The impact of gender on your professional career path as a social care worker

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Why not become the CEO your mam wanted you to marry? (D'Souza 2007)

What is your career path?

Chief Executive Officer

Do you know how to become a CEO in any organisation across the social care sector?

Do you think there are equal representation of women @senior executive level?

Women in the workplace

Women's advancement in the workplace has incrementally improved in the last 30 years with record breaking increases being recorded by Fortune 500 companies of women holding CEO positions.
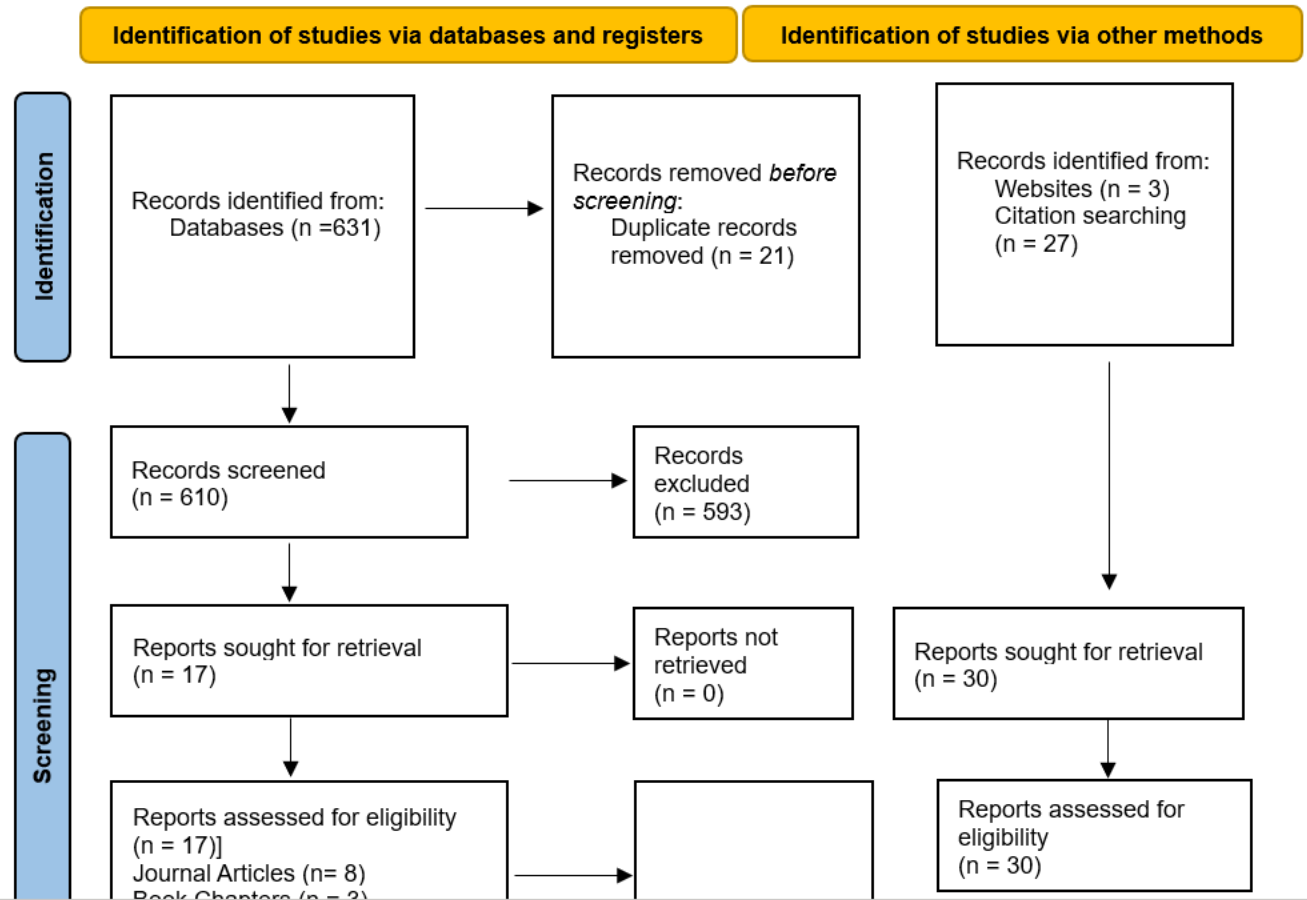
What % of CEO positions do women hold?

Why are women underrepresented

Within the not-for-profit sector which is inclusive of the social care sector women account for ¾ of all employees. However, women still remain underrepresented at senior levels within organisations (Wheel and Horwath 2014).

- Are women less competent than men?
- Have they the same skill set as men?
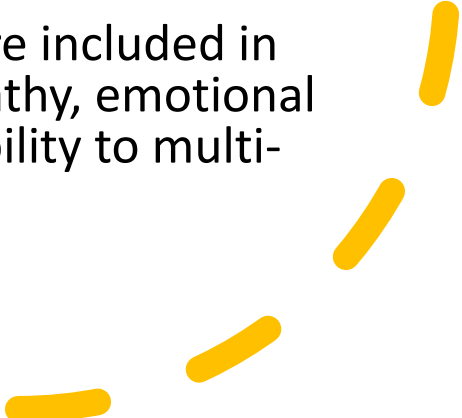- Are they educated to the level required for senior executive roles?

Figure 1: PRISMA 2022 Flow Diagram

| Identification of studies via databases and registers | Identification of studies via other methods |

Identification

Records identified from:
Databases (n = 631)

Records removed *before screening*:
Duplicate records removed (n = 21)

Records identified from:
Websites (n = 3)
Citation searching (n = 27)

Screening

Records screened
(n = 610)

Records excluded
(n = 593)

Reports sought for retrieval
(n = 17)

Reports not retrieved
(n = 0)

Reports sought for retrieval
(n = 30)

Reports assessed for eligibility
(n = 17)]
Journal Articles (n= 8)
Book Chapters (n = 3)

Reports assessed for eligibility
(n = 30)

Evidence of underrepresentation is surprising

- Women have excellent relationship building qualities and demonstrate more empathy, compassion and supportiveness then their male counterparts (Barelka and Downes 2019).

- Characteristics required in leadership positions, such as kindness, sympathy and concern for others, women have in abundance (D'Souza 2007).

- Encourage participation and collaboration in decision making and were more inclusive than men. With women scoring higher on social and interpersonal measures of leadership (Gentry, Booysen et al. 2010).

- Women possess wide-ranging and multi-layered core competencies to navigate complex and turbulent working environments while managing the passion and values of their workforce (Terry, Rees et al. 2006).

- Organisations perform better when women are included in leadership positions, citing skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, sensitivity, determination, and ability to multi-task as possible reasons (Harris 2019).
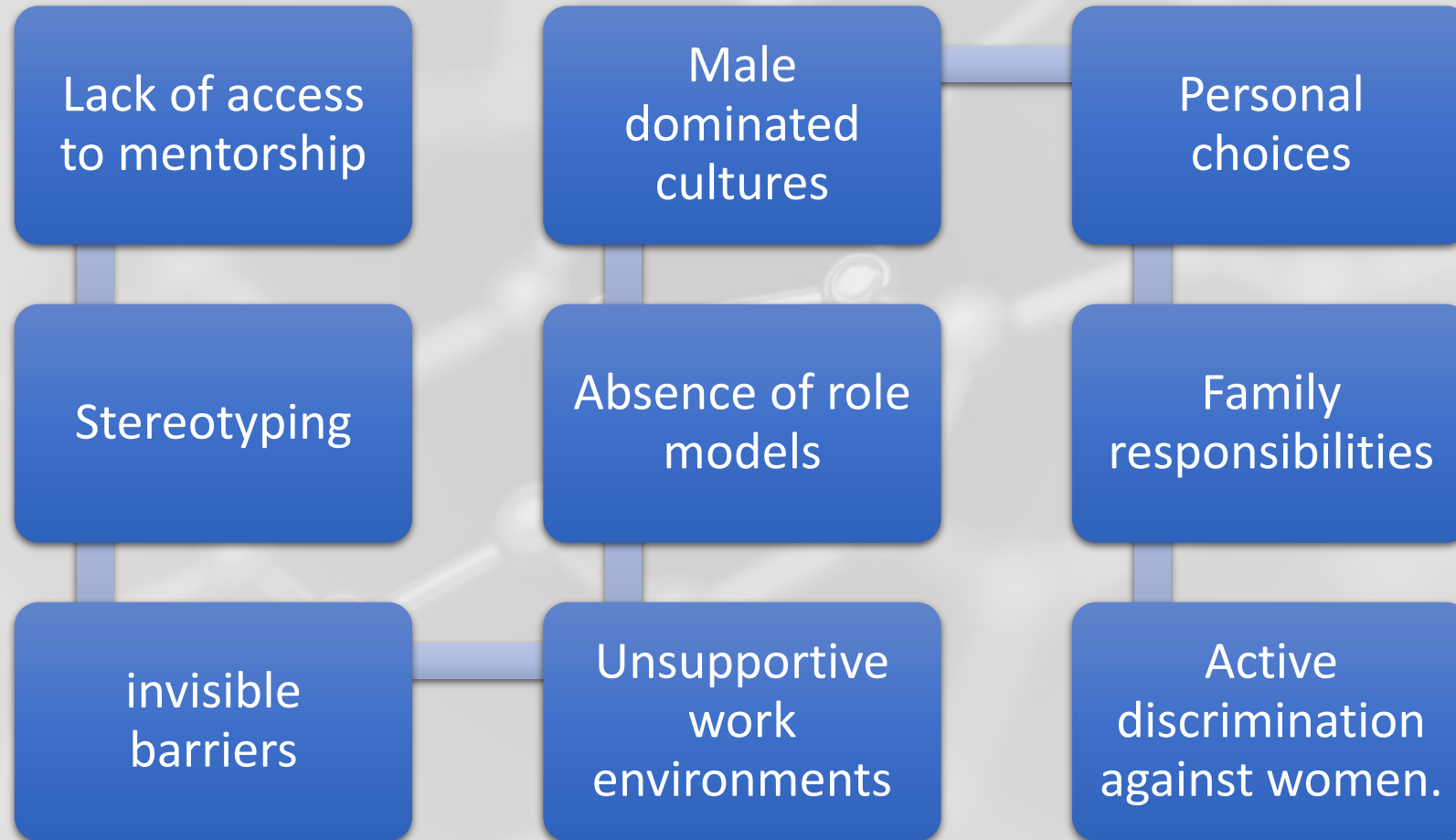
Why is there not equal representation at CEO level

Women themselves have indicated that societal, organisational and self-imposed barriers have inhibited them from advancing to senior executive level (Al-Alawi, 2016; Barelka and Downes, 2019; D'Souza, 2007).

Barriers to career progression for women

Lack of access to mentorship

Male dominated cultures

Personal choices

Stereotyping

Absence of role models

Family responsibilities

invisible barriers

Unsupportive work environments

Active discrimination against women.

Irish Context influenced Stereotyping

- Marriage bar 1933 – 1973

- 27.3 % of women worked outside the home in 1971.

The Irish Women's Liberation Movement, noted that women were:

- Paid approximately 50% less then men for the same job.

- 1/3 of the workers in Ireland were women, just 1% worked in the higher professions & just 6 % in managerial roles. 12% were teachers & nurses, "most working women in Ireland are factory-workers, waitresses, typists or shop assistants".

- Although the marriage bar was abolished in 1973 (and earlier for women teachers), it took some time for the number of women to rise again in the workforce.

Patriarchal Ideology

Patriarchy is an ideology that has persisted throughout time and was developed by white middle class males.

It favours men and contributes to a woman's struggle for equality in positions of power (Katuna, 2014; Lahti, 2013; Pillay, 2012).

The historical patriarchal foundations of our society, set the terms of discrimination that are then enacted at structural, institutional and individual levels. Therefore, women constantly confront subtle, socially constructed obstacles, while men benefit from the apparent normalcy of patriarchy.

Leadership is a social construct developed from a patriarchal lens.

Culture & Social Context

This patriarchal ideology evident in the division of labour is often perpetuated through stereotyped gender roles (Pillay, 2012).

Religious segregated educational systems where girls and boys were educated separately, and stereotypical gender norms were institutionalised in everyday practices

Women worked within the home

Participants acknowledged the strong influence of patriarchal ideology in their limited career choice *'the society I grew up in was very male dominated. The expectation was you'd become a nurse, a teacher, a civil servant, or you'd go into the City Council.'* The old stereotype that women *"take care"* and men *"take charge"* was a prevalent patriarchal ideology that continues to dominate current management thinking (D'Souza, 2007)
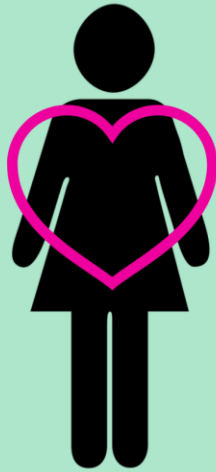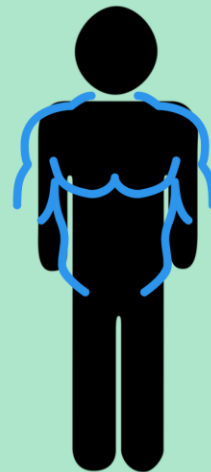
How Stereotyping shapes women's lives

- Fear of failure and fear of success, which are by definition the opposite of each other, are cited by Ming and Minghui (2018) as emotions that women experience in the workplace.

- Barelka and Downes (2019) suggest that women often internalise negative evaluations and social stereotypes, which can cause them to accept the status quo and even turn down opportunities for advancement.

- Ming and Minghui (2018) suggest that this occurs because women are conflicted over their roles as family mother and working mother, with this sentiment reinforced by Gentry et al. (2010) who purports that women perform to a stereotype.

- Barelka and Downes (2019) describe the dramatic "push and pull" between family and work responsibilities as subtle and often invisible barriers that women face. As gender affiliation overshadows other determinants of success, it becomes a powerful source of social identity.

How Stereotyping shapes women's lives

- Explained by Harris (2019a) as an internalised perception in which women see themselves as less capable then men.

- According to D'Souza (2007) the old stereotype that women "take care" and men "take charge" is a, male held ideology that continues to dominate current management thinking. This patriarchal ideology evident in the division of labour is often perpetuated through stereotyped gender roles (Pillay, 2012).

- Eaves-Boykin (2021) posits that women leaders often mask their authentic selves to conform to traditional masculine leadership traits, because traditionally, women who adopted male characteristics were promoted to leadership positions.

How stereotyping shapes women's lives

- Stereotypes are perpetuated by the old boys club, where the proverb "It's not what you know, it's who you know" still applies (Barelka and Downes, 2019).

- Climbing the ladder to senior leadership positions according to Schwanke (2013) can come at a cost to women. As these women are often subjected to the emotional burdens of being stereotyped, sexually harassed, and isolated.

'The culture I grew up in was very male oriented, and women didn't...
It reminded me of Mr. Cellophane, I think that is the way women were perceived.'

YOU CAN LOOK RIGHT THROUGH ME, WALK RIGHT BY ME, AND NEVER KNOW I'M THERE

THE PERFECT GIFT. A GIRL TRAPPED IN A BOX. SHE ONLY DANCES WHEN SOMEONE ELSE OPENS THE LID, WHEN SOMEONE ELSE WINDS HER UP. IF THIS IS A STORY I'M TELLING, I MUST BE TELLING IT TO SOMEONE. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE, EVEN WHEN THERE IS NO ONE. I WILL NOT BE THAT GIRL IN THE BOX.

OFFRED

How to Reconstruct a society that eradicates the silencing & invisibility of women

- According to Flax (1990) this begins by recognising silences or that which is not said and questioning taken for granted social constructs that are considered 'right' and 'acceptable'.

- For example

- The dilemma for the researcher becomes how to expose and recognise narratives which are shrouded in patriarchal socially constructed influences, passed on to us through generations of cultural and institutional norms.

- We must reflect on how we are stereotyped and how we continue to stereotype the next generation?

- In simplistic terms, how do we make the familiar seem abnormal and in need of justification? (Flax, 1990).

"We all use stereotypes, all the time, without knowing it. We have met the enemy of equality, and the enemy is us."

(Paul, 1998)