Through the glass ceiling: is mentoring the way forward?

Caprice Lantz-Deaton*

University of Bradford,
Richmond Road,
Bradford BD7 1DP, UK
Email: C.Lantz@bradford.ac.uk
*Corresponding author

Nayyara Tabassum

Royal Mencap Society,
123 Golden Lane,
London, EC1Y0RT, UK
Email: nayyara.tabassum@gmail.com

Bryan McIntosh

University of Bradford,
Richmond Road,
Bradford BD7 1DP, UK
Email: bmcintosh1@bradford.ac.uk

Abstract: Over the past 30 years, the term the 'glass ceiling' has come to be known as a metaphor for vertical segregation, symbolising an invisible barrier that prevents women from progressing in their careers. Increasingly women are found in higher level positions and mentoring has often been touted as an important way to help women break through the glass ceiling. This paper explores the continued relevance of the glass ceiling and the use of mentoring programs as a means to help women to overcome it. The findings suggest that although some women have penetrated the glass ceiling, further work is needed if a more equitable number of women are to advance to senior level positions. Whilst mentoring can play an important role in helping women to achieve more senior positions, mentoring is not a panacea but only one of many strategies that must be adopted to effectively address the phenomena of glass ceiling.

Keywords: gender; equality of opportunity; mentoring; glass ceiling; work; human resources; vertical segregation.

Biographical notes: Caprice Lantz-Deaton is a Psychology Lecturer in the Division of Psychology at the University of Bradford's Faculty of Social Sciences. She completed her BSc in Sociology and MSc in Counselling Psychology in the USA and a PhD at the University of York, UK focusing on intercultural development. Before joining the Division of Psychology, she

taught on an MSc course in Diversity Management at the Centre of Inclusion and Diversity. She is interested in applied research in areas related to the reduction of inequality, prejudice, discrimination, racism and sexism and the enhancement of interculturalism, cultural and intercultural competence.

Nayyara Tabassum is currently working in the Royal Mencap Society, London to research and improve the lives of people with a learning disability. She worked in two Horizon 2020 EU-funded projects related to gender – STAGES (based at the University of Milan, Italy) and GENOVATE (based at the University of Bradford, UK). Her main research interests are around gender, disability, work and employment, work-life balance, science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) and social inequalities. She has an MPhil in Sociology from the University of Cambridge, UK and a PhD from the University of Milan, Italy.

Bryan McIntosh has worked in central government, the NHS, local government and at various academic institutions within the UK. These include University of Westminster, University of Surrey, University of Greenwich and King's College London. He is the Consultant Editor of the *British Journal of Healthcare Management* dealing directly with commissioning and content. He has an extensive publication record in peer reviewed journals and has worked extensively within the field of health management consultancy.

1   Introduction

Feminist socio-political activism during the last century fostered the movement of women into education and the workforce. Across Europe, women are found in increasing numbers not only in the workplace but in senior level positions (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2008). The increasing visibility of women in top level positions in popular media including politicians such as Theresa May and Angela Merkel, and corporate executives such as Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg, may lead some to believe that the metaphorical 'glass ceiling', (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986), has been shattered. While some highly skilled and educated women have certainly achieved higher status and higher paid positions, the glass ceiling or the phenomenon of low representation of women in senior level roles, also referred to as vertical segregation (Reskin, 1993; Johns, 2013; Blackburn and Jarman, 2006), persists, although the extent to which it persists varies between countries and industries (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001; Bendl and Schmidt, 2010; European Commission, 2013).

Organisations have instituted a variety of support mechanisms to help women to attain higher level positions in the workplace. One such strategy is the implementation of mentoring programmes (Gratton and Erickson, 2007; Clutterbuck and Ragins, 2002; Scandura and Pellegrini, 2007; Ragins, 2007). Mentoring programmes have been found to be successful in helping men and women succeed in their careers, and organisations are increasingly implementing them to support women as a disadvantaged group to gain senior level roles (Allen et al., 2004; Clutterbuck and Ragins, 2002; Giscombe, 2007). However, the persistence of the glass ceiling raises the question of the extent to which mentoring can be an effective means to support women's career progression. This article explores that question by reviewing the literature in relation to this topic. It considers women's entry into the workplace in the UK and across Europe, examines women's

career progression in the workplace and discusses various mentoring initiatives including how they might be implemented in order to help women to achieve success in their careers.

This article explores these issues by reviewing primarily English language peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters although it includes perspectives from European countries. The authors identified literature through the use of Google Scholar and Scopus databases to locate initial articles and book chapters of interest using the terms 'glass ceiling', 'mentoring', and 'mentoring women'. As papers were read search terms were expanded to include such terms as 'work-life balance', 'family-friendly policies', 'women's career development', and 'developmental networks'. Citations within relevant articles and chapters were then followed up.

Following the Introduction, the second section of this article provides a brief description of women in terms of their representation, leadership and career progression in the workplace. The third section outlines the main kinds of gender-based occupational segregation (horizontal and vertical) and how they can have a negative impact on women's careers. It delves further into the complexities of gender-based occupational segregation, by describing the proverbial 'glass ceiling' phenomenon, examining its impact on women's careers, the theoretical debate surrounding it, and the possible solutions for helping women to break through the glass ceiling. The fourth section discusses the barriers women face in their career progression, particularly with regard to traditionally gendered social role expectations for women and the work-life balance debate. The fifth section considers mentoring as a possible means to enhance the career progression of women giving an overview of the ways in which mentoring can be used to support career development. The sixth section looks specifically at mentoring for promoting women's careers and the role of mentoring programmes and their efficacy for women in the workplace. The seventh section presents a four-fold set of recommendations to render workplace mentoring more effective for women's career development. The eighth and final section summarises mentoring as a means through which to promote women's career growth and comments on the factors underpinning the role and efficacy of mentoring programmes in the future to develop women's careers and to build more gender-inclusive and progressive work environments.

2   Women in the workplace

The gains of women educationally and professionally in recent years are widely known. Across Europe, more women now (54.3%) graduate from tertiary education than men (Catalyst, 2015). As more women have become educated, the number of women participating in the workforce has also increased. In 1971 approximately 42% of UK women worked (Women and Work Commission, 2005) in comparison to 71.3% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2015). Similarly, across Europe, the proportion of women working rose from 60% in 2005 to 64.3% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2015).

While there are now greater numbers of educated women in the workforce, there are also more women achieving senior level positions in a variety of organisations. The Equality and Human Rights Commission report 'Sex and Power' (2008) for instance, notes that 19.3% of women were members of Parliament compared to 18.1% in 2003 and

that women represented 13.6% of national newspaper editors in 2008 compared to 9.1% in 2003.

Research also suggests that women are highly successful in senior level roles when compared with men and that women demonstrate leadership styles associated with effective leadership more so than men (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Eagly et al., 2003; Yoder, 2001; Eagly and Carli, 2007). For example, a study by Catalyst (2004) found that organisations in the top quartile of female representation in leadership positions performed better financially than those in the bottom quartile.

Although women are attaining higher levels of education, outperforming men in education, entering the workforce in increasing numbers, occupying more leadership positions, and are linked to effective organisational leadership, concerns regarding the progress of women in the workforce persist (Melamed, 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Evetts, 2014; Witz, 1993; Wajcman, 1996; Crompton, 1994; Ely and Rhode, 2010; Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2016; Ely et al., 2011). In the literature workforce segregation is one of the most frequently discussed phenomenon contributing towards hindering women's career success (Bielby and Baron, 1986; Reskin, 1993; Acker, 1990; Williams, 1989; Blau et al., 2013; Hegewisch et al., 2010; Reskin and Roos, 2009).

3   Workforce segregation and the glass ceiling

Men and women are segregated in different areas of the labour workforce. Segregation in the workforce can be classified into two main types: horizontal segregation and vertical segregation (Reskin, 1993; Anker, 1998; Blackburn et al., 2002; Blackburn and Jarman, 2006).

Horizontal segregation occurs when men and women are clustered in greater numbers in certain industries (Anker, 1998; Blackburn et al., 2002; Johns, 2013). Horizontal segregation is evident in many countries and industries although it is most pronounced across Europe within certain sectors, such as construction (91% male), transport (80% male), health industry (77% female), industry (69% male), education (67% female), and agriculture (65% male) (Eurofound, 2013). Considering particular occupations, 60% of women and 64% of men are found in occupations comprised mostly of the same gender. More than 78% of general clerks, personal care workers, health associate professionals and cleaners are women while 95% of drivers, operators, metal workers, and building workers are men (Eurofound, 2013). Another example of horizontal segregation in the UK can be seen from the Office of National Statistics (2013) data which shows that caring, leisure and service jobs, administrative and secretarial jobs and sales and customer service jobs are made up mainly of women (82%, 77%, and 63% respectively), whereas in the skilled trades, such as process, plant and machine operatives, senior job positions are made up mainly of men (90%, 89%, and 67% respectively) (Office of National Statistics, 2013). Women predominate in lower-paid, part-time positions in service sector occupations while men predominate in full-time and more highly paid positions in manual and professional roles (Acker, 2006; Reskin, 1993; Hakim, 1995; Martin, 2003; Office of National Statistics, 2013).

While women are segregated horizontally in the workplace, they are also segregated vertically in their occupations. Vertical segregation occurs when higher concentrations of men are found in more highly-paid, high-level positions while higher concentrations of women are found in lower-paid, lower-level positions (Reskin, 1993; Johns, 2013;

Blackburn and Jarman, 2006). Vertical segregation continues to be problematic in many fields, but persists even in fields dominated by women. An example of vertical segregation can be seen in a study by Janzen et al. (2013) where they describe the situation in the pharmacy sector in which 59.2% of licensed pharmacists are women. However, whilst female pharmacists are the majority, they tend to work in lower-level, lower-paid pharmacy positions whereas male pharmacists tend to be in senior positions.

An equitable presence of men and women in top leadership positions, or a 'gender balance' is considered to be representation at 40% of women or over, a balance that many European employers have been unable to achieve (European Commission, 2013). For instance, a European Commission (2015) study found that women account for just over 20% of board members of the largest publicly listed companies across the EU. Data from this study (European Commission, 2015) reveal that in top executive positions, only 3.3% of these companies have a woman as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In politics, some countries have a particularly low representation of women. For example, just 10% of senior ministers in Hungary are women (European Commission, 2013). Although statistics are more promising in other countries, for instance in the UK managers and senior officials are made up of a higher proportion of women (33%) (Office of National Statistics, 2013) they still do not represent a gender balance.

Although women are continuing to make progress, it is indeed slow and the 'glass ceiling' persists (Kephart and Schumacher, 2005; Acker, 2009; Adams and Funk, 2012). At the current rate of change, it will take about 73 years for women to gain gender equality as FTSE 100 company board members and 200 years to achieve equal proportions of women in Parliament (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2008). While women's lack of advancement in larger numbers provides evidence of a continuing glass ceiling (Cotter et al., 2001; Alessio and Andrzejewski, 2000; Baxter and Wright, 2000; Powell and Butterfield, 1994), some call into question the actual term 'glass ceiling' suggesting that it is outdated (Martin, 2015; Eagly and Carli, 2009; Barreto et al., 2009; Linehan and Walsh, 1999). Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest that the glass ceiling implies an absolute barrier that cannot be penetrated when in fact women have now achieved high-level positions. Further it implies a single obstacle that fails to take into account the complex array of challenges facing women during their careers (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2009).

Despite such criticism, the glass ceiling metaphor continues to be influential and has sparked renewed interest with a proliferation of similar terms used to describe related phenomena (Barreto et al., 2009; Tesch et al., 1995; Bruckmüller et al., 2013). *Concrete ceiling* refers to a more impenetrable barrier that minority women encounter due to the intersection of race and gender (Hess-Biber and Carter, 2005; Cotter et al., 2001); *glass escalator* suggests that men ascend the organisational ranks more quickly in professions dominated by women (as described in the pharmacy industry example above) (Williams, 1992; Budig, 2002); *firewalls* refer to the discrimination processes inherent in organisations against women's career success (Bendl and Schmidt, 2010); *glass walls* suggest that women who tend to predominate in certain sectors (e.g., human resources) cannot ascend to more senior level positions (Miller et al., 1999; Bowling et al., 2006); *glass cliff* draws attention to high risk positions that women leaders are more often hired into (Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Bruckmüller et al., 2013); and *glass slipper* makes reference to women's decreasing desire for powerful positions (Rudman and Heppen, 2003; Ashcraft, 2012; Bruckmüller et al., 2013). While these new

metaphors may further indicate that the glass ceiling is outdated, as Barreto et al. (2009) suggest, rather they may simply reflect a need to more carefully analyse the obstacles facing women and how these might be overcome. Some scholars (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Acker, 2009; Bruckmüller et al., 2014) suggest the metaphor of a 'labyrinth' symbolising a more complex journey involving the wide variety of barriers impacting women (e.g., views of women as too passive or family oriented, resistance to women as leaders, women having more responsibilities at home). The ever-evolving creation of new terminologies demonstrates that the glass ceiling continues to remain a relevant metaphor for vertical segregation and that the various factors contributing to it need to be further analysed.

Today various initiatives exist which attempt to help women to break through the glass ceiling. Both informal and formal mechanisms such as encouraging greater social contact (informal) and strategic human resource management (formal) are designed to help women achieve higher levels of success in their careers (Blau, 1977; Kanter, 1977; Fagenson, 1987; Wald, 1989; Dreher and Dougherty, 2002; Dreher, 2003; Barreto et al., 2009; Bertrand et al., 2015). A European wide study by Gratton and Erickson (2007) of 61 companies, for example, found four main waves of activity that attempt to help women break through the glass ceiling. The first three include measuring and reporting hiring and promotion practices and publishing employment statistics by gender; creating family friendly policies which enable women to be wives, mothers, and carers; and preparing women to be leaders through providing access to high profile 'stretch' assignments. The fourth wave involves creating networks that provide support for women through mentoring and coaching (Gratton and Erickson, 2007). This last strategy has received much attention in the literature and has been used in particular to advance the careers of women (Ragins and Kram, 2007; Giscombe, 2007; Gratton and Erickson, 2007; Ryan and Haslam, 2007).

4   Barriers to women's career progression

A review of the literature suggests that the key barrier that influences the career advancement of women relates largely to the gendered nature of society and the roles that women are expected to play. The following provides an analysis of societal gender roles along with work-life balance policies that were introduced as a means to help women be more successful in the workforce.

4.1   Gendered social roles and stereotypes

The development of individual identity and gender roles begins in childhood. At a very early age, children recognise the differences between boys and girls and typically begin to associate themselves with particular gender roles (Martin, 2005; Martin et al., 1990; Ceci and Williams, 2007; Barres, 2006). Studies suggest that parents continue to treat boys and girls according to their gender, serving as role models for gender specific values, attitudes, and behaviours (Leaper, 2000; Valian, 1999). For instance, Valian (1999) describes how parents picked gender-specific toys for children, such as cars for boys and dolls for girls. These gender-stereotyped roles, where boys are encouraged to be leaders and ambitious, and girls are encouraged to be gentle and nurturing, are then reinforced through the influence of the wider society, where men and women behave

according to their socially-imposed stereotypical norms and expectations (Bem, 1981; Eagly, 1987; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Prentice and Carranza, 2002; Martin et al., 1990; Hamilton et al., 2006).

The gendered nature of societal norms and role expectations has at least five kinds of important effects in terms of women's career progression. The first is that women as a group tend to develop individual characteristics such as personal values and attitudes towards employment that differ from those of men (Corcoran and Courant, 1987; Williams, 2001; Bertrand et al., 2010). In terms of personal characteristics and their influence on career progression, studies suggest that female managers have lower ambitions and expectations in regard to their careers (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011; Davidson and Burke, 2011; Benschop et al., 2013). Women were also found to have less self-confidence and self-belief leading to more cautious career choices (Kelan, 2009; Blickenstaff, 2005; Ashby and Schoon, 2010). Additionally, women were found to be less clear in regard to their career paths than men (Sonnert and Holton, 1996; Zuckerman et al., 1991; Williams, 2001). For example, a 2006 report on the careers of healthcare executives found that just 40% of women compared to 70% of men aspired to CEO positions (American College of Healthcare Executives, 2006).

A second important influence of gendered societies is the development of gender-role stereotypes and its impact on women's career aspirations and outcomes. Early studies (Anastasi and Foley, 1949; Farley, 1970; O'Connell, 1977) found that particular attitudes and characteristics were associated with men and women (e.g., men tend to be dominant, rational, goal-oriented, and competitive while women tend to be emotional, mild, affectionate, and empathetic). Other studies (Schein, 1973; Heilman et al., 1989; Heilman, 2001), considered the relationship between gender, managerial stereotypes and gender stereotypes. For instance, Schein (1973) hypothesised that gender-role stereotypes created barriers to women's advancement in particular occupations which were gender-typed, that is dominated by individuals from a particular gender, proposing that higher level management and leadership type positions were gender-typed as male because most individuals in higher level positions were men. Other research findings (Schein, 1973, 1975; Powell and Butterfield, 1979; Eagly and Karau, 2002) supported this proposal demonstrating that generally people associate male characteristics with higher level positions. Stereotyping leads employers to hold prejudicial attitudes towards women, viewing them as incapable or unsuitable for particular types of positions. Such attitudes towards women lead to discrimination with women being treated less favourably than men by not being selected for certain types of positions (Oakley, 2000; Williams, 1989; Rudman and Phelan, 2008; Phelan and Rudman, 2010).

A third kind of effect of gendered societies is that women continue to face biases and discrimination in various aspects of jobs, from selection processes to underrepresentation in certain roles. Research provides evidence for the persistence of gender-role stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination in the selection of women (Northcraft and Gutek, 1993; Williams, 1993; Fagenson, 1993; Heilman, 2001; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011). For example, experiments that compared the selection rates for two sets of identical application materials with the only difference being that one had a male name and the other had a female name, found after a review that men were preferred over women for more masculine jobs (e.g., auto sales, heavy industry sales), women were preferred over men for more feminine jobs (e.g., secretary), and men were preferred over women for gender-neutral jobs (e.g., psychologist, hotel clerk) (Davison and Burke,

2000; Eagly 2007; Carli and Eagly, 2011). Thus, women still suffer significant disadvantage when pursuing certain types of positions and / or professions.

A fourth kind of effect of gendered societies is the perceived incompatibility of higher positions and leadership traits with women. While gender-role stereotypes influence women's chances of obtaining employment in particular types of positions (Williams, 1993; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Carli and Eagly, 2011), they also influence their ability to lead and manage effectively in such positions. The traditional stereotype of women tends to be feminine (e.g., communal, empathetic, mild) and women in the workplace are still expected to act in feminine ways (Bem, 1981; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Prentice and Carranza, 2002). In higher-level positions, however, they are also expected to act in the more traditionally masculine ways associated with leadership (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Wajcman, 2013; Ely et al., 2011; Ibarra et al., 2013). However, demonstrating traditionally masculine characteristics such as confidence and assertion appear to others as not being compatible with what are traditionally considered as being feminine characteristics, with women who exhibit these non-conformist traits, easily becoming the targets of prejudice (Rudman et al., 2012; Phelan and Rudman, 2010; Moss-Racusin and Rudman, 2010). As an example, Hewlett-Packard's former CEO, Carly Fiorina (2006, p.173), said that she was "…routinely referred to as either a 'bimbo' or a 'bitch'- too soft or too hard and presumptuous …" Thus female leaders experience a 'double-bind', encountering disapproval for their more stereotypical masculine behaviours associated with leadership and for their more feminine behaviours which makes being an effective leader or manager especially challenging (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Ibarra et al., 2010, 2013).

A fifth kind of effect of gendered societies in women's career progression is due to masculinised workplaces. While the gendered nature of the work environment can impact the selection of women into higher level roles as well as their ability to succeed in them, their disadvantage is compounded by organisational contexts which are dominated by or favour men (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Wajcman, 2013; Cockburn, 1991; Gherardi, 1995; Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Tabassum, 2015). For example, the military is culturally masculine in the demands placed on employees making it particularly challenging for women to succeed in higher-level positions (Koenig et al., 2011; Eagly and Karau, 2002). When roles are viewed as extremely masculine, women may be viewed as extremely unqualified which prevents them from attaining such positions and/or creating intense resistance to those women who achieve such roles (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Kelan, 2009; Pullen and Knights, 2007; Martin, 2006).

4.2   *Work-life balance*

The gendered nature of society is reflected in the distribution of responsibilities related to not only work but also family. Historically, women have tended to view themselves and are also viewed by society as being more suited to the private rather than the public domain and the onus of taking primary responsibility for the care of the home and family inadvertently falls on women as opposed to men (Engels, 2010; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010). Whilst this has changed over time and women are entering the workforce in greater numbers, working women still tend to maintain primary responsibility for domestic tasks (Breen and Prince-Cooke, 2005; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010; Schiebinger and Gilmartin, 2010). Many women work in part-time or in more flexible lower-paid positions that allow them to take career breaks, take time off for children's

illnesses and events and to generally spend more time at home (Epstein et al., 2014; Cheung and Halpern, 2010; Ely et al., 2011). Whilst some argue that they choose these roles due to personal preferences (Hakim, 2006, 2011; Walsh, 2012) the influence of the gendered society plays an important role (Crompton and Harris, 1999; Tomlinson, 2006).

As women began entering the workforce in greater numbers, the European Union as well as other countries began to develop policies to help working parents, particularly women to balance work and family related responsibilities. Such policies included the introduction of part-time and flexible working, maternity leave, and childcare facilities or subsidies which made it easier for women to return to work after childbirth and more generally help them to balance the demands of work and family life (Hantrais, 2000; Saxonberg, 2013; Lohmann and Zagel, 2016). The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment helped to make such policies more integral suggesting that they create structures which help individuals to stay employed through balancing work and non-work related commitments (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

EU countries have taken different approaches to work-life balance initiatives. However, overall studies find that women are still more inclined to work in part-time lower-paid positions, take career breaks, and not return from maternity leave when children are born (Waldfogel, 1998; Hakim, 1991, 2011). One study described by Eagly and Carli (2007) found that women regularly made trade-offs to balance work and family with many leaving their employers for less stressful jobs or taking career breaks. In many cases women leave before ever reaching the glass ceiling, a phenomenon referred to as the metaphorical 'leaky pipeline' in science, technology, engineering, and mathematical fields (Blickenstaff, 2005; Xu, 2008; Sheltzer and Smith, 2014).

While work-life balance policies can help to reduce gender differences in workforce participation and have made it easier for women to enter the workforce, they can also deepen gender differences as they reflect social norms related to gender roles within families. In reference to vertical segregation, reducing work hours or working more flexibly may actually diminish women's career prospects. By not participating in the office as much women can end up on mummy tracks on which they can be more easily passed over for promotions (Gattrell, 2007, Lewis, 2006).

While most women make trade-offs prioritising home and family over careers (Hakim, 2002, 2006; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005), many women in higher level positions make trade-offs in relation to family only in the other direction. For instance, the immense pressures of gendered social norms for women to have families also make many women opt for childlessness as a voluntary life choice (Wager, 2000; Sevón, 2005; Grönlund, 2017). One study, for example, found that most high achieving women had no children (60%) and the rest delayed having children until they achieved high level positions (Eagly and Carli, 2007). This is in stark contrast to studies done on men who typically have children and a stay-at-home wife to care for them (Simpson, 2000a, 2000b). One study of Harvard graduates (Ely et al., 2014) found that the majority of men surveyed (approximately 60%) expected not to be primary care givers of children. Those expectations were not only met but exceeded with 86% not being primary care givers. However, the opposite was true for women. While about 50% expected to take primary responsibility for children, in reality about 70% did so. Although work life balance policies may help some women to balance their roles, concerns in this area continue with women either sacrificing the start of a family to pursue senior level careers or trading

down to part-time or less demanding careers because of domestic responsibilities (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Emslie and Hunt, 2009).

As for the role of men as husbands and fathers, increasing numbers of men are more active in relation to home and family and the number of stay-at-home-dads is increasing (Smith, 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Men are also now more included within policy and practice in relation to work-life balance, although this is fairly recent especially for some countries. In the UK, for example, shared paternity leave for fathers only came into effect in the last two years (Peachey, 2015). However, research finds that men often do not make as much use of such policies in comparison to women (Hegewisch, 2009; Hyde et al., 1996; Casey and Corday, 2006). While this may be due in part to men being the higher earners within dual-earning couples, it is also indicative of the wider gender norms of societies in which women still handle the majority of family responsibilities and men are expected to be the major breadwinners. Studies suggest that the decisions men make to take time off for family are strongly influenced by organisational pressures to show commitment to their jobs (Allard et al., 2007; Rudman and Mescher, 2013; Coltrane et al., 2013).

Despite the proliferation of work-life balance policies, the stereotypical career leading to higher level positions is still largely considered to be a full-time occupation that is pursued on a continuous basis often involving extra hours and a high level of dedication (McIntosh et al., 2012, 2015). Hakim (2006) argues that not all occupations can be domesticated with some involving considerable travel for long periods (e.g., new reporting, investment banking, airline industry) and others requiring long or irregular hours. For example, one study of jobs in the finance industry across four countries found an average working week of 50 hours with employees reporting that they commonly come in early or stay late in response to unpredictable events or strict deadlines (Wharton and Blair-Loy, 2006). Similarly, top level positions often involve taking responsibility for deadlines and resolving crisis situations which can require long or irregular hours making part-time or flexible hours difficult (Johns, 2013; Bandiera et al., 2014). Thus, while work-life balance policies have been designed to help women stay in the workforce and to an extent they have, they may actually serve to deepen vertical segregation because they are not able to conform to the demands of higher level positions without sacrificing time off (Hakim, 2006; Healy, 2004).

While women who take advantage of part-time and flexible schedules may participate less during working hours making it easier to stay in paid employment, they can also be disadvantaged because they do not have time to socialise with colleagues at work or outside of normal business hours and therefore lose out on the benefits of engaging in activities such as information exchange, identifying new resources and ideas, and obtaining advice (Baker, 2000; Barreto et al., 2009). Many women simply do not have this extra time, but even for those that do; after-hours networking activities can at times be discriminatory and not take into account women's interests. For instance, a top Wal-Mart executive was sued not long ago for running quail hunting expeditions for employee development (Birchall, 2005). Other companies have focused executive networking events on football or visiting strip clubs (Jeffreys, 2008; Morgan and Martin, 2006). Thus, after hours networking may not only be inaccessible to many women because of the additional time required, but because it sometimes focuses upon traditionally 'male' activities women can further be excluded.

Gender roles may be changing gradually but they are still entrenched within society. They impact both men and women in a variety of ways including the development of

personal characteristics, aspirations, work preferences and career choices. They also function at organisational and societal levels leading to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Work life balance policies are increasingly being put in place to support the career development of women; however, the glass ceiling persists and may arguably even be enhanced by such policies.

5 Mentoring as a career development tool

Although the exact definition of mentoring is both contested and complex, a simple definition of mentoring comes from Kram (1985) who defined it as involving a relationship between two adults in which a more experienced person (the mentor) helps a less experienced person (the protégé) to succeed in his/her career with the main goal towards benefitting both the individual and the organisation. Mentoring emerged in the 1970s as a key development and progression tool used to support those early in their careers (Levinson et al., 1978). Mentoring relationships involve three key elements including reciprocity, regular interactions over a period of time, and developmental benefits for protégés (Haggard et al., 2011). However, alternatives to traditional mentoring relationships have also been introduced. Specifically, mentoring can move beyond the dyad to involve collections of people who make up a developmental network that provides various kinds of support for individuals (Higgins and Kram, 2001). For example, team mentoring (Williams et al., 2009) can include individuals such as senior colleagues, peers, subordinates, friends, family and others from community or other external organisations who provide different kinds of support for a person's career. Another variety of developmental network is group mentoring (Sontag et al., 2007) which involves a kind of career support group comprised of individuals who provide help to one another in relation to their career concerns.

Mentoring serves various functions. According to Kram (1985) these functions fall into two broad categories. The first, career-related support aims at facilitating advancement and includes functions such as sponsorship, exposure, coaching, protection, and encouragement. The second, psychosocial support, involves helping protégés to develop competence, identity, and role effectiveness (Kram, 1985). Mentoring serves both objective (such as salary increase) and subjective (such as career satisfaction) functions (Allen et al., 2004). Mentors may serve either or both vocational and psychosocial functions for the mentee (Mullen, 1998; Schockett and Haring-Hidore, 1985; Sosik and Godshalk, 2000). Mentoring has been shown to bring psychosocial support to mentees through greater career satisfaction and job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004; Chao et al., 1992; Dreher and Ash, 1990; Turban and Dougherty, 1994). According to a variety of researchers, mentoring leads to greater career success in terms of salary increases, compensation and promotion (Allen et al., 2004; Ragins and Scandura, 1999, Kram and Hall, 1989; Mullen and Noe, 1999; Whitely et al., 1991). Personality characteristics of mentees have also been found to play a role in the success of relationships. For example, protégés who show initiative by initiating initial and ongoing contact with mentors can enhance the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Fowler and O'Gorman, 2005, Turban and Dougherty, 1994; Bouquillon et al., 2005; Ragins and Kram, 2007).

On the basis of the relationship structure, mentoring relationships are widely classified into two types – formal and informal (Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Chao et al., 1992; Viator, 2001; Tourigny and Pulich, 2005; Sosik et al., 2005; Nemanick, 2000; Leask, 2009, Mitchell et al., 2015). As described by Ragins and Cotton (1999) formal mentoring typically involves individuals being matched by employers in a structured programme for a specific period of time. This involves a matching process designed to bring people together based on some commonality in order to meet specific business objectives. Relationships might include established objectives and measurable outcomes, with agreements and potentially organisational support in place. Alternatively, informal mentoring occurs organically as people meet and decide for them to form a relationship. Informal mentoring occurs for more indefinite periods of time and may evolve into or be based upon friendship. Informal mentoring involves more unspecified goals, is likely not to have support structures in place and although it may benefit the organisation, the benefits are not explicitly stated as they are in formal programmes.

Great variation exists in mentoring in terms of formal versus informal relationships, individual versus group mentoring, and the types of benefits that can be achieved through mentoring. The type of mentoring relationship (be it formal or informal) influences how individuals experience its effects on organisational socialisation, job satisfaction, and salary. The benefits of formal and informal mentoring relationships are hotly contested among academics (Eby et al., 2008; Allen et al., 2004; Nemanick, 2000; Inzer and Crawford, 2005; Desimone et al., 2014). Some scholars have argued that formal mentoring may be helpful for mentees as it provides psychosocial support in the achievement of career outcomes (Allen et al., 1999; Noe et al., 2003). Others argue that mentees in informal relationships receive more effective mentoring than those in formal programmes (Scandura and Williams, 2001; Bynum, 2015; Singh et al., 2002) for a variety of reasons. For instance, mentees who informally initiate relationships have been found to be more successful than those placed into formal programmes (Scandura and Williams, 2001); mentors and mentees in formal programmes may not possess shared attributes in comparison to those in informal relationships (Mitchell et al., 2015), and formal mentoring programmes may have ill defined organisational standards that negatively impact the mentoring relationship (Tourigny and Pulich, 2005; Eby and Lockwood, 2005).

Despite the academic debates surrounding the types of mentoring programmes that are most effective, overall research suggests that mentoring generally is effective. A meta-analytic study conducted by Allen et al. (2004) which reviewed and synthesised empirical research related to the benefits associated with mentoring for protégés, found positive results in comparison to non-mentored individuals with a similar meta-analytic study later echoing similar findings (Eby et al., 2008). Thus, findings from these studies support the widely-held assumption that mentoring results in positive outcomes for mentored individuals compared to those who are not mentored in regard to both objective and subject career outcomes.

6   Mentoring for women

While historically the benefits of mentoring for men have been studied, mentoring benefits for women have not been well defined (Orth and Jacobs, 1971; Bolton, 1980, Wright and Wright, 1987). However, some recent studies suggest that mentoring can

support the development of some women's careers by helping them to break through the glass ceiling by achieving promotions, higher salaries and greater job satisfaction (Ragins et al., 2000; Carter and Silva, 2010; Lehman's Centre for Diversity and Leadership, 2007).

Women are increasingly participating in mentoring relationships through companies introducing formal mentoring schemes targeting women because of their underrepresentation in leadership positions (Blake-Beard, 2001). While female mentees participate in and benefit from both formal and informal mentoring programmes (Ragins et al., 2000; Linehan and Walsh, 1999), the 2010 World Economic Forum report, as noted by Ibarra et al. (2010) reported that 28% of companies surveyed indicated offering formal mentoring programmes that focused upon women and another survey found that women were actually more likely than men to have had a mentor at some point in their careers. Mentoring has been found to be an effective career development tool generally but is a particular support strategy used for women as a disadvantaged group and benefits for women specifically have been borne out by research. For example, a study by Catalyst found that female MBA graduates who had a mentor started their first jobs in higher-level positions and received greater salaries than those without (Carter and Silva, 2010). They also increased their chances of achieving mid-manager positions by 56% compared to women without. As well, having a mentor contributed significantly more to the average starting salary for mentored women compared to non-mentored women.

Whilst mentoring has been highlighted as one of the main ways to help women break through the glass ceiling (Lehman's Centre for Diversity and Leadership, 2007) and has been shown to improve the career prospects of women, research suggests that men benefit from mentoring relationships much more than women. For example, a Catalyst study (Carter and Silva, 2010) found that male MBA graduates who had a mentor started their first jobs in higher level positions than women. Also, men with mentors increased their chances of achieving mid-manager positions by 93% compared to 56% of mentored women. As well, having a mentor contributed to men's starting salaries about ten times more than to women's salaries. Such statistics suggest that gender is a key factor relevant to the success of mentoring relationships.

Providing insight into factors such as gender, some scholars have proposed conceptual process models of formal mentoring (although some aspects apply to informal mentoring) which help to explain the differences seen between the mentoring outcomes of men and women (Wanberg et al., 2003; McKeen and Bujaki, 2007). They consider antecedents as well as outcomes related to mentoring, and consider important questions in relation to how and why mentoring relationships form and what the effects are of relationships. By analysing mentoring relationships, how they form and what the effects are of the relationship on career success, findings suggest that organisational context, individual characteristics of the protégé and mentor, and the dyad itself all influence the mentoring relationship. What the mentor provides and what the outcomes are for the protégé are influenced by the interaction of these factors which demonstrate the complexity of these relationships.

As described by McKeen and Bujaki (2007) gender operates on all levels of such conceptual process models. Individually in relation to mentor and protégé characteristics, within the relationship of the dyad of mentor and protégé, organisationally and at the level of society reflecting how women are viewed and valued more broadly. Despite the presence of formal mentoring programmes in some organisations, and mentoring that

occurs informally, these levels converge to create mentoring environments which are challenging for women to navigate given the gendered nature of society and the workplace as discussed earlier. As such, the barriers facing women seeking mentors are many and varied.

7   Mentoring women through the glass ceiling – discussion and recommendations

The reason why mentoring does not work as well for women as it could is clearly complex. While there is no simple answer to helping more women gain senior level positions, the research is clear that participating in mentoring of some kind is beneficial in comparison to not participating at all. As previously noted, Wanberg et al. (2003) suggest that the success of mentoring relationships relates to how and why relationships form, relationship dynamics, individual characteristics of mentors and mentees, and the organisational context in which relationships take place. Thus, we now consider the issues for women in these four areas along with how mentoring might be made more effective in terms of supporting women in attaining better representation at higher levels in organisations within the context of a gendered society.

7.1   How and why relationships form

One aspect of how and why relationships form relates to the formality or informality of relationships. Some studies suggest that informal mentoring is more effective than formal mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003; Bynum, 2015; Singh et al., 2002; Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Blake-Beard, 2001). The difference in success between formal and informal mentoring may be explained in different ways. First, motivations for mentoring have an impact on the quality of relationship that develops between the mentor and mentee. As Blake-Beard et al. (2007) suggest, informal mentors may tend to choose to mentor for more altruistic reasons, (e.g., to contribute to future generations) than those in formal mentoring schemes who may mentor for more practical reasons such as being asked to by a supervisor. These motivational factors may impact the quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Second, personal rapport remains an important factor that distinguishes informal from formal mentoring. While mutual attraction is likely to be more common in informal mentoring, it is not a given in formally organised pairs which may lead to awkwardness if rapport does not develop (Blake-Beard et al., 2007). Third, the social status and social capital that mentors possess within their organisations and workplaces plays an important role in the quality of mentoring that a mentee receives. Mentors may vary in their ability to support mentees. If some mentors hold greater influence in an organisation than others, they may be better placed to support their mentees than those who possess relatively lower social influence and capital. Fourth, the level of motivation and involvement sought by the mentee, and under what conditions the relationship forms are also influential. Some protégés may be informally selected by being identified as potentially high achievers or self-selecting by seeking out mentors themselves. Alternatively, protégés who are formally selected may be automatically entered into a formal mentoring programme regardless of their motivations or potential or may be selected because of a need for remedial support (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). The

conditions under which a mentoring relationship is established are therefore important, as they pave the direction and nature of relationship.

If informal programmes are more effective, then the fact that formal programmes are proliferating in support of women's career progression is of concern. Formal programmes may be proliferating in part because informal mentoring relationships are less likely to develop for women. After hours networking with colleagues is often more accessible to men rather than women. As long as informal afterhours networking continues, women may be limited in their ability to participate in it and to develop informal mentoring relationships (Gratton and Erickson, 2007; Ragins and Kram, 2007; Ryan and Haslam, 2007).

To improve motivation and rapport for mentoring relationships to develop and to enhance networking opportunities for women, a key recommendation would be to combine certain aspects of formal mentoring programmes (through networking events or other social events) with informal mentoring practices (such as creating ice-breaking sessions or workshops or activities during social events designed to facilitate mentoring relationships). In this way, both mentors and mentees could have the opportunity to meet a larger potential pool of individuals in a socially organised event (achieved through a formal programme) yet build mutual motivations and develop personal rapport with each other (achieved through informal relationship-building). In this regard, organisations could make an effort to plan networking events within working hours and / or to focus upon activities that are more gender neutral in order to make them more accessible to women. Further, more informal mentoring for women could be encouraged by, for example, running workshops on informal mentoring or providing networking opportunities aimed specifically at women's career development.

Alternatively, formal mentoring programmes might also be enhanced for women if factors such as motivation and rapport between mentor and mentee are taken into consideration. The preferences of mentees and mentors may be taken into account in the matching process to enhance the possibility for rapport to develop. The motivations of protégés and mentors might also be explored with the goals of the relationship clearly outlined and measurable. Further, more use could be made of developmental networks and group mentoring which may further enhance success.

7.2 *Relationship dynamics*

The dynamics of mentoring relationships can influence mentoring outcomes. When considering gender as a factor, some theories of human relationships such as social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) and similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) suggest that women to women mentoring relationships might be more effective because women will be better able to understand and potentially advise other women on becoming successful in leadership positions in a male dominated world. Such theories suggest that perceived similarity, identification and role modelling with individuals of the same sex can be important in the dyad and can influence the relationship dynamics.

While women may provide more psychosocial benefits to women protégés, some research suggests that women may not be as well placed within organisations and may provide more psychosocial support and not enough strategic advancement advice (O'Brien et al., 2010, Ibarra et al., 2010). However, there are other issues impacting female mentoring relationships. The queen bee phenomenon as it was known, suggests

that senior women can sometimes treat other women poorly rather than supporting them in attaining higher level positions (Mavin and Williams, 2013; Derks et al., 2016).While this label is now regarded as sexist and has been replaced, researchers continue to argue that female misogyny and negative interrelations between women can hinder work relationships with women in higher level positions treating other women less favourably (Mavin and Williams, 2013; Barreto and Ellemers, 2005). In addition, however, the expectations of women who are protégées may also hinder relationships, as women may react to men who are bosses as bosses, but when women are bosses, women may react with the expectation that they be more nurturing and forgiving than men (O'Leary and Ryan, 1994).

In terms of breaking through the glass ceiling, research suggests that men are more effective at helping women to gain access to higher level positions (Ibarra et al., 2010; Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Dreher and Ash, 1990; Allen and Eby, 2004). For example, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found that women who had been mentored by men received significantly greater compensation and more promotions than women who had been mentored by women. Additionally, some women tend to view men as making better mentors because they are better connected internally and externally, more powerful, know how to succeed, and have time available to work with them (Hewlett et al., 2010).

Although such studies suggest that having men as mentors appears to be more beneficial for women in ascending the corporate hierarchy, cross-gender mentoring also poses challenges in regard to after work networking, aligning to stereotypical norms, sexual tension and tokenism (Ragins and Cotton, 1991; Clawson and Kram, 1984; Feist-Price, 1994; Noe, 1988; Kanter, 1977; O'Neill and Blake-Beard, 2002; Hewlett et al., 2010). Sexual tension can reduce the chances that men and women will even enter into mentoring relationships (Hewlett et al., 2010). Additionally, men may find it difficult to advise women on the specific sorts of problems they face in the workplace. For example, it may be difficult for men to understand and give advice on balancing the 'double bind'; i.e., managing the balance of exhibiting socially defined masculine and feminine traits (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Ibarra et al., 2010). Further while studies have found that although women benefit more from having men as mentors, as mentioned previously, they still do not benefit as much as men (Ibarra et al., 2010, 2013).

While men may be more effective in helping women to break through the glass ceiling, there are ways to enhance the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, regardless of the mentor's gender. Sometimes, senior executives, whilst successful in their own careers, do not necessarily possess the skills and sensibilities necessary to successfully mentor more junior individuals. Ibarra et al. (2010) suggest that training mentors may help to boost results. This may involve defining the outcomes of mentoring relationships and the roles of mentors as well as educating mentors in regard to issues, that are particular to women, which may not be well understood, particularly if the mentor is male (Ibarra et al., 2010). For example, those carrying out the training might educate mentors in relation to encouraging confidence and assertiveness in women, strategies to address the double bind, or relationship dynamics of women to women and men to women relationships. Although such training for mentors may be seen as specific to formal mentoring programmes, it can equally apply to informal mentoring or to supporting employees in taking advantage of developmental or group mentoring. Organisations may run workshops and events and maintain collections of mentoring materials that educate mentors and mentees about topics of concern to women and create a climate which supports many kinds of formal and informal mentoring. There are a plethora of resources

that organisations could use to support women in finding their own mentors, as well as educating people regarding how to be more effective mentors and to develop productive mentoring relationships (Ragins et al., 2000; Blanchard and Diaz-Ortiz, 2017, Bruce, 2008).

7.3   Characteristics of women

Stereotypical characteristics of women as protégés may also hinder the organisational goals of mentoring women through the glass ceiling. As previously noted, the gendered nature of society leads some women to have particular traits, attitudes, and values that do not necessarily coincide with many high-level positions (Rudman et al., 2012; Phelan and Rudman, 2010). In terms of mentoring, traits such as assertiveness and confidence may be addressed though training and coaching on the part of mentors and may help more women to attain higher level positions.

It is also important to understand the goals of women, and their preferences in the tussle between family and work. Due to the continued socialisation of women into a gendered society, many still hold values or preferences that are not compatible with more senior roles which often require full-time dedication and long or irregular hours. Many women choose family over careers, referred to earlier as the metaphorical glass slipper. This may also contribute to the leaky pipeline, also mentioned earlier, in which women give up their careers during critical life events, such as after marriage, when becoming pregnant, or when children are born. Mentoring relationships that attempt to push women into top-level careers when their values lie elsewhere may be impossible for mentors to navigate and counterproductive for organisations. Mentoring and training expectations should be well defined and guidance should be realistic (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988; Lantz et al., 2008). Thus, clarifying the goals of mentoring relationships is important to achieve success as defined by both the protégé as well as the mentor. If some women do not aspire to higher-level roles, mentoring no matter how well planned and orchestrated, is unlikely to be successful in helping these women to break through the glass ceiling. It is important to note that socially defined gender norms encourage some women to choose family over work, and that if real change is to be encouraged; gendered social norms need to be challenged.

While there may be only limited strategies that organisations can implement to address gendered traits and preferences of women currently in the workforce, organisations may address vertical segregation in the long term by becoming involved in activities to address the gendered social norms. For example, in the US, there is a national 'Take Your Daughter to Work Day' which supports organisations in running activities designed to help girls consider future career options (Waxman, 2017). In the UK, there are various initiatives designed by social organisations in collaboration with corporate groups, to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) careers for girls and young women, by running events to educate and encourage women into non-traditional careers (Ellis, 2016). A recent project broadcast on BBC2 highlights things that teachers, parents and community members and organisations can do to counteract the processes through which both girls and boys are socialised into traditional gender roles (Palmer, 2017). Such efforts, on the part of companies, may have the knock-on effect of creating work climates, as discussed in more detail below, in which

women feel more supported, which may influence their career aspirations and interest in more senior level roles or male-dominated occupations.

7.4   *Organisational context*

Creating an organisational context in which mentoring for women can be successful formally or informally is important. However, the gendered nature of organisations impacts the selection of women into higher-level roles as well as their ability to succeed in them. As discussed, this is compounded in organisational contexts which are dominated by or favour men (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Tabassum, 2015).

While gendered work environments will continue to create challenges for mentoring relationships for women, the disadvantages suffered by women may be decreased if organisations take steps to address them through policy-oriented action. One strategy is to put policies in place that require organisations to provide statistics that serve as indicators of progress (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). For example, in the UK, public bodies have a duty to report statistics related to women's employment in higher level positions and to outline strategies to make progress towards improving the gender balance in these roles (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). In terms of policy and practice in addressing vertical segregation, there are a variety of practices that can influence the effectiveness of mentoring programmes. While work-life balance policies have been considered a key strategy to address workforce segregation, their limitations regarding vertical segregation are not well-recognised (Kumra and Manfredi, 2012; Hakim, 2006). Organisations might consider the extent to which work-life balance policies entrench vertical segregation and whether steps can be taken to address this. As previously noted, the norm in many organisations for people who wish to ascend to higher level roles is still considered to be the full-time employee, working on a continuous basis, showing dedication and working long or irregular hours as necessary. The gendered nature of society leads men more often than women to work according to these expectations – although their desire to do so and their ultimate satisfaction with working in this fashion is questionable. Studies suggest that men want to work fewer hours and have more of a work-life balance too; although this is not well reflected in their work-life choices (Emslie and Hunt, 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, a study regarding the work/non-work conflict experienced by recent graduates of both genders found that although graduates aim for work-life balance, their concerns regarding career success draw them into working long hours and experiencing an imbalance between home and work life (Sturges and Guest, 2004). However, the long-term pressure for career success resides mainly with men due to societal attitudes even if their values are different. Studies suggest that the way men and women define success and their core values in their lives and careers are similar such as having a happy family, achieving work-life balance, and having positive relationships. This applies even to those who are highly educated and ambitious (Ely et al., 2014; Sturges, 1999).

As long as organisations continue to reward employees according to the aforementioned norms, the presence of mentoring programmes may help to encourage more women to take on higher-level positions. However, its success will likely be limited. Mentoring alone cannot address the underlying issue that relates to a mismatch between the values of many women who desire a work-life balance and due to their gendered social roles, to prioritise non-work over work. In short, the organisational systems which reward full-time dedicated employees willing to work long hours are

inconsistent with social policies designed to create equality in the workplace. If mentoring is to be successful in helping women break through the glass ceiling, organisations must revise their expectations of high level employees and create contexts which rewards individuals for achieving work-life balance rather than creating contexts which reward overwork (Acker, 1990; Martin, 2003).

Along these lines, one innovative mentoring programme described by Giscombe (2007) paired top male executives with junior women with the goal of not only advancing the careers of these women but of helping to raise mentors' awareness of gender issues and to consider how policy, business strategy, and work-life issues might be addressed to create better work environments. Such mentoring programmes could serve the larger goal of transforming organisational cultures in ways that not only support more women in obtaining leadership positions, but also prevent the leaky pipeline and benefit both men and women in terms of achieving subjective career outcomes and work-life balance. As highlighted by Sturges and Guest (2004), organisations play an important role in helping all employees to manage the relationship between work and non-work roles. If work-life balance is not supported in practice at senior levels, the best mentors can hope to do is to support women's development in terms of confidence, assertiveness, and aspirations while outlining the real expectations of senior level roles; and supporting the women who are interested in pursuing those roles. If possible, a final suggestion for mentors would be to act as role models in demonstrating how to achieve work-life balance, or at least champion the cause of work-life balance for employees.

8 Conclusions

Despite more awareness of gender equality in the workplace and some women breaking through the glass ceiling and emerging as role models, women continue to be underrepresented in senior level positions and certain occupations (e.g., STEM) continue to be male-dominated. Mentoring, in its many forms, is clearly a means through which women can be supported in succeeding in their careers. There are many ways in which mentoring can be enhanced to support the movement of women into higher-level roles. However useful mentoring is in this regard, its effectiveness is likely to be limited by the continued gendered nature of society which produces men and women who have somewhat different motivations, attitudes, and values regarding work and non-work time. It will also be limited by organisations that fail to recognise the importance of work-life balance for all employees.

Policies alone are not sufficient to support women in their career development. A change in mindsets in required, which could be brought about by questioning established social norms and gendered attitudes. It is not just women who suffer the consequences of gendered attitudes and norms, but men too can be affected negatively. For example, while a woman may be dissuaded from overtly exhibiting 'masculine' characteristics of, say, ambitiousness; a man too, may be dissuaded from wanting to explicitly express spending more time with family because of it being perceived as a 'feminine' attribute. While corporate and social policies aim to bring more women into higher-level positions, there is also a need to consider men and the ways in which to foster their choices in terms of balancing work and non-work priorities. Doing so could not only be beneficial for men but could free more women to pursue higher level roles. In terms of work-life balance,

while there may be jobs that are more demanding, certainly many have been made more flexible and it is likely that still more could be if organisations would prioritise employee welfare and work-life balance.

Mentoring can be an invaluable tool to help women break through the glass ceiling, if it is tailored adequately to the needs of mentors and mentees. While both formal and informal mentoring styles have their advantages and disadvantages, a combination of certain aspects of formal and informal mentoring processes, could make the relationship between mentors and mentees much more meaningful. In addition, workplace gender-inclusive policies benefit not just women, but men too. Mentoring programmes should be such that they help mentees through the processes of relationship building, setting gender-equal dynamics between mentor and mentee and in the organisational context, and finally, by challenging gendered attitudes and social norms, so that men and women do not feel constrained to be defined by their predetermined social roles and can explore workplace attitudes and behaviours helpful for their careers and personal lives.

Disclaimer

The views of the authors (Nayyara Tabassum and Caprice Lantz-Deaton) are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organisations they are affiliated with.

> **Comment [a1]:** Author: Please confirm if this is correct.

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