

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION AND THE PHENOMENON OF THE GLASS CEILING

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an increase in the presence of women in management positions. However, many studies have shown that women are treated stereotypically in the workplace. In particular, both the biological and the social sex as it is formed through stereotypes and prejudices, create obstacles, inhibiting the promotion of women to leadership positions. These obstacles are usually invisible and are the so-called Glass Ceiling phenomenon. As a result, women are under-represented in high-ranking positions as they are evaluated by different criteria than men. In the field of education, although the majority of teachers are women, the leadership of the educational units is presented to belong to men in a way that exudes "hegemonic masculinity" (Daraki, 2007), since it is governed by masculine values. Nevertheless, women have entered the field of work education dynamically, with the result that the 20th century is characterized as a century of women. Of course, the "weak sex" has given and gives many struggles in its effort to break the Glass Roof and strengthen its position in the labor and social sector.

Key words: sex, gender, professional equality, leadership in education, glass ceiling.

1. The role of sex and of gender

1.1 Biological and social sex

Individuals shape behaviors and socialize according to their gender. However for the term gender there is an important division of category, into biological and social.

Specifically, biological sex (sex, as noted in the English literature) refers to the biological differences between male and female, which concern the genitals and reproduction and determine the female and male sex (Godelier, 2004). Gender (as the English term is) is determined by the social perceptions that prevail for men and women and concerns the traits and behavior of individuals in general, as they are determined by society (Godelier, 2004). Gender identity refers to the self-perception that the individual has regarding the social role the person chooses to have, male or female, and that does not necessarily coincide with his biological sex (Veikou, 2013). Therefore we could say that the biological gender is natural (we are born with it), while gender is variable and is defined both culturally and socially (Connell, 2006).

However, there is a different assessment between the scientific and the common discourse concerning gender, since anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis and the sciences in general within the scope of their scientific field deal with the concept of gender, they came to the conclusion that "Gender" has more to do with cultural rather than biological differences (Beikou, 2013). In particular, they argue that in order for a man or a woman to be, the "social edifice" has a primary role, since individuals are categorized in society

according to the relationship between their biological and social gender, a relationship which, at present, has not been fully clarified. (Kessler, & McKenna, 1985).

The important role of society in determining gender and the priority of the social over the biological sex, is emphasized by the reality that was valid, just a few years ago and is still valid in some areas, and concerned the role of the child before it was even born. Thus, if the child was born a boy, his course and role were predetermined, which was very different from what he would have if he were born a girl, thus giving priority and dominance of the social sex over the biological (Maruani, 2008). Moreover, the family in which women seem to have shouldered all the care of the dependent members, as a result of which they are prevented from education and work (Gasouka, 2008a), has a significant effect on the formation of social gender, which leads us to the conclusion that in order to hope for change in society first there must be change within the family (Kelly, 1976).

Therefore, all activities, habits and even movements, are classified accordingly, as male or female, composing a specific way of behaving, a norm, which concerns respectively those who are male biological or those who are female biological. In this way women are presented as emotional, weak, talkative, capable of household chores and raising children, while men appear strong, dynamic, competitive, rational, thus fueling a dipole of stereotypes, the deviation from which places in margin for anyone who does not embrace them (Connell, 2006).

There are interesting results of a research according to which male identity is linked to public communication, family protection, professional development and individual value. On the other hand, the female identity is limited to the private space of the home, through the care and offer dictated by her roles as mother, husband and housewife, she derives personal prestige and is characterized by discipline and moderation. It is noteworthy that, according to the same research, while female adolescents have aspirations for a professional career and development, they finally propose the creation of a family, thus maintaining socially dictated stereotypes (Deligianni-Kuimtzi, 2008). It is worth clarifying that stereotypes are cognitive representations that derive from general beliefs of some individuals or groups that concern specific individuals or groups and usually (not always) have a negative orientation (Vakola, & Nikolaou, 2012).

One of the most important reasons why society has created the above stereotypes, is the ability of a woman to give birth, thus becoming a mother, a fact that refers to a loving and tender form, thus giving characteristics to the female sex completely different from in the male (Parsons, 1995). However, hormones also play an important role in a person's behavior, so if a girl is born with elevated androgen levels, she may exhibit "masculine" behavior, while a boy with elevated estrogen may exhibit "feminine" behavior (Money, & Ehrhardt, 1972). At this point it is worth mentioning that in the 1980s and 1990s, the dipole between the biological and the social sex was challenged by French feminism, as it was considered to promote gender difference (Delphy, 1993). So we realize that, in addition to the biological background, there are rules of behavior, according to which a child grows up and which, proposed through the family, the relative environment, the school and in general through communication, lead him/her to assimilate and decide which gender he/her belongs to (Maruani, 2008). The rules cover many areas of a persons' life concerning clothing, speech, gestures, profession, etc., as well as sexuality. Therefore *"..sex also functions as a set of commands, which teaches us rules of conduct and ways of thinking, delimits aspirations and*

expectations that are considered appropriate to the category in which it ranks us, and all this is done in such a way that we usually feel that we freely decide and choose "(Pantelidou - Malouta, 2014).

1.2 Professional equality or inequality

In order for the individual to survive, to integrate into society but also to develop, he needs the work through which he creates the network of his social relations (Stamati & Syriopoulos, 2011). The equality of the number of men and women in the global sphere of work results from the application of rules and movements, all of which are defined as professional equality (Maruani, 2008), which contributes significantly to both economic and social gender equality. (Gasouka & Tsoukala, 2007).

From the beginning of the 20th century, when the procedures for the abolition of prohibitions on women's civil and professional rights began, until today, it seems that there has been a great development and a significant rise of women, both in the workplace and in society in general. However, in fact a marginal improvement has been achieved since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, until today, as women face significant obstacles in their quest to find decent work. One of the goals of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, in September 1995 in Beijing, was to ensure the presence of women in both decision-making and leadership positions, emphasizing that in this way the functioning of democracy is ensured through the resulting balance in the composition of society. Furthermore, as agreed by the governments of all the participating States, in order for peace, equality and development to take place, the active participation of women at all levels and in particular in the structures of power is essential, decisions that have been ratified at subsequent (United Nations meetings, 1995, 2000, 2005a, 2005β, 2010). However, inequality between women and men persists in global labor markets. In the last two decades, the significant progress of women in educational achievement has not translated into an improvement in their position at work. Despite the fact that women perform better than men at the level of education, discrimination in the labor market against women is intense, a fact that is intensified by employers as they treat women workers in violation of the law in many cases, such as a pregnancy (Carby - Hall, 1986).

In many parts of the world, women are more likely than men to become unemployed, less likely to join the workforce, and - when they do - often have to accept lower quality jobs. Progress in overcoming these obstacles is slow and limited in some areas around the world. Even in many of these countries, where gaps in labor force participation and employment have been reduced and women are moving away from the contribution of family work and moving into the service sector, the quality of women's jobs is a matter of concern. The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men and between families and society is an important determinant of gender inequality at work (International Labor Organization, 2016). In other words, there is a lack of flexibility (in terms of gender choices) in the labor market which feeds and fuels the separation of occupations, which is based on gender inequality (Anker, 1997).

When we talk about segregation of jobs or division of labor by gender we mean the tendency of men and women to work in different occupations and to be active in different places. According to the ratio of each sex in each profession and in total employment, the professional separation can range from zero (there is no professional separation) to the absolute (existence of professional separation to the greatest extent) (Dermanakis, 2005).

The two axes along which the professional separation develops are the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal axis records the gender professional concentration, a fact which is fueled by the tendency of men to work in professions with higher prestige and earnings, while women, on the other hand, are trapped in less ambitious and lucrative professions. In the vertical axis, the gender concentration is recorded in higher and lower layers of the hierarchy. It is observed that men are concentrated in high hierarchical positions while women in lower hierarchical positions (Karamesini, & Ioakeimoglou, 2003). Through the horizontal and vertical axis of development of the professional separation, two prevailing stereotypical perceptions emerge. On the one hand, women are more suitable for careers, services and social gatherings due to their biological characteristics, and on the other hand, men are more suitable for high-ranking positions that involve responsibility and power (Papagiannopoulou, etc.). It is therefore understood that this is a cultural phenomenon as long as it is dictated by socially constructed perceptions.

The pay gap between men and women, which is observed in both axes of occupational segregation, is known as the "gender pay gap". It concerns the wage difference between men and women taking into account the average difference in gross hourly wages of employees (Khoreva, 2011). Surveys related to payroll studies show that despite the fact that men and women perform the same work, the latter are treated unequally and earn less. In particular, women in the EU earn about 15% less per hour worked than men (European Parliament, 2020).

There are three factors that define the wage gap between men and women:

- Professional and sectoral separation of employment.
- Inequalities in women's financial earnings due to employer practices which are dictated by social perceptions about the value of women's work as well as their under-representation in some professions.
- Work experience (Nina-Pazarzi, 2007).

In 2015, however, the United Nations approved the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, giving a glimmer of optimism for better working conditions for women, after reaffirming the global consensus on the crucial importance of gender equality and its contribution to the goals of sustainable development (International Labor Organization, 2016). The 17 goals of sustainable development include more jobs in number and quality for women, universal social protection, reduction of unpaid care and domestic work, with the ultimate goal of reducing poverty in general, but also achieving gender equality, in order to have full, productive and decent employment for all, in order to achieve economic growth worldwide (International Labor Organization, 2016). (The International Labor Organization is the only United Nations tripartite organization since 1919, bringing together governments, employers and employees from 187 Member States to set work standards, develop policies and promote decent work for all women, and all men.)

2. Gender and administration in education

2.1 Sexual constructions in education administration

Considering what was mentioned in a previous chapter on gender, we realize that specific socially constructed characteristics, which relate to gender, follow man and woman accordingly. In this way there is a sense that the masculine nature is identified with power, success, aggression while the feminine nature

with obedience, the feeling of inferiority, exploitation in areas such as work, politics and education (Hambidis, 2012).

Therefore, the existence of descriptive and specific stereotypes increase prejudice and play a regulatory role in the evaluation of women and their professional development. Descriptive gender stereotypes describe how men and women are and encourage behaviors that discriminate on the basis of gender, contributing to the expectation that women are not properly equipped to succeed in traditionally masculine positions. On the other hand, gender stereotypes, which define how men and women should be, discriminate causing rejection and social sanctions on women who behave in a non-stereotypical - female way, in order to succeed in roles that are considered masculine (Heilman, & Caleo, 2018).

It is understandable that due to stereotypes the path to professional advancement of women presents more obstacles than that of men, a fact that is observed in the field of administrative hierarchy of education, since many women "enjoy" discrimination that leads to their exclusion from the address of the school unit (Athanasoula - Reppa, 2000).

Although the teaching profession is considered the most suitable for women, since it can combine motherhood with that of a teacher (Maragoudaki, 1997), there are obstacles due to both external and internal factors, which are responsible for low percentage of women in administrative positions in the school unit and give an advantage in shaping and maintaining a male leadership profile (Pasiardis, & Savvidis, 2002). Specifically, when talking about internal factors, we refer to the character and individual characteristics of each individual. According to research, women show a lack of confidence and faith in their abilities, in terms of management due to their ignorance of this area, with the result that fear combined with low self-esteem, constitute a brake on claiming managerial positions (Tsikalaki, 2009). However, although the percentages of women in the educational hierarchy are generally low, it is noteworthy that unmarried and married teachers without children have a very limited interest in running a school compared to married teachers (Saiti, 2000).

Regarding external factors, we refer to gender and social gender, which give priority to discrimination which is dictated by institutional and social characteristics and not by qualifications (Pasiardis, & Savvidis, 2002). It is a typical feeling that in order for a woman to be involved in management, she must have settled her family issues, since in any case she must be able to combine work with her profession, a prerequisite that does not apply to men (Kantarzi, & Anthopoulos, 2006). It is also noteworthy that the characteristics of a managerial position are inextricably linked to the male stereotype so that in many cases there is an identification of the two. As a result, women directors are in a constant struggle to prove their worth, which is particularly tedious and soul-destroying, as a result of which they avoid taking the position of director, while fueling the stereotypical regime that leads them to this exclusion (Maragoudaki, 1997).

So we understand that the leadership of educational units is presented to belong to men in a way that exudes "*hegemonic masculinity*", as it is governed by masculine values which concern "*power, strength, superiority, rationalism, certainty, security, the penetration of knowledge, individualism, self-confidence, competition, skill, use of strategies, self-discipline, control, enforcement, risk-taking* ", making it a norm, which is accepted even by women managers (Daraki, 2007).

2.2 Gender forms of leadership exercise

Numerous studies have shown that there are not (or there are few) differences due to biological gender in leadership forms, and in some cases there are similarities (Evetts, 1994; Gold, 1996; Reay & Ball, 2000; Vinkenburg et al, 2000; Collard , 2001, in Daraki, 2007). However, as has already been said in a previous chapter, the identification of management, in the workplace in general and in education in particular, with the male model is a result of, for many years, the dominance of men in similar positions (Deligianni-Kuimtzi, 1999). Therefore, female managers seem to try to dispel stereotypes that show them to be less capable than men in terms of leadership (Daraki, 2007), if leadership skills such as resilience and determination do not conform to the stereotypes that concern them. , so they try to cope influenced by the stereotype think manager - think male (Schein, 2001). The results of a specific study conducted in America showed that women are no longer influenced by the stereotypical nature of managerial positions that existed in 1970. In contrast, men, despite the social, legal and organizational changes that have taken place, still believe that the characteristics that one should have in a leadership position can be better supported by men (Schein, V., 2001).

The example of Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, is typical, who, due to the way she was governed, was metaphorically named "Iron Lady", in order to emphasize two contradictory concepts: that of the "masculinity" of the leader and that of the femininity of the woman. Of course, this is not the case for men since a similar title is considered an asset (Daraki, 2007). It is worth noting that for 12 years, the prime minister in the 1980s did not promote "women" issues at all, applying cuts in many areas related to women, such as maternity benefits, childcare and special rights in the workplace (Daraki, 2007).

It is a fact that despite the large number of men in managerial positions (in the field of education as well), there has been a steady increase in the participation of women in this field, especially in recent years, which raises questions about the forms of leadership exercised by both sexes. These questions concern whether the form of leadership is influenced by biological sex, whether the existing differences are due to issues of style and not substance or whether these differences are still existing or are hypothetical (Daraki, 2007).

When referring to the management of an organization (such as a school unit) we must keep in mind that there are two axes according to which it is formed and exercised. The first axe concerns the structural - organizational level, ie the rules of operation and the connection with the higher levels of administration, which are defined by a specific framework. The second axe concerns the individual - interpersonal level, ie the way in which the respective leader perceives his role in the specific environment (Papanoum, 1995). Therefore, despite the fact that the structural framework of an organization (such as a school) is the same, the way in which the required actions will be performed may differ, due to the organizational behavior that is influenced by gender roles. There is a perception that women rule by feminine values, a fact that perpetuates gender stereotypes, magnifying the different forms of leadership between men and women, which are clearly fewer than those among people of the same sex. Also, peoples' expectations of leaders are determined by gender stereotypes, with the result that leaders function by mixing hegemonic and gender roles (Daraki, 2007).

In particular, the leader (or the woman- leader) is determined in a rather gender-like way, thus influencing his her behavior. Men, in particular, tend to practice competitive and assertive behavior, which indirectly (but clearly) indicates "masculine" quality. In contrast, women approach leadership in a different, more

communicative way, emphasizing, however, the discrepancy that arises between the typical leadership role and the female role, causing negative evaluations in relation to men. Even if a woman-leader decides to "violate" her female role by giving space to the leadership role, the evaluations are also negative because it is not in line with her gender. However, research has shown that the subjective link between a woman's "female identity" (husband, mother, etc.) and a "professional identity" (business executive, manager, etc.) is not self-evident or unavoidable, as in the workplace she can be goal-oriented and outside of work she can serve the values of care and empathy (Daraki, 2007).

3. The phenomenon of the Glass Ceiling

3.1 Definition - Similar expressions

Trying to interpret the term "glass ceiling", it was considered legitimate to approach its two parts separately. So, the "glass" is associated with something transparent, visible, however, with an underlying feeling that although it is obvious what is behind it, at the same time it is in an inaccessible area. On the other hand, the "ceiling" refers to the "limit", the point to which one can reach where an obstacle stops him (Vassiliadou, 2020).

The presence of men and women in certain degrees of hierarchy within the same profession is the vertical professional separation, to which we have referred in a previous chapter. The culmination of this separation is the phenomenon of the "glass ceiling" (Gasuka, 2007b).

The "glass ceiling" refers to all those invisible and prejudiced constraints that are responsible for limiting the promotion of women to higher positions during their professional careers (Vozemberg, 2015). This is an excellent metaphor, which is related to the investigation of inequalities between men and women in the workplace (Bomuwela, & Chamaru, 2013). In fact, later, the "glass ceiling" was defined as the *"invisible but inaccessible barrier that prevents minorities and women from climbing the top rungs of the hierarchy, regardless of their qualifications or achievements"* (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). According to structural theories, these are systematic discriminations that arise from the practices and policies of organizations and affect women and minorities asymmetrically and negatively (Morrison, & Von Glinow, 1990). Therefore, in order to promote a woman or someone who belongs to a minority, subjective criteria are taken into account and not objective ones, such as education and formal qualifications (Powell, 2012). Despite the fact that the phenomenon exists in business executives, research has shown that it applies to any other category of employment, as long as an evolutionary career path is possible (Meurs, & Ponthieux, 2006).

However, remaining on the issue of inequality between women and men in the workplace, since the term came from the field of feminism, the "glass ceiling" is not placed at a specific point but at some point presents and hinders the evolution of women, sometimes visibly and sometimes in disguised ways (Morrison, et al., 1987; Auster, 1993). Therefore, these obstacles are also the reason for the lack of female leaders (Bomuwela, & Chamaru, 2013). Therefore through the "glass ceiling" women can see hierarchical positions but can't reach and conquer them. The fact of the presence of this phenomenon is remarkable even in professions where the participation of women is clearly greater than that of men

(Papagiannopoulou, etc.). The degree of difficulty that women face in order to rise hierarchically to the level of men also indicates the extent of the "glass ceiling" (Dermanakis, 2005).

The fact that women are able to cope with difficult challenges in the labor market on the one hand and the phenomenon of having limits on their prospects on the other, the "glass ceiling" (Albrecht, et al., 2003) is an oxymoron. As a result, women become discouraged, both in terms of their work and salary development (Mavin, 2000).

In order to confirm the existence of the glass roof, certain criteria must be met, such as:

- Existence of unexplained discrimination by other work-related factors. (excluding factors such as skills, education, motivation, experience, may be related with gender or race).
- Existence of specific discrimination at a higher frequency at higher hierarchical levels than at lower hierarchical levels. (there is an inability of both women and minorities to climb to positions of power and not to the lower classes).
- Existence of inequality in the chances of progress to higher levels and not only in the percentages of gender or race that are already at these levels. (there are no opportunities for development).
- Existence of inequality with increasing tendency during the professional course of the individual. (The higher the individual ascends the hierarchy, the more intense the pressure to hold his course from the "glass ceiling" (Cotter, et al., 2001).

The "glass ceiling index" refers to the degree of development of women in the workplace with positive parameters of professional development. *The Economist* website, combining career advancement data on higher education, maternity and paternity rights, labor force participation, pay, childcare costs and senior representation, concluded that despite the increased percentage of women existence in the workforce, their participation in management has not changed significantly. Also, as shown by the data, the countries with the most "friendly" working environment for women and with a higher degree of professional development are mainly the Scandinavian countries (with Sweden being the first in the world) (The Economist, 2019).

Along with the term "glass ceiling" there are other similar terms which refer to similar or not, practices and situations which act as a deterrent to the development of women and minorities in general. Such are the "glass escalator", the "sticky ground", the "motherhood path", the "concrete ground", the "glass ceiling".

In particular, the "glass escalator" refers to the phenomenon that describes the faster rise of men to high positions, compared to that of women, even in professions that are considered female-dominated, such as those involved in health care or teaching. (pink collar professions) (Williams, 1992).

"Sticky ground" refers to the difficulties faced by both women and minorities when starting up the organizational hierarchy. While the "glass ceiling" evokes the idea of a barrier to evolution, the "sticky ground" focuses on the first stage of evolution in which discrimination can occur (Heery, & Noon, 2008).

A similar definition to the previous one is the "glass floor", which refers to the difficulties faced by women in low levels of companies or organizations, where the educational level of employees is rather low. Researchers report that at this stage the unequal treatment of employees by gender is more pronounced than in high-ranking positions (Barnet-Verzat, & Wolff, 2008).

Also, at the recruitment stage there is the so-called "glass door", which describes the obstacles that women face before they are even in the working environment of an organization, during the period they are trying to be recruited (Smith, et. al. 2012).

"Motherhood path" is the term that highlights the parameters that arise in a woman's work when she becomes a mother. On the one hand, she can emphasize specific work arrangements that facilitate motherhood, on the other hand, she emphasizes the fewer opportunities provided for career advancement. There is an indirect comparison between women who choose to become mothers and "career" women, as those women who give priority to their professional careers are called, with a clear preference (in workplaces) for those who belong to the second category. Obstacles to women's leadership, therefore, arise when potential factors of unproductiveness, such as motherhood, seem to affect their performance at work, a perception that largely arises from prejudices, stereotypes and expectations that are naturally inherent in women only (Schwartz, 1989).

The term "concrete wall" is similar to that of "glass ceiling", except that it refers to women of color. It concerns the biggest and most difficulties that women of color face, not only because of their gender (sexism) but also because of their color (racism), in relation to white women, in order to advance professionally (Phipps, 2020).

The "glass cliff", however, presents a phenomenon where women tend to be promoted to positions of power in times of crisis or recession, when during their leadership there is a high probability of failure (Ryan, & Haslam, 2005). British researchers Michelle K. Ryan, Alexander Haslam and Julie S. Ashby of the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom have been credited with inventing the term, based on their research on the 100 companies listed on the 100-Year Financial Listings Index.

Also, in order to describe the "loss" of women in leadership positions as employees move up the "hierarchy", the term "pipeline leakage" was adopted (Phipps, 2020).

Finally, it would be fair to mention that there is a theory that challenges the term "glass ceiling" and instead proposes the term "labyrinth", wanting to emphasize that the road to the top of the hierarchy is more complicated throughout length for women than for men, as they often encounter obstacles, but these are not insurmountable. However, many of them (women) are "lost" along the way (Eagly, 2003). Also, according to Browne (1998), who is a supporter of evolutionary psychology, there is no predisposition by women for leadership roles, so the most tried and tested term would be the "cobweb ceiling", due to the will of each woman to break it and not the existence of the obstacle itself.

3.2 Historical evolution of the term in bibliography

For the first time in 1839, the French feminist George Sand used the phrase *"une voûte de crystal impénétrable"*, meaning *"an impenetrable crystal treasury"* in an excerpt from one of her plays, "Gabriel", which was never presented to the public. Specifically, she describes: *"I was a woman, that's why my wings suddenly collapsed, the ether closed around me like an impenetrable crystal treasure and I fell..."*. Through this description is stated the will of the woman to rise high beyond her socially acceptable role (Harlan, 2008).

Marilyn Loden used the term "glass ceiling" in a 1978 speech on promoting women to senior leadership positions. Listening to the women speakers, she found that they focused on women's weaknesses, projecting

a weak profile, which prevented them from evolving hierarchically, so she used this term to make it clear that there were cultural rather than personal barriers, which were an obstacle to opportunities for women's advancement (BBC NEWS, 2017). In 1979 Kathrine Lawrence, then working at Hewlett-Packard, described the barriers that prevent women from evolving and in particular described the reduced opportunities for women's action in comparison of those of men in this company, using the term "glass ceiling" (Newton, 2017).

However, the term is also applied to Gay Bryant, who reportedly used it for the first time in 1984 in an interview hosted by Adweek magazine, which referred to it as wanting to emphasize that women reach the middle ground management in which they stop (Boyd, 2008).

In 1986, Carol Hymowitz and Timothy D. Schellhardt introduced the term "glass ceiling" in an article in The Wall Street Journal entitled: "The glass ceiling: why women can't break the invisible barrier that excludes them from top jobs ". This article expressed the view that the "glass ceiling" is a phenomenon that can't be discussed in any business meeting or found in a corporate manual. On the contrary, it concerns an invisible, hidden and indefinite obstacle which owes its existence to the availability of men to maintain leadership positions for their own gender (Wilson, 2014).

During the 1990s and after its appearance in this newspaper, the term was often used to describe the experiences of working women in American companies. As a result, the US federal government recognized the "glass ceiling" as an obstacle to the development, not only of women but also of colored workers, at which time it was also used in situations where discrimination against people of color took place (Jackson, & O'Callaghan, 2009). Specifically, in 1991, as part of Title II of the 1991 Civil Rights Act, the United States Congress established the "Glass Ceiling Committee." The committee consisted of 21 members chaired by Labor Minister Robert Reich (Redwood, 1995). It was created to study obstacles to the progress of minorities and women in corporate hierarchies, to report on its findings and conclusions, and to make recommendations for ways to break the "glass ceiling". The committee conducted extensive research and published their findings in a report in 1995. The report, Good for Business, provided "tangible guidelines and solutions on how these barriers can be overcome and eliminated" (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

Since then, the "glass ceiling" has been used in all areas, even in politics. However, in 2003 a more comprehensive term definition was given according to which women, while having the appropriate qualifications, due to discrimination (direct or indirect) or barriers (cultural or organizational) can't be promoted to higher positions in their work environment (Albrecht, Björklund , & Vroman, 2003).

In recent years, the interpretation of the term "glass ceiling" has been extended to include issues that prevent not only women from advancing professionally but also minorities (Johns, 2013).

3.3 Causes of appearance - Obstacles

The decisive stage for the analysis of the phenomenon is the identification of its causes, as this will contribute to its proper treatment, with the ultimate goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating it. As a result, there are several reasons why this phenomenon exists, such as stereotypes, interpersonal relationships, the evaluation of work offered, the difficulty of reconciling family and work life, and the way organizations are run (Omran, et. al., 2015).

A) Stereotypes: Gender stereotypes are perhaps the most important obstacle to women's development. It concerns both the perceptions that others have of women and the perceptions they have of themselves about their gender. Women seem to have internalized perceptions of gender since infancy (Gasuka, 2008a), a fact that burdens them and floods them with anxiety, remorse and insecurity in their attempt to cope with the multiple roles they have, embracing a false self-image that leads them contrary to their real expectations and dreams (Gasuka, 2013). In particular, there is a belief that men and women operate on the basis of characteristics dictated by their gender. For example, women are considered more emotional so they are not able to cope with stressful situations like men. Also, it is considered that the negative feedback in the workplace for women is identical with the negative feedback on a personal level so they do not have leadership skills (Block, & Crawford, 2013). As a result, women are considered responsible for lack of self-confidence, lack of career plan and refusal to take on responsibilities arising from a leadership position. (Coleman, 1996). Therefore, they do not try to gain positions of power because they are convinced, influenced by the above, that they will not succeed, since, in advance, it is considered that this condition will have a negative impact on her family balance.

It is noteworthy that, according to research, educational systems reflect and perpetuate the stereotypical prejudices that exist about gender roles (Cole, 1989). After all, as a microcosm of society they include the prevailing ideology in their organization, so it is the "key" to produce new ideological structures but also to reproduce existing ones (Fine, 1992).

B) Interpersonal relationships: Women in the workplace face problems of connection and networking with senior management as a result of which they do not enjoy the opportunities that this entails (Omran, et. al., 2015). As a result, developmental relationships based on informal interpersonal relationships do not develop to the same extent in men and women in the work environment (Ragins, 1996). Specifically, having interaction with people who have power and experience, the institution of mentor-guide works, which is very important in cases where someone wants to advance professionally, as long as through this process he is trained, develops work skills and is psychologically supported. However, due to the fact that the mentoring networks are largely staffed by men, they almost always choose men as their "protected", depriving women of the possibility of such relationships (Petraki-Kottis, 1993).

C) The evaluation of the work offered: In every organization it is expected that all executives, regardless of gender, perform to the maximum of their potential. As far as women are concerned, however, there is a phenomenon that they themselves exceed their working hours, working more hours than their male colleagues in similar positions. There is also a constant need to reaffirm their skills as men in the workplace show low levels of confidence in them (Omran, et. al., 2015).

Also, due to the stereotypical perceptions that concern the specific subject, girls choose forms of education and scientific branches of theoretical sciences, resulting in their under-representation in the field of positive sciences (Sianou - Kyrgiou, 2006). Thus, socially there is a separation of some professions as female or as male (as is being implied from studies) resulting in differentiation both in jobs and in pay and career prospects (Webster, 2005). According to studies, there is a wage gap between women and men, which is due to both employer practices and collective bargaining that determine the basic wages in the professions. Unfortunately, the social perceptions about women labor as "inferior" show historical inertia, as a result of which it still affects its material counterpart in relation to that of men (Karamesini, & Ioakeimoglou, 2003).

D) Difficulty harmonizing work and family life. When we refer to the harmonization or otherwise reconciliation of work and family life, we mean the acceptance and application of such arrangements which allow the organization of work life in such a way as to combine both work and family obligations, a fact that concerns both women as well as men (Gasuka, 2007a). Despite the increased participation of women in the workforce and in the labor market, roles and responsibilities in the family have not changed. Because of this there is no balance between family and work life. Childcare and other family responsibilities deprive a woman of flexibility in terms of time and work responsibilities, resulting in feelings of guilt and stress each time she has to choose between the two. Research has shown that women experience intense work stress, especially those in managerial positions, which comes from both the family and the work environment (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). Therefore, having children seems to affect the efficiency and career development of women more than men (European Commission, 2012).

In addition, the change of family from enlarged to nuclear or single-parent, has deprived the woman of possible help with household chores or childcare for older women of the extended family, combined with inadequate social services for children and the elderly, place on the shoulders of the woman tasks which are both important and too much to "lift". Given the fact that there is a perception that women's work should be complementary, since there are women's obligations (family, household), there is a phenomenon of overcrowding in certain occupations, thus creating a degraded working class with no prospects for development (Walby, 1986).

Although according to studies, men seem to embrace progressive perceptions about the upbringing of children, in terms of their contribution to household chores, their treatment is rather traditional, limiting it to financial and moral, in order for the family to make a living (Koronaïou, 2007). However, taking into account developments and data changes, even in the concepts of fatherhood and motherhood, it is necessary to adjust the social roles of the sexes in the family environment (Gasuka, 2008a).

Therefore, the asymmetric part of the responsibilities shouldered by women who have a family, is one of the most important inhibiting factors for their development, which allows men to retain the majority of leadership positions (Connell, 2006).

One could argue that if a woman, due to social prejudices, is burdened with household chores and raising children, it would be lawful for her to engage in some kind of paid domestic work. However, in this way women on the one hand do not enjoy the privileges of workers, while maintaining their inferior position in the labor market, on the other hand they support the view that there are specific spaces that correspond to each gender according to its "nature", so the division of job that favors men is sustained by placing women in the labor market with commitments stemming from their definition of "housewives" (Inglesi, 1997). In addition, in this way the social superiority of men is emphasized, as the perception that these women are supported by their husbands intensifies (Maratou - Alipranti, 1995). Still, this type of employment has mainly low earnings and is often "undeclared", thus strengthening a country's informal economy and women feeling insecure and without any hope of development (United Nations, 2000).

E) Manner of management: According to the view of women in leadership positions, the existing management styles have mainly male characteristics. Characteristics such as rational thinking, dynamism, composure, assertiveness and influence that compose a leader's profile are traditionally attributed to men.

They hold a large percentage of wealth and power, control science and technology while 2/3 of the world's illiterates are women (Connell, 2006).

Therefore, women are called to function and manage by facing the dilemma of exercising male or female mode of administration. This in itself is extremely stressful so it is an inhibiting factor for their development since by practicing the masculine style they eliminate their feminine nature and risk being criticized while adopting the feminine style they are likely to be considered as failed (Omran, et. al., 2015).

However, according to research, women who are in leading positions (among many men) are often forced to adopt a masculine style of management in order to face the sexism they experience and to show a strong presence in order to claim, negotiate and in many cases to defend themselves (ISE GCPCGIME, & Center for Women's Studies and Research, 2012).

At this point it would be useful to clarify that by the term sexism are meant those behaviors that express the dominance of men over women (Gasuka, 2008b). It can manifest in both private and public life, overtly or covertly, through language but also through actions, judging women on the basis of their role in the sexual and reproductive process and not on the basis of their individual value (Gasuka, 2013). In this way they are placed at a lower level by men, essentially apologizing for their difference (Bock, 1989).

It is therefore understood that the causes of the phenomenon which are at the same time the obstacles to the development of women are many and different. If we wanted to present them by placing them in a frame of factors we could summarize them as follows:

- Traditional attitudes according to which women are not capable of leadership positions except for caring for dependent members and household chores.
- Existence of male power networks in which women can not penetrate in order to benefit but also to offer.
- Decreased self-confidence and confidence in their abilities and capabilities as a result of stereotypical prejudices about their gender.
- Degradation of the value of their work.
- Difficulty reconciling work and family life due to their multiple and different nature of obligations.
- Discouragement from the family environment.
- Male-dominated leadership and management profile (Abdela, 2005).

In addition, it would be legitimate to emphasize that both the professional development and the emancipation of women can be supported by their participation in both leadership and trade union decision-making positions. However, we must emphasize that as far as the presence of women in politics is concerned, since male-dominated trade unions do not promote "gender" practices, then stereotypes and prejudices are reproduced which negatively affect women's participation in the "public" (Gouvias, 2017a).

4. Conclusions

From the beginning of the 20th century until today, there is a development and a significant rise of women both in employment and in society. However, it is understood that some socially constructed characteristics determine the social gender and accordingly accompany man and woman. This results in the tendency to identify the masculine nature with power, aggression, determination and success while the feminine with

submission, indecision, inaction resulting in their exploitation at work, politics or education (Hampidis, 2012). However, since a woman can function effectively both at work and outside of it, the incompatibility between her "female identity" and her "professional identity" is not self-evident (Daraki, 2007). Although the profession that is considered the most suitable for women is that of teacher because it can combine motherhood and work (Maragoudaki, 1997), it is understood that the path of professional development of women is much more difficult than that of men since they are faced with discrimination as a result of which they are excluded from the management of the school unit (Athanasoula - Reppa, 2000). Recognizing the ability of women to cope with demanding situations in the workplace on the one hand and to meet limits and obstacles in their development is an oxymoron (Albrecht, et al., 2003). All these obstacles, invisible and made of stereotypes and prejudices, are the "glass ceiling", which rivet women in lower positions on the ladder of the hierarchy (Vozemberg, 2015). If we manage to understand, analyze and comprehend in depth the above causes of the phenomenon, then only maybe we will try and eliminate them. Believing in the equality of the sexes and people, we must reduce social inequalities and social injustices wherever they come from and in whatever social arena they are encountered.

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