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Women Managers and Gendered Values

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Abstract

In this study we interviewed 30 women managers to better understand ways in which they experience gendered values and behavior in organizational leadership and their responses to those experiences. The results, based on a constant comparison, thematic analysis, indicate the emergence of surprisingly strong and similar perceptions among the 30 women that there are distinct feminine and masculine power orientations in leadership communication with corresponding sets of gendered values: (a) open/closed and (b) supportive/intimidating. Their most common responses were: (a) rejection of masculine power, (b) self-doubt and blame, (c) competence, (d) confrontation, (e) isolation, and (f) resignation. These women judge masculine values to be harmful, overpowering, and ineffective and view feminine values much more favorably, yet they see themselves as isolated in both their values and numbers. Focusing on this sense of isolation, we suggest renewed discussion of ways in which women managers can connect through support for one another, and we offer to that discussion a suggestion for action-oriented networking.

Organizations do not exist in a vacuum, nor do their gendered practices. An organization produces, reflects, and perpetuates "the gendered arrangements of the material and semiotic world in which it resides . . . [and the] dominant cultural understandings of women and men" (Ferguson, 1994, p. 90). That is, the underlying hierarchical relationships between men and women in organizations reflect the broader socio-historic patriarchal system (Marshall, 1993; Mumby & Putnam, 1992; Sheppard, 1989).

Values such as competition, control, and independence, which have been idealized and associated with men, play the same dominant role in organizations as they do in the larger culture (Marshall, 1993). Feminine values such as collaboration, sharing, and connection, however, define helper or subordinate (Ferguson, 1994).[1] Patriarchy, then, "promotes a particular understanding of gendered relationships, knowledge structures, and male domination in organizations" (Mumby and Putnam, 1992, p. 466), an environment that results

in lower pay and less status for women (Clair, 1994; Marshall, 1993) as well as a marginalized standpoint that offers the knowledge of the outsider.

Feminist standpoint theory scholars begin with the assumption that knowledge is not some abstract universal, but is concretely grounded in one's history and social context (Harding, 1993), and that women's marginalized position provides them with a valuable knowledge, which is different from that produced by patriarchy (Wood 1997). Within this theory, disinterested knowledge is untenable; all knowledge is contextualized and tied to location and vantage. Feminist standpoint scholars, therefore, are those whose inquiries begin with and are located in women's lives. Women's voices or standpoints are not simply added. They are the starting points for a more complete form of certain kinds of knowledge (Harding, 1993), more complete in that the marginalized experiences of women present significant and often unexplored research and social problems.

> It is because the conditions of women's lives are worse than their brothers' in so many cases that women's lives provide better starting places about a social order that tolerates, and in so many respects, even values highly the bad conditions of women's lives. (Harding, 1993, p. 59)

Not because of their "bad conditions," but due to their intellectual struggles in those conditions (Harding, 1993), "it follows that marginalized groups have unique insights into the nature and workings of society . . . [and] can inform all of us about how our society works" (Wood, 1997, p. 65). Those insights are likely to be submerged discourse, implicit in women's experience but left largely unspoken (Ferguson, 1984).

This does not mean, however, that there is one point furthest from the center which is epistemologically privileged, having the best knowledge and greatest authority to speak. Rather, there is no single best-marginalized starting point for thought. There are many starting points of knowledge, and epistemic privilege gives each group the authority to speak for themselves and their own identities (Bar On, 1993; Code, 1991; Harding, 1993). This view of multiple, valid standpoints does not doom standpoint theory to charges of relativism nor ethnocentrism (Harding, 1993). It is based on an assumption that some standpoints are better than others for some kinds of knowledge and for some kinds of research because research and knowledge begin with a group's political struggles: "[Women's] own lives can provide important resources . . . but other different . . . women's groups can also provide [important] resources" (Harding, 1993, p. 58). Harding cites as examples women of different races and ethnic backgrounds as well as prostitutes and rape survivors. For the purposes of our study, we add to the list women managers and/or professionals who offer the unique standpoint of outsiders in the broader culture, yet, by position, insiders as a part of organizational management.

Our study, framed in feminist standpoint theory, allows us to seek out and present as a starting point their unique knowledge, grounded in their standpoint. In our effort to understand their standpoint positions, we interviewed 30 women managers about their experiences and their intellectual struggles with organizational management.

RQ 1: How do women managers understand or interpret gendered values and behavior in organizational management?

RQ 2: How do they respond to gendered values and behavior in organizational management?

Procedures

Research Participants

As discussed earlier, we interviewed women managers because their organizational positions of power juxtapositioned with their cultural positions of less power create the potential for rich and complex experience with gendered values and behavior. To find these women, we used a purposeful networking or snowball process, similar to that used in other organizational studies of women (Ferguson, 1984; Marshall, 1993; Rosener, 1995; Sheppard, 1989). This approach served to find information-rich participants (Patton, 1990). We began by asking a number of key individuals to suggest women in management positions who might be interested in being interviewed on the topic of women and leadership. We continued in a snowball fashion until we had 30 interviews and were satisfied that we had reached what Patton (1990) refers to as "sampling to the point of redundancy" (p. 186). All interviews were conducted by Diane.

We are aware at this point in our writing that "30 women" is an inadequate and impersonal description of real people, and especially of this group whom we came to know so well through their interviews. They are women who were generous with their candor and time. Each woman we asked accepted our invitation to be interviewed. The vast majority arranged it so that the hour or two spent with us would be uninterrupted. They also expressed a deep interest in our topic and gratitude for our work.

Interview Methods

In the interviews Diane asked standard, open-ended questions of each woman, but also followed their lead when their responses took her in different directions. Such an approach provided a consistency of information for comparison while, at the same time, encouraged the emergence of each woman's perspective and voice. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was documented through note taking and audio-recording.

Process of Analysis

Using interview notes and audio recordings, we did a constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of data, an analysis in which different categories emerged and became integrated through constant comparison and contrast. This approach allowed for theory to emerge and to be grounded in the women's responses.

Results

In organizations, significant power lies with upper management. While the meaning for the term *upper management* varies with each organization, here we are discussing presidents, CEOs, and/or senior vice-presidents—those who make decisions and allot resources that affect everyone. In order to understand their experience with this level of power, we asked the women whom we interviewed to first talk in general terms about types of management they had experienced. Second we asked them, more specifically, to describe their experiences with upper management as well as their own experiences as managers. We had planned to ask questions on gender, at the end of the interviews. We never got to those gender questions, however, because all of the women spontaneously brought up the subject early in our conversations. Twenty-eight of the thirty women interviewed stated explicitly their perceptions that male managers were more likely to lead in autocratic and controlling ways while women were more likely to lead with collaboration and support. We asked in research question one: How do women managers experience gendered values in organizational management?

Masculine/Feminine Relationships to Power
The strongest and most unifying theme in this research was that gendered values drive the ways in which a manager leads. These women perceived management to be a gendered construct, reflecting the patriarchal system of values, and bounded by concepts such as autocratic and democratic or controlling and collaborative. Following are the varied terms they used to describe the two poles of gendered orientations to power.

"Democratic" was the word used most often to describe the feminine orientation to power. Other frequent terms were "open," "team," and "participative." In grouping some of the other terms that were used to describe the democratic style, there were a number that could be labeled relationship building terms such as "supportive," "cooperative," "sharing," "encouraging," "trusting," "respectful," and "like family." Another group of descriptive terms emphasized caring and nurturing. Some examples were "mentoring," "coaching," "encouraging independence and growth," "leading by example," "motivating," "visionary," and "dynamic."

Leone described a more feminine form of management under which she had worked as "heart management." "He led us with his heart," she said. "There were more than 100 employees, but he knew our names and our children's names. There was no doubt that when decisions were made, our well-being and future were considered."

The word participants used most often to describe the masculine, autocratic style was "dictatorial." Other terms used frequently were "controlling" and "authoritarian." As might be expected, less than warm, sometimes even threatening terms were found in this category. Top managers were described as "intimidating," "explosive," "cold," "militaristic," "threatening," "paranoid," and "power mongers."

It was also in this category that the most creative descriptions were offered. Marie described an autocratic manager as "reptilian" and "slippery." "It was sideways management," she explained. "You never knew what direction he was coming from." Elizabeth

described a former boss as a "slime ball on a power trip" who was willing to abuse employees to get what he wanted. "He sexually harassed me and almost ruined my career." Cynthia called a style with which she was familiar the "Attila-the-Hun" style. "This man never forgot an infraction." In her soft voice, Donna spoke of the similar, "I'll-nail-your-ass-to-the-wall" style of management. Sherry openly enjoyed the descriptive impact of the term mushroom management. "Feed them shit and keep them in the dark," she elaborated.

In addition to these highly descriptive labels, two sets of gendered values emerged which serve to make clearer the women's experiences. They are: (a) Open-Closed, the extent to which managers lead with openness and invite participation; and (b) Support-Intimidation, the extent to which managers lead by encouragement rather than fear.

Open: "[Being] participative . . . takes more skill. But you get a better decision." In their examples, the women in this study indicated that open managers operating from more traditional feminine values invite participation and new ideas, share organizational information, and share themselves by being accessible and available. Rochelle discussed openness as collaborative decision making. "When I have to make a decision, I honestly work hard to have no idea [what my decision will be]. I gather lots of information from many people." She further stated that a leader needs to be "willing to say I don't know. . . . Then together we can figure it out."

JoAnn indicated that managing behind closed doors was a temptation because it was often faster, less arduous. When using participative management "You have to work through differences . . . study issues; it takes more skill. But you get a better decision." She told of a decision-making process that came out of a merger and involved two distinct ways of operating. "We established a task force to decide if we would go with way number one, way number two or a new way. It was very emotional." People dug in, clinging to familiar ways. However, when the task force had done its job, "We got good information . . . and the committee did have the answer to the problem." She added the whole organization was, in general, happy with the decision because it had been made by people who understood and were affected by the issues involved.

Similarly, Lynn told of an example of a problem her company was having with a major purchaser of their product. Instead of one or two managers sitting in their offices, trying to solve the problem in isolation, the president of her organization put together a task force made up of employees from various levels and departments. According to Lynn, the high visibility of this action impressed employees throughout the organization.

Visibility was seen as key in open leadership. Rochelle explained that such leaders "come out of their offices, walk around and share information informally while the other kind stay behind closed doors and hide behind memos." Because she oversaw hundreds of employees throughout several states, JoAnn believed it was especially important to make an effort to come out of her office. "I get to every location once a month," she said. In addition, JoAnn's executive position offered her a private elevator that whisked her to her top floor office, sight unseen by most people. However, she rarely used that form of transportation. Instead she chose the very visible escalators that moved from floor to floor.

These efforts at being visible and open to employees' ideas seemed to arise out of a spirit of equality and a conviction that there was little actual distance between these managers

and those they managed. "No one's better than anyone else. [We] just have different jobs," stated Lynn.

Closed: "I had to keep secrets." Being closed is consistent with traditional masculine values of separateness and individualism. Closed managers withhold information from their employees and they withhold themselves. In Cynthia's example, she came to work one morning and discovered that half of her staff had been eliminated without her input or knowledge. "That kind of action causes great uncertainty," she deadpanned.

In health care, an administrative council in the central office made a decision to increase wages and salaries across the board for the entire organization, including off-site subsidiaries, without consulting any department heads. "Here we were with our budgets fixed and in place and suddenly we had to find money for those raises, raises about which we had no say," said Jo. "It's a game," said an angry Patty. "In my organization, employees were asked to give suggestions for cost containment. So they did. People worked really hard at it." But she indicated that most of the suggestions were not used or given attention, and she believed employees felt cheated.

Some of the women acknowledged their own reluctant participation in keeping employees in the dark. Veronica talked about not just one incident but a period of secretiveness, which she believed to be demanded by her superior. "I had to keep secrets," she said. "That's not me. I didn't like it." Then why did she? "It was survival. I think that's what happens in institutions and families. People do some strange things to survive." Fortunately for her, the leadership changed. "I didn't have to leave the institution. [I think] I would have."

Even though they are managers, the women in this study tell of being kept in the dark about vital issues and decisions that directly affected their departments and employees. They tell of bosses behind doors that remain shut, invitations to stay away. It is, in Sherry's eloquent description, mushroom management, management in the darkness. If, as they perceive, men tend to manage by withholding and being closed, these women see themselves as giving and open. Doors are open to subordinates, both figuratively and literally. Knowledge is shared and decisions are invitations to participate. Consistent with their earlier observations about gender and leadership, these women experience closed leadership most strongly in their relationships with traditional male managers.

Support: "I celebrate . . . and honor [employees]. In terms of managing from a base of encouragement and support, Julia emphasized the need to belong. "Everyone wants to belong," she said. Personalization of workstations, minimum rules and regulations, and group participation in decisions were ways she encouraged a sense of belonging.

Sara indicated that flexibility was an important way to show concern and support for employees. "I'm a working mother," she said. "I see the need [to be flexible]." She believed employees were more productive when they were not worrying about families. Other managers indicated they demonstrated their supportive leadership in a variety of nurturing ways. They listened, praised, especially in front of others; and when they had to criticize, they did not do it in front of others. Instead they encouraged. "I enjoy watching someone grow and become confident," said Rochelle. "There is nothing like it when it clicks."

Lynn, explaining how she was different from most top managers, said, "I'm much gentler. It's been my experience I don't have to threaten. People will respond better if treated with respect." For Sherry, family experiences as a child influenced the supportive values she displayed in her organization. "I grew up in a family where my opinion was valued. [I was] surprised when I saw something else [in organizations] . . . [Leading is] valuing people."

Intimidation: "I'm barked at and berated in front of everyone." Managers who operate by cultivating fear and intimidation were described in great detail. One manager in sales told of her boss who, each day, called all of his subordinates together in his office to "motivate" them. "He then proceeds to yell at us and swear at us while pacing back and forth." Lynn told an example of technological intimidation in which surveillance cameras were positioned throughout the area where middle managers and other office personnel worked. They did their jobs with the knowledge that their every move was being recorded. Several women gave examples of intimidation that were explicitly gendered. Elizabeth said she often observed power expressed through "male dominance" in conversations and meetings. In this environment, men talked and women listened. Sara told of frequently running into a "controlling male style," under her current management. "They say, 'Do this because I said so.'"

Jean stated, "At [management] meetings, most of the information about 'important' projects is addressed to the men. I may get a pat on the head for doing what are [*sic*] perceived as 'women's work'—working with area volunteers, setting up meetings." But she explained that much of her "women's work" was taking care of the details of the "important" projects that the men overlook. "And if someone thinks I've missed one, I'm barked at and berated in front of everyone." When she protested, "I was told I should be happy because I make good money for a woman. It's humiliating." Mona, a twenty-year professional in her field felt a similar humiliation. "They call me 'girl,'" she said.

The women who expressed the strongest emotional reactions were those who felt coerced into either firing or disciplining subordinates. Rochelle remembered having to fire people in what she believed was an autocratic way. "I tried to soften it," she said. She stated she was still angry with the person who directed her to so abruptly terminate these individuals. Julia told of a time in her previous position. "My. boss told me I had to fire someone," she said. "I didn't agree. Normally I would have tried to work with the person but there wasn't any discussion." When asked how she felt afterward, she looked away a moment and when she turned back her eyes were shiny with tears. "I'm still suffering," she said, "and that was three years ago. . . . This guy had children. I don't think it was right." Sherry, who had had a similar experience, indicated that it was still hard for her to look back at what she had done. "Would I do it again?" she asked herself. "No," she answered firmly. "It's not worth the personal price."

On the day she was interviewed for this research, Mona had just come out of a meeting in which she had been told to put some of her subordinates on probation because they were not meeting sales quotas. "I don't feel good at all, but I have to do it," she said, trying to come to grips with the action that she soon would take. "We put them under a new system but barely trained them. It's not fair," she said, trying to hold back tears.

However, the women in this study did recognize and wrestle with the complexity of communicating tough decisions. Elizabeth revealed a time when she intentionally communicated in an autocratic way because her subordinates were not serving well the needs of some patients. She angrily called them all together and "lectured and embarrassed them for fifteen minutes." She remembered, at that time, thinking it was the right thing to do because consideration toward patients' needs was such a top priority. Later, however, her feelings changed. "[I felt] shitty. I know how much I would have resented [that treatment]."

The women in this study experienced an emotional roller coaster within the theme of support and intimidation. They rise to heights of satisfaction and pride when they see their employees become confident and blossom in an atmosphere of belonging. But there are the depths as well that come with humiliation and anger at being cursed, at being called "girl," and/or the remorse that comes from their own behavior when they cultivate fear or anger in others.

Response Themes

Rejection of masculine power: "I never want to be . . . like them." Rejecting masculine power emerged early and firmly in nearly every interview as women in this study immediately separated themselves from the ways of managing that they associated with traditional masculine values and with men more than women. With vigor, they declared the differences between "us and them." Even though they were all in positions of power, there was a strong, negative reaction on the part of these women to the word "power," which they associated with men in upper management positions. More than half did not even want the term associated with them. Further, they physically expressed their distaste for the word, a number of them almost shuddering when they said it. It seemed apparent that they were reacting to a kind of coercive power, the kind based on traditionally masculine values.

JoAnn, by virtue of her vice-president position and the numbers in her division, occupied the highest power position of all the women interviewed. Yet she stated, "Oh, that's a tricky word. A lot of females would bristle at the thought. I do . . . I have a hard time applying it to me." Katherine shuddered. "Oooh, I don't know. It sounds so nasty." Another added that she saw power as "throwing your weight around," and she did not do that. Julia and Jo, both top managers in their organizations, maintained that any power they demonstrated was not theirs but was inherent in their management positions.

In rejecting a masculine orientation toward power, these women went further than pushing away the mere concept. They also pushed away the idea of themselves in top management positions, believing such positions would force them into assuming masculine value-based behavior. As Leone put it, "I'm not political. I can't lie. I can't coerce. I'd have to compromise my principles." Sherry described her image of masculine managers and then considered how her more feminine way would work in such an environment. "[They are] militaristic. [They demonstrate] a lot of distrust and step on each other. If I'm not as good at playing those games [I] would never know when [I] can tell someone something . . . when they'll turn on [me]." Sara, after considering for a time her feelings about

herself in a top position, said in carefully measured tones, "I never want to be . . . like them."

Self-doubt and blame: "Now I question [my] effectiveness every day." It is in this theme that the deepest pain was expressed. Women doubted their capabilities, and when they perceived themselves to be failing in the system, they blamed themselves. Sara, Patty, and Mona, all of whom had gone through radical organizational changes, seemed to express the deepest self-doubts. Each had previously worked in participative work environments, ones in which their more feminine leadership was recognized as effective. Then, due to either changes within their organizations or changing from one job to another, these three women found themselves working in environments governed by autocratic values. As a result, they began to question their own effectiveness. Sara said emphatically, "I never questioned my effectiveness until [there was a] new style above me." She paused and blinked back tears. "Now I question it every day." Mona acknowledged she was confused by what was happening in her case. "We were [effective]. Now we're not getting the numbers." She was not convinced that she was to blame. "I thought I was [effective then]. People wanted to come to work." Now her superiors were telling her she needed to get tougher with those in her department. "If I changed my style and whipped them, we wouldn't get more numbers," she said. "We probably need to train them more," trying in the moment to work through her dilemma.

A number of women went beyond expressions of self-doubt to self-blame. Rochelle, whose role was in human resources, blamed herself for not doing more in the case of a corporate decision to close a site and lay off the hundreds employed. "If I had exerted more leadership, I could have made a difference. I should have seen it coming." Julia, who was forced to fire someone, felt so badly that, years later, in our interview, she pounded the table in frustration. "I still cry [whenever] I think about it, and it's been three years." About her own behavior in similar circumstances, Marie said, "I sell myself a little at a time." It made her want to "have a beer or six" in order to forget, to numb herself.

Competence: "There are no loose ends. I always carry through." Even in the midst of self-doubt, the women expressed belief in their efficiency, competency, and hard work. As Billie put it, "[I] demonstrate [my power] in my ability to get things done." Katherine said firmly, "[There are] no loose ends. I always carry through." Julia believed her efforts at creating an atmosphere of belonging paid off in the forms of low turnover and word of mouth advertising. "In two years we've run three ads in the newspaper." Further, these women did not intend to change their ways of leading even though the competence they associated with themselves and their values did not necessarily add to their organizational power.

Confrontation: "I was once asked to fire the best person I ever had . . . I refused." In these examples, women refuse orders, defy superiors. Leone reported, "I used a dictatorial style to stand my ground with my supervisor . . . to refuse to compromise my principles." In this case, one of her employees had made a mistake, and she was being told by her supervisor to respond in what she believed was an abusive way to a competent employee who had simply made a human error. She refused. Her boss backed down. "I was once asked to fire the best person I ever had," said Marian, " because he was gay!" She still couldn't believe such a request was made. "I refused. Fortunately the lawyers agreed with me."

For Jean, just expressing her opinion became a confrontation, one met with negative consequences from her boss. "I'm opinionated," she said, "and I say things in an authoritative manner. That is not appreciated." Jean and the other women perceived that their resistance did not help them in their organizations, but it did appear to protect their integrity.

Isolation: "I bet you haven't heard this before." The sense of isolation felt by these women was expressed almost as a side bar. It was parenthetical but evident in comments after interviews were completed and the tape recorder turned off. They would say things such as, "I bet you haven't heard anything like this before" or "it's probably worse here than other places." A woman in banking said specifically, "I think it's better at ___ Bank than it is here." Diane could not tell her, because of confidentiality, that she had interviewed a woman at the other bank and it was, indeed, not better there.

Resignation: "I'm afraid top management is the way it has to be." In the theme of resignation, the women accept the patriarchal status quo as unchangeable and inevitable. Patty reflected on her chances of success with the "good old boys." "Would they hire me? I'm black. I'm a woman. I don't think so." Cynthia recognized the danger of being resigned. "I don't like it . . . [being] afraid to advance because of game playing or style differences." She restated her belief that top managers were chosen because of their autocratic leadership styles. "That limits women and minorities." She believed that those were the groups more likely to lead from feminine values. They were also groups who would be concerned about failing in those top positions because of what their failure might do to those that follow. "So you take yourself out."

Marsha, with resignation, said, "I'm afraid the way top management behaves is the way it has to be . . . I won't be that way." Elizabeth also accepted the situation, not so much with resignation but with some bittersweet satisfaction. She stated, "I don't feel bad. They have to sell their souls, not me. I'm a lot more irreverent [this way]. I value that."

The line between resignation and hopelessness is a fine one that these women sometimes crossed. "I feel locked in because of my years of service," said Marsha. In her fifties, she believed there was no way out of an organization in which her "style doesn't mesh." Pamela had given up and decided that instead of disagreeing or causing problems, "I'll roll over." Lynn believed she was in a no-win situation because, "If I told them [top managers here] of my perception, I honestly believe they would be surprised." She was certain that they believed they were treating her fairly, which meant they had no reason to change in their attitudes or treatment toward her. One woman who worked in an organization at which the current CEO led in a more democratic manner did not believe that meant her democratic style would be equally welcome at the top. She believed, as a woman, she would be viewed as weak. "[But because he's a man] they say, 'Yeah! He's doing a terrific job.'"

Discussion

Organizations wear a mask of gender neutrality, but it is a mask that the women in this study see through. Their vision is enhanced by a keen awareness of the role of gender-

based values in structuring and maintaining the tradition of a male dominated organizational. These women perceive and frame the concept of leadership in terms of gendered values. Their common perception emerged almost immediately in all of their interviews, even though no questions had been asked about gender or gendered behavior. They speak with a single-minded conviction that male managers' leadership springs from traditionally patriarchal, masculine values. Equally strong is the conviction that they lead differently, that their leadership is based on feminine values such as collaboration, support, and respect.

Further, the women do not view the gendered poles with neutrality. They make strong value judgments that are quickly evident in their choices of descriptive words and phrases. Feminine leadership is "cooperative," "sharing," "respectful," "heart management." Masculine leadership is "militaristic," "threatening," "paranoid," "reptilian." In short, for them, feminine and masculine values take on the shadings of a struggle between good and evil. Clearly, they do not like the closed and fear-cultivating values that they attribute to men. According to their descriptions, they see those ways of leading as harmful to others and to themselves. Masculine leadership, in their view, is the same leadership that, unfairly, fired a man with children and demeaned the work of an employee by labeling it "women's work."

As we discussed and wrote this section, we realized that, initially, we were hesitant to emphasize how strong and how unified the women in this study are in their views on managers and gendered values, even though those views on gender were clearly their strongest message. Our hesitancy itself is significant—a sort of knee-jerk impulse to artificially dilute their standpoint for fear they would be viewed as stereotypes and taken less seriously. We felt almost apologetic for these women's reality, perhaps because it is a reality we would all like to believe we have moved beyond. The women in this study remind us that may not be so—that our sense of complacency may be false denial and that the strength of their knowledge emerges from the intellectual struggles of their particular standpoint.

Theirs is an awareness of discouragement. They perceive that as long as they are employed in patriarchal organizations, they are hostages, held within a system that diminishes them and their values. Lacking in the women's responses are any signs that they believe they can change the system. In fact, they state the opposite, as we see in the themes of acceptance and hopelessness.

They do not see themselves as change agents, yet the women managers do use their resources to halt patriarchal action, but only under certain circumstances. According to their stories, these women use their managerial positions to resist or defy autocratic bosses when bosses are about to inflict a harsh injustice on another employee. There appears to be an imaginary line concerning the treatment of others that, if crossed, is judged to be too unfair, too unjust. Taking actions under these circumstances is consistent with the findings of Milwed (1990) whose study showed that women found it almost unbearable to watch others be mistreated by those with power over them. The women's protectiveness of others is also consistent with feminine values such as nurturing and connection. They step in and argue for justice as Mona did, even refuse to fire as in the case of Veronica and Marian. However, the women in this research are less inclined to take on the system when the

injustice is directed toward them—when half of Cynthia's department is eliminated or Elizabeth is sexually harassed by a "slime ball on a power trip." When called "girl," yelled at, or told they are not tough enough, they keep their anger and frustration inside. Others in the organization, therefore, see them in their silence.

These women do not always respond with silence when their values are contradicted. At times, they take action, enforcing orders that are not consistent with their values. Despite their status as mid and top managers, several women describe experiences in which they felt positioned as adjunct laborers (Tancred-Sheriff, 1992), as mere enforcers of policies rather than as shapers of those policies. Their interpretations of personnel policies are overpowered by the interpretations of those managers located above them in the hierarchy. Veronica believes that secrecy should not be an operational policy of her district. Her superintendent overrules. Their understanding of the "right thing to do" is muted by those mostly male managers above them. Their own sense of power and action is undermined. However, rather than applying masculine policies with "conviction" or being seduced by their participation in the authority of those above them, as Tancred-Sheriff (1992) suggests, these women managers report a sense of remorse, regret, sadness, and anger at having done so.

A broad range of the women's responses fall under the category of what Jaggar (1989) calls "outlaw emotions," emotional responses that are outside of the conventional masculine norms in organizational situations. An example is the anger that they express as a reaction to masculine value–driven behavior by their bosses. Their anger is evident in their descriptive terms, angry tones, and tight jaws. When Marie speaks of "reptilian" management, it is with disgust and her foot jiggles in double time. When Jean says that being called "girl" is humiliating, there is no humiliation in her voice, only fury. Jean states, "I feel angrier and angrier . . . not so much for ourselves but for our daughters." Their anger appears to signal, for them, a values contradiction and is a sign of their struggle.

A related form of outlaw expression is humor. It is understandably dark in nature as well as vivid and creative. "Slime ball on a power trip" and "sideways management." "Feed them shit and keep them in the dark." It is humor that helps them make sense of nonsense. Cynthia comes in one morning and finds that half of her department has been eliminated. Her comment? "That kind of thing can cause uncertainty." Jean observes wryly that opinions are not welcome—groveling is. Their humor seems to spring from and be laced with anger.

Other outlaw emotions—ones that clearly would not be valued by those making organizational policy—are expressed in the women's interviews. There is the sadness of isolation—"I think it must be better at the other bank . . ."—and of self-estrangement—"I sell myself a little." There is the hopelessness that "this is the way it has to be"; and the revulsion at the very word *power:* the word, for them, represents the essence of masculine intimidation.

Jaggar (1989) indicates that outlaw emotions can be reframed as heightened emotional responses developed through the less distorted and more reliable perspective of subordination. Such emotions signal that something is wrong and can motivate creative and proactive problem solving (Jaggar, 1989). However, the women in this study experience outlaw emotions in isolation. Such isolation appears to act as a sort of "plug" for their

anger and to contribute to their sense of resignation and hopelessness. Patty, with more than a little anger, sees herself as a black woman in a sea of "good old boys." But that anger is quickly followed by resignation. "Would they hire me? I don't think so." Marsha believes that her feminine values would isolate her even more in top management and lead to failure. She does not like living with this belief, but she accepts it. "So," she says, "you take yourself out."

This sense of isolation, in terms of their values and numbers, is a powerful, though not new, force in women managers' experiences and aspirations. Some of us remember attempts, particularly in the 1970s, to bridge the distances among women managers and ease the discomfort of isolation through a process called networking. We remember our own experiences with this process in which we gathered weekly after work, exchanged business cards, and talked about problems we encountered. There was something affirming about those conversations. There was also the frustration that, no matter how often we met and talked, nothing changed. As time passed, fewer attended, and eventually networking efforts died a slow and unremarkable death. More than 20 years later, the same pessimism regarding change can be heard in the words of the women managers in this study.

Surely networking remains an important resource for women but different forms may need to be considered. Jamieson (1995) suggests learning from women who have maintained their integrity yet been successful in a largely "masculine" world. Women such as Janet Reno, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Sandra Day O'Connor, Dianne Feinstein, as well as those less known but equally successful, can be viewed as our teachers. Jamieson (1995) urges women to hear their stories, learn about them, and learn from them.

We suggest that another more action-oriented form of networking can be cultivated within organizations and/or professions. Outlaw emotions, as responses to autocratic, masculine behavior in organizations, can be very intense. They can be so intense that women experiencing them feel depressed, find it difficult to act, and even repress much of the painful experience (Sloan, 1999). As an example, Diane tells of a time when a female colleague was initially denied a raise, not because of any problem with her work, but because her weight did not "fit the image of the organization." She felt humiliation and shame that such a personal part of her had become central to her professional evaluation. The whole episode would have remained secret had not another woman manager found her crying in the women's restroom. The second woman questioned her, heard the story, and called a lawyer friend who offered a specific and carefully worded response. It worked. The woman got her raise and felt stronger in the process. This example suggests one form of networking in which shared experiences transform into active guidance and mentoring. Such networking would require the deliberate cultivating of connections among women within organizations, and collaboration in the intellectual struggle of one's feminist standpoint.

The women in this study state how difficult their lives are within organizations that are driven by what they perceive to be patriarchal, masculine values. They further reveal their sense of isolation and intense feelings of anger, sadness, and hopelessness. While we do believe that new directions in networking should be considered, we do not mean to suggest that there are easy solutions. What we do offer here is a starting point for discussions

of ways in which women's voices may join together to pierce the isolation that causes them pain and limits their advancement.

Note

1. When we use the terms *masculine* and *feminine*, we are speaking not of biology but of traditional gendered values that have been associated with each sex. Our view is consistent with Eisler (1995) who states that patriarchy is not so much about men and women as it is about an idealized set of values and behaviors, which has been associated more with one sex than the other.

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Appendix A. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

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Industry

Health Care	6	Telemarketing	2
Manufacturing	5	Education	4
Travel	1	Government	3
Insurance	1	Media	3
Hotel	1	Utilities	2

Management Level		*Years with Organization*	
Middle	21	2–5	10
Upper	9	6–10	5
		11–15	4
		16–20	3
		20+	8

Age		*Highest Educational Degree*	
25–29	1	High school	7
30–39	9	Bachelor's	14
40–49	11	Master's	6
50–59	8	Doctorate	3

Appendix B. Interview Protocol

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1. What kinds of leadership have you experienced in upper or top management? (Define as CEO, president, senior vice-president)
   What words or terms do you associate with leadership you have experienced?
   Could you give some specific examples of leadership you have experienced? (Prompts—Consider such things as decision making, information-sharing, uses of power.)

2. How would you describe your own leadership as a manager? Could you give some specific examples of your own leadership? (Prompts—Consider such things as decision making, information-sharing, uses of power.)

3. Is your leadership consistent with your values? If so, in what ways?

4. Do you consider your leadership to be effective? If so, explain?

5. Have you as a manager had to do something not in keeping with your values? If so, describe? How did you feel as a result?

6. Do you plan to try to move into a top management position? Why or why not?

7. Do you associate certain ways of leading more with one sex than another? Explain.