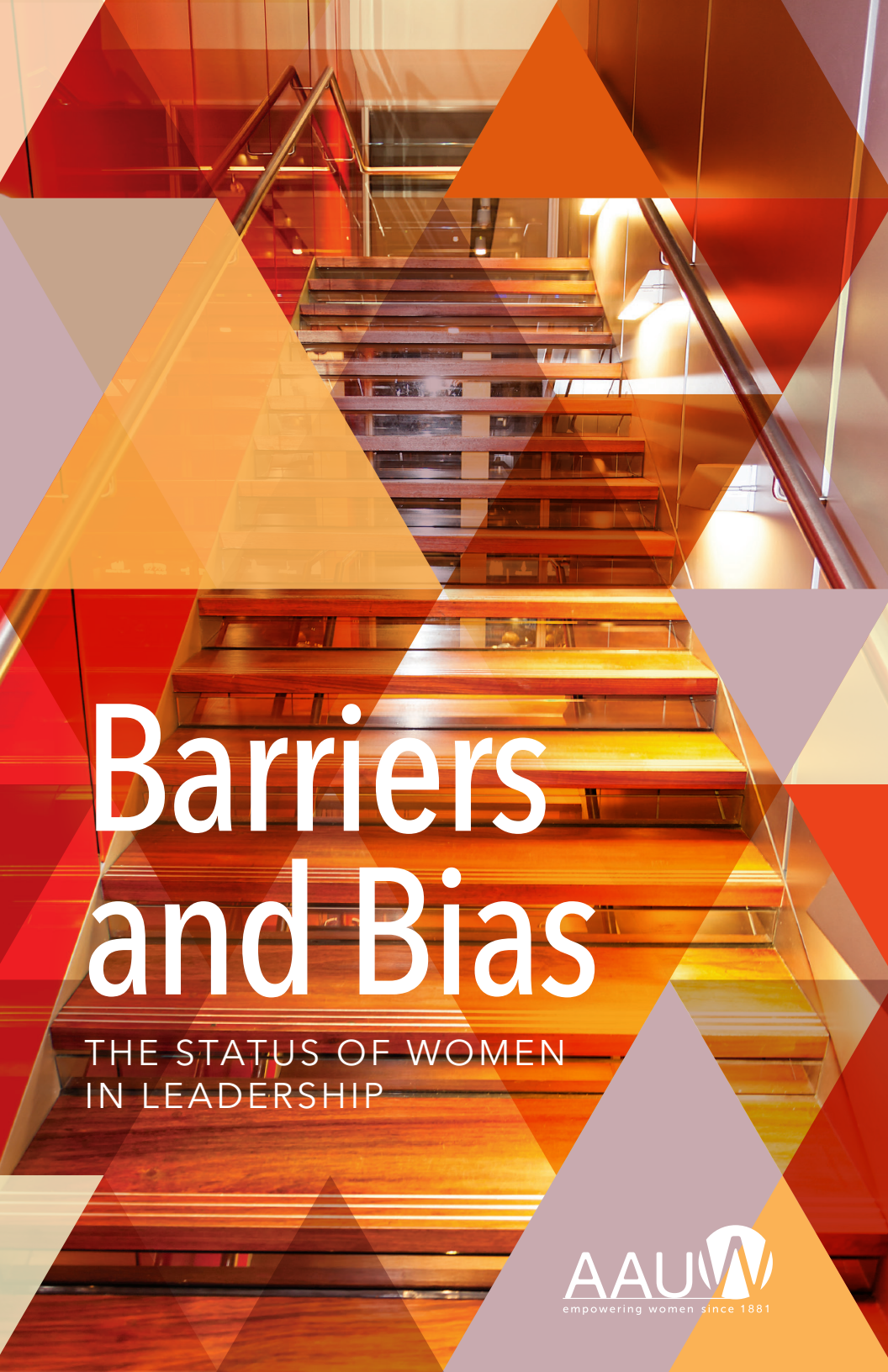

Barriers and Bias

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

AAUW
empowering women since 1881

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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

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FOREWORD

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is an organization built by and for women leaders. Founded in 1881 by 17 female college graduates who shared the belief that women deserve better opportunities in education and the workplace, the organization today has 170,000 members and supporters, 1,000 branches, and 800 college and university partners. Each year, AAUW provides more than $3 million in fellowships and grants to hundreds of women pursuing graduate education. And AAUW offers training across the country for college women seeking leadership positions on campus and beyond. In other words, leadership is in our DNA.

Despite gains in every profession, women remain underrepresented at all levels of leadership. In Congress, on corporate boards, and in our nation's colleges and universities, male leaders outnumber female leaders by considerable margins. For women of color, leadership opportunities are even more elusive. *Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership* delves into the reasons for these leadership gaps and proposes concrete steps for narrowing and, ultimately, eliminating them. Stereotypes and bias are among the leading obstacles to women's leadership. AAUW has launched a new online tool to help individuals learn about their own bias and find ways to mitigate its effects.

To achieve gender parity, we need women willing and able to take up leadership positions. We need men willing and able to take on more domestic responsibilities so that more women have the opportunity to pursue demanding fields. We need employers to embrace a more flexible workplace, allowing women and men to move in and out of the workforce as they balance careers, family, and personal goals. In essence, we all need to intentionally engage in making diversity and inclusion work on a daily basis.

We hope you will join AAUW in expanding the opportunities for all women to pursue leadership at all levels of society.

Patricia Fae Ho
AAUW Board Chair

Linda D. Hallman
AAUW Chief Executive Officer

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INTRODUCTION

The numbers are stark. Despite women's impressive gains in education and the workplace over the past 50 years, men greatly outnumber women in leadership, especially in top positions. From corporate boardrooms to the halls of Congress, from universities to the courts, from religious institutions to philanthropic organizations, men are simply much more likely than women to be leaders.

This topic has captured the attention of the nation. Many thousands of books and articles offer theories about the nature of the problem and advice to individual women on how to stand up, step up, lean in, and make their voices heard. But the leadership gender gap is significant, persistent, and systemic. Individual choices alone simply will not solve the problem.

Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership examines the environment in which leadership unfolds—in the classroom, in the workplace, and in politics. The academic and popular literature on women's leadership is vast and continuously growing. As a result, it is beyond the scope of this report to offer an exhaustive review. Instead, we identify key issues for creating lasting change, focusing on four questions: What is the gender leadership gap? What explains it? What strategies have already helped narrow the leadership gap? And what can we do about it now?

There is no monolithic "women's experience" of leadership. Women always have a race and an ethnicity, so a discussion about gender without reference to race and ethnicity (or vice versa) is simplistic and can be misleading. Other factors profoundly shape women's experiences as well, such as socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age. For the social scientist, this poses a complex challenge. How do we account for all these variables? How do we gather and analyze data in a way that reflects the true diversity of women's experiences? Empirical research that reflects this complexity has been growing, but challenges in scope and methodology limit our ability to generalize from many of these studies. Research specifically on gender and leadership that adequately explores

these variables is, unfortunately, sparse. This is a serious problem because diversity matters, and nowhere is it more important than in leadership. Nevertheless, this report draws on this limited body of research to distinguish among women whenever possible.

Time will not solve the gender leadership gap; action will. Women's representation in leadership will not increase substantially without major changes in the culture, policies, and practices of the organizations where women learn and work. Accountability also inspires action, so we need public policies to ensure that employers do the right thing. This is a solvable problem. We can do a great deal to move beyond stereotypical notions about leadership. Gender parity is a step forward for everyone, freeing us to pursue our aspirations, regardless of gender. *Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership* offers a blueprint for getting there.

WHAT IS THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Women are much less likely than men to be considered leaders. In 2015, only 5 percent of the companies in the Standard and Poor's 500 index had female chief executive officers (Catalyst, 2015a). Of course, the leadership gap is not confined to business. In the nonprofit sector, women are more likely to be in leadership positions, but they remain underrepresented. For example, in a 2015 Massachusetts study, only 21 out of 151 nonprofit organizations had boards with at least 50 percent women (Boston Club, 2015).

Meanwhile, women make up only one in five members of the U.S. Congress, and just six states (New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) currently have female governors (Center for American Women and Politics, 2016a). But the leadership gap is not confined to business and politics; unions (Bryant-Anderson & Roby, 2012), religious institutions (Christ, 2014), the legal profession (Rikleen, 2015), academia (American Council on Education, 2012), and many other institutions also exhibit this gap.

For Asian, black, and Hispanic women, the problem is even more acute. Fewer than 3 percent of board directors at Fortune 500 companies are women from these groups (Catalyst, 2015b). This disparity is also found at the staff level. Asian, black, and Hispanic women make up 17 percent of workers in S&P 500 companies but fewer than 4 percent of executive officials and managers (Catalyst, 2014). In the legal profession, where only

8 percent of equity partners are people of color, women account for just 29 percent of Asian equity partners, 33 percent of black equity partners, and 24 percent of Hispanic equity partners (Rikleen, 2015). Statistics about lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women leaders are not readily available, but a recent study found that women whose résumés indicated they were LBT received 30 percent fewer callbacks than other women, which suggests that LBT status may further limit leadership opportunities (Mishel, 2016).

Achieving gender parity in leadership is, first and perhaps most important, a matter of fairness. Leaders are powerful, so when women are excluded from top leadership, they are denied power to make a difference in the world. Leaders enjoy high status and privilege, and leadership in one area opens doors to other opportunities, which further amplifies the perks of leadership. Leadership also pays. In most organizations, the top leader is also the most highly compensated, and managers and supervisors tend to have higher salaries than workers who are not in leadership roles.

What does it mean to be a woman of color?

Research on gender, race, and ethnicity uses a wide range of definitions and categories. For example, the term "person of color" is generally—but not always—used to describe all people who are not "white." In other situations, Asians are treated separately. Within each of these categories, of course, there is great variability. All the data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal surveys are self-reported, with no standard way to indicate race and ethnicity in terms of gender, which makes this area of research especially challenging. The Census Bureau considers "Hispanic" to be an ethnicity rather than a race and therefore asks about each separately. The bureau is currently experimenting with new ways of addressing these categories to more accurately reflect people's self-perceptions of their race and ethnicity. This report uses the Census Bureau definitions unless otherwise indicated (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Equity concerns are reason enough to close this gender gap, but other factors are equally compelling. Although researchers do not agree about the nature and extent of gender differences in leadership style (Kellogg Insight, 2013), they have observed some interesting benefits of gender-integrated leadership.

Women leaders can benefit the bottom line; a Credit Suisse study (2012) found that companies with at least one woman on their board had a higher return on investment than companies with no women on their board. A 2007 Catalyst report on S&P 500 companies found a correlation between women's representation on boards and a significantly higher return on equity, a higher return on sales, and a higher return on invested capital.

But the benefits of diversity go beyond the bottom line. Research on private firms found that managerial gender diversity is related to positive performance outcomes (Menguc & Auh, 2006). Furthermore, an analysis of 126 firms in the S&P 500 found that board gender diversity significantly correlated with improved corporate social responsibility (Boulouta, 2013). Another group of researchers found that gender-balanced leadership teams seem less susceptible to problems associated with "groupthink" (Opstrup & Villadsen, 2015).

For workers, women's leadership may offer another benefit: A study of businesses operating during the Great Recession found that female CEOs were less likely than their male peers to lay off staff. The difference was significant; workforce reductions were more than twice as frequent at male-owned firms as at female-owned firms (14 percent vs. 6 percent), and more workers were affected (Matsa & Miller, 2014). Retaining staff can lead to lower short-term profits, but it can also preserve employee morale and reduce future hiring and training costs (Matsa & Miller, 2014). Other research shows that firms with more women in leadership roles may have smaller pay gaps between men and women who have similar work experience and arrive at the firm under similar circumstances (Tate & Yang, 2015). And the more women on the board, the more likely a firm will adopt a full range of LGBT-friendly policies (Cook & Glass, 2016).

Whether gender parity in leadership, by itself, fundamentally transforms institutions can be debated, but the status quo is without question neither beneficial nor inevitable. When women lose out on the financial benefits that come with leadership, the repercussions are felt not only by women and their families but also in philanthropy, politics, venture capitalism, and a host of other unexpected places.

Greater gender diversity in leadership is not a magic bullet. Indeed, gender diversity in top management can sometimes hamper effective teamwork because of differences in values, perceptions, and cognitive styles. But it has also been shown to spark creativity and the development and use of diverse knowledge and perspectives to foster new ideas (Opstrup & Villadsen, 2015).

LEADERSHIP DEFINED

Since at least the 1930s, the definition of leadership has been a topic of scholarly and popular debate, yet a generally agreed-on definition has yet to emerge (Northouse, 2015). Warren Bennis and Burton Nanus identified 850 different definitions of leadership in *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (1985). The dimensions of leadership defy simple categorization. Leadership can take place among friends, families, colleagues, and communities; in formal hierarchies and informal groups; within or outside organizations; and with or without management responsibilities. Leadership can emerge in an instant, such as in an emergency, or it can be exercised over a long period of time. Leadership can arise in a broad range of situations, and it can be responsive to change and adapt over time (Keohane, 2012).

Likewise, there are many different types of leaders. A leader may be defined by the position occupied, by personality or charisma, by moral authority, by the power held, or by intellectual contributions. Leadership can be exercised by individuals at any level of an organizational hierarchy, by people without formal authority, as well as by CEOs or presidents. For the most part, positional leaders are paid, often quite well.

Leaders, by definition, need followers, as Barbara Kellerman discusses in her landmark book, *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders* (2008). The power of a leader emanates from the willingness of a group of people to follow. Leadership can be used wisely or foolishly; it is not inherently good.

This report focuses on "positional leaders," that is, people who occupy positions of power that are recognized and rewarded in observable ways. This focus, however, does not suggest that other forms of leadership are less important, simply that they are more difficult to measure.

LEADERSHIP AND MASCULINITY

Despite stereotypes about macho leaders, leadership is not inherently masculine. Because white men have held most leadership positions in society for so long, the concept of leadership has been infused with stereotypically masculine traits: aggression, decisiveness, willingness to engage in conflict, strength, and so on. These traits are not uniquely available to white men, of course, nor are they predominant personality traits in all men. Indeed, researchers have explored the essential ingredients of leadership and found no gender differences in leadership effectiveness (Hyde, 2014).

The question of whether women and men have different approaches to leadership has been the subject of numerous studies and books. Women can and do use typically male leadership styles. For example, medical emergencies call for quick, coordinated action that requires decisive, authoritative leadership. A recent study of medical residents found that both men and women use this form of leadership effectively—although women are more likely to apologize to their colleagues for abrupt behavior after the event (Kolehmainen et al., 2014). Researchers have also found that women tend to adopt a transformational leadership style, which motivates followers through charisma, intellectual stimulation, and consideration of the individual (Bass & Riggio, 2006, as cited in Matsa & Miller, 2013).

Race, ethnicity, age, income, health, and sexual orientation all affect women's leadership opportunities, and these factors can add up to dramatically different experiences among different groups of women. Not only do

women of color confront race and ethnic discrimination that white women do not face, they also experience gender bias differently than white women do—and they experience racial bias differently than do the men in their racial or ethnic group (J. Williams et al., 2014). Scholars use the term "intersectionality" to describe this phenomenon.

WOMEN LEADERS ACROSS TIME

Women have been leaders throughout history. From the pharaohs of Egypt to the queens of England, women rulers are found in nearly every culture and time period. Yet, in almost all circumstances, male leaders greatly outnumber female leaders. Moreover, customs and laws against female leadership can be found throughout history, most notably in every major religion (Christ, 2014).

Women have served as leaders in social movements; for example, prominent women such as Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman campaigned fearlessly for the liberation of African Americans (Ngunjiri et al., 2012). In the early 1900s, Native American women led their own women's clubs to learn subjects that they had been denied access to because of their gender and ethnicity (Tetzloff, 2007). More recently, women have led efforts to improve sanitation and health care, develop public education, establish public libraries, and create a social welfare system. They have led social change in such diverse settings as the peace movement, consumer unions, education reform (Keohane, 2012), and the civil rights movement (Barnett, 1993). Although often invisible to the larger society, women have helped build important institutions through their volunteer leadership, which in turn created pathways for women's leadership in the paid sector. In other words, female leadership is nothing new.

BUSINESS AND NONPROFIT LEADERS

As noted, women are making some headway in leadership positions, but parity remains elusive, with women currently accounting for fewer than 5 percent of CEOs in S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2015a). At the staff level, women's representation is slightly better, but the gaps remain large. In the private sector, white men, and to a lesser extent Asian men, are overrep-

AAUW trains women leaders.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has a long history of volunteerism and leadership in the United States. Established in 1881, when women were denied access to formal leadership roles, AAUW is a membership organization that has always relied on volunteer leaders to achieve its goals. Member leaders have spearheaded the formation of science camps for girls, created scholarships to help women pursue higher education, and lobbied Congress on a range of gender-related issues–including efforts that led to the passage of Title IX, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, among other important legislation. Member leaders guide the AAUW national organization, and many members credit the organization with helping them develop leadership skills.

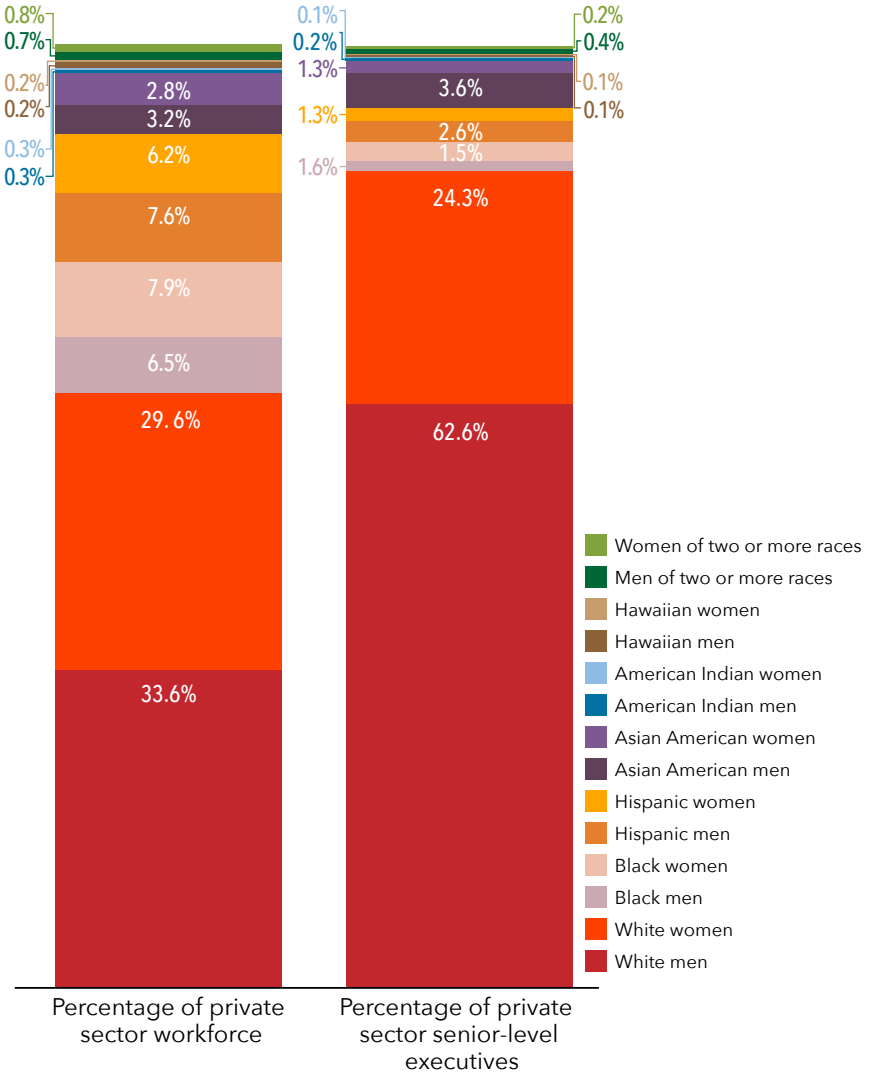
resented at the senior executive level. White women are better represented than all groups other than white and Asian men. Hispanic and black women are the least well represented at this level (see figure 1).

Although not technically "positional leadership," extreme wealth creates unique and extraordinary leadership opportunities—but these opportunities are almost exclusively available to men. In 2015, only 46 of the 400 superrich individuals in the United States (defined as having $1.7 billion or more in total wealth) are women, and only one of these 46 women is a woman of color (Kroll, 2015).

These extreme wealth differences between men and women are mirrored to some extent in pay data. Among the highest-wage workers, women make up only 27 percent of those who are paid $100,000 or more per year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015a). The income gap for black and Hispanic women is even worse: These women make up about 4 percent (385,000 of the 9 million U.S. workers in this income bracket) of people who are paid $100,000 or more annually.

FIGURE 1.

U.S. Private Sector Executives, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2014



Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (n.d.). 2014 job patterns for minorities and women in private industry.
Note: Figures do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

In the nonprofit sector, women are relatively well represented. They make up 75 percent of the nonprofit workforce but just 43 percent of the CEOs (Stiffman, 2015). At the largest nonprofits (those with budgets of $50 million or more), only 18 percent of CEOs are women, while at the smallest nonprofits, women make up 55 percent of CEOs (Branson et al., 2013). Women CEOs in the nonprofit sector earn 6 to 8 percent less than their male peers, depending on the size of the organization (McLean, 2015).

Board members in the nonprofit sector are nearly as likely to be women as men (48 percent versus 52 percent). Women of color, however, are less well represented (BoardSource, 2015). Only 20 percent of nonprofit board members were people of color in 2014, and a quarter of nonprofit boards were all white. Chairs of boards and CEOs were more likely than other board members to be white. BoardSource reports that 80 percent of nonprofits consider racial/ethnic diversity in selecting board members, but despite reporting good intentions, the nonprofit sector has made little progress toward racial/ethnic diversity on its boards (BoardSource, 2015).

LEADERS IN EDUCATION

Given women's prominence in the U.S. educational workforce, we might expect to see women make up a large share of the leadership positions. Three-quarters of public school teachers are women, yet their presence at the superintendent level is much lower (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In 2014, white women made up 18 percent of superintendents, black women made up 1 percent, and women of other races and ethnicities together made up about 1 percent (see figure 2) (Finnan et al., 2015).

In higher education, women have made great gains and are now earning more degrees than men. But women still trail in top academic leadership; they are underrepresented among the ranks of tenured faculty and full professors, who wield much of the power to hire and tenure colleagues as well as to prioritize areas of research. Women's underrepresentation as tenured and full professors in turn limits their opportunities to advance into formal leadership positions at colleges and universities. It is therefore not surprising that men outnumber women even among newly appointed deans, provosts, and presidents (Hammond, 2015). Women headed up 26 percent of col-

FIGURE 2.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity of U.S. School Superintendents, 2014

	Men	Women
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.2%	0.3%
Asian	0.0%	0.1%
Black or African American	0.6%	1.0%
Hispanic or Latina/o	0.5%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%
White (not Hispanic)	75.0%	18.5%
Other	0.6%	0.3%
Race/ethnicity not specified	0.6%	0.2%
Total	**78.7%**	**20.5%**

Source: Finnan et al. (2015)
Note: n=1,711; 0.8 percent of respondents did not specify gender.

leges and universities in 2012, including community colleges and women's colleges, where female presidents are more common (American Council on Education, 2012).

Racial and ethnic diversity is even less impressive in higher education, where women of color fill a small percentage of the leadership positions. Black women have served as faculty and administrators for many years in historically black colleges and universities, but their numbers remain small in historically white institutions of higher learning (Oguntoyinbo, 2014). Overall, women of color made up 17 percent of college presidents in 2011, a number that has increased from just 4 percent in 2006. Women of color also made modest gains in their representation among faculty, accounting for 8 percent of all faculty in 2011 (11 percent of instructors, 11 percent of assistant professors, and only 4 percent of professors). They have increased

their representation on both public and private school boards of trustees; in 2010, women of color trustees accounted for 13 percent of private board members and 23 percent of public board members (Colorado Women's College, 2013).

POLITICAL LEADERS

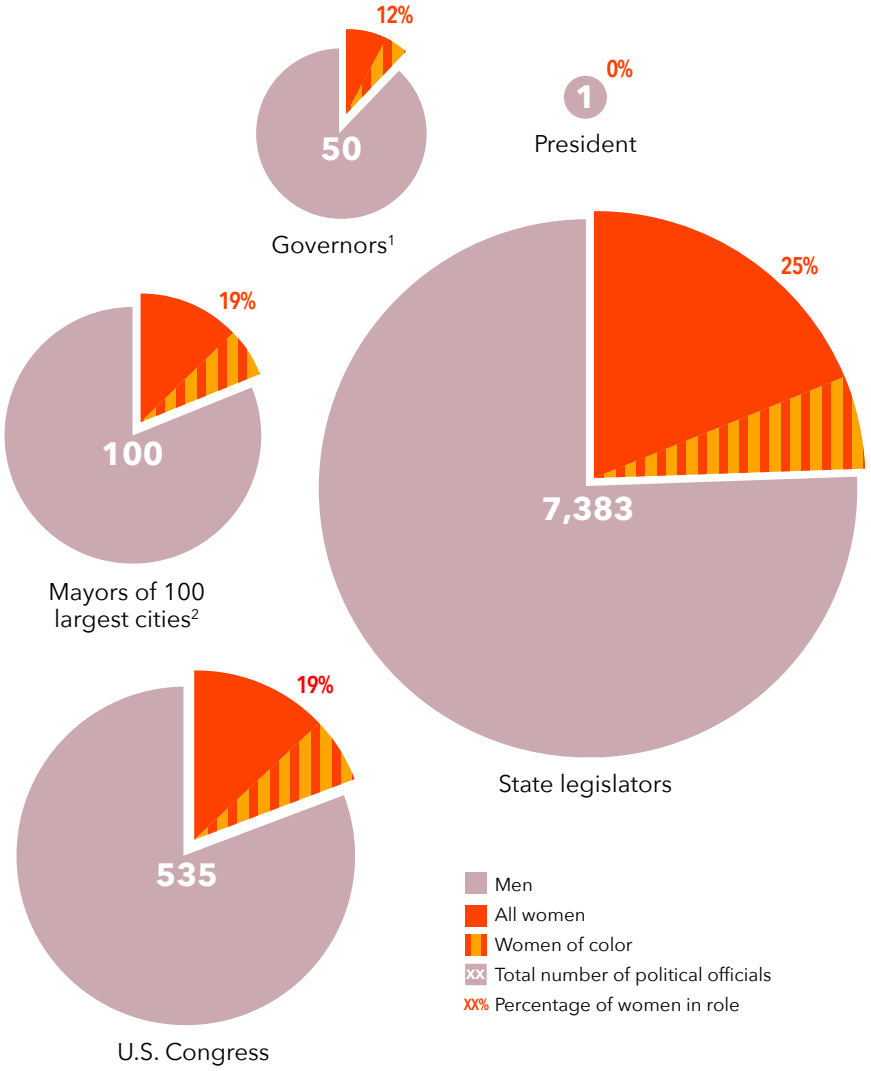
Women have played many different leadership roles in U.S. political life. Through the suffrage movement, women fought for and eventually won the right to vote. Today, women's organizations provide support for women interested in running for office, as well as participating in voter turnout efforts. Women's success in winning elections at the local, state, and federal levels in recent decades is due, in no small part, to the increasing number of women voters (Carroll & Fox, 2014). At the local level, women make up more than 40 percent of school board members (Sparks, 2014) but just 26 percent of city council members (Holman, 2013). Among mayors, women of all racial groups have made inroads, although the majority of mayors of the largest 100 cities are men (Center for American Women and Politics, 2016a).

Yet women remain significantly less likely than men to hold elective office at the state or national level, and the more powerful the role, the less likely a woman is to fill it (figure 3). In the 114th U.S. Congress, women occupy 20 seats in the Senate and 84 seats in the House of Representatives; of these 104 women members of Congress, 33 are women of color and 71 are white women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2016b).

Today, only six of the 50 governors in the United States are women (Center for American Women in Politics, 2016a), and only two are women of color. Gov. Susan Martinez (R-NM), who is Latina, and Gov. Nikki Haley (R-SC), who is of Indian descent, were the first two women of color to win gubernatorial elections (Center for American Women and Politics, 2016b). And, of course, the percentage of female presidents in U.S. history is currently zero.

FIGURE 3.

Women in U.S. Elected Offices, by Race/Ethnicity, 2016



Source: AAUW-assembled data for this figure provided by Center for American Women and Politics (2016a, 2016b)
[1]Does not include U.S. territories or the District of Columbia
[2]Mayoral data are from 2015.

Interestingly, women who do succeed in politics may be especially productive. Between 1984 and 2004, women in Congress secured roughly 9 percent more in federal funding for their districts than their male colleagues did, and they introduced about twice as many bills (Anzia & Berry, 2011).

Who will be the first woman president?

Women have been running for president for more than a century—and they started doing so even before women had won the right to vote. The first woman to run for president was Victoria Claflin Woodhull, who campaigned as the Equal Rights Party candidate in 1872. The Equal Rights Party also selected Belva Ann Bennett as its presidential candidate in both 1884 and 1888 (Center for American Women and Politics, 2012; Falk, 2010). Since then dozens of other women have run for president, including Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME), who was nominated by the Republican Party in 1964 but withdrew after winning 27 delegate votes on the first ballot (Center for American Women and Politics, 2012; Mandel, 2007).

The first black woman to seek a major party's nomination for president was Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-NY), who ran in 1972. Chisholm had already made history by becoming the first black woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, a seat she held for almost 15 years (1969–83). Chisholm was on the ballot in 12 presidential primaries and received 151 delegate votes at the Democratic National Convention (Center for American Women and Politics, 2012; Mandel, 2007). Sen. Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL) campaigned for the 2004 presidential nomination, although she did not get as far as Chisholm (Mandel, 2007).

In recent years women have continued to seek the presidency, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Party and Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) and Carly Fiorina in the Republican Party.

WHAT EXPLAINS THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP?

Why is there still a dearth of women leaders in the United States? Are there not enough qualified candidates? Is there still discrimination against women leaders? Are women simply choosing to prioritize family over career?

The question can be posed another, equally important way: Why are men overrepresented in leadership roles? Are they not qualified for or interested in other kinds of work? Is there still discrimination against men who are not leaders? Are men simply choosing to prioritize career over family?

Personal choices are never made in a vacuum. Organizational, cultural, economic, and policy barriers shape both men's and women's choices and opportunities. Women's underrepresentation in leadership has been framed as a deficit in which something is holding women back from becoming leaders. Initially described as a glass ceiling—the symbolic wall women hit at mid-management levels—barriers to women's advancement can also be thought of as a labyrinth. Alice Eagly and Linda Carli (2007) proposed this concept to describe how, all along the way, women confront distinct barriers that stymie or derail their progress.

Regardless of metaphor, one thing is clear: Women are not simply denied top leadership opportunities at the culmination of a long career. Rather,

those opportunities disappear at various points along the way. So what, exactly, is happening? And, meanwhile, what is happening to men that results in an overrepresentation of male leadership?

THE PIPELINE PROBLEM

In terms of qualifications, the pipeline for women leaders has expanded significantly over the last half century. Women now earn the majority of university degrees at every level except for professional degrees. In 2012–13, women attending U.S. universities earned more bachelor's degrees, more master's degrees, and slightly more doctoral degrees than men earned, a trend that is forecast to continue for the foreseeable future (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Dramatic changes in women's educational attainment and workforce participation have given millions of women the background and skills they need to become leaders—taking on roles that were once reserved for men and providing organizations with a larger and more diverse pool of potential leaders. In other words, qualified and ambitious women are not in short supply.

Further, many of these women are experienced professionals with long tenures in the workforce, although women are still somewhat less likely to be in the workforce than men are (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015b). Among the Silent Generation (born 1930–45) and early Baby Boomers (born 1946–55), women's workforce participation was low during their prime parenting years and only reached a peak once those women were 45–50 years old. Subsequent generations—late Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y—have been more likely to work through their prime parenting years (Hegewisch et al., 2015). These generations of women will have longer job tenures than earlier generations of women, more closely resembling the careers of men.

PERSISTENT SEX DISCRIMINATION

Some bias against women is subtle, but overt—and illegal—discrimination against women in the workplace remains an issue. Companies sometimes still unguardedly state a gender preference for some positions—such as a

2015 advertisement stating that a position "requires filling in the responsibilities of a receptionist, so female candidates are preferred" (Crockett, 2015). This kind of illegal discrimination is not rare. In the past five years, about 30,000 cases of sex discrimination have resulted in a decision or settlement in favor of the person who filed the charge, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency tasked with enforcing civil rights in the workplace (EEOC, 2015).

Some companies still actively defend blatant sex discrimination. In a recent case, an employer conceded that a female executive was paid half as much as male executives with comparable sales, even though sales numbers were the key determinant of salary (*King v. Acosta*). Laws to protect against sex discrimination often can address only the most egregious cases; for every case that reaches federal court, there are thousands of other workers living with similar circumstances.

Hostile work environments are a form of discrimination that can shape careers. Many women's experiences in business, education, and politics are profoundly affected by sexual harassment. Academic literature in education, sociology, and psychology highlights the gendered realities of alcohol consumption, date rape, and sexual harassment at U.S. universities, all of which can work to depress women's autonomy. These dynamics undoubtedly reinforce different roles for women and men in college and play a fundamental role in the "choices" women and men make (Stuber et al., 2011).

In the political realm, rigid stereotypes about women and political leadership—often captured in biased media coverage of female candidates—can influence voters' perceptions of women candidates and discourage women from entering politics. Women leaders are still perceived as masculine and are sometimes negatively stereotyped as "lesbians." Questions about Hillary Clinton's sexual orientation have surfaced regularly since the mid-1990s (Worthen, 2014), and she has been described (derogatorily) as a lesbian by multiple U.S. media outlets (Wakeman, 2014, as cited in Worthen, 2014).

One study found that gendered coverage of women presidential candidates often trivializes their candidacies (Falk, 2010). Others have explored the relationship between the tone and content of media coverage of a woman senator and voters' ratings of her warmth and competence (Bligh et al., 2012). Positive media coverage of a woman senator was associated with higher ratings on both competence and warmth. Together, these studies suggest that media bias affects perceptions of women candidates and hence the outcome of their races.

Some behavior that does not rise to the level of illegal discrimination nevertheless harms women. Just as small acts of kindness can improve group morale, small acts of hostility can contribute to a hostile environment. Academics have coined the term "microaggressions" to describe small mean-spirited acts, such as exclusion and low-level verbal harassment. Sometimes seemingly benign comments can take a toll on women's advancement. In one study, top female college and university leaders cited discouragement, sabotage, and unfair expectations as barriers to leadership. The women reported a lack of understanding and support from family and colleagues, as well as different expectations for themselves and their male peers. For example, women leaders felt pressured to attend public functions more often than men. They also noted that certain roles are not reversible; for example, the "president's husband" is often not an acceptable stand-in at an event, whereas the "president's wife" is (Oguntoyinbo, 2014).

CAREGIVING AND WOMEN'S "CHOICES"

Balancing work and family responsibilities is one of the most challenging obstacles for women seeking leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Sandberg, 2013), and it can be especially daunting for the millions of working women raising children on their own (Hess & Kelly, 2015). Women are usually the primary (if not the only) parent caring for children and other family members during their peak years in the workforce. They are more likely than men to work irregularly and spend time out of the workforce (Rose & Hartmann, 2008), and they are more likely to work part time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). They also take more time off for family commitments than men do (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015c). Moreover, women (and men) may feel deeply conflicted about leaving their

children when they go to work, and the concept of "choice" does not accurately capture their experience of managing paid employment and parenting. Still, many women do continue their careers, and many who leave come back within a year or less. An assumption that women with young children are not on the "fast track" excludes a whole category of employees from leadership opportunities.

Women without access to paid leave are significantly more likely to quit their jobs after giving birth than those with paid leave (Laughlin, 2011), but only 12 percent of U.S. workers in the private sector have paid family leave through their employer (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015). Only five U.S. states have programs that provide temporary disability leave to women who have given birth. In most states, women must rely on leave voluntarily provided by their employer in order to have paid time off work when they have a child. When faced with the prospect of unpaid leave or no leave at all (unpaid leave is protected under the Family and Medical Leave Act for about 60 percent of U.S. workers), many women who have children choose to leave the workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015). Even when employers offer family-friendly policies, workers are reluctant to use them out of a concern that their work commitment will be questioned (Klerman et al., 2012).

Differences in women's and men's earnings also contribute to the leadership gap. When two parents are in the workforce and one has an option to reduce or even leave employment, the higher-paid spouse is likely to continue working. That person is still most often a man: In 2013, among married opposite-sex couples in which both spouses were wage earners, husbands were paid more than wives 71 percent of the time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015d). In a study of women and men working in the petroleum industry, men were less likely than women to be part of a dual-career couple and less likely to leave a position to follow a partner. Men were also less likely to cite pressure to forgo work-life benefits as a reason for leaving their job (Sprunt et al., 2013). Women and men make these choices in the context of cultural expectations, gender socialization, and financial constraints. A wide range of factors shape, define, and limit the career choices of both women and men.

The gender imbalance in leadership is both a women's issue and a men's issue. Being a leader is not inherently valuable or desirable. Leadership roles can be time consuming and often require great responsibility, which can cause a great deal of stress and leave little room for other priorities. Just as the status quo is holding women back from leadership roles, it is holding men back from embracing caretaking and support roles.

LACK OF EFFECTIVE NETWORKS AND MENTORS

Access to influential networks is critical to moving up the leadership hierarchy. Some studies have found that the social capital gained from networking with influential leaders is even more important for advancement than job performance (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hewlett et al., 2010). Research suggests that, although women and men are equally likely to have mentors, women may benefit less than men from this arrangement, especially in the areas of salary and promotions. More recently, scholars have focused on sponsorship, a form of mentorship in which sponsors share both status and opportunity. For example, sponsors can co-author articles, provide key contacts, share important meeting opportunities, and actively seek out future career opportunities. This influential and specific professional relationship has been shown to be more effective than traditional mentorship (Catalyst, 2011).

Women of color aspiring to leadership positions face unique challenges in finding a sponsor. Compared with white men, women and men of color have limited access to social networks that can provide information about jobs, promotions, professional advice, resources, and expertise. In addition, the lives of women of color outside of work are less likely to overlap with those of influential managers, who tend to be white. White women are more likely to live in the same neighborhoods, send their children to the same schools, and participate in the same community organizations as the powerful men in their workplace. For women of color, networking requires more effort.

Women are generally considered to have strong communication skills, so it might seem that they would excel in networking. But networking in the business world often occurs around activities that are typically considered "mas-

culine," such as golf or hunting. Women with substantial family responsibilities may have limited time for building professional networks or socializing with colleagues outside of work.

STEREOTYPES AND BIAS

Stereotypes and the biases on which they are based present a subtle but powerful obstacle for women. There are many ways to define stereotypes and bias. For this report, we define a stereotype as a cognitive "shortcut" that categorizes people on the basis of characteristics such as gender, race, or age (Northouse, 2015). A bias is a semi-permanent belief based on repeated exposure to stereotypes (Project Implicit, 2011). People are less likely to openly admit to negative stereotypes and biases today than in the past; nevertheless, they remain powerful in this quieter form. A recent meta-analysis of gender and leader stereotypes found "no evidence of decreased stereotyping over time" (Koenig et al., 2011).

Gender, race, and age are often subject to stereotyping, and even seemingly positive stereotypes can be problematic. For example, the stereotype of women as nurturers can backfire when employers and peers expect women to take on caregiving responsibilities that are inappropriate or discriminatory in a work setting (Heilman, 2012). We can stereotype others, as well as members of our own group; that is, women can hold stereotypes against women. Once a stereotype has been adopted, it becomes a filter through which we selectively recall and use information. A recent study found that people retain their stereotypical views, even when their personal experience presents evidence contradicting a stereotype (Crites et al., 2015).

Gender stereotypes like these can negatively affect both men and women. In one study, men who didn't conform to the male stereotype of aggression were ranked lower than men who better fit this male stereotype. Such stereotypes can thus create bias in the judgment of decision makers. In this study at least, nice guys finished last (Judge et al., 2012).

Stereotypes about mothers can negatively affect women pursuing leadership roles. Employers may assume that women's caregiving commitments make them inappropriate candidates for demanding jobs. According to one

researcher, "Motherhood triggers powerful negative competence and commitment assumptions" that can result in a "maternal wall" of bias that is an "order of magnitude" more powerful than other biases (Williams, 2004). Fatherhood, on the other hand, seems to have the opposite effect. After becoming fathers, men see an average of a 6 percent increase in earnings even after controlling for factors such as hours worked and marital status, while new mothers see a 4 percent decrease per child (Budig, 2014).

Stereotypes and bias affect how we see ourselves, as well as how we see others. For example, there is a self-confidence gap between women and men (Schuh et al., 2014). Whereas men are socialized to be confident, assertive, and self-promoting, cultural attitudes toward women as leaders continue to suggest to women that it is often inappropriate or undesirable to possess those characteristics (Enloe, 2004; Flammang, 1997). Women's tendency to diminish and undervalue their professional skills and achievements is in place by adolescence. At the same time, male students overestimate their skills and female students underestimate theirs relative to objective indicators of competence (Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Wigfield et al., 1996). In other words, both men and women miss the mark when it comes to self-evaluation. These kinds of errors can result in lost opportunities, wasted time, and poor choices.

Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat arises when people become aware that they are negatively stereotyped in their current role or activity. Negative stereotypes affect individuals' performance when they attempt difficult tasks in the domains in which they are negatively stereotyped (Logel et al., 2012; Hoyt et al., 2010). Stereotype threat can reduce working memory and, because of its relationship with stress, anxiety, and disengagement, can lead to a wide variety of negative attitudes and behaviors (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010).

Stereotypes about Leadership

In a meta-analysis of 69 studies on stereotypes and leadership, researchers found that stereotypes about leadership are decidedly masculine (Koenig et al., 2011). This is not surprising: Stereotypically male characteristics—independence, aggression, competitiveness, rationality, dominance, objectivity—all correlate with current expectations of leadership (Crites et al., 2015).

Those expectations, in turn, affect women's and men's self-perceptions. A meta-analysis of 95 organizations from different countries found that men in male-dominated organizations rate themselves as significantly more effective than women rate themselves (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Stereotypes about Race and Ethnicity

Gender and racial stereotypes overlap to create unique—and uniquely powerful—stereotypes. According to one recent study, races are perceived as gendered, with being black considered more masculine than being white, and being Asian considered more feminine than being white (Galinsky et al., 2013). These stereotypes create a layer of confusion that can change how gender stereotypes are perceived. For example, most of the research on the backlash against women's leadership has focused exclusively on white women. The question of how black women and other women of color fare when their leadership style runs counter to gender stereotypes has received little attention.

One exception is a study that explored whether gender and race shape interpretations of behaviors such as self-promotion, anger, and assertive language (Livingston et al., 2012). The findings about white women were consistent with previous studies on the backlash effect, but they also showed that black women are not penalized for these seemingly dominant behaviors. The study does not imply that black women are not disadvantaged in leadership positions; rather, the specific ways in which they are disadvantaged clearly differ from the better-understood ways that white women leaders are disadvantaged. These enigmatic results underscore the complex relationships between race, gender, and leadership style and the need for more research in this area.

Latinas face still different stereotypes when entering leadership roles. Among college and university faculty, Latinas who behave assertively risk being seen as "angry" or "emotional," even when they reported that they were not angry—they just weren't deferential. Nearly 60 percent of Latinas surveyed reported a backlash against expressing anger. The same study also found that Latina faculty members shoulder a disproportionate share of office "housework" (J. Williams et al., 2014). Latinas and other women of color often encounter overt bias, creating barriers to their career advancement.

Implicit Bias

Implicit, or unconscious, bias occurs when a person consciously rejects stereotypes but still unconsciously makes evaluations based on stereotypes. The social psychologists Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald introduced the concept of implicit bias in 1995, building on earlier findings showing that individuals' actions are not always under their conscious control. Since then, the concept has become more widely known and was the focus of author Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling book *Blink* (2005), in which he describes how implicit bias works:

> All of us have implicit biases to some degree. This does not necessarily mean we will act in an inappropriate or discriminatory manner, only that our first "blink" sends us certain information. Acknowledging and understanding this implicit response and its value and role is critical to informed decision-making and is particularly critical to those whose decisions must embody fairness and justice.

Banaji and Greenwald (2013) believe that implicit bias often expresses itself through in-group favoritism, which can be hard to detect. For example, despite finding no evidence of explicit preference for male or female managers, researchers found that male participants implicitly associated positive managerial characteristics (i.e., competent, executive, productive) with men. The opposite was true for female participants, who associated women with positive managerial characteristics; however, this effect was much weaker (Latu et al., 2011).

Another study looking at implicit biases investigated how participants responded to a simulated initial public offering (IPO) based on a real, successful one. When researchers manipulated the gender demographics of the IPO's top management team, participants viewed female CEOs as less capable than male CEOs, and the women's IPOs were viewed as less attractive than the men's, despite having identical qualifications and firm finances (Bigelow et al., 2014). Similarly, another study found that when participants in hypothetical leadership roles relinquished power to co-workers, they were

more likely to relinquish power to male co-workers than female co-workers, and they were more likely to view men as more competent in leadership roles than women (Ratcliff et al., 2015).

Men are not alone in these biases against women in the workplace. Researchers have found that women workers in particular show evidence of implicit bias against female bosses. For example, as the number of jobs a woman has held increases, the less likely she is to state a preference for having a female boss. Women are especially biased against older female bosses. The research did not find these same effects for bosses of either gender among male participants (Buchanan et al., 2012).

Women's preference for male bosses is not completely surprising. When women leaders are expected to behave kindly and cooperatively as women but assertively and competitively as leaders, they are put in a no-win situation, which scholars call "role incongruity." Women whose leadership style runs counter to female stereotypes often experience resistance or backlash. In addition to being overlooked for advancement, fear of backlash can discourage them from actively pursuing opportunities. Typically, men do not experience backlash because ambition is consistent with masculine norms.

The candidacy and presidency of Barack Obama provided social scientists with multiple opportunities to study the influence of implicit racial bias on votes and voting preferences for Obama in the 2008 and 2012 elections, as well as more specific attitudes such as opposition to Obama's health insurance reform plan (Knowles et al., 2010). Anthony Greenwald (2012), in a review of studies conducted on racial bias and votes or voting intentions in the 2008 and 2012 elections, concluded that racial bias might be the cause of a 10 percent "handicap" against Obama in those elections. Gender bias may lead to similar effects for women candidates.

HAVE ANY STRATEGIES ALREADY HELPED NARROW THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP?

The leadership gender imbalance is not a new problem, and efforts to fix it are not new either. As with most attempts to change a systemic social problem, types of interventions vary and results are mixed. We know that creating gender parity in leadership will require multiple strategies focusing on multiple layers of society: individuals, families, neighborhoods, educational institutions, employers, and local, state, and federal lawmakers. But the most important question is the most basic one: What works?

TRAINING

Diversity training programs have proliferated in the past decade, but they are not all created equal (Moss-Racusin et al., 2014). Some of these programs inadvertently reinforce gender and racial stereotypes or do more harm than good (C. L. Williams et al., 2014; Dover et al., 2016). Nevertheless, some programs have achieved promising results.

For example, college faculty members who participated in an interactive, large-scale bias-reduction intervention workshop—lasting just two and a half hours—were significantly more likely to engage in self-monitoring about gender equity (Carnes et al., 2015). At a three-month follow-up (when at least a quarter of a department's faculty had participated in the work-

shop), participants were more likely to report having acted in a way to promote gender equity. They also reported an improved departmental culture (Carnes et al., 2015).

One study specifically on leadership and gender looked at three strategies for reducing bias against women in leadership roles:

- Structured free recall, in which participants consider positive and negative attributes of a target to avoid generalizations
- Source monitoring, in which participants focus on their actual remembered judgments rather than gut feelings
- Error management, in which participants practice recognizing their own errors and self-regulate

The researchers found that structured free recall and source monitoring were more effective at reducing bias against women leaders than error management, but they noted that even these strategies only worked on participants who had relatively low initial levels of implicit bias (Anderson et al., 2015).

In other research, something as simple as the language surrounding leadership activities was found to have a dramatic effect on women's engagement as leaders. The study compared group leader volunteers under two different conditions: In the control group, participants were given basic instructions about the task. In the intervention group, participants were given the same instructions, along with the brief encouragement, "This is a safe environment to learn and experience leadership." In the control group, significantly and disproportionately fewer women volunteered as leaders, but the disparity was completely eliminated in the intervention group (Wayne et al., 2010).

Studies have shown that seemingly small changes can make important differences. For example, exposing study participants to a counterstereotypical gender role (male midwife, female mechanic) actually alters the way individuals form impressions and process social information. The exposure forces people to turn off their mental shortcuts and instead use more individualistic and systematic approaches to processing social information.

Elect Her trains the next generation of women candidates.

AAUW has supported women in politics in many ways, most recently through our Elect Her trainings. Designed to encourage college women to run for elective office on campus and beyond, these half-day workshops are held at more than 50 sites across the country each year. Participants practice hands-on campaign skills, hear from inspiring local speakers, and discuss research on women in government. More than 1,000 students attended an Elect Her workshop in 2015, and three-quarters of the participants who ran for office after the training won their elections.

This shift in thinking has other concrete benefits; research has found that it increases flexibility in problem solving and enhances creativity. And it seems to have lasting power: Exposure to counterstereotypical role models can actually reduce the effects of stereotypical thinking in completely different settings (Leicht et al., 2014).

Leadership training for high school and college students is also prolific. In a recent study, incoming male and female first-year college students tended to have different beliefs about leadership (Wielkiewicz et al., 2012). While students of both genders had high expectations but unsophisticated beliefs about their own leadership abilities, men thought significantly more hierarchically about leadership than women did, whereas women preferred more systemic, communal leadership styles (Wielkiewicz et al., 2012). Both men and women need structured programs that will help them develop a more sophisticated understanding of leadership by teaching them to balance hierarchical and systemic leadership (Wielkiewicz et al., 2012).

Women make up a majority of the electorate, yet they have never been equally represented in the halls of power. Engaging women in politics and electing them to office earlier in life are critical strategies for strengthen-

ing and increasing women's representation in government. In fact, many women in the current U.S. Congress started their leadership careers in student government.

IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TESTING

Research suggests that by getting to know your own biases, you can learn to counteract them (Project Implicit, 2011). In 1998, Harvard University's Project Implicit pioneered the development of tests that use word association to detect implicit bias. Over the last decade project researchers have developed tests for many stereotypes, including gender, race, and ethnicity. These tests are available for free at their website, implicit.harvard.edu. AAUW has collaborated with Project Implicit to launch a free, anonymous test on gender and leadership; you can find more information about the test on our website at www.aauw.org.

Implicit Association Tests (IATs) measure the time it takes your mind to connect two words, such as "woman" and "scientist." Even if you feel strongly that women should have full access to all scientific professional opportunities, you still might take a bit longer to match the word "woman" with "scientist" than you do to match the word "man" with "scientist" because most of us have seen, met, and read about many more male scientists than female scientists. These small differences reveal an implicit bias. Hidden biases can cloud your judgment in ways you are not fully aware of, and they can make it more difficult to treat people fairly.

Some people are uncomfortable taking an IAT because they may be asked to link words that they don't feel should go together. For example, the test might tell you to connect "silly" with "girl." The test is not asking you to agree with the word connection; it is simply measuring how long it takes your mind to complete the task.

IATs are called tests but they are not graded, and how you perform on an IAT cannot reveal any deep truth about your values. It is possible to have strong implicit biases and still treat people fairly. But exploring how your mind links these words and concepts can help you better understand how your mind is working when your attention is elsewhere.

GENDER QUOTAS AND HIRING GOALS

Many countries in Africa, Europe, and Latin America have adopted quota systems to redress the gender imbalance in political leadership. Norway adopted a quota system for very large companies, requiring 40 percent female representation on corporate boards, and other countries have since followed suit. The United States, with its deep cultural and constitutional commitment to individualism, has rejected the use of strict quotas to address past injustices. But the quota approach has limitations; women selected by quota programs may be stereotyped as less qualified, and self-perceptions of competence may suffer (Heilman et al., 1987). Backlash against women also may result if individuals feel that their choices are being restricted in order to promote women (Pande & Ford, 2011).

Some prominent companies in the United States have voluntarily adopted diversity goals and disclosed previously private data on diversity in their companies. The technology companies Intel, Google, and Apple have publicly disclosed their workforce numbers on race, ethnicity, and gender. The idea behind these efforts is to create accountability for the companies at all levels. It is too early to judge whether these efforts produce measurable change.

Without gender quotas, what else could make a difference? One study found that women's advancement is strongly linked to board gender diversity (Skaggs et al., 2012). When women are in top leadership positions, women are more likely to be promoted to leadership. This brings us full circle: To increase the number of women in top leadership positions, we need to increase the number of women in top leadership positions.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE REFORMS

Research has shown that education alone is not enough to remedy historical inequities in the workplace. For meaningful progress, managers must be held accountable, especially for promoting women and men of color into leadership positions (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015).

Some research suggests that objective performance measures and performance-based promotion practices are essential to women's success in the workforce. Job descriptions using gender-neutral language (so as not to imply that one gender or another is better suited for a position) have also been shown to make a positive difference (Lennon et al., 2013).

The recommendation process is especially fraught with opportunities for bias. Studies suggest that gender bias affects the quality of the recommendations provided. For example, letters written for female applicants for faculty positions are shorter, more likely to give a minimal assurance rather than a glowing recommendation, and more likely to raise doubts about an applicant (Trix & Psenka, 2003). Female applicants for faculty positions are also more likely to be described with communal adjectives (affectionate, warm, kind, nurturing), while male applicants are more likely to be described with agentic adjectives (ambitious, dominant, self-confident); applicants whose letters use agentic adjectives are more likely to be hired (Madera et al., 2009). Even when controlling for how well-qualified applicants actually are, male applicants for faculty positions are more likely to be described with "standout" words (outstanding, exceptional) than are female applicants (Schmader et al., 2007).

Many institutions have reformed their employment practices to better meet employees' needs. Successful programs do not focus exclusively (or even especially) on women. For example, the Stanford University School of Medicine Academic Biomedical Career Customization (ABCC) model includes individualized career plans spanning a faculty member's career, with options to flex up or down in research, patient care, administration, teaching, and mentoring. Flexibility policies, such as tenure clock extensions and parental leaves, are presented as career advancing rather than career limiting (Valantine & Sandborg, 2013). ABCC's strategies for changing the culture of academic medicine are transferable to many other industries and workplaces.

ROLE MODELS

Introducing children early in life to all kinds of leaders, men and women, in various leadership positions (e.g., business, community, and political leaders) helps debunk the monolithic image of masculine leaders (Smyth & Nosek,

2015). Exposure to successful leaders is not inherently empowering; it can also be deflating if the interactions are isolated and superficial. But frequent, high-quality interactions with successful female role models have been shown to improve college women's self-concepts of their leadership abilities and career ambitions (Asgari et al., 2012).

What does authentic leadership look like?

Authentic leaders engage their followers in an honest and straightforward way through self-awareness, openness, and willingness to consider opposing viewpoints. Stefanie Simon and Crystal Hoyt (2012) found that women who were exposed to counterstereotypical images of women in the media reported more positive self-perceptions and increased leadership aspirations than women who were exposed to stereotypical images of women. So what does authentic leadership look like? From their empirical studies of volunteer leaders, James Kouzes and Barry Posner formulated five practices of exemplary leadership:

- Model the way: Leaders exhibit the behavior they expect of followers, set examples through their actions, and match their words with their deeds.
- Inspire a shared vision: Leaders understand their followers' motivations, interests, and aspirations. To inspire vision in others, leaders are passionate and enthusiastic.
- Guide others in times of change: Leaders are important guides when organizations innovate, change, or face the unknown.
- Enable others to act: Leaders share their power and encourage followers to develop the confidence and capabilities needed to succeed.
- Encourage the heart: Leaders demonstrate genuine caring and concern for followers. Contributions are recognized, and there is a culture of celebrating successes.

These leadership skills offer a tangible alternative to the outdated, stereotypical image of macho leadership (adapted from Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

For women of color, role models can be especially powerful. But a lack of role models from the same race or ethnic group can be a barrier to advancement for women of color (Catalyst, 1999). Further research is needed on the availability and effect of role models on the leadership aspirations and experience of women and girls from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Role models are also powerful in politics. Young people's political ambitions are related to and shaped by a variety of experiences, traits, and activities early in life (Atkeson, 2003). In politics, researchers have found that women who live in states with successful, visible female candidates are more likely to be politically engaged (Fox & Lawless, 2014). And that brings us back full circle, again: To increase the number of women in political office, we need to increase the number of women in political office.

HOW DO WE CLOSE THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP?

There is no magic bullet to solve the leadership gap, but this problem does not require magic. There are many commonsense steps we can take as individuals, employers, and policy makers to create significant change. Drawing from the research examined in this report, we offer the following recommendations.

INDIVIDUALS

Become a student of leadership.

There are thousands of academic and popular books, journals, and webinars for women seeking leadership roles in business, politics, education, and a host of other fields. This report does not endorse any particular approach; instead, we recommend that women immerse themselves in the leadership literature most relevant to their own career paths.

Seek evidence-based leadership training.

Focused, interactive training can be empowering when implemented well. For example, AAUW's Elect Her program trains college women to run for office on campus and beyond. AAUW also holds an annual National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, which brings together nearly 1,000 women to hone their leadership skills, learn about public policy issues facing women today, participate in a career and graduate school fair, and network with the AAUW community.

Ask for more.

Learn and practice negotiation skills to ensure that salaries and benefits start fair and stay fair. AAUW Start Smart and AAUW Work Smart salary negotiation workshops teach women effective techniques to negotiate their salary and benefits at different stages of their careers.

Find a sponsor or become one.

Investing in the next generation of leaders takes time and effort. Be on the lookout for opportunities to learn from people in leadership positions, and as you advance in your field, make it your responsibility to invest in future leaders.

Explore and address your biases.

We all have implicit biases that are in conflict with our conscious beliefs. Find out about your biases and learn some practical tips for avoiding the mental shortcuts that can lead to unfounded judgments. Visit the AAUW website and take our gender and leadership Implicit Association Test.

Understand stereotype threat.

Simply knowing about stereotype threat can help diminish its effect on you. Role models can be helpful in countering stereotypes. Encouraging a "growth mindset" in yourself—that is, the belief that your mind is always learning and growing—can serve as a defense against the notion of fixed capabilities, which is at the core of stereotype threat.

Set leadership goals.

When women don't meet all the qualifications for a position, they are less likely than men to pursue it. Even if you don't want to pursue leadership roles at this stage of your life, look ahead to opportunities that are on the horizon.

Plan for potential career interruptions.

Work-family balance can be difficult for anyone to achieve. Although women are still more likely than men to handle the housework and caregiving, men are increasingly taking on these roles. Taking time out of the workforce can be the right decision for both men and women.

Seek out employers that promote women's leadership.

Before you join a company, take a look around: Do you see women and people of color in leadership roles? Blazing a trail is a possibility, but it can be challenging.

Look for volunteer opportunities that include leadership skill development.

This report focuses on positional leadership, but there are many types of leadership. Volunteer leaders have been involved in building schools, libraries, and hospitals; they have fought for civil rights and advocated for children and the poor. Volunteering can be a wonderful way to develop your leadership skills while helping to make a difference in the world.

EMPLOYERS

Offer flexible schedules.

Some jobs do require fixed times and places. But employers can change the default rules that govern offices and many other workplaces so that all employees have the flexibility to work at times and places that mesh with family caretaking responsibilities. Schedule conferences and important meetings during core working hours to accommodate employees' personal needs.

Focus on productivity, not face time.

The notion that "face time" (arriving at work early and leaving late) and frequent travel will prime employees to become effective leaders is simply misplaced. When managers focus on and recognize employees' contributions rather than watching the clock, productivity and morale may improve.

Offer evidence-based diversity training.

Diversity training programs should reflect best practices. While there are many programs available, employers should look for those that take into account the latest evidence-based findings about bias and stereotypes.

Actively encourage sponsorship programs.

While mentoring programs can be useful, sponsorship involves the sharing of credibility and standing in the field.

Design better human resource materials.

Bias affects different groups differently, and too often practices do not reflect individuals' real experience of gender, racial, and ethnic bias. Policies and programs designed to reduce bias, such as blind review of résumés, can limit bias in crucial aspects of the hiring process.

POLICY MAKERS

Tackle persistent sex discrimination.

The gender imbalance in leadership can only be solved by creating an equitable workplace. Enforcement agencies like the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Justice need adequate resources to enforce existing civil rights laws so that employers can get the technical assistance they need and employees can get meaningful access to the protections they deserve.

Strengthen pay equity laws.

Passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act would create incentives for employers to follow the law, empower women to negotiate for equal pay, and enforce the laws we already have. State and local policy makers can follow the lead of states like California and Massachusetts and strengthen their state's equal pay provisions.

Increase salary transparency.

The federal government is helping to fight the pay gap by making sure federal contractors do not retaliate against employees who share salary information. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor and the EEOC must finalize and implement new regulations to collect wage data by gender and race from employers. These data will provide better insight into the wage gap and discriminatory pay practices that hold women back across industries and occupations.

Strengthen leave policies.

While some employers choose to provide these protections as a benefit to some or all employees, many U.S. workers do not have guaranteed paid annual leave, paid time off for illness or family care, or paid parental leave. Without these policies, caregiving responsibilities can hinder women's career trajectories and leadership opportunities. The Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act would establish paid medical and parental leave for all workers, and the Healthy Families Act would allow workers to earn paid sick days to cover temporary and minor illnesses and caregiving. State and local policy makers can also pass laws that set these standards for all workers.

Update laws to protect pregnant workers.

Pregnancy should not prevent a woman from pursuing her career. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would require employers to make reasonable accommodations to protect the health of pregnant workers and ensure that they are not forced out of their jobs or denied leadership opportunities.

Support educational programs for women seeking high-wage jobs.

Jobs that have been traditionally held by men tend to be in high-wage, high-growth fields. Educational programs that provide bias-free counseling and promote gender equity can encourage effective workplace culture change.

Fully enforce Title IX.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in education, including discriminatory policies in admissions, recruitment, counseling, and athletics and in addressing the persistent sexual harassment and violence in our schools. These factors all limit women's ability to complete their education and pursue leadership opportunities. The U.S. Department of Education needs adequate funding to provide technical assistance and to fully enforce the law. The High School Data Transparency Act would help schools, parents, students, and community members ensure the promise of Title IX by making information about gender and sports in high schools publicly available.

RESOURCES

GENERAL

- **Catalyst** (www.catalyst.org) provides data on women in the workplace and hosts a variety of Inclusive Leadership Learning Experiences (www.catalyst.org/what-we-do/catalyst-inclusive-leadership-learning-experiences) to develop inclusive leaders who will help build and sustain a diverse and more successful workforce.

- **The Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University** (cawp.rutgers.edu) offers a variety of leadership training programs for women, in addition to publishing data and research on women in politics. Ready to Run (cawp.rutgers.edu/education_training/ready_to_run/overview) offers campaign training programs for women; the NEW Leadership program (cawp.rutgers.edu/education_training/NEW_Leadership/overview) educates college women about politics and leadership to inspire them to run for elective office; and Teach a Girl to Lead (tag.rutgers.edu) provides tools and resources for teaching young girls about leadership.

- **The Gay and Lesbian Victory Institute** (victoryinstitute.org) is dedicated to increasing the overall leadership potential of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities.

- **The International Leadership Association** (www.ila-net.org) has published an interdisciplinary three-volume book series called *Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice* (www.ila-net.org/Publications/WL/index.htm) that offers insight into women's leadership development and experiences.

- **Mujeres Latinas en Acción** (www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org/Home) offers the Latina Leadership program (www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org/Home/programs/latina-leadership), an intensive 20-week training program dedicated to developing Latina leaders and community activists.

- **The National Coalition of 100 Black Women** (www.100blackwomen.org) promotes the development of black women civic leaders through advocacy and networking.

- **Project Implicit** (implicit.harvard.edu/implicit) offers Implicit Association Tests that provide insight into individuals' implicit biases, which may prevent women from attaining leadership positions.

AAUW

- **The AAUW Implicit Association Test on Gender and Leadership** (www.aauw.org/article/implicit-association-test), created in collaboration with Project Implicit, can help you find out if you have unconscious biases about women leaders.

- **AAUW Start Smart and AAUW Work Smart Salary Negotiation Workshops** (www.aauw.org/what-we-do/salary-negotiation-workshops) teach women effective techniques to negotiate their salary and benefits packages at different stages of their careers.

- **Elect Her** (www.aauw.org/what-we-do/campus-programs/elect-her) is a one-day training program that helps college women develop leadership skills to run for student government and future political office.

- **The National Conference for College Women Student Leaders** (www.nccwsl.org) is an annual conference that prepares college women attendees to be future leaders through workshops and networking opportunities.

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