

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Generating power currency: Afro-diasporic women navigating the black ceiling

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the reasons why Afro-Diasporic women are not represented as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, and advance a strategic and ameliorative approach for how Afro-Diasporic women can navigate the “Black Ceiling” while thriving (not merely surviving). Synthesizing scholarship on critical race theory, critical race feminism, intersectionality, power, status, and institutional logics, we unpack the intersectional nature of Afro-Diasporic women’s leadership journeys and advance “power currency” attainment as an ameliorative strategy that engages a broader discussion of the Black Ceiling. From this perspective, we highlight the need for researchers, scholars, and practitioners to develop a deeper awareness of the contextual factors that serve as barriers to Afro-Diasporic women obtaining positions in C-Suites and on corporate boards, as well as the need to understand how mentoring and coaching can help Afro-Diasporic women not only navigate dynamics of power in organizations but also utilize power currencies to attain the tools they need to break through the Black Ceiling.

Keywords: Black Ceiling, Power Currency, White Supremacy, Afro-Diasporic Women, Women’s Leadership, Patriarchy, Coaching, Mentoring, Thriving