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NANCY J. ADLER

Competitive Frontiers

Women Managers in the Triad

> The best reason for believing that more women will be in charge before long is that in a ferociously competitive global economy, no company can afford to waste valuable brainpower simply because it's wearing a skirt. (Fisher, 1992, p. 56).

World business has become intensely competitive. Japan, the United States, and the European Community, often referred to as the Triad, dominate that competition. With only 13 percent of the world's population, the Triad produces 64 percent of the world's GNP (World Bank Atlas, 1991; ILO Yearbook, 1991). Moreover, the Triad accounts for 81 percent of the world's outward foreign direct investment, 47 percent of the world's exports, and 39 percent of inward foreign direct investment (U.N. Centre for Transnational Corporations, 1991), clearly demonstrating the Triad's dominant position in global cross-border economic activity, including that of transnational corporations. Therefore, to understand women's roles in management worldwide, it is essential to understand their role in the Triad, and in particular in transnational corporations.

Good people allow corporations to compete. Yet, while top-quality human resource systems provide competitive advantages, companies worldwide draw from a restricted pool of potential managers. Although women represent over 50 percent of the world population, in no country do women represent half, or even close to half, of the corporate managers. Even in the United States, where many believe the proportion of female executives to be outstanding, reality belies the belief: whereas 46 percent of the American work force is female, women consti-

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tute only 3 percent of the senior executives (Ball, 1991; Segal and Zellner, 1992), and less than one-half of one percent of the highest-paid officers and directors (Fierman, 1990).

What has prevented women's movement into management and, especially, into the executive suite? What have countries, companies, and women themselves done to increase women's representation in management? This introduction to *Competitive Frontiers: Women Managers in the Triad* reviews the changing nature of global competition and presents a model for viewing the role of female managers within worldwide business dynamics. It reviews the role of female managers working domestically within their own countries as well as those working across national boundaries. Unlike the many articles written about American women in management,[1] this issue of ISMO takes a global perspective and goes beyond the parochial determinism of any individual country's cultural, social, legal, economic, and political history of domestic business. Throughout *Competitive Frontiers* we ask if globally competitive firms dare to limit their potential talent pool to half of the human race.

Global competition

Business increasingly competes on a worldwide basis. Few firms have the luxury of competing primarily within their domestic market. While some firms use country-specific multidomestic strategies, and thus compete in multiple highly independent domestic markets, a much greater number have embraced globally integrated strategies structured around worldwide lines of business (see Adler and Ghadar, 1990). As global competition continues to increase, firms are evolving transnational strategies. Such strategies simultaneously require the local responsiveness demanded by multidomestic strategies, the worldwide integration demanded by global strategies, along with an increased emphasis on organizational learning and innovation (see Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989). Such business dynamics lead to:

> transnational networks of firms and divisions within firms, including an increasingly complex web of strategic alliances. Transnational firms . . . are less hierarchically structured than firms operating in the previous phases. Power is no longer centered in a single headquarters that is . . . dominated by one national culture. As a consequence, both structural and cultural dominance are minimized, with cross-cultural interaction no longer following any predefined "passport hierarchy." [Adler and Bartholomew, 1992, p. 56]

These organizational changes are affecting the number and role of female managers.

Women and transnational corporations

Given the increasing importance of transnational corporations, it is encouraging that their impact on women in management, to date, has been primarily positive.

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Transnational corporations include women in ways that domestic, multidomestic, and multinational firms do not. First, the extremely competitive business environment forces transnational firms to select the very best people available. The opportunity cost of prejudice—of rejecting women and limiting selection to men—is much higher than in previous economic environments. As *Fortune* succinctly stated, "The best reason for believing that more women will be in charge before long is that in a ferociously competitive global economy, no company can afford to waste valuable brainpower simply because it's wearing a skirt" (Fisher, 1992, p. 56). The advantage of including women as managers is heightened by a growing education differential favoring women.[2]

Second, whereas domestic and multidomestic companies hire primarily local nationals, and therefore must closely adhere to local norms on hiring—or not hiring—female managers, transnational corporations are not similarly limited. Because the corporate culture of transnational firms is not coincident with the local culture of any particular country, transnationals have greater flexibility in defining selection and promotion criteria that best fit the firm's needs rather than those that most closely mimic the historic patterns of a particular country. Said simply, transnationals can and do hire local women managers even in countries where the local companies rarely do so.

United States–based transnational corporations, for example, have often hired local female managers when local firms would not. This dynamic has been particularly pronounced in Japan where foreign corporations have had difficulty attracting top-ranked male applicants (see Lansing and Ready, 1989; Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1988). American firms have led the way in hiring excellent Japanese women, while Japanese firms are still extremely reticent to hire them (see Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1993 in this volume). Interestingly, while still hiring fewer women than most U.S. firms, Japanese multinationals operating in the United States hire more female managers in their U.S. affiliates than they do in their home country operations (Rosenzweig and Nohria, 1992).

By hiring women, transnationals act as role models for firms in many countries that have not seriously considered promoting significant numbers of women into managerial positions. The greater the number of expatriates involved in foreign affiliates, the less likely they are to follow local human resource practices—including being less likely to restrict the number of female managers (Rosenzweig and Nohria, 1992). The firm's transnational character allows it organizational freedoms and imposes competitive demands not present in domestic or multidomestic situations.

Third, transnational corporations have begun to send women abroad as expatriate managers (Adler, 1984c). Because transnationals use expatriates and local managers, they can benefit from the greater flexibility that many cultures afford foreign women. In most countries, foreign women are not held to the same professionally limiting roles as are local women (see Adler, 1987; Jelinek and Adler, 1988). The outstanding success of these female expatriate managers in all

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geographies—Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East—is encouraging firms both to continue sending women abroad (Adler, 1987; Moran, Stahl, and Boyer, 1988) and to begin to promote more local women into management (Jelinek and Adler, 1988). However, currently more than half (54 percent) of all human resource managers in North American multinationals are hesitant to send women abroad, based on the assumption that foreigners' prejudice will have a detrimental effect on the female expatriate manager's efficacy and that dual-career issues are insurmountable (Adler, 1984b). Luckily, for both the companies and the female managers, local clients and colleagues see the women first and foremost as foreign managers, and only secondarily as women. Therefore, rather than treating them as they have historically treated their local women, they accord female expatriate managers the respect necessary for success (Adler, 1987).

In addition, expatriate status has inadvertently helped to solve some of the role overload experienced by women who are managers, wives, and mothers. Since most expatriate managers can afford household help while on foreign assignment, but not in their home country, they are able to reduce substantially the demands on their time. As one American expatriate manager in Hong Kong said, "It would be impossible for me to do what I'm doing here if I was still in the United States. There just wouldn't be enough time!"

Fourth, whereas domestic, multidomestic, and multinational firms have been characterized by structural hierarchies of dominance and subordination, transnationals are increasingly characterized by networks of equals. Recent research suggests that women work particularly well in such networks (Helgesen, 1990):

> [W]omen . . . are countering the values of the hierarchy with those of the web [p. 52]. . . . when describing their roles in their organizations, women usually refer . . . to themselves as being in the middle of things. Not at the top, but in the center; not reaching down, but reaching out . . . .Inseparable from their sense of themselves as being in the middle was the women's notion of being connected to those around them. [pp. 45–46]

Not surprisingly, women are seen as bringing needed collaborative and participative management skills to the workplace (Perry, 1992).

Fifth, leading management scholars have identified innovation as a key factor in global competitiveness (among others, see Porter, 1990; and Hammond and Holton, 1993, in this volume). An inherent source of innovation is diversity, including gender diversity (Adler, 1991). Women bring diversity to transnational corporations that have heretofore been primarily male.

Complementary contributions

Given women's current scarcity in the managerial ranks, transnational firms—as well as domestic, multidomestic, and multinational firms—can use two ap-

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proaches to leverage the potential of female managers: they can increase the number of female managers and/or encourage their unique contribution. Unfortunately, many managers, scholars, and executives have inadvertently focused on only one of these two approaches.

Fundamental assumptions: Different approaches

Although generally implicit, one of two fundamentally different assumptions about the ideal role of women in management is generally made. As shown in Table 1, the first defines an equity approach based on assumed similarity, while the second defines a complementary contribution approach based on assumed difference. The first is based on representation; the second on process.

The first, the equity approach, based on assumed similarity, has been most pervasive in the United States. In this approach, women are assumed to be identical, as professionals, to men, and therefore equally capable of contributing in ways similar to those of men. From this equity perspective, the primary question is one of access and representation. Are sufficient numbers of female managers hired and promoted? Primary change variables include affirmative action programs, equal rights legislation, and structural changes designed to avoid tokenism and to train women in managerial skills traditionally neglected during their formal education and informal socialization.

Given the equity approach's emphasis on equal access to and equal representation in the male-dominated management world, the equity approach's implicit goal for female managers is assimilation: women are expected to think, to dress, and to act like the men who have traditionally held the aspired-to management positions. Understandably, effectiveness is measured against male norms: Can she do what he has been doing as well as he has been doing it? Or, according to *Fortune* (Perry, 1992, p. 58), "If you can't join 'em, beat 'em.... the way to overcome [discrimination] is to ... start outdoing men at their own game." The potential for women to make unique, but equally valuable, contributions to the organization remains outside the logic of the equity approach and therefore largely unrealized.

In contrast, the second approach, the complementary contribution approach, is based on the assumption of difference, not similarity. While Steen[3] originally used it to describe Swedish managers, it is pervasive throughout Europe and Japan, and evident in most other areas of the world. In the complementary contribution approach, men and women are assumed to differ and therefore to be capable of making different, but equally valuable, contributions to the organization (see Aptheker, 1989; Calvert and Ramsey, 1992; Fossan, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Korabik, 1988; Loden, 1987; Miller 1976, 1982). Unlike in the equity approach, fair treatment is not assumed to be a question of equal statistical

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Table 1
Two Approaches to Women in Management

Assumptions	Equity approach	Complementary contribution approach
Fundamental assumptions	Similarity	Difference
• Men's and women's contributions:	Identical	Complementary
• Fairness based on:	Equity	Valuing difference
Strategic goal	Equal access	Recognizing and valuing difference
• Assessment:	Quantitative	Qualitative
• Measured by:	Statistical proportion of women at each hierarchical level	Assessing women's contribution to organization's goals
• Process:	Counting women	Assessing women's contribution
Measurement of effectiveness		
• Women's contribution:	Identical to men's	Complementary to men's
• Norms:	Identical for men and women	Unique to men and women
• Based on:	Historical "male" norms	Women's own contribution
• Referant:	Men	Women
Acculturation process	Assimilation	Synergy
• Expected behavior:	Standardized	Differentiated
• Based on:	Male norms	Female norms
• Essence:	"Dress for success" business suit	Elegant,feminine attire
Example	United States: "The melting pot"	France: "Vive la différence!"

Source: Adler (1986–87).

representation, but rather one of equivalent recognition of men's and women's differing patterns and styles of contribution.

From this second perspective, change strategies focus first on identifying the unique contributions of male and female managers; second, on creating enabling conditions to encourage and reward both types of contribution; and third, on creating synergy—combining men's and women's contributions to form new and more powerful organizational solutions to business challenges. Under this second set of assumptions, female managers are expected to think, to dress, and to act like women. Female managers' thinking and behavior, though similar in many ways to that of their male colleagues, are seen to differ in important respects.

Progress, as measured by the equity approach, is quantitative—a statistical accounting of the proportion of female managers in the organization by rank,

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salary, and status. As measured by the complementary contribution approach, progress is qualitative—an assessment of the organization's track record in encouraging and rewarding men and women for making unique contributions and for building organizationally effective combinations of those contributions; that is, for increasing innovation and organizational learning.

Interestingly, each approach has tended to be labeled as heresy when viewed through the eyes of the other. From the perspective of the equity approach, viewing women (or any other distinct group) as different has been seen as tantamount to judging them as inferior (see Calvert and Ramsey, 1992). Recognition of difference has implicitly been equated with prejudice (Adler, 1991). From this point of view, there is one best way to manage, and equity demands that women be given equal access to that one way. By contrast, the complementary contribution approach posits that there are many equally valid, yet different, ways to manage. The best approach, based on recognizing, valuing, and combining differences, is synergistic. From this second perspective, not to see a female manager's uniqueness is to negate her identity and, consequently, to negate the potential for her unique contribution to the organization.

To understand women's role in management in the Triad, it is important to reflect on the underlying assumptions being made in each country in this economically dominant region. To what extent is difference viewed as heresy rather than as a potential resource? To what extent is uniqueness seen as a constraint rather than as a valuable asset? To what extent do firms view female managers' representation and potentially unique contribution as sources of competitive advantage rather than as societal constraints?

Multidomestic: Women managers in the Triad

Although the number of women who work outside the home is substantial in most countries, the number in management is considerably lower, and the proportion holding executive positions remains negligible (Morrison et al., 1987). Three decades ago, fewer than a sixth of the working women in most countries held administrative, executive, or managerial positions (see Adler, 1986–87, based on the International Labour Office, 1970). By the 1980s, women held two-thirds (64 percent) of administrative and managerial positions in Sweden; more than one-third of all administrative and managerial positions in the United States (37 percent), the United Kingdom (37 percent), Canada (35 percent), and Eastern Germany (33 percent); one-fifth of such positions in Norway (20 percent), Western Germany (20 percent), and Finland (20 percent); and considerably less than one-fifth in most other countries of the Triad, including in Denmark (15 percent), Belgium (13 percent), France (9 percent), Ireland (9 percent), Japan (8 percent), the Netherlands (7 percent), and Luxembourg (6 percent).[4] At the largest and most prestigious companies in Japan, women

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hold fewer than 3 percent of the professional positions (Holden and Weiner, 1992).

Top management positions still elude women, with women representing less than 10 percent of senior managers in all countries, including only 8 percent in Belgium, 7 percent in France, 6 percent in Western Germany, 5 percent in the United States, 4 percent in Luxembourg, 3 percent in Ireland and Norway, 2 percent each in Denmark, Italy, and the Netherlands, and only 0.3 percent in Japan.[5] Corporations, it appears, have systematically ignored women as a potential executive resource. In all countries in the Triad, the higher the rank within the organization, the fewer women one finds. In the United States, for example, by 1991, 41 percent of all managers were women (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993), yet only 4.9 percent of senior managers were women—up from 2.9 percent in 1986 (Fisher, 1992, p. 46), and only nineteen were listed among the highest paid officers and directors of the 1,000 largest American companies (Fierman, 1990). In Western Germany, only 0.7 percent of managing board members and 0.3 percent of supervisory board members of public companies are women (Hochstatter, 1989, p. 47). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, there are no female CEOs among Britain's top 100 companies (Allen, 1991) and only twenty-one female board members among the United Kingdom's 200 largest industrial companies (Holton and Rabbetts, 1989; also see Hammond and Holton, 1993, in this issue).

Along with the underrepresentation of women, those who do gain managerial and executive positions face pay discrimination (Perry, 1992). "Women receive smaller salary payoffs than men engaging in identical career-enhancing activities, including acquiring international credentials" (Egan and Bendick, 1992, p. 1). For example, in 1991, American female managers earned 67 percent of the compensation of their male counterparts (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). Similarly, in both East and West Germany, women earned one-third less than did men (Schmidt, 1991, p. 2; Nickols, 1990, p. 8). In 1987, British women earned 74 percent of comparable male earnings, with four out of five of the highest paid jobs in London being held by men (Hammond and Holton, 1993). This pay inequality persists even though each country, upon joining the European Community, signs the Treaty of Rome which states that "Each member state shall . . . ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work" (Article 19; see Hammond and Holton, 1993).

Explanations for the paucity and underutilization of female managers appear neither coincidental nor random. There is no systematic evidence proving women ineffective as managers (Donnell and Hall, 1980; Freedman and Phillips, 1988; Tsui and Gutek, 1984). In entry- and middle-level management positions, in which many Triad countries now find women in sizable

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numbers, experience confirms their effectiveness. In upper-level management, the scarcity of women to date precludes judgment for or against their effectiveness. Since proven ineffectiveness is not the explanation, why are there so few female managers worldwide?

Many of the constraints facing female managers across the range of Triad countries are quite similar. Nevertheless, the relative importance of each varies markedly from society to society. The possibility for both increased representation of female managers and increased recognition of their unique contribution depends fundamentally on each culture's dominant societal constraints and the avenues available for change. Women in Japan, for example, may focus primarily on cultural patterns when explaining the role of female managers and use increased enrollment in prestigious universities as their approach to changing the situation. By contrast, because the U.S. Constitution mandates individual civil liberties, American women have looked primarily to the legal system, both to legislate change and to seek redress. However, in the Western European countries, where social democratic parties have emphasized social equality and the proportional representation system has been more favorable to women, European women have used the political system to achieve change.

The barriers to female managers' representation and contribution are societal, organizational, and psychological. They include cultural, educational, legal, social, and historical sanctions. A few of the more prominent barriers in the Triad are reviewed below.

Cultural sanctions

Almost all cultures differentiate between male and female roles. Societies expect women to behave in certain ways and men in others. In most cultures, the traditional female role supports attitudes and behaviors that contradict, or at least fail to support, those of traditional managers.[6] In Japan, for example, "Families traditionally encourage women to get the type and level of education that will equip them to marry managers, rather than to become managers themselves" (Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1993). In the United States, more than 80 percent of female CEOs list "stereotyping and preconceptions of women managers as a primary factor impeding women's ability to rise to the top of their corporations" ("Corporate Women," 1986, as cited in Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). In the private sector in Germany, 95 percent of notices advertising top management positions use the masculine noun form (see Antal and Krebsbach-Gnath, 1993, in this issue, and *Management Wissen*, 1990, p. 8). Many women therefore fail both to aspire to and to apply for managerial positions, while many men fail to allow them to pursue such career aspirations. This pattern creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that both eliminates women and leads only men to apply.

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Educational barriers

North American business has been most reliant on MBAs, yet women there have not traditionally pursued graduate business studies. Harvard Business School accepted its first women into the MBA program in the 1960s. By 1981, U.S. management schools awarded 25 percent of all MBAs to women (Perry, 1992; Brown, 1981, 1988). Today, women represent 35 percent of all MBAs graduating from North American business schools (Bebbington, 1988, p. 15; Perry, 1992). Similarly in 1960, women accounted for only about 2 percent of the international management students at the American Graduate School of International Management; three decades later, 38 percent are women (1992). However, women today comprise only 5 percent of the participants in executive training seminars, down from 8 percent in 1980 (Fisher, 1992, p. 44).

Until very recently, businesses outside of North America considered the MBA degree less important; consequently, Asia and Europe have few business schools and considerably fewer MBAs. In Europe, an insignificant number of women hold graduate business degrees, although their number is increasing. For example, in England, in 1970, the London Business School included only one woman among the ninety-seven MBAs; six years later, nearly one in six was a woman (Ross-Skinner, 1976). By 1988, 49 percent of British graduate students in business administration were women along with 20–25 percent of all British MBAs (Hammond and Holton, 1993, in this issue). The number of female graduates of Italian business and management schools tripled in a decade, from 5 percent in 1975 to 15 percent in 1984 (Olivares, 1992). Similarly, female MBA students more than tripled at Spain's IESE in Barcelona, increasing from just 5 percent to 17 percent a decade later (Bebbington, 1988, p. 15). During the 1970s, women were almost unheard of in the senior management programs at Switzerland's Centre d'Etudes Industrielles; now they regularly participate. At INSEAD, a leading international business school in France, the enrollment of women increased from 0.5 percent in the mid-1960s to 12 percent recently (Bebbington, 1988, p. 15). In East Germany, where MBA programs were nonexistent, women accounted for 66 percent of the economics students (Winkler, 1990, p. 47).

As in university programs, some companies now include more women in their management training seminars (Ross-Skinner, 1976), with Great Britain (see Hammond, 1988) and the United States (see Fagenson and Jackson, 1993) being notable examples. While the numbers are by no means equal to those of men, and women remain the least represented in the most senior-level courses, the trend toward women's increasing representation in management education is indisputable.

However, a serious problem remains because "the weight placed on professional qualifications is inversely related to the position in the hierarchy: the higher the position, the less significance is attached to such 'objective' criteria as

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educational qualifications" (Antal and Krebsbach-Gnath, 1993, p. 7). Whereas educational achievement, including acquiring an MBA, has proven quite helpful in advancing women into lower- and middle-level management, it has not helped women to enter the executive suite. Acceptance into senior management is based on criteria other than those needed for entrance into lower-level management or promotion into middle-level management.

Legal sanctions

Historically, nations' legal structures have rarely supported the equality of women at work. Even ancient Greece, the cradle of democracy, denied women citizenship (Fleurat, 1982). In 1765, English Common Law codified women's "lowly status" in stating, "Husband and wife are one and that one is the husband"(U.S. Department of Labor, 1981). Women in most industrialized countries now recognize that a nonintervention strategy is insufficient for achieving equal representation of men and women in the work force, even much less so at the managerial and executive ranks.

The United States

Over the past quarter-century, the United States has enacted a series of well-publicized federal laws to redress inequalities in the U.S. system. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act rendered discrimination on the basis of race or sex illegal. However, 1972 court cases were the first to uphold the legislation prohibiting discriminatory hiring practices. Subsequent executive orders prohibited sex discrimination and required affirmative action programs by employers receiving federal contracts valued above $10,000 (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). The Equal Rights Amendment, which would have guaranteed that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on the basis of sex" was never ratified. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 allows women to file a discrimination charge, however "the monetary, professional, and personal costs associated with pursuing legal remedies to rectify gender-based job discrimination still remain exceedingly high" (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). By contrast, the Indian constitution has guaranteed equal rights since its adoption in 1952.

Western Europe

In 1957 the European Community enacted laws prohibiting pay discrimination based on gender, but left each country free to write its own legislation. Predictably, the result was massive inaction (Lynch, 1975). Twenty years later, in 1975, the European Economic Community (EEC) agreed to ensure legal recourse in

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discrimination cases through the Commission of the European Communities (Scully, 1977). The following year, 1976, the EEC passed Council Directive 76/207/EEC assuring equal employment opportunity. By the late 1970s, virtually all European countries had enacted equal pay for equal work legislation. During the 1980s, most European countries also passed equal opportunity legislation.[7] The European Community, including the European Court, has been instrumental in encouraging national changes that support women's rights in obtaining equality.

Notwithstanding such changes, the gap between the spirit of such legislation and reality persists, primarily because no mandate exists to implement affirmative action, only guidelines and recommendations. Compliance with EEC measures, while encouraged, is not obligatory in any of the member states of the Council of Europe (Vogel-Polsky, 1989). In practice, legal recourse for women who have been treated unfairly is very limited (Vogel-Polsky, 1989). Moreover, laws defining the status of married women have often discouraged women's full participation in the work force. For example, the German civil code states that a woman's employment is subordinate to her household responsibilities (Merkl, 1976; see also Antal and Krebsbach-Gnath, 1988).

Japan

The new 1986 equal employment opportunity law was ostensibly intended to improve opportunities for women. "Unfortunately, it has weak enforcement provisions and does not address the problem of differential hiring. ... There is no indication yet that the Japanese government intends to press large companies to change their practices fundamentally in order to provide women equal access to promotion opportunities" (Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1993).

Corporate barriers

The United States

Senior executives' attitudes are one of the most important determinants of women's corporate progress. Yet, even in the United States, a survey revealed that men hold considerably more traditional views toward women in management than do women, and that male business students have the same reservations as senior executives concerning women's ability to combine management with the "primary responsibilities to the family" (Tomkeiwicz and Brenner, 1982). Corporate barriers to women, especially to women attempting to assume senior executive positions, persist. In a survey of 201 CEOs of the United States's largest companies, all of whom are men, only 2 percent considered it very likely that their company would have a female CEO within the next decade (Fisher, 1992, p. 44). The biggest barrier to future female CEOs "is an irrational one—

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plain and simple discrimination" (Fisher, 1992, p. 44). According to Sara Lee Corporation's CEO, John H. Bryan:

> I'm not sure there's a lot that women can do about it. They're already working hard and very qualified. It shouldn't be this way, but too many senior managers, and particularly CEOs, tend to want to pass their jobs along to someone who's the image and likeness of themselves. [Fisher, 1992, p. 44]

Expressing similar sentiments, 70 percent of the 400 American female managers surveyed by *Business Week* continue to see "the male dominated corporate culture as an obstacle to their success. ... More than one third of the respondents thought that in five years' time the number of female senior executives at their companies will have remained the same or fallen" (Segal and Zellner, 1992, p. 74).

Western Europe

Male resistance to women executives in Europe has been far stronger than in the United States (Ross-Skinner, 1976). Two-thirds of surveyed British managers reported preferring male applicants for executive positions, with only 12 percent preferring equally qualified women. Similarly, two-thirds of surveyed Italian managers stated that they did not want to take orders from a woman (Ferrari, 1977). Moreover, according to one consulting firm, "German companies always prefer to hire male graduates when there is a choice—and ... there are plenty of men available" (Ross-Skinner, 1976).

Likewise, a British survey found that managers believed that desirable managerial job attributes were more likely to be found in men than in women, that women were basically inferior to men as employees, and that the primary reason for reserving jobs for men (in approximately one-third of the cases) was "the circular one that men had always done them before" (Caulkin, 1977). According to Caulkin (1977), "The U.K.'s historical failure to give women industrial responsibility is ... scandalous. ... The reason is conditioning which makes men prejudiced and prevents women aiming as high as they might."

Japan

A hostile corporate climate is seen as a major barrier to the few Japanese women who have been able to secure managerial positions in leading Japanese corporations (Holden and Weiner, 1992). Corporate practices of large Japanese corporations are a primary mechanism for keeping women out of managerial and decision-making positions. For example, Japanese companies encourage young female employees to marry male employees. The companies then use antinepotism rules to force her—not him—to retire (Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1993). Less than 10 percent of male managers in a large Japanese bank believed that women should continue working after marriage (Daiichi Kangyo Bank, 1989). Moreover, in 1986, one-third of large Japanese companies stated that they would not

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promote female college graduates even if they had the same abilities as men (Japan Manpower Administration Research Institute, 1986). Similarly, companies exclude women from geographical transfers, thus denying them the experience they need to move up the corporate ladder (Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1993). In addition, according to a Labor Ministry poll, "43% of all women in management positions complain of sexual harrassment" (Holden and Weiner, 1992, p. 43).

The myth of women's disinterest in management

Although society, along with its legal, political, economic, and social structures, often causes women's underrepresentation and underutilization in management, many blame women for causing their own predicament (Barrett, 1973). Women, they contend, fail to demonstrate as much interest as men in pursuing managerial careers (see Taylor, 1986); or, stated more bluntly, "one reason more women ... aren't sitting above the glass ceiling is that they haven't tried hard enough to get there" (Perry, 1992).

The experience of North American and European women considering international careers, however, contradicts the belief that women are either less interested or less motivated than their male counterparts. Research found no difference between men's and women's preparation or interest in pursuing international careers (Adler, 1984b).

Similarly, the large number of female entrepreneurs also belies the myth of women's disinterest in management. American women currently own 30 percent of all sole proprietorships and partnerships in the United States (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). During the 1980s, the number of female-owned American businesses increased at four times the overall rate of new business creation (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). Likewise in Japan, two and a half million women run their own businesses (Women's Bureau, 1989) and almost 40,000 women are presidents of companies, an increase of more than 50 percent in four years (Teikoku Data Bank, 1986, 1990). Similarly, women created one-third of all new West German companies in the 1980s (Assig, 1989, p. 5). It is clear that the problem is not women's insufficient interest in managerial careers.

Other factors

Given the dominance of American assumptions and United States-based research, a number of factors have tended to be overlooked, underresearched, or only included more recently in explaining the paucity of women in management. For example, what are the noncorporate career paths of women in management? Why are such a large proportion of women entrepreneurs? What is the distribu-

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tion of female managers by size of firm (small, medium, and large), type of industry, and type of ownership (public corporations versus family-owned enterprises)?[8] These questions have only begun to attract the scholarly attention they deserve.

Another underresearched area is that of ascribed status: to what extent do women gain access to managerial positions by being born into the "right" family, the "right" socioeconomic class, the "right" tribe, or the "right" ethnic group? Whereas much research, especially in North America, has focused on achieved status (i.e., obtaining a general education, an MBA degree, and in-house managerial training), far fewer studies have investigated the importance of ascribed status.[9] Similarly, how do women gain access to the formal and informal networks needed to succeed as managers? How do such networks vary across cultures? To understand such issues, we need more research on the national, political, economic, social, and cultural contexts within which organizations and managerial careers are embedded.

Predictions for the future

Two decades ago, the Swedish government made a formal commitment to provide equal employment opportunity and equal participation in family life for both men and women. Sweden boldly attempted to change the very nature of society and the place of work within society (Barrett, 1973):

> A policy which attempts to give women an equal place with men in economic life while at the same time confirming woman's traditional responsibility for care of the home and children has no prospect of filling the first of these aims. ... The subdivision of functions between the sexes must be changed in such a way that both the man and the woman in a family are afforded the same practical opportunities of participating in both active parenthood and gainful employment.

National governments through legislation, private corporations through policy, and women themselves through women's organizations and lobbies are changing the role of women in management. The progress is slow, sometimes almost nonexistent, but there is progress. Transnational corporations, faced with the most intense global competition, may well lead in hiring and promoting women into senior management. Can transnational corporations risk not choosing the best person just because her gender does not fit their traditional managerial profile? Needs for competitive advantage, not an all-consuming social conscience, may answer the question, if not in fact define it.

Many questions remain: Will societies create new ways of balancing work and family demands, of men and women working together, of experimenting with risk—the risk of promoting women into positions of major corporate responsibility heretofore held by men. The reality is that some women are assuming senior executive positions: the prediction is that the trend will continue.

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Women are different, and they bring some of that difference to the managerial role. Only when sufficient numbers of women have joined the senior managerial ranks will we begin to understand what women's unique contribution is and could be. Until then, we are left with the more mundane task of counting the increasing numbers of women who, hopefully, will continue to assume management positions worldwide.

Notes

This article is based on Adler's 1986–87 article "Women in Management Worldwide" which introduced a special issue of *International Studies of Management and Organization* on the same topic. Other material for the article is drawn from Adler's and Izraeli's book, *Women in Management Worldwide* (1988) and Adler's own research on female expatriates (see Adler, 1979, 1984a, 1984b, 1984c, 1986, 1987; and Jelinek and Adler, 1988).

1. See, for example, Bird (1976), Brown (1979), Fagenson (1993), Hennig and Jardim (1977), Kanter (1976), Morrison et al. (1987), and Terborg (1977), among many others.

2. See Adler and Izraeli (1988a) and *Competitive Frontiers* (Adler and Izraeli, 1993) for a description of the increasing women's graduation rate in Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Europe.

3. Gunilla Masreliez Steen originally presented the two approaches in a working paper "Male and Female Culture: A View From Sweden" (1987) and at the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations.

4. See *ILO Yearbook of Labor Statistics* (1987) for all reported countries except Denmark, France, West Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, for which the statistics are from the *ILO Yearbook of Statistics* (1986), as reported in Antal and Izraeli, 1993, table 1. For East Germany, Nichols (1990, p. 5) states that a third of all managers are women. By 1991, American women represented 41 percent of the managerial work force in the United States (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993). It should be noted that such statistics use a very broad definition of managers and administrators, including very junior-level positions. It should also be noted that definitions of whom to include in the manager category vary from country to country, thus making comparisons problematic. In certain cases, ostensible increases in the proportion of female managers have strictly reflected changes in the definitions countries use to categorize people as managers. It should also be noted that the high number for Sweden (64 percent) includes all professionals, not just managers and administrators.

5. See Trafford et al. (1984) for the United States, Steinhoff and Tanaka (1988) for Japan, Ellefsen (1986) for Norway, Hochstatter (1989, p. 47) for West Germany, and Eurostat (1987) for all other reported countries. For further detail and comparison, see Antal and Izraeli (1993, table 1).

6. See Schein (1973, 1975); Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein (1989); Hearn and Parkin (1988); and Antal and Izraeli (1993).

7. See Antal and Izraeli (1993), table 2, for an excellent summary of equal pay and equal employment opportunity legislation, and table 3 for maternity and paternity leave policies.

8. See Symon's (1988), Garcia de Leon's (1992), and Hoffarth and Logarta's (1992) work in these relatively unexplored areas.

9. See Renshaw (1988) for a discussion of "chiefly status," one form of ascribed status in the Pacific Islands.

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