

Women's Leadership Aspirations

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Although it is quite easy to identify women leaders, men continue to occupy the vast majority of leadership roles in the world. It has been argued that one of the reasons for this differential is women's aspirations for leadership are less than men's. Women's leadership aspirations are defined in this chapter as girls' and women's longing for and intentional seeking after a future that catalyze their visions, goals, or calling for themselves into reality, whether or not they use the term leadership to describe their aspirations.

There is ample support for this hypothesis. While studying women managers in Australia, Ross-Smith and Chesterman (2009) found something they labeled "girl disease"; among its symptoms is the reticence of women managers to pursue or accept advancement. Ramakrishnan, Sambuco, and Jagsi (2014) observed that women often limit their options within medicine by the choices they make even before entering their careers. Shapiro, Ingols, O'Neill, and Blake-Beard (2009) found women's goals for success are not limited to those associated with career advancement, but also include work/life balance goals, being passionate about their work, and doing work that makes a difference. Even those who seek to be leaders sometimes eschew being

identified as a leader (Arminio et al., 2000), preferring to be seen as addressing social or community issues (Stead & Elliott, 2009) rather than to “be in charge” per se. Not surprisingly then, women often struggle with seeing themselves and being seen by others as leaders (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013).

Studies have demonstrated that young girls and teens may have lofty goals for adulthood, but their career aspirations remain largely gendered, that is, linked to professions considered more “typical” for women, such as nursing and teaching (Shapiro et al., 2012). In the United States and elsewhere in the Western world, there are equal or higher numbers of girls compared to boys pursuing post-secondary educational training and degrees. Yet leadership in elected office, in the most senior jobs in corporations, and in the upper ranks of higher education administration remains largely a male province (see Shapiro et al., 2012).

To understand women's leadership aspirations, we have organized this chapter as follows. In the section below we describe two models that provide the foundation for the organizing framework we have created to provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's leadership aspirations. We then describe the components of the framework we created to provide deeper insight into how it might be useful to both scholars and practitioners. Finally, we conclude with implications for moving forward.

Organizing Framework

To explore women's aspirations for leadership we began with Singer's (1989) Leadership Aspiration model and Stead and Elliott's (2009) Leadership Web.

Singer's Leadership Aspiration Model

In a comprehensive study of college seniors' leadership aspirations and leadership self-efficacy, Singer (1989) found that men in comparison to women had significantly higher

aspirations to become leaders, as measured by their response to the question, "How much would you like to be in a leadership position?" (p. 28). When asked why a leadership position seemed attractive, men were more likely than women to say leadership would put them "in a position of power and authority" (p. 29). Women said that leadership positions were attractive because they offered opportunities to "develop contacts with high status people" and "with subordinates" (p. 29). Thus, from the initial research question, participants in Singer's study reinforced the pervasive stereotype that men are drawn to agentic tasks while women like tasks that involve developing relationships with others. Regarding leadership self-efficacy, that is, how well the participants thought they possessed the skills and attitudes of true leaders, men were significantly more likely than women to believe that they had leadership abilities, that they would be effective as a leader, and that they would be successful.

Singer (1989) found that women had a significantly more complex view of leadership than men, believing that it required the internal characteristics of specific personality traits, intelligence, and competence; external support from subordinates; and a positive climate in which to lead. Women's leadership aspirations were best predicted by the relational aspects they anticipated would be part of leadership (i.e., opportunities to work with others), along with their beliefs about how well their abilities matched those necessary for leadership. Men's leadership aspirations were best predicted by the opportunities they thought leadership offered to preside, hold power, and influence outcomes.

Singer (1989) has thus described woman's aspirations to lead as a function of three important perceptions: (a) how she perceives leaders to behave (implicit leadership theory), (b) her self-efficacy related to her perceptions of these expected leadership behaviors, and (c) her evaluation of the benefits and costs of being in a leadership position. However, aspirations are

dynamic (Brown & Segrist, 2016; Coffman & Neuenfeld, 2014). Each of these perceptions is based on a woman's answers to a variety of questions she might ask herself at different times throughout her lifetime. Her answers might well change given changing circumstances and experiences, and as they change, her leadership aspirations also change.

Elliott's and Stead's Leadership Web

Singer's work relates well to Stead's and Elliott's (2009) Leadership Web, a comprehensive description of the personal and environmental factors that shape a woman's approach to leadership and her aspirations for leadership. The Leadership Web is shaped by (a) *work* or the often unconscious biases and gendered dynamics of work (i.e., "male" jobs and "female" jobs) and other features within a work place, (b) *relationships* with others in all aspects of life, and (c) *place* or "the physical and geographical location in which the women leaders were brought up and in which they live" (p. 75). All three elements of the Leadership Web are shaped, modified, and informed by the social environment.

To deepen our understanding of women's leadership aspirations in this chapter, we continue our discussion using the three components of Singer's Leadership Aspirations framework (i.e., Implicit Leadership Theory, Perceptions of Self-Efficacy, and Evaluation of Costs and Benefits of Leadership) with elements of Stead's and Elliott's (2009) Leadership Web (*work*, *relationship*, and *place*) used within each of these Singer components (see Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Implicit Leadership Theory

Implicit leadership theory asserts individuals have an understanding of what it means to be a leader (Eden & Leviatan, 1975). However, relative to Stead and Elliott (2009), it is a theory that needs to be seen through the lens of *work*, *relationships*, and *place*. Not surprisingly the

ideal model of leader is of one who implicitly or explicitly exemplifies the norms within a specific culture (Schein, 2001). Singer (1989) observed, "An individual's implicit leadership theory refers to the theory or beliefs held by the individual about how leaders behave in general and what is expected of leaders" (p. 27). We would expect women and girls in different time periods and in different cultures to have diverse answers to the first question they might ask: "How do leaders behave?" or perhaps even "How do women leaders behave?" We suggest that these questions are supplemented by another set of questions not included in the original Singer model: "Is this behavior consistent with the way I view myself?" and "Do I want to behave this way?"

Relative to *work* in the Leadership Web, cultural notions often prescribe "masculine" fields such as construction jobs or the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines for men, who should also, more often than women, assume the role of leader. Women, on the other hand, should be in "feminine" jobs, such as nursing and teaching (Diekman & Goodfried, 2006; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Evans & Diekman, 2009; Prentice & Carranza, 2002) and assume feminine roles of nurturing and supporting. So inculcated are these roles that Ibarra et al. (2013) asserted that systemic changes must take place in organizational cultures in order for them to be suitable environments for women to not only learn to be leaders, but also to be seen as legitimate and credible leaders. These implicit leadership theory related systemic changes include, but are not limited to, issues related to second-generation bias and deep structure (work), masculine and feminine behaviors and leadership (relationship), and prevailing and changing leadership stereotypes (place) (see Figure 1).

Second-Generation Bias and Deep Structure

In developing leadership aspirations, women must acknowledge and work through invisible though persistent second-generation bias, including cultural traditions, assumptions, and implicit prohibitions that often discourage women as leaders. A manifestation of second-generation bias is found in the “deep structure” of organizations (Batliwala, 2011) consisting of unspoken, unwritten rules for male and female roles (*relationships*), behavior, presentation of self, and utilization of skills, including leadership skills (*place*). In this way, deep structures in the workplace can challenge women's leadership aspirations in all three realms of the Leadership Web. Even more pernicious, the influence of the deep structure, and thereby many forms of second generational bias, can be so subtle that few women are aware of its presence, assuming instead that they are deficient in some way when they encounter workplace resistance.

Masculine and Feminine Behaviors and Leadership

With leadership seen as masculine behavior, it is not surprising that Boatwright and Egidio (2003) found that women whose self-image included stereotypical feminine characteristics had lower leadership aspirations. In fact, in their study, the largest significant beta predicting leadership aspirations was for feminine characteristics and although a need for connectedness had a significant positive beta in predicting leadership aspirations, it was a very small one. Regarding leadership aspirations, the implicit message is that an individual cannot be too feminine if she wants to be a leader, and although a desire for connectedness will reinforce leadership aspirations, the reinforcement will be weak at best.

Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, and Ristikari (2011)'s comprehensive meta-analysis of studies about leadership stereotypes reinforced the Leadership Web by demonstrating that in the spheres of *work*, *relationships*, and *place*, stereotypes clearly uphold the conflation of masculine traits with leadership traits. Relative to the *work* aspect of the Leadership Web, Koenig et al. found

that across 40 studies, descriptors for generic leadership positions upheld the Schein (2001) paradigm, “think manager, think male” (p. 631). Regarding *relationships*, they also found agentic or stereotypically masculine characteristics were more often used across 22 studies to describe typical leadership behaviors. The internal dynamics and intersections of *place* were well represented by seven studies in which participants were asked to consider the suitability of men and women for specific leadership roles such as bank president, university president, and government leader. Typical of other findings in this meta-analysis, men were perceived as more suitable for holding most medium- and high-status leadership positions than women.

Clearly, all three aspects of the Leadership Web—including *work*, *relationships* with others, and *place*—appear to be skewed by gendered stereotypes. If the Web influences personal aspirations as we believe it does, a woman likely feels significant dissonance between what she observes to be seen as a leader and what she aspires to be.

Prevailing and Changing Leadership Stereotypes

The *place* where leadership is practiced has long conflated masculinity with leadership. Changing that conflation is an evolving process given that cultural stereotypes are very slow to change (Schein, 2001). Organizational models of leadership evolve slowly as they are repeatedly replicated by those who have gained the most power in the organization and who would have the most to lose if the assumptions of how a leader should behave were to change (Eagly & Carli, 2007). On the positive side, as women increasingly populate leadership roles at *work*, the list of expected leadership traits will expand to include more feminine traits (Cabrera, Sauer, & Hunt, 2009; Diekmann & Eagly, 2000).

Other researchers agree that leadership stereotypes might be slowly changing, as highlighted in a number of chapters within this handbook. Schein's (2001) international studies

demonstrate not only that both men and women continue to associate men's traits with leadership, but they also indicate that women in the U.S. are beginning to associate women's traits with transformational leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership styles. Hints of this shift were suggested by Singer (1989) who found women aspired to leadership for the opportunities to develop *relationships* with others, while more recently, Boatwright and Egidio (2003) found a positive relationship between students' stated needs for connectedness and their leadership aspirations. Hopefully these changes will broaden a woman's personal leadership theory and thereby provide greater support for her leadership aspirations.

While there are signs of progress as noted above, researchers continue to find an implicit association of leadership with gendered (male) descriptors. A study done by Johanson (2008) helped explain why many most people still think "male" when they think leader. In Johanson's study, participants were asked to sort a lengthy list of leader characteristics between structural (task-related) and consideration (people-related) behaviors. Not surprisingly, participants associated structural tasks with men and consideration tasks with women. Moreover, Johanson's research found that both men and women prioritized structural over consideration behaviors in their characterizations of leaders.

More recently, Ingols, Shapiro, and Tyson (2015) queried a sample of 471 business women about professional workplace behaviors and the desirability of each behavior in a business environment. They found that six traits classified 50 years ago as masculine (i.e., decisive, rational, disciplined, athletic, self-esteem, and self-reliant) and six classified as feminine (i.e. loyal, sensitive, spiritual, wholesome, excitable, and flirtatious) were now labeled as androgynous. Traits that remained masculine and professionally desirable for men included aggressive, ambitious, assertive, competitive, forceful, intense, strong personality, and risk

taking. Traits that remained feminine and professionally desirable for women were attention to appearance, cheerful, clean, cooperative, patient, polite, warm, kind, and friendly.

These results have implications for a woman's leadership aspirations. Characteristics previously seen as male-only can now be "claimed" by women; however, women's professional presence in the workplace is still linked to appearance, self-presentation, and degree of nurturance. Stereotypes are both changing and remaining the same, creating considerable confusion in the formation of women and girls' leadership aspirations.

Perceptions of Self-Efficacy

The second aspect of Singer's Leadership Aspiration model, leader self-efficacy, refers to the specific belief that one has the requisite skills and knowledge to be an effective leader. The development of leadership self-efficacy implies a growing understanding of one's ability to plan, to build, and to nurture, influence, guide, motivate, and rally others; skills that may not be as widely recognized, nurtured, or even legitimized as part of leadership development. Bandura (1982) emphasized that to be effective, self-efficacy must be a belief focused on a specific action, role, or talent, such as self-efficacy as a musician or writer or in this case, a leader. Although self-efficacy is not an actual predictor of success, it is a powerful mediator of action. Low self-efficacy can hinder performance and even prevent an individual from experimenting with or practicing a skill.

Self-efficacy is also best understood using the lenses of *work*, *relationships*, and *place*. Yet for a woman, developing leadership self-efficacy is further complicated because leadership stereotypes are still largely masculine for every aspect of the Leadership Web and often rigidly reinforced by organizational deep structures. Whether at *work* as a girl in school or church, or as an adult in an organization, she must first decide if she has sufficient self-efficacy to be a leader,

and second, if her leadership self-efficacy is strong enough to allow her to go against gendered stereotypes. Role models in the *workplace* can provide 'evidence' that women can lead and are actually rewarded for leading; key *relationships*, such as family and friends, can support or discourage her earlier aspirations; and finally, the culture of her *birthplace* and *growth-place*, is fundamental in legitimizing and validating her aspirations for leadership.

Role Models and Gendered Vocations

Work, from the Leadership Web, exerts a powerful influence on leadership self-efficacy. Seeing women leaders is a crucial step in the complex process of building one's leadership identity, and it is not as simple as "see it, be it." Rudman and Phelan (2010) found that exposure to examples of women in typically female jobs increased college-aged women's interests in choosing stereotypical female professions, but exposure to examples of women who excelled in typically male professions decreased students' perceptions about their own leadership abilities. Hoyt and Simon (2011) found that teenaged girls are not necessarily empowered by seeing prominent women senators, chief executive officers (CEOs), and Pulitzer Prize winners because they consider these exceptional individuals too far "above them." Apparently exposure to examples of outstanding women leaders can evoke strong feelings of not "measuring up".

However, in another study, Beaman, Duflo, Pande, and Topalova (2012) found that leadership aspirations were higher after observing the leadership of similar individuals, that is, individuals in one's own contextual *place*. Their study was carried out in India soon after the implementation of a new regulation that required the leadership position in one third of the villages be reserved for a woman. Leadership aspirations of girls and boys living in villages who had not experienced a woman leader were compared to girls' and boys' aspirations in villages who had experienced one term with a woman leader and with another group who experienced

two terms with a woman leader. Boys' leadership aspirations were unaffected by the presence of women leaders, but girls' aspirations were significantly higher after only two terms of women's leadership.

In addition to similarity, sharing real-life experiences about overcoming biases at *work* (Leadership Web) or "telling it like it is" may be a strategy for increasing the impact of role models on leadership self-efficacy and aspirations. Weisgram and Bigler (2007) studied the change in interest and aspirations of adolescent girls who listened to one of two types of talks by women leaders in STEM disciplines. In one version, the women leaders spoke about the variety of interesting careers in STEM. In the other version, the leaders discussed the gendered barriers they faced in their work and how they overcame them. Girls' interest in pursuing STEM careers was heightened only in the second condition. The authors noted it is possible that hearing about gender-related difficulties helped the young women to think through and understand their own experiences in STEM classes. Perhaps the girls replaced their thoughts about perceived personal inadequacies in STEM subjects with the speculation that they may have disliked the classes because they encountered invisible barriers in them. It is also possible that by specifically discussing work place discrimination, the speakers were not only addressing and allaying concerns the girls had about bias and discrimination, but also effectively conveying the message that women with strong self-efficacy can move through these barriers successfully.

Self-efficacy does not remain stagnant; it strengthens or weakens over time (Bandura, 1997). It is abundantly clear from other work (e.g., Batliwala, 2011; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016) that self-efficacy can be limited or erased entirely by events or barriers outside the woman's control; these events or barriers might be located within the deep structure of an organization. Bandura (1982) wrote that, to be effective, self-efficacy beliefs must be strong enough to promote

resiliency in the face of adversity and challenge. Set-backs happen to everyone, but a person with strong self-efficacy will persist and even work harder (Bandura, 1997).

Influences of Family and Friends

Relationships (Leadership Web) include the influence a woman's family and friends have on her perceptions of leadership and her personal leadership aspirations (Stead & Elliott, 2009).

Family and friends provide or promote certain role models, discount others, and give commentary on girls' and women's choices and practices, thereby influencing, either directly or indirectly, the woman's leadership self-efficacy.

In an unpublished study, Austin (2016) assigned undergraduate university students to discuss with parents, spouses, and friends reasons why there were not more women leaders in the U.S. and more specifically in the state in which their university was located. (As background, this state typically ranks in the bottom ten states for women's political participation and executive-level leadership (Hess, Milli, Hayes, & Hegewisch, 2015)). Austin found that, for these students, women's lives were seen as strictly bifurcated. They saw leadership and motherhood as polar opposites and could not imagine a "good" mother combining the two. They focused on the observable main effects of traditional mothering roles, biology (monthly mood swings), and personality without consideration for the intersectionalities that might constrain leadership aspirations and expression of talent. None of the students said that women's self-efficacy or self-esteem might be a hindrance to leadership; rather the hindrance had to do with the demands of the mothering role.

Given that the roots of self-efficacy begin early in life, usually in the family of orientation, but reinforced shortly thereafter by friends, an important way to encourage women's leadership aspirations is to encourage the development during childhood and adolescence of the

notion that even as young girls and teens they can influence and work with others to purposeful ends and that they, not anyone else, can determine their own path in life. Clearly, “gender begins at home” (Valian, 1999, p. 23), starting with parents’ need to know the sex of the neonate so they can launch the gendered socialization of their child beginning with the baby’s first cries. A family’s and later friends’ views of “a woman’s place” and “a woman’s role” shape self-expectations, self-awareness, and thereby self-efficacy from the very earliest days of childhood and onwards.

The constraints of *place*, so damaging to self-efficacy and often conveyed through *work* and *relationships* aspects of the Leadership Web as well, are listed by Reis (1999) as internal barriers young women face during adolescence and beyond. These include the social expectation that women should take care of others before themselves, a fear of success, doubting and hiding their own abilities, the “imposter syndrome” (i.e., attributing success to external factors including luck rather than attributing success to their own capabilities), a crushing demand for perfectionism coupled with feelings of criticism, and always feeling inferior when compared to others. Each of these expectations alone can significantly truncate leadership self-efficacy, and when taken together the influence can be crushing. More recently Hinshaw and Kranz (2009) and Simmons (2009) added the “triple bind” to the list of barriers to describe the societal expectation that young women should be good at traditional female roles, traditional male roles, and perfect besides (i.e., both a star athlete and an all “A” student).

Prevailing Cultural Norms

Place, at its most fundamental, may be one’s culture, in a sense one’s birthplace, as it represents “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group ...from others” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6). That “collective programming” is

synonymous with the messages one receives from one's *relationships*, starting with one's family and expanding outwardly to one's community, including the spheres of *work* and society at large. This messaging/programming defines social roles (what men and women are supposed to do) and leadership roles (who can be leaders and how leadership is to be enacted). It would follow that women's leadership aspirations would be shaped by their national culture and, specifically relevant to our discussion, how differentially cultures value femininity or collectivism or are infused with religion.

Hofstede (1980) began his work identifying dimensions of national culture to explain different values in the workplace. His six dimensions included the degree to which a culture values masculinity versus femininity. High masculine cultures, such as Japan, German-speaking countries, and some Latin countries such as Italy and Mexico, value "achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success"; high feminine cultures, such as France, Spain, Korea, and Thailand, value "cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life" (Hofstede et al., 2010). The implicit ideal of leadership is one that exemplifies the norms of the culture (Schein, 2001), in this case, masculine or feminine. Indeed, Ayman and Korabik (2015) determined that women are more likely to be accepted as a leader in cultures where femininity is valued than in cultures where masculinity is valued, and thus more likely to aspire to and achieve a leadership position. This dimension links *place* with *work*.

A second Hofstede cultural dimension, namely individualism versus collectivism, links *place* with *relationships*. Individualist cultures, such as those of most Western countries, value autonomy, independence, and self-reliance; collectivist cultures, present in many Eastern countries, value tight group cohesion, which offers support and protection in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 2011). Leong, Hardin, and Gupta (2010) argued that while collectivism

“usually involves the subordination of personal goals to be able to attain the goals of the group/community” (p. 466), individuals from collectivist cultures do not necessarily reject their own personal goals. Instead, collective goals often have been so deeply internalized as to conflate with personal goals.

Leong et al. (2010) did not articulate a differential impact of collectivism on men and women. However, when integrated with trait expectations of women being caring and nurturing, the authors argue that women from collectivist cultures could experience greater pressure to consider any aspiration for leadership in the context of its impact on their in-groups, whether families, communities, or organizations. Aspirations to lead may be dampened if the cost to relationships is high; or it may be invigorated if her leadership contributes to the welfare of the group.

Religion adds to the “collective programming” in many world cultures. Hunter and Sargeant (1993) focused on the changes in the leadership and philosophies within Protestantism and Reformed Judaism in the United States. They observed,

what is really at stake is the cultural meaning of womanhood, and this, as we have seen is related to still larger philosophical questions about the nature of moral authority, the meaning of tradition, the ontology of sacredness, and the relation of human experience to the sacred. (p. 569-570)

In her studies of European countries, Leyenaar (2008) observed that the more religious the country (specifically, Catholicism and forms of fundamentalism including Islam and evangelicalism), the fewer women there are in leadership. Another study by Yun (2013) focused on the influence of Confucianism on the subordinate positions of Asian women both within the family and within society, and speculated on how the expectations associated with subordinate

roles would change with more exposure to western cultures. Religious influences, while slowly evolving, predominantly define women's roles as subservient to men.

Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Leadership

While an implicit understanding of leadership behavior consistent with her self-image and strong self-efficacy are important to women's and girl's leadership aspirations, Singer (1989) found a woman must also believe that the benefits of being a leader will be worth the costs. This is consistent with the motivational metatheory developed by Leonard, Beauvais, and Scholl (1999), which identified the ideal self (the implicit leader); the perceived self, including perceived self-efficacy; and value based goal internalization as combining to motivate action. Thus, she also considers "What would I have to give up/sacrifice to be a leader, and am I willing to do that?" and "What would be gained if I were a leader?" Research indicates the list of what she might expect to give up or sacrifice is long; at *work* she may incur the penalties associated with role incongruity; the time demands associated with leading may negatively impact critical *relationships* in her life; and finally, the place where leadership sits in a woman's list of priorities may be sufficiently low so as not to be worth the costs incurred.

Role Congruency

Even if a woman believes that her personal self-image is congruent with leadership behaviors, she is likely to face challenges in all aspects of the Leadership Web (i.e., *work*, *relationship*, and *place*). Role congruity, for example, challenges each of the three aspects simultaneously and separately. Relative to *place* and *work*, the expectations others have of how leaders will behave are inconsistent with the gender traits they associate with women. This role incongruity comes with a steep price. Eagly and Karau (2002) named two forms of prejudice towards female leaders embodied in their role congruity theory. One is that there are less

favorable evaluations of women's potential for leadership (because leadership ability is more stereotypical of men than women). The second is a less favorable evaluation of the actual leadership behavior of women in comparison to men because leadership behavior is perceived as less desirable in women than men (Silverman, 2015).

This prejudice becomes more pronounced the more masculine the context (e.g., male dominated leader and/or greater number of male subordinates). The classic "double bind" occurs when women must choose between the (masculine) traits associated with leadership or feminine traits; enact the masculine leadership traits and be castigated as unfeminine, or enact feminine traits and not be seen as a leader. By enacting feminine traits, women also run the risk of their motives being misinterpreted and finding that the value of bringing compassion and collaboration into the workplace is invisible and "gets disappeared" (Fletcher, 1999).

By enacting masculine traits, women might earn the title of leader but will still be "punished." Diekmann and Goodfried (2006) identified two other responses: (1) women behaving as leaders being perceived as less likeable or hostile and (2) women being penalized for self-promotion (Rudman, 1998), speaking directly, or enacting an autocratic leadership style. Prentice and Carranza (2002) found that the harshest punishments resulting from enacting gender-intensified proscriptive traits are meted against women in masculine (leadership) roles.

This high price helps explain why women, when presented with an opportunity for leadership, may not step up as they correctly anticipate the problems of role incongruence. This hesitation starts well before a woman enters the workforce. As young children, girls get labeled "bossy" when taking up leadership (Girl Scout Research Institute, 2008; Valian, 1999). Lips (2000) found that college women were less optimistic about holding powerful leadership positions, not because they did not have self-confidence, but because they had reservations about

how they would be perceived and treated in those positions of power. Relative to the section on self-efficacy, they ask themselves if they have sufficient self-efficacy to move past the negativity they know they will encounter.

Role congruency challenges are exacerbated by intersectionality, including race, age, and class. Intersectionality captures the complexities of an individual's life experiences and challenges model and theory development to move away from not only binary conceptions of identities (male or female, Black or White), but also from homogenous (all women) and even from additive categories of identities (women, plus race, plus class). By exploring race, gender, social class (and other identities) together, one can more accurately understand an individual's multidimensional lived experiences, including the complexities of often simultaneously conflicting expectations for and feedback on their leadership (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Debebe & Reinert, 2014; Holvino, 2010).

As noted earlier in the discussion of implicit leadership, changes are occurring in society's implicit leadership model. As this change is occurring simultaneously with an evolution in the gendered perceptions of appropriate male and female behavior, the combination is slowly enabling greater congruity between female and leader roles. If so, taking on what were previously perceived as masculine traits associated with leadership may come with fewer penalties. Bem (1974) predicted that as more women move into conventionally masculine roles, the traits associated with those roles will become androgynous; women, as well as men, will be able to enact those traits. Many scholars have now called for a more androgynous concept of leadership (Ayman & Korabik, 2015; Gartzia & van Engen, 2012; Watson & Newby, 2005).

The intersectionality of racial and ethnic identities significantly adds complexity to women's leadership aspirations and decision making. Arminio et al. (2000) identified how

college students of color responded to leadership opportunities, including the personal costs of holding positions (i.e., facing unattainable expectations, “being watched 24/7”), having to prioritize group/team loyalty over individual needs, and a lack of campus staff and faculty role models. Many of the college students in their study rejected even being labeled a leader, as that label marked them as someone who had “sold out” to the “system that oppressed their racial group”; and leadership was generally regarded as a “burden” (Arminio et al., 2000, pp. 500–501).

Time Demands

Coffman and Neuenfeld (2014) found that the time commitment of being “always on” deterred women from wanting to proceed into leadership. Many leadership roles require 24/7 availability which defines an evolving category of jobs labeled “extreme jobs” (Hewlett & Luce, 2006) with required hours up 9% since 1979. In general, the average number of hours worked has increased by 181 hours annually since 1979, representing a 10.7% increase or another 4.5 weeks of work per year (Mishel, 2013). While women have increased their hours at work, they have simultaneously increased the amount of time they spend with their children (Bianchi, 2000), moving from an average of 10 hours per week to 14, or a 40% increase (Parker & Wang, 2013). Similar to how a women’s self-image might conflict with her implicit leadership theory, her understanding of the time required to achieve her personal *relationship* goals to be a good partner, daughter, friend, and mother are often inconsistent with her understanding of the time demands associated with being a good leader. Time demands of both roles influence women’s aspirations for leadership.

Value of Leadership for Women

While leadership has conventionally been regarded as the ultimate endpoint for career planning and advancement, Eccles (2009) recognized a key component of taking up leadership is “subjective task value” (p. 82). A woman may ask: Is leadership important to me? Does it have “interest” value or “attainment” value? The answer for many women may be no; taking up leadership may have low subjective task value. O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) observed that women are motivated primarily by “personal fulfillment/happiness” (p. 181), which is often tied to satisfying *relationships* and the least by “winning or competing” over their entire arc of career. O’Neill, Shapiro, Ingols, and Blake-Beard (2013) found that out of 16 possible goals, the goals of “do *work* I am passionate about” and “do *work* that makes a positive impact on people and communities” were ranked as the top two across White, Black, and Latina women. In contrast, the goal of “progress to top leadership positions” factored in third for Asian American women, eighth for White women, eleventh for Black women, and twelfth for Latina women. If this study were conducted in other *places*, leadership ranking would be expected to reflect the cultural values of the participants.

Conclusion

Seeking to develop an understanding of the influences on women’s leadership aspirations, Singer’s Leadership Aspiration model was supplemented by Elliot and Stead’s Leadership Web to create a framework for the review and discussion of relevant literature. *Work*, *relationships*, and *place* were addressed within a discussion of women’s implicit understanding of leadership behavior, women’s self-efficacy related to their understanding of leadership behavior, and women’s evaluation of the costs and benefits of leadership behavior. The literature cited in this chapter has identified influences, often conflicting ones, from every aspect of the Leadership Web that impact women’s leadership aspirations.

It became apparent that increasing women's leadership aspirations is likely to require changes throughout our societal systems and strong communications in all media to reinforce changing societal norms towards equality. One area of change needed is the inclusion of and greater respect for *relationships* and better alignment with feminine or androgynous characteristics within society's implicit leadership model. While it appears this evolution in implicit understandings of leadership is occurring due in part to changes in technology and increasing globalization, change is slow. Moving to new understandings of leadership will require greater changes in some *places* than in others, as the cultures of countries', industries', and organizations' *work* environments vary. Each of these entities can begin to institute changes in leadership expectations and scholars can lend research support for these changes.

The barriers inhibiting women's confidence in their self-efficacy for leadership must also be reduced, with an increase in the congruity between leaders' roles and women's roles. Organizations, individuals, and researchers can work to understand and reduce the current incongruity challenges. Increasing women's leadership aspirations is also expected to require an evolution in the expectations of what is considered an appropriate allocation of home and family related work responsibilities between men and women. These changes would be expected to decrease the costs of leadership behavior for women, such that when women consider the costs and benefits of leadership, benefits will outweigh the costs.

As noted throughout the chapter, aspirations are developmental and dynamic (Brown & Segrist, 2016; Coffman & Neuenfeld, 2014); as her environment and self-efficacy continue to shift, so may a girl's or woman's aspirations. Thus, when women see leadership behaviors as desirable behaviors, when they see those behaviors as consistent with their own self-images, when they believe they are prepared and have the capability to be leaders, and when they see the

value of the impact they can make as leaders to be more important than the personal losses they believe they would suffer if they chose to be leaders, only then will women's aspirations for leadership increase.

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Figure 1.

Organizing Framework to Understand Women's Leadership Aspirations

