

## **Barriers To Women's Progress: Psychology As Basis and Solution**

Lorene S. Coward, Adjunct Instructor, Trident Technical College

### **Abstract**

Although opportunities have grown for women to actualize both socially and vocationally, women continue to experience barriers to complete success. The article examines the progress of women's rights and the increase of opportunity women do now enjoy in the context of the discrimination which still exists against them. Current discrimination and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes by both masculine and feminine society are explored. The psychological aspect of the issue is examined at length. The ways in which psychological phenomena continue to oppress females are discussed, and the absence of certain socially nurtured psychological mentalities on the part of women as factors for motivation are also presented.

Possible solutions to the complex problem are offered via recommendations to the educational community about academic courses and career guidance, both which have proved to diminish negative psychology. Finally, a review of legislation which has helped to battle discrimination is given and an invocation is made to all readers to emphasize the need for tougher legislation to law officials in order to more strongly battle lingering discriminatory incidents.

### **Introduction**

Women continue to experience barriers to equality on multiple fronts. The "glass ceiling," introduced by the Wall Street Journal in 1986, (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630) is still there. As the American congress noted as recently as 2008 in the second section of the Paycheck Fairness Act, women continue to experience barriers. "Despite the enactment of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, many women continue to earn significantly lower pay than men for equal work. These pay disparities exist in both the private and governmental sectors. In many instances, the pay disparities can only be due to continued intentional discrimination or the lingering effects of past discrimination" (Paycheck Fairness Act, 2008). According to N.J. Adler, as of 1999, only 42 women had ever held the position of president or prime minister (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.629). And of these, more than half did not rise to these stations until the 1990s (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.629). And almost any women in top corporate positions of this 1990s group attained the said positions in the 1990s as well (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.629).

As the changing trend of the 90s decade illustrates, though, women have come a long way. There was the Paycheck Fairness Act enacted in 2008 by the sensitive 110<sup>th</sup> congress cited above. And, as we see in the statement of this said congress, U.S. women finally received more promise of equality with the Equal Pay Act in the early 1960s. Then came the Civil Rights Act of 1964, containing Title VII, the Equal Protection Clause, which helped women. And the 1972 Title IX of the Education Act helped to form a foundation for U.S. Supreme Court decisions that ultimately worked in favor of women's social status (Alexander, 2005, p.184). By the time the 90's decade closed and the 21<sup>st</sup> century rolled around, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2001 reported that U.S. females had "entered the paid labor force" and made up "47% of workers" (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630). That same year women were "45% of managers and administrators" (Carli and

Eagly, 2010, p.630).

Still, of that same year inequities can be cited, but as Carli and Eagly point out, the old tried and untrue argument that this inequity is due to a lack of credentials and suitable training for such positions simply cannot stand any longer because “The pipeline is full of women” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630), and has been for a while. Between the early 1980s and the publishing of Carli and Eagly’s article “Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction,” in 2001, more bachelor degrees had been awarded to women than men (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630). And at the turn of this century, women were holding “51% of all bachelor degrees” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630). The statistics surrounding the earning of advanced degrees is equally telling of the fact of women’s abilities and achieved specializations. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, again, the U.S. Census reported that women held “45% of the advanced degrees and were in the process of earning ‘42% of Ph.D.’s” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630). Strikingly, however, at this same time, despite the accomplishments of women, there was still a lack of women in “elite leadership positions” of Fortune 500 companies (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.630).

No, as the statistics prove, the issue is not lack of ability but existence of prejudice. What is possibly more disturbing is that Americans, even of this decade, according to Alexander, seldom proactively battle the cause for women’s financial and social equality, but latently accept the lack of continuity between the genders in both areas (Alexander, 2005, p.185). It should be noted, as Alexander has, that “The Equal Rights Act was never passed...” (Alexander, 2005, p.185). There remains a lack of protective policy in U.S. government (Alexander, 2005, p. 185) and women, although highly qualified, are passed over for top positions. The question is not, “Does gender bias exist?” but “Why does gender bias continue and how can it be changed?”

### **Various Contributors To The Problem**

Linda L. Carli and Alice H. Eagly wrote an informative article asserting an interpretation to a review of research on the topic. They said in “Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction” that “women continue to lack access to power and leadership compared with men” and demonstrate within this article some “evidence of bias in the evaluation of women” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.629). What is more helpful, though, is also their discussion of reasons that this inequity continues to occur as they examine “effects of gender stereotypes on women’s influence and leadership behaviors” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.629). The first article by Cecilia L. Ridgeway claims that “people presume that men are more competent and legitimate as leaders” than their counterparts (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.631). The next article by Madeline E. Heilman considers research on the topic and concludes that, in addition to bias existing in the work place, this same bias also creates a situation in which a devaluing of women managers often occurs (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.632). The third article by Virginia E. Schein reviews studies from five different countries and notes a pattern that in each and all of them, men--even from different social and economic backgrounds--were seen as “more qualified” for management than women (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.632). The fourth article by Jennifer Boldry, Wendy Wood, and Deborah A. Kashy “revealed gender biases against women in a military setting” (Carli and Eagly, 2010,

p.632). The fifth article by Monica Biernat and Kathleen Fuegen demonstrates, through empirical data, that “female study participants set harsher standards for hiring female than male applicants and...[have been]...less likely to hire women than men” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.632).

In addition to these various examples of bias in the evaluating of women’s competence, more has been done by Luzadis, Wesolowski, and Snavely. These authors cite a fine article from the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* entitled “Sex Discrimination in Simulated Employment Contexts: A Meta-analytic Investigation” by H.K. Davison and M.J. Burk which sheds more light (Luzadis, Wesolowski, Snavely, 2008, p.468). They cite that this source reveals a preference for “male job candidates...over females for male sex-typed occupations and females over males applying for female sex-typed jobs...” (Luzadis, Wesolowski, Snavely, 2008, p.468) Although “evidence of descriptive gender bias” was not discovered in their research or that of their contemporaries, “prescriptive bias remains” and is explained. The authors define “prescriptive gender bias as that which “is concerned with how females ‘should or should not act’ in various situations” (Luzadis, Wesolowski, Snavely, 2008, pp.468-469) as opposed to how they traditionally have, as is more the case when “descriptive gender bias” occurs. The authors offer a discussion of a study they conducted which demonstrates prescriptive gender bias on the part of hiring decision-makers. The essence of the study reveals that when “decision-makers were provided with position and candidate information as well as clearly defined hiring criteria” bias in their hiring decisions could be detected (Luzadis, Wesolowski, Snavely, 2008, pp.468-482). The bias did not occur in the “defined hiring criteria” as once might have been the case when descriptive-gender-bias decisions were historically present. Instead, the bias was detected after the decision was made by having the decision-makers respond to a series of possible “factors about which they had been given no information” that might have “had an impact on their decisions” (Luzadis, Wesolowski, Snavely, 2008, p.482).

There are various reasons for the perpetuation of such obvious bias. First, history, itself, is not easily overcome. If men and even women have historically not seen as many women as men in leadership roles, they will be naturally more inclined, due to environmental conditioning, to see men, not women, as leaders. As has already been established, men have historically dominated the positions of power; therefore, women battle a historical barrier which leads to a societal one through the psychological conditioning of the society’s members. Interestingly, the psychology of prescriptive gender bias discussed above can be seen as a natural outcome of the stereotypes men and women share concerning the roles of men and women. What is more, though, is that the bias only further feeds the stereotypes. Scholars, then, should note the reciprocal effect of prescriptive gender bias and negative psychology.

In addition to the historical root and stereotypical aspects of the problem is the effect of the psychological fall-out. If history is difficult to overcome, more so might well be the stereotypical way women and men have learned to perceive gender behaviors. In other words, in addition to history influencing us to see men as the leaders, our conditioning sees that men should *act* like leaders, and women perhaps should *act* less aggressively like leaders. Carli and Eagly point out that in order to be taken seriously as a leader that women “must combine agentic qualities, such as

competence and directiveness, with communal qualities, such as warmth and friendliness” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.632). The paradoxical expectation of women becomes, then, yet another barrier to their success. People are conditioned to expect women to be less competent; therefore, women have to prove overly competent to be taken seriously. By the time this “over-competence” is perceived, the on-lookers have already developed a dislike for a woman who fits this “competent” role, finding her lacking “communal qualities” (Carli and Eagly, 2010, p.633).

Of more interest, still, than the perpetuation of gender stereotypes by both masculine and feminine society is the fact that women combat their own psychology. Interestingly, some research indicates that women possibly lack the same level of psychological motivation towards leadership as that of men. Many females do not see themselves in leadership roles, and they tend to restrict themselves because of cultural assumptions.

Seemingly, females do not see themselves in leadership roles for a couple of reasons. One study asked participants “to envision themselves in a leadership role” and contemplate “how positive and possible” they perceived their being in such a role would be (Killeen, Lopez-Zafra, Eagly, 2006, p.312). Since motivation is the primary component in the pursuit of success, these responses of this study’s participants are revealing. As perhaps predictable, women perceived the roles as “less possible” than their male counterparts (Killeen, Lopez-Zafra, Eagly, 2006, p.312). Moreover, both the men and women participants were asked to envision themselves in leadership in both industries which had a “feminine image” and a “masculine image” (Killeen, Lopez-Zafra, Eagly, 2006, p. 312). Women and men, the study demonstrated, perceived the roles equally positive, but women found the leadership roles of masculine-imaged industries “less facilitative of close relationships and gender relationships.” Interestingly, too, women found the roles with a “feminine image” more positive than those of a “masculine image” (Killeen, Lopez-Zafra, Eagly, 2006, p.312 ).

Women unwittingly adopt a self-restricting culture which plays a huge role in holding them back in various ways. Research by Susan B. Twombly reviews scholarship which suggests a “relationship between power, gender, culture, and policy” (Twombly, 1999, p.442) “Women construct feminism, oppression, and change differently depending on...race/ethnicity and gender” (Twombly, 1999, p.453). Upon review of these scholarly pieces, one sees that women, themselves, contribute in large part to their own barriers. As Twombly asserts, women are more than “victims”; they are, at times, “active resisters” of positive change (Twombly, 1999, p.453). Carmen Luke is cited arguing that women need to “disengage from their anxieties about authority and power” (Twombly, 1999, p.453). Jaye Jang Van Kirk would agree with this sentiment by Carmen Luke. Kirk explains “that to achieve success, an individual may be obligated to detach from the context of her personal life and assimilate to the existing structure and demands of the academic institution” (Kirk, 2005, p.200). In the context of this discussion, then, one sees that this scholar’s insights complement the views of others: persons who actualize often must disregard or disconnect from their inherent cultures. Kirk goes on to explain that women who wish to be successful must often overcome the “gender roles...that shape a woman’s self-concept” (Kirk,

2005, p.201). And these roles are often “tied to ethnic views of one’s familial relationships, acculturation and the personal conflicts inherent in integrating culture, educational goals and experiences” (Kirk, 2005, p.201). Sally Reis offers two must-reads on the subject of cultural phenomenon and women. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, women seem inwardly trapped by their own psychology due to cultural dictates. Sally Reis’s article “External Barriers Experienced by Gifted and Talented Girls and Women” and her article just over one year later entitled “Internal Barriers, Personal Issues, and Decisions Faced by Gifted and Talented Females” are rich in their examination of cultural barriers women experience or, ironically, self-perpetuate. In addition to Reis’s observations about the role of the general environment negatively affecting the mentality of women, there are internal barriers which she explores that reciprocally act on the individual female and her environment, thus, like inertia, perpetuating and even accelerating both until a cultural obstruction halts the phenomenon.

One such internal barrier that is psychological in nature is a mentality women have traditionally adopted by the time of maturation, that “being ambitious is synonymous with being selfish” (Reis, 2002, p.15). The scholar, Reis, recounts a story of a gifted woman named Maria. When she was the tender age of 15, she proved skeptical about believing she would face barriers to her dreams. She had plans to attend a woman’s college and, upon completion of her undergraduate degree, earn a graduate degree, too. She further dreamed of teaching at the college level and writing. Instead, twenty years later, when interviewed, she had fallen in love as an undergraduate and married without ever having pursued her master’s. According to Reis, when asked about her dreams not pursued, she was quoted as saying, “Oh today, I am much more realistic about my goals. I try to get through the week and take care of my family. I also am devoted to my husband’s dreams” (Reis, 2002, p.15). Before the interview was finished, she was also quoted explaining, “...it’s just not right to put my own needs ahead of the needs of my child and my husband. He has such dreams about his work” (Reis, 2002, p.15).

Reis mentions, too, another interior barrier is the absence of the psychological sense of self. An interview revealed a woman’s reflection on her life. The woman shared that as a young girl she was known as, primarily, her father’s daughter; when she married, she was known as his wife, and upon the birthing of her young, she became their mother. Years later when her children were gone and her husband had passed, she was known for the first time primarily by her birth name--Berice (Reis, 2002, p.16). A sense of self is necessary. In addition to perceiving that one’s right to pursue one’s dreams is not selfish, a belief already discussed as lacking, one needs to feel the sense of self which defines the dream(s) one might dare to pursue.

A third interior barrier is an absence of *resilience* as defined by Rutter and discussed by Reis (Reis, 2002, p.17). Rutter called this “the positive pole of individual differences in people’s response to stress and ‘adversity’” (Reis, 2002, p.17). As Reis studied various psychological subjects, she found that resilience, even if possessed in large quantity at one time in a person’s life, is not necessarily ongoing throughout all of life. “The successful negotiation of psychological risks at one point in a person’s life does not guarantee that the individual will react positively to other stresses when situations change” (Reis, 2002, p.17). She goes on to talk about women who were

successful whose lives were exceptional in the presence of characteristics associated with Rutter's resilience (i.e., independence, determination, etc.) Likewise, too, one such woman, a college president, possessed a helpful philosophy which contributed to her resilience: the understanding that even criticism can be a precursor to positive change (Reis, 2002, p.17). Still, according to the material Reis presents here, more women possessing more such characteristics are necessary if resilience is to be a dominant psychological mentality in the minds of the female gender to enable success.

Fourthly, Reis discusses, too, another interior barrier of the psychological kind--one which has much to do with the traditional roles of women, although she ultimately qualifies her discussion of it. They can experience, according to Horner, another scholar Reis cites, what he terms a *fear of success syndrome*. If women grow too competent, Horner believed, they may become disliked by peers or unattractive to the opposite sex (Reis, 2002, p.17). She also cites Sassen who even conceived of a relationship between competition and anxiety (Reis, 2002, p.17-18). Reis comments on the research above, though, by giving it her twist. She asserts that women simply have mixed feelings about traditional roles and career ambitions. They often simply perceive that positive career choices can be accompanied by negative social consequences (Reis, 2002, p.18). At a most basic level, staying at the office late does not put a hot meal on the table. The complex aspects of positive career choices are also readily perceivable. If one's focus is her desire to sit on the Supreme Court, then law school might very well come before marriage and children.

Although Reis does not conclude her discussion of interior barriers with this next one, of the remaining ones she discusses, it proves strikingly important. She talks about the issue of the *great imposter syndrome* as labeled by Clance and Imes (Reis, 2002, p.19). This idea is that females tend to see outward influences as the dominant reason for their accomplishments; whereas males own their accomplishments, seeing them as a reflection of their own efforts. Since self-efficacy, as Bandura termed it (Reis, 2002, p.16), is a necessary front-runner to consistent success, this interior barrier needs to be examined. As Kirk says, too, a "potentially significant factor influencing motivation and perseverance in achieving one's goals is the perception of one's abilities. A person must be able to acknowledge the value of who they are and the nature of the contributions they are capable of sharing with others" (Kirk, 2005, p.211).

### **Possible Solutions**

Then what might we consider as solutions? There are several which naturally spring to mind upon examination of the above research. These solutions have to do with better serving our female body through the improvement of our educators' training, the restructuring of our educational curriculum, and the improvement of our educational institutions' career counseling. In addition to these, society should take seriously the need to push for women in positions of academic leadership so that women may act as mentors to the youth of their gender--even if this push suggests a need for litigious action.

Educators need to be versed during training on the reality of psychological conditioning

and need to become more aware of how females unwittingly limit their own career potential. When a young woman is in a potentially self-harmful and selfless mode, educators could point out that government, military, corporate, university, scientific, and other various types of leaders are in a position to help people as much, if not more, than some of the more traditional female career choices which the young woman might be more conditioned to pursue (Rockenstein, 2005, p.48). Educators should address head-on female students' lack of confidence--the *imposter syndrome*--like progressive and successful curriculum restructurings have already done. For instance, The Athena project, which will be addressed further below, begins addressing this denial of ability the first day of the class (Rockenstein, 2005, p.50).

A primary focus of the educational institutions needs to be on offering classes and courses of study which psychologically nurture women while battling, too, negative psychology. Beck explains, "Evidence suggests that programs that include female role models and mentors in traditionally male fields help gifted girls and women visualize themselves in, and prepare for, careers in these fields." (Rockenstein, 2005, p.46). Such an approach might well disrupt previously incorrect notions which contribute to negative stereotypes, limiting females' visualizations of potential career selves. Such a negating of worn stereotypes can also open the minds of male students to the perceptions of female roles. Since stereotypes still have the power to perpetuate themselves in societal industries through *prescriptive bias*, such a shift in focus in institutional curriculum should not be undervalued as a means of combating psychology which is negative to women. Moreover, such a curriculum restructuring can increase the likelihood that women will grow empowered and gain confidence, a benefit which complements the progressively trained educators' goal of the first day and beyond.

In addition to institutions' curricular approaches, focus should be placed on more effective career counseling. Rockenstein notes that "A substantial body of work indicates the need for specialized career counseling for all gifted students, particularly gifted girls and women..." (Rockenstein, 2005, p.47). Striking is Rockenstein's observation about the literature of Betz and Fitzgerald. Rockenstein asserts that "career theory literature...generally omit's the serious issues of intellectual ability, underachievement, and multipotentiality" (Rockenstein, 2005, p.48). Rockenstein quotes Kelly saying that typically such career counseling "models" neglect particularly the needs of gifted females by not considering "student potential and underachievement" (Rockenstein, 2005, p.48) in addition to "the effect of sex roles on interests declared by gifted women" and by not offering "gifted women" the means to "overcome the internal and external barriers to achievement of their full potential" (Rockenstein, 2005, p.48).

So what are some examples of helpful models of career counseling? Rockenstein catalogues quite a few. Gordon said there was Ohio State University's "orientation program to first-year honors students" that "included a one credit course providing individual career counseling" (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). Another one was at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This was a career program for both male and female gifted high school students "that resulted in raising the career aspirations of gifted women" (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). Rockenstein mentions Schroer and Dorn's discussion of Texas A&M University which offered a "6-hour group program

in career counseling” to their “freshman and sophomore honors students” which resulted in an “increased awareness of potential for personal conflict and external barriers in their career decision” (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). In addition to all of these institutional contributions, St. Cloud State University of St. Cloud, Minnesota had a couple successful programs summarized by Rockenstein: Windows On The World and The Athena Project.

The Windows On The World project at St. Cloud University implemented a pioneering first-year Honors curriculum which integrated an “interdisciplinary, global, multicultural, and gender-balanced first-year curriculum” (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). Seven departments, from the humanities to the sciences, engaged in the project by “redesigning their instructional materials” and presenting them such that the curriculum was presented to students in years two and three (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). Although aspects of the project were “not continued in...[their]...entirety, it resulted in inter-disciplinary, multicultural, and women’s studies courses in the Honors curriculum” (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49). The project did present “Female role models” and “received positive reviews from students, faculty, and outside evaluators” (Rockenstein, 2005, p.49).

The Athena Project has as its components a three-credit elective course entitled Psychology of Gifted Women. The course, as stated earlier, is designed to address the denial of ability the first day of class. The gifted young women are shown their intelligence scores in comparison to the norm statistics (Rockenstein, 2005, p.50), and the incongruity between what they had believed to be true and what actually is commands their attention (Rockenstein, 2005, p.50), leading them to open their minds to a new psychology.

More than addressing training of our educators, a restructuring of our curriculum, and the creating of effective counseling/self-illuminating programs, we need to work on putting appropriate female mentors in positions where they can make a difference. The fact is that women are underrepresented in academic positions worldwide. And when we consider the roads which have led to and positive gender equality, legislation and legal pressure have been involved. Thus, we must note the legislation which has helped to make a difference, its strengths, and its weaknesses.

Generally, both the U.S. and the U.K., over time, have made strides in legislative policy towards anti-sex discrimination. In the U.S. in 1963 there was the Equal Pay Act and, also, in the U.S. there was Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This Title VII actually “covered all kinds of job discrimination, from the initial advertising of a position to hiring, pay, promotion, and retirement” (Trolander, 2005, p.228). Broader legislation in 1972 in the U.S., too, was a result of an “organized women’s movement” (Trolander, 2005, p.228). England also addressed sex discrimination legislatively around the same era. Trolander reports Joan Hoff saying, “The U.K. instituted its Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts in 1975, (having passed its Equal Pay Act in 1970) and outlawed race discrimination the following year.” (Trolander, 2005, p.228). With the implementation of “Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts,” a woman “could now file an individual complaint with the courts or ask the newly created Employment Opportunities Commission, analogous to the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in the U.S., to do an



investigation” (Trolander, 2005, p.229).

Because of the power of litigation, if only symbolically, in some respects the U.S. has forged a respectable beginning for women’s advancement in comparison to that of her mother country. As one can see when tracing the litigation history in both countries, the British system has proved litigiously weaker (Trolander, 2005, pp.229-241). In England “discrimination cases [have] had to go to the existing employment tribunals, which already dealt with other employment related issues, such as redundancy payments, (unemployment compensation in the U.S.)” (Trolander, 2005, p.229) Because these “tribunals” have been rather “informal and local,” the withdrawal rate of women applicants to these tribunals can be high, seemingly “related to the high degree of personal and work-related stress compared to the low level of the potential reward if the applicant prevailed.” (Trolander, 2005, p.229).

In the same article, Trolander points out an important truth: that the “possibility of high damage awards in the U.S.” is significantly different from the awards possible in Britain (Trolander, 2005, p.230). She explains that “While federal law caps Title VII awards at \$300,000 for each person, many states have no caps, providing a loophole for much larger awards” (Trolander, 2005, p.230). An example of how this proves itself is also offered by Trolander who cites a case against Trinity College in 1999 when Leslie Craine prevailed in a jury trial at the tune of \$12.7 million (Trolander, 2005, p.230). And even though this victory was ultimately undermined by the judge and the Connecticut Supreme Court, she was finally awarded \$721,000 (Trolander, 2005, p.230). Further, Trolander mentions the “1980 settlement of the Rajender case against the University of Minnesota” in which a settlement of a “salary petition” occurred such that the “base pay of women faculty” was increased significantly (Trolander, 2005, p.231). And “St. Cloud State University in Minnesota” had a “class action settlement granting” the “women faculty” there “\$830,786 in back pay and salary adjustments” (Trolander, 2005, p.232).

Class action law suits have demonstrated financial awards much greater than anything the British system can comparatively offer; still, some British sex discrimination cases have proven results. Although Evelyn Henson at Gloucester College did not receive a job offer after inappropriate dismissal (Trolander, 2005, p.233), the college did prevent a further legal dispute by simply awarding her “40,000 pounds” (Trolander, 2005, p.233). Finally, Violet Leavers, an “engineering lecturer” at “Manchester University” claimed that she had been “harassed” (Trolander, 2005, p.234). Other examples are supplied by the reading of Trolander’s “Gender Discrimination Litigation In Higher Education: The United States And England” as she outlines the facts of the Lorna Chessum case in which she “learned she was making ‘6,000 pounds less than a similarly qualified male colleague.’” (Trolander, 2005, p.234) Still, in spite of a couple other “British example[s]” of “salary cases” (Trolander, 2005, pp.234-236) provided by Trolander in the remaining pages of her article, a dismal fact remains apparent: without a significant legal recourse--such as that of class action--women in the British system are still not able to effectively halt or change ongoing sexual discrimination.

When one examines a couple historic facts about both countries and contextualizes the comparison of these countries’ advancements for women, the data becomes interesting and

significant to our consideration about how we should proceed. As Trolander points out, England had no direct history with racial inequities in the form of slavery, although her colonies did (Trolander, 2005, p.228). Yet, perhaps because of her perception of gender inequities, England did eventually develop a conscience about the issue of racial inequality and addressed it legislatively. As Joan Hoff puts it, “The U.K instituted its Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts in 1975, having passed its Equal Pay Act in 1970, and outlawed race discrimination the following year.” (Trolander, 2005, p.228). With the implementation of “Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts,” a woman “could now file an individual complaint with the courts or ask the newly created Employment Opportunities Commission, analogous to the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in the U.S., to do an investigation” (Trolander, 2005, p.229). England banned sex discrimination “before legislation banning racial discrimination” (Trolander, 2005, p.228). Fascinatingly, the English seemed to have moved on legislative issues, though, not due to reaction from minority movements but from a moral directive of collective conscience. America, however, had a comparatively opposite experience in that, interestingly, she responded legislatively first to racial discrimination before addressing gender inequality (Trolander, 2005, p.228). The aspects of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII from which women can claim some benefit were really not generally applied to women in any practical way until after the building of a women’s movement and legislation that came later in the seventies (Trolander, 2005, p.228). Such a sequence of legislation might certainly have been a kind of legislative reaction to the civil unrest of the oppressed minority group of the time. Only after the U.S. had watered one fire did she begin to water the next. It seems that the U.S. might be seen to allow her moral principles to be guided by the pressures of oppressed minority groups rather than her own sense of moral rightness.

Having now observed these differences in the countries’ histories, we might better see the implications of the history of women’s progress in both countries, the drive behind this history, and, in light of the collective psychology of each nation, how best to open doors for the advancement of women. The facts are that despite good intentions on Britain’s part and, perhaps, mere survival-intentions on the part of the U.S., the legislation of the latter country has been more successful in its practice, and the reasons for this could have serious implications. The U.S. women are “moving up” slightly faster than British counterparts, “especially with respect to academic administration” (Trolander, 2005, p.239). Also, U.S. women are also slightly better represented than British women in the positions of their respective countries’ academic institutions (Trolander, 2005, p.240). Succinctly stated, the women of the U.S. are doing better than those of Britain, at least symbolically. Despite the motivation of the one country or the other, the name of the winning game seems to be pressure. A strong legal hand makes a difference. Significantly, though, in respect to salary issues, the “pay gap” between women and men in the academic worlds of both countries is “roughly comparable” when analyzed by percentage (Trolander, 2005, p.241). Women in neither country are where they should be. Trolander points out that an aggressive legal structure outside of aggressive enforcement can still be weak (Trolander, 2005, p.241). And women in the U.S. who have symbolically improved their situations somewhat significantly still

lack the practical equality they deserve. What needs to be noted, though, is that litigation has taken us places we once were not, and litigation focused on practical equalities--those of equal pay, equal benefits, and equal promotional opportunity--needs to be one defined goal. In addition, all of society needs to remain vigilant about and cognizant of the need for committed legislative staff who will seek to strongly enforce such legislation. We all must keep legal pressure on society.

### **Conclusion**

Clearly, better educators, better curriculum, and better counseling need to take place. As has been convincingly demonstrated, the psychological conditioning of potential women leaders and society members is wide-spread and damaging. Our educators need to be trained about this fact and how to effectively address it through the development of better school curriculum. Better counseling obviously needs to occur, too, with knowledge of these conditioning realities in the forefront of the minds of mentors. And, of course, academic leadership which better reflects the abilities and leadership intelligence of women needs to be created. Women need to step up and loudly renounce the barriers holding them back, and they need to make their societies and legislatures do the same by keeping the pressure on.

The U.S. and Britain can learn from their different approaches to moral justice and merge the best of them. Seemingly, the U.S. and the U.K. approach their moral conscience differently and, thusly, make morally progressive choices--and advancements--differently. While the U.S. apparently responds in a kind of reactionary mode to grass-roots' campaigns of minority groups and, afterwards, institutes moral law, persons of the U.K. perceive injustice with a kind of collective, dignified conscience and attempt to right it with as little unpleasant intrusion as possible upon her society--limiting the amount of litigation one might impose on any singular person or institution. Certainly, if such an observation is correct, one might readily conclude that England holds herself at a morally superior level.

Still, perhaps, a more critical look at the same data might make a grander suggestion: that both countries might do well to learn from one another. Even though England is well-intentioned, she may desire to consider at what cost it comes. Certainly those women in America who have triumphed litigiously would agree. Still, too, America's leaders might look to their mother country and note that moral conscience which precedes litigation rather than reacts to it is a high ideal that should invoke them all to review theirs. It is truly a matter of grave thought that despite the symbolic progress of women in the United States in positions of leadership, women still remain fixed financially with inferior professional incomes to those of men. If justice is to be done, continued contemplation on the parts of all Americans at all levels needs to occur. Since America's progressive legislation has traditionally been led by the discriminated class, women must become less psychologically apathetic--for whatever reason--to their own cause and proactive about opening the doors of their potential. Women must lead both men and other women and insist, if even litigiously, on educational and societal structures which do the same--if even litigiously--however unpleasant or impolite such action might be; they must grow psychologically accepting of their own abilities and nurture them; and they must seek to

psychologically mentor one another to this end by nurturing their own individual abilities while being a role-model for others like them. Legislatures, too, in both the U.S. and England seriously need to address lingering discriminatory incidents by lifting the societal chains that shackle.

## References

- Alexander, Kern. "Epoch of Gender Equity: Recent Progress And Uncertain Future." *Forum On Public Policy* 1, no. 3 (2005): 178-187.  
<http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol1.no3.gender/alexander.vol1.no3.gender.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2010).
- Carli, Linda L., and Alice H. Eagly. "Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction." *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (2010): 629-636.
- Killeen, Lauren A., Esther Lopez-Zafra, and Alice H. Eagly. "Envisioning Oneself As A Leader: Comparisons Of Women And Men In Spain And The United States." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (2006): 312-322.
- Kirk, Jaye Jang Van. "Ongoing Barriers To Progress For Women's Equity In Education: The Cultural Context Of Success And The Promise Of Change." *Forum On Public Policy* 1, no. 3 (2005): 200-226. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol1.no3.gender/vankirk.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2010).
- Luzadis, Rebecca, Mark Wesolowski, B. Kay Snavelly. "Understanding Criterion Choice In Hiring Decisions From A Prescriptive Gender Bias Perspective." *Journal Of Managerial Issues* 20, no. 4: (2008) 468-485.
- "Paycheck Fairness Act." House Report 110-783, Section 2. *U.S. Government Printing Office*. 28 July 2008. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-110hrpt783/html/CRPT-110hrpt783.htm> (accessed Sept 12, 2010).
- Reis, Sally M. "External Barriers Experienced By Gifted and Talented Girls and Women." *Gifted Child Today* 24, no. 4 (2001): 27-66.
- Reis, Sally M. "Internal Barriers, Personal Issues, and Decisions Faced By Gifted And Talented Females." *Gifted Child Today* 25, no. 1 (2002): 14-28.
- Rockenstein, Zoa. "Addressing The Leadership Gap: Preparing Gifted Women To Take Their Rightful Places On The World Stage." *Forum On Public Policy* 1, no. 2 (2005): 41-56.  
<http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol1.no2.wr/rockenstein.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2010).
- Trolander, Judith Ann. "Gender Discrimination Litigation In Higher Education: The United States And England." *Forum On Public Policy* 1, no. 3 (2005): 227-246.  
<http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol1.no3.gender/trolander.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2010).
- Twombly, Susan B. "New Scholarship on Academic Women: Beyond "Women's Ways." *The Review of Higher Education* 22, no. 4 (1999): 441-454.