A Study of the Promotion to Partner Process in a Professional Services Firm: How Women are Disadvantaged

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Increasing numbers of women are attracted to careers in the professional services. However, when their progress is considered to partner positions, it is found that they are not advancing to the levels anticipated. When the literature in relation to the partnership promotion process is explored, we find explanatory models are rare, and rarer yet is work that considers the impact of sex bias on the process. The article adds to the limited work available by presenting findings from a behavioural process perspective through an empirical study with male and female management consultants in a professional services firm which indicates that the promotion to partner process is indeed sex biased. Two areas of disadvantage for women are identified: the presence of a self-managed career advancement process necessitating a proactive approach to demonstrating individual contribution; and the need to ‘fit’ a prevailing model of success within the firm which is a masculine model and is more problematic for women. The article calls for a differentiated treatment of the glass ceiling phenomenon, capable of capturing disadvantage accruing from societally based factors and sector-based factors. The implications of the findings for future research and professional service firms are discussed.

Introduction

There has been widespread research interest in studying the career advancement of managerial and professional women in industrialized countries (Adler and Izraeli, 1988; Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Morrison, White and Van Velsor, 1987). Researchers agree that women have more difficulty in reaching senior levels despite having similar educational levels, years of service and job performance (Burke and Nelson, 2002; Powell, 1999; Tharenou, 1999). The ‘glass ceiling’ refers to this phenomenon facing females in career development – ‘a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy’ (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990, p. 5).

We argue in this article that women’s difficulties in advancing to the top of their organizations are not the same in all contexts. In so doing we develop the case for a more differentiated treatment of the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon. We present a case study of a global management consultancy firm, where both male and female consultants were interviewed about their perceptions of the promotion to partner process within their firm. We argue that the nature of a professional services firm (PSF) makes it more challenging for women than men to get promoted to partner positions. The promotion to partner decision process is the criterion used to establish the existence and nature of the glass ceiling in the management consultancy firm.

The structure of the article is as follows. First, we consider the literature explaining women’s
increased participation within professional services and discuss the causes advanced for their absence at partner level. We then turn to the literature addressing the promotion to partner decision-making process to explain why so few women are being promoted. Findings are then reported from in-depth interviews with male and female consultants at one global consulting firm on their perceptions of the promotion to partner decision-making process within their firm. The discussion focuses on two particular problems for women seeking to advance to partner positions in the firm. These issues are discussed in relation to the existing literature, and future research directions are proposed in the conclusion.

Women in the PSF

Recent trends show an increase in the number of women entering the professional services, which includes law, accountancy, management consultancy and investment banking (Stumpf, 2002). Women comprise 42% of all Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales accounting students and 41% of solicitors. In management consulting firms women typically represent between 30% and 40% of the intake, and similar figures are reported for investment banking roles. This is not matched by the number of females in partner positions, which is between 7% and 14% (CPA, 2004; also see ‘Big 4’ website data, 2006).

In assessing why women are entering PSFs in increasing numbers, Crompton and Sanderson (1986) suggest the dual pressures of supply-side constraints and cultural orientations may combine to steer women towards careers in professional practice rather than general managerial positions. They argue that professional practice is structured around the attainment of objectively measured qualifications and experience, thus giving women a ‘level playing field’ in which their achievements will be recognized as a matter of course and they in turn will reap the rewards. Eckberg (2001) found the reasons women are attracted to the professional services include high salary, respect, job security and rewarding challenges.

The promotion to partner process

There is little research on the promotion process within PSFs, and what there is addresses very specific issues such as the ‘up or out’ rule (Gilson and Mnookin, 1985; Morris and Pinnington, 1998; O’Flaherty, 1992; Spurr, 1990). PSFs differ from traditional organizations in a number of ways thereby preventing findings from such organizations being directly applicable in a PSF. PSFs are frequently partnerships meaning the firm’s owners are active in the day-to-day management of the business. They generally manage firm governance with particular emphasis on overall performance, and also claim a share of the profits (Greenwood, Hinings and Brown, 1990). The much discussed ‘up or out’ rule requiring those not promoted to the next organizational level within a specified time period to leave (Galanter and Parlay, 1991; Nelson, 1988; Wholey, 1985) is highly prevalent within PSFs but absent in other organizational forms. Other differences include a relatively flat hierarchical structure, similar career paths for all professionals, a relatively homogeneous set of skills and experience, and a high preponderance to operate an internal labour market; i.e. the almost exclusive promotion of internal candidates to senior organizational positions (Maister, 1993; Wholey, 1985).

Malos and Campion (1995) present an options-based model of the promotion to partner process and acknowledge that the biases, politics and power differentials amongst partners and associates are likely to influence promotional processes in organizations generally (Pfeffer, 1989) and PSFs specifically. Gilson and Mnookin (1985) concur that many of the criteria for promotion to partner are inherently subjective. They contend that such decisions are based on a combination of an individual’s knowledge and personal attributes, so not just technical ability is being assessed.

The literature in relation to promotion to partner in the professional services indicates the centrality of the process for the effective future functioning of such firms. The ‘up or out’ rule is used to expel those unsuitable for higher positions within the firm in a timely manner, leaving the way clear for the retention of talented organizational members to stay. In relation to the partner promotion process what becomes apparent is that technical skill is a given, as those without it would have been excluded at an early stage in their careers (McLean, 1998). However, what is also clear is that of those remaining not...
all can become partners, and it is here that other
criteria beyond objective measures of technical
competence become important. What these cri-
teria are has been alluded to but not fully
articulated, as empirical studies of promotion
processes within professional service firms, parti-
cularly outside the USA, are rare (Morris and
Pinnington, 1998), and rarer yet is research which
considers the partner promotion process and the
effect gender has on promotional outcomes.

An exception is the work by Spurr and
Sueyoshi (1993) who argue that larger law firms
handle larger cases so an incorrectly promoted
partner is more costly. Thus larger law firms
gather more information and take longer to
determine promotion to partner decisions than
smaller law firms and this seems to disadvantage
women. In a detailed study of the promotion
process within large law firms Spurr (1990) found
substantial differences between the employment
and promotion experiences of male and female
lawyers, with women half as likely as men to be
promoted to partner positions. There were no
significant differences in quality between male
and female lawyers, measured by quality of
school attended or achievement of academic
distinction in law school. Spurr concluded that
his findings were strongly suggestive of discrimi-
nation. Interestingly, and of relevance to this
article, Spurr raised the possibility that whilst
male and female lawyers were equal in ability,
female lawyers may exert less effort in competi-
tion for partnership; ‘indeed, the incentive of
women might be weakened by the lower like-
lihood of promotion’ (Spurr, 1990, p. 409). In a
later study, Spurr and Sueyoshi (1993) found that
whilst there was still a sex difference in likely
promotion to partner in law firms this difference
had diminished. Spurr and Sueyoshi (1993)
suggest three explanations for the observed
discrimination.

1. Firms may be less inclined to promote women
in the belief that women are more likely than
men to leave after promotion or reduce
significantly their commitment to their work.

2. Attached lawyers might leave a firm because
the lawyer’s partner is transferred or takes a
job in another location. Historically women
are more likely to be the ‘tied movers’ on
account of generally earning less than their
male partners.

3. Finally, the discrimination may be inherent in
the promotion to partner decision-making
process.

In this paper we move from the econometric
analysis presented by Spurr (1990) and Spurr and
Sueyoshi (1993) to a behavioural process ap-
proach in which we analyse the perceptions of
male and female consultants and present evidence
on the partner promotion process in a major
PSF, i.e. a global management consultancy in this
instance. We focus on whether the promotion to
partner decision-making process is gender biased
and, if so, how this is done through the
perceptions of a sample of male and female
consultants within the firm.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

The study took place within a single international
consulting firm, ‘Consultco’ (pseudonym). Con-
sultco is one of the world’s leading providers of
management consulting and technology services
and represents one of the ‘Big 4’ consulting firms.
The study is located in the UK practice.

As the aim of this study was to ascertain how
the promotion to partner process worked, and
whether it disadvantaged women, it was neces-
sary to seek the views of a number of members of
a PSF, in this case consultants, to elicit their
understanding of the conditions necessary to
advance within their firm. This necessitated a
sample drawn from the overall population to
reflect a broad range of views on the topic. The
sample consisted of male and female consultants,
representing a variety of ages, grades and the four
key business areas in the UK practice. Thirty-
four interviews were conducted with 19 women
and 15 men.

**Data collection**

As the study was inductive in nature, i.e. to
ascertain how the promotion to partner process
works and whether it disadvantages women, a
qualitative approach was deemed appropriate
(Cassell and Symon, 1994). Semi-structured
interviews were used for the study. However,
gaining information on individuals’ views of the
way in which promotion decisions were made
posed some problems. Promotion is a rather sensitive topic; individuals may feel aggrieved that they have not been promoted to levels they believe they should, so it was clear that a sensitive approach to framing questions was required to get beyond surface explanations for advancement to the ‘thick description’ essential for effective qualitative research. Interviewees were not asked to provide information or examples in relation to the course their own careers had taken, or to disclose action they had adopted personally to advance their careers. Rather, they were asked to advise an ambitious friend on how to gain promotion to partner within the firm. The question was framed in this way to remove sensitivity individuals may feel by seeming overly strategic or planful in their career advancement.

In adopting an advisory role it was anticipated that interviewees would be willing to give their hypothetical friend the full range of their advice on how to advance within the firm without feeling the necessity to hold anything back. The question was framed as an open question to enable interviewees latitude to select from the entirety of their knowledge of how promotion operates within Consultco those elements they believed were most critical to achieving advancement.

Interviewees were also asked if there were things they would specifically advise their friend not to do (i.e. factors which would inhibit their promotability), and whether in their view promotion as it operates within the firm is fair. It should be stressed that interviewees were asked for their perceptions of the way in which the promotion to partner process operates. The 34 interviewees were drawn from three grades within the UK practice:

- **Consultant 3**, a grade attained after typically three to five years with the firm and one which would necessitate at least two promotions had the individual started their career with the firm;
- **Principal Consultant**, a senior consultant with between four and six years’ experience, who is required to manage large projects and has some revenue generating responsibility;
- **Director**, a position reached with five to eight years’ experience. This group comprise the level just below partner, and are effectively the potential partner pool (excluding direct external hires). The requirements for this group are to generate revenue for the firm, to run and manage large project teams and to contribute to professional practice and knowledge sharing across the firm.

None of these grades is at partner level, and their views can only be their perception of the way in which the promotion to partner process works. However, it can be said that all 34 interviewees were potentially on the partner track, with some being closer to it than others. The promotion to partner process is a process of which they were keenly aware, and had a vested interest in understanding, as their future career progression within the firm will be dependent upon their ability to read and understand their organizational context appropriately and take action accordingly.

Interviews lasted between one and one and a half hours, and were conducted at a location most convenient for the interviewee. This was sometimes in the UK head office of the firm or out at client sites. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews began with a brief description of the study, and interviewees were assured that all information would remain confidential.

**Content coding**

Analysis began with a review of the transcripts in order to gain interviewees’ in-depth perceptual understanding of the promotion to partner process, and also to begin an initial identification of concepts and themes in the data aiding a more structured approach to the analytical stage. Following the method used in Vinnicombe and Singh (2003) transcripts were imported into NVivo, and a hierarchical coding structure was developed initially using the themes and concepts identified in the transcripts. Reports were developed for key sections of text coded at the nodes of interest to the study and patterns of similarity and difference were identified between men and women (Miles and Huberman, 1994). By utilizing the NVivo search tool sets of responses from male respondents and female respondents were isolated and examined to determine patterns emerging from the data. Reports from these searches were saved as nodes and positioned as appropriate into the overall analytic framework.
The ability to categorize lines of text from original transcript documents into a number of nodes on branches relating to a particular theme was beneficial as this meant the data could then be re-tabulated under key themes through examination of the nodes thereby creating higher level categories. The process of checking that each data item fitted the intended definition of the category, developing clarity over similarities and differences in the data, and keeping coding as close to the original data as possible, thereby enabling interviewees views to emerge through the categorization process, ensured an overall confidence in the coding and a clear audit trail through the findings.

**Results**

The interviews provided clear evidence of sex bias in the promotion to partner decision-making process. Respondents provided a detailed account of their perceptions of the process within their firm, and through these two main areas of potential disadvantage for females emerged. The first issue, discussed by all but one of the interviewees, was the self-managed nature of the career advancement process within the firm. Although both male and female interviewees were aware of this issue, there was a difference in their level of comfort with the process. Examples of this difference are provided in relation to the necessity to network, and the requirement to self-promote achievements. The second area discussed was the necessity to ‘fit’ a mould in order to succeed within the firm. Three-quarters of the interviewees discussed this issue, and there was general agreement in respect of what the mould is as well as its gendered nature.

**Self-managed career development process**

With the exception of one interviewee, all interviewees saw career management within the firm as largely ‘self-managed’. Comments were made about the nature of the process, and the necessity for individuals to be self-motivated in seeking out opportunities on which to build their careers. Recognition was given to the fact that formal processes were unlikely to operate as effectively as informal processes, with factors contributing to this situation identified as the presence of an informal system of project assignment allocation alongside a formal resource management system, and the likelihood that individuals would not work directly with their line managers, which resulted in only seeing line managers once or twice a year, often for performance review purposes:

The firm is very detached. If you expect to be seen and encouraged that you’re doing the right thing by the partnership you won’t be; you’re basically left to get on with it and in essence you sink or swim . . . I think it wholly depends on you to manage your progression and if you want support, that’s up to you to go and get it. (Male Principal Consultant)

. . . but their response to me [peers] is well nobody listens, it’s not going to change. They don’t see people taking an active interest in their role, because the management structure that you have here is that each individual has a staff manager, but that staff manager may not actually be working with you and therefore can’t create opportunities for you or can’t help you develop your career apart from the one meeting you have with them each year. (Female Consultant 3)

I think you have to be quite proactive when you arrive. I think if you’ve got a good partner who’s looking after you, they’re doing the promotion for you, but if you haven’t then you have to get around and knock on doors and just be in people’s faces and say ‘I’m here, can I help?’ Get involved in something, anything, just to get on the radar screen. (Male Principal Consultant)

It is clear that respondents saw the career management process within the firm as an activity which individuals within the firm would need to take control of, as leaving one’s progression in the hands of others may mean that aspirations remain unmet.

However, it was evident from discussions that female interviewees were less comfortable with the proactive nature of the process than their male counterparts. For example, networking was discussed by three-quarters of respondents as an important activity for career advancement. Half the female interviewees questioned whether this was as natural an activity for women as it seemed to be for their male counterparts. Discussion here centred on whether it was usual for women to network in a utilitarian way and also whether women were as aware as their male counterparts...
of the importance of the activity for career advancement.

The people that get promoted quickly are exceptionally effective networkers; interestingly that doesn’t suit women. (Female Principal Consultant)

There’s a lot of balanced score cards and appraisal systems, and all of those things that come together. But you can’t really tell what sort of person it is. It does help if you actually know somebody and know they’re good, or you know someone who recommends them. Of course it has to be like that, but it is a shame for some women who don’t think it’s necessary or who aren’t very good at this type of networking that they lose out. (Female Consultant 3)

Two male interviewees commented on women and their networking activity. For example, one male Principal Consultant said he didn’t believe women networked as actively as men, and therefore they had to be more talented to gain recognition and advancement opportunities:

. . . invariably the majority of women I come across in the business are very talented and there’s a perceptible difference in quality, and to get there they’ve had to demonstrate that. I don’t necessarily think they network that well with the men and I think that’s why they have to be of a quality that’s slightly better than men because they don’t have that level of network. (Male Principal Consultant)

The need to self-promote one’s achievements was viewed as important by three-quarters of the interviewees. The advice here is to ensure that senior organizational members are made aware of achievements and interests. It is also important to keep key individuals informed of performance above and beyond the call – ‘don’t be a hero and keep it to yourself’ cautioned one male Principal Consultant. However, half the female sample indicated that in their view men were better at actively self-promoting:

. . . it comes back to the fact that you’ve got to put your flags in the ground and I never did. I never said I want to be a Director until I came back [from maternity leave] by which time I was quite a long way down the track. I was almost embarrassed to say that and I sort of thought . . . how pushy does this sound . . . also the sense that if I was good enough they will see it anyway, why should I need to say it. (Female Principal Consultant)

I absolutely cringe, it tends to be people just saying how wonderful they are, or telling the partner how wonderful the partner is. It’s just obvious and I find it really difficult. (Female Principal Consultant)

Fit mould to succeed

Three-quarters of the interviewees discussed the issue of fit and from the analysis it became evident that there is a prevailing success model within the firm:

. . . there is a mould you’ve got to fit and if you don’t fit that the other bits you’ve got never get pulled out. (Female Consultant 3)

Interviewees also identified a certain ‘type’ evident in senior ranks. Characteristics of this ‘type’ were individuals with ‘gravitas’, good technical expertise and skills, those who were overtly ambitious, good team players and who worked well with clients. Physical presence was also seen as being important:

Intellectual content is quite high on their list I think, the being one of us. I have heard that partners talk about people who will never make partner . . . because one of the qualities you want to see in partners is that when you walk into a room people stop and take notice that you’re there; therefore physical presence is important . . . which is why there are so many big tall male partners, because they have that immediate impact. (Female Director)

It was also evident that the model against which ‘success’ is measured is predominantly male:

Just to summarize and say that it is nothing to do with quality of work, and I think it is fair to say that people have much in the way of glass ceilings and having said that it is a very male culture, and the people that do get into the partnership tend to be like the existing partners. (Male Director)

Have you got what they look for in a partner candidate? Is it talent? No, I don’t think it is talent, I think it is people who [the existing partners] think would be safe partners to have along. We want to promote people like us. (Female Director)

Likeability was thought by almost half of the female sample to be linked to this ‘mould’. This centred on ‘being one of us’, with the perception being that the more one was liked the smoother
the career path. Interestingly, none of the male sample mentioned this issue.

I’ve always thought that a lot of it is definitely likeability. I’m from a bit of the organization where I think a lot of the partners like what I call a ‘good bloke’. Someone who will go out drinking, play snooker, and I can spot a mile off the type of person who’s going to appeal to that sponsorship group and ten to one you’ll see them in the room and think that’s inevitable. (Female Director)

There is a sort of Consultco person, and if you are too rash, too critical of people then I think it is a case of being a bit alternative, but you have to be alternative with a commercial end. But I think if you are critical and not constructive, then I think that is probably a bad thing . . . there has got to be something about you they like. People talk about you informally, but you don’t find out. It’s not written down anywhere. (Female Principal Consultant)

Discussion

As indicated previously, women are joining professional service firms in record numbers, yet few are reaching partnership positions. There is thus a need to look at how the promotion to partner process works. The analysis of the 34 interviews conducted within Consultco indicates that interviewees perceive there to be two main areas in which women are disadvantaged, and in this discussion section we will deal with each area in turn.

Self-managed career development process

The career development process within the firm was seen by almost all interviewees as being largely ‘self-managed’. This requires individuals to be proactive in the management of their career and to be self-motivated. Networking and self-promotion are given as examples of proactive career enhancing strategies with which women in the sample expressed discomfort. In seeking to explain why this may be the case, the social psychology literature may provide some illumination.

The work of Buss (1988) indicates that men are culturally conditioned to take personal credit for their achievements, to compete intra-sexually for economic resources. They are socialized to be individuals, to lead and to compete hierarchically for positions of power and influence, i.e. agency characteristics (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987). This is not so for women; ‘women cooperate and men compete’ is a clear and powerful message which women learn to accept from an early age (Nelson, 1978). Women’s focus is on similarity, things which bring us together and connect us. They are also urged to advocate for others and not themselves (Janoff-Bulman and Wade, 1996). So women are raised with a community rather than self-centred focus (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987).

Self-promotion is both intuitively and normatively more acceptable for men than women (Miller et al., 1992). Gardner (1992) recounts the story of a woman who was not chosen for a senior position despite her evidently superior experience and qualifications because she relied on her work speaking for itself. Authors’ (2001) findings also support this view; in this study it was found that considerably more female managers than male managers believed their excellent work performance and commitment would be noticed by their senior managers.

Women may avoid self-promoting behaviours for interpersonal considerations, believing that those who behave out of role risk social censure for behaving outside their gender stereotypical norms (Deaux and Major, 1987; Eagly, 1987; Huston and Ashmore, 1986). Thus self-promoting behaviours may be rejected by women for fear they may be perceived as unfeminine, pushy, domineering and aggressive (Janoff-Bulman and Wade, 1996).

Fit mould to succeed

Male and female interviewees agreed that to advance within the firm it is necessary to understand and emulate the prevailing model of success; in essence the people who are made partners are those who look like existing partners, a predominately male group.

The recognition by women in the sample of the need to be liked supported this view and these findings are consistent with the body of research on sex stereotyping, which is defined as the widely shared beliefs about the attributes possessed by men and women (Heilman, 1983). Work in this area indicates that women are not chosen for traditionally male roles due to risk of their failure
(Heilman, 1983), and women are less likely to report possession of job characteristics required for high-level male-dominated organizational positions (Ohlott, Ruderman and McCaulay, 1994).

These findings are also consistent with those of a survey commissioned by the American Women's Society of Chartered Public Accountants (Heard, 2001), which indicates women in the profession perceive lack of gender acceptance to be a key barrier to attaining senior positions within firms. Respondents also felt access to high-visibility job assignments was unequally shared, with the majority of such assignments being allocated to men. This was an area focused on by Deloitte and Touche in their programme to address the imbalance of men and women in partnership positions (McCracken, 2000). It emerged that women frequently missed out on key opportunities because partners (usually male) made erroneous assumptions about what they could and could not do, e.g. women were not allocated to assignments in so-called masculine environments, such as manufacturing. Women were also denied opportunities because it was felt that the travelling involved on particular projects would be too taxing, or that husbands would be unwilling to relocate (McCracken, 2000). Further, an audit was undertaken to assess the types of assignment women were typically offered; it revealed that women were to be found working on accounts in non-profit, retail and healthcare, sectors lacking large high-profile global accounts. Assignments in manufacturing, finance and mergers and acquisitions – highly visible areas – were allocated to men.

These work practices preventing women from attaining partner position are all examples of how gender-based norms pervade organizational life. Acker recognizes that 'gender may be deeply hidden in organizational processes and decisions that appear to have nothing to do with gender' (Acker, 1992, pp. 251–252). These are the 'masculine substructure of organizations' (Acker, 1992) or what Maier calls 'corporate masculinity' (Maier, 1999). The expectation that men and women must both adopt a particular masculine standard of partnership, whilst constraining to men, is particularly problematic for women. As Maier concludes in his discussion of corporate masculinity, 'when organizational imperatives clash with gender difference, the organization usually wins . . . organizations implicitly, exensively, and consistently favour the masculine worldview, whether they realize it or not, rewarding those who conform to it and marginalizing or subordinating those women (and men alike) who don’t’ (Maier, 1999, p. 89).

Conclusion

In this paper we have sought to identify whether the promotion to partner process is sex biased and if so how it disadvantages women. The nature of the promotion process has been explored through interviews with 34 consultants, and differences between male and female interviewees in the sample in terms of their perceptions of the promotion to partner process have been examined. Through this it emerges that there are indeed two key areas within the process that appear to disadvantage women. In this study these have been identified as the self-managed nature of the career development process, necessitating a proactive approach towards career management, and the existence of a prevailing model of success which is a masculine model. Evidence is presented in the discussion section from the literature to support the views expressed by interviewees of the biased promotion to partner process as it operates within their firm and the particular challenges this poses for women seeking to advance to this position.

It is evident from the analysis presented that the disadvantages women face in relation to the promotion to partner process arise from a combination of firm-based and societally based factors. Thus, for example, the self-managed nature of the career development process discussed by interviewees as a key requirement within the firm has been shown to pose particular problems for women who have been socialized to collaborate rather than compete and who are more used to advocating on behalf of others rather than operating from an individually self-interested position. However, the nature of the PSF environment necessitates a self-managed approach to career management due to its flat structure, relatively unmanaged environment in which it is unusual for managers to directly work with those they manage and there are constant absences from any central office as individuals are frequently working on assignments at client sites, often for extended periods.

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We acknowledge the limitations of the study. It is important to note that the data presented within the paper are perceptions of the promotion to partner process, and cannot be interpreted as actual or observed behaviour. It is also important to note that this is a small study, conducted within one PSF. The findings cannot therefore be generalized beyond this context, and more research studies are required before generalizability can be made.

In terms of a future research agenda we would encourage work which looked more directly at the partner promotion process in professional service firms. Studies which extend analysis beyond the single firm to a more broad-based sample across a number of PSF contexts and environments are particularly welcomed. Further study into the nature of disadvantage to females within the promotion to partner process is also needed if PSFs are to exploit fully their talent pool and appropriately recognize the contributions of women aspiring to partnership positions.

References


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