comparable data from Africa was not available. According to the United Nations (2000), women's participation in management and administrative positions averages 15 percent across 26 African countries.

Although global data show that women continue to increase their share of managerial positions, the rate of progress is slow and uneven. A 2004 update of global progress revealed that in 48 countries using the same ILO classifications as Wirth (2001), women's share of managerial jobs increased by only between 1 and 5 percent in 26 countries between 1996-1999 and 2000-2002. While a few countries, such as Costa Rica showed steep increases (23.5 percent), others, such as Canada, (- 3.7 percent), and Ireland, (- 5.6 percent) experienced declines (ILO, 2004).

International data comparisons of women at the very top of organisations are more difficult to obtain. However, all indications are that progress is even slower at these levels. In the USA, among the Fortune 500 companies, women hold 14.7 percent of all Board seats (Catalyst, 2006). They constitute only 7.9 percent of those holding "clout titles and 5.2 percent of the most highly paid officers" (Catalyst, 2002a, b). In the UK in 2005, women held 10.5 percent of all directorships among the FTSE100 companies (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2005). In France, women occupied 5.3 percent of the top positions in the top 200 companies in 2000 (ILO, 2004). In Greece, women compose 6 percent of the Executive Boards of the top 50 firms on the national stock exchange (Kyriazis, 2003). Among Australia's top 200 companies, women hold 8.6 percent of board positions (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, 2004). In South Africa, among all companies listed on the main board of the JSE Securities Exchange and 17 state-owned enterprises, women constitute 10.7 percent of all board directors (Business Women's Association, 2004).

Barriers to women in management exist globally and the higher the organisational level, the more glaring the gender gap. Berthoin and Izraeli (1993, p. 63), in an overview of women in management worldwide, stated that "probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in all industrialized countries is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male." In 2004, a worldwide review of the status of women in management speaks similarly of the barriers created by biased attitudes towards women in management (ILO, 2004).

To the extent the managerial position is viewed as "male" in gender-type, the characteristics required for success are seen as more commonly held by men than by women. All else being equal, a male appears more qualified, by virtue of his gender alone, than does a female to enter and advance in management. Gender stereotyping of the managerial position fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions.

While the operation of gender stereotyping as an impediment to women's progress in management is well known today, such was not the case in the 1970s. Indeed, at that time most people believed that the limited number of women in management was "how it should be." The high ratio of men to women in management was viewed as a result of women's lack of qualifications for or their disinterest in these positions. That talented women were dissuaded from applying for or turned away from managerial positions because of stereotypical perceptions of their qualifications was not a consideration.

Think manager – think male, Circa 1970

The purpose of my research in the early 1970s (Schein, 1973, 1975) was to determine if there was a relationship between gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics. Specifically, I examined the extent to which successful middle managers are perceived to possess those characteristics, attitudes, and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men in general than women general. The research group consisted of 300 male middle level managers and 167 female middle level managers from a total of 13 insurance companies in the USA.

To define gender stereotypes and the characteristics of successful middle managers, I developed three forms of the Schein Descriptive Index. All three forms contain the same 92 descriptive terms and instructions, except that one form asks for a description of women in general (women), one for a description of men in general (men), and one for a description of successful middle managers (managers).

The instructions on the three forms of the index are as follows:

On the following pages you will find a series of descriptive terms commonly used to describe people in general. Some of the terms are positive in connotation, others are negative, and some are neither very positive nor very negative.

We would like you to use this list to tell us what you think (women in general, men in general, or successful middle managers) are like. In making your judgments, it might be helpful to imagine you are about to meet a person for the first time and the only thing you know in advance is that the person is (an adult female, an adult male, or a successful middle manager). Please rate each word or phrase in terms of how characteristic it is of (women in general, men in general or successful middle managers).

Ratings on each of the 92 terms are made according to a five-point scale, ranging from 1, not characteristic to 5, characteristic of (women in general, men in general, or successful middle managers). Each subject receives only one form of the SDI and is unaware of the purpose of the study.

The results confirmed a relationship between gender stereotypes and perceptions of requisite management characteristics. Among males there was a strong resemblance between the ratings of men and that of managers, and a near zero resemblance between the ratings of women and managers. Similarly, among female managers there was also a large resemblance between men and managers. Although there was also some similarity between women and managers, it was still significantly smaller than that between men and managers.

These outcomes showed that gender stereotyping was a major barrier to women's entry into management in the USA. Women were perceived by male and female managers as less likely than men to possess the characteristics, attitudes, and temperaments required of successful managers. Characteristics such as leadership ability, desires responsibility, and objectivity were seen as requisite management characteristics and more likely to be held by men than by women. To "think manager" was to "think male," and this view worked against women seeking to enter and advance into management positions.

Has anything changed?

Since, the time of these early studies, women in the USA have made significant progress in management. In 1972, women filled 19 percent of all management

positions, whereas by the mid 1980s nearly 33 percent of managerial positions were held by women (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986). From 1983, when 32.4 percent of all managers were women (US Department of Labor, 1984), this proportion has risen almost continuously. Today, in the US women comprise 42.5 percent of all managerial workers (US Department of Labor, 2006). Given the progress of women in management over the last 30 years, has gender stereotyping of the managerial position diminished as well?

In the 1980s and 1990s, several studies of the attitudes of corporate executives and management students were carried out to examine this question. Brenner *et al.* (1989) examined gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics among a group 420 male middle line managers, and 173 female middle line managers drawn from four manufacturing companies, four service-oriented companies, and one combined service and manufacturing company in the USA.

Male outcomes

Among the corporate managers, the results revealed that the attitudes of male managers were remarkably similar to those held by male managers in the early 1970s. For the males, there was a large resemblance between the ratings of men and managers, whereas there was a near zero resemblance between the ratings of women and managers.

In the same year Heilman *et al.* (1989) also replicated the research among 268 male managers from a wide range of industries. Their results also showed that requisite management characteristics are perceived as more likely to be held by men than by women. Also in the same year, Schein *et al.* (1989) replicated the research among 145 male and 83 female upper level management students enrolled in a small private liberal arts institution in the USA. The outcomes for male management students were the same as those of the corporate male managers, again confirming that to “think manager” is to “think male.”

Martell *et al.* (1998), using a group of 132 male managers from a variety of industries, also found that women were rated less favorably than men on characteristics associated with successful executives. Dodge *et al.* (1995) replicated my research using a sample of 113 male and 77 female adult MBA students. They obtained results similar to the other studies of male managers and management students. The males perceived men as more likely than women to possess the requisite management characteristics.

Female outcomes

Among the females, the Brenner *et al.* (1989) study found that the attitudes of female managers differed from their earlier counterparts. Among the females, there was a large resemblance between the ratings of men and the ratings of managers. However, there was also about the same degree of resemblance between the ratings of women and managers.

Thus, for the female managers, women and men are seen as equally likely to possess characteristics necessary for managerial success. Of note, this outcome appears to be a result of a changed view of women, rather than of a change in their perceptions of men or perceptions of the requirements for managerial success.

The 1989 Schein *et al.* study and the 1996 Dodge *et al.* study, both with management students, also found that females students did not gender type the managerial position. Similar to their female corporate counterparts, they viewed men and women as equally likely to possess the characteristics, attitudes, and temperaments necessary for success in management.

Think manager – think male today

Compared to attitudes held in the 1970s, female managers and female management students no longer gender type the managerial position. They see women and men as equally likely to possess characteristics necessary for managerial success. No longer influenced by stereotypical thinking, these managers would be expected to treat men and women equally in selection, placement, and promotion decisions.

On the other hand, the male managers and male management students of today hold attitudes similar to those of male managers in the 1970s. Despite all the societal, legal, and organisational changes that occurred in the USA over the last 30 years, male managers continue to perceive that successful managerial characteristics are more likely to be held by men in general than by women in general.

Over the course of almost three decades males continue to perceive men as more likely than women to possess characteristics necessary for managerial success. These outcomes among males suggest that had the legal pressures in the USA been less, and these attitudes gone unchecked, women's gains would be less dramatic. The psychological barriers, at least among male decision makers, did not diminish. They lost their force when governmental pressures for equal opportunity and concomitant corporate structural changes to ensure such equality were introduced.

Equally disconcerting is that male management students hold the same views as the male managers. As managers of the future, then, they would be expected to still view women as less qualified for entry into and advancement in management.

Many people believe that as women move into management, managerial gender typing will diminish. And it has, among women. But the relationship between gender stereotypes and requisite management characteristics among male managers has not lessened. In fact, as found in the Brenner study and in a similar comparative one done by Powell and Butterfield (1989), the relationship has actually become somewhat stronger.

A global look

The globalization of management brings to the forefront the need to examine the "think manager – think male" phenomenon in the international arena. Do the same psychological barriers to the advancement of women exist worldwide? To what extent does gender stereotyping of the managerial job exist in other countries and how does it compare across countries?

Along with several colleagues, I conducted multi-country replications to begin to examine gender typing of the managerial position globally. Schein and Mueller (1992) selected Germany and the UK as research sites for replication of the stereotyping research done in the USA. Schein and Davidson (1993) did a second replication in the UK. Schein *et al.* (1996) extended the international investigation to the People's Republic of China and Japan.

Management students were studied in each country. The German sample consisted of 167 female and 279 male management students in a major university. In the UK one sample was composed of 78 female and 73 male business students enrolled in a metropolitan polytechnic school in the south-east and the second composed of 105 female and 123 male undergraduate management students in a large university in the north-west. The Chinese sample consisted of 123 female and 150 male undergraduate upper level students enrolled in a school of business in a large city in China. The Japanese sample was composed of 105 females and 211 males enrolled in business courses at a university in a large Japanese city.

Cross cultural outcomes

The results revealed that managers are seen as possessing characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than to women in Germany, the UK, China, and Japan. Among males in all four countries, there was a high resemblance between the ratings of men and managers and a low, often close to zero resemblance between the ratings of women and managers. These outcomes are very similar to those found among US male management students. The Chinese male sample exhibited the highest degree of male-manager similarity.

Females in Germany, the UK, China, and Japan also gender typed the managerial position. Among females in all four countries, there was a strong resemblance between men and managers. However, unlike most of their male counterparts, across country samples there were variations in the degree of resemblance between women and managers, ranging from near zero in Japan to moderate, but still significantly lower than their men-manager ratings, in the UK, the US female management student samples did not gender type the managerial position.

The similarity in strength of the male perceptions may reflect intractable attitudinal barriers. That the Chinese males show the strongest degree of managerial sex typing is probably not surprising. Chinese women have been considered men's appendage during the many thousands of years of feudal society (Xi-hong, 1992). Gender discrimination is often not considered as such, but rather as a true difference based upon a belief in the males' basic superiority (Korabik, 1992).

Although China's history is different from that of the other countries, the attitudes of the males in the UK, Germany, Japan, and the USA are not that much different from those of the Chinese. The similarity in strength of the male perceptions is somewhat disquieting. Regardless of context, there appears to be a devaluation of women's qualifications among male students of management worldwide.

Think manger – think male: implications for women's progress in management

The research on gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics, first done over almost 30 years ago in the USA, followed up with US replications and extended internationally, allows us to see the strength and inflexibility of the "think male – think manager" attitude held by males. Despite enormous changes in the status of working women in the USA over the last three decades, the corporate males in each decade hold the same view. Despite the many historical, political, and cultural differences that exist among the USA, the UK, Germany, China, and Japan, the view of women as less likely than men to possess requisite management characteristics is a

commonly held belief among male management students in these five countries, and one similar to US corporate executives.

Surveys of executive men and women bear out that women see the negative impact of gender stereotyping on their careers, but men, for the most part, do not. Women senior level executives in the USA (Catalyst, 1996, 2004), Canada (Catalyst, 1997), the UK (Catalyst/Opportunity Now, 2000) and in major corporations in 20 European countries (Catalyst, 2002a, b) all agree that gender stereotyping is a major barrier to women's progress in management. On the other hand, males CEOs in the USA (Catalyst, 1996) and Canada (Catalyst, 1997), and male senior level executives in the USA (Catalyst, 2004) and in major corporations in 20 European countries (Catalyst, 2002a, b) do not see stereotyping as a significant barrier to women's advancement. They tend to see lack of line experience as a major barrier to women's progress. Overall, women recognize the insidious effects of stereotyping on their careers, but men continue to operate with blinders on when it comes to the influence of gender stereotyping on decision-making.

The strength and persistence of the "think male – think manager" attitude held by men may explain why efforts to enhance the status of women in management are still so difficult. Underlying the resistance, the foot dragging and the excuses, is a deeply held belief that managerial positions are "for men only," or "only men are really qualified" to do these jobs. Neither changes in women's work force participation nor cultural differences seem to affect the view of women as less likely to possess qualities necessary for managerial success. As a manifestation of men's attempts to preserve their advantage in the workplace, the need to perceive women as not qualified for traditionally male occupations may well be rooted in sexism (Yoder, 1991) and power issues (Lipman-Bluman, 1984).

Implications

What are the implications of the intractable nature of the "think manager – think male" attitude among males for women's progress in management? One major implication of these outcomes is that legal efforts must remain an integral part of the process of reducing barriers to women's advancement. Women's continued progress depends on recognizing the persistent nature of these negative attitudes towards women and continually seeking ways to ensure that these attitudes do not derail their success.

Another implication of the intractability of the "think manager – think male" attitude held by males is the need to challenge the "corporate convenient" structure of managerial work – a way of working convenient in the old order of a gender-based division of labour, but a detriment to women's progress in the new world of women's equality in the workforce. Efforts to enhance women's opportunities at senior levels need to focus on changing the design and structure of the work itself so as to facilitate an interface between work and family.

Keep the legal pressures on

Legal pressures can bring about increased equality despite attitudes to the contrary. For example, in 1986 Australia passed an Affirmative Action Act based on the US model. Hede and O'Brien (1996) in a study of 1,228 Australian firms found that the percentage of women in management increased significantly after passage of the act,

from 17.2 percent in 1990 to 21.7 percent in 1995. By 1998, it rose to 27.3 percent (Wirth, 2001). These outcomes highlight the value of efforts for equal employment opportunity laws that encourage corporations to make changes that minimize the negative impact of gender stereotyping.

US corporations, fueled by government pressures for equal opportunity, have introduced structural mechanisms to circumvent the negative impact of stereotypical attitudes on women's opportunities. Increased recruiting efforts, more objective measurement of managerial abilities, rewards for affirmative action compliance, and constant monitoring of the number of women in the managerial pipeline, among other efforts, have decreased the opportunity for stereotypical thinking to enter into decisions on selection and promotion.

Women's progress in management may lead decision makers to consider reducing the emphasis on structural and legal efforts. The perpetuation of the "think manager"- "think male" attitude, however, counsels against this. Although behaviours have changed, the underlying attitudes have not. If legal pressures were to subside, and concomitant structural changes reduced, we might experience a back sliding to more discriminatory practices.

Such backsliding and the importance of legal pressures are illustrated by the recent Wal-Mart sex discrimination case in the USA. *Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.* is the largest civil rights class action suit ever filed against a private employer in US history. It alleges that Wal-Mart discriminated against women in pay, promotion, and training and affects up to 1.6 million past and present female employees (*Economist*, 2004). In his ruling on the class action status, the federal judge stated that the issue is sex bias, allegedly carried out by individual managers who determined pay and promotions with little outside review under the influence of a strong corporate culture that includes gender stereotyping (Egelko and Strasburg, 2004).

The women's allegations reveal how deeply held and wide spread the "think-manager, think male" attitude is in Wal-Mart. One woman was told that it was a man's world and men controlled management positions at Wal-Mart (Featherstone, 2002). Another was told that she was too emotional and needed to doll up (Zellner, 2003). One woman was told by a manager that "You're a girl. Why do you need to be in hardware?" (Egelko and Strasburg, 2004). A single mother with a baby, who complained that a male manager with less experience was making \$23,000 more a year for the same job, was told that the male manager was a father with a family to support (Dusky, 2004).

The *Dukes v. Wal-Mart* case underscores the importance of maintaining on-going legal pressures. Left unchecked and apparently allowed to flourish in Wal-Mart's corporate culture, gender stereotyping seems to be a major impediment to women's entry into management. In Wal-Mart, women make up 72 percent of its sales force, but only 33 percent of the managerial ranks (Featherstone, 2002). Despite the progress of women into management in the USA in general, the women in Wal-Mart, the nation's largest private employer, have lagged behind. Progress cannot bring complacency and the legal pressures need to continue.

Moreover, other recent lawsuits in the US and elsewhere indicate the power of and the need for more legal efforts at the top of organisations on behalf of women. In the US, legal pressures are bringing to light discrimination against some of highest paid women in the securities industry. Women still make up only one third of the officers

and managers in the industry (McGeehan, 2004). Recent gender discrimination charges have resulted in millions of dollars in settlement costs. In 2004, Morgan Stanley agreed to a \$54 million settlement of a sex discrimination lawsuit. Merrill Lynch has agreed to pay 100 million to settle sex discrimination cases in New York and more lawsuits are in the pipeline. In London, a Merrill Lynch employee sued for 13.5 million in damages due to sex discrimination (Capell, 2004). Although she lost her case, she did win a claim of unfair dismissal (Griffiths, 2005). In one of the largest discrimination awards to a single plaintiff on record, UBS, Europe's largest bank, was ordered by a New York federal jury to pay more than \$29 million to a former saleswoman who sued the firm for sex discrimination (Porter, 2005) Earlier this year six women senior bankers sued Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein Services, contending that they were denied equal bonuses and promotions that went to men with less experience (Anderson, 2006). These recent high profile cases in major world capitals highlight the need for on going legal pressures to ensure the continued progress of women into positions of power and influence.

Challenge corporate convenient

The way work is structured and the barriers these structures pose for women also need to be examined. Blind to the influence of gender stereotyping on their thinking, male decision makers fail to see a key impediment to women's progress – the way managerial work is done and the norms and expectations around such activities. Women's advancement into management serves a function similar to that of the canaries once used by miners to alert them to any poisonous gases. If the canaries died, then the air was not healthy to breath. The presence of women in managerial positions reveals a corporate atmosphere that is poisonous to those seeking to function successfully in both managerial and family roles. Yet males, who have operated successfully in this climate, fail to recognize its deleterious effects on women who strive to be wives and mothers as well as successful executives. Rather, they see women's still limited gains in senior management positions as verification of their strongly held stereotypical views of women. A woman who "drops out" or questions traditional corporate routes to success is viewed as someone who "can't cut the mustard" or "doesn't have what it takes" to be a top executive.

Equality of opportunity for women in management may never be achieved fully as long as the current structure is accepted as "as it should be" – something into which women, wives, and mothers must fit. Efforts to increase women's equality at senior levels need to focus on changing the design and structure of the work itself so as to facilitate an interface between work and family. To do this, basic assumptions must be questioned and challenges made to work demands which are "corporate convenient" rather than job related (Schein, 1993).

Most executive positions, having been occupied predominately by males since the beginning of industrialized society, have been designed under the assumption of a gender-based division of labour. Over the years, these job demands and requirements have become acceptable and assumed necessary behaviours. The original assumption upon which the design was based was not questioned. What is needed is to examine the time frames, priorities, scheduling expectations, and valued behaviours from the perspective of: "What is convenient to the corporation?" What demands, activities, and expectations are convenient in the old order of a gender-based division of labour and

but are detrimental to women's progress in today's world of gender equality in the workforce?

For example, last minute meetings, urgent requests, and unscheduled high priority business trips appear to be a fact of corporate life. These can be hurdles in the race to the top that can trip up the woman manager with family responsibilities. But perhaps these crisis situations are corporate convenient — assumed and unexamined when there is a wife at home to take care of the children and adjust the family to the corporate demands.

Similarly, the relationship between how time is spent and performance evaluation needs be examined. Performance is often judged on the basis of how late you work or how early you arrive at the office. The necessity of such long hours or their relationship to actual performance is rarely questioned in the old order of a gender-based division of labour. But such work schedules can have serious consequences for a woman with work and family responsibilities.

By examining basic assumptions about work requirements, work activities that are found to be “corporate convenient” can be re-evaluated, allowing for a new and different set of valued performance behaviours and expectations to emerge. For example, if family obligations on the part of all managerial employees are the norm, advance planning becomes the rule and true corporate emergencies the exception. The manager accustomed to last minute “fire fighting” and receiving praise for acting swiftly in an emergency might be chastised for not planning ahead and foreseeing and preventing so-called crisis situations. Expectations regarding the hours of work become different as well. Workdays that extend into the night and Saturdays at the office might be viewed as time spent only by the poor performer or inefficient worker.

Work activities and expectations that are valid and essential to the productivity of the enterprise, that is, those that are “job related” can also be looked upon differently by the corporation. If a work and family interface is the norm, the responsibility for any negative impact of vital job related activities on required family obligations would be shared by the corporation and the manager. Corporations might employ family service representatives to provide back-up support when work-family conflicts occur or pay for an executive nanny service when job-related activities require last minute or late night activities. Along these lines, Amoco reimburses employees for dependent care when they travel overnight on business and there is no family member to care for the child or elderly parent. Similarly Chevron and Dorsey & Whitney pay for child care costs if an employee's business travel creates a need for additional child care during evenings or on weekends (Lawlor, 1998). By viewing the world differently, and challenging corporate convenient, a myriad of possible changes emerge, ones unconsidered under outdated views of work and family.

Restructuring managerial work to facilitate a work and family interface may be more viable than many people imagine. Men, as well as women, are beginning to see the value of such changes. In a recent survey of senior Fortune 500 male executives, 73 percent believe it is possible to restructure senior management jobs in ways that would both increase productivity and make more time available for life outside the office. And 84 percent said they would like job options that let them realize their professional aspirations while having time for more things outside of work. The roadblock to reform may be more fear than infeasibility. In the same survey, more than

half of the men believed that to discuss this with their boss would hurt their career (Miller and Miller, 2005).

Assumptions about the nature of managerial work are beginning to be questioned worldwide. In 1997, at the invitation of the International Labor Organization, participants from 20 countries met to discuss factors impeding women's progress in management. As reported by Wirth (1998), a key issue that emerged from both the meeting and ILO research was that breaking the glass ceiling implies a significant transformation of the workplace itself, such as management approaches and work organisation and structure. According to Wirth (1998), a major question is whether or not a standard 60-hour or longer workweek for managers is detrimental to business, health, families, and gender equality. Hence, as canaries in the mine, the increase in women managers globally seems to be revealing the unhealthy aspects of a previously assumed corporate convenient culture of long hours.

In addition to maintaining legal pressures, the advancement of women into positions of power and influence in organisations may well hinge on resolving the issues surrounding the work and family interface. Work structures based on traditional gender-based division labour operate to impede women's progress. Work demands and requirements must be evaluated on the basis of their relationship to organisational effectiveness rather than their convenience to those locked within an outmoded view of the world of work. As observed by Dr Frene Ginwala, former speaker of the South African National Assembly, "institutions that discriminate are man-shaped and must be made people shaped. Only then will women be able to function as equals within these institutions" (Adler, 1999, p. 260).

Achieving and maintaining equality of opportunity for women in management is an on-going process. Three decades of research on gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics reveal that males continue to see women as less likely than men to possess characteristics necessary for managerial success. As such, it is imperative that legal pressures are maintained and serious attention given to restructuring managerial work. Such efforts will pick-up the pace of parity and enhance women's opportunities to progress to positions of power and influence in organisations worldwide.

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