

Glass ceiling is thicker for mothers

April 30 2015



Rising up the corporate ladder with kids in tow marks women for an extra helping of gender discrimination, new research finds.

Recent headlines about women abandoning the tech industry highlight a stubborn area where women still face significant barriers—top

leadership positions.

Cindy Schipani, a business law professor at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, said her research on the impact of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 finds that women still face gender discrimination at work. This can be seen in areas such as the number of discrimination suits being brought, the lack of women in top leadership positions and pay disparities.

In the study, to be featured in an upcoming UCLA Women's Law Journal, Schipani and co-authors Terry Morehead Dworkin of the Seattle University School of Law and Aarti Ramaswami of the ESSEC Business School in France, found that family status poses added barriers for women's careers.

"Our results show that in the U.S., women who have high career attainment also tend to be single and/or without children," Schipani said. "We also found that mentoring boosts results for women with dependents to overcome challenges to networking."

In 2012, women were 58 percent of the workforce, a 53 percent increase from 1963. In the same period, the number of working mothers has grown by 30 percent to about 70 percent in 2012 from 54 percent in 1962.

In 2012, a record number of Title VII sex discrimination cases were filed. Of course, some industries are worse than others. Women do worse in male-dominated, higher-paid professions such as technology, financial and legal.

This lack of female leadership is not a problem of supply. By 2014, 88 percent of women had completed high school or more, and by 2013, 37 percent had completed four years of college. Indeed, more women than

men have received a graduate education. Eleven percent of women ages 25-34 had two or more years of graduate school compared to 8 percent of men.

The researchers suggest that in cases alleging [gender discrimination](#), the courts should consider the paucity of [women](#) in leadership positions as evidence that discrimination has occurred. They also suggest that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission could define diversity, in the reports already mandated, to include gender diversity.

"Just because the problems are complex and elude simple solutions does not mean that they cannot be solved," Schipani said.

Provided by University of Michigan

Citation: Glass ceiling is thicker for mothers (2015, April 30) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-04-glass-ceiling-thicker-mothers.html>

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