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Exploring the Lives of Women Who Lead

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"People want to know how to live in this world as feminists, not just think feminism" (bell hooks, as quoted in Jennifer Williams, 2011, p. 42). My life has been spent thinking like a feminist instead of living like a feminist as I found myself boxed in by structural impediments. While the analyst in me would have liked to conclude the dissertation with a simple "problem solved," my lived experience of feminism has served to foster a deep appreciation for its complexity. So, it is with that respect for complexity that I keep the faith that this study will move women just a little closer to a day when they can truly do all that they value.

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i

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Abstract

Scholars have identified various reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the upper echelons of organizations. This study used grounded theory methodology enhanced by situational analysis to explore how American women at senior levels in large organizational contexts engage and negotiate the totality of their situation. Utilizing a predominately White, married, middle to upper class, heterosexual sample, this study sought to understand how women create and consign meaning around their experiences; how they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities; and how they experience the entanglement of macro, meso, and micro societal forces. It explores relationships among factors participants named as influential in experience in leading. Most importantly, this study sought to elevate not just one component as problematic, but to elucidate all interconnecting complexities that are problematic. Five key contexts were identified in the situational analysis as spaces of influence, related to the conditions of the dimensional analysis. Five emergent dimensions were rendered in the dimensional analysis: *Growing in Leadership, Solving for Having It All; Stalking the Unknown, Leading in a Glass Box* and *Negotiating Equality.* A grounded theory model was developed of the experience of women who lead, providing an interactive model of how women interpret and engage with the totality of their situation. Four theoretical propositions were extrapolated from the study. The study combined a commanding view of the situation in which women lead, with an interactive theoretical model, mapping places of entry toward resolution of gender leadership parity. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLINK ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu

Table of Contents

v

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

> Many CEO's who make gender diversity a priority . . . by setting aspirational goals for women in leadership roles, insisting on diverse slates of candidates for senior positions, and developing mentoring and training programs are frustrated. They and their companies spend time, money and good intentions on efforts to build a more robust pipeline of upwardly mobile women and then not much happens. (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013, p. 62)

Where are the female leaders? (Ignatius, 2013). Fifty years after they began entering the workplace, women still haven't reached critical leadership positions. CEOs are frustrated, scholars are frustrated, the World Economic Forum is frustrated, and, most of all, women are frustrated.

Each new and promising year since women began entering the workforce weaves together the promise of greater organizational commitment to gender equality with an arsenal of diagnoses and corresponding fixes that aim to close the equality gap. This has resulted in decades of re-engineering women for leadership. These re-engineering exercises have failed to garner positions of leadership in organizational hierarchies for women. Alice Paul succinctly articulates women's frustration with their progress toward independence in her keynote speech in Seneca Falls in 1923:

> If we keep on this way, they will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1848 Convention without being much further advanced in equal rights than we are . . . If we had not concentrated on the Federal Amendment we should be working today for suffrage . . . we shall not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our government. (as cited in Francis, n.d., para. 28)

With minor changes in sentence detail, Alice Paul's statement would be relevant today. We are at a critical and pivotal point in women's leadership in the United States; it's time to move away from the single-minded antidotes of consultants and scholars. The percentage of women holding executive officer positions has ticked up only one point since 2009 to a paltry 5.9% of women who hold CEO positions in S & P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2017). When one

compares graduates from 26 prestigious global business schools in Asia, Europe, Canada, and the United States, women still lag behind in advancement and compensation (Carter & Silva, 2010). Women constitute only 34% of the top 10 business schools as ranked by the *Financial Times* in 2013 (Kelan, 2014). The implementation of women's-only leadership programs and MBA courses and curriculum has failed to raise these percentages to acceptable levels because the business school culture remains mired in a masculine culture that elevates aggressiveness and risk-taking (Kelan, 2014; Shellenbarger, 2008; Sinclair, 1995). Additionally, MBA prerequisites of three to five years of experience, often coincide with the age in which women begin a family. Women represent only 38% of management positions in the United States (Center for American Progress, 2014). In fact, women's progress has stagnated in recent years (Carter & Silva, 2010; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010) as gender has progressively become culturally "unspeakable" (Gill, 2014a, p. 121). The gender pay gap continues to threaten women's economic independence. The wage gap actually widens after a women reaches the age of 35, an age when women would be moving into leadership positions, and the attainment of education has not narrowed this gap. In many areas the gap is larger for educated women (American Association of University Women, 2017).

Women also lag in political representation. To date, women comprise only 18.1% of Congress even though they represent half of the American population (J. Warner, 2014). The United States ranks 69th in terms of women elected to national offices. This affects women's ability to pass laws contingent and critical to their success. For example, Americans have no paid family medical leave, and parents cobble together early childhood education, considered to be essential to adult success. Daycare is expensive and hours of operation mismatched to the

long work day currently required of those in leadership positions. These are but a few facts, from an arsenal, that begin to provide a mere glimpse of the world in which women try to lead.

This study seeks to take a panoramic inventory of this landscape, to honor the complexity that is painfully apparent in this situation, and to concentrate research efforts on the whole of the situation in lieu of partial processes and fragmented remedies. Much like the process engaged by a skilled cartographer, it is imperative to map out the complete terrain of women who lead with a research goal perhaps not of resolve, but of understanding the interconnectivity of systems of gender oppression. To do requires that understanding the following: how harmful social processes are reconstituted, how the vortex of masculine power (Simpson & Lewis, 2012) stays its position, how women in leadership experience multiple and intersecting identities, how forces of influence impact the construction of self and "possible selves"(Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954), and how movement from the cavernous furrows of frustration might be accomplished. Scholars, organizations, and women cannot make good decisions on partial or silenced information. To repeat, suffragist leader Alice Paul, warned in 1923 of the danger of delay if "if we keep on this way" (Francis, n.d., para. 28); my work is based on a similar conviction that conducting research jeopardy, we will still be trying to solve the women's leadership conundrum fifty years from now.

The following sections explicate relevant research questions and provide a solid rationale for the study.

Research Questions

How do women in leadership positions experience being a woman who leads? How do they create and consign meaning around their experiences? How do they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities? How do they experience the entanglement of macro,

meso, and micro societal forces? What are the relationships among those factors that they name as influential in their experience of leading? And most importantly, this study seeks to elevate not one component as problematic, but elucidate with interconnecting complexities all that is problematic.

In the remainder of this chapter, I provide a rationale and purpose for the study, situate the complexity of the topic, and end with a discussion of study, scope and limitations.

Rationale for the Study

Why does the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions matter? Is it not better for women, the stability of the American family unit, and for children if mothers choose to work part time or leave the labor market at critical intervals? Is it not better for the elderly if work is sidelined and replaced with care? It matters because women now represent a majority of the talent pool. In 2009–2010, women garnered 62% of the associate degrees, 57.4% of the bachelor degrees, 62.2% of the master's degrees, and 53.4% of the doctoral degrees conferred in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). In 2014, women represented 47% of the workforce and 52% of management, professionals and related occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). If women are not in leadership positions, one has to ask if the best and brightest are leading? If the most capable are not leading, one must consider how our nation's future, economy, and political stability will be impacted. From a purely rational economic perspective, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is a poor allocation of resources.

It matters that women are not in the upper echelons of organizations because they are not in positions to make critical decisions contingent to their success in the workplace. The United States is the only developed country that does not mandate paid parental leave, sick leave, or

paid vacation. What has been called *Wild West daycare* (Kunin, 2012)—day care that is largely unregulated and immensely underfunded—remains expensive with hours of operation are incongruent with the long workday often required for promotion. Standard childcare in the United States is inflexible and ill-suited for business travel. The school day and the school calendar remain out of sync with busy work schedules. The culture of work continues to demand and reward face time as opposed to the flexibility of virtual work arrangements. Mothers are seen as less committed and penalized in areas of wages and promotion, or assessed with *the motherhood penalty*, a phrase used in several studies on the earnings impacts of motherhood (Anderson, Binder, & Krause, 2002; Avellar & Smock, 2003; Bernard & Correll, 2010; Budig & England, 2001; Budig & Hodges, 2010; Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2012; Correll, Bernard, & Paik, 2007; Lips & Lawson, 2009).

It matters because the masculine organizational culture will not change without the representation of women at some critical mass (Kanter, 1977). It has changed little in forty years. The Center for American Progress (2014) estimates that at the current rate of change, it will take women will not reach parity in the workplace until 2085. There is no critical mass of women at the higher echelons of the organization from which women can access important organizational dynamics. "It is harder to read the room if there are no other women at the table" (Heath, Flynn, & Holt, 2014, p. 119). Being female is perceived by women to be a liability (Ely et al., 2011). Contrary to authenticity, women are often coached to act like men to fit in and to secure promotions. Studies affirm that being authentically female does not work, especially at higher levels of the organization. In transitioning to senior roles within the organization, "women's attempts to remain authentic ultimately undermined their ability to find and internalize identities that were congruent with the kind of professional they aspired to become (Ely et al.,

2011, p. 11). In a recent *Harvard Business Review* article about research regarding women's

visibility in meetings, it was said that women are coached to "keep an even keel" (Heath et al.,

2014, p. 120) when expressing passion about a subject; to be "less efficient" (p. 120) with their

meeting times and schedules; to "prepare to speak spontaneously" (p. 120); and to "make your

language more muscular" (p. 120). As one male participant in this study articulated, "Women

have to be mindful to stay within the guardrails; men don't" (Heath et al., 2014, p. 121). Ely et

al. (2011) cited three guiding principles necessary for designing successful women's leadership

programs: "(1) situate topics and tools in an analysis of *second generation bias*; (2) create a

holding environment to support women's identity work; and (3) anchor participants on their

leadership purpose" (p. 29). While these researchers endorse the necessity of training leading

women to acquire the necessary skills in networking, negotiating, dealing with visibility, and

navigating in a masculine culture, they contend that women often succumb to "*identicide* where

one suppresses or even kills an identity that is seen to impede other valued identities" (Ashforth,

Harrison, & Corley, 2008, p. 355). Additionally, while research advocates that women grow

work identities, it negates the presence or integration of non-work identities. Research ignores

other systems of influence, thus reducing the leadership experience to one dimension and

context. Research routinely panders to the masculine organizational culture by recommending

"feel-good initiatives" that target women as the problem.

> They actually communicate to women that they are missing something (skills, confidence, commitment, networks, vision) and should work harder at acquiring it . . . men love them too. It makes them feel like they are doing something to empower women and solve the gender balance issue. (Wittenberg-Cox, 2013, p. 107)

With the educational and professional competencies attained by women today, is it still

reasonable to require them to work in an outdated masculine culture? Are there other

alternatives for women but to assimilate into the masculine organizational culture? Women find

themselves in a double bind: they have to act like men to get promoted, but they often lose purpose and authenticity in the process. Thus, even women at higher levels of the organization often perpetuate masculine organizational hegemony (Mavin, 2008). In a masculine environment, women must self-regulate to avoid backlash (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010), and those who fear backlash are less successful in promoting themselves. Women need to be in leadership positions not only to make critical decisions contingent to their success, but to also change the cultural tide. It is impossible to prioritize one of these organizational changes over the other; they are not mutually exclusive. I argue with Kanter (1977) that a critical mass of women in leadership positions is necessary to change the cultural tide, but not a critical mass of masculinized, assimilated and re-engineered women. Greater understanding of the situation and creativity of solutions are more desperately needed than the current "add women and stir" remedy (J. Martin & Meyerson, 1988).

It matters because being able to access real structures of opportunity are critical to women's economic and financial independence. Forty percent of women are "breadwinner moms" (Pew Social Trends, 2013, para.1), but this percentage is diluted by the fact that 60% of these mothers are single mothers, or breadwinners by default. Single mothers represent a quarter of American households, and single motherhood continues to rise. Given the lack of current organizational support systems for working mothers, it is especially difficult for single mothers to occupy positions of leadership. "There is much more research to do, but this we do know: Single parents work less and earn less because they are the sole caretakers of their children" (Mather, Fu, & Hansen, 2013. para. 7). Women, particularly mothers, remain underemployed (Selmi & Cahn, 2006). In a recent article in the *New York Times,* columnist Frank Bruni (2014) wrote that his sister's ability to manage her work and family "has surely constrained her'

professionally, in part because she chose employment that allows her to telecommute" (para. 6).

But her choice—if it can be called that— in telecommuting is costly. When examining the

persistence of the wage gap and underemployment of women, economist Golden (2014) states:

> Quite simply the gap exists because hours of work in many occupations are worth more
> when given at particular moments and when the hours are more continuous. That is, in
> many occupations, earnings have a nonlinear relationship with respect to hours. A
> flexible schedule often comes at a high price, particularly in the corporate, financial and
> legal worlds. (pp. 1116–1117)

> It matters because economic applications of labor market reforms to narrow the economic

inequality gap, Piketty's (2014) labor market reforms for example, could best be served by

strengthening women's position in the labor market (Geier, Bahn, Gamble, Einstein, & Bouchey,

2014). Wealth drives policy outcomes in America and that wealth is most often connected to

conservative capitalist, pro-business, not pro-worker legislation. "This suggests that the

increasing concentration of wealth in our society is a major threat to feminist work and family

policies. Growing economic inequality may well be the most powerful obstacle blocking

women's advancement in our society" (Geier et al., 2014, para. 8). It is imperative that women

garner some of this wealth.

> The labor market reveals itself to be a system shaped by social norms and biases rather
> than objective criteria alone. . . . We've developed social markers for what makes a 'high
> tier' worker. For example, big financial firms tend to hire and reward predominately
> White men from a small slice of the economic strata. Earners assigned arbitrary value by
> wealthy institutions benefit from the productivity of the larger workforce. Wealth
> distribution and high tier wage distribution in the United States can be attributed,
> essentially, to discrimination. (Gamble, as cited in Geier et al., 2014, para. 28)

Furthermore, Einstein (as cited in Geier et al., 2014) states "They act as though capitalism is a

singular system . . . rather than an overlapping and multiple nexus of power" (para. 34).

Previous research has not assisted in eradicating these barriers for women as they have not

attained high tier status. The labor market alone is extremely nuanced and multi-faceted.

Situational analysis will facilitate the fleshing out of this overlapping nexus of power.

It matters because women can be the catalyst to change capitalism as we know it. Barsh

(2014) asks, "Have we reached a point of diminishing returns for female participation in senior

management?" (para. 11). One could arrive at that conclusion if advancement stagnation is

considered (England, 2010; Huffman et al., 2008; Padavic & Ely, 2013). Barsh advocates that

the next global wave, or the next leadership paradigm, will move to a platform of centered

leadership and conscious capitalism: "We know from the research that women in leadership tend

to invest differently . . . for example, on health, education and community infrastructure and the

eradication of poverty" (p. 1). She believes that change will come only with the support of

targets, quotas, and like-minded men that seek to destabilize the current "greedy algorithm"

(Barsh, 2014, para. 16).

It matters because pervasive discrimination has deleterious effects on women, children,

and the ongoing construction of social worlds. Women sensitive to cultural sexism, experience

lower levels of job satisfaction, physical and mental health, and well-being (Minor-Rubino,

Settles, & Stewart, 2009; Pascoe & Smart-Richman, 2009). Fischer and Holz (2007) posit that

sexist environments impact women's perceptions of justice and the extent of control they have

over their lives. Behavior changes as women experience pervasive discrimination over an

extended period of time.

> Consistent with group consciousness theories . . . perceiving discrimination to be isolated
> appears to ultimately promote an acceptance of the status quo, but recognizing the
> pervasiveness of discrimination can have motivational qualities over time. (Foster, 2009,
> p. 179)

The intersections between social construction and neuroscience remain unclear:

What neural mechanisms support this remarkable ability to adapt one's sense of self to the immediate cultural context? Activity within cortical midline structures, including the anterian rostral portion of medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) and posterior cingulated cortex (PCC) are thought to constitute two components of a network of cortical midline structures underlying self-relevant processes . . . MPFC and PCC regions are recruited during other processes important to social interaction, including emotional and moral judgments, perspective taking and theory of mind (Northoff & Bermpohl, 2004) . . . less understood is how cultural priming affects neural mechanisms underlying the self. (Chiao et al., 2010, p. 2)

Additionally, pervasive gender discrimination continues to bolster rising child poverty rates in the United States. An estimated 1.3 million children in the public school system were homeless in the 2012–2013 school year, and over 16 million American children subsist below the poverty line (Goldberg, 2014). Child poverty rose to its highest level in 2010 and has not diminished. One in four children live in what is deemed a *food insecure household*, and over seven million children do not have health insurance (Flores & Lesley, 2014).

It matters that women are in leadership positions so that we can take care of our children by lobbying for public policy stability and improvements; children are our future. Last year, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) suffered severe cuts at the hands of policy makers. In a study commissioned by the non-profit, *Feeding America*, J. Cook and Jeng (2009) suggest that children who struggle with hunger are prone to more physical, emotional, and intellectual problems. Pursuing an education and cultivating ambitious goals for the future are luxuries for these children as test scores in public school systems have fallen precipitously with increases in child poverty. This translates into a future of less competitiveness in the global market by the decline in human capital formation coupled with real and pervasive economic costs. "The healthy development of all children benefits all of society by providing a solid foundation for economic productivity, responsible citizenship, and strong communities"

(Shonkoff, as cited in J. Cook & Jeng, 2009, p. 2). Business leaders and policy makers are not investing in our future; they are rewarding today's stakeholders. It matters that women occupy leadership positions because our children cannot remedy these ills. As Barsh (2014) points out, women tend to invest differently especially in education and the eradication of poverty. These areas of America are in dire need of women available to lead and invest in a future that ensures the continued viability of stakeholder's wealth.

Every paragraph of this section that begins with "it matters" provides this study with ample purpose. Any one of these paragraphs would substantiate further research and critical analyses, but taken together, as a grounded theory study with dimensional and situational analysis they will provide in sum greater clarity than the any of the "it matters" parts studied alone: or a gestalt way of approaching the complexity. These paragraphs represent a chorus of women's voices asking for a higher level of conceptual understanding.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to move away from the current methods of fragmented, disciplinary research regarding women's experiences as both leaders and women, to more fully integrate understanding of how women live and lead in these spaces. It seeks to understand how these women make meaning of their lives across and within multiple roles. The majority of research to date looks only at one component of women's work life. The research to date artificially elevates the studied component as a singular problem impeding gender equality. Women's lives are complex with intricate, integrated, and interrelated identities and relationships, intertwined with broad cultural, political, and economic macrosystems and microsystems of social and family processes. This study through the use of qualitative method, seeks to gather rich, storied data that originates with women who have lived inside leading roles. The hope is to gain a

deeper understanding of the interacting systems that play critical roles in the decision-making and identity of women who lead.

> Often there is no clear cause and effect; that's the nature of interacting forces. We can't just talk about behavior and perceptions as separate phenomena; they are constantly reinforcing one another. We need to look at the dynamic of the systems to understand how reinforcing elements are set into play to create momentum that shapes the likelihood of the next episode (not inevitable, but more likely) and once momentum occurs over longer and longer periods of time, it becomes harder to change, but once you understand, you can intervene and change. (Kanter, 2013 as cited in Berdahl, 2013, para. 7)

This study seeks foundational understanding of the phenomena of women who lead, with an ultimate goal of lighting the paths to gender equity.

Situating the Topic

I arrived at this topic with a passion for resolution, grounded in solid and thorough research, to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Like the CEOs and women cited in the opening paragraph of this introduction, I, too, am frustrated by the decades that have passed with little progress on virtually every dimension of women's lives. I am convinced that women must occupy positions where critical decisions are made, or we will share a dubious and unfulfilled destiny.

I have wrestled with the privilege associated with a study designed to focus on an elite group of women. As Selmi and Cahn (2006) so eloquently ask: "Which women, which agenda?" (p. 7). There is no disagreement that issues of an elite group of women may be quite different from those of women on a lower socioeconomic strata or women or color. For this study I have chosen to look deeply at the lives of women who lead because I remain committed to Kanter's (1977) critical mass ideal.

Kanter (1977) began this debate 38 years ago with thought provoking ideas put forth in the groundbreaking *Men and Women of the Corporation.* Over the years more than 50 research

articles were published that present counter arguments to Kanter's critical mass propositions or add value to the debate by illustrating that the devaluation of women is not merely an organizational problem to be remedied by adding women, but a pervasive cultural issue (Yoder, 1991; 1994; Zimmer, 1988). However, no research was located to validate or invalidate Kanter's theory of critical mass. I argue this is problematic. Women look up to the organization for mentoring and sponsoring. Important decisions are made at the top. The organizational culture is driven at the top. In a study regarding group composition, Hewstone et al. (2006) concluded, "Women were only ever in the minority and men in the majority, and relation group proportions varied within this constraint" (p. 524). Women have always acted within this constraint regarding leadership.

It is with this idea of operating within constraint that I situate the gender equity topic historically, socioeconomically, domestically, politically, socially, and personally.

The historical debate. The debate for gender equity in the workplace and in the nation at large has a long and tiring discursive history. In situating this topic, we often reflect on the last 40 years of the women's movement and forget the true investment in the quest. It is a debate deeply defined by the rules of masculine hegemony. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "Justice cannot be for one side alone but must be for both" (as cited in Brainy Quote, n.d., para. 1). The history of women's rights has been etched in justice for both, or sameness. The march towards women's rights began in the United States in 1848 with the Seneca Falls convention at which even the women debated whether their demands for the right to vote were too extreme. Susan B. Anthony started the conversation with this statement: "I beg you to speak of Woman as you do of the Negro, speak to her as a human being, as a citizen of the United States, as half of the people in whose hands lies the destiny of this Nation" (as cited in Biggs, 1996, p. 454). Early

women understood that they, not men, must actively control a shared destiny. Women gained the right to vote at the federal level in 1920, nearly 70 years after the Seneca convention. But the rebel voices were quiet in the aftermath of World War II when women's contribution to the Nation was defined by domesticity.

The cultural division between work and home became highly demarcated. In the early economy of our nation, virtually all domestic production was produced by the family. As American industry began to rise, industry sought to co-opt the employment process by hiring one family member who then recruited others in his/her family. Industry moved into the role of parent/family as towns were created, supported, and controlled by industry. Separation occurred when families began to migrate away from urban cities.

> It's hardly surprising to notice, as Crestwood Heights researchers did (Sealy, Sim, & Loosely, 1956), that for much of the time suburbia is populated only by women and children, the people who transform an individual worker into a "family" with "family life" and the man is plugged in where he appears, but he is not seen as carrying the family membership when he goes off to work. (However, working women are seen as always carrying the family). (Kanter, 1989, p. 83)

By the late 1950s, the ideal worker—one who can prioritize work with a single-minded focus—had evolved (Joan Williams, 2000). The embodiment of the American Dream was the ideal worker; how hard one worked was the duty and measure of worth of individuals. The ideal worker remains constructed in masculinity, but it is an image against which self-worth is measured and shared by both sexes.

Betty Friedan revitalized the conversation in the post World War II era, when she included men in the definition of the problem: "Men weren't really the enemy, they were fellow victims suffering from an outmoded masculine mystique that made them feel unnecessarily inadequate when there were no more bears to kill" (as cited in Levine, 1974, p. F1). The feminist movement, undergirded in the United States by the formation of the National

Organization of Women (NOW), was formed in 1966. Women were attaining education and moving into the workplace and amongst many calls for equality, NOW pushed economic equality. Spurned by the women's movement, the Food and Drug Administration approved the birth control pill in 1960, and Congress passed the Equal Pay Act in 1963.

President John F. Kennedy implemented affirmative action in 196l and by executive order of President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 to insure that all members of society had equal access to opportunities. Affirmative action, especially when implemented along the lines of race by colleges for admission purposes, continues to be hotly debated. Based in an ideology of merit, those against the implementation of affirmative action in college admissions contend reverse discrimination in that one racial group receives preferential consideration over another when academic performance (merit) should be the benchmark of collegiate acceptance. Those against affirmative action contend that it lowers overall standards. Supporters of affirmative action contend that it provides opportunities where there were none historically, compensates for centuries of racial, social, and economic oppression (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014), increases diversity, and provides a life-long economic effect for minorities that benefit from the plan. Although Kanter (1977) never advocated for affirmative action per se, she advocated for a system that would establish gender equity, or a critical mass, at all levels of the corporation. Kanter contends that in highly skewed groups, token women were "often treated as representations of their category, as symbols rather than individual" (1977, p. 209). Like all equality issues battled in the United States, the perspective of equality is relative.

> The norm is largely invisible, "opaque to analysis" (Collinson & Hearn, 1994) unproblematized and evading scrutiny. Individuals who occupy the normative position (such as White middle class men) tend to go unnoticed. They do not represent a particular (e.g., gendered, raced) category and in this sense they are "unmarked." (Lewis & Simpson, 2010a, p. 5)

Robinson (2000) refers to this as *disembodied normatitivity.* The privileges that accompany this normativity are also concealed.

The Civil Rights Act was signed in 1964 after a long and arduous battle to outlaw discrimination along the lines of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. True victory, however, is in how laws are enforced. Although this was a landmark step toward equality, early enforcement was weak. Not only is proving discrimination often problematic, but the laws often fail to acknowledge and remedy more subtle and pervasive forms of discrimination.

The Equal Rights Amendment was introduced by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman in 1923 as an amendment to the United States Constitution; the amendment was intended to insure equal rights for women were written into the fabric of our nation. Although it passed the House and the Congress in 1972, it failed to secure the 38 states necessary for ratification. This amendment continues to be a point of contention. The Equal Rights Amendment serves as an icon for women's struggle to reach full equality; full equality remains unfinished business.

Women continue to lobby for equality in the public sphere. In 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act which resets the timeframe in which a person can file for pay discrimination. But organizational privacy issues around wages and promotions continue to pose problems for proving discrimination and enforcing this law.

Research has its own discursive history in championing the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Most research depicts the individual as the unit of analysis and constructs difference as compared to the masculine status quo. Clarke (1995) interjects: "in postmodernity, capital has fallen in love with difference" (p. 146). Research has cited the differences between the leadership styles of men and women (Alimio-Metcalfe, 2010, Arar, 2012, Bartol & Wortman, 1975, Chapman, 1975; Crincione-Coles, 1975; Dale, 1973; Day &

Stogdill, 1972; Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Matsa & Miller, 2011; Moses

& Boehm, 1975; Northouse, 2012; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt,

2011); that women are not assertive (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013; Baxter, 2012; Crum &

Fridman, 2013; Twenge, 2011); that women lack self-confidence/the confidence gap (Healy &

Pate, 2011; Orenstein, 2013; Santos-Pinto, 2012); that women opt out (Antecol, 2011;

Burkstrand-Reid, 2011; Good, Rattan, & Dweck, 2012; Schmidt, 2011); and that women are

neurologically different (Bluhm, Jacobson, & Maibom, 2012) as some of root causes of women's

leadership ills. Research has begun to move away from the individual unit of analysis and focus

on cultural and organizational systems as a cause for women's lack of representation in the upper

echelons of work. These include conclusions that women are not mentored or sponsored in the

organization (Dworkin, Ramaswami, & Schipani, 2013; Foust-Cummings, Dinoflo, & Kohler,

2011; Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010); that second generation bias is pervasive in the

organizational context and thus interferes with women's identity work (Ely et al., 2011), and that

women (and men) are overworked (Cha, 2013; Padavic & Ely, 2013). Specifically, Ely et al.

(2011) have begun to combine systems of oppression under the auspices of second generation

gender bias, stating:

> Organizational research on the causes of women's persistent underrepresentation in
> leadership positions has thus shifted away from a focus on actors' intentional efforts to
> exclude women to consideration of so-called "second generation" forms of gender bias,
> the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement that arise from cultural
> beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures, practices and patterns of interaction
> that inadvertently favor men. (p. 4)

When we reflect on the debate for gender equality, we must honor the fact that women

have spent 166 years asking for equality in the United States. Is our definition of equality

sameness? Eleanor Roosevelt and Betty Friedan were concerned with macro oppressive

hegemonic systems while our research and remedies have largely focused on the individual.

With merit and opportunity as conceptual cornerstones of the American psyche, we are

embedded in a socially constructed system which fundamentally teaches that everything is

possible to those who try. So blame, whether it be couched in choice, merit, sameness, or

difference, is laid in the lap of the individual. As scholars, we have the power to question the

patriotic ideologies that flow deeply through our social processes. Can we reconstruct such

cornerstones? Where are the intersections between being an American and being a woman?

What happens when being an American collides with being a woman? This is only part and

parcel of the situation in which working women find themselves today.

   Situating the current debate. The following sections situate the topic in known data.

These sections represent the larger categories of data that gets collected, researched and funded.

But it does not represent the totality of the situation in which women live and lead.

   Socioeconomic complexity. The workforce continues to be gender segmented. When

work demands more than a 50-hour week, attrition rates escalate for women (Cha, 2013). Most

leadership roles continue to be defined by masculine norms, including an overt physical,

temporal, and mental commitment to work. Because women continue to shoulder most of the

family and domestic responsibility, they find it more difficult to comply with long hours of work.

There are structural and societal barriers that impede a woman's ability to comply with

overwork. The school day continues to be ill suited for working parents, and the demands for

child education and preparedness have increased. Even without children, women continue to

perform most of the household and caregiving duties for older parents. Macroeconomic

frameworks still operate under the presumption of the rational person, with no gender, no sex, no

age or ethnicity, no class, in no particular historical or geographical context with economic

choices and decisions undeterred by unequal power (Balmori, 2003). While macroeconomic

policies are etched in gender-blindness, the impact they have on women and men are not. Women's unpaid domestic work continues to be unaccounted for in Gross National Product even though the paid economy could not flourish without it. "For developed countries, unpaid work is estimated to produce the equivalent of half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)" (Balmori, 2003, p. 9). The household remains a key site of gender inequality; is invisible in national productivity statistics; is devalued as a whole and subsequently continues to impede women's advancement in the workplace. Can this relationship with domesticity change?

There are exceptions to the lack of advancement by profession, but these exceptions have predominately occurred in professions where employment of women has increased. There are few choices within these industries but to hire women. For example, women represent 63.0 % of all auditors and accountants in the United States (Catalyst, 2015). In 2011 half of the new hires in accounting at the Big Four (Deloitte, KPMG, Ernst & Young and PricewaterhouseCoopers) were women, but only 18.5% were full equity partners. The Big Four have developed an array of programs targeted at keeping women and men in the accounting profession. For example, Deloitte has developed a program for career retention. The mass career customization program allows employees to take on more or fewer responsibilities as non-work responsibilities dictate while staying in the accounting profession. While this program has been successful in retaining employees, the company still makes taking a step back punitive to one's career. Why must taking a less visible position be equated with less success? Deloitte will keep you, but the consequence for not accepting more responsibilities will mean that you are taken off the fast track and put on the "mommy track" or "daddy track." This sends the wrong cultural message about the linear nature of success.

Other countries, particularly Scandinavian and European countries, have implemented mandatory quota systems to combat the lack of women in leadership positions. The Scandinavian countries have the highest percentage of working women per capita and have moved closest to closing the gender gap (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2012; World Economic Forum, 2015). Quotas do not seem to be an option for Americans. The only attempts in American history to remotely implement a quota system are affirmative action initiatives. It continues to draw ridicule from the majority that claim to harbor no cognitive bias. The United States remains profoundly tied to one document for the interpretative purpose of equality. Interpretations of the Constitution, and thus equality, can vary with the composition of the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the United States judicial system dictates a dual evidentiary system in which women and minorities bear the burden of proof and men and Whites are judged only on their negative impact. This system pits majority against minority despite an overwhelming disparity of resources. A discourse of merit is prevalent among these arguments. A capitalist market with an animal kingdom mantra of "survival of the fittest" fuels this discussion. Other countries have geared equality discussions on results instead of fairness. For example, the UK's Prime Minister Tony Blair vowed in 1999 to abolish child poverty in tandem with an additional economic goal of controlling and keeping wages bolstered for both men and women as women entered and diluted the labor market (see Minoff, 2006). Women were not the target in either of these scenarios, but they have benefited indirectly from the processes put into place to achieve national economic goals.

Women advance a discourse of desired flexibility while men advance a discourse of desired higher wages (K. Parker & Wang, 2013). Why? Are women accepting stereotypical roles, or are they forced to make concessions because they lack support? Opting out of work or

reducing work commitments carries a "motherhood penalty" that has a lifetime deficit income effect (Budig & England, 2001). Because the compounding effect of money is temporally sensitive, it is virtually impossible for women to overcome this deficit over the course of a lifetime. This compounding effect is exacerbated by the loss of skills and valuable networks. Budig and England (2001) find five correlates to explain the lower wages of motherhood: job interruption or lack of experience; compensating differentials or desirable hours for lower pay; managing distractions that translates into lower productivity; overt discrimination; and decreased career ambition. What Budig and England fail to explain is why motherhood alone carries these penalties.

The phrase *feminization of poverty* originated in the 1970s as the United States battled welfare reform. A national discussion ignited post Civil Rights Amendment as Americans anticipated the onslaught of African American women entering the program. But this term has broadened to encompass wage disparity. Women have earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by men from 2002 to 2012 (American Association of University Women, 2017). This trend is pervasive across occupations and grows wider with age. Women generally earn 90% of the wages earned by men until age 35, and then it drops precipitously to levels between 75 and 80% (American Association of University Women, 2017). Neither childlessness nor education has eradicated the wage gap. On average, women without children earn 82% of the wages earned by men; the study found that in many areas the wage gap was larger for educated women.

How work is accomplished has changed. Socially constructed boundaries between work roles and non-work roles have deteriorated. Communication technologies render employees available nearly 24 hours a day from any geographic location. "The affordances offered by smart phones and other mobile devices quickly went from representing the possibility of

connection/availability to producing a work of subjectivity in which this was normatively

demanded, as all of life becomes a 'social factory'" (Gill, 2014b, p. 515). Declining job stability

and the onset of the entrepreneurial career have created additional stressors that inhibit boundary

setting (Cappelli, 1999; Kalleberg, 2009). Globalization and workforce diversity (Calas &

Smircich, 1996; Coutinho, Dam, & Blustein, 2008; Davis-Blake & Broschak, 2009; Geiger &

Jordan, 2014; Savickas et al., 2009) have contributed to the blurring of these boundaries and

roles. The flattening of organizations has contributed to work instability (Friedman, 2005). On

average, women lost jobs six times that of men in the economic downturn between 2006 and

2009 (Gill, 2014b). This leads women to feel psychologically disposable and chronically

insecure. Overwork has been cited as an American cultural factor that may exacerbate structural

determinants of work (Cha, 2013; Padavic & Ely, 2013; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Jencks

(2002) concludes that the United States is not richer than other nations because we are more

efficient; instead, as Smeeding (2005) observes, "we employ more people who work longer

hours than do counterparts" (p. 976). Our ideas of success are intrinsically linked to overwork

and overt competitiveness. Anand Giridharadas suggests:

> If you select high financiers by their willingness to work 100 hours a week and ignore
> their families and outmaneuver their peers . . . you are going to get a disproportionate
> number of self-serving, less-than-empathetic people managing society's money. (as cited
> in Cummins, 2013, para. 29)

Gill (2014b) contends that we have internalized a social knowledge that all time should

be available for work. "Power operates not from top-down managerial imposition but through the

internalization of a felt knowledge of workplace culture that makes it quite literally laughable to

choose something different" (p. 516). She suggests that this is a new form of "labouring

subjectivity" (p. 516) that is fused psychosocially where power works through the professional to

self-impose this hyper-conscientious as opposed to power from above. Furthermore, Gill (2010)

suggests this is an underexplored area that demands feminists' focus (see also Krings, 2007; Ursell, 2000).

Capitalism, the basis of our economy, continues to be tethered almost singularly to shareholder maximization. This is often presented as a counter argument to increasing employee benefits. The poor economy since 2008, coupled with the increased competiveness of a global market, has served as an excuse for organizations to do little in employee regard. Politicians have obliged pro-business legislation. As organizations have become flatter and leaner, women have experienced "value threat" (Srivastava & Sherman, 2015) as they attempt to protect their place in the flattened hierarchy from other women.

Family complexity/conflict. "The transformation of the single-parent family from a marginalized rarity to an established family form was one of the most dramatic social changes in the 20th century" (Usdansky, 2009, p. 209). American family structures have changed. Prior to 1960 only one in ten children lived in single parent families. Today, 27% of American households are headed by single parents with only 4% of those reflective of men (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Cohabitation rates continue to escalate. Cohabitation increased 13% between 2009 and 2010 with a higher number of men (24%) in these couples not working (Kreider, 2010).

While work has changed, time commitments to non-work roles have not accommodated. They have increased. Americans find themselves entrenched in time poverty. "Time is a concept that is taken for granted at all levels of our lives: personal family, social and institutional. It 'permeates all values, decisions and actions'" (Daly, 1996, p. 201). Thus, time is a central organizing principle of women's lives. "The data indicate that it is virtually impossible for employed single parents to escape time poverty" (Harvey & Mukhopadhyay, 2007, p. 70).

Furthermore, Hodgson, Dienhart, and Daly (2001) suggest that busy parents experience time not as reflected by a clock, but as social: "Social time is imbued with meanings based on different frames of references and experiences" (p. 3).

Time spent with children has increased. On average, parents spent an additional five hours per week with children between the periods of 1981 and 1997 (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Current data (2011) reflects that mothers spent approximately 13.5 hours with their children while fathers spent 7.3 hours (Guryan, Hurst, & Kearny, 2013; Pew Social Trends, 2013). Mothers have expressed a sense of unrelenting responsibility, fragile control, the value of precious moments, and the experience of on-duty and off-duty parenting as their experience of time (Hodgson et al., 2001).

American mothers have been accused of providing intensive mothering (Hays, 1996), yet our culture dictates intensive parenting for the success and relevant competitiveness of the child. There is a positive correlation between the educational level of mothers and time spent with children. This educational gradient is somewhat offset by the fact that the higher the educational level a women receives, the greater propensity she is to be married and have fewer children. Kimmel and Connelly (2007) posit that a mother's wage is positively correlated with time invested with children. However, the interplay between education, income, and time spent with children has great ramifications for the intergenerational transmission of value systems (K. Parker & Wang, 2013). I could locate no such study for fathers. Apparently intensive fathering is not a cultural issue. What cultural message are we conveying to our children if we do not make structural changes, if we keep raising the demands in both work and family domains, for them to engage with future generations of children?

The continued use of boundaries between work and non-work spheres is flawed. These are socially constructed and have historically been less demarcated. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1989) seminal contribution, "Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review of Work and Policy," challenged the sociological separation of work and family. She concluded:

> Despite the agreement that the family and the economy as institutions are linked in broad ways, the specific intersections and transactions between work and family, between occupations and families as connected organizers of experience and systems of social relations, are virtually ignored. (p. 77)

Organizations cannot be totalitarian institutions; they can choose to exclude non-work roles and identities with the Culture of Work but they cannot eliminate them. Furthermore, organizations play a critical role in the social conveyance of norms. Values expressed and elevated in work are imbued to children as parents understand that these are necessary for generational success. This intergenerational transference of work values has historically served to perpetuate the division of American classes as white collar and blue collar work values may differ. For example, research has elucidated that middle and upper class parents may encourage ambition and more creative, liberal thought, but working class parents stress obedience (Inkeles, 1955, 1960; Joan Williams, 2010).

As organizations have sought to separate work and non-work roles in hopes of perpetuating masculine hegemony with the ideal worker, Americans have simultaneously sought to idealize non-work elements of family.

> Family is a place of our own creation . . . a haven from the world as such. The idea of family as the place where the private is protected from the public space, "a world of our own making" (Gillis, 1996), feeds a mythical discourse about boundaries between work and family, boundaries intended to protect us from the dynamics of the workplace. (Bacigalupe, 2002, p. 8)

Identity formation. In the first 25 years of their lives, women are socialized toward career accomplishment and success. Why else would they invest so heavily in education? However,

being a professional comes with a set of societal, cultural, and performance expectations that

often conflict with family responsibilities. In other words, early messages to "be all that you can

be" often conflict with the myriad of other messages young women receive as they move into

career advancement. While they are socialized early toward achievement, they are also

socialized to be acutely aware of body image (to be "made up" to be attractive), to avoid conflict,

and to be more critical of their performance (Heath et al., 2014).

> Feminists point out, and Kegan agrees, that women are socialized into the characteristics more fully associated with the interpersonal stage and men to the institutional stage. Understandable concerns exist about conceiving of women as perpetually less than men developmentally. (Eriksen, 2006, p. 297)

> The interpersonal stage is defined as people who are

> embedded in or subject to relationships, roles and rules . . . and have internalized the values of society or their surroundings. Being defined by relationships may result in (a) being determined by others; (b) needing to maintain even unhealthy relationships, be approved of, and not rock the boat at any cost; (c) being unable to experience intimacy (the full sharing of two different people), only fusion in relationship (the sharing only of sameness); and (d) following inner urges in an intuitive, unexamined, sometimes reactive way. (Eriksen, 2006, p. 294)

Those in the interpersonal stage cannot experience roles as objects and tend to stay within the

boundaries of intergenerational values.

By contrast, men are socialized at the institutional level. They are embedded in

institutions in their lives, that is, their jobs. They have defined boundaries, and are

"self-possessed, believing that they need to be 'steel rods' that display no weakness" (Ericksen,

2006, p. 295).

Women are inundated with mixed social messages throughout identity development.

What happens to a woman's identity when the lack of real opportunity to rise in the ranks of the

organization persists? Often, women resort to narratives of choice and merit to cope with the

clash between the younger possible self and the current realities. Kanter (1977) cited choice as a

possible narrative for those in organizations without full access to structures of opportunity:

> Behavior in organizations is, when all is said and done, adaptive. What people do, how
> they come to feel and behave, reflects what they can make of their situation, limited as
> though it might be, and still gather material rewards and preserve a modicum of human
> dignity. (Kanter, 1977, p. 251)

> Early in organizational studies, Tom Burns (1955) suggested a counter system that

develops when employees are denied access to real opportunities.

> Sometimes an individual fails or is doubtful about his success or has rejected his
> occupation role because it has become devalued . . . The failure will seek to opt out of his
> occupational role in collusion with others—he will want to present the occupational role
> as being less important to him. (as cited in Kanter, 1977, pp. 149–150)

Furthermore, Kanter (1977) suggests that the organizational structures of opportunity create

inter-organizational cycles of advantage and disadvantage:

> People set on high mobility tracks tend to develop attitudes and values that impel them
> further along the track . . . those set on low mobility tracks tend to become indifferent, to
> give up and thus "prove" that their initial placement was correct. (p. 158)

> Indsco, the pseudonym given to the organization in which Kanter (1977) conducted her

field study, was an organization in which success was synonymous with promotion. Kanter

describes opportunity as "seductive" (p. 134). Success continues to be plotted on an axis of

hierarchy. It remains heavily embedded in our culture and greatly impacts identity formation. A

woman's leadership workshop provided a laboratory for simple observation of this phenomenon

amongst women who lead. The workshop was small, selective, and expensive. Organizations

sent their best and brightest women. On the first evening of the workshop, 35 women gathered

casually around the keynote speaker. When asked to introduce themselves, each proceeded to

articulate rank, file, and competencies. But the next morning, when the first person stood as

requested and communicated something very personal, the cultural mandates to posture around success lifted.

Women's identity is built in a context of gender discrimination: "The chronic and often ambiguous nature of discrimination . . . make it a stressor that is difficult to cope with, and victims show a range of psychological and physical disturbances" (Foster & Tsarfail, 2005, p. 1730)

Ely et al. (2011) suggest a subtler, second generation gender bias, often referred to as *sexism,* is pervasive. Because merit and choice are an embedded belief system of women, they can be deployed as a defense mechanism in the face of gender bias. Belief systems provide a coupling mechanism for stress. Meritocracy is an ideology deeply embedded in the American belief system by both sexes (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Kluegal & Smith, 1986; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Put succinctly, Americans generally believe that merit is a measure of IQ plus effort from which goods are distributed.

Sealy (2010) suggests that meritocracy is implicit in the employment contract of Western economies: "It forms part of the individuals' contract with the organization, whether formal or psychological, that their potential for career progression will be based on their ability and talent demonstrated within their role" (p. 184). But those with access to organizational power, or men, determine what qualifies for merit; thus, merit becomes a social defense to perpetuate, control and manipulate organizational power. The question is why women perpetuate this "vortex of power" (Lewis & Simpson, 2010a, p. 9). Is it an integral part of identity or just a macro force?

Foster and Tsarfati (2005) tested behavior around the beliefs of merit. They found that women who suffered from discrimination but did not believe in a social system based on meritocracy reported greater well-being than those who subscribed to the system of merit.

> This finding is consistent with group consciousness . . . and women's studies theories
> . . . that promote a critical view of the social system as a means of empowering women.
> These theories argue that shattering such myths will encourage women to turn their
> blame for failure onto the system. (Foster & Tsarfati, 2005, p. 1734)

The study found that women who believed in a system of merit believed they got what they

deserved even in the face of overt discrimination. Janoff-Bulman and Schwartzberg (1991)

suggest that this is a cognitive adaptive strategy that serves to protect identity and well-being in

the face of discrimination, but utilizing this mechanism has deleterious macro social

consequences. Sealy (2010) asks:

> When we look at the considerable literature on women's corporate careers and their
> progressions to the upper echelons of organizations, one stark fact is abundantly clear is
> that there are so few women at the top. If today's managerialism is really based on the
> ideology of meritocracy, how could this be? (p. 186)

The ideology of merit prompts women to adopt the masculine norms of the organization

early in their careers, but as they accumulate experience and find no women at the top, their

belief in meritocracy wanes. It is replaced with authenticity.

Perhaps this is part of the situation; there is no place in a masculine organizational culture

for feminine authenticity. When—and if—identify formation and human development move

into what Kegan (1982) has labeled the fifth order of consciousness, or inter-individualism:

> [People] become more tentative and less certain about their theory, seeing that any
> system of operating is temporary, preliminary and self-constructed . . . seek out
> differences as needed challenges to themselves and as opportunities to grow . . . tolerate
> emotional conflict and even plurality within themselves; return to connectedness but not
> to fusion. They mutually preserve each other's distinctiveness, simultaneously, together
> creating a context in which these separate identities "interpenetrate." (p. 253)

It may be that women are suffering from identity crisis. Our identity has suffered from

leadership re-engineering. We've received a ticket into the stadium but no seat. Standing is

stressful. We think we are professionals, leaders, mothers, sisters and daughters, but we are

granted these positions only provisionally. What can we claim?

A person's identity involves more that the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the current self; it also includes reflections of what a person was like in the past and hopes and fears about what a persona may become in the future. (Strahan & Wilson, 2006, p. 2)

Future possible selves are co-constructed with current self. Most often a person looks upward to a target person for comparison and development of future possible selves. Where are the female leaders? Whom do we emulate? Furthermore, girls (women) and boys (men) have different processes for assimilating possible selves. Girls (women) incorporate others' outcomes, including spouses and children, into their own construction of possible selves (Oyserman, Kemmelmeir, Fryberg, Brosh, & Hart-Johnson, 2003). Boys (men) do not. Men transition less easily into fatherhood because they rarely envision fatherhood as a possible self.

Ely et al. (2011) suggest that leadership work should be framed through identity work.

How people become leaders and how they take up the leader role are fundamentally questions about identity . . . A leader identity is not simply the counterpart to a formally held leadership positions but rather evolves as one engages in two core, interrelated tasks: internalizing a leader identity . . . and developing an elevated sense of purpose. (p. 6)

Perhaps purpose and the internalized identities of women are destabilized by the cultural, political, and socioeconomic macrosystems they encounter and by the constant reverberation of devaluation across so many dimensions of their lives.

Gender and feminism. Wave after wave of feminism has drained much of the energy from the tide of the feminist movement. "Feminism has the historical baggage of a movement that is now old. The things that feminism had to accomplish, the things that galvanized it, are dramatic and distant" (Fridkis, 2011, para. 7). The organization and activism of the feminist movement have been replaced with a somewhat quieter capitalist version. Third wave feminist Jennifer Baumgardner, now 40, reflects on feminism in this way.

Amid the progressive takes on vulvas, negotiating raises and constantly changing ways of doing feminism, I'm also struck by how much the young fems have to go through the same trials that Third Wave. . . . and Second Wave . . . went through, too. Sexual

assault is still rampant, confusion (and humiliation) about how to have an orgasm abounds, and saying "I had an abortion" is still as risky as it is empowering. I can't save younger feminists from any of this, but as they grow themselves up, my generation can be the allies we always wanted for ourselves. That alone is progress. (Baumgardner, 2011, p. 23)

As feminism has moved into more complex concepts such as intersectionality, some young feminists, such as Laurie Penny, suggest that "gender polices our dreams" (as cited in Peterson, 2014, para. 3) and that women's dreams are "beautifully wrapped nightmares" (para. 4).

The notion that feminism is antiquated and articulated as such by so many younger women and professionals is not surprising given the gender neutrality our culture assumes. Kelan (2014) attributes this primarily to the gender neutrality of business school cultures and curriculum. Business schools define our concepts of the ideal professional. Furthermore, Kelan (2009b) suggests that workers are caught in the conflict of an ideological dilemma:

Although gender discrimination remains a feature of working life in many contexts, research on gender in organizations has shown that workplaces are constructed as gender neutral. This poses an ideological dilemma for workers: how can they make sense of gender discrimination at work while presenting their workplaces as gender neutral? (p. 1)

Gill (2014a) consigns that the word *sexism*, which she defines as "an agile, dynamic, changing, and diverse set of malleable representations, discourses and practices of power" (p. 120), has been erased from our cultural vocabulary in part as a measure of "post feminist sensibility" (p. 116). Sexism remains as a subtle but powerful tool to practice gender discrimination, or what has been aptly termed second generation gender bias (Ely et al., 2011).

Girls are socialized and women work in a world where gender is "unspeakable" (Gill, 2014a, p. 120). Society suffers from "gender fatigue" (Kelan, 2009a, para. 78). Indeed, there are no Title IX laws in the workplace to insure that women get to play at the top. Structural power relations cannot be discriminatory if gender is unspeakable or invisible.

Political complexity. While women represent more than 50% of the American workforce, work and family policies have stagnated. There have been no new policies implemented since the Clinton administration signed the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993. A flawed conservative political agenda of business protection is largely responsible for the lack of momentum. Women and men have failed to demand policy improvements. Why? Is the drive for women to be the same as men and to think like men that strongly held? Americans have accepted the rhetoric that pro-business and pro-family are mutually exclusive concepts. There is no leadership for an organized women's platform. Do women hold to the belief that the need for separate leadership would perpetuate difference?

Women are voting. In the last two elections, women voters outnumbered men by four to seven million (Center for American Women and Politics, 2015), yet there is no meaningful political platform for women. The political agenda remains snarled in a polarizing abortion debate. Hillary Clinton attempted to establish common ground and move past this heated debate in her speech on the 32nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

> So my hope now, today, is that whatever our disagreements with those in this debate, that we can join together to take real action to improve the quality of health care for women and families, to reduce the number of abortions, and to build a healthier, brighter . . . and more hopeful future for women and girls in our country and around the world. (as cited in Kunin, 2012, p. 15)

Her conciliatory efforts failed politically to move away from this polarizing issue. Hillary Clinton's bid to become the first female president of the United States was defeated in 2016. In the aftermath, the media blamed women for the defeat. "The accusation leveled at women voters is clear: They didn't just betray the woman who tried to shatter the glass ceiling, they betrayed each other" (Foran, 2016). Exit polls reveal Clinton won 54% of the female vote to Donald Trump's 42%. (Foran, 2016). What these claims lack is the backstory of political complexity:

while Clinton garnered 94% of the African American female vote, and 63% of the Hispanic vote,

the White female vote was divided along party lines. Many White female women identify as

Republican (Pew Research Center/U.S. Politics & Policy, 2016). Although Clinton won 51% of

the college educated White vote, she only garnered 34% of the White non-educated female vote

(Foran, 2016). Kelly Dittmer, of the Center for American Women and Politics, advises that this

demographic has been growing in the Republican party for the past 24 years (Foran, 2016).

While one could argue the merits of gender as a salient issue in the 2016 presidential election,

this election supported the nexus of this dissertation:

> Rather than thinking about gender as a separate issue that voters care or do not care
> about, or assign a level of importance somewhere on a scale of priorities, it may be more
> useful to consider gender norms and ideals as inextricably intertwined with economic and
> social realities. (Foran, 2016, para. 9)

The legal system does not support the lived experience of women. My own story serves

as a point of illustration: State laws dictate family law. I live in a state that makes no legal

provision for the care of children past the age of 18, which is a majority state position (National

Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). Although some states do make exceptions for children

with disabilities, North Carolina does not. I have a disabled child, now 20, who is bright and

excels in a college curriculum. His father bears no expense for him. Although the state does not

require either parent to provide for a child over the age of 18, I suggest that many single women

continue to bear the costs and responsibility of children past the legally required age. The legal

system remains out of sync with the lived experience of the family, and the lack of women's

engagement and representation in the political system is correlated to these shortfalls.

Now that the topic has been situated in the larger social arenas, I will discuss some

sensitizing concepts as framework from which to interrogate the data.

Sensitizing Concepts

Three ideas serve as sensitizing concepts for the dissertation: Sen's (1987) framework of capabilities, social identity theory and self-concepts, and intersectionality. In this regard, a sensitizing concept will be used as an interpretative device to guide, but not direct nor encumber analysis. Blumer (1954) compares sensitizing concepts in this manner: "Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look" (p. 7). Furthermore, sensitizing concepts will guide the deeper data collected for situational analysis: "Who and what are in this situation? Who and what matters in this situation? What elements 'make a difference' in this situation?" (Clarke, 2003, p. 561) and may lead the researcher to see the "sites of silence."

Sen's framework of capabilities. Economist-philosopher Amaryta Sen's (1987, 1990, 1993) theories of social choice and normative framework of capabilities posit that well-being is indexed by the degrees of freedom in which people are able to be and do. With a truth-seeking strand (G. A. Cohen, 2008) and a practical political philosophy strand, both strands support the dissertation in sensitizing ways. The truth-seeking strand suggests that in a perfect world, the ability to access all opportunities is possible. This strand accurately reflects the ideology of the American dream. The practical political philosophy strand incorporates a feasibility test. Sen's capabilities approach embeds a complexity lens. This approach asks not whether an individual has the opportunity to pursue a meaningful career or the opportunity to secure adequate child care but whether the individual has the agency to do both? Does the individual have to forgo opportunity in one area to satisfy the demands of an alternative opportunity?

> It asks us to consider not only what individuals do, but also what their opportunities to be and do are. For Sen, the core issue is not only what individuals choose, but also the choices that they would make if they had the capabilities to lead the kind of lives that they want to lead. (Hobson, 2011, p. 148)

Additionally, Sen's (1987) framework is an ends-tested framework as opposed to a means-tested framework. It dictates a real opportunity to bring to fruition the be, through paths that are individually unique. The approach pays close attention to diversity and differences among individuals: "A person's agency aspect cannot be understood without taking *note* of *his* or *her* aims, objectives, allegiances, obligations and . . . in a broad sense . . . the person's conception of the good" (Sen, 1987, p. 203).

Sen's (1987) framework is also critical as a sensitizing concept in that he, and, recently, Nussbaum (2001), have advanced an argument that disadvantaged groups actually change their preferences on a non-conscious level in order to align themselves with what they think they can achieve.

Social identity theory and self-concepts. A second sensitizing concept used to foreground this dissertation, especially in the areas of boundary scanning, intersection, and boundary crossing, will be social identity theory.

> The approach is explicitly framed by conviction that collective phenomena cannot be adequately explained in terms of isolated and individual processes or interpersonal interaction alone and that social psychology should place large scale social phenomena near the top of its scientific agenda. (Hogg, 2006, p. 111)

The theoretical foundations of social identity theory are deeply rooted in discrimination. Henri Tajfel, a Polish Jew, survived the rise of the Nazis and the relocation of Jews throughout Europe during World War II. He firmly believed that large scale social phenomena could not be explained through attributes of personality or interpersonal interactions and that social forces configured personal action (Hogg, 2006). "His explicit metatheoretical goal (Turner, 1996) was to develop an explanation that did *not* reinterpret intergroup phenomena merely as the expression

of personality traits, individual differences and interpersonal processes among a large number of

people" (Hogg, 2006, p. 112).

Furthermore, management research has elucidated and linked the importance of how

employees experience work identities with measures of citizenship behavior, cooperation, and

organizational support (Bartel & Dutton, 2001; D. Cooper & Thatcher, 2010; Dukerich, Golden,

& Shortell, 2002; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). D. Cooper and Thatcher (2010) link self-concept

orientation to identification motives within the organization, where self-concept is defined, as

"knowledge structures that consist of beliefs about the self, including one's attributes, social

roles and goals" (p. 519). There are three levels of self-concept orientations: the individual level,

the relational level, and the collective level. Of primary importance to the sensitizing of data

from this dissertation is the concept of self-consistency.

> Individuals go to great lengths to ensure that others see them as they see themselves
> . . . Within the organization, self-consistency can be a powerful motive for identification
> because it aligns one's individual view of oneself with relational and collective-based
> representations. (D. Cooper & Thatcher, 2010, p. 530)

While D. Cooper and Thatcher (2010) allude to self-consistency and "nested identities"

(p. 531), they do not fully address integrated concepts of self.

Identity theory (identity work) will also be called on as a sensitizing concept in the study.

How do macrosystem demands impact identity and experience of self? How do these influence

the construction of possible selves? A. J. Hodges and Park (2013) explored oppositional

identities. Fulfillment in one identity is obtained at the expense of the oppositional identity where

cultural expectations play afound that pivotal role in the definition of fulfillment. Specifically, A.

J. Hodges and Park explore how men and women experience parent versus professional roles as

oppositional identities. The researchers found:

> In general, men show increased activation of their professional identities in response to either a success or failure, and that a work-related failure has a different consequence for men and women, especially among those with more nascent parent identities . . . women are more likely to gravitate toward activation of their parent identities. (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013, p. 211)

This was especially true for women in light of a perceived work failure.

> These effects are consistent with the self-affirmation perspective (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1998) in which the parent identity is used to repair the threat caused by failure in the career domain. Although in general, such affirmation processes serve a protective function for the self, when the two identities are perceived as oppositional to one another, one unintended consequence is the possibility of disidentificaiton with the threatened domain. (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013, p. 212)

A grounded theory study will best explicate the complex and perhaps conflicting experience of identity but will do so in a nonreductionist manner. Indeed, DeRue and Ashford (2010), following Parry (1998), call for more grounded theory studies of the claiming and granting processes that undergird leadership and leader-follower dyads.

Alvesson (2010) warns of the "fashion consciousness . . . [and the] slippery notion of identity" (p. 194) currently in vogue in organizational literature regarding identity. He suggests, "there is more to be done in terms of encouraging sensitivity about alternate ways of approaching identity (p. 194).

Intersectionality. It is imperative that intersectionality be a sensitizing concept that guides this study.

> As a framework, intersectionality serves as a reminder to the researcher that any consideration of a single identity, such as gender, most incorporate an analysis of the way that other identities interact with, and therefore qualitatively change, the experience of gender. (L. R. Warner & Shields, 2013, p. 804)

Engaging an intersectionality framework assumes that "situational power dynamics can alter the nature of our social identities" and that "categories mutually define one another" (Shields, 2008, p. 301). Academic critics suggest that a strict application of the framework undermines the

fluidity of identity (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Prins, 2006; Robertson & Sgoutas, 2012), negates

human agency in identity negotiation (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Nakano-Glenn, 1999; Prins, 2006;

Robertson & Sgoutas, 2012), and applies socially constructed identity categories, for example

"race, that have been constructed by the dominant society members that serve to reinforce

stereotypes (Ackerly & McDermott, 2012; Robertson & Sgoutas, 2012). Engaging the analytic

tools of situational analysis with positional and social arenas maps should delineate dominant

labels and sources of power that influence identity and behavior. Even with these sensitizing

concepts, this study will be further bounded in scope and limitations as discussed next.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

I employed a grounded theory methodology to explore how women in leadership

positions construct, experience, and make meaning of their lives. Situational analysis provided

an analytic tool to render the data and to map out the spaces of influence.

The purpose of the study was to theorize how women in leadership positions engage and

negotiate the totality of their situation. Charmaz (2006) describes "theorizing as a practice that

engages with the world to abstract understanding" (p. 126). More importantly, theory building

will elucidate social process and provide women in leadership roles, and those that continue to

hope for leadership, the necessary spectrum of knowledge to develop strategies for greater

awareness and action through agency. Theory building that rises from the "big picture" will cut

across the current strongholds of disciplinary research and management and create a conceptual

strategy for advancing the issue.

The use of situational analysis not only honors the complexity of the research pursuit,

but also serves to excavate quiet data, position, power, domination, and history and amalgamate

them at the conceptual level. Situational analysis allowed this research to pass into worlds of

women who lead to formulate standpoints. "To me, there is no such thing as "society," but rather mosaics of social worlds, arenas, discourses . . . some at quite large scales with vast audiences . . . but never everyone" (Clarke, 2005, p. 154). Situational analysis, here, elucidated the unique production of limitations that women in leadership positions experience. It was a gestalt way of interrogating the data in that "a situation is always greater than the sum of its parts because it includes their relationality in a particular temporal and spatial moment" (Clarke, 2005, p. 23).

The study was limited to women in leadership positions, constrained by the required number for grounded theory interviewing. The study was conducted in a context of privilege. Interviewees were predominantly Caucasian and middle to upper class. Statistically, women of color occupy 11.9% of managerial jobs in the United States, with African American women occupying 5.3%, Asian women occupying 2.7%, and Latina women occupying 3.9% (J. Warner, 2014). Every effort was made to incorporate women of color into the interview process, but the study largely reflects a White experience.

Another limitation concerns the primarily heterosexual perspectives of the narrators. Participants were drawn from two years of attendees at an annual conference in North Carolina (TWIST). There are approximately 40 attendees each year. Sexual orientation of those in attendance was unknown and I made no special effort to include (or exclude) LGBTQ people. In light of the fact that, despite increasing legal and social acceptance of same-sex rights, more than 50% of the LGBTQ employees do not reveal their gender preferences at the workplace (Fidas & Cooper, 2015), insuring that the study had some proportion of homosexual women leaders would have required purposeful sampling directed at including this segment of women leaders. This was not done for the present work but would be a worthwhile follow-up (see Chapter VI).

Additionally, the study carried the essentialist assumption that elucidating structural barriers and social processes for one group of women automatically translates across race and class. Social change must have a beginning. Given the forecast for a gray workforce by 2050 (Geiger & Jordan, 2014), this should be a consideration for future research.

The study is also designed with the understanding that grounded theory concepts are abstracted to a level to be applicable across disciplines. This may not occur. Additionally, the study is designed for the intent of social change. Will seeing the concepts that arise from the data be enough to provide the inertia for change in both academia and the workplace?

Summary and Organization of the Dissertation

This study sought to understand how women in leadership positions construct, experience and make meaning of their lives. It accomplished this through performing a dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) and a situational analysis (Clarke, 2005), to construct explanatory matrices of these social processes. The dimensional analysis, grounded in the voices of women, was located in the larger world of women who lead by the situational analysis as a container of "mosaics of social worlds, arena, discourses…some at quite large scales with vast audiences . . . but never everyone" (Clarke, 2005, p. 23).

Chapter I conveys the purpose of the study, poses relevant research questions, and situates the topic. Finally, sensitizing concepts are discussed.

Chapter II provides the academic context of the topic. Primarily, this chapter explores research published regarding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions.

Chapter III includes a rationale for using grounded theory as a methodology for data gathering, interpretation, analyses, and theory building for this dissertation. It provides study methodological details including participants and decisions involving sampling, interviewing,

coding, dimensional and situational analyses. This chapter describes the reciprocal nature between the dimensional and situational elements. It will describe how grounded theory was engaged and executed as a methodology of this study.

Chapter IV produces the dimensional analysis interpreted from the interviews and observations collected during the study.

Chapter V provides the situational analysis and maps interpreted from participant interviews, expert interviews, artifacts, documents and observations during the study.

Chapter VI amalgamates the data to render a theoretical model for understanding the experience of women who lead. The theoretical model will be considered from the perspective of existing research on the primary concepts that emerge from this study and theoretical propositions abstracted.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Is a Grounded Theory Literature Review Warranted?

Researchers disagree on the importance of the review of literature in the execution of grounded theory methodology. Methodological founders Glaser and Strauss (1967) initially advocated for no extant literature review. They believed in the power of the data to reveal emergent categories and theoretical frameworks. Dey (2007) suggests that the researcher who chose to conduct a review of the literature "was the researcher inclined to plough ahead through an established theoretical furrow regardless of the diversity and richness of the data, thereby diminishing its potential for a wider repertoire of theoretical innovation" (p. 176). Strauss later began to deviate from this position and advocated review of the literature early in the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser, however, persisted and remained committed to the original maxim.

> Grounded theory's very strong dicta are: a) do not do a literature review in the substantive area and related areas where the research is to be done; and when the grounded theory is nearly completed during the sorting and writing up, then the literature search in the substantive area can be accomplished and woven into the theory as more data for the constant comparison. (Glaser, 1998, p. 67)

The argument for performing no literature review has some merit. Glaser (1998) contends that an early literature review "contaminates" (p. 67) the entire grounded theory process, to include data collection, coding, and analysis. "Because the methodology privileges empirical data, Glaser (1992) argued that grounded theorists must "'learn not to know' which includes avoiding engagement with existing literature prior to entering the field" (Dunne, 2011, p. 114). Additionally, Glaser (1998) warns of imposing rhetorical jargon onto the study rather than allowing it to emerge from the data. Even Charmaz (2006) suggests postponing the literature review "to avoid in importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on your work.

Delaying the review encourages you to articulate *your* ideas" (p. 165). Strauss and Corbin

(1998) caution that a researcher, especially a novice, can become attached to research discovered

in an early literature review: "It is not unusual for students to become enamored with a previous

study (or studies) either before or during their own investigations, so much so that they are

nearly paralyzed in an analytical sense" (p. 49). The current debate, however, is not about the

inclusion or exclusion of a literature review; instead, it is about when to perform the review.

The argument for an early review of the literature. The lack of progress derived from

40 years of research on the topic of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions

suggests an early literature review is prudent for this study. A cursory review of the literature is

warranted to identify not merely the gaps in knowledge, but to inform study decisions. In this

work, the early literature review foreshadowed the memo writing process and fostered an

understanding of the complexity of the research topic. It provided the researcher with some

notions as to the shortcomings of historical lines of inquiry. Additionally, an early literature

review for this dissertation only reflected half of the situation under study because the research to

date has predominately been confined to binary thinking: research exists in work related

organizational contexts without the inclusion of intersectional identities or experience.

An early literature review provided a strong rationale for implementing a grounded

theory study and elucidated sensitizing concepts. Former lines of inquiry, although interesting,

have not rendered results. This literature review sought not to contaminate, but to facilitate the

study process, especially that of situational analysis. An early literature review can potentially

achieve the following:

> Help contextualize the study . . . orient the researcher . . . and reveal how the
> phenomenon has been studied to date . . . it can help the researcher develop "sensitizing
> concepts" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; McCann & Clark, 2003a), and gain theoretical

sensitivity . . . avoid conceptual and methodological pitfalls . . . and actually become aware of, not numb to, possible unhelpful preconceptions. (Dunne, 2011, p. 116)

Furthermore, research performed during the past 40 years has impacted the phenomenon under study. Consultants, coaches, business schools, and human resources executives within organizations have disseminated study information. Women are coached to be more masculine, to be more self-confident, less emotional, more skilled at negotiating, and more visible, to name a few. The ramifications of previous studies surfaced in the empirical data collected for this study. The history cannot be excluded from the current study.

Billing and Alevesson (2014) concur:

Apart from all other difficulties in measuring something that perhaps is so intangible, varied, and depending on social construction processes, it is important to consider how expectations, beliefs, and normative pressures on gendering (and, sometimes, to avoid gendering) are central not only for values, identities and behavior, but also how people respond to requests for reporting values, identities and behavior. It is perhaps naïve to believe that responses to questionnaires, interviews, or experiments simply mirror gender and leadership. (p. 218)

Memos provide a place in the research process for the researcher to plot along with the data: a place to record her own thoughts. "Memo writing distills this motion between respondent voices, 'data' and the developing analyses" (Lempert, 2007, p. 256). And Charmaz (2006) suggests they make relationships intelligible amongst the data. Although memo writing begins with data collection, Dunne (2011) suggests that memo writing commence simultaneously with the compilation of the literature review for a grounded theory study so that researcher reflexivity begins at the onset of the project. Rather than contamination, an early literature review facilitated mindfulness. Furthermore, the grounded theory maxim of constant comparison provided the researcher with a methodological and ongoing process of reflexivity replete with opportunities to reflect on any preconceptions conjured an early literature review.

An early literature review substantiates the need for performing the study. It highlighted the gaps in the literature and the shortcomings of other methodologies and concepts and delivered the rationale for the study's purpose. It allowed the researcher to formulate meaningful research questions and cultivate purposeful and theoretical sample populations. In particular, an early literature review provided a cultural window into the epistemology and perceptions of gender as a changing, yet culturally dominant system.

Finally, as Clarke (2005), admonishes, "there is something ludicrous about pretending to be a 'theoretical virgin'" (p. 13). I am no theoretical virgin. I have spent the past five years intensely studying the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, and while I honor the tenants of grounded theory as an emergent methodology and indeed have selected this method primarily for its emergent qualities, I certainly brought theoretical frameworks as sensitizing concepts to this study. However, as an entrepreneur and lifelong student of business, I bring limited theoretical knowledge in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, organizational psychology, and organizational behavior. The lack of theoretical knowledge in these disciplines brings some theoretical virginity to this study.

Organization of the Literature Review

The literature regarding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is extensive and multidisciplinary. Rather than choose among the disciplines, I have organized the literature into chronological waves that coincide with concepts of gender (Calas, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014). The first wave includes predominately early gender research couched in difference. This literature falls under the category of gender in organizations. The second and more contemporary wave moves away from the individual as the unit of analysis to produce research that examines gender as socially constructed. As opposed to the individual as the unit

of analysis, this research takes on a systems perspective. This literature falls under the category

of gendering organizations. The boundaries between these organizing groups are artificially

imposed for clarity and analyses; ongoing research continues to appear in both camps. However,

these categories are relevant to this study because they organize the evolutionary concepts and

organizational behavior around gender. Finally, I bring the literature into the time frame

encompassed by this study and discuss the direction that lines of inquiry have taken in that time

frame.

Appropriations of gender as a system: The impact of feminist thought. It is

imperative to acknowledge the lock-step, ontological correlation between concepts of gender and

research produced. Social scientists began to study sex differences in the early 1900s (Connell,

1987; Ely & Padavic, 2007). But not until Parsons (1942) and Parsons and Bales (1955)

introduced the functional theory of sex roles in the 1950s, were social scripts correlated to

behavior. The functionalist theory of sex roles is operationalized as a macro level, efficient, and

stable division of labor. De Beauvoir (1952) criticized the functional nature of this theory as it

negates issues of power and subordination, but these ideas were not popularized until the second

wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s (Connell, 1987; Ely & Padavic, 2007). It was this

feminist impetus that spurred the redefining of *gender,* from a biological imperative, to a socially

constructed category that creates and maintains sex differences. Gender would now be viewed

as constructed and perpetuated in a hierarchy in which men are privileged and hold power (Ely &

Padavic, 2007; Padavic & Reskin, 2002, p. 3).

> The sex-gender distinction was a significant break from the conventional functionalist
> paradigm of sex roles, making it possible for feminists to undermine the notion that
> biological and social sex are naturally aligned and, in so doing, to expose and undermine
> the cultural bases of sexism . . . Women's contributions have been devalued because of
> the insidious assumption that women are less rational and closer to nature than men. Sex

difference is a fiction used to legitimate unequal treatment. (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1126)

Extending the gender conversation of power, Ferguson (1991) advocates not only for the identification of privilege and power, but also for concepts that re-value and legitimize sex differences. "It envisions a social order celebrating women in their 'feminized difference' rather than devaluing them as 'imperfect copies of Everyman' (Di Stefano, 1990, p. 67)" (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1127). This attempt by feminists has failed predominately because the archetype of a universal humanist is deeply masculine. Furthermore, power exerts forces at both an external and internal level. It operates externally through practices and dissemination of knowledge to control people's wishes and conduct (Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994); and it exerts an internal force in which people feel a need to comply or resist (Alvesson & Billing, 2009; Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, & Samuel, 1998; Ely & Padavic, 2007). While Ely and Padavic (2007) elucidate the nature of choice in gender role compliance, the power of masculine hegemony as a cultural and organizational imperative remains intact.

Postmodernism has provided an additional evolutionary turn in concepts of gender. Feminist theorists, often producing essentialist work from their own perspectives of privilege, began to critique their own work.

> The postmodern critique represents a significant political, ontological, and epistemological break from earlier feminist work, particularly in its skepticism about gender and the core assumptions associated with it. Postmodernist feminists argue that theorists' and researchers' continued use of "male and female" and "masculine and feminine" as primary, ahistorical, and transcultural categories has had the insidious effect of concealing important aspects of gender, especially aspects related to power. (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1127)

This proliferation of sex/gender differences sets up a binary universe in which women are seen not only as different, but problematic. This binary framework exemplifies the male gender as neutral, as the cultural ideal and further anchors his dominance (Ely & Meyerson, 2001).

The progression of feminist thought as annotated above has influenced the work of sociologists, psychologists, and organizational behaviorists attempting to address inequality in the workplace, but it has not obliterated the embedded culture of binary thinking. Women continue to be defined by the private sphere and men by the public. This division of labor, naturalized by our culture, continues to perpetuate the dominance of men and the masculine retention of resources. Turns in concepts of gender have not translated into inroads of male hegemony.

The birth of gender in management literature. The march of women into the workforce during the 1970s and the challenges they faced working in organizations entrenched in masculine hegemony prompted the need for a new field of research aptly ordained as gender in management research. Unlike previous protests for gender equity, second wave feminists communicated the need for social change as pivotal to economic stability. Leading this research wave was Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1977) groundbreaking study which elucidated the cultural and structural impediments women faced as they attempted to succeed in the organization. Kanter's research explicated how masculine hegemonic systems worked to ensure the majority status quo (Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008; Liff, Worrall, & Cooper, 1997) and keep the "invisible vortex" (Lewis & Simpson, 2010a, p. 12) of power in place. Although Kanter was careful not to align her work with liberal feminist ideologies, her controversial concepts around critical mass, tokenism, stereotypical assimilation, and lack of structures of opportunity for women provided the gateway for a new era in gender research.

> While Kanter denied the salience of gender in her analysis . . . locating the dynamics observed within gender neutral organizational structures . . . she arguably paved the way for future studies focusing not only on the detrimental experiences of women but also, from a critical perspective, on masculinity and men. (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p. 471)

Kanter did not frame her study in gender difference but opted for a systems approach or a "gendering organizational" approach. Themes found in Kanter's seminal work based in the power of organizational culture to shape both identity and opportunity can also be found in today's research (Baretto, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2009; Benschop, 2009; Broadbridge, 2010; Danahar & Branscombe, 2010; Ellemers, Rinks, Derks, & Ryan, 2012; Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2008; Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014; King, Johnson & McGeever, 2010; Kumra, 2010; Kumra & Vinnecombe, 2008, 2010; S. Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Pesonen, Tienari, & Vanhala, 2009; Sekaquaptewa, 2011; Stichman, Hassell, & Archbold 2010; Taylor, 2010; Torchia, Calabro, & Huse, 2011; Turco, 2010; Wallace & Kay, 2012).

Although Kanter's (1977) critique was that of organizational systems, the research that ensued was overwhelmingly designed to elucidate gender difference. This strand of research ensued for several reasons:

- The United States is a culture rooted in individualism.

- Perhaps the individual unit is perceived easier to change than that of a system.

- At some point in time it became abundantly clear that the "pipeline theory" was not working.

Beyond these suggestions, Kanter's work was the catalyst in giving women an organizational voice. Women's organizational voice was perceived as different. I will give a brief history of the gender in management, or the gender difference literature, and trace the literature to the present.

First Wave Research Concepts: Gender in Management Research

Following the evolutionary map of gender research, seminal leadership research by organizational psychologists (Parsons, 1942) drew on concepts of sex roles. Concepts of gender

roles replaced those of sex roles (Eagly, 1987) and have more recently been conceptualized as social roles (Powell & Butterfield, 2003). Calas et al. (2014) suggest that each of these concepts reflect the pervasive division of labor between men and women and the prescriptions for stereotypical "fit" in gender performance. Carli and Eagly (1999) add, "The tendency of men and women to occupy different roles, which require somewhat different behaviors, fosters gender roles by which people expect each sex to have characteristics that equip it for its sex-typical roles" (p. 207). As concepts of sex and gender have evolved to reflect the relational nature of gender, so has the literature:

> At the most general level we can identify two main meta-theoretical approaches in the gender and organization literature. The first and older approach . . . theorizing gender *in* organizations . . . follows a more "naturalistic" or "common-sense" orientation toward gender; understands gendering organizations . . . "de-naturalizes" the common sense of gender using processual, social constructionist theoretical approaches. (Calas et al., 2014, p. 20)

Early research by sociologists pivoted around status processes as sites of inequality (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Meeker & Wieitzel-O'Neill, 1977). These researchers posited that status overarched the concepts of gender in that status conveys member knowledge, ability, and influence and thus stratifies social hierarchy (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Ridgeway, 2001; P. L. Roth, Purvis, & Bobko, 2012).

Role theorists prefer to focus on role incongruence and gender difference while status theorists focus on legitimacy and hierarchical inequity (Calas et al., 2014). Ultimately, both theoretical foundations meld together processes that work in concert to prevent women from accessing structures of opportunity. Ridgeway (2011) posits that because gender is a "primary cultural frame for coordinating social relations" (p. 88), female stereotypes subconsciously influence interactions at work, including decisions around legitimacy.

The literature that followed Kanter (1977) sought to include the experiences of women in management and organizational research (Fagenson, 1990; Marshall, 1984, 1987; Morrison & von Glinow, 1990; Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987; Nicholson & West, 1988; Powell, 1988; Reskin, 1988) and expose the gendered culture (Spangler, Gordon, & Pipkin, 1978; Joan Williams, 1989; Yoder, 1991, 1994; Zimmer, 1988). Before Kanter, research had reflected masculine models of competence and effectiveness (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Schein, 1973, 1975; Wajcman, 1996) and masculine archetypes, or great man theories of success (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Powell & Mainiero, 1992). The pursuit to include women in the management analyses often resulted in research of difference.

The unit of analyses in gender in management research is often the individual and is predicated on the notion that if women are as good as men, they would be represented at all levels of the organization. Gutek (1993) advanced the "individual deficit model" (p. 301) and other researchers examined the "fixing" of women (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Acker (1992) described the system of gender as "the pervasive ordering of human activities, practices and social structures in terms of differentiations between women and men" (p. 567). However, against this difference trend, early researchers Riger and Galligan (1980) urged researchers to analyze "the interaction of both person- and situation-centered variables" (p. 908). Fagenson (1990) concurred when she suggested researchers consider factors that may co-vary with gender.

Two lines of inquiry have dominated gender in management research. One is Schein's (1973, 1975) research around concepts of the successful manager, or what is called the *think manager—think male* paradigm (Dodge, Gilroy, & Fenzel, 1995; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989; M. K. Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, & Bongiorno, 2011; Schein, 2001, 2007; Schein, Muller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996;). The second major line of inquiry seeks to demonstrate that

women are held to different evaluation standards from those on which men are judged (Eagly &
Karau, 2002; Masser & Abrams, 2004; Ridgeway, 1991, 2006; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000;
Webster & Hysom, 1998).

The gender in management lines of inquiry include research that elucidates women's
differences with experiences with career progress (Alban-Metcalfe, 1984; Broadbridge &
Simpson, 2011; Burke & McKeen, 1994; Burke, Rothstein, & Bristor, 1995; M. J. Davidson &
Cooper, 1992; Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Hammond, Crainer, & Holton, 1991; Nicholson &
West, 1988; Rosen, Miguel, & Pierce, 1989; Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994); careers as a
"kaleidoscope," (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, p. 106); as a "labyrinth" (Eagly & Carli, 2007,
p. 2); or as "off-ramps and on-ramps" (Hewlett, 2007, p. 9); differences in leadership styles and
behavior and decision making (M. J. Davidson & Cooper, 1987; Donnell & Hall, 1980; Ferrario,
1991; Johnnie Johnson & Powell, 1994; Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1990), barriers to career success
(Adler, 1993; Ashburner, 1991; T. Coe, 1992; Hansard Society Commission, 1990; Marshall,
1984; Oakley, 2000; Povall, 1990) barriers of token women to success (Simpson, 1997); gender
differences in the meaning of success (Sturges, 1999) and differences with respect to
motherhood, or the "motherhood penalty" (Griffith, MacBride-King, & Townsend, 1998;
Hewlett, 2007; Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2010; Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon,
2009, Metz, 2011; L. M. Roth, 2007).

The difference research has largely been divided between exposing the difference as a
transformational asset, or the feminization of management (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011;
Fondas, 1997; Simpson, Ross-Smith, & Lewis, 2010), or as a deficiency to be remedied. Some
researchers suggest that women are more empathic, have more intuition and creativity and are
increasingly more flexible and connective (Helgesen, 1990; Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Rosener,

1990). Critics of the transformational research (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Billing & Alvesson, 2000) suggest that this avenue of research confines women to a more stereotypical caring aspect. The difference literature reifies the attributions of stereotypical difference and thus entrenches dominant perspectives. "At the collective level a correspondence always exists between the cultural ideal of masculinity and the form of masculinity visible among those who hold institutional power" (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1129).

What undergirds these two lines of inquiry is actionable solutions. In hopes of anchoring action, research has described a male culture that is competitive and emotionally devoid (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Cockburn, 1991; Maddox & Parkin, 1993), a culture in which women are judged more harshly than men (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992; M. K. Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Wajcman, 1998; Warning & Buchanan, 2009) and a culture which has resisted diversity (Sealy & Singh, 2010; Wajcman, 1998). Research would lead women to comply with masculine norms and cultures in hopes of succeeding. The literature has also explicated the correlation between masculine hegemony and what is deemed neutral good management practices (Alvesson, 1998; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Kerfoot & Knights, 1993, 1998).

The masculinity studies (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011) have highlighted the alignment between masculine hegemony and management processes with ultimate goals of control and power (Kerfoot & Knights, 1993, 1998). Dominant masculinity has been embedded in the unquestioned routines and practices of management. Indeed, management itself was born out of positivism, scientific rigor, and a desire for control. Furthermore, Höpfl (2014) suggests that "monitoring, which as an activity has become increasingly prevalent in organizations in the last twenty or so years, is fundamentally about deference to the phallus" (p. 98). Masculinity

research has shown that because of these taken for granted norms, men garner more senior

positions, have more formal and informal power, enjoy security in employment, are

economically better compensated, have more role models, experience less stress, and have not

encountered discrimination or prejudice (Alvesson & Billing, 2009; Broadbridge & Simpson,

2011; Calas & Smircich, 1996; Catalyst, 2012; Sealy & Singh, 2010). The onslaught of

technology has expanded concepts of control. Simpson and Lewis (2012) suggest that the

masculine culture not only serves to disenfranchise women, but to disenfranchise

non-homogenous members, for example, homosexuals.

Recent research indicates that subsequent organizational action plans predicated on

research findings have not rendered gender neutral organizational cultures, but gender divisions

have been intensified as masculine power has been threatened. Exemplified by the recent

financial crisis, heroic and excessive masculinity have pervaded organizations (Broadbridge &

Simpson, 2011; Mavin, 2008; National Council for Research on Women, 2010). Metcalfe and

Linstead (2003) suggest that men have reclaimed some feminine organizational domains such as

collaborative and interpersonal aspects of team building and replaced them with overt in-group

competitiveness and long hours. Additionally, researchers suggest that formerly feminized

sectors of the economy such as the service/caring sectors have seen an influx of masculine

control:

> Managerialist discourses of targets, accountability and control, culturally coded
> masculinity . . . have been found to drive many practices in the "feminized" service and
> caring professions . . . suggestive of a re-masculinization of emotional labour skills.
> (Lewis & Simpson, 2007, p. 13)

Thus, as Korczynski (2001) suggests, the emotional labor of front line service workers

such as in call centers (also in retailing and hospitality) is being harnessed and controlled by

management through masculine practices involving targets, observation systems, and remote monitoring in order to deliver quality service.

Researchers have also posited that work family conflict provides an additional vignette of difference between women and men (J. M. Martin, 1993). This argument renders women less mobile and with less time to invest in career (M. J. Davidson & Burke, 2000). This also translates to less investment in social capital (Eagly & Carli, 2007) and higher levels of stress than male counterparts (M. J. Davidson & Burke, 2000; Guillaume & Pochic, 2009). Additionally, the notion of work-family conflict brings the role of motherhood into the identity of professional as spillover. The work-family narrative has also fostered discourses of choice (L. M. Roth, 2007; Zahidi & Ibarra, 2010). As the demands for longer work hours and questions of commitment to career escalate with seniority, women are often faced with managing great time demands in both spheres (Cha, 2013; Padavic & Ely, 2013).

The difference literature can also be divided between researchers who claim no difference (Butterfield & Grinnell, 1999; Kovalainen, 1990; Powell, 1999) and those that claim differences in gender stereotypes (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2008; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Helgesen, 1990; Lipman-Blumen, 1991; Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1990).

Although this wave of literature provided and continues to provide (Billing, 2011; Cabrera, 2009; Corby & Stanworth, 2009; Maxwell, 2009; Priola & Brannen, 2009; Vanderbroeck, 2010; Vinkenburg et al., 2011), a rich voice for women in the organizational context, research has migrated to a constructivist perspective of the organization as a gendered culture. This research seeks to understand gendered power dynamics and the dominance of masculinity in management practices.

Second Wave Research Concepts: Gendering Organizations

Recent research has assumed a social constructivist stance when analyzing gender seeing it as socially performed and fluid; it derives meaning from a system of social practices (Acker, 1992; Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; Lorber, 1994; Ridgeway & Correll, 2000; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and is embedded in both social complexity and the intersection of identities (Atewologun & Singh, 2010; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2010; Kamenou & Fearfull, 2006; Kerfoot & Knights, 1993, 1998; Whitehead, 2002). Kanter (1977) firmly believed that the organizational structure impacted the performance of gender through acts of assimilation. These studies predominately focus on the navigation of work identities. Indeed, gender research reflects an identity turn. Seminal research on identity (Collinson, 2003; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Wrzeniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003) opened the academic conversation that identity is enacted and context driven. More contemporary research (Anteby, 2013; Anthias, 2013; Ashcraft, 2012; Cooper & Thatcher, 2010; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Padavic & Ely, 2013; G. Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010; G. Petriglieri & Stein, 2012; Ramajaran & Reid, 2013) elucidates the intersections and experience of multiple identities and the broad cultural systems in which identities flourish.

"Many authors see issues of identity as potentially leading to significant theoretical and practical advances in the study of almost every aspect of organizational life" (Alvesson, 2010, p. 1994). Ely and Padavic (2007) concur; they view identity and identity work as the most promising avenue for change. However, Alvesson (2010) cautions against the fashion consciousness of identity studies within the discipline of organizational studies and advocates for moving away from Western concepts of self as unitary and separable from organizations and

social life to more complex open project orientations that Alvesson believes should be "taken seriously" (p. 195). My grounded theory study aimed to achieve this goal.

Further support is provided by Ely and Padavic (2007) who question the usefulness of historical sex difference literature and suggest that the link between sex difference and organizations is "gender identity, which provides the conceptual apparatus that can help make that link" (p. 1130) and that the interplay of internal and external forces determine identity and subsequent organizational behavior.

> We argue that researchers interested in sex differences should draw more heavily on the construct of gender identity as negotiated in the context of organizations. This approach places our research agenda squarely at the meso level . . . because it connects organizational features representing the macro level with individual gender identity representing the micro level. Onto this research agenda we map the operation of power as one key process that links these levels. Ultimately, our purpose is to generate strong theory. (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1132)

Billing and Alvesson (2014) also question the usefulness of gender difference research in that the phenomena of difference is difficult to measure, is highly dependent on the subtleties of context, and is often not transferable. Grounded theory moves away from the reductive difference framework of previous research and offers the utility of understanding complex social processes. Additionally, the abductive nature of grounded theory is data driven toward theory building as opposed to hypothesis driven research. Finally, the use of situational analysis brought into this study human and non-human forces on macro, meso, and micro levels in lieu of one dimension or context.

Gender identity is further explored through the lens of intersectionality. Intersectionality is proclaimed as a primary and one of the most influential contributions to feminist scholarship. Based in critical race and feminist theory, Crenshaw's (1989) seminal articles "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine,

Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," followed by "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality , Identity, Politics and Violence against Women of Color" (1991), opened the debate and created a framework for exploring the multiplicity and intersectionality of identities, especially as they pertain to race and gender.

The debate has ensued around the utility of concepts of intersectionality in research. Shields (2008) advocates for urgency of incorporating intersectionality worldviews into research agendas:

> Intersectionality has consequences for how social issues are construed and the construction of systematic explanation, including empirical strategies with a foundation in scientific method. Bograd (1999), for example, describes how focusing on gender alone as the central issue in domestic violence hindered theory development and empirical research. In another vein, Burman (2005) shows how prevailing research approaches to cultural psychology, such as multiculturality, each in their own way marginalize or erase gender. (p. 309)

Anthias (2013), J. W. Scott (2010), and Yuval-Davis (2006) discuss the usefulness of intersectionality as a move away from additive approaches towards a conceptualization of mutually constitutive framework and posit specific levels of social divisional hierarchies at which intersectionality is an asset. Arguing that the qualities of ambiguity and open-endedness bode well for intersectionality, Bilge (2010), Choo and Ferree (2010), and Davis (2008) support it as an integral to feminist theory; on the other hand Azmitia, Syed, and Radmacher (2008) explore how intersecting identities unfold over time and dictate the need for cross-contexts consideration. Bowleg (2012), Carastathis (2008), and Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008), each explore identity experienced by multiple subordinated identities as intersectional invisibility. Walby, Armstrong, and Strid (2012) and Boogaard and Roggeband (2010) disentangle intersectionality debates around the use of categories, the balance between stability and fluidity of identities, and the ideas of visibility in mutual shaping and mutual constitution of inequities.

In her best practices guide to intersectional research, L. R. Warner (2008) endorses the

use of situational analysis as a tool for studying intersectionality:

> Researchers in psychology have largely considered identity as a stable group of traits, which has kept them from being able to take advantage of the ways that couching identity within social structural contexts can facilitate the research process. (p. 462)

Also advocating for the use of qualitative methodologies, MacKinnon (2013) suggests

using grounded theory to ferret out the experience of intersectionality.

> That the location of departure and return for the analysis is on the ground, with the experience of a specific group, this group in particular, and not in universal generalizations or in classifications of abstractions in the clouds, even ones as potentially potent as race, and sex, is the point. Thus, capturing the synergistic relation between inequalities as grounded in the lived experiences of hierarchy is changing not only what people think about inequality but the way they think. (p. 1028)

The debates also include a broadening of the applications of the intersectional framework

in research. Studies by Mehrotra (2010) and Haq (2013) move the intersectionality conversation

away from American-centric identities of race, gender, and class to include sexuality, ability,

migration, colonization, caste, marital status and ethnicity. Mohanty (2013) discusses the effects

of neoliberalism on feminist scholarship, suggesting that "we need to re-center the notion that

there are no locals and globals, only locals in relation to various global processes" (p. 863). Patil

(2013) takes a transnational approach to intersectionality. Verloo (2006) addresses the politics

and policies that affect groups with multiple subordinated identities while Mattsson (2014)

argues for the use of intersectionality to provide the critical reflection aspect of anti-oppressive

social work. Carastathis (2008) and Veenstra (2013) explore identities as coalitions rather than

couched in the dominant feminist paradigm of identities as merging and additive. In their

studies, Carbado (2013), Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz (2013), and L. R. Warner and Shields

(2013) ask scholars to push theoretical boundaries when using intersectionality. Arguing for the

use of intersectionality in work-life research, Ozbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, and Bell (2011) state:

"In order to transcend the blind spots in positivist and critical work-life research, the review argues the case for an intersectional approach which captures the changing realities of family and workforce through the lens of diversity and intersectionality" (p. 177).

Some of those debates on intersectionality address issues of power. To examine the intricate relationships between identity and power, Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) and Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013) advocate for intersectionality as a social movement catalyst. Spade (2013) contends that social movement demands aspiring from intersectional research cannot be realized by the "technologies of racialized-gendered population control" (p. 1047). Tomlinson (2013) cautions scholars that "writing is a quintessential social act" (p. 1012) and that intersectionality is a matter not of identity, but power

Although identity has been greatly explored in extant literature, there remains a dearth in research that explores the multidimensionality of identity and the organizational context (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013; Miscenko & Day, 2015; Padavic & Ely, 2013; Ramajaran & Reid, 2013; Ramarajan, 2014; L. Roberts & Creary, 2013; Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher, & Nkomo, 2016). Ramarajan and Reid (2013) ask: "How much of our self is defined by work?" (p. 621), but they restrict their analysis to how nonwork identities impact work identities and do not explore the real complexities and experience of wholeness in identity. Their analysis and subsequent conceptual model only serves to reify the binary of the work identity. However, Ramarajan and Reid (2013) implore:

> We argue for an extension of the nomological net of scholarship on work and identity to include the study of nonwork identities. Management scholarship on organizational and occupational control of identities has largely focused on the control and "regulations of organization based identities" . . . Our model suggests that the control of work identities may be understood to proceed alongside the control of nonwork identities . . . our theory suggests that these processes are mutually constitutive such that people's construction of a work identity requires managing nonwork identities in a particular way with critical work-related consequences. (p. 636)

Padavic and Ely (2013) take a psychodynamic system perspective to suggest that organizations continue to use the work-family narrative as a social defense for actual debilitating work structures such as overwork "to protect members from having to confront disturbing emotions stemming from internal psychological conflicts produced by the nature of work" (p. 1). The perpetuation of the work-family narrative allows organizational members to project women as problematic and men as successful without confronting the core problems: structural work impediments. Padavic and Ely (2013) observe,

> Sustain ition requires support and not receiving it is demoralizing, ironically making it easier for ambitious women to ratchet back or leave. . . . they reach this accommodation by splitting off their professional ambition, projecting it onto men, and identifying instead with the emotional bonds of parenthood. (p. 13).

While Padavic and Ely's (2013) study takes a holistic approach to the experience of women—not only in leadership positions, but also at various levels of the organization—the psychodynamic systems perspective theory is induced from interview data collected during a consulting engagement. The researchers abductively move between interview data and analysis:

> Our research is both inductive and deductive. We did not enter our research site with a hypothesis about the organization's social defenses. Rather, we arrived at it over time, inductively, upon observing a series of disconnects at several levels as we collected data, analyzed it, and provided feedback. Upon observing these disconnects, we proceeded deductively by taking a psychodynamic systems perspective on our data to further develop the analysis. (Padavic & Ely, 2013, p. 2)

The research analysis by Padavic and Ely (2013) prompts unanswered questions such as the following: Were other perspectives considered or applied? What rationale justifies selecting the psychodynamic systems perspective over other perspectives? The psychodynamic systems perspective has been popularized by Jennifer and Gianpiero Petriglieri, and Mark Stein (G. Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010; G. Petriglieri & Stein, 2012; J. Petriglieri, 2011). The lack of

transparency in the application of the psychodynamic systems perspective could lead one to speculate about this choice.

A. J. Hodges and Park (2013) explore identities of parent versus professional as oppositional identities. The premise for their study is that of a need to belong:

> A primary human motivation is the need to view the self positively, to establish and maintain a sense of the self as a competent, capable, good and moral individual . . . Some argue that this need exists in the service of a larger goal, that is, the need to belong, to feel that one is an accepted, valued and included member of the social world. (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013, p. 193)

A. J. Hodges and Park (2013) seek to understand the processes undergirding emergent identity conflict experienced by professional women. Specifically, the researchers looked at how the experience of identity is facilitated by self-associations. In a four-part randomized sample study, they deduced that when women experience identities as oppositional—which most professional women do given the demands to an ideal mother and an ideal worker—a work-related failure will create a shift to the parent identity. Ironically, this was more pronounced for women who experienced these identities optimistically and as equally manageable. However, when men experienced a work-related failure, self-associations remained shifted toward the professional identity. Women have experienced increased expectations for cultivating and maintaining a professional identity, but stereotypes regarding the mother/parent identity have not decreased and are in conflict with the requirements of the professional identity. "The mother is responsible for making the family run. These two roles—professional and mom —remain relatively discrete and non-overlapping in content so that women can "have it all" but that requires that they "do it all" (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013, p. 211). Men do not experience the same degree of role conflict because being an ideal father is more in harmony with being an ideal worker. Men experience more overlap in self-association of these two

spheres. This study also elucidates that the cognitive switching mechanisms experienced by

professional women depletes working memory or executive function resources. Furthermore, A.

J. Hodges and Park note:

> Perceived control over one's various self-aspects importantly moderates the relationship
> between self-complexity and well-being . . . the experience of different selves can be
> difficult for the individual, requiring both the exertion of mental energy to manage these
> and resulting in negative mental health outcomes. (p. 212)

Consistent with the research findings of Dasgupta (2011) and Stout, Dasgupta,

Hunsinger, and McManus (2011), A. J. Hodges and Park (2013) suggest that the identity of

professional and mother might become more facilitative and less oppositional if professional

women had role models from which to model self-perceptions. The aforementioned research

substantiates this study in three primary ways: first, in calling for more women in leadership

positions with facilitative identities so that younger women can formulate facilitative future

selves; second, in noting that understandings of the self are constituted though complex

interpersonal processes that are integrally connected to context, situations, and relationships: and

third, in posing the idea that professional needs be broadened to be less than one-dimensional as

stated by A. J. Hodges and Park (2013): "And perhaps most importantly, the prototype of the

ideal professional needs to be broadened to include the possibility of someone who manages to

take care of work even with other important commitments on his or her plate" (p. 213).

Bringing the Early Literature Review Into the Present Study

Since 2014, a predominant identity line of inquiry has focused on understanding how

identity is expressed and constrained by the organization, or the "doing" of gender. This work

elucidates the narrow band of performativity that women who lead must exhibit to survive in the

organizational environment still very much entrenched in masculine hegemony. Mavin and

Grandy (2016b) suggest that:

Women elite leaders live within paradox and negotiate at least two cultures . . . that of the elite leader role which is inherently masculine and where they are "sometimes privileged" (Atewologun & Sealy, 2014, p. 433), and the wider societal culture where they are socially disadvantaged and particular notions of 'respectable' femininity are expected . . . We offer a theory of *respectable business femininity* as a discursive and relational process that explains the tensions women elite leaders can experience at the nexus of being sometimes privileged, embedded notions of embodied leadership as masculine, and wider expectations of acceptable embodied femininity. (pp. 379–380)

Mavin and Grandy (2016a) have also taken an intra-gender perspective in this line of inquiry to develop a theory of abject appearance. They postulate that the body remains a site of identity work and that elite women leaders often "transgress boundaries associated with elite leader positions to negotiate embodied leadership" (p. 1117). This provides another invisible barrier for women to navigate to the top.

Bierema (2016) discusses the double bind as they advance into leadership between the expectations of the "'ideal' (male) worker" (p. 119) and their own identities and experiences. Sorrentino and Augoustinos (2016) explore the discursive management of gender at the intersectional margins: "I don't view myself as a woman politician, I view myself as a politician who's a woman" (p. 385). Unlike men, women in leadership roles must constantly tactically manage gender identity.

Although several of the contributions discussed here underscore the psychological stress that the identity process, including what its ambiguity wreaks on women, few address the ramifications of this stress. Karelaia and Guillen (2014) found that holding a positive social gender identity reduced stress and increased women's motivations to lead while Kinias and Kim (2012) explore cross cultural tolerance of gender inequality.

Gendering organizations research has stretched not only toward avenues of identity, but also toward diversity. Diverse topics include flexibility in organizations (Ierodiakonou & Stavrou, 2011; Swan & Fox, 2009); women in international management (Linehan & Walsh,

2001); and the glass cliff (Adams, Gupta, & Leeth, 2009; A. Cook & Glass, 2014a; Haslam,

Ryan, Kulich, Trojanowski, & Atkins, 2010; Kulich, Lorenzi-Cioldi, Iacoviello, Faniko, & Ryan,

2015; Nadler & Bailey, 2015; M. K. Ryan & Haslam, 2005; M. K. Ryan et al., 2015).

Recent forays in academic research have followed the rise in women exiting the

corporate arena to explore possibilities of entrepreneurialism (Bullough & Sully de Luque, 2014;

Bullough, Sully de Luque, Abdelezar, & Helm, 2015; Goltz, Buche, & Pathak, 2015; Harrison,

Leitch, McAdam, 2015; Terjesen, Bosma, & Stam, 2015; Weidenfeller, 2012; Yousafzai, Saeed,

& Muffato, 2015). The increase in female entrepreneurs has been driven by women of color.

Margot Dorfman, CEO of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce notes:

> We attribute the growth in women-owned firms to lack of fair pay, fair promotion, and
> family-friendly policies found in corporate America. Women of color, when you look at
> the statistics, are impacted more significantly by all the negative factors that women face.
> It's not surprising that they've chosen to invest in themselves. (Haimeri, 2015, para. 5)

The extant bodies of literature in the gender in organizations research and the gendering

organizations literature have provided touchstones toward understanding the experience of

women in the organizational context but have lacked the power of change. What directions

should future research take? What will be the third wave in the literature?

Where does the literature map leave women? Calas et al. (2014) ask a most relevant

question: "Where does this leave women?" (p. 20), as they are certainly still seeking leadership

positions. It has been suggested that gender in management research occupies a "precarious

positioning within academe" (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p. 475), but it is not dead. One

only has to look, for example, at the June 2014 issue of *Harvard Business Review* (Heath et al.,

2014) to acknowledge that research on the gender difference, or gender in management, is still

publishable. Additionally, issues of gender appear selectively in the literature including

leadership, human resource management, and organizational behavior with an absence in areas

of finance, production, and marketing (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). Why is this the case? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), women comprised 61% of the banking and related industries, 55.3% of financial managers, and 62.1% of accountants and auditors. Surely the critical mass of women in the financial markets justifies a need for gender research. Do the disciplines of leadership, human resources and organizational behavior correlate with psychological arenas of female ghettos? Linstead and Brewis (2004) have labeled human resource management functions as *female ghettos* "because they are widely understood to have particularly well-developed people skills, to be more intuitive, sympathetic and more effective communicators than men" (p. 75).

The future is female. Furthering the feminization of organizational culture thesis, or feminine as advantage discourse, academics and organizational leaders may deduce that the problem has been solved. Researchers have claimed a "de-masculinization" of leadership (Alvesson, 2013; Elsesser & Lever, 2011). Some suggest that there is female advantage under certain circumstances (Post, 2015). The phrase "the future is female" has appeared in numerous articles (e.g., Boseley, 2009; Craven, 2009; C. Davidson, 2007; Sawer & Henry, 2008) and leads to beliefs that flatter organizational hierarchies where relational leadership, shared leadership and collaboration are valuable assets can be enhanced with feminine leadership. "Such visions promote the view that women have the right capabilities and mindset for the modern business world" (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p. 475). This is particularly the case with Generation Y women who believe gender inequity to be their parents' issue. When confronted by Kelan, Gratton, Mah, and Walker (2009) with the lack of women in leadership positions in their respective organizations, Generation Y women justified this dearth as lack of ambition. "This poses specific challenges for gender and management research . . . positioned as old fashioned

and redundant in a world where, despite evidence to the contrary, gender issues are perceived to have been solved" (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p. 475). The lack of organization around women's issues, or society's issues, is problematic.

Merit and choice. Men and women espouse discourses of merit and choice. Such discourses ignore organizational barriers and oppressive systems and reduce the unit of analyses to the individual level (Kuperberg & Stone, 2008; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998; Simpson et al., 2010). Meritocracy is an ideal deeply embedded in American culture. A system based in merit suggests a degree of fairness and sameness, one in which women and minorities can excel. However, those in power determine the criteria for promotion and success, and these criteria are often biased (Bagihole & Goode, 2001; Lewis & Simpson, 2010b; Simpson et al., 2010). "This supports Wajcman's (1998) notion of contemporary patriarchy, i.e., the subordination of women within a framework of equality . . . a subordination based on the concealment of unequal outcomes and which can be difficult to detect" (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p. 477). Evidence of the lack of merit in organizational systems has not diffused the value or rhetoric of merit in our culture (Krefting, 2009). Women continue to be absent from boards of directors as well as organizational leadership positions (Ahmansson & Ohlund, 2008; Hakim, 2000; L. M. Martin, Warren-Smith, Scott, & Roper, 2008; Vinnicombe, Sealy, Graham, & Doldor, 2010). Women continue to believe in systems of merit and attribute lack of advancement to choice (Anderson, Vinnicombe, & Singh, 2010; Lewis & Simpson, 2010a; McRobbie, 2009). They appear to assimilate to these discourses rather than advertise disadvantage.

Intersectionality. The burgeoning discipline of intersectionality poses to dilute gender in management research (Adib & Guerrier, 2003; Atewologun & Singh, 2010; Holvino, 2010; Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). While intersectionality

furthers the evolutionary concept of gender, it adds to the complexity of understanding and social justice. Marshall (1995) suggests that this complexity "dilutes the standpoint of women" (p. S63), and, citing Bordo (1990), Broadridge and Simpson (2011) are concerned that "gender is abandoned in favour of 'endless difference,' undermining the possibility of a single coherent theory and politics" (p. 476). This leaves women in an intersectional bind. Can gender be essentialized in research pursuits in the name of results? Can researchers simply apply basic mathematical concepts to gender research and assure women of color that making the status of women better will naturally elevate their status?

Research indicates that women of color have a different organizational experience (Berdahl & Min, 2012; Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Hall et al., 2012; Landrine, 1985; Millard & Grant, 2006). Rosette, Koval, Ma and Livingston (2016) explored intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties and found that race matters:

> There are distinct stereotypes associated with each group and distinct consequences for women leaders from each of these subgroups of women. Simply stated, Black women are perceived as being dominant but not competent. Asian American women are perceived as being competent but passive. (p. 440)

White women are viewed as more communal and fall in the middle of spectrum. Therefore, Asian women, and White women to a lesser extent, suffer the most backlash for agentic behavior, with Black women experience the least. This cycle is reversed for agentic deficiencies. While stereotypes for Asian American women as competent and hard-working, may bode well for them as agentic, stereotypes around passiveness are perceived as low in the leader recognition process. Asian American women are deemed more feminine than White women and least likely to be selected for leadership positions (Berdahl & Min, 2012). Rosette and Livingston (2012) discovered that Black female leaders are penalized more severely for mistakes than Black men or White women. The Black woman suffers stereotyping as angry,

aggressive and masculinized (Pratt, 2012; Tonnesen, 2013; Townsend, Thomas, Neilands, &

Jackson, 2010; Walley-Jean, 2009). Black females tend to go unnoticed because they are

non-prototypical for both race and gender (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Concurrently, Black females

have been stereotyped as hyper-sexed and labeled as "Jezebels" (Harris-Perry, 2011, p. 33).

This research reflects that role congruency (Eagly & Karau, 2002), lack of fit (Heilman &

Kram, 1983) and conflated gendered and racial expectations must be constantly assessed and

negotiated. Each ethnicity carries unique stereotype threats that must be managed.

The role of gender. Ely and Padavic (2007) suggest that gender identity can be the

conceptual link between organizational systems and systems of gender.

> Inconsistency in culturally produced messages creates space for individual choice. To
> fail to acknowledge humans' ability to act in the face of seemingly totalizing pressures is
> to view social life "as though Mr. Patriarchy himself . . . moved in and ordered men and
> in particular, women around" (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p. 91). (Ely & Padavic, 2007,
> p. 1130)

Identity is born of interaction. Identity is constituted through experience (J. Scott, 1992).

However, identity can also trigger bias study responses. If a social identity such as professional

woman or mother is engaged at the onset of data collection or interviewing, that identity

becomes more salient (Haslam, 2004) and data collection may reflect the engagement of that role

over others.

The breadth of diversity in the gendering organizations research is positive if one is

simply knowledge seeking, but it serves to distract what might be at the core of the problem of

underrepresentation and stagnation of women in leadership roles. It lacks coherence,

connectivity, depth, and transformational theory building capacity.

> One may expect robust empirical studies to come up with clear answers on issues around
> women and leadership. But careful consideration of the difficulties indicates that one
> should not expect too much of research in terms of clear-cut evidence offering final, or
> perhaps even preliminary truths. . . . Measuring subtle phenomena not following law-like

patterns as much as bearing strong imprints of discourses, meaning, and (other) social construction processes is not so easy or necessarily a very sensible project . . . More qualitatively rich studies . . . in-depth interviews and ethnographies . . . are potentially more valuable. (Billing & Alvesson, 2014, p. 205)

Furthermore, gender research language such as leadership, women, and style is used with universal meanings but inhibit very unstable, context driven and interpretative realities (Alvesson, 1996; Billing & Alvesson, 2014; Calas & Smircich, 1991; Chia, 1995). For example, self-report quantitatively-driven survey studies, as well as qualitative studies, elicit data that reflect these universal meanings. This often results in a gap between data collected and actual and observable behavior (Cliff, Langton & Aldrich., 2005).

There is a gap between progressive gendering organizational research and organizational practice (Padavic & Ely, 2013). Diversity programs and work-family policies have been lauded as the fix for gender underrepresentation in organizational hierarchies. Organizations foster discourses of equitable gender success through the funding and existence of such programs, yet these programs have failed to yield results. Additionally, some researchers have suggested that women's leadership programs are the answer to the ills of underrepresentation (Ely et al., 2011). While these researchers acknowledge the inequities of the system, they come back to the individual as the site of change.

The literature reflects binary research assumptions. Specifically, the gender in management research and the gendering organizations literature, dissect gender along work and non-work categories. The work-family narrative is a primary example of binary thinking. There is no identity fluidity. There is little discussion of intersectionality unless it pertains to intersections of gender and race. There is little discussion of non-work versus work identity intersectionality. I propose that for women in the United States work and the Culture of Work could be construed intersectionally as an axis of oppression equitable in theory to any categories

historically in the intersectionality literature. There are a few articles that address the embodiment of gender or the intersections of management and pregnancy (Gatrell, 2011).

Few researchers (Cotter, England, & Hermsen, 2008; England, 2010, Huffman et al., 2008; Padavic & Ely, 2013) address external structural elements in the "doing [of] gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125) outright, but have expressed this concept through identity research. Leadership can be greatly influenced by profit maximization, capitalism, and increased global competitiveness. For example, Morley and Crossouard (2015) explore the value systems of overt competitiveness and increased performativity imposed by a neoliberalized global economy on higher education in South Asia and the detriment those systems are to women's leadership. Internal structures such as critical mass or in-group dynamics may influence the performance of gender (Ely, 1995; Kanter, 1977). Indeed, even marriage trends are highly correlated with the economy (Carbone & Cahn, 2014).

Cutting edge American gender scholars are less published in journals designated solely as gendered focused publications. The Academy of Management has organized a women in management division and there are a number of American held gender journals, for example, *Sex Roles, Gender & Society, Psychology of Women Quarterly*. However, leading European gender researchers publish in both. It could be argued that most journals have an international presence rendering this analysis moot. It could also be argued that some of the elite American gender researchers prefer to publish in high impact management journals (Ely et al., 2011; Ely, Stone, & Ammerman, 2014; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Furthermore, in many research situations, only high impact journals are included in a literature review. It could also be argued that these researchers occupy faculty positions in business schools and research topics have more affinity with gender as it is enacted within the context of the organization. But

Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson remain well-published in both high impact and gender focused journals. Although high impact journals appear to be an optimal publishing choice, how is gender research influenced by the selection of this publishing route? Is American gender research diluted by and controlled by what high impact journals will publish? Do emergent theoretical frameworks get published and debated? Is American research too connected to the economics and politics of consulting work?

Kumra, Simpson, and Burke (2014) posit that business schools in the United States have the greatest influence on gender research and thus have negatively impacted progress because they focus on changing women and/or the neutrality of gender in the workplace. Additionally, they fear that this hegemony will strengthen as United States business schools retain more global presence.

> Epistemologically, these approaches stem from sociological theories of the 1970s, including role theory, when functionalism and positivism dominated scholarship in the USA. As well, the strong presence of psychological perspectives in the US business schools, supporting the emergence of organizational behavior as a subdiscipline during the 1950s and 1960s, continues to influence explanations for 'sex-gender differences' in organizational outcomes while seldom mentioning 'inequality'. Theorizing and research from these perspectives emphasize neutrality and generalizability, with findings to be translatable into actionable practices based on cognitions, as if remedies could be located inside the heads of people. (Calas et al., 2014, p. 23)

Psychological and sociological perspectives. The fixation with psychological and sociological perspectives suggests that solutions can be found through locating some pathology, or gender as a disease model. Indeed, the notion to move away from the disease model has been the catalyst of positive psychology. Organizational sociologists Castilla (2012), Bielby (2012), and Madden (2012) are exceptions to the sex difference/gender neutral literature as they connect macro organizational pressures with individual performance and behavior.

Institutional gender gap explanations. A research agenda of explaining gender difference exists in the literature at the institutional, or systems level. The intent of this research is to show that if you can diagnose the problem at the individual vis-a-vis institutional level, it can be fixed. This research moves away from earlier research where the problem and thus the resolution lay strictly with the individual. For example, Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) suggest that women fail to accumulate critical career capital at societal, organizational and individual levels over the course of career to catapult them into leadership positions. Case and Oetama-Paul (2015) suggest that gender difference in brain biology produces different styles of communication within the organization which impacts paths to leadership. Several studies (Chaudhuri, Cruickshank, & Sbaj, 2015; Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Hoption, 2015; Kaiser & Wallace, 2016; Krishnan, 2009; Mendez & Busenbark, 2015; Powell & Butterfield, 2015; Van Vugt & Grabo, 2015) address differences in behavior to explain the gender leadership gap. Numerous studies focused on differences in organizational behavior created by pervasive stereotypes and conflicts with role congruity (Baker, Larson, & Surapaneni, 2016; Elsesser & Lever, 2011; Hogarth, Karelaia, & Trujillo, 2012; Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2014; Javidan, Bullough, & Dibble, 2016; Lemoine, Aggarwal, & Steed, 2016; Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b; Mensi-Klarbach, 2014; Monzani, Hernandez-Bark, van Dick, & Peiro, 2015; Munoz-Bullon, 2010; Orser & Leck, 2010; Preece & Stoddard, 2015; Ren & Zhu, 2010; Rossette, Meuller, & Lebel, 2015; Warning & Buchanan, 2009). Two areas of stereotyping received more academic emphasis: the display of emotions (Brescoll, 2016; Fischbach, Lichtenthaler, & Hortsma, 2015) and of dominance (L. G. Chin, 2016; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Schuh et al., 2014, Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016). Brescoll (2016) elucidates a synergy between displays of emotion and dominance as a combined stereotypical threat to women's leadership:

Gender-emotion stereotypes create two complex minefields that female, but not male, leaders have to navigate in order to be successful: (1) identifying how much emotion should be displayed and (2) identifying what kind of emotions should be displayed. Specifically, females can be penalized for even minor or moderate displays of emotion, especially when the emotion conveys dominance (e.g., anger or pride). (p. 415)

M. J. Williams and Tiedens (2016) provided a meta-analysis of backlash penalties for dominant behaviors.

Adding value. One trend in gender research is to test the value of women in the leadership context (Bansak, Graham, & Zebedee, 2011; Eagly, 2016; Ellwood & Garcia-Lacalle, 2015; Gartzia & Baniandres, 2016; Ho, Li, Kinsun, & Zhang, 2015; Isidro & Sobral, 2015; Lanaj & Hollenbeck, 2015; Opstrup & Villadsen, 2015; Palvia, E. Vahamaa, & S. Vahamaa, 2015; Perryman, Fermando, & Tripathy, 2016; Post & Bryon, 2015; Ruiz-Jimeez, Fuentes-Fuentes, & Ruiz-Arroyo, 2016). Certainly, if value is added, more resources may be deployed to secure diverse organizational contexts. Firm performance is often the measurement of value.

Testing theories and practice. Several recent academic contributions test theories of diversity and practice. Themes such as testing for resolution in the gender wage gap (Srivastava & Sherman, 2015); board diversity (A. Cook & Glass, 2015); work-life practices (Kalysh, Kulik, & Perera, 2016); quotas and targets (Sojo, Wood, Wood, & Wheeler, 2016); sustainability of gender change (Eriksson-Zetterqiust, 2016); women's networks (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Sullivan, 2011); and the pipeline theory (Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2006). A. Cook and Glass (2014b) also took an institutional perspective in testing three institutional level theories: the glass cliff, a metaphor coined by M. K. Ryan and Haslam (2005) to describe an organizational pattern where women are more likely than men to be appointed to top leadership positions in organizations that are struggling and may be at the brink of failure (Ashby, Ryan, & Haslam, 2007; M. K. Ryan &

Haslam, 2005; M. K. Ryan, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007), decision-maker diversity, and the savior effect, a metaphor that describes "the mechanisms that shape their post-promotion tenure" and "predicts that women will be granted less of an opportunity to prove their leadership capabilities compared to men, leading to significantly shorter tenures" (p. 93). They find little evidence that women are likely to be promoted in situations dictated by the glass cliff or the savior effect, but find that diversity "significantly impacts women's mobility and tenure" (p. 91).

Singular impediments. An additional gap in the literature can be found in the proclivity to elucidate barriers to women's leadership as singular impediments (England, 2010; Haveman & Beresford, 2012) without fully acknowledging the integration and co-production, and often mutually reinforcing nature of structural barriers, identity, social, and organizational processes. A few studies sought a multi-level framework (Leslie & Gelfand, 2008; Metz, 2009; Metz & Tharenou, 2001; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). However, these research attempts artificially impose the analytical framework. For example, Metz and Harzing (2009) investigate the relationship between organization size and dominance of male hierarchy as they relate to the psychosocial factors for women. Because of the self-report, regression analysis study design of this work, no additional intervening factors that may impede women's psychosocial capital, could be considered. One exception to the singular impediment research framework is a contribution by Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) in which they analyze barriers across macro, meso and micro levels of cross cultural organizations. "Most organizational approaches intended to support women only focus on the meso level. Yet focusing on those barriers will not be truly transformational, because the micro- and macro-level barriers remain" (p. 197). This leads Diehl and Dzubinski to argue that "organizations therefore need to develop strategies that extend

beyond the walls of the workplace to impact societal and personal perspectives on women"

(p. 199).

Diehl and Dzubinski's (2016) recommendations for further study were premised on Kolb,

Fletcher, Meyerson, Sands, and Ely's (2003) framework for promoting gender equity in

organizations and Swanson and Holton's (2009) sociotechnical change approach. While Diehl

and Dzuinski made plausible suggestions directed toward Kolb et al.'s "revise work culture"

frame (p. 13), including creating community partnerships and creating new organizational norms,

they lay the entire burden of change upon the organization.

Reviews of the literature on gender and leadership. Each review of the literature on

gender and leadership has been organized differently which convolutes progressive comparison,

action orientation, synthesis, and future research pursuits. These reviews include Terborg

(1977), Bartol (1978), Riger and Galligan (1980), Nieva and Gutek (1981), M. J. Davidson and

Burke (2000), Alimo-Metcalfe (2010), Broadbridge and Simpson (2011), and Powell (2014).

Powell (2014) asks:

> What have four decades of sex, gender and leadership research told us? Overall, these conclusions suggest that the playing field that constitutes the managerial ranks continues to be tilted in favour of men, despite evidence suggesting that women as a group are the superior leaders. (p. 262)

Powell (2014) argues for moving toward a research agenda that enhances the possibilities

that both sexes have opportunities to succeed. Indeed, Powell advocates with Bem (1978) in that

"behavior should have no gender" (Powell, 2014, p. 19), and neither should leadership.

Conclusion

Scholars are challenging the gender research status quo. They are asking for research

imbued with deep understanding around the issues of women in the workplace and women who

lead. Billings and Alvesson (2014) call for more "qualitatively rich studies . . . in-depth

interviews and ethnographies" (p. 206) but also advise of the vices inherent in these methods: activating one identity at the negation of another or considering that "many studies only consider women's viewpoints, which in interviews tend to be about their own positive values, ambitions, and acting and how males and masculine norms are sources of oppression" (p. 206). Hoyt (2010) proposes that the "researcher would be advised to take lessons from women who have successfully negotiated the labyrinth" (p. 493) and suggests that research be conducted in a way that will move gender roles and stereotypes toward parity in the private sphere. Blustein (2011) challenges researchers to join "together domains of life experience that are far more integrated in the natural flow of life than in existing vocational psychological theories" (p. 15). Broadbridge and Simpson (2011) suggest the current state of research and management is fraught with "gender denial" (p. 470) and that "a responsibility also lies in journals such as BJM to publicize outcomes, debates and emergent theoretical frames" (p. 478). Powell (2014) states that research should continue to track gender status, stereotypes, preferences, and behavior and the intersections of gender and leadership; but to date this information has not fixed the problem. Therefore, he advocates for research designed to address organizational gender inequalities. Kempster and Parry (2011) advocate: "When reflecting on Bryman's (2004) call for the qualitative research of leadership to be both contextualized and generative, we assert that a critical realist informed grounded theory approach is a useful underpinning framework to move us toward both of these goals" (p. 118). Ramarajan and Reid (2013) advocate for studies that embrace the fullness and complexity of the experience of identity: "We deliberately constructed a simplified model that traces how people negotiate a single nonwork identity: future scholars might complicate our model by considering multiple identities" (p. 637). Ely and Padavic (2007)

advocate for research that disrupts organizational social constructions of gender in the

workplace:

> In the spirit of Kilduff and Mehra's contention that "no method grants privileged access to truth" (1997: 458), we envision a research agenda that rigorously challenges convention wisdom about gender by drawing from the full repertoire of research methods, including field and laboratory, qualitative and quantitative, and inductive and deductive approaches. (p. 1138)

Recently, Padavic and Ely (2013) have explicated the pervasiveness of the organization

to maintain social defenses in the form of the work-family narrative that reinforces gendered

divisions of labor "allow an organization to hold together and pursue its task while at the same

time limiting its members' awareness" (p. 14). Padavic and Ely have pursued the organizational

disruption framework put forth in their work of 2007.

The present grounded theory study on the wholeness of experiences of women in

leadership positions, addresses many of the gaps in the literature and answers the challenges put

forward by seasoned gender researchers. This study is enhanced with situational analysis that

facilitated the discovery of macro, meso, and micro forces that impinge on the decisions women

in leadership make; it choreographed micro-interactions in their lives; and it lifted their voices as

empirical data, locating what Kempster and Parry (2011) called the "complex nexus of

influences" (p. 111).

In the next chapter I will make an argument that grounded theory methodology, informed

by dimensional analyses and situational analyses, was indeed a good fit for this study. I will

delineate the methodological path and include methodological turns as well as the rationale for

those decisions. I will conclude the next chapter with a discussion of ethical issues that

presented during the study.

Chapter III: Methodology

Grounded theory with situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) and dimensional analyses (Caron & Bowers, 2000; Schatzman, 1991; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) were used as research methods for this study. This methodology allowed the researcher to enter the lives of women who lead with the purpose of understanding, not just explaining, how their behavior is choreographed by the complex factors in their lives. Although only one question was crafted and articulated during the interview process with participants, the study was designed with the intent of answering the following research questions: How do women in leadership positions experience being a woman who leads? How do they create and consign meaning around their experiences? How do they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities? How do they experience the entanglement of macro, meso and micro societal factors? What are the relationships among those factors that they name as influential in their experience of leading? And most importantly, this study was designed to elevate not one component as problematic, but elucidate with interconnecting complexities all that is problematic. This study was designed to theorize how women in leadership positions engage in and negotiate the totality of their situation. These questions will be addressed in Chapters IV, V, and VI that present and discuss study findings.

This chapter will present the methodological foundation of grounded theory and will provide an overview of the implementation of this method to the study including processes and decisions that informed methodological turns. That will be followed with a discussion of sampling and interviewing processes and decisions followed by coding and conceptual processes for building the dimensional analysis. The dimensional analysis will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV. This chapter will then move to the data sources accessed for the situational analysis

and provide an overview of the map building processes involved in the analysis. Situational analysis findings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V. Chapter III will demonstrate that constructivist grounded theory provided the best methodological fit to pursue the discovery of this social experience and assimilated the best systematic methodological devices to both fragment and bring back together copious amounts of data in an exercise of theory building. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of ethical concerns.

Defending Methodological Fit

Grounded theory did not impose predetermined notions on this study, but rather allowed the voices of women to guide data collection, study decisions, dimensional and situational analyses and study conclusions. Adhering to the interpretative framework of standpoint secured the social justice underpinnings of the one objective of this research: to elucidate the imbalance of power. "To ignore power relations is simply to misread standpoint theory . . . its raison d'etre, its continuing salience, it's ability to explain social inequality" (Collins, 1997, p. 376). Constructivists value standpoint and situation. "Strauss carried this particular banner throughout his scientific career, noting that social organization was negotiated and processual, affected by a continual stream of contingencies, and always in the eye of the beholder" (Kearny, 2007, p. 130). Women's voices were deemed integral to an understanding of the studied phenomenon because participants have experiential knowledge that cannot be gleaned from other resources. Allowing the voices of women to speak to resolution was important to study design; otherwise this study would be guilty of extending the patriarchal paradigm. Indeed, each interview was concluded by asking the question: "Given your leadership position in the organization and your experience at this lofty level, what do you think will close the gender gap at the top?" Participants reciprocated by giving this research project strong voice; often bumping appointments and

meetings further into the day as we spoke so that they could commit more time to the interview process. All but two interviews eclipsed the hour set aside for interviewing with the longest lasting over three hours. Most interviews exceeded two hours. One participant talked for her entire commute home only ending the conversation when she arrived at her front door. One participant met me in the early hours of the morning so that we could talk before her busy day began. Several participants have emailed in the interim, eager for findings. Participants wanted to activate their voice and to carve out a space in the mountains of studies around the leadership gender gap. Grounded theory honors the reverence of their voice.

Grounded theory provided a framework for abductive thinking and theory building. Because there are so few women in leadership positions after 40 years of being in the workforce and many years of speculative theory around the gap, this phenomenon demands abductive thinking. While Reichertz (2007) points out that researchers cannot merely command abductive thinking, he argues that a study can be designed that invites such reasoning.

> Research is laid out in such a way that new hypotheses can and do appear at every level, that the interpretations of the data is not finalized at an early stage but that new codes, categories, and theories can be developed and redeveloped if necessary. If one takes a closer look at the work of Strauss and Strauss and Corbin to see whether there are methodological routines and practices within GT which favor the appearance of new hypotheses, much evidence can be found. (p. 224)

Do women need a theory derived from a grounded theory process to explain their underrepresentation in leadership positions? Charmaz (2006) suggests: "Interpretative theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied'' phenomenon. This type of theory assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as linked; trust as provisional and social life as processual" (p. 126). Constructivist grounded theory seeks to abstract understanding while most research is performed with a causation directive. In this study, participants asked for academic theory building that might move them toward gender

parity in the workplace. They were weary of the causation research with imperatives of personal change and they are weary of research that has not moved them closer to resolution. They don't need another fix; they need a theory for thriving:

> Therefore, theory generated from constructivists grounded theory seeks to understand *how* participants construct meaning and actions and then *why* they act in the ways that they do. Theory is generated for process, or patterns of action and interaction among social units. If focuses less on the individual. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 127)

This study reflects the philosophical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). The dimensional analysis provides understanding of how women who lead make sense of their situation; and the situational analysis objectively presents the situation and the commiserate commitments of the various situational actors within that situation. The merging of these analyses provides a fluid zone for theory building.

The assumptions and goals of grounded theory methodology and symbolic interactionism are aligned (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011; Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, & Usher, 2013). Grounded theory aligns with symbolic interactionism ontologically in that both view realities to exist through shared symbolic meanings (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory share the same epistemological foundations in recognizing that knowledge is formed interactively in the natural field; and that methodological design should be tailored to discover the social experience through interaction between the researcher and participant in the context of interest (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Coding and constant comparative canons. Given the copious amount of data collected throughout the research process, coding provided a systematic way to both fragment and aggregate the data across interviews and resources. The activity of coding was distributed among a coding team of three to triangulate the coding process and to bring multiple

perspectives to the meaning making process. Coding provided a system to harness emergent concepts and a benchmark for theoretical saturation.

The grounded theory canon of constant comparison provided a clef to orchestrate participant voices and to choreograph patterns in the coding and discuss their potency. Performing comparative analysis throughout this research process cultivated structural boundaries for theory generation and broadened its ability to explain the phenomena of women who lead; or it's transferability. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that categories are "conceptual elements of a theory" (p. 36). A category illuminates the different dimensions at play and allows for categorical integration. Incidents, and therefore coding and categorical properties, became nuanced. Engaging in constant comparison of the conceptual categories kept the researcher and the team both intellectually and emotionally coupled with the data and served as a theoretical co-creative process (Charmaz 2006, 2009; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012); the processes of the methodology melded with the processes of the mind.

Cultivating the habit of comparative analysis also allowed the researcher to go forward with emergent concepts in pocket into subsequent interviews; to test them and to elicit participant elaboration in real time. Comparative analysis provided the analytic motion for abductive thinking and theory building.

Situational and dimensional analyses. The methodological bookends of situational analysis for an outward gaze, and dimensional analysis for an inward depth, assisted in answering the overarching research question "what all is involved here?" (Schatzman, 1991, p. 310). What all is involved, is the most critical aspect of this research study because the study did not seek to fragment the lived experiences of women, but instead, honor its complexity, wholeness and fluidity. Indeed grounded theory was born out of a disdain for data reduction:

Glaser saw the practical relevance and value in theory generation and recognized the immense waste of resources in the vast caches of untapped empirical data collected at schools like Columbia as preparatory to undertaking large scale survey work. Observing Lazarsfeld's index formation process, Glaser saw the stripped down, summing up quality as a loss. (Holton, 2011, p. 207)

Previous research regarding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions has been stripped down and summed up. Situational analysis and dimensional analysis provided coordinates from which to attend to the multiple perspectives and the symbolic interactions that occur in the studied phenomena. Theory generated from these analyses seeks to understand how participants construct meaning and actions and then why they act in the ways that they do. This study defines patterns of action and interaction among social units. It focuses less on the individual and more on the "between-ness" (Star, 2007, p. 90) in the world. This study attempts to move away from "fix the woman" research and look to iterative patterns of social action for justice.

Given the large scope and exploratory purpose of this study, grounded theory provided the best methodological tools to accomplish the research task. Given the scope, performing the situational analysis provided challenges. In the following section, the research journey will be discussed.

Study Design

This section delineates the design of this study including purposeful sampling and theoretical sampling decisions, interviewing, coding, coding team design, data analysis processes, memoing, and concluding with situational and dimensional analyses.

Data for this research study were collected from three primary resources: in-depth, unstructured interviews with women who lead; artifacts that were relevant to the purposeful and theoretical sample populations including public documents and reports, government reports,

nonprofit research, organizational websites, internet blogs, media outlets, internal organizational documents and economic data; and interviews with field experts.

In depth interviewing began in May, 2015 and extended until May, 2016. Data from all three resources were collected simultaneously throughout the study process. Open coding ensued subsequent to the first interview and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was performed when it was deemed that sufficient data had been collected to aggregate and tier codes. NVivo software was employed for organizing and manipulating the coding process.

The purposeful sample. The purposeful sample was comprised of women in senior leadership positions in corporate America. Because senior, in reference to female leaders can have ambiguous hierarchal meanings across industries and contexts, the purposeful sample was taken from a network of female leaders that attended a women's leadership conference in which the employer self-selected or deemed to be attendees as senior female leaders. This was the TWIST[1] Conference for Women in Leadership convened annually by the Queens University, McColl School of Business in Charlotte, North Carolina (see Queens University of Charlotte, n.d.-b) A snowball sampling approach was also employed.

All purposeful sample participants took part in in-depth, unstructured interviews. All interviewees were contacted initially via email and were provided a participant consent form (see Appendix B) and a study overview (see Appendix D) for perusal. If study candidates decided to move forward with scheduling an interview, a time and venue was designated. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. By employing the grounded theory dictate of immediate and simultaneous immersion in the data, coding and analyzing

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[1] TWIST is not an acronym; rather, it was chosen because of dissatisfaction with larger less relational meetings of women leaders. There was a felt need for a conference, "with a twist," designed to achieve richer conversation and networking to advance the ways women lead (L. Solomon, personal communication, May 12, 2017).

processes translated into iterative interrogation of data. This allowed for the tweaking of sampling decisions and interview strategies founded firmly in emergent concepts of the data.

The average age of the purposeful sample participant was 49 with ages ranging from 34 to 60. Of the first seven randomly selected interviewees from this purposeful sample, four were childless. Additionally, the three remaining participants had engaged in a domestic role reversal strategy with a stay-at-home spouse. When asked about the tensions between work and family as they ascended to leadership positions, early interviewees were not able to easily return to that period of their lives with any connection to emotion or details; they often glossed over hardships only to advise "it was a very difficult time, but we made it." The shift to a theoretical sample population of early Millennials and late Gen-Xers carried the expectation that study findings might be rich with the decisions and conflict that holding a career and young family in tandem might bring.

Given the data collected from these interviews, the decision was made to move to a theoretical sample of younger women in the throes of managing work and family.

The theoretical sample. The women's leadership conference provided a roster of such participants who were immersed in the situation of holding work and family in tandem. Unlike the purposeful sample, they were not conjuring situational facts or the emotions infused with each decision from memory. The purposeful sample also looked at childlessness from an anticipatory perspective that informed the theoretical sampling decision:

> I know that my career will slow down as far as where I'd like to be in 10 years, but it's necessary. I'm worried about that. I didn't really slow down when I was in school. We'll see. I just don't want them to feel that they're second to the job. I always tell mom, we were second to your job. (Laura)

The average age of the theoretical sample participant was 33.5 with ages ranging from 32 to 44.

Because this sample population was primed to discuss professional lives, each interview began with asking the participant to share a little about themselves both professionally and personally. This question served to re-direct thinking and provided a segue into the rather long, thought-provoking interview question. Some of the demographics were gleaned from this information. Of the 14 interviewees in the theoretical sample only one participant was a single parent. Two theoretical sample participants were childless. Most participants had two children, with only one participant having three children.

The initial sample populations were tightly geographically held which meant a disproportionate number of participants from the financial industry.[2] Diversification of the theoretical sample was attempted through snowballing techniques. The theoretical sample included two African-American women, one Asian woman and one Hispanic woman and represented the financial industry, the energy sector, the healthcare sector, the chemical industry sector, a commercial real estate holding company and a wholesale beverage conglomerate. Table 3.1 shows the study participants' demographics.

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[2] For this reason, often in this study special note is made of aspects of the legal and organizational aspects of North Carolina.

Table 3.1

Demographics of Study Participants (n=21)

Participant	Age and Ethnicity	Industry	Position Held	Length of Interview	Marital Status	Children
Purposeful Sample						
Madison	White; 44	Retail Grocery	SVP – Compensation	2 hours	Married	2
Rebecca	White; 50	Global Tire	SVP-IT	1 hour	Not Married	0
Kaci	African American; 34	Higher Ed	Head of Student Affairs	2 hours	Not Married	0
Laura	White; 34	Healthcare	Head – Clinical Trials	2.5 hours	Married	0
Leslie	White; 55	Healthcare	Physician Consulting	2 hours	Not Married	0
Cathy	White; 52	Global Retail Grocery	CFO	2.5 hours	Married	2
Lacey	White; 60	Real Estate Development	COO	1.5 hours	Married	2
Theoretical Sample						
Tess	White; 35	Financial	Senior VP Risk	2 hours	Married	3
Jennifer	White; 34	Financial	Senior VP for Marketing	2.5 hours	Married	2
Karen	Asian; 34	Energy	Senior VP for Compliance	3 hours	Married	1
Ginny	White; 30	Marketing	Project Management	1.5 hours	Married	1
Shari	White; 40	Healthcare	Senior VP for Operations	2 hours	Not Married	2
Nora	Hispanic; 37	Healthcare	VP for Non-Profits	1.5 hours	Married	0
Carmen	White; 35	Financial	SVP for Strategic Consulting	2 hours	Married	2
Diane	White; 41	Chemical	Operations Manager - Plastics	1 hour	Married	2
Sonia	White; 32	Global Beverage	VP PR and Communications	2 hours	Not Married	0
Amanda	African-American; 44	Financial	Exec.VP for Consumer-shared Services	.5 hours	Married	2

Participant	Age and Ethnicity	Industry	Position Held	Length of Interview	Marital Status	Children
Carson	White; 36	Healthcare	Director of Corporate Wellness	1.5 hours	Married	1
Ella	White; 37	Real Estate Development	Project Management	2 hours	Married	2
Denise	White; 34	Financial	Investment Strategist	2 hours	Married	1
Tera	White; 44	Global Retail	Senior VP for Merchandising	1.5 hours	Married	2

Note. All names are pseudonyms.

Interviewing process. Interviewing intervals pervaded the year-long data collection process as they clustered around coding and analytic processes. The purpose of performing in-depth, unstructured interviews was to glean the experiences of women who lead, imbued with perspectival nuances and language.

There were interviewing issues that had to be wrangled with throughout the data collection process but were intensified with the theoretical sample. Because participants suffered severe time poverty, most interviews were scheduled during lunch times or during short appointment windows in the business day. No interview took place after business hours or on weekends and most interviews were performed either in the participant's office or a conference room on the organizational premises. Four interviews were conducted via telephone in order to secure time in participants' busy schedules with the remainder of the interviews being conducted face to face. When interviews were scheduled, participants were instructed that they would be discussing their experiences as a woman who leads. These dynamics made it very difficult to segue from the professional facade to a conversation that would reflect deep, holistic experience. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, vulnerability in the workplace is highly correlated with failure and all participants were hesitant to invite the personal into the workspace. There

was a hypothetical work/home division that had to be permeated even in the interview process as

this crossover was perceived to violate cultural norms of being professional.

> Despite the agreement that family and the economy as institutions are linked in broad
> ways, the specific intersections and transactions between work and family, between
> occupations and families as connected organizers of experience and systems of social
> relations are virtually ignored. If any one statement can be said to define the most
> prevalent sociological position on work and family; it is the "myth" of separate worlds.
> (Kanter, 1989, pp. 77–78)

The adherence to this cultural norm is elevated for women as they, unlike men, are seen

as carrying the family into work (Kanter, 1989). Participants anticipated what would be shared

during the interview process; we are an "interview society" (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997,

p. 304). Therefore, the opening interview question was reconstructed several times to prompt

women to discuss the full bounty of their experiences. Specifically, women were asked how

they co-created their lives with others both professionally and personally. The question

continued to provide angst for participants not only stemming from the cultural divisions

between work and home but also because of the individualistic American culture. Americans

tend to see themselves individualistically and as self-created rather than as strongly affected by

inter-relationships (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2007; Spence, 1985).

However, when participants were able to transition fully into experience and vulnerability, they

engaged in much longer, contemplative interviews.

Relationship building was integral to the interview process. The women's conference

connection provided contact opportunity but, given the time constraints these women

experienced, did not necessarily secure an interview. An attempt was made to appeal to their

sense of research benefit and the proprietary nature of their experiences as one of the few women

who lead as good investments of time. Opportunity to tell their story from unique standpoints

was emphasized: their stories were not necessarily feminist stories or gendered stories or

organizational histories nor stories couched in the hubris of leadership, but personal stories of living in leadership. This approach was effective.

Participants were treated "like a full human being and less like a repository of facts" (Josselson, 2013, p. 5) often sharing my own work and family experiences as a way to foster conversation and mutuality while being cognizant of maintaining the boundary of my role as a researcher. Following Josselson's (2013) approach, after posing the opening question, I listened actively and extended questions as opposed to just asking other questions. Interviewing was participatory. Additionally, this question was posed to each interviewee at the end of our time together: "Given your experiences and from the lofty position you hold at the top, what do you think it will take to close the gender leadership gap?" This was often followed by "Where would you begin?" It was important to the philosophical underpinnings of this study to refrain from holding theory building as the exclusive domain of academia.

Coding and constant comparison processes. Interviews were recorded, professionally team of three. The team was comprised of myself and two former Ph.D. students who used grounded theory as a dissertation method and were therefore familiar with methodological processes. The team came together only initially to begin the coding process, but remained in contact via email throughout the process under the auspices of team memoing. Team input provided another outlet to evaluate and elevate concepts in the data. Here is an excerpt from one such email:[3]

> You will note that as I went on I got away from the code list and started adding my own with interpretation. Sorry if [this is] kind of irreverent but it was a fascinating interview and a little scary. I worry about what we as a society do to women! While in the process I had a long phone conversation with my niece [who is] 26, and while I think she is talented and brilliant and just a great kid— no bias there— it is starting to become apparent at work that she has some star capabilities too. So, the point I think I'm trying to

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[3] In order to protect private information in this passage, the coder's name is not included.

make is, how old is Jennifer? I have observed a huge difference between Gen X and Millennials. (personal communication, March 8, 2016)

The above excerpt illustrates that the codes generated from this interview may or may not have elevated this concept in the data but this team memo prompted me to go back to the data for comparison and go forward in the interviewing process with theoretical sample participants representative of both generations. The coding team provided another platform to foster abductive thinking and augment the research turns. They also aided in the dimensionalizing aspect of the study, as did my dissertation chair. Triangulation not only served to minimize researcher bias, but also capitalized on emergent themes in the data. When codes reached into the 400 range in number, many were purged and merged and axial coding ensued. Updated coding tiers were shared with the team. A full list of the final codes is in Appendix B.

Coding and constant comparison of emerging concepts in the data elicited ongoing formations of hypotheses. Hypotheses often emerged when reflecting on memos written throughout the analytic process. "Memo writing distills this motion between respondent voices, 'data,' and the developing analyses" (Lempert, 2007, p. 256). Charmaz (2006) suggests that integrating memos makes analytic "relationships intelligible" (p. 120). Memo writing provided a way to bookmark the abductive imagination in a forest of data and return to it when necessary. For example, an early hypothesis that arose in the process was that women remained engaged with their careers, despite obstacles, when they were part of an organization that embraced a broad range of work and family policies. This hypothesis was tested in subsequent interviews and by comparing the data across interviews. While this hypothesis was found to be a strong driver of engagement, it was not the principle one. Closure on the early hypothesis of the study would have been premature and left important concepts submerged in the data.

Dimensional and situational analysis. It was imperative to the symbolic interaction philosophical underpinnings of this study to center theory building between the grounded theory bookends of both dimensional analysis (Caron & Bowers, 2000; Schatzman, 1991) and situational analysis (Clarke, 2005). While a cognitive working theory could have been derived from dimensional analysis alone, it would have again returned to the individual as the unit of analysis and therefore the unit of change. Performing a situational analysis provided a big picture understanding as to how external factors influence the processual actions of women.

Dimensional analysis. This grounded theory study, guided by dimensional analysis (Caron & Bowers, 2000; Schatzman, 1991) produced an explanatory matrix for the way women interpret and make meaning of their experiences. Based in symbolic interactionism, "Dimensionality refers to an individual's ability to address the complexity of a phenomenon by noting its attributes, context, processes and meaning" (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, & Robrecht, 1996, p. 315). Dimensionality provides a window into the natural cognitive process and meaning making in which individuals engage.

As the data were analyzed, they were simultaneously coded. This provided an opportunity to develop a vocabulary for analyzing the situation and communicating the processes and properties that are present in this phenomenon. Coding began at the beginning of the data collection process, but these codes were not fixed or permanent. Dimensions were then compared to the ongoing concepts rising from the data, and theoretical memos were written to integrate the dimensions with the conceptual process. When a critical mass was achieved in the analysis, the dimensions were organized and ordered into explanatory matrices. The explanatory matrix organizes the dimensions into conceptual components—conditions, processes, and consequences:

Context indicates the boundaries of inquiry . . . that is the situation or environment in which the dimensions are embedded. Conditions are dimensions of the phenomenon that facilitate, block, or in some way shape actions and/or interactions . . . the processes of a given phenomenon. Processes include intended or unintended action or interactions that are implied by specific conditions. Finally, consequences are the outcomes of these specific actions/interactions. (Kools et al., 1996, p. 318)

Table 3.2 is an early draft depicting the dimensionalizing process. Only one dimension

of Table 3.2 is included here for illustrative purposes. The full dimensional tables are presented

in Chapter IV.

Table 3.2

Analysis of Study Dimensions: Context, Conditions, Processes, and Consequences

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Growing in Leadership (Core Dimension)	Organization	. Inclusive culture . Investment in potential (opportunities; conferences, etc.) . Culture of trust; support and sponsoring	. Modeling a new generation of female leaders . Risking preparedness . "Doing" leadership . Seeking out female role models . Using difference . Seek feedback in work and home realms	. Staying in pipeline . Feeling impactful . Building generational model . Finding a place for drive . A cohesive identity; a less transitional or unstable identity

The full version of the table for each dimension, as presented in Chapter IV, was distilled

into higher-tier conditions, processes, and consequences for ease of assimilation and discussion.

The distillation was made by going back to the data to see which conditions, processes and

consequences deserved a place in the final version of the dimensional analysis. All dimensions

were moved to the core position and the re-ordering of the data was analyzed to delineate which

dimension possessed the best explanatory power. Performing the situational analysis in tandem

with the dimensional analysis assisted with fine-tuning the conditions for dimensionalizing.

    Situational analysis. Situational maps and analyses (Clarke, 2005) provided a third eye

for the research process. Collins (2004) suggests that situations, not individuals, be the point for

theorizing. Women who lead do so in a social, visible, and critical context. Situational analysis

pushes back from pure social action and process toward a continuum of social ecology:

> In keeping with "Foucault's footsteps" (Prior, 1997), situational analysis de-centers the human individual as the unit of analysis and moves into the sites of his (Foucault) serious theorizing . . . historical narrative/textural and visual discourses . . . the reconceptualization of the nonhuman as not only important but agentic is deeply provocative and productive . . . Seeing the agency of the nonhuman elements present in the situation disrupts the taken-for-granted, creating Meadian . . . moments of conceptual rupture through which we can see the world afresh. (Clarke, 2009, pp. 201, 203)

> Situational analysis facilitates the seeing of the situation from different perspectives.

Clarke (2005) developed situational analysis in part to address what she considered a flaw within

grounded theory methodology: to ignore identity politics. More recently she explained:

> As a serious feminist who was teaching women's studies when I entered the doctoral program in sociology at UCSF, I quickly found the refusal of grounded theory as developed and taught by Glaser and Strauss to deal with identity politics a serious flaw. Both would say that such concerns were analytically important *only if and when found in the data.* I thought this was absurd especially since they did not then talk about how to design research that could and would make sure such issues *did* appear in the data. (Clarke, 2014, para. 6)

> Clarke (2005) advocates not for purity, but for pragmatism in method and sought to pull

grounded theory around the postmodern turn to reflect that life is social, experienced, and

discursively constructed. "Situational analysis speaks directly to such issues . . . not merely to

allow analyses of power, difference, inequality, but also to provoke them" (Clarke, 2014, para. 6).

    By creating messy situational maps, world arena maps, and positional maps, silent spaces

and the invisible elements of the situation are located. This creates a space for holding the

tension between historically dominant human agency, social process, and nonhuman elements. In this study, silent spaces and nonhuman factors were some of the most potent elements. For example, second generation bias (Ely et al., 2011) is not a blatant cultural or organizational element, but it is pervasive and powerful nonetheless. What cultural message (often not articulated) is sent when there are so few female leaders? How is this message actualized?

While self-awareness is an approximated ideal in any research pursuit, I came into this study with my own situated knowledge, history, and assumptions. Situational analysis gave me space to hold these as both conflict and advantage. Doing in part Foucault's bidding, Clarke (2005) urges the researcher to answer "'Who is an author?' There is no place to stand outside of discourse(s) including our own" (Clarke, 2014, para. 11). In my study, the mere act of performing situational analyses gave me license to pursue examining institutionalized forces that impact women's agency and action.

Three types of maps are created in this study to interrogate the situation: situational maps, world arena maps and positional maps. A project map was constructed but was deemed not informative of the situational analysis. The goal of situational maps is to list as many of the human and nonhuman elements in the situation under study as possible; to explore "What elements 'make a difference' in this situation?" (Clarke, 2005, p. 87). These maps make a broad, panoramic sweep of the situation.

Abstract or messy maps allow for elements to move around in the context, to bump into each other and precludes any particular element from becoming a millstone to inhibit thinking processes. The making of a messy situational map visually framed the density of the situation without giving weight or understanding to the elements at the onset. It served to heighten active listening around these elements during the interview process. As well it prompted interview

questions of elaboration and subsequent direction of data collection. Abstract situational maps were assembled over the course of the data collection process. They are the genesis for the construction of world arenas maps and positional maps. An early abstract situational map created in this study can be found in Chapter V.

While abstract situational maps are never static or complete, relational analyses between the elements in the map were performed when some critical mass in the map was reached to understand data connections. Each element was singled out and considered for its relationship with other elements in the map. Because there were many versions of this exercise with rather chaotic renderings, I have not depicted a relational example. This was merely an exercise to provoke thought and decide which relationships to elevate and pursue (Clarke, 2005, p. 102).

Working with the abstract situational map throughout the data collection process allowed for identifying element connectivity in the midst of interviewing and extending those lines in inquiry in real time to fully understand how elements connected and clustered.

What was also daunting about the abstract map was the overwhelming number of organizational elements as compared to elements that can be construed around caring. Furthermore, there appeared to be little connection between the situational elements of caring and those of business and organization. The messy map then led to a series of questions that guided the development of the ordered map, the next step in the method of situational analysis.

An ordered map was constructed from the abstract situational map as this further assisted in saturating situational areas and thinking about the relationships between situational categories. The ordered map is presented in Chapter V (Table 5.1).

The construction of the world arenas maps fosters an analytic exercise in meso level social action and furthers the relational analysis amongst the arenas of commitment. World arenas maps reflect,

> multiple collective actors (social worlds) in all kinds of negotiations and conflicts in a broad substantive arena focused on matters about which all the involved social worlds and actors care enough to be committed to act and to produce discourses about arena concerns. (Clarke, 2005, p. 37)

This analysis not only elucidates discourses and allegiance, but power in the situation.

The construction of these maps required gleaning data from numerous artifacts and documents, expert interviews as well as participant interviews. As with the process of assimilating the abstract situational map, arenas of commitment were added as they appeared in the data throughout the data collection process. When data saturation was reached, the world arenas map was indeed messy. This map also allowed the acknowledgement of shared commitments, proximity and blurred arena boundaries.

Initially, the key social worlds were depicted as relatively equal but as data continued to be collected and narratives enhanced understanding of the social arenas, some arenas grew in dominance and size. The initial map was distilled over the course of the data collection process so that only key social arenas of commitment and influence are represented in the final format. The final version of the World Arenas map, is presented as Figure 5.2 in Chapter V.

The dominance that began to emerge from the early world arenas mapping processes in conjunction with the continued data collection process prompted the construction of a project map. The project map was constructed to explain the discourses of dominance in an effort to understand not only which arenas and actors contribute to the situational dominance, but also an understanding of how the dominance is sustained. It allowed for identifying subtle and silent connections between arena commitments and pursuing those further in the data collection

process. Although the analytic exercise of constructing the project map was informative, it was deemed not imperative to the situational analysis and thus is not included in the situational analysis discussion in Chapter V.

However, because there appeared to be ongoing polarity in the world arenas mapping it was deemed that constructing a positional map might be more relevant for the situational analysis of this study as it elucidates dominant positions as well as positions not yet taken. Therefore, in the final phase of performing the situational analysis a positional map was constructed.

Positional map. A positional map delineates major positions taken in the data but does not reflect the position of individuals or groups. I deduced that positions in American investment in capital were the most relevant position to map given the study data and topic. One axis represents investment in organizations and one axis represents investment in human capital including women. Positions, not individuals or groups, were then added as this map was built. This removed the identity politics from the situation and allowed for the situation to be characterized much like a financial portfolio with an allocation strategy. It also allowed for coming back around later in the world arenas analysis process, to attach groups or individuals to a particular position and question why they position themselves as such. The construction of the positional map also facilitated the understanding of what positions constituted polarization in this situation and ultimately reflected a short-term gain strategy of investment in American capital. This map will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V. See Figure 5.3 in Chapter V for the positional map.

Field expert interviews. As themes emerged from the primary source of purposeful and theoretical interviews (see below) with study participants, I turned several times to interviews

with experts in fields pertinent to specific issues. These sources and insights they shared emerge in reporting of results in Chapters IV and V. A consent form was used in cases where field experts were interviewed (see Appendix C) and all such interviewees were provided in advance with the same study overview as circulated to research participants (Appendix D). It should be noted that two of the field expert interviewees—one from the Kennedy School at Harvard, and the other from Harvard Business School—requested anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the issues discussed and possible ramifications for their professional practice. Their comments, when quoted are identified as *Field Expert 1* and *Field Expert 2*. Others who were interviewed and whose ideas and words are cited several times in Chapters IV through VI, were Joanna Barsh, Director Emerita at McKinsey and Company (an international consultancy network) and co-author of *How Remarkable Women Lead* (Barsh, Cranston, & Lewis, 2011) and *Centered Leadership* (Barsh & Lavoie, 2014); Senator Kay Hagan, who served in the Senate for North Carolina, from 2009–2015 and is former chair of the U.S. Senate Children and Families Committee; Dr. Kenneth Matos, Vice President of Research at Life Meets Work, a consultancy based in Illinois that specializes in helping executives in work-life balancing; and Kathleen Russo, MD, a prominent pediatrician in Charlotte, North Carolina, practicing traditional and integrative medicine, and currently medical director at Carolina HealthSpan Institute.

Ethical Issues

Confidentiality posed the greatest ethical concern in this study on two specific levels, the organizational and the intra-conference level. On the organizational level, information shared during the interview could have potentially compromised the participant's employment contract. This presented significant risk to participants as they have achieved trustworthy leadership positions within their organizations despite numerous obstacles. Participants provided

organizational insider experience that could not be secured through the iron curtain of public relations or human resource departments. Attempts to secure organizational information through these venues for the situational analysis proved impossible.

Most interviews were performed at organizational sites. This heightened confidentiality risk. To offset this risk, recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Each transcript bore a pseudonym in place of the participant's name and identifying elements were removed from the written transcript. Transcripts were delivered to participants for perusal and their editing of any identifying information. Transcript delivery methods proved to be somewhat challenging in that at times the only contact information exchanged was a business one. In those cases, the transcript was hand delivered in a sealed envelope. Only after participant perusal could interview transcriptions be shared with the coding team and/or uploaded into NVivo software.

There were also confidentiality concerns at the intra-conference level. While the women's conference used for the purposeful and theoretical sample population is an annual conference and cohort based, participants were drawn from the same cohorts and across cohorts. Since network-building is integral to success, the conference sponsors an annual event to facilitate networking across cohorts; therefore there was potential for participants to self identify. Additionally, many participants in my theoretical sample asked what other women were saying because they are information seeking. They viewed this research as a repository for women's experiences. Great care was taken to answer those questions from a place of integrity and to honor their need for information without compromising the identity of fellow conference participants**.**

Conclusion

This study engaged in grounded theory methodology with dimensional and situational analysis that led to explanatory matrices for all dimensions. Dimensional categories were then integrated with the situational analysis to form a comprehensive platform for theory building. Theoretical propositions and a conceptual model will culminate this exploratory process and are presented in Chapter VI.

Chapter IV: Findings of the Study—Dimensional Analysis

In this chapter I seek to communicate the findings of this study and parse the data into the development of dimensional concepts. Through the vectors of such analysis I explore the micro level individual and relational concepts located in the data that give rise to the understanding of what " 'all' . . . is involved" (Schatzman, 1991, p. 313) in this phenomena. The dimensional analysis yields the important conditions, defined and detailed later in this chapter, that undergird women who lead actions and interactions. Macro and meso contexts named by the participants of this study as impactful and influential to their sense-making and social processes are further explored in the situational analysis and will be discussed in Chapter V.

These findings provide an experiential path outward into corporate America from the original study questions: How do women who lead, create and consign meaning around their experiences? How do they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities? And how do they experience the entanglement of macro, meso, and micro societal forces? This dissertation seeks to understand the relationships among the factors they name as influential in their experience in leading. And the findings provide an experiential path inward to the cognitive and social processes that create women's understanding of their context in corporate America. The findings communicated and organized in this chapter through the vehicle of dimensional analysis, and through the vehicle of situational analysis in Chapter V, are the heartfelt attempts of women who lead to answer these questions. They are the study sherpas; dimensional and situational analyses rise from their human experiences.

This is a constructivist exercise. Constructivists value standpoint and situation. "Strauss carried this particular banner throughout his scientific career, noting that social organization was negotiated and processual, affected by a continual stream of contingencies, and always in the eye

of the beholder" (Kearny, 2007, p. 130). Data gathered through participant interviews allows the researcher to behold the experience of women who lead. Inquiry is contextually and temporally bound. The situational context is intricately woven into the fabric of the dimensional analysis as social processes delineated in the dimensional analysis stand within and reinforce the situation. At intervals throughout the analytic process, it was a Sisyphean task to separate the dimensional concepts from the situational concepts. Analytic data annotated in the dimensional analysis in this chapter and situational analysis in Chapter V reflect these research decisions.

The dimensional analysis anchors the research at the individual level and reflects how women make meaning of their lives within this context. Constructivists, as did Strauss, focus on action or the interplay between individuals or the "between-ness" in the world (Star, 2007, p. 90). The dimensional analysis is perspectival and anchors this between-ness.

This dimensional analysis is also perspectival in that it is constructed from data collected from predominately White women interviewed for this study. White women hold the majority of professional positions in the United States; women of color occupy only 11.9% of management and professional positions (J. Warner, 2014). The dimensional analysis associated with this study thus reflects this marginalization.

Dimensional Analysis

The dimensional analysis here is hewn from the voices of study participants as they reflect on their experiences of leading in corporate America. The data evolved from responses to my opening study prompt:

> My purpose today is to understand your experience of being a woman who leads; but because your personal and professional experiences are not mutually exclusive, I'd like for you to talk about the broad context of your life—and more importantly—not only how you create and experience your life but how you co-create your life with others.

Although nearly every participant named relationships as extremely important later in the interview process, many asked for this study prompt to be repeated and temporarily struggled with the co-creation concept of the question. "I'm not quite sure what the question is in that. Could you re-frame it a little and perhaps provide some context" was a common retort. It caught many participants off guard and they asked for a few minutes to contemplate how they co-created their lives with others. Each interpretation of the question was different and some could not readily arrive at the contingencies of success: One participant finally settled on engagement with her team as her co-creation process whereas others moved on to consider parental or mentor relationships across personal and professional paths as integral to the co-creation process of success. Participants were primed to share a personal story of success, one no doubt they have shared before, but the study prompt was designed to make them think about the intricacies of how and with whom.

The contemplation around the initial interview question is telling in itself: American culture is mired in individualism and women who lead extend this mindset. And yet humans, and in this case women leaders, create a sense of self and being in the world through relational connections (Blumer, 1969; Dewey, 1933; Fletcher, 2001, 2004; Sinclair, 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2006) and it is the character, context, and meaning of these relational processes that the dimensional analysis and situational analysis seeks to reconstruct through participant reflection.

Participant voices are the centrifugal force of this study and therefore where the dimensional analysis begins. The analysis is delineated into three sections. The first section discusses the core dimension of what I call *Growing in Leadership*. The second section provides a synopsis of the remaining four primary dimensions: these are referred to here as, *Solving For*

Having It All; Stalking the Unknown; Leading in a Glass Box; and *Negotiating Equality.*[4] The

third section discusses the primary dimensions in detail and develops the explanatory matrix for

each dimension. The conditions of the matrices can be located in elements of the situational

analysis, referred to in Chapter V as *key contexts*, and illustrate reciprocity between the

dimensional analysis and the situational analysis. For purposes of this study, key contexts

represent an environmental container for holding dimensions and allowing for the existence if

not the sustenance of conditions:

> Context indicates the boundaries for inquiry – that is the situation or environment in
> which dimensions are embedded. Conditions are the most salient of dimensions . . .
> Conditions are dimensions of a phenomenon that facilitate, block, or in some other way
> shape actions and/or interactions—the processes of a given phenomenon. Processes
> include intended or unintended actions or interactions that are impelled by specific
> conditions. Finally, consequences are the outcomes of these specific actions/interactions.
> (Kools et al., 1996, p. 318)

Dimensional development and forthcoming dimensional discussion around concepts that

emerged in the data and is conveyed in this chapter through direct participant quotes. Quotes are

denoted by participant pseudonyms but reflect both the diversity and unity in the sample

population around the core and primary dimensions. While the dimensional analysis is grounded

in data gleaned from the theoretical sample, the purposeful sample aligns with the dimensions.

Departures between the purposeful sample and the theoretical sample will be annotated in the

discussions of this dissertation. The dimensional concepts are presented separately for study

comprehension, but they are tightly integrated and intricately performative. The primary

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[4] In this study, I use italics and capitals for the dimensions, introduced in this chapter: *Growing
in Leadership, Solving For Having It All , Stalking the Unknown, Leading in a Glass Box,* and
Negotiating Equality. The key context areas that are the focus of Chapter V— are not presented
in italics but are in caps: The Culture of Work. Foreclosure, The Work-Home Performance
Ratio, Heft of Marriage, and Malleable Me.

concepts exist in service of the core concept. Any deficit in the primary concepts impacts and

impedes the core concept.

Core Dimension: *Growing in Leadership*

Above any dimension, participants filtered all experiences through the experience of

Growing in Leadership. Table 4.1 lists the dimensional properties for the core dimension, of .

Table 4.1

Properties for Primary Dimension of Growing in Leadership

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Growing in Leadership (Core Dimension)	Organization	. Inclusive culture of work . Investment in potential . Personal ambition	. Risking . Moving toward authenticity . Modeling female leadership	. Staying in pipeline . Finding a place for drive . Establishing independence

The core dimension is a dyad threaded with intrinsic feeling and relational experience. It

is a compound of personal and public. It is a felt knowledge that is created by a sense of

self-awareness that is fueled by a personal reservoir of drive and opportunity. It is a constantly

evolving and regenerative dimension.

> So I had recognized myself growing as a leader. And just in the past 3 years—I used to think it was a one size fits all and if people don't— if it's not for them this isn't for them. That was my industry, So, I worked in industry before. So, I brought this kind of industry mentality, fast paced, if it's not going to work it's not going to work kind of thing. And then I started, for my growth I learned that some people don't respond the same way. So, yes, I started to really try to recognize that people needed to work different ways. (Laura)

This dimension does not exist for audience, but can't exist without it. It reflects the basic

human capacity to integrate natural and scientific approaches to thinking (Caron & Bowers,

2000). Participants are meeting the human challenges in the workplace to approach leadership in

ways that in turn broaden personal perspective. It is an iterative process: What is accomplished is internalized and builds capacity.

While there were no concrete indicators for the feeling of growth, participants revealed common conditions. One of the most critical conditions was a co-constructive relationship with the organization where leadership potential could be expressed and realized; and family could be held in tandem. These organizations are moving toward "deliberately developmental organizations" (Kegan, Lahey, Flemming, & Miller, 2014, p. 46).

> These companies work on the foundational assumption that adults can grow; that not only is attention to the bottom line *and* personal growth of all employees desirable; but the two are interdependent; that both profitability and individual development rely on structures that are built into every aspect of how the company operates; and that people grow from the proper combination of challenge and support, which includes recognizing and transcending their blind spots, limitations and internal resistance to change. (Kegan et al., 2014, p. 46)

> Growing in leadership allowed participants to find an outlet for expressing drive:

> And every time I think that I'm okay with that my instinctual ability to drive doesn't let me be okay with that. Like my review, I'm always like how can I get to this, how can I get to that, and I have to tell myself like, I thought you were okay with being here. So, it's this internal drive of who I am as a person is always going to be the one that wants to do more, wants to prove more, wants to be better at it. (Jennifer)

> It was a critical condition for women to be able to hold space in both work and family

spheres for growth. Therefore no matter how much growth opportunity a corporation provided, if it stifled the ability to experience personal and family growth, participants experienced this as a career sheering point that could not be sustained over the long run. A deliberately developmental organization allowed participants to anchor their personal identities within leadership roles (Ely et al., 2011). These organizations foster a relationship of coexistence between the work and family realm and move toward an environment where the choices are not mutually exclusive. The interview excerpt below is a participant's reflection on a personal crisis

that ended her career with an international grocery retailer because they offered her no options to continue to grow in her leadership and her family role:

> But I knew that the way I was doing it was not working for my family, or my kids. Even if my husband wasn't involved anymore, whether my marriage worked or not I knew I wasn't being a mom. So, I had to get closer. And I tried that for about three years: it worked but it ended up I was not going to give work everything work needed for me and be a mom and be a wife. That balance wasn't working at that time in my life with everything I had going on. So, I was in a meeting two weeks before my contract was not extended and I remember praying to God get me out of this because I still can't be there. And two weeks later they did not extend my contract. (Madison)

The balance was not working or working less at that time of her life, but most participants viewed these periods of personal need as episodic, albeit unpredictable. This personal crisis should have punctuated her leadership growth, not ended it. Participants experienced increasing demands in one sphere like pressure building in an enclosed space; at some point there is no room for expansion. A door either opens or the space implodes. After so many attempts to ease the pressure in the family space, this participant's career imploded. There was a great amount of emotional work that was created by incongruent spheres. This participant wrestled with her acute self-awareness in the face of identity threat in both spheres. She realized that the deficits she was experiencing in both spheres were too great and growth had ceased. At this juncture, she was not sure what to solve for. There is a constant effort at just managing for women to keep the momentum of growth going.

Madison also reflected on the interdependence between the bottom line and personal growth and what she deemed the company lost by not honoring the fullness of adult development in the midst of this personal crisis:

> In hindsight, they really did miss out on the knowledge of an individual that still had much to give to the organization. I had worked 50 to 70 hours a week for nearly nine years to get where I was, I almost lost my marriage and my children doing it. I live with no regrets because I know God has and had a plan for my life in so doing. However, I do

believe it would have been a good time to take a sabbatical and come back later to give more. (Madison)

Although all the dimensions are tightly wound and are critically interdependent cognitively and performatively, growth is particularly sustained and supported by primary dimensions I use the phrases *Solving For Having It All*, and *Stalking the Unknown* because few organizations—less than 20 in the United States and none in this study—have reached the status of deliberately developmental organizations (Kegan et al., 2014). Organizational deficits must be supplemented by the social responsiveness of women if they are to remain in an adult growth framework.

Growth is not necessarily conditioned with promotions or money, although these would be anticipated, but requires real investment in potential. The investment opportunities provided by corporations must be met with personal ambition. This combination is the glue that keeps women churning in the pipeline despite the inhospitable context when other choices or options could be actualized. It undergirds a sense of purpose.

> X spends a lot of time on self-training and technical training. In my last job I only got technical training. I didn't have any sense of leadership training. And I think that's where X is so different than my last job, is leadership training and finding the potential in a person instead of just [saying]: "Here is an assignment, get the numbers to work, or here is the job, get it done but we're not really going to give you the tools or help you develop the tools to get the job done or to lead effectively. (Karen)

> Even here I am given opportunities, like to go to Brazil, to jump in and help in other areas to help develop my business acumen. Or like the Brazil thing, it was the component of strategic skills that I was able to develop by doing that. So, I would say the system at X has certainly afforded me the opportunities to be successful in leadership. (Nora)

In an inclusive culture of work and, willing to invest in potential, women could move toward more risk taking and away from over preparedness or feeling completely qualified for a job. The risk taking is reciprocal and the space sacred for doing so:

I think I'm fortunate to work in an organization that focuses on promoting from within and giving people opportunities to grow into a role. So, I think I had less experience than was ideal when I took my current position but I think the CEO saw potential instead of going out and hiring a new person who had a super strong background in everything that this position needed to do. So, I think she took a chance on me and believed in me and offered me the support that I needed going into that role to be able to transition into a leadership role. (Sonia)

An inclusive work culture prompted, women to move toward authenticity and bolster self

confidence: "All I have to bring to these people in Information Technology is myself. And that's

what they're looking for. And it was an explosive period of growth for me as a leader" (Cathy).

In an inclusive culture of work, women were compelled to model female leadership and

open doors for other women as opposed to resorting to the Queen Bee syndrome (Mavin, 2008;

Staines, Tavris & Jayaratne, 1974). Of this, one participant said:

The boss that I had that I took her position when she left, she was really wonderful about giving me opportunities and giving me things that I could own and demonstrate my value through and I guess I haven't always had bosses that gave me those opportunities and a lot of the time it was just pushed down menial tasks for me to do and it 's really hard to show that you're capable if your doing jobs like that. So, she really gave me responsibility in a way that I think the CEO could notice 'oh wow, X is good at this. Let's give her more opportunities'. So, I think I was fortunate to have another woman give me a chance to get where I am. (Sonia)

The context, conditions and strategies around *Growing in Leadership* allowed

participants an outlet for expressing drive that would be difficult to express elsewhere:

And I don't fault my parents for that because it's made me who I am today but that probably had something to do with my drive, So, I'm very driven and I think that helps. Early on I knew that if it was to be it was up to me. (Madison)

I was not meant to stay at home. But I mommy tracked nonetheless. So, I went back as a family reporter. I had a funny conversation with the station manager. He called me up, he called me up every 3 months and say are you ready to come back? I said no I like being at home. And finally he called me up and said are you ready to come back yet? I said I have one question for you. He said what's that? I said do you have a bathroom that if I go into it there will not be a child on the outside banging on the door saying "mama, mama, mama" like I'm David Copperfield and if I go in the room I'm going to disappear? (Lacey)

Intertwined with the sense of leadership growth was a need to be impactful:

I think what I've discovered in the past couple of years is it's incredibly important to me to have a direct impact on the livelihood of people. To not do work for the good of the corporate experience, to really make an impact that will last in the life of someone else. (Tess)

"I think people, probably just women in general, we don't feel like we're going to impact the larger organization" (Laura). Being impactive is inherently relational. Relationships were extremely important to all participants and represented a barometer to gauge impact and growth, yet they often struggled to find the time to cultivate relationships:

And in that I've got the blessing of being able to be up at those meetings of 3,000 people and be a leader and propel our organization versus the financial report. It was all about sharing the vision, defining a mission, setting ourselves up for breakthrough performance, all driven by the ability to relate to others. (Cathy)

Being impactive often integrated a social justice agenda:

And it's probably part of why I stayed in healthcare as long as I could. I felt like I could change the system, this big organization and all the ways they do things. Certainly, I can make an impact. (Leslie)

Some participants struggled with the lack of perceived organizational power or the lack of being impactive. It convoluted family decisions. If they didn't feel impactful, the old cost-benefit of work analysis reared. Lack of impact created a hollow existence where women felt they were just "keeping the bus rolling" in each sphere. They lost their sense of purpose in the unrelenting and conflicting demands of each sphere.

When *Growing in Leadership* was experienced, younger, childless participants also wrestled with the idea of beginning a family. Many had postponed this life event. They were extremely cognizant of the downside and currently unavoidable consequences of motherhood penalties. Anticipated motherhood penalties were often amplified with memories of their own working mothers. Most experienced feeling a mothering deficit or a mothering excess which

they did not want to repeat. They are contemplative as to how to improve on the past generation professionally and personally with no additional resources and increased work demands. They were pausing as one might hesitate before heading into a hurricane. There are no clear paths to hold on to growth in both work and family spheres through the storm. For childless participants, personal leadership growth represented a force in their lives they did not want to interrupt; yet they knew that children most certainly would at best slow growth down. They desired work and family; but during their lifetimes they have rarely experienced a lack of growth. They have few role models that exemplify this work/family paradigm. They are gridlocked in a cognitive double bind:

> I know that my career will slow down as far as where I'd like to be in 10 years, but it's necessary. I would never, I think that would be so empty if I didn't have kids. You'd look back, what have I done? I don't know. I'm worried about that. I didn't really slow down when I was in school. (Laura)

The context, conditions and strategies associated with the core dimension provide the best scenario for women to stay in the pipeline. If they were experiencing growth in career and family without excessive constraints in either realm, they will have opted for continued growth in the workplace. There are few systems other than work for them to channel their drive. Work provided an outlet for participants to experience purpose and being impactive that they could not derive from the home sphere. "I was getting fed. I was getting accolades, I was getting the money, people looked up to me, I was being fed by my work" (Madison). While participants very much valued growth in the family sphere, they advised it was difficult to get "fed" in the same way. They were not the stay at home types:

> I thought I'm going to have a baby and I'm going to stay home. That's not the reality for many reasons, but the biggest reason being I don't think I'd be 100% happy being at home; which I feel selfish saying because I love Lucy and I love being around her. When I first went back to work even with all that horrible stuff going on I still felt liberated. (Ginny)

Feeling fed or accomplished in both work and family was equally important to participants and was the lifeline for sustaining growth in leadership. Even in the better cultures of work, *Growing in Leadership* could create role conflict and this is borne out in the cultivations of primary dimensions of *Solving For Having It All* and *Stalking the Unknown*.

Summary of core dimension: *Growing in Leadership*. It is imperative to iterate that the mere presence of the core dimension in participants' lives is by no means a guarantee for success: Many life scenarios can upend growth especially those located in the family realm. Participants were very cognizant of the precariousness that pervades their lives and undertook actions to stave off the disruption of growth. When the core dimension is sustained by the situation and the coupling of the primary dimensions, participants create the "capacity to flourish under fire" (Ryff & Singer, 2003, p. 15).

Introduction to the Primary Dimensions

This section provides a brief overview of the remaining four dimensions: *Solving For Having It All; Stalking the Unknown; Leading in a Glass Box;* and *Negotiating Equality*. These dimensions as related to the explanatory matrices; evidence and discussion of each of these are given in more detail later in this chapter.

Dimension: *Solving For Having It All*. It seemed in their stories that after nearly 50 years of moving into the workforce and approaching critical mass, women articulated that they were still solving all problems on all fronts. With so few resources available, they were forced to problem solve to survive. There is no national government, no childcare proponent, no union, no support net, no advocacy group, and in many cases, no spouse to assist. A few states have stepped up to help women problem-solve and a handful of corporations provide family benefits. However, corporations do so from year to year completely at their discretion: "We are always

looking at our benefits program" said Jim Huffman, U.S. Health and Wellness Benefits executive

for Bank of America (as cited in D. Roberts, 2016, para. 4). Bank of America closed an on-site

childcare facility in 2012 but extended paternity leave in 2016. This illustrates the

unpredictability of available resources.

Participants articulated a constant undertow of seeking renewable solutions as the family

matures and moves through developmental stages. They were quintessential coordinators and

they lived in a constant state of anticipation. These women accomplished problem solving by

taking one day at a time. "But when everything is this whirlwind of busyness, it's just hard to

make sense of all that and try to figure out, okay, here's what we're going to do next and take it

one day at a time" (Shari).

Dimension: *Stalking the Unknown*. Somewhat complementary to the previous

dimension of *Solving For Having It All* , women were not only anticipating the unknown but

outright stalking it. Stalking is different from solving in that it is future-oriented, anticipatory.

Women are anticipating possible issues and outcomes. They stalked the unknown primarily

through information gathering. Along the premise of game theory (von Neumann &

Morgenstern, 1944) women assume that there are pre-defined outcomes if "plan A" fails and

they seek out resources in order to sustain a competitive advantage with other players in the

workplace. Participants defined stalking not so much in terms of seeking competitive advantage,

but as a way to stay one step ahead of the precariousness of their lives. They knew, from

witnessing others female colleagues, that situational buzzards are circling success. And while

these women couldn't prevent the unknown, recovery time was critical: falling down can't equal

staying down. There is a very short window to re-stabilize. Women's visibility, especially in the

higher echelons of the organization, could magnify such events. The lack of resources in general

imbues the stalking process with additional stress. Participants constantly anticipated future

demands of family. Control was a common theme, even if women knew it to be an illusion.

Stalking at least alluded to feelings of control.

> So, my sister is going through that now . . . so, she does help me. She sends them to two
> different after school cares where she has to pick them up by 6:00. It is a little, you've got
> to start mapping out and getting the logistics down. (Jennifer)

Jennifer speaks to the mechanisms of control. If any plan failed for any reason; camp closing or

a sick child or extended work travel, then control was lost.

> Every baby that was in that class we knew their parents just through friends or friends of
> friends. And five days into me being back at work one of the babies . . . our neighbor's
> baby . . . was abused . . . like shaken baby syndrome. They thought she was going to die.
> And you're in shock. What do you do? And I remember the rest of the parents banded
> together because what do you do? You have to go back to work tomorrow. How are you
> going to find another babysitter? I was not even a week into being back to work. What
> am I going to do? And, so, we all took our babies back there the next day. (Ginny)

Even as Ginny vetted the best daycare available through dimensions of solving and in crisis,

stalking—as parents banded together—they made the ultimate choice to send their infants back

into a volatile care situation because they experienced this as no choice.

One participant summed up the solving and stalking dimensions in this way:

> And one of the women was about to have a baby and she came to me for career advice
> and I said, "The only advice I'll give you is get comfortable with being uncomfortable
> because once this child is born your world will revolve around caring for the needs of that
> child, but this [responsibility] won't go away and this won't go away." (Shari)

Dimension: *Leading in a Glass Box.* Researchers have used the phrase glass ceilings as

a metaphor for an invisible barrier in corporate ascent (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Cotter, Hermsen, &

Ovadia, 2001; M. J. Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000; Powell &

Butterfield, 1994; Ragins et al., 1998) and glass cliffs where women are placed in precarious and

risky leadership roles (M. K. Ryan & Haslam, 2005; 2009; M. K. Ryan et al., 2011); but

participants in this study described experiences of leading in corporate America as doing so in a

glass box. For them, this meant working in a very constricted space of organizational power.

Unlike the glass ceiling effect where women experience a plateauing in career, or the glass cliff

effect in which women sit in a risky leadership position, the glass box effect operates like an

enclosed exhibit that can travel throughout the organization and land in one department or

another, but can only influence the space where the box is placed. The box is glass because the

barriers on all sides are invisible while the muted female leader is quite visible. The glass box is

the portable diversity box of organizational politics.

> At enterprise risk management meetings about the strategic direction of the company, it's all men. It's all men in the room. My boss is a man, his boss is a man; all of our executives except one are men. A lot of our leadership council, directors and above are men. So, as a woman you do notice that. You do notice hey, there's only one woman here, maybe there's only two women here. Then I started thinking are they like the token executive? Is she in this role because they needed to have a woman in the room or did she get there because she really deserves to be there? (Karen)

> By being confined to a glass box, women continued to find themselves closed off from

having organizational impact and influence. Furthermore, the invisibility of the constrictions

imposed on a woman by the glass box impeded her ability to innovate and this would then

viewed as her shortcoming, rather than as a product of the gendered environment.

Dimension: *Negotiating Equality*. This dimensional concept emerged not only from

accounts of participants' attempts to effect equality at work, but their frustration with attempts to

effect equality in marriage. Far more emotional frustration was directed at marriage than the

workplace. A cultural assumption is that the work and family spheres are separate but, in reality,

the systems and people within those systems are intricately intertwined:

> Yet despite the agreement that the family and the economy are linked in broad ways the specific intersections and transactions between work and family, between occupations and families as connected organizers of experience and systems of social relations are virtually ignored. (Kanter, 1989, p. 77)

The work and family systems were co-created in a way that Bowles and McGinn (2008) have suggested is a two level game. On one level, women negotiate with employers and on a second level, with the household. Many situational elements informed this dimension, including the blurring of the workday and the lack of access to good and stable resources which ultimately translates into a leveraging of negotiations. There appeared to be a generational lag between marital expectations and actions. Societal norms around care and gender roles nestled in this dimension. This dimension, above all, exemplified the tension women experience between the positions they occupy the antiquated infrastructure in which they exist. These are currently situated in the structural cracks.

Summary of primary dimensions. The dimensions provide an understanding of how women make meaning of and move through their environment. The four dimensions support the core dimension of *Growing in Leadership* in that growth, particularly in leadership, is cognitive filter through which everything flows. Growth is the magnet of engagement. Growth is a basic human need; "The reason we grow is that we have something of value to give" (Robbins, n.d. para. 12). The dimensional analysis reflects the coping actions employed by participants to stay in the growth pattern.

Dimensional Analysis and Explanatory Matrices

This section explicates the four primary dimensions with richer detail of their meaning and their role in the development of the explanatory matrices. These dimensions include the core dimension, *Growing in Leadership*, and primary dimensions: *Solving For Having It All , Stalking the Unknown, Leading in a Glass Box* and *Negotiating Equality*.

In addition to the core dimension, *Growing in Leadership*, the following dimensions encompass a critical mass of those which "represent emerging pathways that possess some

explanatory power" (Kools et al., 1996, p. 317) of the study phenomena. Primary dimensions

represent this dimensional critical mass. Dimensional components integrate with participant

perspectives and histories to provide a cognitive vehicle of human interpretation and

sense-making. Furthermore, the explanatory matrix delineates the conceptual components of the

studied phenomenon and provides a framework to move beyond description into explanation.

   ***Solving For Having It All* : dimension and explanatory matrix**. This dimension

capitalizes on a catchphrase in our culture that catapulted to the forefront after publication of

Anne Marie Slaughter's (2012) groundbreaking article in *The Atlantic* entitled "Why Women

Still Can't Have It All." Theoretical sample participants in this study not only believed they

could have it all—even though they experienced days of doubtfulness—they defied multitasking

algorithms to do so. *Solving For Having It All* touched every context of their lives. Table 4.2

lists the dimensional properties for the primary dimension of *Solving For Having It All* .

Table 4.2

Properties for Primary Dimension of Solving For Having It All

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Solving For Having It All	Organization, Marriage, Family and Community	. Culture of Work . Spillover . Lack of Resources . Lack of partner responsiveness	. Seeking inclusive culture of work . Seeking and establishing support systems . Searching for good mother/good professional fit	. No advocacy . Time poverty . Settling in middle management . Dominant coordinator

   Conditions for *Solving For Having It All*. The continued incompatibility between the

Culture of Work and childcare provided the greatest bundle of problems to be solved. *Solving*

For Having It All meant the right mix between work responsibilities and family responsibilities.

Some women felt their hierarchical position to be most advantageous because it provided some

flexibility; it was often perceived that a promotion might diminish this prospect. A promotion

was perceived to connote more travel and client-facing. Choosing the right mix of opportunities

was important. Participants were holding this condition constant:

> I needed a role, or a job, where I could integrate what was important to me with my family life. I feel very lucky to have some flexibility in this role. When I have to leave early to pick up my daughter I do it. Or if I want to take her to the bus stop one morning, I can. So, to me, it is intertwined. Because if I'm not happy there, I'm not going to be happy here, and there are certainly days that the two are out of whack, but on the days it works really well, I feel like I'm bettering myself; accomplishing my personal goals while taking care of my family. (Carmen)

> Lack of resources compounded problem solving. Being able to afford what they

considered to be a good daycare didn't always resolve the problem:

> And I think about not only people who can't afford it but also people who can't get in. Especially in this area . . . center city down to the X area. There is such an influx of children and the wait-list is over a year long to get into some of these centers. (Ginny)

> Stagnant work and family policies added to these dilemmas. Lack of organizational

power to create helpful work and family policies was a limiting condition. Traditional ideas of

career remain entrenched in a linear upward trajectory pitting a woman's childbearing years with

upward mobility. Unstable organizations and stagnant economies globally provided a condition

in which problem solving and organizational structure was less predictable. Higher gender

performance expectations encroached on the time needed to problem solve. Additionally,

cultural norms of marriage and motherhood often tagged women as the sole problem solver.

> The sheer pace of problem solving negated the use of go-to strategies:

> I can't get all this stuff done and more just keeps coming in. And I think if you narrow it down too, it is that lack of control and not having the time in life to stop, and I'm a planner, but put a plan in place so that you can navigate the stuff you know is coming. (Shari)

This dimension is riddled with the presence of internalized power (Gill, 2014a, 201).

"Returning to work literally hours after giving birth is clearly a choice, yet is experienced as 'no

choice.' This indicates the way in which power and compulsion operate psychosocially" (Gill,

2014b, p. 516).

> I think the farther you get in your career, the more responsibility you have; the more access you have to people at the top, and it's kind of like this trickle down. Like if I get an email from our VP, I'm going to respond to it even if it's ten o'clock at night. He's never told me that I have to respond to it, but it's just like this . . . you just do it. (Ginny)

Participants described these actions not as individual decisions, but automatic responses

or known knowledge of the Culture of Work. They failed to question their own responses.

> **Strategies/processes for Solving For Having It All.** More than anything, participants

were anticipating the problems to be solved. This dimension is integral to the dimension of

Stalking the Unknown. They are actively seeking progressive work cultures as partners in

Solving For Having It All :

> So I try to look for, for example, I look at their boards. What percentage are women or minorities? I look at their senior leadership that reports to the CEO. What percentage are women or minorities? I talk to people who work there and ask what's the culture? What determines success? Who are the role models in the organization? Who is the organization putting forward in the community as their leaders? You can tell a lot from those things. (Amanda)

They were looking for work cultures that allow them to negotiate new boundaries

between work and home:

> I think that; I know I harped a lot about my day doesn't end at 5 and the bleeding over of the personal and professional I think for women to be able to take on those positions I think there has to be the community and the workplace understanding of that flexibility. And that if I'm the head honcho and I might not be at my desk from 9 to 12, or 9 to 5, there is the understanding that I'm getting my work done and I'm carrying the mission forward even if it's not during the perceived work hours. (Ginny)

Participants wrestled with and redefined the concept of working mother. They were

searching for a good mother/good professional fit. "We're just trying to get by day by day and

feel like a good mom and a good worker" (Jennifer). Their own experiences with the

mother/daughter dyad weighed heavily in the process of formulating a working definition: "I just

don't want them to feel that they're second to the job; I always tell mom, we were second to your

job," said Laura.

> I didn't feel like a mom. And I was okay with that. Like I'd never been a baby person,
> So, my kids were young and when my kids were young I was okay with taking them to
> daycare and having Jack pick them up. But I also thought they were seeing their mom as
> successful. I was taking care of my family like a man takes care of their family.
> (Madison)

> To accommodate this good mother/good professional fit, women manipulated careers and

adjusted job roles to accommodate families while trying to forge new, more forgiving careers to

the top;

> So for me I've always thought of my career in phases and my life in phases and because
> of that I don't worry so much about what I can't do right now because there will be a
> time when I can do it. So, when I was at McKinsey, I loved McKinsey and I loved
> travelling around the world but then I got married and had kids and I didn't want to travel
> all around the world. And so I left a job that I loved and I was good at to move into the
> industry where I could have a role where I didn't have to travel every week right. And to
> me it was a very deliberate decision. (Amanda)

> Women sought support systems. Although money is important to the problem-solving

process, many found it to be a tool that worked only to a point:

> I think that I started out my family, the joint family and professional life thinking
> whatever challenges I have can be solved with money. I can buy a nanny, I can buy a
> really good nanny. What I came to realize was I wished I had held my son more when I
> was on maternity leave. (Tess)

> But I do think the formula around once you make this amount, as long as you can balance
> your family time and fun time you're fine. You don't have to make six figures times three
> or whatever to be happy. (Madison)

> They leveraged technology and used it as a support system to problem solve: Jennifer

explained: "My husband and I have an iPhone and the calendar is the bible. So, you put

something on the calendar and you both see it." They gamed the childcare and educational

systems:

> So we've been very lucky. At first, because the waitlists are so bad, we had to find an interim daycare before we got in and that's everywhere, which is really hard for working parents. You have find something to do with your kids for three months. Another reason to have an extended maternity leave. I'll tell you the minute I heard a heartbeat, the next day I took a day off from work and got my name on a daycare list. (Denise)

Participants problem solved and sought support systems through relationship building

when possible:

> I think relationships can do amazing things. And sometimes having connections and networks and relationships in place does make it possible to change things or influence things that maybe others thought couldn't be changed. (Leslie)

Leading women found it difficult to build relationships outside of work because of time

poverty: "But ask me how may true girlfriends I have outside of work that I invest time in?

None" (Shari). They perceived this lack of relationship building outside of work as problematic,

but had no solutions to extending the day to include relationship building outside of the

workplace.

A few spouses shared in problem solving but this was certainly the exception: "But then

when Alex was in school it was very difficult to balance, to find any kind of give" (Tess). But

often they were the sole problem solver:

> I have no idea why . . . but every working mom I know, it always falls on the mom and I don't know if it's because we're control freaks and we don't think they would do it the right way or if there's just this stigma that they think their job is more important. (Ginny)

These processes reflect that to be a successful working mother, women must be the

coordinator and a time and resource wizard.

Consequences of Solving For Having It All. Women who lead were in a constant state

of *Solving For Having It All* because the family demands and the Culture of Work are constantly

in flux. This often resulted in time poverty and a feeling of not being completely competent in

either realm:

> So, it is really hard. I think my boss said to me because Lucy was pretty much sick the whole month of November. She got sent home at least once a week and had a double ear infection. It was terrible. And she said, you need to let go, you need to figure out what's mission critical and get that done and just don't worry about the other stuff. But then it's like you're working double time once they're back up and running. So, you're always behind. I never feel like I'm 100% ahead. (Ginny)

Solving For Having It All required an immense capacity for coordinating. Women "kept

the bus rolling" at a cost:

> We went to Disney World and I had it all scheduled, all of our character visits, all of our dress up visits, breakfast, lunch, rides, like the whole thing. And I think everyone remembers having a good time. I remember Jonathan asking me at one point on the day that everybody got dressed up—Alex was a pirate, Jonathan was a pirate, the girls were princesses. Jonathan said "what are you dressing up as Mom?" And I said: "I'm not." And it was just indicative, it's sad even in the retelling, that my job was to keep the bus rolling. I was doing it at work and I was doing it at home. (Tess)

There was great mental stress associated with the coordination role. This stress often

affected concepts of self: "If I could just have a better perception of myself then I think it would

make things better, not that I hate myself or anything like that, but you just constantly feel like

it's not enough" (Ginny). There was so much unpredictability associated with children. This

participant talked about her ability to focus on work when problem solving is a constant:

"Unfortunately it's almost like I can do it until another force breaks in and kind of requires me

to. So, it's almost like by priority, by fire, like if there's a fire that I'm putting out" (Shari).

Because of the difficulties of *Solving For Having It All*, many women with children

remained content with current positions or in middle management.

> I'm asked often from other leaders in the organization like Shari, what do you want to be in five years? Because you're supposed to have a plan. And I have said, I have said to some very senior leaders in this organization and then gone, "Oh shoot, I shouldn't have said that. I'm probably never going anywhere." But I've said you know, I don't know.

My kids are getting more complicated because they need more from me. So, I have told people I'm happy doing what I'm doing and I don't have a five year plan. (Shari)

Solving For Having It All often presented a double bind for women because what might push them in one sphere would pull them in the other. For example, participants wanted to attend women's conferences and workshops and found value in them, perhaps even advocacy; but this often heaped on additional coordination responsibilities at home. One single mother expressed it like this:

> I don't have time. I don't have time to do the homework and my boss said "You need to go, Shari. You need to invest in yourself." Once again, a man actually doing it, but it was the best thing I did. But I didn't want to go because I didn't have time and I had to find someone to watch my kids. (Shari)

Participants found it difficult to even fathom fun, camaraderie and networking because they are so tethered to problem solving:

> X would challenge me he'll say, "Well, why don't you create a way—go drink wine with these women once a quarter. Take our physician leaders out that are female." And I asked a couple, like we don't have time. I can't take one more thing on my schedule because I've already got work responsibilities and leadership responsibilities and then I've got responsibilities at home. (Shari)

And sometimes the problems prevailed:

> So I was gone a lot and I had two small children. I had a daughter that was in kindergarten that year and a one-year-old, an almost two-year-old. And my husband was having an affair. And, that's not excusable, I don't excuse and I don't accept the behavior but I was not there. And I was deep into my career. And at that point I moved to Salisbury and he ended up eventually moving with me. But I knew that the way I was doing it was not working for my family, or my kids. Even if my husband wasn't involved anymore, whether my marriage worked or not I knew I wasn't being a mom. So, I had to get closer. And I tried that for about three years it worked but it ended up I was not going to give work everything work needed for me and be a mom and be a wife. That balance wasn't working at that time in my life with everything I had going on. So, I was in a meeting two weeks before my contract was not extended and I remember praying to God get me out of this because I still can't be there. And two weeks later they did not extend my contract, paid me lots of money—not, I mean enough to get by. (Madison)

Solving For Having It All: summary of explanatory matrix. Women solved for having it all because they experienced no other choice if they were to stay in careers where they could

pursue leadership growth. Time poverty created by *Solving For Having It All* prohibited the

cultivation of resources and advocacy. *Solving For Having It All* serves as a precursor for the

next dimension, *Stalking the Unknown*. It is through solving the challenge of having it all that

women come to understand the precariousness of their situation and infer what must be stalked.

***Stalking the Unknown*: dimension and explanatory matrix.** Women must be able to

recover quickly from an unknown event. Unknowns destabilize future concepts of work and

family. Unknowns were predominately experienced as coming from the family sphere, but that

was not always the case. Children were often viewed as like a joker card that might be dealt at

any time in the deck of career cards. Furthermore, the experience of moving through life stages

or childhood developmental stages is a monumental unknown with countless variables of living

quicksand.

This dimension has a future context. It is an attempt at control. It connotes an if/then

planning scenario. One participant described being able to grasp the unknowns in this way: "It's

like you remember when you had your first child and you found out you were pregnant with your

second, you actually have a conversation like can I really love, is my heart going to be big

enough to love these two?" Unknowns defy comprehension, yet professional women must put

up their best defense. Table 4.3 lists the dimensional properties for the primary dimension

Stalking the Unknown.

Table 4.3

Properties for Primary Dimension of Stalking the Unknown

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Stalking the Unknown	Organization, Home	Culture of work Child development precariousness . Lack of resources Future unknown	. Scenario planning . Information seeking . Anticipating	. Dreams of C-Suite blurred . No more children

Conditions for *Stalking the Unknown*. Because women still occupy minority status at the top, participants often escalated organizational expectations and felt the need to over perform or to always be right.

> I don't know. I don't know why I'm not comfortable. I hate to be wrong. I think that's just something within me. I don't want to be wrong and I don't want somebody saying, "Oh no, we should do it my way instead." So, I don't want to open myself up to the opportunity of being right because I'm so afraid of being wrong. (Karen)

Participants in this study articulated expectations of a culture of work in which "it is clear that in its injunctions never to be ill, never to be pregnant, and never to need time off to care for one's self or others, it may pose particular challenges for women" (Gill, 2014b, p. 517). Visibility fed these organizational expectations. There were organizational motherhood penalties coupled with known and measured penalties for workforce absence.

There is still organizational prevalence to place a higher value on roles that require travel and client-facing (a termed used by participants to describe responsibilities for client interaction) which makes dealing with an unknown more complicated. The lack of flextime in work schedules narrows the window of opportunity to reckon with an unknown. No participant thought flextime or part time were options to be exercised. "They don't encourage it. People used to be on flex schedules more often, probably three years ago, but I think they kind of started to phase even flextime out too" (Karen). Travel and client facing add layers of complexity in addressing unknowns associated with childcare. Because of the correlation between education and marriage, professional women tend to be married, they must factor spousal work conflict. Only one study participant was unmarried. Experiencing an unknown for any length of time could upend these roles and career trajectory. Participants knew the rules of engagement.

Strategies/processes for Stalking the Unknown. Most participants in the sample had a great need for control therefore it was imperative to attempt controlling all aspects of their lives

including unknowns. This dimension is highly integrated with all five of the situational contexts

in that women find themselves in the situational margins. The control mechanisms were primed

by the possibility of career derailment resulting in a disconnect from the core dimension,

Growing in Leadership. **"**And I like control. If you look at my personality assessment I'm one

of those people that has a high need for control" (Leslie).

> Strange thing about me is I'm a very high D person, very detail-oriented and I find
> value— it's sick— in getting stuff done and I find that I feel like I'm valuable to others
> when I can do things for them. So, I don't delegate as much as I should. (Shari)

> Most women accomplished this through information gathering and scenario planning.

Often, this meant observing or interacting with other women inside and outside the organization:

> There was a female in my role but she moved to another group. Her son now is in late
> high school; so, she works full time now but she did do flextime and worked 9 to 3 for
> years. I think it's a possibility but I don't know that X and I will want to do that. I don't
> know. Just between you and me I have talked to some other groups within the bank but
> I'm not ready for a move yet. I'm kind of a calculated risk taker. I want to make sure that
> what I do . . . it's for the right reasons. (Carmen)

> Yes, So, I've talked to one woman that they are kind of a back office support for us . . .
> Anyway, they are a back office support team for us and they're not client facing and a lot
> of them work remotely. And So, I talked to my girl who works back there and she said
> "oh I love it," the flexibility it provides. (Denise)

Participants could not go to their human relations departments to scenario plan or seek

information. These processes were performed underground and required an element of trust

between the women seeking and the women giving information. Furthermore, the women giving

information were often doing so from a historical context. Women seeking information were

closed off from exploring all present or future possibilities.

Anticipation consumed much of participants' energy. They were in a constant state of

thinking ahead, probing, asking questions and *Stalking the Unknown*:

> And it's funny like one of the things I find in my role as a mentor now, I'll try to tell
> young women who ask me that kind of question like you don't know what you don't

know. The only advice I'll give you is get comfortable with being uncomfortable that you're not going to please anybody. (Shari)

So, my sister is going through that now, so, she does help me. So, she's like you've got to start getting camps in February for the summer, or all the camps are booked. she sends them to two different after school cares where she has to pick them up by 6:00. It is a little, you've got to start mapping out and getting the logistics down. (Jennifer)

You don't really know what it's like until you actually do it. And I think I catch myself in a situation where I think I know what it's going to be like and I really don't have a clue. (Karen)

The following comment was from a participant who was trying to hold family and career in balance: "I'm starting to think about it. I think it would be very hard to maintain career development. I think it would be truly hard to have children and put your work first" (Laura).

Consequences of Stalking the Unknown. In the past, when unknowns occurred in the women's careers, they tried to resolve them when they surfaced. These events caught women unaware and there were few options available and little time for resolution. Often these resulted in retrenching to part time work or opting out of the workforce for a period of time. The choices for resolution were often devastating to career. Participants were proactive about unknowns; primarily because they wanted to remain engaged in their careers and because many must work. They have witnessed the generation before them fall down. They fully understood the vulnerabilities, both long term economic and of self, that the previous generation experienced after falling down. They are attempting to stave off unknowns. The following was said by a participant expecting her second child who was assessing lateral options, but also fully comprehends the career consequences:

So that's my biggest hesitation. Is this going to stifle my career growth for the future? And I think it would. So, in the back of my mind I've got to weigh what's most important. So, I kind of interviewed a few people about it and once I got that, I stopped it for now. So, we'll see. (Denise)

Participants wrestled with what's important. How can one know? How can one know

the future value of importance? Yet the current situation demanded these choices.

Because a promotion might destabilize the perception of work/life balance, many participants

had ceased to dream about getting to the C-suite (a commonly used term in corporations

referring to the uppermost executive level)*,* or at least achieving their career plan. Participants

felt they could control the career component and hold it constant easier than the family

component. This is a dangerous perception if closing the gender gap at the top is a goal.

> And so, I think if you were to ask me specifically like which part of those folks that you mentioned would drive your next step more, it's got to be my kids right now. People will say to me, "but you can still get a promotion, you can get more help to raise your kids," but I don't want that. So, it's like any new opportunity that I either maybe look to find or that is brought to me, like I didn't apply for a certain promotion a few years back because I thought about it and I realized I didn't want that at that time in my life. Because I thought about it okay, that would mean I'm home less, I would have more stress. (Shari)

> Most participants had put career dreams in a holding pattern:

> I want to be in management; I want to deal with people; I think I'm a really good manager. It's always been a goal of mine. But now that I have kids I have this constant layer of worry of how I'm going to be able to do that but still be a wonderful mom too. And at this point I think, like I mentioned, I'm exploring some other options. And I think at this point I've decided where I am is great. (Denise)

> Women under acute stress even contemplated leaving careers behind for intervals of

time. It remained important for them to have the opportunity to excel as both a mother and a

professional. Participants continued to experience being a good mother and a successful leader

as somewhat mutually exclusive and virtually unattainable given the current context:

> I want these years for us to be connected. So, one of my girlfriends just did that. She quit project management and she drives the school bus in Lincoln County and she's a teacher's assistant. (Ella)

> I turned down a promotion because it wasn't the right time with Pat's recovery. Which probably hurt me. But it wasn't right for the family, So, I turned it down. So, there are sometimes when something has to give and it can't be all about work So, those are

tougher decisions because you know the consequences but in the end, family comes first. (Diane)

Participants expended so much energy *Stalking the Unknown* and *Solving For Having It All*, that they were left very little energy for dreaming. Women were dreaming in 24-hour cycles, one day at a time.

An additional consequence for *Stalking the Unknown* was to control the family component by limiting the number of children. Only one participant had three children. Several participants agreed having a third child would be a deal breaker if trying to rise to the top.

> Having a third is out of the question for him. It's something I still kind of want but he's like if we have a third child something has to break. One of our jobs has to stop, we'd have to get a full-time nanny or somebody to pick the kids up. We know the way our lives are now; a third would break us or not necessarily break us as divorce but break us, something would have to give. (Jennifer)

> I'll tell you I never worried about two but I worry about three. Like if I had a third child, I don't know how I would work. I don't know how I would do this. Because it is *so* hard to do it with two. (Carmen)

> But I think the real telling factor will be when everyone has another kid. Because childcare; double the cost. My salary is not being doubled. It's not like they're rewarding me for having another kid. Here's double the salary! (Ginny)

Stalking the unknown meant different things to spouses, most of which did very little stalking and provided mostly advice and commentary. Women experienced the spouse as less understanding and even callous. When women experienced an unknown event, it often rendered them less powerful at work and at home. The following reflection was from a participant who was laid off from her job in the financial industry two weeks before her second daughter was born with infant health issues. The participant was offered a job after her daughter was born in which travelling was required:

> So in my heart I wanted to work but I wanted it in my terms and it wasn't going to be. And he has wanted me to work; he's very much a guy that likes me to be working for whatever reasons. I think he just sees the value of working until you're 70; he thinks about retirement; and he thinks about me putting money into my 401K. (Ella)

Women carried all the family worry; it is through the dimensions of *Solving For Having It All* and *Stalking the Unknown* that the worry got channeled. In the above excerpt, Ella's husband's worry was not as elevated as hers. His family priorities were skewed differently. She explains it this way:

> I think maybe it's the caregiving piece. I felt like when I had the girls and he would be like 'why are you so worried and nervous?' This part of my brain is what is supposed to help keep them alive. (Ella)

The following comment was from a participant who accepted a very different role after leaving an intolerant work culture and was still struggling to confide in her spouse: "I have not felt completely free to be vulnerable with him about how insecure I am and scared" (Tess).

Although the intent of *Stalking the Unknown* was to feel control, often participants expressed feelings of vulnerability:

> Yeah, I cry, I probably cry and then I have to get to some rationalization in my head. I probably, well like with the nursing, okay if I can get to six months I have another plan. I just change my mentality, tell myself abort, let's try something else. The plan was: I can breastfeed for six months; I will force myself; I will force him through crying. Get to six months we can do this and I'll get his vitamins this way or I'll just have to you know, there's always got to be a plan for me. (Jennifer)

Stalking the unknown: summary of explanatory matrix. The reality for participants was that someone must take responsibility for children and in general, their partners did not. Accepting, but not necessarily choosing this responsibility, creates an element of risk to career fulfillment.

> Nancy Folbre (2004) argues that the time-use outcomes we observe today are not necessarily the result of free individual choice, nor are they necessarily efficient. She asserts that the inherent difficulties in coordinating caregiving activities has resulted in the evolution of institutions designed to facilitate this coordination that may be resistant to change. (Connelly & Kimmel, 2015, p. 2)

Stalking the unknown is about mitigating risk. Gill (2014b) interrogates this dimension more deeply and asks why society has taken for granted that "the 'risks' of cultural work should

be borne entirely by the individual" (p. 516). Who benefits from this effort? Women perceived

that they can never exhibit vulnerability or fall down; So, *Stalking the Unknown* was imperative

to continued growth.

   ***Leading in a Glass Box*: dimension and explanatory matrix.** Although most

participants conceded that the Culture of Work is more gender tolerant than in the past given the

conversation of diversity in our culture, there are still issues that they experience as token women

at the top. These experiences made participants feel that they were boxed in their organizational

reach of power and confined to expertise.

> I feel like on certain issues people really respect my opinion and my point, but other
> issues they don't. Like I can't negotiate a pay raise for some reason, I don't have power
> there. But if it's in my glass box, then I have that power. But it's only because it's in my
> realm of expertise versus just a general kind of power in my point. (Karen)

   Even in more progressive work cultures, the glass box metaphor pervaded the experience

of leading. Table 4.4 shows the dimensional properties of the primary dimension *Leading in a*

Glass Box.

Table 4.4

Properties for Primary Dimension of Leading in a Glass Box

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Leading in a Glass Box	Organization	. Shut out from organizational processes . Visibility and Invisibility . Tested . Power and Powerlessness	. Attending women's leadership conferences . Not failing . Attempting influence	. Internal paranoia . Not calling out inequities . Trapped in the glass box

   Conditions of Leading in a Glass Box. Organizational ambiguity contributed to the

experience of the glass box. Karen, as quoted above, didn't understand why her negotiations for

a pay increase failed, as the reasons were not communicated to her by her superiors. Her boss

was male, and she experienced this lack of power as patriarchal hegemony. She was shut out of

the organizational processes:

> There's going to be people who can schmooze their way in and there's going to be people who aren't so great at it. I'm not so great at schmoozing but he's very, I don't know, he's very good at schmoozing and doing the political dance with the right people and knowing who the right people are. (Karen)

She, and other participants were excluded from informal organizational activities where

the good old boys club thrives.

> He's mentioned just in casual conversation that he's golfing with so-and-so or he went on a hunting trip because everyone at X goes on hunting trips. And I'm like, "I don't go for hunting trips. I don't know how to hunt." Being a man he has an opportunity where there's conversations and there's trips and events. Whereas as woman I don't. (Karen)

> I would also just add that a lot of times all the guys would get together and go on hunting trips with suppliers and suppliers would not invite females, which was usually me, because we weren't one of the guys. So, it was growing up in a career that was not completely inclusive, So, it was quite challenging. I still believe that some of the buddy system really still applies. The guys are getting together for golf, there's still conversations being had about career development on the golf course. It doesn't really give the females that same opportunity unless you want to go hunting or fishing. (Tess)

> Often women were singled out and tested:

> And he allowed me to come into the office where the shift supervisors could all unload on me and he sat back smiling wanting to see how I would react. To see if I could handle myself and I showed that I could. But I find that they test you and they want to see if you can handle it: Will you explode or what will you do? (Diane)

Because there are so few women at the top, women in leadership positions became a

target for being both visible and invisible. The below excerpt points to the scrutiny and visibility

in the glass box:

> If I'm jumping in and trying to defend myself them I'm becoming a person that's not confident in what she's saying, doesn't have the ability to kind of control a room or control the present. And I'm learning how to battle that right now. Sometimes I do want to jump in when they're saying something I don't believe in, but it's understanding the delicacy of how that reflects on you as a person and how people will take you and your demeanor. (Jennifer)

And the paradox of the invisibility of the glass box: "But what is interesting, I see it more hierarchically too, like if somebody is really frustrated, they really need something, they bypass me and go straight to my boss" (Shari).

Strategies/Processes for Leading in a Glass Box. Some women took a "prove them wrong" or "educate them" approach in attempts to influence the environment outside the glass box or penetrate the walls to the glass box:

> There actually were two very pivotal moments where I was starting out as a buyer and I had a female boss and I came on board and she told me that I was too nice to cut it and that I would never cut it in the role because of being just too nice. At that point I made a decision in my mind to prove her wrong. So, I did everything possible to really prove her wrong and prove that I could do that job and ultimately did. (Tera)

> I think if people get to that level and prove themselves out it will happen. And open those doors where it's shown that they can be successful. But I want it to be based on the fact of their performance and not anything else. (Diane)

Some women worked harder than male counterparts, over performed and felt like failure was unacceptable:

> So, if I perform, I should be recognized for it but in the sense of a good ole boys club, it's harder to get that recognition. So, you have to do things 10 times harder to get to the same spot. (Diane)

In some organizations, over performing was the only way to get promoted even though the glass box travelled with you up the ladder: "And this organization is one that yeah, you can apply for promotions, but the way we typically do things is typically you're picked for a promotion as opposed to applying for one" (Shari).

Because women felt as if they could not fail, they needed more feedback as they rose through the ranks for often, as they rose into leadership positions, they only received feedback when something went wrong:

> So, I came from . . . so, this is really up until fifteen months ago when I got this new role, so I came from a very metrics oriented environment. So, I defined my worth by how good

my name looked on the stack rank or on the scorecard. So, that's where I've really struggled and put a lot of "oh, I could have done a better job." So, I need a little feedback. So that, I think, makes me a little vulnerable. Because the higher you get, I think the less you get of that. People aren't telling you you're great. We're really good at telling the front line people that they're doing a good job, but the higher you get, you don't get that a lot. (Carmen)

Although working virtually might be more conducive to managing family demands, the great need for feedback or "reading the room" most often outweighed the convenience of working from home:

It's just that you have to be very self-aware of your audience, you have to read the room. A lot of my co-workers, the team under me, people like to work from home, I like to be in the meeting. I like to see their faces; I like to see their reactions; I like to read the room. I cannot do that over the phone. (Jennifer)

Women were attending women's leadership conferences and in some organizations, creating internal mentoring programs, workshops and summits. The following excerpt is from a participant in healthcare where her organization is 70% women in the lower ranks, but women only occupy 20% in the ranks of leadership. What is compelling and, unfortunately somewhat unique about this situation, is that there is a strong female proponent in a leadership position in HR that is spearheading this progress and soliciting the help of the participant:

I want to help close that gap. I don't know what it looks like, but let's talk. And so, we're thinking about creating like a summit or another program in addition to our mentoring program that we do, something that really helps, kind of a sponsorship program to pull ladies up in the organization. (Shari)

Consequences of Leading in a Glass Box. The experience of *Leading in a Glass Box* left women feeling very isolated in their leadership. They were still in the minority in the upper ranks of the organization. They felt trapped in the glass box. Minorities don't have the combination to exit the box. The good old boys club still holds the organizational keys to the glass box. In the below excerpt, the participant becomes a little sarcastic about what a women's club might resemble:

It's just guys being guys and they naturally bond and get close because they are men and they have same interests. How do we do that with women if there's only one woman executive? Do we all hang out with the one woman executive? (Karen)

Being trapped in the glass box created what one participant termed "internal paranoia." Some quieted the voice in the glass box with the approach of staying—fighting off the imposter syndrome sustained by the glass box.

There's an external and an internal effect. I think the internal uncertainty that existed before I did this is still there. I wonder if I can, I wonder if I'm good enough, I wonder if they'll like me, am I really worth what I'm asking for? It still exists on the inside. I think what has changed is the necessity to push forward regardless of how I feel. And what I tell people—and I use it some in the corporate world—but it's the Sylvia Plath approach to working in the world, which is if I act like what I'm doing is acceptable and normal then people will think that it is. So, I act like I've got this when there are times when I feel like I don't. (Tess)

And sometimes it feels like imposter syndrome. Sometimes I feel like somebody is going to find out that I don't deserve to be here and I don't know as much as they think I know. (Sonia)

Laura described the internal paranoia and the insecurity it breeds as "wearing the female cloak":

But I think I always feel, to your original point whenever we stand in a room we introduce ourselves, I always have an insecurity. And you don't really know what it is. Is it me? Am I just insecure in a room of people? Surely not. Or do all the females in the room feel this way, just because of the male dominance? I don't know. But I do think that kind of wearing this female cloak, or whatever, definitely creates insecurity. (Laura)

Several participants articulated even being isolated when among women in that women don't have these feelings of isolation with each other. As Laura comments: "Is it me . . . or do all females in the room feel this way?" She is unsure because she is isolated in the experience.

Rumination was a common theme and kept women up at night:

I come home after a meeting, if I said something in a meeting and it didn't go well I'm going to remember that, and I think about it. Everybody lets it roll off their shoulder—most men do. And I know you've got to let that roll of your shoulder. I mean you're going to have those times. And I worry, did I piss that person off, like I don't want to have a bad relationship with that person. Because I'm not scared of stating an opinion or getting in a heated conversation but at the end of the day I don't want to ruin a

relationship because of that. So, I can't sleep at night sometimes. I fret over little things. (Jennifer)

In addition to the consequences of being trapped in a glass box and experiencing internal

paranoia, women failed to call out inequities in the workplace: they failed to act on righting

wrongs. Karen's comments provide an example of a missed opportunity:

> And that's when I realized that no, we can't keep gossiping like this. This really tears her down. It tears all of us down because the next time you're up for promotion you shouldn't be denied something because you're young. You shouldn't be denied something because you are a woman. You shouldn't be denied something for any reason. If you're capable of doing it then you're capable of doing it. So, that was really disappointing of me to hear it from our cohorts in the same leadership program. Instead of being excited, they really dragged her down. (Karen)

When asked if she ever articulated those sentiments, Karen replied:

> You know what, I didn't. I didn't bring it up . . . I think instead of saying you shouldn't do that, I said, "Well you know, she deserved it." I don't know how to approach those. I'm a conflict avoider myself, So, I don't know how else I would have handled it. (Karen)

If you were one of the few at the top and trapped in a glass box, it was difficult to exact

social justice and change. As a consequence, very little changed. Complacency left a void in

applicable strategies. In the following excerpt, Karen recognizes the benefits of the good old

boys' club, but hasn't taken action to formulate a counter network:

> Have I tried to start a girl's club at X? No. Have we tried to really make it a point to get together and go out as women? No. But guys do that. Guys have had so many years to practice this art and time, and we're just now starting to think about it. That this is where in the past I might have shied away from going to a women's only event or a women's event, but guys have been doing it . . . So, they've been doing it so long that it's just like embedded in how to be a guy. Women—we haven't been doing that for very long in a workplace setting. We just need to get in practice. (Karen)

Leading in a Glass Box: summary of explanatory matrix. Participants experienced

being promoted into the ranks of leadership but having a limited span of control and influence.

They lived beneath the corporate veil of power and ambiguity. They have not been successful in

penetrating the good old boys club and remain perplexed as to how to shatter the walls of the

box. Several participants entertained the notion of a "good old women's club" but couldn't

envision what that might look like given the time poverty they experience. There was no time to

dream about liberation from the glass box. This dimension manifests the subtleness of today's

sexism and masculine hegemony in the workplace and how women in this study navigated those

barriers. Until the informal structures of the organization relent, women will continue to lead in

a glass box.

     *Negotiating Equality***: Dimension and explanatory matrix.** Participants discussed

negotiating equality in both work and home spheres. These spheres, nor the negotiation

processes that ensue, are mutually exclusive. While Bowles and McGinn (2008) focus on

understanding the gender wage gap, their application of two-level game logic (Putnam, 1988), in

order to comprehend the complexity of negotiating between work and home is extremely

relevant: "We argue that one cannot understand the effects of gender and negotiation on work

compensation without recognizing the fundamental interlocks between gender effects in

candidate–employer negotiations and gender effects in intrahousehold bargaining" (Bowles &

McGinn, 2008, p. 394). Whereas men experience the privilege of hegemony in work and home

spheres, women must continually negotiate for some semblance of equality at each level. The

gender wage gap has historically de-leveraged women's position in such negotiations. This

study continues to elucidate the importance of closing that gap to give women more negotiation

leverage on both levels. Table 4.5 lists the dimensional properties of the primary dimension,

Negotiating Equality.

Table 4.5

Properties for Primary Dimension of Negotiating Reality

DIMENSION	CONTEXT	CONDITIONS	PROCESSES	CONSEQUENCES
Negotiating Equality	Organization, Family, Marriage, Home	. Inequities in work and marriage . Dual careers . Prospects of divorce	. Using iPhone technologies . Asking for spousal help . Asking for work equality	. 2 level negotiations . Move toward individuation of marriage . Staying in the pipeline

Conditions for Negotiating Equality. Negotiating equality was difficult given that both

sides of the negotiating table are in constant flux. While concepts of marriage have not kept pace

with concepts of work, there is a movement away from traditional concepts of marriage to

individualized marriage (Yodanis & Lauer, 2016). The workday continues to bleed over into

dedicated family time. Marital partners not only aspire to dual jobs, but dual careers. This

participant describes the battle:

> All those women speakers, I counted them and I think 70% of them were divorced. You
> don't see many dual power couples. I'm not saying we're both unhappy or anything like
> that, but I can't even get to middle class power jobs without every day I mean, it takes
> me—you'll have to get the kids. Yeah. It's a battle every day. (Jennifer)

The need for help in the domestic realm has increased. Certainly, there are strong trends

for today's fatherhood to be far more engaged in parental responsibilities than in generations

before (Stambor, 2005). But while men are no doubt doing a great deal more housekeeping and

child care than their fathers performed, women still bear roughly 70% of domestic responsibility

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). This dimension is critically impacted by men's perception of

domestic equality; it is far from the realities experienced by women in this study:

> Compared to what our parents did he does a lot and he would say 50/50 but it's more like
> 70/30. They're counting things like I loaded the dishwasher. Like well that's not my
> responsibility to start with. Like everything is like we helped you do this. So, is it all on
> me"? (Jennifer)

Women in this study experienced great frustration in attempting to negotiate equality in the marriage because perception is more difficult to assuage. Instead of looking at day-to-day family responsibilities, men compared themselves to other male peers or their fathers. The responsibility for children proved to be especially problematic for married women in this study because they continue to find themselves in the primary care role:

> But when you get the call you have to leave, rearrange your day, and then they have to be home for 24 hours—even if, she gets fevers when she's teething, or two messy diapers . . . you're done. Then they [the daycare] were closed on Monday for the snow day. Kurt is well . . . "I can't be home" and his mom will help us out a lot but she now has a part time job; so, she is not as on call as she used to be; so, are you scrambling to find a babysitter or do I just work from home? Work from home—you're not really working when you have a one-year-old that's trying to walk and doesn't like taking a nap. (Ginny)

Staying in the pipeline can prove difficult due to the lack of childcare resources and unequal spousal responsibility. The educational system remains out of sync with work schedules while the requirements for parenting have escalated. The birth of children and the responsibility of family collide with critical years in career building.

What participants cited most often was not merely the time and energy allocated to domestic responsibilities and childcare, but the sole responsibility of coordination. Intertwined with coordination was the need for anticipation especially given time poverty.

> Sometimes I sit in my bed at night and I look at my husband and I'm going over everything today, I'm buying clothes for my kids online and I'm looking at him and he's got a demanding job too but I'm like he can shut it all off. A woman's brain is always thinking about something. I feel like he's out of work and I've shut work out but whose going to get winter clothes for the kids, whose going to sign them up for Cyber Shot? (Jennifer)

Most participants referred to having a chaotic brain that they absolutely could not turn off. Many had cultivated the ability to focus, but this hard wiring to multi-task added to the complexities of this dimension and deterred the ability to simply not care.

Women also negotiated for equality at work. Powerful male gatekeepers exerted pressure for women to seek equality in the work sphere. Women who lead, experience gender bias, testing, *Leading in a Glass Box* and exclusion to the informal politics of the organization but often these come in the forms of subtle, second generation gender biases. It proved very difficult to negotiate with perception and ambiguity:

> I don't know why, because I've tried to negotiate several times but they're all like, "No, we can't do it." But then when my manager asks, I don't know if his level . . . He's very charismatic, I think that's part of it but he's been able to negotiate raises on my behalf too. (Karen)

Equality had to be constantly negotiated in the organizational experience. This excerpt connotes the subtleness of second-generation gender bias:

> Our new CEO came into the room with all of the family and all of the executives were meeting him really for only about the second or third time, but in his new role as CEO. Very nice gentleman, very nice gentleman. Older gentleman, I think he's 65. But he comes into the room and he bypasses three women and goes over and shakes five men's hands and did not shake our hand. (Tera)

How can you negotiate equality in this situation? The subtleness makes it very difficult to address. The participant in the excerpt below is currently in the C-suite of a company who has just merged with another and is trying to find some footing in the negotiation process:

> They have no female leaders. So, I'll be honest with you: this is a business case in itself because my former CEO at _____ that is now just exiting and will be on the board, he said it is up to you and two of my other female colleagues to teach them about diversity and inclusion. So, I've been doing that . . . so, we'll see how that goes. The story is still unfinished; so, we'll see how it goes. (Tess)

Strategies/processes for Negotiating Equality. Married couples often employed iPhone calendars as tools to navigate responsibility and move toward career equality. Many referred to that calendar as "the Bible," with the rules of engagement being that once something is placed on the calendar, the other party cannot override it. Occasionally, husband and wife would have simultaneous travel or meetings that would create a conflict. Participants resolved these conflicts

by negotiating as to which person had the most important event to their career and which had

some flexibility. Having a spouse who actualizes marital equality is critical to these

negotiations:

> So snow days, last month, a few weeks ago, there was Friday, Monday and Tuesday, and that was a situation where my husband had bigger work calls; he had to travel next week so that was 100% on me, and that's just kind of what happens. There have been situations where we both have meetings or we may have to travel at the same time and we literally look at those two meetings and go which meeting is more important to that person's career? (Carmen)

Marital negotiations that pivoted around equality required a focus on both career and

family by both partners. Negotiations were very different for women whose spouses perceived

their jobs as the important one or didn't prioritize family. "He is career planning; and I took a

step back because my focus is on the girls" (Ella). Because salaries are often commensurate,

money is no longer a deciding factor of importance: "Then they [day care] were closed on

Monday for the snow day. Kurt is well 'I can't be home'" (Ginny). Participants perceived

getting closed down in negotiations by this lack of family focus. It is noteworthy that Ginny's

husband works in an environment where he is harassed for asking for family time:

> He got pushback from his boss on just because you have a kid doesn't mean you shouldn't be putting in extra hours. And he's says: "Well I have a wife that works, your wife never did; your wife has never worked; so, when my wife has to work, I do have to be available to get to the daycare before it closes and in turn she is doing that for me most of the time because I'm usually the one that's out the door at 5 to pick Lucy up which is why I bring work home." But he gets flack from his boss, which is really sad. (Ginny)

Masculine gender discrimination at work and socially at large also impedes the

negotiation process at both levels. Both spouses may encounter bullying from superiors and

peers.

Most women used a strategy of asking for spousal support, but rarely felt spouses were fully responsive. Most also agreed that spouses performed more tasks than their fathers, but it was nowhere near a 50/50 arrangement.

Women have to be careful as to how they negotiate for equality at work. The subtleness often exacerbates negotiation strategies:

> Because first I think well that's just a crutch to say it's more difficult to be a woman in business. But then I go back and I think if it weren't for this—you know I could just say what I wanted to say and it would not come across crass or snippy, it would just be what I have do say, if I was a man. (Laura)

Millennials and late Gen-Xers in the theoretical sample articulated the experience of gender differences and sought to reconcile those differences by *Negotiating Equality* at all levels of their lives. Older participants in the purposeful sample, late Baby Boomers and early Gen-Xers, took a gender-neutral or gender blind perspective to work and thus negotiated less for equality:

> I made a conscious conversation with myself that I'm not getting bogged down in this man versus woman thing. I saw so many women that were starting at [X] that were so focused on "he's a man I'm a woman, I've got to work harder, better about salaries" and "do they make more or do they not make more, do they get promoted faster, do they not?" I just felt that—I'm not dismissing that those are genuine feelings but it was such a waste of time to me because I can't control any of it. My responsibility is to find my way and be true to myself. (Cathy)

Another felt that a gender difference attitude had actually hurt women that she worked with:

> I had a lady in my career and she always told me, she would say things like you know you really need to surround yourself with women that are going to support you. She had this mindset that that's what it was going to take for a woman. She was somewhat limited in her career path, she got stuck and I remember telling her, I said I don't agree with that. And I think part of her getting stuck was that mindset. (Madison)

Millennials and late Gen-Xers in the theoretical sample articulated the experience of gender differences and sought to reconcile those differences through Negotiating Equality at all levels in their lives.

Consequences of Negotiating Equality. Because participants experienced inequality in both the work and marital realms, women continued to employ two-level negotiations (McGinn & Bowles, 2008) as a path to move toward equality. This was the primary tool for moving toward quality in both spheres. If they remained in the pipeline, and they did for both personal and economic reasons, they had few additional tools available.

They were moving concepts of marriage along the continuum of individuation. The question remains as to who needs to change to accommodate the new American dual earner family. Is it men that need to change? Participants experienced so much time poverty and indicated that it is men that need to change if marriage remains a viable institution.

Although the majority of the theoretical sample insisted that divorce was not a consideration, statistically, if divorce rates continue current trends, 40% to 50% of them will be divorced by year 12 of marriage (Fleisher, 2017). Some Millennials have not yet reached that threshold. Failed negotiation attempts in either sphere can result in leaving that sphere.

Women, and perhaps men as well, are creating new American marital and family norms. This metamorphosis will continue until women reach some critical mass at the top where the cultural norms of work move away from masculinity and toward femininity. Breadwinner status is becoming an unusable reference point in marital negotiations. The wage gap is slowly narrowing: In the wife-earns-more scenario, the woman takes home 68% of the total family earnings as compared with men's 82%; but there are 25% of working women earning more than their spouses in 2014 as compared to 15% in 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). There is

turbulence in the changing marital dynamics and women are experiencing the bumps of

ambiguity. As a consequence they are frustrated with current experience of marriage.

Negotiating equality keeps women creeping forward in their leadership; expanding wages

and remaining in the pipeline to reach the top. Several high-ranking participants in this study felt

an obligation to move organizations toward diversity and inclusion. These women have been

able to penetrate the glass box and express the power of influence:

> There are very different cultures; so, we're going to have to take the best of both and blend them. But it is interesting because they have all men. So, I was there 2 days this week and I was the only female leader in the executive leadership role in the room. And so, there's a lot of ownership in that and showing even their women that you can continue to grow and develop and take on more roles. (Tera)

It is critical to note that the women taking ownership of diversity and inclusion in this

study, occupied very senior positions in the organization and perhaps felt that they could take

greater action around those initiatives. However, they continued to take a wait-and-see attitude

toward results.

> The state of constant negotiation for equality is mentally stressful:

> Stressors that threaten valued roles, goals, and ideals; self-conceptions (our identities or how we define ourselves); and self-evaluations (our sense of ourselves as valuable or worthless and efficacious or not) matter more than others. This implies that in order to understand how positions in social hierarchies influence mental health, we must understand their associations with these kinds of threats. (McLeod, 2015, p. 151)

> The dimension of *Negotiating Equality* indicated that even though women experience

gender bias at work and must continue to negotiate for equality in that sphere, their frustrations

were directed at the marital unit. Even in the midst of frustration, they were trying not to

perpetuate previous decades of divorce: "My biggest fear is getting to both of us being too pretty

important is the wrong word—having pretty high pressure jobs that require a lot of attention and

result in divorce" (Jennifer). They very much valued the institution of marriage and this adds

another layer of complexity to this dimension. It creates dissonance in that women directed frustration into a long-held idea of self in an equitable marriage.

The dimensions, *Solving For Having It All* and *Stalking the Unknown*, are very much entwined with this dimension and amplified frustration. Negotiating for equality remains in service to the core dimension, *Growing in Leadership*.

Negotiating Equality: summary of explanatory matrix. From these stories, it is evident that women negotiate for equality in all contexts of their lives. Younger women directed frustration with inequalities into the marriage. These are women who vowed never to divorce. It violates their ideals of marriage. Jockeying for equality is a mentally exhausting process. It often suppresses authenticity, self-confidence and self-expression. It pervades human experience. It places women in a perpetual state of undervaluation.

Summary of Dimensional Analysis

All the dimensions work together to formulate how women who lead make meaning of their lives. They aggregate existence inside the situation. "The construction of meanings as situationally sufficient requires an awareness of what the audience assumes and expects, and what the purpose demands" (Caron & Bowers, 2000, p. 290). These dimensions serve as a bridge between audience and purpose. Women aspire to actualize their lives through the core dimension but this can only be sustained if the other primary dimensions—*Solving For Having It All , Stalking the Unknown, Leading in a Glass Box,* and *Negotiating Equality*—are in play. These dimensions are supported by a precariousness of karma: any protracted turbulence in any of the primary dimensions can diminish or halt leadership growth. Additionally, turning all the dimensions on at the same time is mentally exhausting. It is difficult to flourish when constantly

working in cognitive overdrive. The situational analysis which frames these dimensions will be

discussed in detail in Chapter V.

Chapter V: Findings of the Study—Situational Analysis

This chapter explores the context in which women lead. It refocuses study findings to the macro level and provides an outward lens from which to juxtapose the dimensional analysis. The situational analysis is not mutually exclusive from the dimensional analysis in that both operate as the whole. This study cannot be fully understood without the integration of the situational context with the dimensions: the situation drives participant's social processes and understandings.

> Questions of power enter and lead us to also ask how people organize themselves in the face of others trying to organize them differently, and how they organize themselves vis-à-vis the broader structural situations in which they find themselves and with which they must come to grips, in part through acting, producing and responding to discourses. (Clarke, 2005, p. 109)

Each situation explored earned a place in this analysis because participants deemed it influential to their experiences. Discourses in the situation were explored as they emerged in the excerpts from women, to bridge, extend, and triangulate the study analysis and construct the world arena and positional maps. Data collected in this exploration is crucial to the situational analysis discussion. There were many tangential discourses and debates that greatly impacted participants' lives and required disentanglement for situational clarity.

Discourses explored in this situational analysis included those around childcare, marriage, public policy, parental leaves, work and family policies, American work ethic and labor markets. Discourses were interrogated from a pragmatist point of view by looking for "the right tools for the job" (Clarke, 2005, p. 146).

The situational analysis was thus embellished by reviewing all relevant documents and artifacts, securing expert interviews in various fields of inquiry including academia, consultancy, and public policy, reviewing public blogs and articles, reviewing organizational narratives,

observing virtual communities, and reviewing public policy documents that moved the analysis toward greater triangulation. For example, discourses about childcare and parental leaves led to exploration of corporate benefits and how corporations strategize around those offerings. Exploration included the review of corporate public statements, contacting corporate relations departments and interviewing corporate benefits consultants. Exploration continued into the government realm by interviewing policy makers to understand what role our government holds in its abstinence in the situation.

Reviewing nonprofit reports on childcare was integral to the situation analysis and often prompted a personal conversation with report authors. An understanding of state childcare regulations prompted a review of state policies and mandates. There was a need to explore the capacities of urban planning as participants expressed a dearth of childcare facilities near uptown worksites and this was explored by securing an interview with city partners. This situational analysis also led to the perusal of documentation including committee reports and newspaper articles produced by states that are doing a better job with supplementing childcare and supporting working parents. The analysis extended into pediatrics to understand how child health and development protocol decisions are made as these decisions greatly impacted the lives of participants. This was accomplished by reviewing pediatric articles and interviewing pediatricians.

Discourses of childcare are but one facet of this analysis but mapping this breadcrumb illustrates the power of performing situational analysis to bring the complexity of the context into full view. It facilitated moving childcare as an issue, away from the individual level into a structural level. Mapping facilitates an understanding of not only what but how elements in this

situation impact women's understandings and behavior and moves the analysis away from a solely individual focus.

Clarke (2003, 2005) suggested that situational mapping not only visually illustrates the complexities between relationships, but also capitalizes on researcher knowledge without resorting to reductionist analyses (Charmaz, 2006). Situational analysis moves away from social action and process along a continuum to social ecology. Following "Foucault's footsteps" (Prior, 1997, p. 63), situational analysis de-centers the human individual as the unit of analysis and moves into,

> sites of his (Foucault) serious theorizing . . . historical, narrative/textural and visual discourses. This reconceptualization of the nonhuman as not only important but agentic is deeply provocative and productive . . . "Seeing" the agency of the nonhuman elements present in the situation disrupts the taken-for-granted, creating Meadian . . . moments of conceptual rupture through which we can see the world afresh. (Clarke, 2009, pp. 201–203)

De-centering the individual as the unit of analysis, is particularly critical in this pursuit as both American culture and American research centers the individual as the unit of analysis and thus the site of change. While the dimensional analysis and the situational analysis take a co-deterministic approach to the social universe, and the situational analysis acts to de-center the individual or agency as the site of change, it is in the transactions between the two where change can be effected (Depelteau, 2007). Therefore, a probing of both is necessary. Situational analysis complements the beholding process and is instrumental to the social justice purpose of this research. It provides a theoretical stage for the dimensional analysis presented in Chapter IV.

The Situational Analysis

Women who lead find themselves in a challenging context with macro level pressures in nearly every context considered. Much like Ilya Prigogine's (1977) dissipative and complex

systems, these macro elements hold women far from equilibrium as energy flows around women and back into the powerful societal influences.

   Throughout the data collection process, I assembled a messy situational map and an ordered situational map. The messy or abstract situational map was an exercise in brainstorming. It facilitates free thinking and gives no particular weight to any element listed in the map. It also facilitated the thinking of interrelationships between the elements of the map. Figure 5.1 depicts an early messy situational map followed by Table 5.1, which depicts the ordered situational map. The ordered map provided a structured way to brainstorm around the possible elements in the situation so that an element, especially one cloaked in silence or power, might not be inadvertently omitted. As contexts appeared in the data collected from personal interviews, the data were coded at the micro level and parsed into situational properties that exist through the dimensions. These were then placed at random in the messy situational map and migrated to the ordered map when it was apparent to the researcher which ordered map heading had the best category fit. Category language reflects direct participant language, coding language and situational elements alluded to by participants and identified by the researcher in further probing the situation as supporting the dimensions. Categories were organized using the ordered map headings as suggested by Clarke (2005, p. 90). The ordered map represents the situation as articulated by participants in this study but may not exacerbate all elements of the situation in which women lead. Some situational elements in Table 5.1 appear several times under different headings, illustrating their pervasiveness in the overall setting of women leaders.

Ideals of Motherhood

Consultants

Minimalist Market Based Economy

Boards of Trustees

LinkedIn

Professional Associations & Networks

Gender Pay Gap

Employment Regulations

Virtual Work

Organizations

Professional & Advanced Education

American Ideas Of Capitalism

Culture of Overwork

World Economic Forum

Child Health Agencies

Feminism

Masculine Ideas of Management

Pipeline Issues

Legal System

Federal Government

Institution of marriage

Technology

Student Loans

Business & Industry Lobbies

Academia Research

Women's Symposia & Conferences

Devaluation of Caring

Shareholders

Increase in Childhood Disorders

State Government

Merit

Sticky Floor Effect

Industry Norms

Mentoring Sponsorship

Global Influences

Time Poverty

Female Stereotypes

Protestant Work Ethic

Organizational Competition

Family Values

24/7 Accessibility via cell phone

Power

Lack of Unions

Human Relations Actors

Organizational gatekeepers

Changing Organizational Platforms

Figure 5.1. Messy situational map showing contextual factors raised in interviews.

Table 5.1

Ordered Situational Map

INDIVIDUAL HUMAN ELEMENTS	NONHUMAN ELEMENTS
Managers/colleagues/teams/direct reports	Organizations/cultures of Work
Board of directors	Money
Human Relations staff	iPhone/technologies
Spouse/significant Other	Organizational family policies
Spouse's Managers/Colleagues	Diversity and inclusion programs
Children	Childcare
Children's teachers	Educational system
Parents/extended family	World Economic Forum Gender Index
Mentors/mentees	Reports
Organizational gatekeepers	
CEO	IMPLICATED/SILENT ACTORS
	Children
COLLECTIVE HUMAN ELEMENTS	Childcare/educational system
TWIST	State government
Network of executive women	College
Pediatricians	Organizational and societal power
Intra-organizational networks	The "gaze"
Organic groups (Lean In)	
World Economic Forum	DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NONHUMAN
Linked-In Groups	ACTORS
Professional associations	Good place for women to work
Child development researchers	
Department of Social Services	SPATIAL ELEMENTS
Consultants	Urban planning for daycare
Academia	Family friendly cities
	Work travel
DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION	Blurred technology boundaries
INDIVIDUAL/COLLECTIVE OF HUMAN ACTORS	Sick child
Good mother/working mother	Virtual work
Successful woman	Part-time/Flextime work
Collaborator	
Nurturer	
Emotional woman	
Bitch/mean	
Professional woman	
Breadwinner	

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC ELEMENTS	SOCIOCULTURAL/SYMBOLIC ELEMENT
Lack of political representation	Caring undervalued
No national work/family policies since1993	Gendered expectations of childcare
State Regulations of daycare	Lack of spousal domestic support
Escalating costs of daycare	Daycare/educational system rules out of sync with work rules
Organizational paternity Leaves	Changing marital expectations
Gender wage gap	Unlimited media access
Dual earner families	Escalating parenting demands
Lilly Ledbetter Act	Children's access to media
Student loans	Disdain for quotas
Corporate lobbies	Second generation gender bias
Lobbies	Higher in organizational hierarchy
No legislation to audit organizational diversity	Diversity= more time at work
Additional education for children	Instant contact with children via smartphones
Weak affirmative action	Millennial attitudes toward equality
Global economies	Equality
World Economic Forum	Individualism
Scandinavian gender model	Gender is problematic
Capitalism	Post feminism
Money	Breastfeeding
	Divorce
TEMPORAL ELEMENTS	American competitiveness
Time poverty	Female stereotypes
Work demands/childcare demands	Attractive/Visible
Out of sync school day with workday	Spirituality as explanatory
Blurred technology boundaries	Self-blame
Invisible coordination of family	Availability after workday
Invisible caregiving	
Promotions/Special Projects	
Sick Child	**RELATED DISCOURSES**
Part-time/flex-time work	United States gender inequality
Time for self	Misogyny
	Capitalism/greed
	Mental Stress balancing all
MAJOR ISSUES/DEBATES	Bottom line mentality
Women and leadership	
Second generation gender bias	
Organizational masculine hegemony	**OTHER KEY ELEMENTS**
Balance of work and family	Where is the "fix" to gender parity?
Redesign of work cultures	
New concepts of marriage	

From the ordered map of Table 5.1, a social/world arenas map was extrapolated that attends to the key macro forces at play as women lead The World Arenas Map (Fig. 5.2) delineates commitments by actors to participate in world arenas. The mapping of arenas provides a meso-level analysis of the individual intersecting with the social in a way that they are "simultaneously creating and being constituted through discourses" (Clarke, 2005, p. 110). The world arenas map tethers the situation and various discourses as both singular and together: "The social worlds/arenas map produces multiplicity through looking at each situation 'over the shoulder' of each of the social worlds in each arena" (Clarke, 2016, para. 9). Each of the worlds in this map pivots to a different world perspective, a perspective distinctive to that social arena, and which represents different commitments amongst the actors belonging to these arenas. In Clarke's (2005) words, each world arena thus represents a different "universe of discourse" (p. 46).
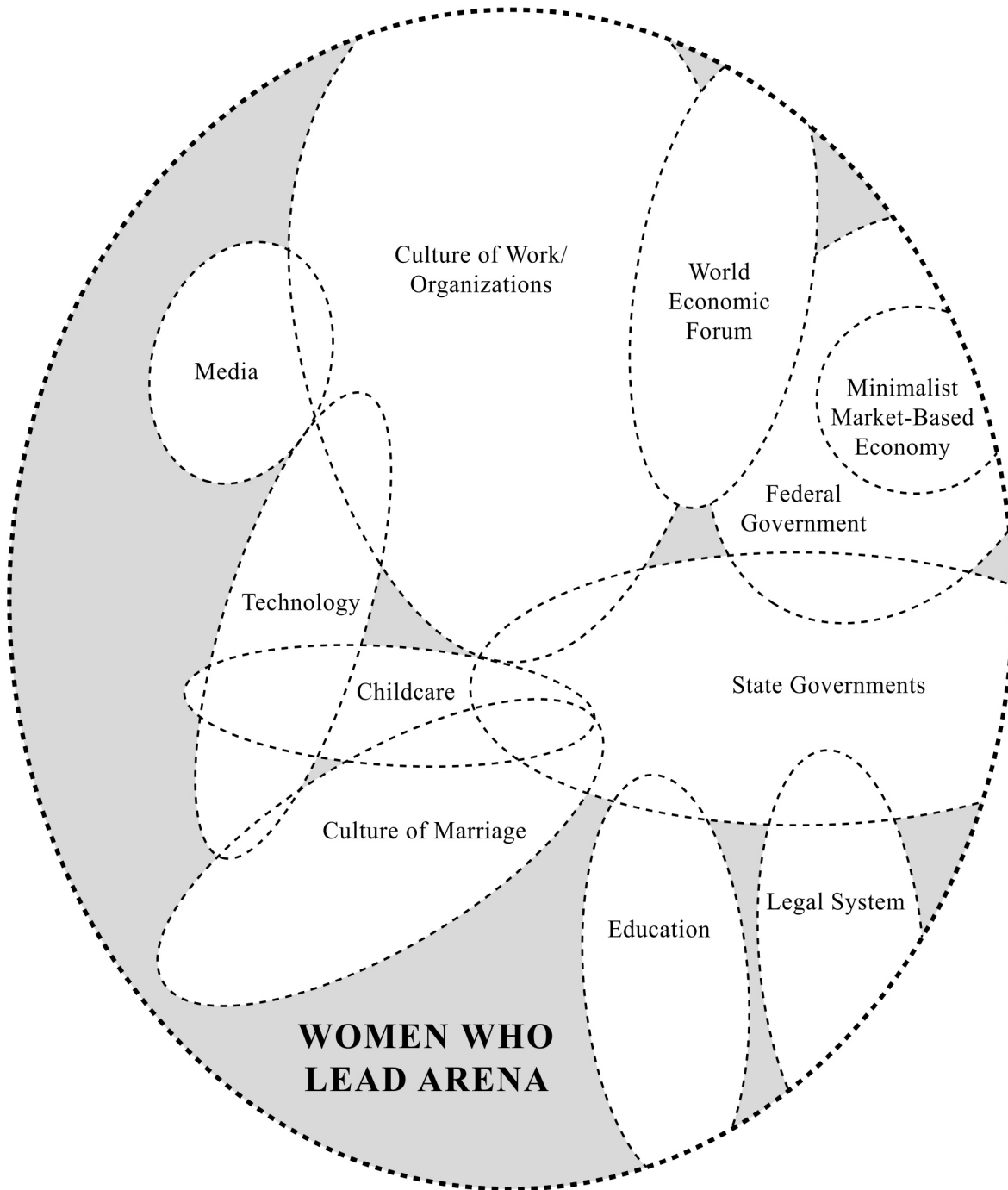
Figure 5.2. World Arenas Map.

The World Arenas Map represents the key macro forces at play in the studied situation.

These macro forces are identified as the five core world arenas or in the language used herein

context. These contexts emerged from the elements of the explanatory matrices and were named

as: Culture of Work; Foreclosure; Work/Home Performance Ratio; the Heft of Marriage; and

Malleable Me. The five context areas are aligned in Figure 5.2 with those dimensions that are

dominant in the discourse. Thus, each context informs and is informed by the dimensions:

- The Culture of Work informs the core dimension *Growing in Leadership*;

- Foreclosure and the work home performance ratio informs the dimensions *Solving For Having It All* and *Stalking the Unknown*;

- The Heft of Marriage informs the dimension *Negotiating Equality*; and

- The context category, Malleable Me," informs the dimension *Leading in a Glass Box*.

Although contexts are highly integrated into certain dimensions, they can spill over into

all dimensions and influence social processes at the micro level.

Macro forces depicted in the World Arenas Map can also be overlaid and integrated into

the five key contexts.

- The Culture of Work represents macro forces generated by the Culture of Work (organizations); its collusion with federal and state governments and its embeddedness in the minimalist market-based economy;

- Foreclosure is representative of the federal and state governments and its endorsement and perpetuation of the minimalist market-based economy;

- The Heft of Marriage represents macros forces and systems depicted by the Culture of Marriage; childcare; state governments and the legal system;

- Malleable Me is influenced by all key macros in the World Arenas Map

Key Context Areas of the Situational Analysis

While delineated for explanatory purposes, all of the key context areas are interconnected

and represent a labyrinth of loci in the experience of women who lead. Figure 5.2 illustrates how

these contexts collide, gerrymander, and mesh with others, and, how some have antithetical impact on others.

The first key context area is Culture of Work. This context delineates how work gets accomplished and recognized. It is a container for doing work. Participants frequently described work cultures as progressive or intolerant and this greatly impacted their ability to solve the work/family equation, while continuing to grow in their leadership. Situational analysis encourages the researcher to look for silence as it often identifies unexplored power inequities.

Foreclosure, the second key context, is a silenced or empty situational container for the unexpected or unexplored solutions to gender parity at the top. It is in this situational context that competitive economic factors are prioritized over human inputs. Although the World Economic Forum is situated between the Culture of Work and Foreclosure, it is not considered a key context but rather arbitrates the discourse of the gender parity conversation between the two.

The third key context is the Work/Home Performance Ratio. Much akin to investment formulas, this context provides the situational complexity for the performance and coordination of the work and home interface. The interplay, tension, and polarization between the commitments of the corporate and childcare world arenas, push women into extreme time poverty. While the interface between these two world arenas was the primary driver of time poverty, time poverty pervaded every situational context and created an overarching situational condition of being in constant overdrive.

The fourth key context is the Heft of Marriage. This context holds the messy reconstruction and the Millennial and/or modern vision of equitable marital partnership.

The fifth key context is Malleable Me. This context provides a container for situational themes that traverse all social world arenas via communication, media or social expectations and norms.

In the remainder of this chapter, for each key context area I will identify examples of social processes and conditions women of this study experienced that led to further exploration of relevant sources at the meso and macro levels of discourse. The inclusion and discussion of these sources comprise the additional findings of the situational analysis for each context area.

Key context: The Culture of Work. In this section I propose that the Culture of Work is the pinnacle of this situational analysis and is intimately intertwined with other spheres of commitment. In order to triangulate the data for this key context other resources were explored. These included personal communications with Dr. Ellen Kossek, Associate Director of the Center for Work, Family, Health and Stress and the Center for Creative Leadership; an interview with Dr. Kenneth Matos, Vice President of Research at Life Meets Work, Inc.; information from nonprofits including New America, Workwell, and Unum's Leave Management (Lauby, 2016); review of academic literature; and information from the Survey of National Employers (Matos & Galinsky, 2014).

In Figure 5.2, the role of culture of work takes a dominant position in the studied situation. It is dominant on multiple levels. It dictates not only the economic experience but also the cultural experience of the postmodern life and thus greatly impacts women's ability to continue *Growing in Leadership,* the core dimension as described in Chapter IV. The culture of work is a powerful gatekeeper of modern identity. The psychology of working theory (Blustein, 2008, 2011) states that "sociocultural factors must be treated as primary in understanding the career decisions and work experience of all people" (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016,

p. 127) and the Culture of Work heavily influenced the lives of participants. It is the postmodern vehicle of expressing purpose. Although no participant used the terms "progressive" or "intolerant," their narratives were filled with examples that reflected such cultures, and they experienced them as such.

Progressive work culture. Participants described a progressive work culture as one that allowed them some flexibility to take care of family while fostering growth in leadership. This work culture seeks to destabilize the ideal worker paradigm (Joan Williams, 2000) thus allowing for moderate fluidity between work and home. Corporate roles and requisite demands were not diminished in a progressive culture, and existing in this environment proved chaotic. But this type of work culture allowed participants the feeling of flourishing in both spheres. It allowed them to cultivate and hold in tandem identities of being a mother, wife or significant other and a professional.

> I want more, and is that bad to want more? To be out in the world and be leading something meaningful; making a difference. Or just having adult conversations and working your brain in a way that is not just changing diapers. (Ginny)

A progressive work culture provides resources, such as paid paternity leave or childcare subsidies and works toward flexibility for the occasional sick day with a child. No participant took advantage of the progressive work culture and worked virtually or into the evening, if possible, on days that were taken off to care for a child. The culture's reciprocity defined it as progressive.

The work and family benefits provided by a progressive organization work best when there is a organizational context that supports them. Kalysh et al. (2016) found that the "positive effects of work-life practices (overall) were only observed when women constituted 43% or more of the organization's workforce" (p. 511). These benefits are not observed in

male-dominated organizations. There is an "implementation-to-benefits lag" (Huselid & Becker,

1996, p. 428) of eight years for work-life practices to manifest at the organizational level of

outcomes. This is attributed to the fact that the women, and men, using work-life benefits may

be several years away from leadership roles. Secondly, as Kalysh et al. (2016) suggest, "full

benefits of work-life practices can only be expected in organizations where supervisors support

work-life practices . . . and there is a culture that fully embraces the spirit of work-life practice

adoption at all levels of the organization" (p. 512). Therefore, organizational context at all levels

in the organization, is critical to women's success. Previous research has elucidated the links

between supervisor support and reduced work-family conflict (O'Driscoll et al., 2003) but

executing this cultural shift is no easy task for organizations. Kossek and Distelberg (2009)

found that 46% of employers believe work-family options are not clearly communicated

throughout the organization. This percentage is correlated with the size of the organization;

communication waned in larger organizations. There are perceptual gaps to in how access of

work and family policies will affect career progression. Participants described a progressive

Culture of Work as one that embodied this spirit as "a good place for women to work" and thus

had been successful in adopting work-life practices throughout the organization.

It is critical to iterate that, even in progressive cultures of work that provide paternity

leaves and some flexibility to manage work and family, there are penalties to accessing these

opportunities. Doing so translates into lost career capital:

> Even women who come back to work immediately after maternity leave can suffer
> capital erosion. Women are often sidelined to lower-status support roles for which they
> are underpaid relative to their previous seniority. While providing new mothers with
> flexibility, support roles, and part-time work fails to fully leverage existing capital. They
> provide fewer development opportunities and disrupt established social networks that are
> needed to promote capitals through visibility. (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016, p. 360)

Capital accumulation is a masculine ideal built into and prioritized by the organizational system. It is a test for promotion. This situates the women of this study in a double bind: the need to stay relevant in both spheres. Their strategy is to stay in both games and they deem organizations that loosen the grip around the double bind as progressive, despite penalties.

A progressive work culture was perceived as providing opportunities for promotion and professional growth. Many of these cultures enrolled women with leadership potential in women's leadership conferences and workshops; women experienced these progressive work cultures as places where they can be respected and valued enough to invest in. Progressive cultures of work also provided women with opportunities outside their area of expertise. Again, participants viewed this as trusting them, betting on them, risking.

> So, I'm an accountant; I thought I didn't have the skill set to get people rallied around this idea, to buy into it. You have to be a salesman, but it's something that I had to learn to develop. I've always been the type of person that just must do a good job in whatever I'm doing. So, I think people see that that can be applied in a lot of different situations and they've given me opportunities to do that. (Karen)

Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) note that it is often a lack of career capital that impedes women's progression in the organization, especially in cross-functional roles. In a study of female scientists, Duberley, Cohen, and Mallon (2006) found that career capital must be viewed as differentiated. Eagly and Carli (2007) found that greater value is assigned to experiences derived from line roles and the number of staff reporting to a functional position. Organizations that provide opportunities for women's accumulation of vital career capital are therefore progressive.

When progressive organizations affiliated with participants of this study were surveyed about the value to them for sending women to women's leadership conferences, they replied:

> Stepping away and outside of everyday routines, responsibilities, and habits offers leaders an opportunity to reflect, collaborate and experiment with new ways of doing and

being. It heightens self-awareness: this may be difficult to achieve within the organization due to fear of being vulnerable, or having weaknesses held against them, and also the concern as being labeled as self-serving.

It sparks creativity. I hear participants say they've been pushing so hard to solve a problem and that it is great to come to a safe place where they can express an issue and be supported to allow for the answer to emerge. It is also advantageous to see how others are solving the issue and to have the space to allow ideals to develop that seem unreachable in my regular environment.

Important relationships arise from these conference gatherings. It is amazing what happens when you meet others with similar paths and diverse backgrounds. Women have a knack for invitation and support. It can be hard to explain . . . there is an energy and focus when you get a group together. "Aha's" are common and it can set off a chain reaction with others. Organic relationships emerge by the wisdom in the room.

Many participants articulated a progressive work culture as one that promotes and

supports diversity. It was seen as integral to personal leadership growth:

I will say what is fantastic to us within the organization is diversity, respect for people. When you do deal with other countries what you learn is how Americans approach things. We're ready to move forward. In other countries or cultures, they may talk things to death, and still it may take things ten times as long to get done versus if you were just dealing with Americans. I will tell you from both a personal and professional perspective it really opened my eyes even more just stepping back and listening to people before setting the direction. Because quite often as leaders we kind of have in our mind where we want to go, where that north star is, but sometimes we may jump over a better idea. (Rebecca)

Progressive organizations promoted women into top tier positions and they, in turn,

mentored other women both formally or informally. These mentors not only served as role

models, but also took an active role in fostering individual leadership growth and

self-confidence. Women were rarely able to establish this type of relationship within the ranks

of male leaders. The below excerpt reflects such a situation:

I really believe I started down a downward spiral after Carol left. She was a great leader that gave me great confidence and helped me see possibilities in my career. It really does matter who you work for. While I was working for a man that was very capable he did not help me to grow or develop or to see ways of doing my job without working my tail off! I think I really didn't have his support in the end. (Madison)

Many women actively sought out mentors or sponsors across the organization; therefore, a progressive organization didn't just have high-tiered women siloed in a department or division:

> I constantly looked for feedback from other women. Not women I worked for but women I respected and how were they doing things. One of those conversations, one of the women had said—I did have the note somewhere—"don't be afraid to be vulnerable." I was like, "okay." Because I'd been trying to know everything in that role with a very demanding manager. (Tess)

> I started meeting with successful women, or what I deem successful, just to—I don't know if I was searching for a mentor or simply looking for somebody in the bank . . . I didn't really have a purpose. It was fulfilling for me. Some of them were moms; some weren't. I got their advice on how they got to be where they are. (Denise)

A progressive work culture promoted and modeled good work and family balance; not just talked or published around work family balance.

> And at that point he said "I value my family more than anything and I expect you to be out of the office at 5 o'clock every day, so that you can go home to your daughter. And if you aren't doing that then it is your own fault." And there were many days he would call me at 5:30 and say "what are you still doing here? You need to go home." (Tera)

Women, in particular, were effective in establishing the rules of engagement around work and family boundaries and learned that there was no substitute for modeling that work-family behavior for other women. Progressive organizations provided them with a space to be role models:

> I realized this once I got my staff. Because I typically work from 8:00 until like 5:30, 6:00 or whenever I feel like leaving, because I had the luxury of just leaving whenever I wanted to before I had Luke. And I noticed that I wouldn't leave until like 6:00, 6:30 a lot when she started, just because I like working whenever there's not a lot of people around to get quiet time. A lot of people at X do leave exactly at 5:00 and I just kind of like to linger, and then I saw her kind of lingering and I was like, "Oh no, she's following my lead." And so, I made sure to tell her like I just stay because I want to. If you're sitting here without anything to do, don't feel obligated to sit here. But she still sat there because I still wasn't going. (Karen)

Stories that could be situated in this progressive work culture context also reflected the persistent onerousness of female stereotyping and masculinized organizational norms. Many of the women themselves articulated and perpetuated these stereotypes especially when asked what

might close the gender leadership gap. Women often had to decide whether to assimilate to or

resist stereotypes:

> I think as women we're generally not aggressive enough. It's because we're afraid to be
> aggressive because we're taught very early to play nice and be nice to each other,
> whereas guys are taught to be more aggressive. Because you're that bitch if you're
> aggressive about things; so, you don't want to be labeled. (Karen)

> And I would say also at some point in my career I was told that I would be a great
> assistant, no matter what I did, there was no need for me to continue with my education at
> the time, that I would be just a great assistant, meaning secretary during that time
> anywhere. Again, that was another comment that really just fueled me because I just felt I
> knew I could do more and I knew I wanted to do more. (Tera)

> I think women's emotions—the majority of women, more so than men—get in the way of
> us making decisions and being confident and telling people this is the way it is. And I
> think because we over think, because we look so much for other people's approval.
> (Jennifer)

Brescoll (2016) states: "The belief that women are more emotional than men is one of

strongest gender stereotypes held in Western cultures" (p. 415) and being too emotional is cited

as a major impediment to women holding leadership positions in our society (Dolan, 2014).

Participants strategically managed displays of emotion and tried to emulate men, even in

progressive cultures of work.

In the most progressive of organizations participants acknowledged the living fraternity

of the "good old boys' club" despite organizational investments in diversity and inclusion. Even

in the best of situations, this was experienced by women as a disadvantage and whittled away at

their earned and expected organizational power. While participants expressed no desire to

actually belong to the boys' club as it currently operates, some had tried to access it given its

insider power.

> So I started playing golf with customers. It was more around some big captain's choice
> type of format, and there were so many times when I would go out there and would not
> know a single person and be paired with three guys and they would look at me like "oh
> no!" and then I would blow right past them. But I would always go up to the tee box and

go like, "I know: y'all got the shortest straw; you drew the girl. But I won't keep you back. But just don't blow past me. So, I tried to get around that with golf. (Carmen)

Doing business the good old boys club way could be problematic for women:

Okay. So, like our bankers, one person would take one male customer to a Panthers' game. Just the two of them. Well I couldn't do that. If I took a male customer, it would look really weird—they have a wife and I have a husband; So, how would that look? Entertaining our customers brings on a whole new level that guys never even think about. (Carmen)

Participants in the theoretical sample desired a "women's club" because they experienced feelings of isolation and recognized the power associated with informal organizational collaboration. But because there are so few women at the top, this notion was particularly difficult to envision:

It's just guys being guys and they naturally bond and get close because they are men and they have same interests. How do we do that with women if there's only one woman executive? Do we all hang out with the one woman executive? (Karen)

Some women tried to envision a women's club without strict hierarchy rules or an improved version of the club in a progressive culture of work:

It doesn't necessary have to be peers but people below you. Because I would think it provides them the opportunity and fulfillment to reach out to those that are looking for upward mobility and I think that is a huge fulfilling part of what all women do. As much as we want to find somebody to reach up to we can reach out and down. (Denise)

Often women depended on groups outside of the organization for support. These groups, however, cannot offer access to organizational power:

I think I have good networks. I have two workout groups and I have my spiritual group and within any of those I think I can reach out to strong women who will be honest with me and it's key. (Ella)

And one participant had no inclination to envision a women's club:

I guess what popped into my head when you said women's club is that I think women are so mean to each other. I don't think there could ever be a women's club. Women are mean and nasty. (Carson)

Perhaps this is what some call the "mean woman reality" for this participant. But often

this is a perpetuated stereotype: "And I've been asked 'how do you women get along?' which is

an interesting question because I don't know that men get asked that question, 'how do you men

get along?'" (Tera).

Women are networking outside the organization to locate progressive work cultures. For

example, Fairygodboss is an online platform "created by women, by women" (Fairygodboss,

n.d.) to provide company reviews and insider information that women are seeking. This

platform boasts,

> It's not always easy being a woman in the workplace. Born in 2015 when our CEO was
> interviewing while two months pregnant (and hiding it) Fairygodboss helps women get
> hard-to-ask questions answered. We help you get the inside scoop on pay, corporate
> culture, benefits and flexibility. We offer company ratings, job listings, discussion boards
> and career advice. (Fairygodboss, n.d., para.1)

Women post experiences and pose questions that are of importance to them. This online

platform provides answers that they cannot ask in a job interview, or that may be difficult and

time consuming to discern on their own.

Millennials and late Gen-Xers in the theoretical sample of this study did not view the

spillover of the business day into family time as a product of an intolerant culture. In fact, many

of them had high expectations of availability of their staff and thus perpetuated this work trend.

Participants equated accessibility demands as escalating as one rises up the organizational ladder.

A progressive work culture, however, is deemed to have social norms and boundaries around

access. No participant was sure how the boundaries were drawn but everyone knew where they

were. Several commented on this:

> To an extent, yes, (I expect my staff to be available after 5 p.m. because we're giving
> them corporate phones and devices. Now let me preface my answer on the job role. So, in
> my old role as a banker, you have your phone because stuff is customer time-sensitive.
> Even if you don't do anything tonight you have to be looking at it. I will say—and this is

something I very much value about our company—it's kind of an unspoken; people generally respect the weekends. So, Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, there is nothing. (Carmen)

You want to be there for your staff and So, it has gotten worse. And then I think you add to it this thing where your work email is on 24 hours a day. We have texting 24 hours a day. Our kids are texting us, our parents are texting us, our neighbors are texting us. It's like we've jerked up the communication requirements in life. And even if nothing else at work had changed, I think everybody's expectation for speed in response because of how readily available this is has just doubled. (Shari)

In the next excerpt a participant explained the internalized expectations of a progressive

culture of work in that her availability after the business day is motivated by her indebtedness to

workplace flexibility:

It's just this culture of feeling like you have to be instant with your response because you're being granted a little flexibility when your daughter needs you. When I forward something to someone who hasn't been here as long as I have or is lower on the org. chart, it annoys me when they don't respond quickly. And that's just adding to the vicious cycle. (Ginny)

Work boundaries aren't articulated or published in the employee handbook but are

nonetheless known by all. For married professional couples, the reality is that two work

boundaries could provide spillover. The following comment from Karen is an example of a

spouse's work culture cannibalizing family time and the participant's feeling of being unable to

get any pushback. It is much more difficult to influence a spouse's culture of work boundaries:

Yeah, but what does he do? His manager is sending him emails; does he go outside of his manager, does he go . . . and I don't know if it's his group or him or if he could do more by saying, "No, I'm not going to work." But I think you're just too afraid to say anything about it because you really don't know if management supports that. And I think you've got to make it clear that there's an initiative but we really support it too. (Karen)

A progressive work culture allowed women to be more authentic, particularly in the way

that they could show up at work.

Couple of times there I ran into "this is the way you're supposed to be and look and act in this space." And I had to do my little bounce against my filter, "I'm going to be who I am and I'm going to do this differently." And I was able to break through that. People

migrated to it. It was just very . . . I had lots of situations where it was confirming to me that I could be who I was in a world that might traditionally not look that way and have success. (Cathy)

This participant expressed authenticity as a way to be more productive because energies could be focused on productivity and the job at hand.

If somebody was free and whole and at full power, bringing their real self to work, then that meant they did great work. Right? Because they spent time delivering against what they were supposed to do versus painting themselves. (Cathy)

Many participants discursively referred to a progressive work culture as "a good place for women to work." They are actively seeking such work cultures. Because the sample population was somewhat geographically defined, I witnessed participants leaving one financial industry work culture they deemed intolerant, and migrating to one that was "a good place for women to work." Three of the 21 participants had migrated from one bank to another within the last two years. When asked how they knew Bank X was a good place for women, one participant who has left the intolerant culture, offered this:

So I try to look for, for example, I look at their boards. What percentage are women and minorities? I look at their senior leaders that report to the CEO. What percentage are women and minorities? I talk to people who work there and ask what's the culture? What determines success? Who are the role models in the organization? Who is the organization putting forward in the community as their leaders? You can tell a lot from those things. (Amanda)

Intolerant work culture. An intolerant work culture made taking care of children a near impossibility and created a feeling of vulnerability for women.

No, she had high expectations. We didn't set expectations at the beginning when I took the job. She was a corporate exec who . . . she and her husband had made a decision that her career was going to take priority, her husband was the lead parent. Alex and I are still figuring it out. So, I had three kids under five. Alex was going to graduate school and I was trying to still climb . . . we were modifying a document and I said "I have a hard stop at 6:00, I have to go get my kids" . . . And she went, "Why? What's your husband doing?" "He's got a study group tonight. I can work on this later . . . No, forget it, I'll do it." And that was it and she was done with me. I felt heavily judged that I could not make

it work, that I was vulnerable and she got me, and so quickly. And I should have been more prepared and I should have told her in a different way, or had better back up. (Tess)

An intolerant work culture stifled women's ability to grow or feel impactful. It commands all time and resources and impedes the ability to live fully:

So we did two years of annual planning without a hiccup, without a delay, without being late, without working overtime. Our financial manager ended up getting married because she wasn't working 70 hours a week anymore. She got her life back. (Tess)

Intolerant work cultures were often defined as ones in which there were very few women at the top. Women at the top of intolerant organizations experienced what Kanter (1977) has described as visibility.

But I do think there were systems or things in place that did make it harder. Like, so I'll tell you when I got my promotion to a department manager, I had a gentleman who thought I had gotten that job because I was a female and I had taken his spot, which was not the case, because he was messing around with an employee when he was told not to. Even though they didn't work for him. So, he had stuff to overcome. But . . . he made my life difficult. Especially when they showed the numbers to the staff about how many females are in a certain position and basically I was it . . . So, he felt like I was the token. (Diane)

Other women experienced an intolerant work culture as invisibility.

And I do feel like in a meeting with executives and men I have to be, I feel like I catch myself having to be too aggressive and I get more defensive in these meetings and I think that puts off the wrong vibe because I think people become defensive in meetings and it makes them look like they're fighting for that attention. (Jennifer)

Some women experienced this type of work culture as testing them.

Well when they finally scaled up all of a sudden there is a big problem. I just came down there and said, "why don't you just change how you're putting the pallet in the equipment just like you there?" It was a simple resolution. And he allowed me to come into the office where the shift supervisors could all unload on me and he sat back smiling wanting to see how I would react, to see if I could handle myself and I showed that I could. But I find that they test you and they want to see if you can handle it: Will you explode or what will you do? (Diane)

Rapid organizational change is inevitable in today's global economy, but participants often found themselves uprooted during a corporate reorganization or merger and placed in roles

and departments for which they had no knowledge or expertise. This made participants feel

more vulnerable. Unlike men, women tend to seek roles in which they feel qualified:

> Then the organization changed again and they just plugged me into a position that they needed to fill which was the compliance executive. It's chocked full of government regulation and laws . . . Yeah it was terrible. And probably within two to four weeks I was trying to design a compliance program from operational risk. In the midst of that corporate audit reopened nine different issues for them. They were all tied to regulation that all needed to be resolved within 90 days and I didn't have any staff. Now Alex is still going to school; we still have these three kids under five and I was working about 60 to70 hours every week. And it couldn't last. So, I started to look for something else and I had people constantly—like the executive for operational risk called me to tell me how he thought I was not fit to do the job. (Tess)

Although work and family policies are currently viewed as an employee benefit to attract

the best talent across gender, this study data suggest a retrenchment in the offering and

availability of part time and flex time. This could be due to the demands and additional

responsibility as women rise up the hierarchy, but these work and family options were generally

not viable options to the study participants. Participants felt they were unable to overlay role

demands on a part-time or flextime schedule:

> I don't see it happening ever in the corporate workplace that I'm in. It's like the first thing I think about is the scrutiny of the full-time employees. I'm not going to lie, it's hard. If I was working part time I'd have to be some sort of consultant or contractor that was on a per-project basis and you can manage yourself. But in a corporate workplace like I'm at changes are happening all the time and you've got to keep up the speed. (Jennifer)

Therefore, an intolerant work culture is considered one that not only continues to operate

in the ideal worker paradigm (Joan Williams, 2000), but also escalates against it. There continues

to be an intra-organizational and societal stigma to working part time or flextime in addition to

ideas previously researched around notions of organizational commitment.

> And right now—going part-time—I certainly have less money, less power. and it was interesting to see, shifting to part time job, when you're part time whether you're capable—it's not like I became less capable of doing work—when you tell people you're part time there's a shift in other people's exchange with you. And I was surprised at how

even though I was the same person there was a perception that I was somehow less. (Leslie)

The employee "benefit du jour" appears to be extending paternity leaves. Lauby (2016) suggests that this is a corporate trend and we should expect to see more organizations offer extended parental leave to attract talent (para 6). Angel Bennett, director of the insurance company Unum's Leave Management Center, advises that the benefits of offering paid paternity leave far outweigh the costs: "Studies show that employees are more loyal and view their employers more favorably when they have paid parental leave" (Lauby, 2016, para. 5). This study's data concurs: participants often described companies that offered extended parental leaves as "good places for women to work." While these extensions are sought out by women and can only be viewed as a positive, they address only temporary needs against the total spectrum of childcare.

An intolerant work culture divulges diversity and inclusion figures in the annual report or employee communications to appear progressive, but they don't really "do diversity" nor have a vested interest in the potential and growth of the individual. They are still following the advice of diversity guru R. Roosevelt Thomas "If diversity management is strategic to the organization," he used to say, diversity training must be mandatory, and management has to make it clear that "if you can't deal with that, then we have to ask you to leave" (as cited in Dobbin & Kalav, 2016, p. 54). Dobbin and Kalav further suggest that organizations can't police bias and that only by working with women and minorities will bias be reduced. Intolerant work cultures were experienced by this study's participants as merely checking diversity off the to-do list. The following excerpt reflects a situation where a participant had asked repeatedly to go to a women's leadership conference and after much divisive stalling, the manager offered a "diversity substitute":

She said: "Oh, and by the way I did talk to Mary about that, she is going to do this series for the group on unconscious biases and it's really the same thing as what your conference is, and it's for everybody and this would be just for you. So, we're not going to be able to do it." I went back to my desk and texted Neil—"I don't care that this is on the company system I want to quit my job." I sent her a note and said I'm actually going to go on my own cost. She never emailed me back; she never acknowledged that I went; she never asked me how it was. (Tess)

Additionally, as women amass advanced degrees, skills and experience, they are voting for diversity and inclusion with their feet. The following excerpts are borne out of a merger with two major retail chains with very different work cultures:

The CEO does not have one female reporting to him. And then our President now has one and I have already asked in order for me to stay I need to understand what your view is on diversity, because I don't see it. And so, their response was funny. One of the guys I talked to about it, he said we tried but she left. One lady. But she left. Her husband had to relocate. So, she relocated. I couldn't help but laugh. The one? (Tara)

I needed a role, or a job, where I could integrate what was important to me with my family life. I feel very lucky to have some flexibility in this role. When I have to leave early to pick up my daughter I do it. Or if I want to take her to the bus stop one morning, I can. So, to me, it is intertwined. Because if I'm not happy there, I'm not going to be happy here. (Carmen)

Anchoring the Culture of Work in the situation. Progressive and intolerant cultures of work provide a living context for all dimensions but especially the core dimension, *Growing in Leadership* and primary dimensions *Leading in a Glass Box* and *Negotiating Equality.* Participants found few venues for leadership growth other than the workplace. While fodder for *Leading in a Glass Box* and *Negotiating Equality* could be found in each culture of work, an intolerant culture of work magnified these dimensions and the mental gymnastics associated with them.

No matter which context women found themselves working in, both progressive and intolerant work cultures continue to view working mothers as less committed to the organization.

Because diversity and inclusion are attractive buzzwords for many larger corporations, some

women experience this as subtle, while other organizations make this expectation known:

> When I had my first child and came back to work and had my review that following December—I had my child in July and probably went back to work in October—he looked at me and said "I'm surprised about your performance because I expected it to drop after you had a kid." (Diane)

> He was helping me, teaching me, because I was willing to learn; and we had gone to France and a couple of other places working on projects and after having a child I was in my office and I would have to . . . because technically work is supposed to provide me a place to do my thing with the breast pump. So, I was having to do it in my office. I would have bottles everywhere and everything out and I was upset that I didn't get a promotion. And he said "Well, what do you expect with that everywhere?" (Diane)

> While progressive organizations are beginning to embrace other ways of working,

participants perceived an organizational priority for presence. Several participants perpetuated

this demand for presence because they did not feel confident enough to read the room if they

weren't physically present. The temporally conflicting demands of having to be at work and

simultaneously needing to be at home is exacerbated as parents are faced with the continued rise

in the benchmark of good parenting.

> People right now we evaluate your work value on how long you work. How late is your car in the parking lot? How early do you get here and how late? How many emails do you produce? How many revenues do you generate every year? Until somehow society changes the way that they value production in the office, we're going to struggle with this. But yet we still have kids who play sports, and in fact when I was growing up there were no such thing as club teams when you were in middle school. Now kids are in fifth grade playing travel volleyball. So, we've steroided up the work responsibility and steroided up the pressures on the kids at home, I don't know how we're going to fix that. (Shari)

A perfect storm brews around women's biology, or childbearing years, and pervasive

linear concepts of career. Perceptions of this were true for both progressive and intolerant

organizations. Certain roles were organizationally known as fast track roles even though most

participants didn't have a clear understanding of the valuation process. Client-facing and

extensive travel often predicted organizational role value. Because the social value of these roles were embedded in the stories of organizations, participants were fully aware of the costs of taking a lateral step or a step back from client facing or travel responsibilities. "Today many of the economic disadvantages women face are triggered by parenthood rather than gender in and of itself" (Coontz, 2015, p. 10). Women in this study validated this disadvantage in that the roles garnering the most power, prestige and higher salaries were incompatible with holding a family in tandem.

There was also a knowing of cultural fit between women and departments within an organization. Women often used this insider information to gauge decisions around promotions including the disposition of future bosses; or an index for possible success. "Research consistently shows that supervisor support is linked to reduced work-family conflict (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 30). This knowing of the nuanced organizational culture, often by department, requires a second shift for women. Behson (2005) noted that the informal mechanisms within the organization are far more influential in terms of employee outcomes than are formal mechanisms. Women incur a higher requirement to discover the organizations' informal mechanisms than men.

The culture of work in both progressive and intolerant work cultures are embedded with our American ideals of capitalism. American corporations continue to seek out bottom lines that are primarily driven by shareholder wealth. The business case for diversity is known and has proliferated, but many corporations still practice accumulation tactics. They continue to maximize wealth today and are risk averse to investing in the future. The 2014 National Study of Employers (Matos & Galinsky, 2014) drives home this capitalistic point: since the economic downturn of 2008 organizations are "providing less formal and informal support for flexibility,

diversity and inclusion" (Matos & Galinsky, 2014, p. 8). This translates into fewer leadership

programs for women (16% in 2008 and 12% in 2014); fewer considerations for flexible work

arrangements when making promotion decisions and providing performance appraisals—62% in

2008 and 48% in 2014; fewer organizations encouraged productivity over face time—71% in

2008 and 64% in 2014; and fewer rewarded management for effectively utilizing flextime—20%

in 2008 and 11% in 2014 (Matos & Galinsky, 2014, p. 8), even though research indicates that

diversity adds to the strength of the organization and better long term decision making (Dwyer,

Richard, & Chadwick, 2003; Kidluff, Angelmar, & Mehra, 2000; Marinova, Plantenga, &

Remery, 2015; Richard, McMillan, Chadwick, & Dwyer, 2003). Additionally, there is a gap in

perception between employer and employee regarding the use and implementation of work-

family policies. "There is often a gap between what employers say and what employees say

when it comes to work and family policy areas. (HR) may 'bias report' much higher access to

flexibility forms" (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 15).

> I mean, it's the financial services industry, I think, especially in the global markets which is where she came from, some people on the trading floor were really very aggressive and the culture is completely different. (Tess)

Dr. Kenneth Matos, Vice President of Research with Life Meets Work, Inc., speaks to the

complexity of organizations trying to cope with the integration of work and family:

> Organizations don't tend to be rational. It's not one individual and one individual decision; it's many individuals reacting to the environment. Sometimes the exposure to work-life benefits will prompt implementation. Often the CEO reads something in the NY Times and insists on implementing it . . . even if you can't rebuild the organization to fit this particular benefit in. These ideas follow power and influence, so, who recommends them really matters. You have to understand that if you want to change work-life policies, you are saying that somebody got it wrong. Sometimes there are practical issues. If you change work-life policies but your organization emphasizes delivery, those two dictates are misaligned. (personal communication, December 5, 2016)

This illustrates that even with corporate support, moving the barometer to accommodate work

and family is not without great difficulties.

Although many work cultures, driven by bottom line capitalism and mired in the United

States' minimalist market-based approach to work and family policy, were difficult to work in,

women articulated that money was important to them. Some liked the idea of money because

they experienced childhood deprivation and money provides comfort and stability:

> It is only because I think growing up we didn't have a lot of it. My parents immigrated to America probably in 1983, like a year before I was born. And it's always been a struggle for them. They've worked very labor-intensive jobs. My dad was a janitor at Frito-Lay, my mom just kind of did menial work on, like, machines. So, we didn't have a lot when we were growing up and So, I think that's why money is important to me, not in a way that money is the only thing I see, but I know you need money to live comfortably. (Karen)

> Some women viewed it as a cost/benefit equation:

> So if you're not making enough to pay for the things you're having to pay for because you're working then something has got to change. So, I think it validates success, it validates, like, what I'm giving up. I'm giving up all this time with my kids, I'm even getting the salary and if I'm going to continue working like this I need to be getting more and it validates, yeah it validates me and what you've given up to do it. (Jennifer)

> Some pointed out they have to justify salaries:

> But money absolutely. So, we go to these work things and they say these are the 3 things that people say are most important to them and their job. And money is not up here, relationships are here, a good supervisor and all this stuff is here. Everybody is sitting around the table and shaking our heads, like money does matter at the end of the day. If you're not compensated—which is another thing too—I do think that males are definitely, if you get a male that fits the bill in the department and can get the work done, they're to the top. But as a woman you have to justify. (Laura)

Although money was important to participants, no participant was solely motivated by

money. Growth and purpose remained core to participant career decisions but growth was

intertwined with the expectation of money. It remained a way for women to feel valued,

respected, and compensated for efforts. "Money had never been a driving factor for me. I've just learned for myself it's absolutely critical for me to have some meaning in my work" (Sonia).

Often both progressive and intolerant cultures of work provide similar work family benefits. They serve both talent-seeking and shareholder maximization organizational goals. No benefit, however, will render an intolerant culture of work as a good place for women to work.

Both progressive and intolerant cultures of work wrestle with the prolific amount of information provided from academics and consultancy on how to close the gender gap and eradicate gender bias in the workplace. Some information is based on solid and vetted research and some is not. A prominent academic with extensive consultant experience on gender in organizations, commented on this proliferation and implementation of some information:

> But what I can say is that some findings produced by entities, McKinsey included, are misleading because analyses have not been done correctly, and they over claim based on their findings. One reason this happens is that, unlike scholars, their research is not subjected to rigorous peer review. But as to the question as to what drives organizational change, I don't know the answer to that. I hear companies spouting off findings that have been produced by such entities, and they believe the findings, but whether they actually take action on them is hard to say. I have a sense that companies do not make a distinction between findings by scholars and findings by these entities. (Field Expert 2, personal communication, October 5, 2016)

What makes the distinction between good research and mediocre research even more troubling is the synergies now created by scholars, nonprofits and for profit companies. For example, Anne-Marie Slaughter, who has held prestigious Princeton University appointments, worked in foreign policy for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, wrote the famous article in *The Atlantic* magazine, "Why Women Still Can't Have It All" (2012) and authored numerous additional research, articles and books, is now the CEO of the think tank, New America. New America recently partnered with for profit companies Care.com and the consulting firm A.T. Kearney, to produce a new comprehensive report on childcare in the United States (Schulte &

Durana, 2016). This alliance illustrates that it has become more organizationally difficult to

discern the origin of good research on which to base decisions. Field Expert 2 agreed:

> Note that some very fine scholars work for these institutions, and it is very likely that at least some of the research they produce is valid. I just have seen some that is not valid, yet companies reiterate the findings, for example, when they discuss the need for change. (personal communication, October 5, 2016)

Summary of the key context: The Culture of Work. If there were one scale for

satisfaction, this context is pivotal to overall satisfaction for professional women. If you situate

the Culture of Work within the life course, it can be viewed as a continuation of childhood

promises and educational pursuits. In the United States, girls experience gender-leveled arenas

in schools and sports because of policies like Title IX.[5] Girls are told they can do anything and

be anything; they believe it (Twenge, 2013). A progressive work culture, albeit far from

unbiased or equal, provides a context for continuing and enhancing growth, goals and purpose.

It allows women to flourish in many spheres of their lives, not just work. An intolerant work

culture continues to proliferate the ideal worker paradigm and provides a stifling and

dehumanizing context in which women and men find it difficult to flourish. It lacks food for

growth and starves expectations across all contexts of women's lives.

> The general problem these employees face is the demand that they have no identity other than of a labor commodity, and that creates an internal conflict that must be resolved. The system of competition between companies in capitalism compels overselling, which appears organizationally as overwork. This imperative sets up an ongoing demand that other, non-work identities (and needs generated within them, such as being a good parent) be contingent. (Padavic & Ely, 2013, p. 10).

Key context: Foreclosure. Situational analysis allows the researcher to look for silence

because often those silenced are silenced through power dynamics. Oppressive systems are at

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[5] Title IX is a section of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and a federal mandate stipulating that no person should be discriminated against or denied benefits under any education program receiving federal financing assistance.

play in this situational context. Additional resources were engaged to triangulate this context.

These included:

- personal communications with Senator Kay Hagan, former chair of the Senate

    Children and Families Committee;

- information from economist Dr. Steven Fleetwood;

- information from the Luxembourg Income Study (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2014);

- personal communication with Dr. Ellen Kossek, Associate Director of the Center for

    Work, Family, Health and Stress and information gleaned from her work;

- information from McKinsey Global Institute and the World Economic Forum's

    (2015) Global Gender Gap Index;

- information from reports issued by nonprofits including New America, the National

    Partnership of Women and Families;

- information from the Center for Responsive Politics and Pew Social Trends;

- information from the National Association of Pediatrics;

- personal communication with a pediatrician;

- information from reports from the Federal Reserve; information taken from the North

    Carolina Department of Health and Human Services;

- information from the 2014 Survey of National Employers (Matos & Galinsky, 2014);

- statistics from the Center for American Women and Politics; and

- organizational information from public records published both independently and by

    the organization.

While Scandinavian countries enjoy mandated paid parental leave and have achieved

greater parity in top leadership positions, work and family policies are implemented to all

citizens through the government. Only one participant mentioned the government as a possible resource to the work and family dilemma and only in the context of helping poor women. This participant was not completely foreclosed on the possibilities of government intervention in the work family interface because her job dictates her knowledge of child welfare policy.

Women are foreclosed to the possibilities of government policies that might increase and stabilize resources because they find themselves triangulated between four cultural social phenomena: The first is our American Puritan foundations with the individualistic "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality; the second is the lack of any collective advocacy given that many younger women don't identity as feminists or if they do, don't look to the movement for resolution; the third is the continued political and economic movement toward neoliberalism; and the fourth is the lack of voice or leverage in legislative bodies. Each of these cultural strands come together in the situation to influence socially constructed understandings of what attitudes and actions are socially acceptable and impact micro level social responses of women who lead. The tenets of Puritanism have greatly influenced American culture and are deeply embedded in postmodern values, perhaps even to a greater extent for women as they incur higher performance expectations in the workplace (Ely et al., 2011). A duty of hard work and individualism, ideals that have reinforcing influence, are at the core of the American belief system. These are apparent in our interpretation and participation in capitalism:

> American Puritans linked material wealth with God's favor. They believed that hard work was the way to please God. Every Puritan tried to work hard and do his own job better. They developed their characters of taking risks and pursuing without ending. To most Americans, material achievements are the mark of one's success, the manifestation of their personal values, and the symbol of one's independence. (Kang, 2009, p. 150)

Neoliberalism dovetails well with an American Puritan belief system rooted in individualism. Neoliberalism, as 21st century capitalism, is understood as a "a new class

strategy whereby the iron fist of a renewed ruling class offensive is wrapped in the velvet glove of freedom, individualism and above all flexibility" (Fleetwood, 2006, p. 6). The underlying concept of neoliberalism is to shift "the responsibility of well-being from the state to the individual" (Fleetwood, 2006, p. 7), or even further to the capitalistic market. The distancing of young women from third wave feminism also panders to the disposition of individualism. Third wave feminism, which has been a source of advocacy for women in the past, has not been a movement joined by Millennials for three primary reasons, according to Cummins (2016):

- They think the battle has been won; they have not experienced institutional sexism;

- Feminism is portrayed aggressively and negatively as extremism by radical feminist especially via social media; and

- Feminism has been singularly equated with careerism; or lacking the ability to channel other identities such as that of mother.

Because young women have failed to join the feminist movement or create another social movement that might emphasize representation, women don't have a voice in our legislature; there is no momentum to push helpful agendas for working women because women have not reached a critical mass in our legislative bodies. In 2015 women held 19.4% of the seats in Congress, 20% of the Senatorial seats and 19.3% of the House of Representative seats (Center for American Women and Progress, n.d.). Senator Kay Hagan suggests that we are approaching that tipping point as evidenced by the positive agendas and subsequent bills put forth by women chairing subcommittees but anticipates a stronger showing as women move toward the 30% benchmark and have a real voice in our legislative bodies (personal communication, July 6, 2016).

Because of our individualistic mindset and our American myths of opportunity combined with the political silencing of the voices of women, the sociocultural unit of analysis in American society continues to be the individual, not the system (Engestrom, 2004) or the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Given this mindset women themselves often look inward as opposed to outward for resolution. "It is high time we stopped trying to fix women" (Wittenberg-Cox, 2008, p. 107). It's time to scrutinize the system and look deeply into the situation.

In this study, women couldn't see the government as a resource even though researchers, the World Economic Forum, and the media have made known the role government has played as a critical element of success of more progressive countries. They either looked to themselves or an employer for family resources.

> The United States employment policy regarding work and family is predominately voluntary and private-based. Scholars refers to this as "a minimalist market-based employers approach" where employers have wide latitude to voluntarily determine the manner and extent to which they will choose to financially support workers' family needs . . . This policy approach emanates from leanings toward individualistic societal culture. The United States values a limited role for government regulation with caregiving decisions left up to the individual employees and employers. (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 5)

Some corporations provide minimal paid paternity leave and childcare subsidies, but as Jim Huffman with Bank of America stated when the bank announced extended parental leave to 16 weeks in March, 2016, "We're always looking at our benefits program" (as cited in D. Roberts, 2016, para 4). Therefore, employers can remove benefits at any given time, just as Bank of America closed their child development center in 2012. There is no stability when the employer offers work-family options rather than those required by law.

The discourse around this subject is flawed: Why do Americans classify opportunities to take care of our families and ourselves as benefits? Thereby, having these benefits translates into a "good place for women to work." Although organizations publish altruistic reasons for what is

characterized as taking care of team members (e.g., Wells Fargo, 2017), a review of family policies over the past few years "shows flat or only modest increases in employer support for family (child care assistance or flexible workplace)" (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 14). For example, participants in this study named childcare as the number one challenge they face in balancing career against family. This is an area of benefits they have named as needed. Yet according to the 2014 Survey of National Employers, 37% of employers offer only information about child care, but only 2% provide subsidies or vouchers for childcare, 7% provide close or on site childcare and 4% provide emergency child care (Matos & Galinsky, 2014). The number of on-site childcare facilities has decreased from 9% to 7% in recent years (Schulte as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para 60).

No one in this study could articulate the reason for Bank of America closing the childcare facility in uptown Charlotte in 2012. In aggregate, only 15% of private sector employees have access to child care assistance of any kind in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006, p. 28). Even when employee benefits are established, accessing these may vary greatly between departments and roles. For example, Wells Fargo just announced for the first time in April 2016 paid parental leave. However, users of flextime are not eligible (Wells Fargo, 2017). Most families may not be utilizing flextime at the birth of the first child but may do so after that birth; So, this policy may negatively affect employees with the birth of subsequent children. They are the mostly likely candidates for using flextime, yet they are penalized in the long run for doing so. Most families in the United States have 2.4 children (Livingston, 2015). Additionally, Wells Fargo calculates annual paid time off by years of service which can negatively affect young women.

As well, in some organizations there are informal, unwritten policies around parental

leave. Some women in this study felt that if they took offered leave, they still needed to be

available via email. Some felt that even when leave was available, their role could not survive

such an absence. Americans work longer hours than any other industrialized country and a

culture of overwork is embedded in the American work contract (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009;

Padavic & Ely, 2013). Role and responsibility weigh heavily in leave decisions. Women often

impose the rules for leave intrusions on themselves:

> When I was on maternity leave with my second child, my manager ended up calling me
> one day and said that I'm going to turn off the access to your email if you don't stop. But
> I said, "This is sales, it's deals, we have to keep it moving." (Carmen)

Women can't count on such employee benefits for a myriad of reasons. In the current

context, although there were a few exceptions, most women at very senior roles in the

organization did not benefit from paid paternity leave because they have passed childbearing

years. Such leave opportunities are seen as pipeline retention tools. Women in this study at the

senior levels of the organization did not engage with any work family benefits provided by

employers, because they didn't feel they could do their jobs adequately. There continues to be a

gap between the realities of caregiving and the organizational demands of leadership. Senior

women were isolated in finding a way to accomplish both caregiving and leading. It can be

deduced that Bank of America, at least in part, increased paternity leave because there are

geographically clustered financial industry competitors that are talent seeking. Indeed, within

weeks after Bank of America's announcement, Wells Fargo matched Bank of America's

paternity extension.

> Let me tell you what, when I heard that Bank of America was offering an additional
> month's leave, it was definitely tempting. It was tempting. A few of us have laughed in
> the office. They don't have the best corporate culture though. We've all said, "If they
> weren't the evil empire I'd jump ship!" (Denise)

This excerpt reflects the complexity of today's workplace: simply adding work and family policies may not be adequate to attract and retain talent. Not only is an intolerant work culture difficult to change, but the reputation proliferates and lingers. Among this study's sample, women suggest that when there is a choice, they will choose a progressive culture.

Joanna Barsh, Director Emerita at McKinsey and Company, advises that a progressive organization recruits women in this way:

> It is straightforward for a company to attract more women to entry roles—focus on it—target a wider net with female schools like Smith—bring more women professionals to recruit and address women's issues with policies and practices that help women— change the website to feature more women. In other words, change perception, policies and practices, and process. (J. Barsh, personal communication, June 30, 2016)

Several institutions in the financial industry were contacted for statements regarding how they strategize around work and family benefit decisions but none responded. Participants articulated uncertainty as to why certain benefits were selected or discontinued. There appears to be no clear feedback loop between benefits that employees might find helpful and the corporation's interest or ability in matching or meeting those needs. One corporation suggested via public announcement that they made family policy decisions after "evaluating the market and the right mix of benefits" for employees (D. Roberts, 2016, para. 5). References to market, allude to competition; thus, the organizational intent is geared around seeking a competitive edge. The edge in seeking competitive talent somehow gets publicly convoluted with employee well-being, but certainly is not driven by this. One corporation advised, when contacted for this study, that they could not discuss the rationale that preceded work and family decisions. This makes it difficult not only to depend on benefits offerings, but shop for those as well. Women in this study experienced shopping for benefits as exhausting. While extended paid paternity leave is timely, helpful, and desirable, especially given the lack of adequate daycare, it provides a

short-term solution to an 18-year responsibility. Despite the shortcomings of paid paternity benefits, women in this study applauded these efforts and referred to this corporation in the financial industry "a good place for women to work."

Not only did participants find it exhausting to shop for family friendly organizational benefits, it was equally difficult to discern offerings and effectiveness because perceptual gaps exist between employer and employee on the availability and use of work and family policies. As A. M. Ryan and Kossek (2008) suggest availability does not necessarily correspond with effectiveness or even access. There is no academic, economic or national definition for what qualifies as flexibility. This is a much-needed place for government to insert itself in the work family policy conversation: "We would like to see national standard definitions on flexible workplace policies and work and family benefits developed" (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 15). Further because there are no such standard definitions, performing meta-analyses is made difficult for intra organizational, national, academic and public consumption information.

The corporations associated with this study remained silent about how they strategize around work and family policy decisions. Participants in this study could not articulate an organizational work and family strategy or the possibility of future benefits, and when contacted by the researcher organizations remained silent behind the public relations veil. This mystery creates ambiguity for women and makes solving childcare issues and family planning a greater unknown. The question arises as to whose responsibility it is to provide work and family resources? While it may or may not be a corporate responsibility, it appears that corporations are capitalizing on the gap.

The findings of the 2014 National Study of Employers (Matos & Galinsky, 2014) indicate that corporations are not soliciting government intervention to ease the provision of

work and family benefits to employees. Among participating organizations, 35% report

implementing work and family policies primarily for retention purposes followed by 14% for

talent seeking and 12% for productivity purposes (Matos & Galinsky, 2014, p. 10). Contributions

retain candidates in our legislature that will sustain a big business agenda. For example, Wells

Fargo, contributed $6,390,000 to lobbyists in 2015; $4,710,000 in 2016 and $3,474,249 in 2016

(Center for Responsive Politics, 2016). Seventy-two percent of total contributions ($2,494,237)

were spent on supporting candidates. Sixty-seven percent of these campaign contributions

supported Republican congressional candidates. (Center for Responsive Politics, 2016). These

funds are additional to contributions made through the National Bankers Association.

Additionally, Wells Fargo made contributions to Congressional Committee members, the largest

proportion of whom were on the Senate Finance Committee that governs tax law, and the House

Financial Services Committee which governs banks, insurance companies and securities

organizations.

Women have not had a legislative voice in steering legislation toward policies that would

provide resources to working women even though there are national economic reasons to do so.

Senator Kay Hagan, who has chaired Children and Families Subcommittee in the U.S. Senate,

suggested that because there has been no critical mass of women in the legislative body, women

have historically lacked a voice in our government (K. Hagan, personal communication, July 6,

2016). Not only have most male legislators not been motivated to address and promote work and

family policies, they operate in a culture that silences women in the legislature:

> On the table that summer were trillions of dollars of spending and taxes. And women—
> especially DeParle and Mastromonaco—were doing a lot of legwork behind the scenes.
> But they were excluded from some vital negotiations. The men involved would walk into
> the Oval Office to hold impromptu sessions with the President when ideas struck them, or
> they'd turn to the topic in an unrelated meeting. (Newton-Small, 2016, p. 22)

Hagan acknowledges that the United States legislative bodies are approaching the 20%

critical mass benchmark and are beginning to impact government agendas as evidenced by the

track record created by committees and sub-committees chaired by women in the 2013–2014

Senate as gender and family progressive. The Children and Families Subcommittee is now

chaired by Senator Patty Murray who has been dubbed by her masculine counterparts as "the

tennis shoe mom" (Pope, 2007, para. 14) because she is not a career politician; she came out of

the childhood educational system. Senator Hagan cautioned against just blaming government or

organizations: "Women need to vote. There are enough powerful women that collectively we

could move the agenda forward" (personal communication July 6, 2016). She suggested that, in

tandem with favorable business benefits, the United States government needs to provide tax

credits, daycare subsidies and family friendly work policies. She reiterated that the government

will not make inroads on these issues until women reach a critical mass in the Congress and

Senate and have a voice in what gets served up and what gets passed as legislation that assists

working women.

There is a strong capitalistic argument for government and corporations to join in closing

the gender gap. "Narrowing the gender gap and realizing the economic potential of women is an

ambitious agenda that will require concrete action by governments working in concert with the

private sector" (Bughin, Manyika, & Woetzel, 2016, p. 1). In a discussion paper recently

released by the McKinsey Global Institute, it was calculated that if all countries matched the

historical rate of equality at work progress garnered by the fastest improving regional peer,

global GDP would increase by $12 trillion by 2025 (Bughin et al., 2016). This translates into an

increase of 11% in GDP. There is a benefit and there is a cost to working together. This study

identified six areas in which $1.9 to $2 trillion must be invested from private, public and

household annual spending to empower women equally. These six areas include financial inclusion, unpaid care work, education, family planning, maternal health and digital inclusion (Bughin et al., 2016).

There is little evidence that the United States government and the private sector are working together to resolve the gender gap except in the area of the pay discrepancy. At the June 2016 State of Women Summit, the White House announced "The Equal Pay Pledge" (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2016) in which companies in the private sector publicly pledge to work toward equal pay for women. Several states, including California, New York and Massachusetts have passed legislation to close the gender pay gap. As of August 1, 2016, Massachusetts passed the toughest mandate thus far, requiring all business in Massachusetts to "pay all employees the same wage for same or 'comparable' positions regardless of gender" (Andrews, 2016, para. 3). Closing the gender pay gap is a step forward, but money can't buy childcare resources that are unavailable.

If success is contingent on also being able to provide caregiving, where employees live can determine success. Gender equity in the workplace, in tandem with work and family policy legislation, is driven at the state level in the United States. This will eventually have an impact on our national conversation, but has had little persuasion to date:

> State progress in enacting laws that help expecting and new parents is critically important because it provides people in those states with the protections and workplace supports they need. It also demonstrates that these policies help families, dispels myths about effects on business, shows support from smaller businesses and strengthens the economy. This evidence helps enable other states to take action, paving the way for change at the national level. (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2016, p. 9)

Where employees work and where live have a significant impact on family. "We often lack common definitions and standards of employer policies and practices, which makes measurement of availability on a national level difficult" (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 15).

Parents must gather and triangulate information across many categories to make parenting and childcare decisions. Most reports can only be aggregated at the state level. Because there are no national tools for measurement, each report must formulate individual reporting metrics, which makes comparison difficult. For example, the National Partnership for Women and Families issues a report card for each state around access to work and family amenities. Expect Better, the report's title, issued North Carolina an F, along with 17 other states (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2016, p. 21). New America, in partnership with Care.com recently released a comprehensive report on the status of childcare across the United States, comparing state against state in the absence of any national metrics of costs, availability and quality (Schulte, & Durana, 2016). North Carolina received what was called a standard grade in this study, with the national standard being extremely low. What prompts some states to be more progressive than others? In the absence of national legislation and in light of the paltry organizational offerings, states limp toward some resolution of work and family policy and childcare.

Participants did not articulate and were therefore partially foreclosed on the competing demands for the health and wellbeing of children. One participant articulated that earlier and more frequent extracurricular activities for children were a competing demand while another raised educational concerns—but this idea was not challenged in full. Perhaps this is not surprising given that women are socialized to care. Parents want their children to be competitive to the standard society holds. American families are child-centered (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). Because of this cultural focus, a proliferation of early childhood health and development research has placed the wellbeing of the child at the forefront of our social structure without much thought to the implications for working parents (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). The

implementation into practice of such research without looking at the systematic ramifications is often punitive to working mothers. For example, recent pediatric guidelines suspend the prescription of antibiotics to children often extending illness for weeks. When asked if the National Association of Pediatrics assesses the impact of protocol decisions on the family unit, one prominent pediatrician provided this comment:

> Often in the medical literature you will see references to how illness or health impacts society in terms of lost production, wages, etc. However, rarely is there a reference to this at the level of the family. We see issues only discussed at the level of society and not how they impact the family level. (K. Russo, personal communication, October 4, 2016)

While I am not advocating for increased childhood medication, movement in this situation without some countermovement in the way childcare is practiced or in culture of work—which often disallows paid or unpaid sick days—is shortsighted. Even in progressive work cultures, an absence of seven to ten days with a sick child is costly to both the employee and employer.

There are indirect costs affecting U.S. businesses. So, because of a lack of resiliency in our childcare system and inadequate back up care we have a lot of employed parents that have to stay home with sick children. So, there's a lot of productivity losses in the U.S. economy. Some estimates put this at as much as $4 billion a year. (MacCaffrey, as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para 31).

Furthermore, it is difficult to work virtually with a sick child as they require more care. Most participants tried to divide sick child responsibilities with a spouse or close relative, but experienced these situations as extremely stressful. How much can parents commodify and outsource care? Is this a fully substitutable responsibility?

> That's a difference that I think, if people recognized it, it's sometimes you just want mom, sometimes you just want dad. But most of the time you're just going to want mom

and we just have to deal with it and people have to be understanding of the fact that sometimes only mom will do. (Karen)

Furthermore, there continues to be a dominant paradigm of mothering, especially around issues of childhood sickness; participants found that even when a father was designated for such incidences, the mother often gets called:

And Kurt has a really flexible job; he works in commercial real estate. So, there are times . . . like one time I was out of town and I had told her teacher well "I'm not going to be here today, so, you're going to have to call Kurt"— and she still called me first. And they called Kurt and Kurt called me and said I'm going to go get her and I said yeah like I'm in X, it would take me a little time to get there. So, it's even engrained in the teachers and the caregivers. They always think to call the mom first. I don't think she has Kurt's phone number in her phone. (Ginny)

The state is involved in the childcare arena effecting laws regarding day care: employee-to-child ratios, facility and food preparation requirements. The location of daycare was of particular concern in the sample population because there are few facilities in the uptown area. The exceptions were church or healthcare sponsored daycares. North Carolina law, the law affecting most study participants here, requires 25 facility square feet per child with additional 75 square feet fenced in, equipment free outdoor area per child (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 2015, p. 6). This makes development in the prime commercial real estate of the uptown area cost-prohibitive for a daycare facility, particularly because ground level must be used to accommodate the required outdoor space.

Most participants in this study had to decide to leave children in daycare facilities in the suburbs and be 25 miles from their children. Conversely, if mothers found a spot in an uptown daycare, they had to make the decision to drive 25 miles with a child in rush hour traffic. This made picking up a sick child more difficult. This made visiting the child to breastfeed or visit with the child intermittently during the day impossible.

Fraga (interviewed in Joshua Johnson, 2016) has termed this issue *daycare deserts* in which parents must move out in concentric circles around work and home to find both quality and affordable care. These issues continued and were often exacerbated as a child transitioned out of privately held daycare centers into the public educational system. Urban planning, state regulatory bodies and social norms around child development align to challenge working mothers.

The current body of research on childcare and working mothers primarily focuses on low-income families because that's where the policy dollars have been allocated (Ben-Ishai, Matthews, & Levin-Epstein, 2014; Manoogian, Jurich, Sano, & Ko, 2015; E. Scott & Abelson, 2016). There are a few exceptions (Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2012; Damaske, 2011). Schulte (as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para. 59) advises 60% of childcare costs are borne by parents; 39% by the government through low income subsidies; and 1% by business and philanthropy. Even with the government safety net, one in six children in the United States that should receive subsidized childcare actually receives the subsidy (Fraga, as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para. 78). Universal childcare programs have been implemented in Canada and the Scandinavian countries, but the United States continues to debate the issues. There is very little research conducted in the United States to substantiate the cost and benefits of universal childcare for middle-income families:

> Critics of such a move argue that society should focus its investment on low income families where the returns are likely to be the greatest; extending subsidized child care to middle and upper-class children may require an increase in taxes at the cost of economic efficiency. Proponents of universal programs counter that even if returns are greater for the poor, subsidized child care may have benefits that exceed the costs for middle or upper-class children that may exceed its costs. (Havnes & Mogstad, 2015, p. 100)

Additionally, a new study by New America, Care.com, and A. T. Kearney (Schulte & Durana, 2016) advises that no state is doing well in child care: "And I think probably the most

revelatory and perhaps shocking thing is that it didn't matter what quartile you were in. Every

state was faced with trade-offs between costs, quality and availability. Everyone is struggling"

(Schulte as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para. 17). This report elucidates the pervasive

challenges working parents incur while trying to secure childcare to work. It also shows that the

United States continues to wrestle with an individualistic, self-sufficient mentality. Many early

child development experts advise at the risk of a competitive future: "Childcare should and is a

private responsibility, not a public good, that's really the crux of the issue about why we have

such a patchwork system. We're very divided as a country in terms of what we think should be

happening" (Schulte as quoted in Joshua Johnson, 2016, para. 100).

Many states have reduced funding the educational system and pay teachers poorly.

North Carolina ranks 41st in teacher pay. There are decisions around public or private education

for North Carolina children, but most participants had opted for public education. Choosing this

route means supplementing the educational system in place or/and actively campaigning for

system improvements. This translates into source of time poverty for women and a situation in

which they primarily look to themselves for resolution:

> The neighborhood school is terrible. They will not go there. We hear horror stories from
> our neighbors—lock downs weekly; a ten-year-old brought a knife to school. But I also
> think they all shouldn't be locked up in one school. Needless to say, it's a terrible
> environment and they need to be exposed to something else. There is a school in the
> neighborhood that I'm not sure if they want to make it a magnet school or just better
> integrated. It's a different one than the one I was referring to; so, I'd like to be able to get
> into that committee and see how it goes. (Denise)

In summary, women were closed to systemic solutions and resources between corporate

policy, the government and child development, because they are steeped in a social paradigm

where solutions are developed individually. Women are not collectively advocating for more

resources—as documented earlier the government provides none and corporate America

provides only a few. The future of our children is also in this gridlock. Women cannot rise in the ranks to reach some critical mass if individual families have the sole responsibility for raising and educating the next generation. This is not a sustainable model. "The United States has fallen behind other wealthy countries in women's employment rates in part due to a lack of maternal employment supports" (Blau & Kahn, as cited in Boeckmann et al., 2014). A recent report by the Federal Reserve suggests that by 2022, workforce rates will hit a low, not seen since the 1970s, of 61% (Aaronson et al., 2014). This is stifling the ability of the United States to move GDP from the current .5% low and provide an adequate tax base. Conservatives attempts to broaden Earned Income Tax Credits have caused little movement in the decline. "But as of yet, conservatives have largely overlooked family friendly policies as a tool to counteract declining workforce participation rates and increase options for American workers. This could be a significant omission" (Mathur & McCloskey, 2016, para 4). Blau and Kahn (2013) found that the lack of family policies accounted for 28% of the decline in workforce participation. Concurrently, there is a positive correlation between public childcare and women's labor market participation: Bauernschuster and Schlotter (2015) found that a 10% increase in public child care provisions yielded approximately a 3.5% increase in the maternal labor force in Germany. Public provisions of childcare would ease the burden for working women in a plethora of ways. Women interviewed in the present study not only cited the high costs of daycare as a problem, but lack of newborn care. Four participants from the 12-member theoretical sample with children had to make interim childcare arrangements for newborns so they could return to work. Proximity of childcare was a problem for participants and finding good childcare remains an issue. The overall undervaluation of care in the United States and the underpayment and lack of education of childcare employees is problematic. All participants of

this study agreed that childcare was the largest impediment to work. More resources need to be made available in conjunction with the all-encompassing concepts of corporate leadership. At this juncture, women remain foreclosed to solutions.

The World Economic Forum and the business case for gender equity. The World Economic Forum (2015) estimates that if the United States continues to crawl to gender parity at the current rate, women may have the same career opportunities as men in 60 years. Organizational diversity and inclusion programs have yielded little momentum. "We face a growing structural mismatch between the design of jobs and career systems and a transformed workforce" (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009, p. 1).

The World Economic Forum sits in the middle of the Culture of Work and government in the United States and facilitates as the interlocutor for the gender conversation. It provides a vignette in which we are far from a super power; in fact, the United States is super small in 28th position in the 2015 Global Gender Gap Index rankings (World Economic Forum, 2015). This leads to the hard questions: "Caring is what makes us human. So, why don't we fund it?" (Burrow, 2016, para. 1). "The system is broken, So, how do we fix it?" (C. Parker, 2016, para. 1). "The paradox of meritocracy: Why does this happen?" (Sandgren, 2016, para. 4).

The World Economic Forum functions as a global arbiter of economic success, but measures that success along fault lines other than shareholder wealth. It relies on some of the best minds in economic policy, and provides a classroom for dissecting issues. It provides a space for collaboration so that the best performing country's template for success can be shared with others. It ranks countries against a metric and prompts America to keep thinking and working toward gender resolution in the workplace. It highlights the United States' continued failure to do so.

Corporations, the government, academia, consultancy and individuals are informed and subsequently motivated by each year's annual gathering at Davos, to circle back to the gender drawing board. World Economic Forum USA also assists in actualizing World Economic Forum gender gap resolutions and provides a continental feedback loop. This effort is joined by American corporations because they see the business case for accessing the global value talent chain but they continue to offer minimal competitive resources because they have few competitors. Only when talent is siphoned away, do corporations extend resources as Bank of America did in March of 2016: "In explaining the move, Jim Huffman, U.S. Health and Wellness Benefits executive for Bank of America, noted some other large companies such as Facebook and Netflix have recently enhanced their parental leave offerings" (as cited in D. Roberts, 2016, para. 6).

The World Economic Forum punctuates American capitalism and redirects our bottom line fixation. It brings Americans under the global economic tent for the gender conversation. It provides a "framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress…the rankings are designed to create greater awareness among a global audience of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them" (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 3).

Summary of Foreclosure. Perhaps women are foreclosed to the government as a provider of resources for cultural and political reasons, but also for concrete reasons: To date, our government has offered little to working women. As our legislative body inches toward a critical mass of women, the work accomplished by female politicians in committees and sub-committees is foundational and hopeful. But, as seen from the words of this study's participants, it has not been impactful in the everyday lives of working women. It has not been

enough to garner women's interest, support and advocacy. Furthermore, the dire context in

which working women find themselves precludes investment in political advocacy. Working

women are so mired in a one-day-at-a-time outlook that they can't reach out for the situational

player that has the potential to help most.

Key context: the Work-Home Performance Ratio. I chose to refer to this situational

context as a ratio because each sphere is intricately reciprocal in nature: any movement in one

sphere can be felt proportionately in the other. Other resources gleaned for situational analysis

of this key context include:

- reports and a case study produced by nonprofit New America;

- information from reports produced by Pew Social Trends;

- reports by the Center for Disease Control; and

- references from relevant academic literature.

Participants talked at length about struggles with childcare. Childcare remained a

dominant theme throughout the interview process and created the most movement in the context

of the Work-Home Performance Ratio. Baby boomers in my purposeful sample, dealt with

childcare issues by designating a stay-at-home father or remained childless. Income or potential

earnings normally predicated this decision. A few participants who had some flexibility in job

requirements tried to work through childcare so that both parents could stay in their respective

careers:

> I went back as morning and noon anchor. So, I got up really early in the morning, I got up
> at 1:30 a.m. which was tough. But I was at home by 2 p.m. So by that time, David was in
> school, kindergarten, and Devon was in 4th grade. So by that time they would both come
> home from school at 2:00 p.m. and I was home. So, I could fix them a snack, we could
> work on school work, I could take them to soccer or T-ball or whatever. We would all go
> to bed. I would go to bed with David at 7:00 p.m. and I could fix them dinner. So, I was
> a mom and then I could go to bed and then get up at 1:30 and Robert would fix them
> breakfast and they could turn on the TV and there's mama. And then they could go to

school and then mama is home when they got home. So, I completely mommy-tracked myself. So, I had sort of the best of both worlds although I was the walking dead, I was really, really tired. But I mommy tracked until they got into high school. (Lacey)

Women in the theoretical sample population did not see opting out of the workplace as a viable option for either spouse and were committed to dual earner family status. Thus, childcare was a constant reality to support work. Often women sought out strategies for accomplishing this feat by soliciting family to help with childcare. One participant spoke of how she had moved closer to family for support. She illustrates the dependability built into the family support system:

We're lucky that my family lives close by and my sister has two boys; she's had to get the kids at school for me before. One time daycare called me. I was in a meeting all day; my husband was in St. Louis. The power was out at school and they had like two hours to get off the premises. Well I was doing this presentation for work so I couldn't go. Ryan was in St. Louis at all day training so, he didn't answer the phone. They called my backup which is my sister who also has a stressful job and she went and got the kids because she had to get her kids. I came back to my desk, rushing to get myself together to pick up the kids on time. Check my phone on the way out and I have a picture of my 2-year-old with my sister and her boys saying yeah mommy. I had like 16 missed calls or something. And I called my sister, I'm like frantic; and I said why do you have Graham and she's like the daycare called four hours ago. So, family is big; when things have to give I lean on my mom to come babysit, my dad, my sister. Family is really important to us. (Jennifer)

Another participants spoke of using family as a childcare bridge between her return to work from maternity leave and the securing of daycare: "Yeah, So, my dad he's in X town and my brother is living with him for a little bit So, they're taking care of Luke now. But when Luke was first born they didn't want to do it" (Karen).

Many participants were forced to make interim child care arrangements after the birth of a child, due to the lack of infant availability in daycare. The preceding excerpts also show the strain on the extended family to support the care of children in the United States, of looking inward in lieu of outward for resources. Many mothers of study participants who muddled

through part time or flexible jobs in order the take care of their families, find themselves now

caring for or at least on call to care for grandchildren.

What makes these stories additionally troubling is that they reflect the United States' lack

of value for caregiving and early childhood education. For example, Massachusetts ranks as one

of the best states in which to get affordable high quality daycare (Schulte & Durana, 2016). Yet

the average childcare employee in Massachusetts in 2015 made $12.01 per hour and 39% of

them received government assistance for food and housing (N. Mooney, 2016). This compares to

the national average of $9.77 in hourly wages and translates to over 50% of childcare workers

receiving public assistance. "And despite the calls in state for childcare workers to get college

degrees, the Department of Labor still groups them with personal service providers such as

valets, butlers and fitness trainers rather than other education-related occupations" (N. Mooney,

2016, para. 4). Massachusetts formed a Department of Early Education and Care and

implemented a Quality Ratings and Improvement System in 2011 to address early childcare

issues, and although it boasts a high (38%) childcare center accreditation rating, it also has some

of the highest childcare costs in the country while providing childcare workers no more than

poverty level wages.

> That the state may be rated as one of the most successful early care and learning systems
> in the country, yet still have such high costs and poverty wages for caregivers, says more
> about what's lacking in the rest of the country than what's thriving in Massachusetts. It
> is indicative of the nationwide state of childcare that neither the providers nor the parents
> nor the teachers feels the system works well for anyone. (N. Mooney, 2016, para. 7)

Childcare employees have one of the higher turnover rates in the country; 13% as

compared to a 3.4% turnover rate for non-farm workers (N. Mooney, 2016, para. 9). This does

not provide the stability and attachment that young developmental minds require (Ainsworth &

Bowlby, 1991). Additionally, low wages paid to employees of feminized industries has

sustained the gender segmentation in the labor market (P. Cohen & Huffman, 2003) thus creating a repetitive low wage cycle.

Not only is the single mother looking for a support strategy for childcare, but she is able to capitalize on the low wages paid to teachers: "But from a support system I don't have one, but I will say I have hired help, which is good. Funny she was my daughter's fourth grade teacher a couple of years ago. She's now my sitter" (Shari).

Daycare is only a partial answer for leading women. Sick days, especially in the child's first few years, can take a toll on a new mother and her career. This participant has a newborn and is anticipating those dilemmas:

> I think about that and I'm like what would I do if he got sick? If I put him in daycare and he got sick, what would I do? Would I have to take a week off of work as vacation time; is that sick time? I guess it would be sick time, but once you have a sick child at home it's not like you can get that much work done either. So, it's not like you can really work from home. (Karen)

Rates of childhood developmental disorders have risen. For example, one in 45 children are diagnosed with autism (Zablotsky, Black, Maenner, Schieve, & Blumberg, 2015) and11% of American children are afflicted with ADHD; children diagnosed with these disorders often suffer co-occurring conditions such as learning disorders (Zablotsky et al., 2015). The numbers of children diagnosed with autism and ADHD have continued to rise with an 80% jump in autism between 2011 and 2014 and an increase in ADHD from 7.8% in 2003 to 11% in 2011 (Zablotsky et al., 2015). These are issues of concern and precariousness for working mothers. These childhood issues, to name a few, demand time and money and complicate the Work-Home Performance Ratio.

And there is the escalating cost of daycare.

> I didn't know how expensive childcare was and how difficult it was to find until I started working for X and early childhood is one of the issues that we work on and through my

work I learned that Colorado has some of the most expensive childcare in the entire country. It can be $24,000 a year to put two kids in childcare which is more than a lot of people make in a year; and then there are the wait lists, especially for the good child care programs. And so when I first found that out, I remember thinking why are people not rioting in the streets, this is absurd! Like we're all just paying $24,000 a year just so that we can go to work? (Sonia)

Historically, married couples employed a cost-benefit analysis in juxtaposing childcare and women's work. In these scenarios, women often opted out of the labor force or selected a part-time status when childcare expenses approached salary levels. Women often earned less than male counterparts because of the gender pay gap and married men often garnered larger salaries because they were older and further along in their career than their female counterparts. These decisions were often absent of any consideration of a woman's future income stream or her propensity for work re-engagement or satisfaction. The gender pay gap remains influential in such decisions, but as women rise through the organizational ranks, they are earning more income. None of the sample population entertained the possibility of part-time or opting out of the labor force. Women are opting to stay engaged with work for personal satisfaction, but many must contribute to the economy of the family. Younger women are wrestling with student debt.

And sometimes when I think about not working, if it crosses my head, I think I have a college education; I'm still paying back loans. I'm going to use that college education that I worked so hard for and still paying for. (Ginny)

While most participants in this study might be classified as elite, many potential female leaders are wrestling with childcare issues in mid-pipeline. Additionally, having a spouse or significant other in a lower income profession can exacerbate this conundrum. This represents a critical time in a woman's career trajectory. In the excerpt below, the participant's significant other was a teacher and she is contemplating the financial burden of a family:

We advocate a lot for our state's childcare assistance program that contracts with childcare providers and gives them a subsidy to help make it more affordable for low income families but that doesn't begin to help middle income families So, you still have

that middle class squeeze there where it's still too expensive for them but they are not getting any financial assistance. (Sonia)

There are issues with availability, especially at what are considered good daycares. In the excerpt below, the participant talks about the availability of newborn care, because the state regulates a very high teacher to newborn ratio. She recently discovered she was pregnant with her second child.

So we've been very lucky. At first, because the waitlists are so bad, we had to find an interim daycare before we got in and that's everywhere, which is really hard for working parents. You have to find something to do with your kids for three months. Another reason to have an extended maternity leave. I'll tell you the minute I heard a heartbeat, the next day I took a day off from work and got my name on a daycare list. (Denise)

The childcare issues do not end when children go to school. The school day and the school year remain out of sync with the workday. Participants describe the scramble to assemble childcare coverage for these days off.

We don't have a lot of days off like holidays and daycare does more than the actual school will, and then summer. So, she's like you've to start getting camps in February for the summer, or all the camps are booked. So, the discount I'll get from the public school will be filled up with camps and after school care. (Jennifer)

Today's working mothers encounter a plethora of early development and educational demands. A weakening public school system across United States shifts more of the educational burden to parents. Additionally, extant research on child development and education is easily disseminated through blogs, websites, workshops, conferences and parental networking. The benchmark for the well-adapted toddler now includes activities such as gymnastics at Gymboree, or music enrichment at Kindermusic or swimming lessons at the Little Otter Swim School. Extracurricular activities for preschoolers is positively correlated with parent education and income (Pew Social Trends. 2013). Involvement in extracurricular activities increases as children enter the educational system. Many of these enrichment programs and after school

activities do not cater to the working mother's schedule (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014).

Yet parents are compelled to enroll children in these activities and try to make a 4 p.m. sports

practice work because they understand that a college degree will not necessarily guarantee future

success for their children. Katz (2008) has suggested that children are "current and future

projects in economically insecure times" (as cited in Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014, p. 624).

It should also be noted that the engaging children in these extra-curricular activities accentuates

socioeconomic divides as working class families often cannot afford to enroll children in

enrichment programs.

> So parents aren't just supporting the work of schools by helping with homework, they are
> devoting themselves to creating healthy, cultured, confident little people who are ready to
> take on the world. They are under pressure to deliver at work, they have to keep their
> own employment skills up-to-date, they still do more of the domestic labour than men,
> and now they're under pressure to ensure their children have an enjoyable childhood and
> development in appropriate ways (Bingham, 2014, para. 14).

> Researchers Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2016) have termed this additional burden of

childrearing "professionalized parenting" (p. 376).

> Participants readily employed technology to manage and juxtapose childcare against jobs.

> My husband and I have an iPhone and the calendar is bible. So, you put something on the
> calendar you both see it. So, Thursday I have a meeting until I have to go to Chicago for
> 3 days next week; the day I get back I have a late meeting. So, he's got to get the kids
> that whole week practically. So, I put it on the calendar and it's kind of what we both
> have this where the calendar is bible. If you get it first then I either have to renegotiate
> something, or I can't do it (Jennifer)

> There were participant conversations around who is responsible for work life balance:

> Because everyone in accounting will tell you work-life balance, work-life balance. And I
> don't know if it's true in other industries or not, but that's kind of a catch phrase where
> they like to throw and say, "Oh, this is how we manage your work-life balance." But
> what I realized is you have to manage your work-life balance, your company is not going
> to manage it for you. (Karen)

Several participants expressed a tension between work and home that often fed feelings

of guilt: "I think I got fed so much at work that it didn't matter when I got home. And a lot of

times when I got home I was so exhausted or tired" (Madison).

> The biggest guilt trip. Every day I get my kids, my two-year-old is waiting in the lobby
> with the teacher and the infant is the last one there, my kids are the last ones at the
> daycare every day, because I get there at 5:59, 6. And I've got a great relationship with
> the teachers, they all know it now and you've just got to make the best of it. My mom
> was watching the kids while we were out of town, and when I took Graham to daycare
> when we returned he said to me: "Are you going to pick me up early like Grandma
> does?" I'm like, "she picks you up at 3 or 4 and comes home and plays and gets dinner
> ready. I pick you up at 6—and barely get food on the table while the other one is crying,
> get the bottle down and then I get back online after you all get down at 8." (Jennifer)

Children's adaptability and satisfaction were tightly integrated into the work satisfaction

of participants: "I think when things are not right with daycare, it's really hard to work.

Like today, I can work really well because both my kids are in schools that they love and they're

happy" (Carmen).

Participants grappled with a culture of intensive mothering. As A. Henderson, Harmon,

and Newman (2016) indicate, "families exist in two spheres, both public and private . . . which

means that mothers' experiences cannot be analyzed without taking prevailing gender ideologies

into account" (p. 512). There is a gendered nature to parenting. Even when mothers in general

did not subscribe to intensive mothering, they were subject to the scrutiny and pressure of the

culture at large to perform intensive mothering. Regarding the seeming choice to ignore

intensive mothering cultural norms, Douglas and Michaels (2004) suggest that it is the very

notion of choice that makes the ideology of mothering so powerful:

> The only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that that proves, first, that
> you are a 'real' woman, and second, that you are a decent, worthy one, is to become a
> 'mom' and to bring to child rearing a combination of selflessness and professionalism
> that would involve the cross cloning of Mother Teresa with Donna Shalala. (p. 5)

Intensive mothering has been linked to increased levels of depression and stress (Rizzo, Schiffrin, & Liss, 2013), isolation and anxiety (Liss, Schiffrin, & Rizzon, 2013) and mother-blame (Jackson & Mannix, 2004; Singh, 2004).

Furthermore, aspects of privilege have been linked with intensive mothering (Baca Zinn, 1990; Collins, 1994). However, other scholars suggest:

> The omnipresent state of these maternal expectations across populations such that even if a group questions a particular aspect of the ideology, the hegemony of these maternal standards continue to affect how women parent . . . Indeed, this model of mothering has been critiqued for overlooking the very different ways of doing motherhood, including the voices of lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered mothers, those from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as mothers of color. (A. Henderson, Harmon, & Newman, 2016)

When asked what issues, if addressed, would alleviate stress and help women move cohesively between work and home childcare was articulated repeatedly as the top priority. There are many places of need and places of entry in the antiquated childcare systems of the United States. Delving a little further, when I asked participants if they thought the educational systems was the first venue of change—that is the length of the school day or the possibility of year-round school—they did not think that a likely solution. They had no answer to this question. I think this reveals how daunting the task of revamping childcare in the United States is and how embedded and perhaps even escalating the ideals of mothering are.

This context also holds a very compelling human element: the strong emotional bond and attachment between working women and their children. It is not sufficient to label it solely as guilt. While this study did not interview fathers regarding their emotional bond with children, working mothers are constantly triangulating not only the needs of work, home and children but are also wrestling with the emotional tug of each.

> Unfortunately, it's almost like I can do it [focus] until another force breaks in and kind of requires me to. So, it's almost like by priority, by fire—like if there's a fire that I'm

putting out. So, like if I'm at work and there's a fire going on at home, it's really difficult for me to focus, and the opposite would be true at home if there's a fire going on to work. (Shari)

While they articulated few concerns about outsourcing housework, other than the sole responsibility for coordination of that task, the commodification of care was not so easily handled. Relying on family members assuaged this somewhat, but they experience outsourcing of caregiving as a double bind: there is no real substitute for mommy. When work demands increase, mommy time decreases and this is a constant physical and mental struggle for participants:

> All of that being said, even today, I still wonder am I doing the right thing? I still wonder because I miss out on some moments. I try really hard to make it to the most important events, or days at school and special parties at school or plays during summer camp. If they're in acting camp I'll be at the play or something like that. I really try to make sure that I'm not missing those big moments. (Tera)

The Work-Home Performance Ratio context elucidates not only the struggles of women to accomplish any balance given the lack of resources to do so, but also the severe time poverty incurred by increasing demands in both the work and home spheres.

Summary of the Work-Home Performance Ratio. This key context examines the reciprocal relationship between the work and home spheres. It not only elucidates the severe lack of childcare resources that might provide more cohesiveness between work and home, but also implicates the impact of increased work demands on cohesiveness. The work and home interface is experienced by participants as interdependent: Any increase in one sphere led to a direct decrease in the other. Slaughter (2015) compares the balance to a seesaw:

> What matters is that on the precarious seesaw between work and family it is always possible to put enough weight on one side to create a tipping point, most often leaving the woman as the caregiver and the man as the breadwinner. (p. 21)

It is imperative that America move toward linking and locating families as institutions in the economy and not separate from other spheres of experience.

> The search for practices to transform gender relations in and through the family as an institution thus points to a continuing need for research considering the political and economic contexts in which families are located. The circuits among family, state, market, [and] community should be scrutinized as they flow in multiple directions, with both stabilizing and destabilizing effects on intersectional inequalities in various institutional sites. (Ferree, 2010, p. 433)

Key context: The Heft of Marriage. Many participants found themselves in marriages where equality was promised but was not being experienced. Because marriage is to some extent confined to the interpersonal, private realm, outside resources were difficult to incorporate into the exploration of this key context. Information was garnered via personal communication with Field Expert 1 (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard) and an interview with Kenneth Matos, Vice President of Research at Life Meets Work, Inc. The literature was consulted to extend the situational analysis in this key context. These consultants and academics reflected on participant comments around the frustrations of marital inequality and the difficulties in moving toward resolution in this situational context:

> Because I'm doing it. So, here's the interesting thing too – So, we took that quiz at TWIST and I was [a prioritizer]. I sent it to my husband, I said you take this. I would have bet millions of dollars that he would have been maybe a planner [or] probably an arranger or something. He got prioritizer. I said I don't understand how you're a prioritizer. You have not done anything for this baby coming; you have not gotten a car seat ready. I've asked you to do this three times, how are you a prioritizer? He goes "why would I prioritize that stuff if you are." He just he prioritized me because I'm doing it. (Jennifer)

There is an opinion in our culture that it matters who you marry. This was one theme put forth in Sheryl Sandberg's (2013) book *Lean In*. Some participants endorsed this notion:

> I think it's really important if you are going to go down the path of getting married and having kids to be very deliberate about your choice of spouse. If you expect to do the career thing and you've got to think about that way ahead of when you have the kids and way ahead of when your career takes off if your aspiration is to move up the ranks of

corporate America, you have to really think through that choice of spouse and trade off around some of those things. Because if you don't have a supportive home environment it can be very challenging. (Amanda)

This advice spills over to the context of Malleable Me (discussed more fully below) and the dimension *Negotiating Equality*. It becomes a woman's responsibility to choose correctly and not get blind sighted by love or emotion. But is that really feasible? Imagine you are going to a job interview but the job is 10 years in the future. Choosing the correct spouse is such an abstract and outlandish notion, yet women are actively trying to accomplish this goal.

Some women suggested that even when spouses accessed paternity leave, they used it like a vacation in lieu of helping with newborn care:

> Like with _X__[Ella's husband], he would just sleep in the other room so he could get sleep. And he was at [place of his employment] with our first daughter, and he took all three months of paternity leave but he used it like a vacation; he had a hot tub salesman come over to the house when he was on the first paternity leave and I said "are you kidding me?" And then we were in this house with _R_ [the second child] and he came in one day and said "you weren't very friendly to the window guy" and I said "I'm trying to breast feed! And I'm hormonal and every little thing is pissing me off." (Ella)

Professional women are frustrated on many levels given lack of resources and workplace demands, but they are channeling most of that frustration into the institution of marriage. Perhaps this is the only venue that they feel they can channel their frustration with any leverage or movement. Perhaps they feel betrayed by the modern institution of marriage and its expectations of equality. Millennial mothers remained adamant that no matter how frustrated or disappointed they were in their partners, divorce was not an option. As parental influence provided one of the most prevalent codes in this study, many participants were emotionally impacted by divorced parents and suffered the fallout of that life event. Therefore, their frustrations are provoked not only by failed equitable expectations, but ideals of marital longevity.

The continued demands of the Culture of Work weigh heavily on the lived experience of

marriage and equality. Dr. Kenneth Matos suggests that this scenario often plays out in dual

career families when work demands collide with family demands: "Men suck it up and drop this

on wives . . . they may make children a focus but not housework. It comes down to deciding

whether you are a game playing individual or a trouble maker at work" (K. Matos, personal

communication, December 5, 2016).

Field Expert 1 stated:

Millennials think they are entering into an equal partnership but they don't know what
equal looks like . . . they have no model of equality. They are struggling to understand
what equality is and how to you go from concept to construction. It's a heavy lift.
(personal communication, May 23, 2016)

Concepts of marriage continue to change and researchers have failed to keep pace with

the changes. Coontz (2015) suggests:

Many alternatives to marriage have emerged. Even when people marry, they often do so
for different reasons from the ones of past and organize their marriages in different ways.
We need to pay special attention to the "rules of engagement" in family life and gender
relationships, making sure we don't assume that the results of a data set from the 1980's
or early 1990's still apply. I also think we need to be much more conscious of the
different dynamics and internal variations that exist underneath even seeming continuities
of this period. We need to stay aware of important changes and variations in the form,
content and consequences of male dominance, as well as in the ways women
accommodate to, or resist domination. (p. 9)

Some participants in the theoretical sample articulated marital satisfaction. In fact, when

the marriage is good, women looked to husbands for career advice and leaned on them heavily

for support. These partnerships allowed women to take care of the family while growing

professional identities:

I will say, once I met my husband, I feel like I advanced a lot quicker than I ever had. I
never thought about that. Could he be the reason or did he just give me the freedom and
support to rise? Before that, the first five years of my career, I was dating someone who
. . . I was making more money than him and he didn't feel good about that and he never

really wanted me to succeed, so, I just sort of stayed where I was. So, I meet this man who wants me to succeed, and I've always had that in me, So, I don't know. (Carmen)

Women frequently followed their spouses' advice around career decisions. This spousal advice provided a boost of confidence for women. Karen, a new mother, attributed her eventual decision to leave a Big Four accounting firm where she was unhappy and also returned to her job after maternity leave at her husband's urging.

I mean, in so many ways we are the same and in so many ways we are different and So, I really find it refreshing that we are different. Otherwise I don't think I would have expanded kind of who I am without it. I would have been the same person I was five years ago if he didn't help push me. So, my husband actually convinced me just go back and try it and see, because you don't really know what it's like until you actually do it. (Karen)

The legal system plays a pivotal role in this situational context. Because the construct of marriage is changing, women find themselves without laws that benefit working mothers:

When I was at that point in my life where I thought I was going to lose my girls and going to see an attorney and the attorney told me "your husband might get custody of your kids because you work out of town and he's been taking care of the kids." He wasn't making any money. He was making money but nothing compared to me, I was the breadwinner. I was the one doing all this; he's the one having the affair, why would he get my kids? I was horrified. Like really mad! He said: "Because you're not there." I thought this money wouldn't mean anything if I had no family left. (Madison)

They are again finding themselves in a position of having to choose between success at work or home or suffer due to antiquated family law perpetuated by traditional social norms. It is worth noting that marital laws are governed by the state and if you reside in a conservative state, divorce and custody can prove to be a slippery slope. Many women are leery of the legal system because they already bear divorce scars. No emotion elicited participant tears more than the experience of divorce. In the excerpt below, the participant talks about her parents' divorce and how it changed her and her sister's lives. Her sister is still recovering and the participant has stepped in to parent her sister:

My parents divorced when I was a senior getting ready to go to college. So, I was gone but she had to deal with all that and it's been hard for her to this day. Bless her heart that was 1997. She still . . . and even now I get emotional talking about it, has difficulties. (Carson)

Only one participant was single/divorced. Her job allowed her the financial ability to

leave a bad marriage. She advises that she traded one set of burdens for another, but is satisfied

with the trade-off. She illustrates the fact that women are *Negotiating Equality* in both work and

home spheres and that those negotiations have duel consequences:

He cheated on me three times that I know of, and I stayed the first couple, but it was that there are women that—granted—could I have fought it and gotten an attorney and gotten all this, he didn't have any money, it was all my money anyways. But there are some women I don't know what their situation but that don't have jobs or that can't live on their own and they have to stay because they don't have an ability to financially stand on their own two feet. So, I am lucky in that regard. Now do I feel a little bit less trapped being single? Yeah, maybe but now I have the whole burden of my kids. So, I probably have more burdens on me than I did before, but somehow knowing that when I go home I'm not like seeing what I don't like. I do blend my personal and my professional life because to be an authentic leader that people want to respect, they have to know you're human. (Shari)

Summary of the Heft of Marriage key context. Women are in the throes of tearing down

the old structure of marriage and creating a new structure that allows and supports their

leadership in the workplace. They are constructing this in tandem with the reconceptualization

of a diverse and inclusive workplace. Changing concepts of marriage and men are not keeping

pace with women's expectations and women's progress at work. "Not so long ago marriage was

defined as a fundamentally sexist institution where the wife was both sexually and financially

subservient to her husband. Early Americans defined marriage as a institution that robbed

women of their entire economic identity" (Millhiser, 2014, para 4). Middle and upper class

women have continued to advance in the workplace to be financially solvent and garner a

productive economic identity; however, the premise and the embedded traditions of the

institution of marriage have lingered past the point of relevancy. There is much tension around

this disequilibrium. While women have a long way to go to achieve parity in the workplace and

marriage, they are channeling frustrations inward toward marriage.

     Key context: Malleable Me. There is a strong cultural bent in the United States that the

unit of analysis, and, therefore, nucleus of change, is the individual. Women in this study

filtered any information through this lens of a malleable self. Although information was

abundant to actors in this context, this situational analysis focused on information provided by

Field Expert 2 regarding the validity of emerging synergies in research and practices of

consulting, information pertaining to LinkedIn and other forms of social media and virtual

communities and the influence of parents.

     Women named these as most influential to their experiences.

     While no participant over indulged in social media, given the time poverty they

experienced, the proliferation of Facebook and LinkedIn identities provided a portal of

narratives, images of perfection and vignettes of comparison:

> It's funny I had a friend who moved out to Colorado before I did. We worked together in St. Louis. She had what I thought was this great husband and she was going hiking every weekend and her Facebook feed was just one adventure after another and I remember thinking, why don't I have her life? And I came out here and connected with her again and it turns out she was miserable and she was going to divorce her husband and she really didn't have that many close friends. And it was a completely different picture than she was presenting to the outside world. (Sonia)

     Social media allows women to compare themselves to colleagues and professionals

outside organizational boundaries. Often these images are somewhat contrived. More evident

on LinkedIn, images are professional rather than unique, and there is an enterprise of belonging:

> The diverging interests between users, employers and site owners . . . calls into question how social media sites push for users "uniform" online identity while unconsciously steering their behavior. Both Facebook and LinkedIn appear to be powerful players in shaping our *normative* behavior. Social media profiles, in other words, are not a *reflection* of one's identity, as Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg wants us to believe, but are

part and parcel to a power struggle between users, employers/employees, and platform owners to steer online information and behavior. (van Dijck, 2013, p. 212)

And women are correct in their assumptions that it is important to belong to this enterprise. A 2011 Reppler study of 300 human resource professionals suggested that 91% screened prospective employees through social media venues; 48% used LinkedIn (Swallow, 2011; van Dijck, 2013).

Participants internalized gender critiques that originate in academia. Such research then gets disseminated by consultants, popular media, industry publications and newsprint, to the individual and becomes part of the organizational fabric. This information soaks into the social psyche at macro, meso and micro layers and fosters the diagnosis of women's work problems. Study participants internalized this knowledge both personally and professionally. One prestigious gender academic and consultant frames managers' misunderstandings in this way:

> What the literature has to say about gender differences is largely unsupported. I try to speak to the myths . . . things people believe because of stereotypes (e.g., gender differences) or because of misinformation in the business press (the business case for diversity) and present empirical findings that are more reliable. I don't know if these findings fall on deaf ears or not; sometimes probably yes; others no. (Field Exert 2, personal communication, October 5, 2016)

An example is the belief in women's lack of negotiation skills, which was popularized in academia by Deborah Kolb. Her original work on women at the bargaining table, was published in the late 1980s as a working paper (Kolb & Coolidge, 1988) and the topic was picked up and disseminated by popular media (Effron, 2016; Exley, Niederle, & Vesterlund, 2016; Fondas, 2015; Frank, 2015; Ibarra et al., 2013). Participants were all too familiar with such assumed areas of gender deficit in the workplace. Participants referred to the act of negotiation predominately around their ability to effectively negotiate. When asked how she negotiated her

life as both a woman and a leader, this participant jumped over the intended question and began

to defend her negotiation skills:

> What I've actually learned from a leader perspective, anything around negotiating is understand who you're dealing with, what their personality is. Do they need to know the details and facts or do they just want to understand what it is you can do for them. What drives them. That's key. The other piece in leading and around negotiating is always have facts and details in your back pocket. (Rebecca)

Another participant commented: "It is complicated and I think it's because for some

reason people respect it when guys negotiate and people don't respect it when women negotiate"

(Karen). The exploration of this context of abundant knowledge and its influence on participants

is not meant to negate participant experience, but to elucidate their hyper vigilance around

popularized workplace gender deficits.

Aggressiveness, or lack thereof, was a frequent popularized theme. Women never

referred to themselves simply as assertive:

> I don't want to comment around stereotypes but unfortunately when women come across stronger than maybe what people "feel they should be," it can have a negative stereotype over women, which can be tough. And that's where it's just one of these, as we say, you've got to put your armor of steel on. (Rebecca)

One participant spoke of being conflicted around her aggressiveness. She is conflicted

about her effectiveness to move between experience and perception and very cognizant of this

intricate dance:

> I do think I get labeled as tough and the B word and I can be aggressive. I think if you know me it's more of a challenging mentality; it's more of a making sure you know yourself. So, when you have to present to my boss's boss, I've just prepared you for everything . . . I catch myself having to be too aggressive and I get more defensive in these meetings and I think that puts off the wrong vibe because I think people become defensive in meetings and makes them look like they're fighting for that attention versus sitting back waiting for everyone to stop. (Jennifer)

Difference in gender decisiveness was also bantered around by participants:

So I don't know if it's just because it's in our—like men just don't seem to—and I'm being stereotypical right now, I know I am. Men do not seem to kind of think about things like we do. I feel like they're in the moment, they deal with it, they address with it, they move on. Where women seem to process whatever was in that moment, five moments from now they're still processing what happened and it's got to be something with our makeup. (Nora)

As was female camaraderie:

I've often been asked—I work with two other women specifically within my work group. My boss is a male and he's the CMO and then on his team are three women and two men, which is rather uncommon—And I've been asked how do you women get along, which is an interesting question because I don't know that men get asked that question, how do you men get along. And the reality is we get along because we all have one common goal and we are very focused and we are supportive of one another and we want each other to be successful. (Tera)

Most participants acknowledged thinking stereotypically to a degree. They often prefaced a thought with "I know this is stereotypical." This situational analysis merely suggests that these have been identified as problematic and out of sync with the demands of the organization. The awareness of these stereotypes and how performance is judged within the confines of those stereotypes requires extra emotional work for women. The knowing can be both good and detrimental. The constant indexing and reevaluation of actions is exhausting. Women constantly compare themselves to masculine models and norms.

And at times, when you're really vocal . . . Yes, I think there's still a bit of a double standard because if women are really too vocal then they're considered as being pushy which is unfortunate. But I think it does create a little more work to figure out how to message appropriately so that it doesn't come across as pushy and instead is taken for what it's worth. (Tera)

There are mixed situational messages which make this emotional work even more daunting:

I thought I am not going to speak up for the sake of speaking up and sound stupid. I need to listen and observe—so, too bad. So, here's where we come back together on the poker face is for years I was told you show your emotions on your sleeve, you need to not be so assertive, don't be so aggressive blah-blah. Then in this role it was the complete opposite. (Tess)

Younger women struggled in this context between authenticity and conformity while older women had in most cases, arrived at a cease-fire agreement within themselves. Mixed messages also originate in academia. Most of the current management literature advances an age-of-women-in-leadership paradigm. Academics describe new workplaces yearning for women as collaborators and long-range decision makers. Participants experience a gap between the leadership literature and the corporate experience. This creates dissonance for women.

Parents had a substantial influence on women who lead. Participants were particularly influenced by the father even though many had working mothers. Mothers were viewed as having flexible jobs or "working hard," neither of which sufficed as influential collateral.

> I would say it was crafted from my dad probably the way I think about leading, why it's important to me, the way that I push myself and work and I drive myself to be better. I think early on in life my dad set very high expectations of us, my sister and I and it really created a drive in me to do well not because of your title or because of your pay but because that's the standard you live by. (Jennifer)

In the following excerpt, the participant showed disdain that her mother, a college professor who is married to a doctor, worked hard for so little monetary reward:

> Probably more disdain than lack of understanding. How can you work this hard? I mean constantly and just yeah. I think it was, my sister and I both were we're going to… yeah, you know get a position where we're respected for what we do. And I don't really know that mom's not respected for what she does but certainly undervalued. I don't even know how much money mom makes. (Laura)

Only in the single parent home did participants see their mother as a strong leadership influence:

> So I come from a single parent home, just my mother and I, no siblings. Really, I was raised also by my grandparents, So, a very close small knit family. But, definitely, I was raised with a mother who was so kind hearted, selfless, just a genuinely good person. And I recognized that early on. I think I always said when I was little that I always wanted, because my mom has always been a person who sacrifices and gives and let me be the person that I am, I always said I want to make sure she's always proud. So, things like paying it forward, virtues, various different wisdoms, all that has always been a part of everything I do. (Kaci)

To bring the parental situational analysis into present, the same influential parental strongholds not only supported childcare issues women had, but often fed feelings of doubt, inadequacy and guilt.

> And as far as where it comes from, I definitely had some critical voices in my family growing up that didn't always make me feel valued or like I had value or was worthy of things; so, I think that permeates throughout my life and not just at my job. (Sonia)

The below excerpt reflects a family situation where two sisters have breadwinner status and have been hugely successful yet their father continues to only address their spouses about work:

> We used to actually kind of joke about it because our dad used to just only ask our husbands how's work. And then when both of our husbands weren't working it became a little odd. Well how's work and it just seemed a little awkward for our dad to ask. (Tera)

Some participants felt judged most severely by parents and this created a feeling of working hard to please but not malleable enough: "But I think it's also generational too because even my mom judges me. I just feel like everyone is judging me" (Ginny).

There is a visual standard of self-presentation for professional women. Some participants expressed a need to look promotable: "I always try to dress a level up, not just let my skills do that. I try to dress for what, if I wanted to be something bigger I would dress for that" (Madison). While there is no clear image or description for a "professional" visual, an inventory of participants' LinkedIn pages yielded 19 similar photographs: head and shoulder shot with dark suit or clothing. Only two participants had photographs with lighter clothing and one participant's LinkedIn page could not be located. Women must manage an online professional presence. Women are "encouraged to create professional identities in combination with their personal profile and resume content to enhance the likelihood that they will convey a positive impression in a new script" (Chiang & Suen, 2015, p. 517). Unprofessional-seeming photographs are not considered favorable:

However, we note that a small, albeit substantial enough, percentage of our sample had photographs that are considered unprofessional (19 percent). One interpretation of this is that some LinkedIn users still do not comprehend the potential ramifications of how they present themselves via SNWs [social networking sites]. (Zide, Elman, Shahani-Denning, 2014, p. 598)

In fact, the personal photograph is one of the distinguishing factors between LinkedIn and traditional resumes or business cards. While a professional photo was deemed by researchers to be of passport quality, there is no clear benchmark for what passes as a professional photo. There is a distinct cultural bias for what looks professional. There were gender presentation differences on LinkedIn: "Men were more likely than women to give and receive recommendations, and to display their personal and professional interests" (Zide et al., 2014, p. 599). Furthermore, men valued these attributions more than women. This creates another venue of disadvantage.

The use of online networks has transformed the traditional workplace into an "e-workplace" (Korzynski, 2014). Women must now maintain a physical and virtual presence in the organization. They must fit the job. If the job fit is incongruent with authenticity, women risk being taken seriously. This participant looked for a corporate culture in which she felt more comfortable showing up visually as a woman:

> In the past, it's been if I wanted to be professional, hair straight or in a bun, very plain suits, dark colors, nothing really should draw attention to yourself. But now if someone said wear professional dress, I put on a suit but it would not be pants; it would be a dress because I like dresses, they are just so much easier than wearing pants and a shirt. But then I would comb my hair, I would put on makeup, I would wear an accessory. I don't want to be like everyone else. (Karen)

Summary of key context: Malleable Me. Theoretical sample participants, albeit influenced by the enormous amount of information about how a professional woman should look and perform, are looking for work cultures in which they can be less contrived. They are overly

contrived in this context thanks to the proliferation of information. Every social arena and every context exerted pressure on the context of Malleable Me.

The Positional Map

After mapping various discourses, commitments, resources, power and silences in this situation, I constructed a positional map (Figure 5.3) as a visual inventory of what positions had been taken and what positions could be taken in the situation. This allows for mapping of micro, meso and macro positions as well as potential change. It also provides a visual of clustering and a visual of polarized positions.

American investment was mapped on two axes of investment. The vertical axis represents American investment in the organization, while the horizontal represents investment in human capital, or more specific to this study, the investment in women. The positional map does not assign position with a corresponding actor or e-element; it merely establishes all positions taken in this situation.
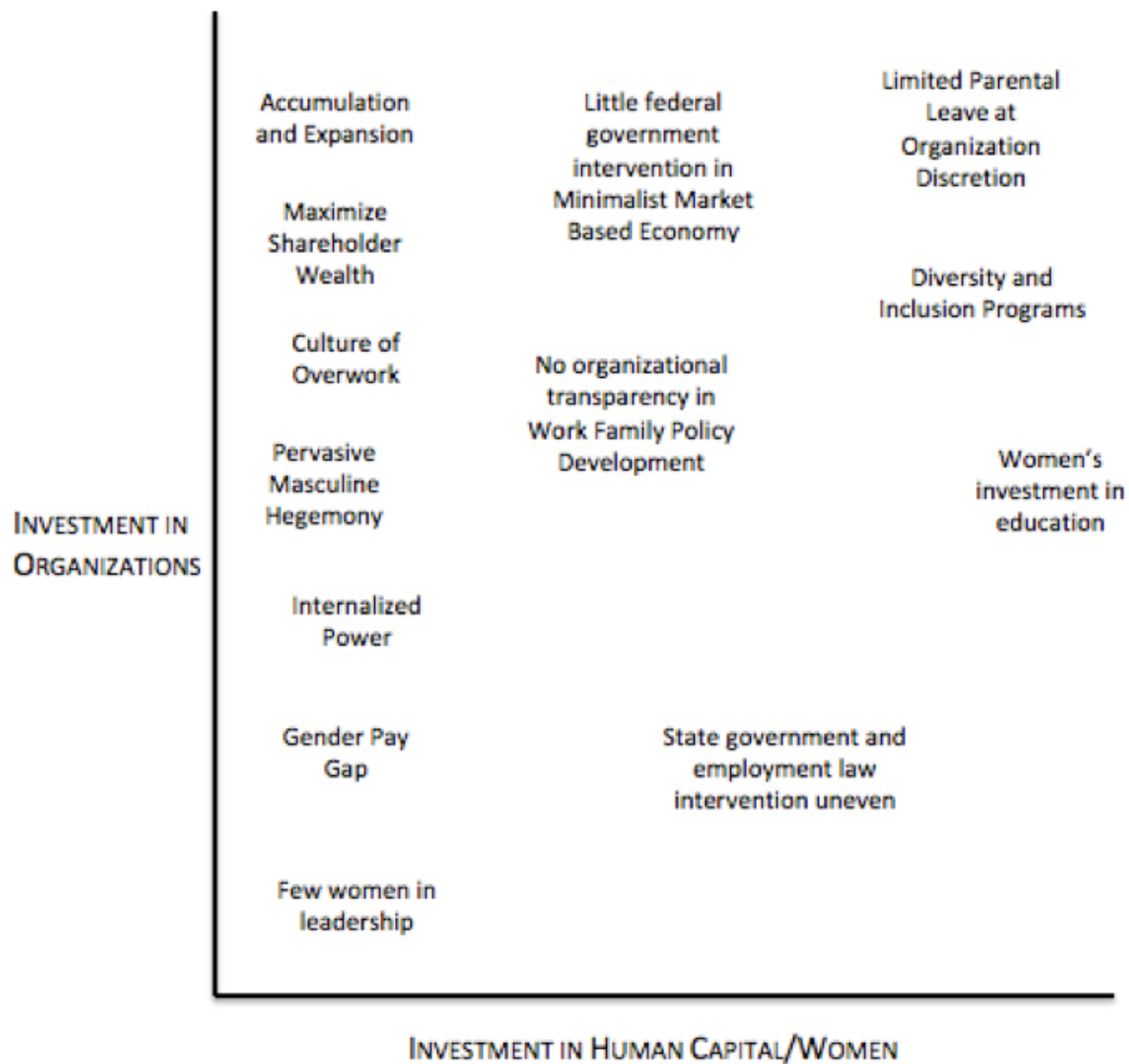
INVESTMENT STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN CAPITAL

Accumulation and Expansion

Maximize Shareholder Wealth

Culture of Overwork

Pervasive Masculine Hegemony

Internalized Power

Gender Pay Gap

Few women in leadership

Little federal government intervention in Minimalist Market Based Economy

No organizational transparency in Work Family Policy Development

State government and employment law intervention uneven

Limited Parental Leave at Organization Discretion

Diversity and Inclusion Programs

Women's investment in education

INVESTMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL/WOMEN

Figure 5.3 Positional map: Investment in organizations versus human capital/women.

Summary of Situational Analysis

This situational analysis identifies five key contexts that are significant in the lives of women who lead, as identified and named by participants. These are: The Culture of Work; the Work-Home Performance Ratio; Foreclosure; the Heft of Marriage, and Malleable Me.

While there has been increased awareness of diversity in work cultures, family resources have remained stagnant or dwindled (Matos & Galinsky, 2014). Study participants operate in a challenging, chaotic context with extremely few resources to perform at work and take care of family responsibilities. Kanter (1977) defined power as the ability to access resources. The situational elements render women powerless and in doing so manipulates destiny.

This situational analysis combines with the dimensional elements to suggest that bringing resources to the table will not close the leadership gap: given the precariousness of the family sphere, ideals around linear careers and leadership must adapt in lock step with resources. Second generation gender bias (Ely et al., 2011) must continue to improve. Women in this study forged career pursuits by taking each day as a situation to be survived. Thus, there is a double bind: women can't look for higher resolution because they are so bogged down in the daily situational offerings. Women in this study reported no advocacy for situational opening. In fact, several participants were persuaded to participate in this study because they are desperately looking for advocacy and situational opening.

The intent of this situational analysis has been to elucidate the formidable context in which women find themselves while attempting to close the gender gap at the top. This analysis constructs a vivid and complex career and family ecosystem in which leading women live. It is essential to understanding how women leaders make meaning in their lives; and it is integral to understanding the agency verses structure argument put forth in postmodern society. Unlike marathon athletes, who experience varying conditions en route, women are constantly running through the storm of situations. Despite all the training, few make it to the finish line. The situational analysis coupled with the dimensional analysis in Chapter IV give rise to the theoretical model presented in Chapter VI.

To close this chapter, I'd like to share a communication from a young freelance writer[6], who advises that she, like many Millennials, writes as what she called a "side hustle" to pay the bills. While not a study participant nor a woman who leads, she encapsulates the situational squeeze and difficult choices many young women must make all the while knowing they may be compromising leadership hopes. This contributes to the gender leadership gap:

> My husband and I confront daycare and childcare issues on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. We currently pay a whopping 90% of my salary to daycare ($2300 per month), as I recently returned to the workforce as a 28-year old young mother of two. Part of the rationale for my return to full-time work was the fact that women who take time out of the workforce receive an overall lifetime reduction in pay. It has always been important to me that my daughter has role models that are passionate about their lives as women outside of their role as mother/daughter/caregiver and who are able to use their skills/talents as part of this. Increasingly, I see that my life as a working mother fits my personality better—I experienced postpartum depression and significant loneliness as a stay-at-home mom—and personally, it was very lonely trying to create a structure for two little children without the community that seems to (at least anecdotally) have been the norm 20–30 years ago. What is interesting, to me, about this, is that I chose to forego a lucrative career as a Physician Assistant. When I received the acceptance letter several years ago, I was facing down $120K in loans to attend because I was terrified of being chained to a series of difficult student loans when I already had a baby to care for, and with one on the way—I found out I was pregnant around the same time. Back then, we faced difficult questions like: How can we take out $20K (or more) in loans per year for daycare? And what if we have a second child with special needs? There are numerous scenarios under which the student loan package I was provided would have crippled us. In the end, I chose to forego the P.A. while my husband worked to gain promotions at his first few jobs. It has not been an easy road, nor am I sure we've made the right choices. ("Barb," personal communication, May 23, 2016)

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[6] A pseudonym is used by her request.

Chapter VI: Discussion and Conclusion

If you stir a cup of coffee and then you add some cream to the coffee . . . what you see is that the two liquids swirl around each other; they don't just kind of merge into one another. They form this eddy this little sort of spiral and then they mix . . . by and by, the spiral gets tighter and tighter and tighter until the two liquids have mixed together. And that is the observation of a pattern you see in lots of other places.

—Helen Czerski on WBUR's *On Point* (Andersen, 2017)

This chapter introduces a theoretical model founded in the patterns seen in the results of this study. This theoretical model has been conceptualized around the dimensional properties and the situational properties of the study. Although Chapters IV and V convey the symbiotic nature of the study situation and dimensions, the model delineates elemental fit and flow; the swirling around each other. In this concluding chapter I revisit the literature and describe the gaps bridged by this study. The chapter also includes thoughts on the study's limitations and on future research directions.

A good place to begin is to return to the study purpose. This was to theorize how women in leadership positions engage and negotiate the totality of their situation. I sought to close a gap in the literature on women's experience of leading. Many previous studies focused on just one component or one deficit in women's experience of leading, implying that progress on an individual component would significantly resolve gender leadership parity. Such studies often treated as inconsequential the complexities and impact of the socio-cultural situation on individual experiences. In contrast, this study looked at many dimensions and situational contexts. It sought to understand how women in senior leadership positions create and consign meaning around their experiences; how they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities; and how they experience the entanglement of macro, meso, and micro societal forces. It sought especially to reveal the relationships among factors women name as influential in their

experience in leading. And most importantly, this study sought to elevate not one component as the most problematic, but elucidate interconnecting complexities in this experience. Schatzman (1991) describes *problematic* in this nuanced way: "Dimensionality was conceived as a property and variety of human thinking that turns language toward interrogative and analytic processes in the face of cognitive problems with phenomena, that is, when recognition and recall fail to provide situationally sufficient understanding" (p. 309). It is in this sense of problematic cognitive probing that my study is founded. Again, the overarching purpose here has been to theorize how women in leadership positions engage and negotiate the totality of their situation. The theoretical model will first be described in relation to this study and then theoretical propositions will be used to locate this model in the extant literature.

The Theoretical Model

Women who participated in this study find themselves existing between the Culture of Work, to which they desire to belong, and the Culture of Marriage, to which they also desire to belong; but neither of these conceptual zones can accept the evolved feminine. Both exert pressure on women to fit the masculine norms idealized for each zone. Therefore, women must constantly solve (for having it all), stalk (the unknown), lead (in a glass box) and negotiate (equality) to pass through No Women's Land and penetrate the Culture of Work. Simultaneously, they must solve, stalk and negotiate in No Man's Land to equalize the Culture of Marriage. All of the model energy generated by women is predicated on the need to sustain *Growth in Leadership*.

Additionally, women have absorbed the movement in the Culture of Work to at least superficially admit women into the workplace as well as the lack of movement in the Culture of Marriage. This movement has essentially widened the space for performing in the dimensions of

Solving, Stalking, Leading and *Negotiating*, and women have filled the widening rift in the middle of the model with their malleability to the situation to sustain some semblance of growth. They alone have accommodated the elasticity of the model.

The theoretical model is based heavily in theoretical sample data. There is a stark difference between the original sample population's situational understandings and mitigating social processes and the social processes and understanding enacted by the Gen-X and Millennial theoretical sample populations. Original sample participants, primarily Baby Boomers and early Gen-Xers, employed three processes to ascend to corporate leadership:

- complete caregiving role reversal; or establishing a "feminist housedude" (Mama Unabridged, 2013, para. 1);

- seeing the workplace as gender neutral; and/or

- opting for no children.

Indeed, four of the seven original participants decided on having no children. The theoretical model and forthcoming theoretical propositions are firmly based in the theoretical sample data as these participants articulated starkly different experiences and understandings of their situation. Millennials will most likely not have the options exercised by early purposeful study participants with a designated stay at home partner, and will most likely be engaged in a dual earner situation (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2003; Masterson & Hoobler, 2015). The theoretical population did not articulate a gender blindness but acknowledges gender difference which may be a touchstone toward finding a collective voice.

The theoretical model, shown in Figure 6.1, thus accomplishes this overarching purpose to theorize how women in leadership engage and negotiate the totality of their situation. It is a model, constructed with the voices and experiences of women, which conceptualizes the energy

flow, the resources, cognitive processes, the vignettes of power and the swirling movements that keeps women from closing the gender leadership gap in the current social paradigm. The theoretical model will be described in two sections. There will be an overview of the model in full followed by a more detailed discussion of the influential domains of the model with conceptual details.

Theoretical model overview. The following description provides a working overview of the Theoretical Model depicted in Figure 6.1.
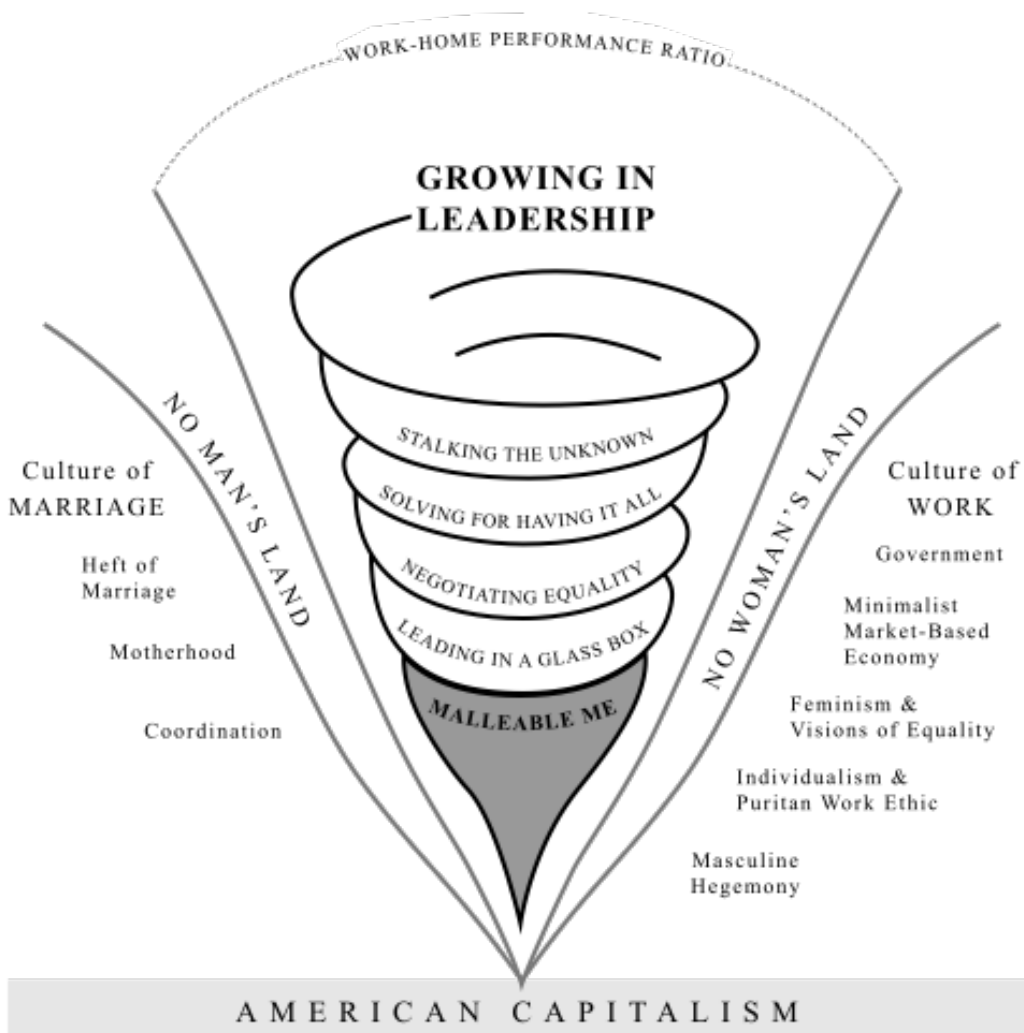
Figure 6.1. Theoretical model for *Exploring the Lives of Women Who Lead.*

While taking a drawing class in college, I was told that a true creative never begins in the middle of a space—but that is where I begin the discussion of this model because women are the epicenter of model movement. Women desire to belong to the key context of the Culture of Work, a dominant social arena denoted on the right side of the model because it is the best channel for *Growth In Leadership*, the core dimension. They desire to belong because modern society is organized around concepts of work; women want to find their place in this organizing principle (Just, 2014). Belonging provides a template for identity. Participants have an immense capacity for drive, and the Culture of Work provides a productive outlet for this drive. Most participants found it difficult to successfully channel drive into volunteer work or domesticity. This has been the case since Betty Friedan suggested that women's roles and identity should not be confined to the repetitions of domesticity. Although women have moved from the limiting roles defined by the feminine mystique (Friedan, 1963), they continue to be limited in the expression of identity. "A thousand expert voices applauded their femininity, their adjustment, their new maturity . . . Gradually, I came to realize that the problem that has no name is shared by countless women in America" (Friedan, 1963, pp. 58, 63).

The dimensional properties, representative of the new maturity or the new mystique are discussed in more detail in the section, Theoretical Model Detail, later in this chapter, but not only are they present in the model, but also, they are the engine of the larger theoretical model. Because of this desire to grow and belong, women are constantly and simultaneously enacting the primary dimensional processes of *Solving For Having It All, Stalking the Unknown, Negotiating Equality,* or *Leading in a Glass Box*—depicted in the middle of the theoretical model—to sustain some inroads into the boundaries of the Culture of Work. Additionally, there is both a velocity in the enacting of these processes and a requirement to hold all these processes

in tandem. Any default in *Solving For Having It All, Stalking the Unknown, Negotiating Equality,* or *Leading in a Glass Box,* can result in a loss or cessation of growth. Seeking to penetrate the Culture of Work, fortified in masculine hegemony, is a Sisyphean task. It is particularly daunting given the looking glass of gender that pervades our culture at large; therefore, women are culturally in a value deficit position. Work, in modernity, is a vessel of self: "In modernity, work is no longer a mere instrument of power and a tool for repressing human life, but a mode of power in its own accord: a privileged means of shaping life by cultivating and regulating its productive potential" (Just, 2014, p. 1).

The Culture of Work is not only the dominant paradigm that traverses the model, but it exerts the most pressure both inward and outward on all other model elements. There is no space in the theoretical model that is truly organization-less. Even the Culture of Marriage, located on the left side of the model, is impacted by the organization.

Because Culture of Work is satiated with masculine hegemony, it sits safely beyond a cultural defense zone of its own creation aptly titled in this model as No Women's Land (Figure 6.1, right side of model). No Women's Land is difficult to pass through because it is mired in masculine ideals of work Women experience difficulty penetrating the fraternity; it is a zone of deterrence. While their desire for growth magnetizes women to the Culture of Work, they find it exceedingly difficult to pass though this space and navigate an entangled labyrinth of obstacles and to correctly play the man game, as judged by men, and remain authentic.

While women in the purposeful sample crossed this No Woman's Land, their entrance into the Culture of Work was not without costs of self. They expressed that belonging to the Culture of Work was exhausting. One former chief financial officer described it this way:

I had great opportunities in that space but I was exhausted. I was so tired and to be honest with you the organization was changing which is great, organizations change, I'm all for that. But it didn't look like it used to look and I didn't feel like I fit in anymore. (Cathy)

This woman's back story was that she went to work every morning at 3:30 a.m. and worked until 7 a.m. She then returned home to get her children off to school and then went back to work for a full day. This tiring schedule ensued for years and she held this schedule in tandem with the enormous demands of her role.

The construct, No Women's Land, dovetails with theories of symbolic boundaries:

Boundary theorists view social inequality as hinging, in subtle yet important ways, on the categories actors use to "classify" those around them (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). Theorists in this vein have sought to understand the ways in which symbolic distinctions, classifications systems, and cultural markers all contribute to the articulation of divisions among social groups. (Vallas & Cummins, 2014, p. 234)

Women experience cognitive dissonance in this model given their educational attainment and contemporary discourses of diversity and inclusion; women think they have an invitation to join the Culture of Work. No Women's Land represents the Culture of Work's push back to women's desire for belonging; the Culture of Work is an invisible vortex of masculine power (Lewis & Simpson, 2010). At times the obstacles render women directionless; and at times women find themselves wandering in this inhospitable land. Yet they must move through this space to sustain growth as leaders.

The Culture of Work creates cultural cadences of masculinity that greatly pervade value mechanisms built into the model. These include particularly values systems of care and work, creating binary boundaries between care and work that impede fluidity. The Culture of Work alone inculcates the definitions of leadership and success that are also hitched to the masculinized ideals.

The vortex of invisibility (Lewis & Simpson, 2010a) and power of the Culture of Work, are both fortified by the silence of the United States government, shown in the model (Figure 6.1) under the Culture of Work. The government defends inaction as dutifully honoring a minimalist market-based economy. The federal government honors its commitment to the minimalist market-based economy by failing to step into the Culture of Work arena and mandate work family policies such as parental leaves or paid parental leaves. The federal government fails to subsidize childcare or provide additional childcare resources for children in middle socioeconomic classes. The federal government honors its commitment to the minimalist market-based economy by to pushing responsibilities tagged as employment responsibilities down to the state level thus creating uneven progress on work and family issues across the United States. The federal government honors its commitment to the minimalist market-based economy by allowing states to continue to regulate the hours and months of operation for educational systems creating what Hagermann (2006) has termed "time politics" (p. 217).

The minimalist market-based capitalism that is practiced and experienced in the United States with the hands-off approach to business, gives all the decisive power to enterprise and little to women trying to cope with the situation. The colluded forces in the right quadrant of the theoretical model between government and the Culture of Work solidifies a dominant and formidable cultural, political, and economic bond that works in concert to keep women buried in the depths of the vortex between work and home The United States federal government and the Culture of Work can maintain this collusive relationship in the minimalist market-based economy because it feeds our national narrative of individualism and Puritan work ethic. Individuals who work hard can succeed despite ominous structural impediments or lack of resources. The ails of feminism also play an indirect role in fortifying this dominance in that

feminism's lack of appeal and momentum has depleted any collective efforts among women to challenge dominance (Cummins, 2016).

The dimensional properties extend and reflect this national boot-strap narrative. Women have absorbed all of the movement in the model over the past 50 years. They have absorbed the long hours of overwork; the need for greater education; the demands for logic over emotion; the need to solve what society has deemed their problems; the need to anticipate all unknowns; to assume the personal cross of *Negotiating Equality* and to persevere toward their dreams of leadership despite organizational obstacles and a dearth of familial resources. Malleable Me, located in the mid-bottom of the model, is both a condition and consequence of an unbending situation of dominance of the Culture of Work firmly undergirded by American systems of individualism. Because women are knocking at the door of the Culture of Work, they have assumed all the shape shifting in the model as clearly evidenced and enacted by the dimensional properties.

There is a lock-step mechanism built into this model. Women's growth in the Culture of Work is critically dependent on growth in the family sphere, or Culture of Marriage, located on the left side of the model. While women push outward into the Culture of Work with dimensional processes, they must simultaneously push inward by *Negotiating Equality*, *Solving For Having It All*, and *Stalking the Unknown*, to take care of family and move toward marital equity. The masculine hegemony she faces in this sphere is equally as great as her experience pushing against the Culture of Work. In this sphere, however, she faces No Man's Land, aligned on the left side of the model with the Culture of Marriage; a space few men cross. Movement in the Culture of Marriage is somewhat more difficult to grapple with in that it is not aided by the

coercive power of the "gaze" (Foucault 1977, p. 171). Foucault (1977) describes the gaze in this way:

> The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible . . . all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power.
> (pp. 170–171)

The Culture of Work effectively exerts the power of observation to conform the Culture of Marriage, is minimally visible, highly relational and interpersonal. It is but a negotiation with one person. The Culture of Marriage is reinforced by our cultural notions of family traditions and is very much socialized into our fabric of understandings. There is no diversity and inclusion program in the institution of marriage. There are no training seminars or historical precedents that I could locate for marital equality. In the theoretical model, women continue *Negotiating Equality*, *Solving For Having It All*, and *Stalking the Unknown*—or an outcome that has not been determined. What is marital equality? Yet moving toward marital equality via the dimensional processes is absolutely necessary for women's movement and growth into the Culture of Work.

To bridge the institution of marriage with sustaining growth into the Culture of Work also demands the malleability of women. The Culture of Marriage has failed to progress in lock-step with the Culture of Work, thus theoretical study participants found it necessary to almost single handedly carry the Heft of Marriage in the deficit of such progress. Baby boomer women in this study were able to assuage this heft with role reversal strategies. The pressures exerted by the lack of equality in the Culture of Marriage combined with the pressures experienced by the dominance of the Culture of Work in their lives create tensions around the re-defining processes of motherhood. The lack of partnering left women with all the coordination responsibilities for the family and thus robbed them of any feelings of flourishing fully as a mother, spouse or

leader. Dimensional acts of *Negotiating Equality*, *Solving For Having It All*, and *Stalking the Unknown*, became more emotionally infused in this middle-ground space of the model because of participants' strongly held commitments to the ideals of the institution of marriage even in the face of the dissonant realities of their experience.

Several further dynamics are represented in Figure 6.1. Participants experienced much frustration around the processes depicted in the middle of the theoretical model to sustain the Culture of Marriage due to this double bind. The Culture of Marriage on the left side of the model is tethered to the Culture of Work, on the right side, by a space at the top aptly titled the Work Home Performance Ratio. This zone represents the inverse relationship between the Culture of Marriage and the Culture of Work; increased demands in one sphere, for example, the Culture of Marriage, inversely affected the demands of the tethered sphere, or the Culture of Work. Rarely did women find this a zone of comfort in that they were constantly balancing the contingencies of one sphere of need against the other.

The holding container for the theoretical model shown in Figure 6.1, is the Gendered Looking Glass. This filter is so embedded in our culture that it is not depicted in the model but warrants acknowledgement. There is no place in our culture—or in this model—in which gender is unnoticed or unconstrained by norms.   Although we are always reenacting or "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125), gender norms remain heavily embedded in our cultural ways of knowing and reproducing social processes and knowledge. This need to protect norms is nowhere more obvious than in the conceptual construction of No Women's Land and No Man's Land, seen as moats running along both sides in Figure 6.1. This defensive force is so strong that trenches appear around zones of masculinity and femininity.

Theoretical model detail. Figure 6.1 also depicts other details, seen in the dimensions, which are mainly in the center of the diagram. These reflect women's dimensionalizing processes as described in Chapter IV. While each is discussed separately for detail comprehension, it is essential to understand that this whirling dervish of dimensions is deeply integrated within the whole of the model and is, indeed, very much a product of the dynamics shown in the model.

> Social interactions thus take on critical importance as a site where Black workers…and presumably, minority employees more generally . . . face a unique opportunity to demonstrate "soft skills" such as personability, geniality, and positivity that can be interpreted as evidence of their capabilities and suitability for promotion to higher status jobs. In interactions with others, racial tasks involve self-presentation, emotion work, and/or behaviors that are necessary for upholding the racialized power dynamics in predominately White organizations. (Wingfield & Alston, 2014, p. 280)

While Wingfield and Alston's (2014) observations were directed at the performance of race in a White organizational culture, they validate the demonstration of soft skills by other minority, or marginalized, employees. The similarity between their observations on race and my study's discourse on gender, is clear: women are trying to demonstrate their affinity to the corporate culture, and its definition of leadership, by trying to solve system problems individually, not by the system itself having to change and to accept them into the fold.

By performing dimensional social processes, which include more than soft skills but, in reality, survival skills, women attempt to prove their worthiness to belong to the Culture of Work. They don't want to appear different or ask for resources that men do not. This need to appear equal has been fueled in part by a long-standing debate about the successes and failures to implement affirmative action programs in the United States. Gustafson's (2008) study on women in the police academy suggests:

> Perhaps affirmative action policies have placed too much emphasis on numbers alone (like Kanter), without acknowledging some of the institutionalized mechanisms that bring

about disparate treatment of women and minority police. Increasing the number of women and minority officers is certainly a positive step, but such efforts may need augmentation. (p. 8)

Additionally, we prefer to see the world as what Lerner (1980) in the title of his book refers to as the delusion of a "just world"—which supports and perpetuates the status quo. "Even people who express a strong desire to end racial and gender imbalances often give faltering support to affirmative action because of their discomfort with a policy that assumes imperfections in the status quo" (Crosby, Iyer, & Sincharoen, 2006, p. 599). Proving worthiness to belong is internalized by pressure from the culture and it operates at both a conscious and unconscious level (Christensen, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Gill (2007) argues that externalized power exerted through masculine discourses of female identity are internalized by women and manifest as self-regulating. She further connects self-regulation with ideals of neoliberalism and postfeminism in which our culture is awash. Both ideologies are centered in individualism and choice:

> In popular cultural discourses examined here it is women who are called on to self-manage; self-discipline. To a greater extent than men, women are called upon to work on and transform the self, to regulate every aspect of their conduct, and present all their actions as freely chosen. Could it be that neoliberalism is always already gendered and women are constructed as its ideal subject? (Gill, 2007, p. 165)

Dr. Kenneth Matos, Vice President of Research at Life Meets Work, Inc., speaking about our culture of individualism in which the Culture of Work is firmly embedded, reiterated:

> Part of this is our American culture and fundamental assumptions around work and individualism: to stay in the game is a mark of competency.   Centralized countries can't believe it . . . in the U.S., if you call for help, you've failed. If you need the system, you've failed . . . that is, welfare programs. People don't see themselves as a collective. (K. Matos, personal communication, December 5, 2016)

The core of this study's theoretical model is depicted as a tornadic, swirling force in which *Solving For Having It All , Stalking the Unknown, Leading in a Glass Box* and

Negotiating for Equality, must be enacted at warp speeds and held in tandem at all times. These

social processes unfold because they are context driven: to remain at the epicenter of this model

women must perform all dimensions. Enacting dimensional processes consumes an immense

amount mental and physical work that translates into time poverty, but also creates tremendous

amounts of emotional work for women. Much of the emotional work lay in the ambiguity of the

situation. In a study of highly ambitious women working within male-dominated industries, the

emotional stress was described in this way:

> One of the main constituents in the women's concern was constantly experiencing
> ambiguity overload. The concept of ambiguity overload captures how the cumulative
> effects of various dimensions of ambiguity generate intense and constant mental activity
> due to uncertainty, continuous decision making, and evaluation processes. Hence, the
> informants' great enthusiasm and striving for performance were constantly triggered and
> reinforced by the specific characteristics of their living context, a situation that could
> result in long periods of intense activity with little possibility of recovery. Handling
> specific contextural characteristics, such as gender-based structures and
> performance-focused surroundings leads to stress. However, this effect was significantly
> amplified by the continued effect of handling various demanding contextural dimensions
> at the same time. (J. Love, Hagberg, & Dellve, 2011, p. 10)

Women also experienced ambiguity in the Culture of Marriage, although they attempted

to minimize ambiguity by enacting the social processes of *Stalking* and *Solving*. But even the

best solvers and stalkers could not anticipate everything; there was ample room for situational

ambiguities such as sick children, failure of childcare resources, childhood educational

challenges, and scheduling conflicts.

Women have provided the elasticity, denoted not only through the dimensional properties

located in the middle of the illustration in Figure 6.1, but also through the constant

transformation taking place in the space entitled Malleable Me (the shaded area at the bottom of

the vortex). Malleable Me represents what Gill and Orgad (2015), following Foucault (1988),

have termed a technology of self. Foucault (1988) articulated the technology of self as a way to understand the link between cultural discourses and individual agency.

> Technologies of self . . . permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988, p. 18)

Elsewhere, Foucault added that technologies of self are "the way in which the subject constitutes himself [*sic*] in an active fashion, by the practices of the self . . . these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself" (as cited in Gill & Orgad, 2015, p. 326). This is a critical understanding in the dimensional analysis, the situational analysis and the mechanisms at work in the theoretical model: Malleable Me represents a technology of self-induced by the situational components. The women must be malleable to claim some space in the model and attempt to continue to grow in their leadership.

The model analysis prompts the question as to what might be the maximum elasticity of Malleable Me? By absorbing all the motion, Malleable Me sustains the systems that undergird the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage. There is no challenge to those systems to change.

Threaded throughout the model are American ideals of individualism and Puritan work ethic of which our minimalist market-based economy, or American capitalism, extends. Therefore, American Capitalism is annotated at the bottom of the model in Figure 6.1, as a base from which these ideals flow into all the elements of the model.

Summary of theoretical model. The theoretical model developed here is grounded in the human need for belonging. Women in this study found it difficult to belong to the Culture of Work or the Culture of Marriage in authentic ways. They found the accommodations they made to exist in both cultures exhausting and difficult to perpetuate at the velocity necessary to stay in

the game. They experienced the model motion as teetering on the brink of vulnerability. Yet where else can they locate themselves in this situation other than occupying this middle ground? The components depicted in the model thus act to control women so they conform to the model, predominately through the actions of women themselves as they respond to the situational constraints and search for growth.

Theoretical Propositions

The theoretical model animates the pattern between the studied situation and the dynamic participant scripts. Model principles were integrated with the data to abstract theory that attempts to explain, predict and understand the situation in which women lead. When I returned to the coded interviews from the theoretical sample and compared the data against the mechanics of the theoretical model, four theoretical propositions arose:

- Proposition 1: No Women's Land is the only route to sustain growth, purpose and a hope of belonging;

- Proposition 2: A bridge is needed between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage that allows for caravan travel;

- Proposition 3: Women seek peace as a third "P" between personal and professional; and

- Proposition 4: Women are holding the paradox of hope and hopelessness as they live one day at a time.

Although these theoretical propositions emerged from this study, they too are based in basic human needs of belonging and growth.

Proposition 1: No Women's Land is the only route to sustain growth, purpose and a hope of belonging. Participants wrestled with the prospects of crossing No Women's Land in service of belonging. The desire to belong is a strong human instinct:

> A primary human motivation is the need to view the self positively, to establish and maintain a sense of the self as a competent, capable, good and moral individual . . . Some argue that this need exists in the service of a larger goal, that is, the need to belong, to feel that one is an accepted, valued and included member of the social world. (A. J. Hodges & Park, 2013, p. 193)

Furthermore, the Culture of Work, as a postmodern proxy for capitalism, has become not only a means to determine status, but integral to our identities:

> Rather, capitalist postmodernity generates a hyperreality, an aesthetic coating of the world with images that replace, displace and themselves generate what used to be called "society." Even labour has become a "sign among signs": Not a material force of production and commodification, but a sign that marks one's social position within "the system." (Slater & Tonkiss, 2001, p. 182)

Aside from concrete economic and financial reasons, it is quite understandable why women want to belong to the Culture of Work. Where else can they center identity value or place in society?

Women prospect the topography of No Women's Land by engaging in conversations with other women making the trek and observing the experiences of those women around them and of women who have gone before them. They contemplate belonging to the Culture of Work with visions of future selves—primarily as token female leaders. They are prospecting conjured questions such as, what will I need in the crossing? What happens if I fail? What will I sacrifice? Will the Culture of Work be what I want? Can I go back to the safety of women's work trenches if the crossing proves too difficult? And importantly they look at the question: "If it isn't what I want, can I change it when I get there?"

Crossing No Women's Land escalates the enacting of dimensions of *Solving, Stalking, Leading* and *Negotiating.* The decision to cross also means that women have to reach down into the Culture of Marriage and ask: who will go with me? Will my spouse support the belonging? Can I take my family into the organization? Can I really solve for having more of it all?

These are deep and transformative questions that predicate the decision to cross No Women's Land. They are questions that require re-asking every day. Millennial women do not want to cross into the Culture of Work without family. They are heavily weighting sacrifices in the face of little information or experience. They have few female role models to which they can look and information seeking is confined to an underground network of women. There are no crossing discussions with the HR departments, with managers, or with organizations, as this might signal lack of commitment and put careers in jeopardy. While they contemplate the decision to cross women continue to straddle the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage while they sustain small feats of growth. While research and published literature on Millennials is just beginning to surface, particularly around issues of work-life balance—since this is a life phase that many are just entering—emergent literature validates study conclusions. Millennials have a great need for meaningful work, have higher expectations for career advancement, are more confident than previous generations, and extremely achievement focused (T. Smith & Nichols, 2015; Hauw & Vos, 2010); yet they also integrate a family focus, or a private life focus, to this cohort persona. (Andert, 2011; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; T. Smith & Nichols, 2015). Holding these structurally opposing values creates conflict for Millennials, especially Millennial women who remain tasked with the majority of domestic responsibilities.

This study found that women want more feedback from organizational superiors especially as they move into leadership roles as leadership is uncharted territory for women.

Current literature again validates the finding that Millennials need more feedback (Behrens, 2009; Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; T. Smith & Nichols, 2015) and they would benefit from more and better information. Being able to access such information, especially if relationships were fostered, would additionally address Millennials' need for growth in connection. If they cannot align themselves with an organizational structure that provides both career advancement that fosters the primary dimension, *Growing in Leadership*, while allowing them to hold a private focus in tandem, they will continue to opt for one of three social processes: increase the performance of all dimensions thus increasing Malleable Me in order to sustain growth in an ill fitting organizational structure; park careers in mid-management; or, look for an organization with better fit.

   Returning to the literature: relational cultural theory. Perhaps relational cultural theory at least partially explains the lack of fit between women and leadership in today's corporate America. Given that participants' core dimension was growth in leadership:

> Work organizations are likely to be hostile environments in which to seek growth-in-connection. This is true because organizations, like most of society's structures, are based on masculine models of growth that are antithetical to connection, models that privilege separation and independence rather than interdependence and collectivity. (Fletcher, 2004, p. 270)

   While participants reflected on relationships as important to them, they found it difficult to establish meaningful relationships with men. The expectation threshold for relationship formation was low. As they rose in the hierarchy, male relationships only served as a proxy for limited organizational power or as a means to challenge the old boys club. They articulated acute feelings of isolation as they rose through the hierarchal ranks and withdrew in their practice of relational leadership. Entrenched in time poverty and often communication

shut-downs by men, they expressed very little ability for true relationship building in any area of

their lives.

> If I pull up my executive coaching plan, my coach will tell me that I need to do a better job with relationships building. And I tell my mentees all the time it's important to have those relationships. On that note, don't use me as a role model because I don't do a good job with it. But I also know, because of the lack of time, I'm very selective about who I extend my time. (Shari)

Because the demands for work extend past the boundaries of the workday and they have

so little support or resources in the domestic sphere, women in this study have also withdrawn

from the sisterhood of friendship: "But ask me how many true girlfriends I have outside of work

that I invest time in? None" (Shari). The Culture of Work, the Culture of Marriage and the

constant enactment of the dimensions precluded almost any growth in relationships for

participants. The dimensions themselves very much reflect this isolation and individualistic

approach to narrowing the gender gap at the top. *Solving, Stalking* and *Leading in a Glass Box*

do not lend themselves to growth in connection. And when participants tried to enact

Negotiating, they were often shut down and shut out of organizational processes.

> That's when I told my manager, "I know how much she made. I don't understand why you're pushing me back." And he was like, "I know it's not fair, but you hadn't really started; so, there was nothing to base it on yet." And I was like, "Okay, that kind of doesn't makes sense." I don't know why, because I've tried to negotiate several times but they're all like, "No, we can't do it." But then when my manager asks, they consider it. I don't know his level? He's very charismatic. (Karen)

They were often shut down in negotiations with spouses as well. Being shut out does not

equate to Fletcher's (2004) "disappearing" of relational practices. Men in the organization are

perpetuating a power-over paradigm in which they extend the culture of gender oppression at the

inter-individual level. Participants assimilated to this paradigm in remaining silent in situations

of gender discrimination and choosing not to call out transgression even when they knew it to be

wrong.

Karen: So, it was really disappointing for me to hear it from our cohorts in the same leadership program. Instead of being excited, they really dragged her down.

Interviewer: So, did you articulate this to those people who were saying that?

Karen: You know what, I didn't. I didn't bring it up to . . . I'm a conflict avoider.

This example is reminiscent of Miller and Stiver's (1997) "central relational paradox" (p. 81). Their idea of a central relational paradox is that even though most people desire belonging and social inclusion, they often act in counterintuitive ways in addressing relational issues in their lives. In situations of an increased need to belong, vulnerability increases. To stave off the feelings of vulnerability, people often act in ways that create further disconnection in lieu of acting in ways that might foster connection.

In the *Stalking the Unknown* process, participants went underground to locate other women who had survived holding both work and home in tandem but described this not particularly as growth in relationship, but merely as information seeking. Information givers have very little time for relationship building with information seekers.

In their quest to belong to the Culture of Work, participants have become part of the culture even as they are disallowed from legitimately belonging. They have assumed this as an intersection of identity.

> Consistent with feminist and social/justice theorists, RCT scholar Walker (2002) made the point that movement toward connection toward the course of individuals' lives is made in relational contexts that have been "raced, engendered, sexualized and situated along dimensions of class, physical ability, religion or whatever ontological significance in that culture" (p. 2). (Comstock et al., 2008, p. 280)

Participant identities are of professionalism and more than any other intersectional identity, women see themselves as individuals and professionals. Perhaps this is because the formative years of identity development have been socially constructed during times of rampant neoliberalism (C. Love, Booysen, & Essed, 2015). Perhaps this identity was more salient given

the nature of the interview encounter. Atewologun, Sealy, and Vinnecombe (2016) suggest that intersectional identities are negotiated during micro encounters.

> We locate identity work sites in the interpersonal encounters during which individuals negotiate congruity between their sense of self and other's view of self . . . Identities are constructed or 'worked' in the context of socio-structural power relations that trigger ongoing self-evaluation and resolution of identity gaps. (pp. 226–227)

Specifically, Atewologun et al. (2016) found that respondents used "intersectional location as cues and resources that expanded or restricted power positions in these encounters" (p. 227). They did not view intersectional identities as purely disadvantaged nor privileged, but constructed identity to leverage power in the encounter.

C. Love et al. (2015) found that Millennials articulate a different experience of discrimination. "Millennials were more expansive in their thinking about the simultaneity of multiple identifications, which extended beyond race and gender" (p. 16). Millennials "perceive the current construction of the Black experience as limiting because it does not take into consideration the breadth of social identifications held by an individual" (pp. 21–22). This individual perception could also be extended to the framework of feminism. Crispin (2017) suggests feminism, which she prefers to call "pro-woman power" (para. 12) still lies in elitism: "The pro-woman power elite peers deeply into the savage inequalities of American life and asks, in essence, 'Where's my half of the profits?'" (para. 12). She attributes this ideology as a move away from the origins of feminism as a social movement for all women, towards "the sway of self-empowerment" (para. 12).

Professionals belong to the Culture of Work yet that culture continues to deny stereotypical feminine attributes into the realm of professionalism. Acceptance into the Culture of Work meant leaving the feminine at the door. Women often blamed themselves for not being able to "think professionally" or act on masculinized corporate leadership ideals:

> Women are more emotional than men and that can get in the way of us making decisions; thinking it through and being competent and telling people this is the way it is. And I think because we over-think, because we look so much for other people's approval, or we don't want to hurt anybody's feelings for the most part. We have trouble making decisions and going with it and believing it and ourselves in the corporate setting. (Jennifer)

This participant understands that the necessity to fit into the corporate culture defies her

woman's ways of knowing, leading and being authentic; but she will conform to the best of her

ability because her desire to belong is strong. The idea of the professional as not emotional, for

example, is what Collins (2000) has referred to as a "controlling image" (p. 85) put forth by the

Culture of Work in an effort to normalize masculine norms and to oppress difference. The

Culture of Work is a situation of persistent disconnection that breeds feelings of isolation.

> In this isolation experience, individuals carry a deep sense of shame and the belief that they are defective as human beings. Feelings of condemned isolation are reinforced when individuals from marginalized and devalued groups, who routinely encounter the myth of meritocracy, end up primarily blaming themselves for personal failures that are often linked to factors in the broader cultural context . . . Hiding or denying large parts of their life experiences, and relating inauthentically with others in an effort to reconnect in nonmutual relationships, often becomes a strategy for surviving the emotional distress associated with feelings of condemned isolation. (Comstock et al., 2008, p. 282)

Where women are not reconciling with the masculinized Culture of Work, is in the

demand to hold space for the Culture of Marriage, home, and family, even if they couldn't bring

this into the work sphere. They also refused to let it degrade their professional identities or derail

personal drive. They are staking out their relational practice in this space but are also

experiencing this as a disconnection. Socialized to view the Culture of Work as masculinized

and rigid, their expectations of marriage are quite different. The disconnect in marriage feels

very much like betrayal. In addition to feelings of immense frustration, women felt very isolated

in marital partnerships in which they are having to provide all family coordination while

maintaining an equally demanding job. One participant describes the disconnect and ensuing

frustration in this way:

> Wake up and smell the coffee! I need for you to wake up and be engaged in this conversation not just half listening and have ESPN on in the background. When we have to have an important discussion about budgeting or something I actually send him an Outlook request to come prepared to discuss it. Because a lot of times I will have been thinking of it in my head a longer than he has. When I ask him a couple of questions, I say, "you don't understand, there are twenty other questions I want to ask you about this right now but you're only hearing about 30% of what's happening in my head." (Ginny)

Relational cultural theory explains most participants' experiences as women who lead, in

that they are shut down and out of any relational practices in the Culture of Work. In

disconnection and in the power of the paradigm, women have begun to participate in the culture

in very individualistic and non-relational ways. The culture works at large to limit resources and

ability to flourish and grow in connection.

The masculine hegemony that has gripped the Culture of Work must give way to an

organizational culture that embraces human thriving and destabilizes systems of opportunities

that work primarily for men. Theories of role congruency (Eagly & Karau, 2002;

Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006; Hoyt & Burnette, 2013; Ritter & Yoder, 2004),

management value (Palvia et al., 2015; Srivastava & Sherman, 2015); lack of career capital

(Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016), and stereotype threat (Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001;

Mavin & Grandy, 2016) continue to create what Vial et al. (2016) termed a "reinforcing cycle of

illegitimacy" (p. 400). This reinforcing cycle renders women in a kind of immigrant status in

crossing No Women's Land and rarely grants them citizenship should they ever reach the

Culture of Work. There is little power accessed by the illegitimate especially in the business of

leadership.

Theories of critical mass suggest that at some tipping point masculine hegemony may be destabilized. Kanter (1977) suggests that "as proportions shift, so do social experiences" (p. 207). She delineates four types of groups and describes how their composition drives behaviors:

- *Uniform groups* are homogeneous and are comprised of one social group;

- *Skewed groups* have a ratio of roughly 85:15 but the majority group remains dominant and controls organizational culture;

- *Tilted groups* have a ratio of roughly 65:35 and while the dominant group persists, there is an interaction that occurs between the majority and minority; the minority represents a powerful enough number to be heard and influence decisions;

- *Balanced groups* have a distribution of near equals: between 50:50 and 60:40. This represents a situation of equal influence.

Academics have long debated the assumptions which Kanter (1977) assigned to these groups both numerically and behaviorally. Yoder (1991, 1994) and Zimmer (1988), for example, suggested that gender and more specifically the pervasive devaluation of women in the culture at large played a larger role in in-group dynamics and that numbers alone were not explanatory; Holli and Kantola (2005), and further in Holli (2012), suggested that the focus should not be on achieving critical mass but critical acts.

While women constitute a balanced group in the workforce at large, I could not locate research that investigated how Kanter's (1977) organizational propositions may work in larger social frameworks or if critical mass can be operationalized to scale. Recent research has explored theories of numerical proportions and critical mass in boards of directors given the push to increase those numbers particularly in Scandinavian countries (S. Erkut, Kramer, & Konrad,

2008; Konrad, Kramer, & Erkut, 2008; Torchia et al., 2011). Erkut et al., 2008; Konrad et al., 2008 and Torchia et al. (2011), have all have concluded that by having at least three women, or minimally, 25%, constitutes a critical mass of female board directors to impact board decision making, innovation and strategic tasks. If these findings can be extrapolated to the upper echelons of the organizations where women lead, and women reach a threshold of 25–35%, the masculine hegemony entrenched in the culture may begin to dissipate and give way to a culture in which women can thrive.

Although women's leadership conferences, personal coaching and mentoring concentrate on the fixing the woman approach, there is certainly merit derived from these applications. They provide coping mechanisms to stay engaged with leadership and to cross No Women's Land. Participants found these tools helpful, as is reflected in this comment:

> The tone the facilitators set for the entire conference was very open, vulnerable, funny and engaging. They set the tone from the moment we began, and it really helped to cement the group. The activities were also all designed to engage the group and allowed folks to open up in a safe environment. It was an amazingly powerful conference. (cited without attribution, Queens University of Charlotte, n.d.-a)

However, participants also described leadership conferences as something additional added to an already full plate:

> I didn't want to go to TWIST, but my boss insisted. I'm a single parent and trying to find someone to keep my kids is just an extra burden. Once I got there, I was glad to be there, but I didn't want to go. (Shari)

Proposition 2: A bridge is needed between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage that allows for caravan travel. Linking the Culture of Marriage, or family sphere, with the Culture of Work is imperative if women hope to enjoy success in the workplace. One cannot fully experience these spheres as separate:

> I can't compartmentalize my personal life in my professional life because there are so many times when my personal life is bleeding over into the workday because . . . I have a

doctor's appointment or my daughter's sick and I have to go pick her up or there's a program going on at her school that I don't want to miss. (Ginny)

Life does not fit neatly into categories. Additionally, caravan travel would allow for work to travel into the Culture of Marriage and family to travel into the Culture of Work when necessary. As Ginny so eloquently points out, there is spillover despite the cultural impetus for boundary setting. Until we can build some flow between work and home, as well as relieve some of the real domestic burden, women as a whole will not experience success in the workplace. Field Expert 1 saw this concept as critical to women's path to success (personal communication, May 6, 2016). Women cannot bridge this gap in isolation. They are doing so by implementing the dimensional social processes but they have been unsuccessful in penetrating organizational leadership hierarchies with any critical mass. It is difficult to grow primarily through malleability. The question looms as how to accomplish this: The situational analysis of this study suggests movement at many structural and cultural levels will be necessary to solve this conundrum. Certainly, the elite women consulted in this study engaged the best of resources, were highly educated and motivated, and were married, yet still found it difficult to sustain growth in the masculinized systems of Culture of Work while holding the family in tandem. Many theoretical participants still could not dream of the C-Suite. They remained equally frustrated at the lack of partnership in marriage. The bridge between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage is important because Millennial women will represent 25% of the global workforce by the year 2020 (PwC, 2015).

The stakeholders in this situation must find a way to validate this as an issue that merits investment. Care must be equally valued in our culture and our economy. Values must be actualized and integrated: "I don't believe in the concept of work/life balance at all. I just think it is a concept that is outdated. I believe in work/life integration" (Elliot as cited in Vien, 2015,

para. 18). Blocking the bridge building, in this theoretical proposition, as is the situation in the

theoretical proposition of deciding to cross No Women's Land, is the powerful paradigm of

masculine hegemony.

Masculine hegemony and the power of paradigm. To explore how the literature on

masculine hegemony provides explanatory potential for this study, it is important to establish

that gender is interpreted as a relational construct "whose principal utility consists in exploring

how female characteristics are attributed to women and masculine ones to men, and how 'doing

gender' is a social practice that positions people in context of asymmetrical power relations" (A.

Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005, p. 3). Furthermore, masculine hegemony is defined as "the

configuration of gender practices which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem

of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of

men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1987, p. 77). What then appears to be

supporting the relational disconnections for women who lead in a culture embedded in masculine

hegemony? What accounts for the persistence in gender inequality that keeps women in

disconnection and disempowerment and in what mechanisms does masculine hegemony sustain

the vortex of power? All hegemonic groups "serve the purpose of legitimating and naturalizing

the interests of the dominant group to the detriment of other groups (Murgia & Poggio, 2013,

p. 414). Study participants articulated the masculinized ideals of the Culture of Work: overwork,

decisiveness, unemotional, competitiveness, perceived commitment, face time, client facing, and

heroic antics, to name but a few. Theoretical sample participants commented around these:

> So, I've learned some of those things from the stereotypes of what a man will do, but you
> do have to . . . in the business world you have to take a little bit of that man mentality,
> you have to get tough skinned, you can't let those things defeat you. (Jennifer)

> That external system is constantly something that I'm aware of and I have had to be very
> intentional about how I prepare for that. So, if I am doing a face-to-face meeting, I am

intentional about what I wear, how I present myself, how I sit at the table, where I sit. All of that becomes much more relevant for me. (Nora)

Furthermore, postfeminist ideologies have moved women into a period where it is taboo to critique male privilege:

What is conspicuously absent is any angry and outright critique of male domination. There is something of a taboo here for the reason that to contest male privilege is to risk inhabiting the old space of the radical feminist whose antipathy, as it is understood retrospectively, was to "men." (McRobbie, 2015, p. 17)

This further silences women and keeps them in disconnection even amongst themselves.

Tilly (1999) has additionally argued that social inequality hinges on two processes in modern capitalist markets: exploitation by organizational hierarchies of revenues and the hoarding of opportunities. In agreement with gender researchers, he posits that these social structures are held in place and endure by the organizational "doing" of social categories like race, gender and ethnicity.

Key to Tilly's framework is his insight that social inequalities endure, or gain solidity, when categorical distinctions . . . such binaries such as male/female, White/Black, citizen/foreigner, and Protestant/Catholic . . . are "mapped onto" the internal boundaries of organizations and social networks. (Vallas & Cummins, 2014, p. 230)

Tilly (1999) further argues that exploitation and opportunity hoarding are supplemented and reinforced by institutional tendencies to emulate and normalize the inequitable organizational structures within industry, and the assumption that subordinate groups will adapt to social and economic inequalities in an effort to survive. This adaption further reifies and proliferates social inequities. Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey (2010) take Tilly's analysis a step further by applying a symbolic interaction lens to the underlying claims making processes of opportunity hoarding and exploitation: "It is through interactions in social relations, where actors construct and reproduce meaning around categorical distinctions, that exploitation and opportunity hoarding emerge and are legitimized" (p. 166).

What the system of masculine hegemony creates is a gender monoculture that renders masculinity as both invisible and as the benchmark for organizational behavior and the feminine as abnormal; incompetent and incredibly misaligned with professionalism and success. For example, Fisher, Boyle, and Fulop (2010) find that the metrics for organizational commitment are developed around masculine rationalistic norms of task, delivery, objectives, and are oriented toward behaviors of challenge-seeking, presentism and being proactive (p. 284). The meaning of commitment differs between men and women and is thus genderized. Women's commitment includes a complex emotional component demonstrated by enthusiasm, involvement, concern for others, and work availability (p. 284). Swailes (2002) suggests that researchers have focused on measuring commitment as opposed to understanding the meaning of commitment and thus have excluded women from the conceptualization processes. Given the organizational notions of commitment, women appear to be less committed and are often overlooked for opportunities and promotions.

Masculine hegemony has three primary dimensions: "power relationships (that is, women's subordination to men), production relationships (that is, gender-based division of labour and its economic consequences), and cathexis (which concerns the dominant model of desire)" (Murgia & Poggio, 2013, p. 414). These dimensions work in concert to produce a cultural script that legitimizes and recycles power back to those at the top. This cultural script ensures that even women often participate in the reifying of ideological domination as described by Gramsci (1934/1975). Participants equated masculine attributes with professionalism and tried to incorporate those attributes into work repertoires.

Power is the partner of masculine hegemony: it keeps masculine hegemony in business. Power in the United States in particular has been amplified by blending masculine hegemony

with ideals of American individualism. Furthermore, the focus on gender inequality combined

with the feminist movement has served to heighten this sense of individualism in women. It is a

power so pervasive at the society level that it works even through the lives of women in a

predominately female organization:

> I do have a male co-worker and I think a lot of us have noticed that when he says
> something, everybody, women included seem to take it more seriously than when one of
> the women say something. So, I do kind of notice that even though he is not more
> qualified or more sophisticated than any of us, he does seem to be given more credibility.
> (Sonia)

Relational cultural theory posits that women experience growth in relationship. This

disposition is not acknowledged, desired, normalized or rewarded in a system of masculine

hegemony. While academic literature has touted new directives of leadership as collaborative

and with greater affinity to the feminine (e.g., J. L. Chin, 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2013) this is

not the system in which women currently find themselves. This study suggests that participants

who are, to a degree, assimilated to the masculine culture still experienced the system of

masculine power as impenetrable. They have an admission ticket to the arena but no seat and

certainly no stage pass. There is so much emotional work that must be performed by the women

to stay in the organizational arena dominated by masculine hegemony.

> The concept of ambiguity overload captures how the cumulative effects of various
> dimensions of ambiguity generate intense and constant mental activity due to uncertainty,
> continuous decisionmaking, and evaluation processes. Hence, the informants' great
> enthusiasm and striving for performance were constantly triggered and reinforced by the
> specific characteristics of their living context, a situation that could result in long periods
> of intense activity with little possibility of recovery. Handling specific contextual
> characteristics such as gender-based structures and performance-focused surroundings
> independently leads to stress. (J. Love, 2010, p. 52)

It is noteworthy that men, LGBT and transgender people who violate the stereotypical

masculine norms legitimized by organizational and cultural masculine hegemony also experience

negative repercussions. Male surgeons in Italy who took legalized parental leave saw their

surgery access diminished to one day a week upon return (Murgia & Poggio, 2013). As one

surgeon surmised, "'They all belong to the same world,' as if to highlight the compliance of his

own colleagues with the dominant organizational culture" (Murgia & Poggio, 2013, p. 416), and

such narratives further "highlight the difficulty of altering the hegemonic gender order in work

and the family" (p. 419). To understand the new masculinity of the Silicon Valley, M. Cooper

(2000) found that men belonging to the predominately male technology industry "remained silent

in the face of work and family conflict, which served to give the impression, if not the reality,

that work comes first" (p. 383). M. Hodges and Budig (2010) found that the masculine

organization awarded the largest fatherhood bonus to White professional/managerial men

exhibiting more masculinized traits. Participants in the present study emulated silent strategies

around work and family conflict; preferring to *Solve* and *Stalk* alone. They do not occupy a

powerful position.

Foucault (1982) speaks to "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject"

(p. 208). Foucault posits that the Western form of political power is pastorial power in that

"implies a knowledge of conscience and an ability to direct it" (p. 214). Furthermore, he

suggests that

> Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We
> have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political
> "double bind," which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern
> power structures. (Foucault, 1982, p. 216)

This concept dovetails well with Sen's (1987) framework of capabilities, discussed later

in this chapter. Taking a symbolic interactionist lens, Foucault (1982) also notes that power

requires iterative action.

> The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or
> collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Power only exists when it is
> put into action. At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it,

are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom. This is to say, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted "above" society as a supplementary structure. (pp. 219–220)

Returning to Rosalind Gill (2011) and the mechanisms of internalized power, we see from the present study that the masculinized organizational Culture of Work has escalated the demands of overwork and professional conformity that women strive to accommodate. Gill and Orgad (2015) argue that confidence "is a new technology of self, and one that is profoundly gendered" (p. 339). This new confidence culture pushes women further out to the margins of speaking up to employers or mounting any sort of collective agency. Such actions would violate social requirement for women to be self-confident or require help.

Returning to Kenneth Matos (personal communication, December 5, 2016), on alignment with Foucault (1982) and Gill (2010), he suggested that nothing will change until women—and men for that matter—speak up and challenge the current work norms around what Joan Williams (2000) termed "the ideal worker" (p. 1). But the situation is rife with complexity; current social norms prod women to be self-confident and masters of their own destiny and conversely, organizations will pushback any challenge under the guise of the work contract: they will more than likely take a stand that they own employee time. And Matos reiterates that, to a certain extent, they do.

Deconstructing masculine hegemony and silence. While study participants described a masculinized organizational culture, they desired to belong and thus became malleable to its norms, despite the pushback of a dire lack of support structures and resources. They worked diligently to rid themselves of their feminine shortcomings, left the conveniences of virtual capabilities to be present to read the room, desiring to assimilate to the demands of organizational role. They *Solved, Stalked, Lead*, and *Negotiated* to remain in growth.

The melding of desire to belong, immense drive, an overtly individualized culture and gendered social norms with masculine hegemony, ensures women's silence. "Studying silence means in practice that the researcher has to rely on methods of deconstruction, to study what is not contained within the text, what is 'written between the lines'" (Kronsell, 2006, p. 115). It is in the silence that the dominance and the masculine hegemony reflected in World Arenas Map (see Chapter V) become acutely evident. It is in the lack of interconnection between the systems of work and family in the negotiation process of accomplishing all responsibilities that the silence lurks. The silence has pitted work against family, male against female, and masculine ideals of paid work against nonpaid work/care, in a continued effort to map binaries onto the internal boundaries of work to retain power. It is the power of masculine hegemony that keeps women from crossing No Women's Land.

Proposition 3: Women seek Peace as a third "P" between personal and professional. Theoretical sample participants articulated a protean career orientation (Briscoe & Hall, 2006), which suggests that they are "agents of their own career destinies" (Inkson & Baruch, 2008, p. 217). As such, they viewed work life balance as an individual responsibility. "But what I realized is you have to manage your work-life balance, your company is not going to manage it for you" (Karen). They also took offense at the notion of balance as a constant state or perhaps even an achievable state. "So there are sometimes when something has to give and it can't be all about work; so, those are tougher decisions because you know the consequences but in the end, family comes first" (Diane). Participants absorbed the fluctuations in imbalance and attempted to offset the turbulence with *Solving* and *Stalking*.

This study's findings suggest that, rather than balance as a constant state, women are searching for peace between the demands of each sphere without relinquishing presence in each

sphere; they aim to hold the feelings of opposition without tipping into vulnerability. They are

accomplishing this by regulating the system in which they find themselves, by climbing to a

comfortable hierarchal level and parking their protean careers in that space. They are creating

the No Women's Land parking lot. They do not park there without trepidation over the unknown

consequences for career futures; but because they have reached a hierarchal role that holds some

flexibility and autonomy, they have deduced it as a logical intersection to hold work and family

in tandem. They can control the chaos and delimit vulnerability with this strategy by mediating

work and family spillover. They are also mitigating the probabilities of disadvantage in the

sense Hirsh (2014) refers to:

> Disadvantage tends to accumulate over social systems and is reinforced by the social roles that individuals take on in institutions settings. In the workplace, this means that vulnerability often involves overlapping status hierarchies, such as mapping of ascriptive hierarchies (sex, race, ethnicity, age) onto organizational ones (occupation, job, work group. (p. 262)

One of the worst fates participants could imagine experiencing was that of being

vulnerable; thus, career-parking staved off vulnerability. Matos suggested that in the American

culture at large, but particularly in the American work culture, to ask for help is viewed as being

incompetent (K. Matos, personal communication, December 5, 2016). So, women are coping in

silence. Perhaps they have resorted to individualized plans of career control not only because of

their protean career orientation, but have found it difficult to influence the masculinized

benchmarks of work and the feminized coordination of home. The cultural norms of gender

have moved little, leaving any change to be had at the individual level. Or perhaps Millennials

have reached what Kegan (1982) refers to as the "interindividual stage" (p. 103) of development.

In this developmental stage, individuals are capable of holding "motion, process and change . . .

as the irreducible and primary feature of reality" (Kegan, 1982, p. 229). Eriksen (2006), in an

essay on Kegan's concepts, adds:

> Inter-individual people, then, can maintain an open, incomplete stance, admitting that they might be wrong; take a one-down, not knowing position that says to other people "Let's co-construct our experience together." [Let's] seek out differences as needed challenges to themselves and as opportunities to grow. (p. 296)

An individual in this stage can hold the tension involved with transformation and view

this as a necessary product of all the systems as competing systems of change in their lives. This

stance does not occlude their continued desire and drive for change.

The women in this study understand the competing systems of family and work and are

taking on the responsibility to make both succeed and to find growth in both systems with the

best possible scenario. They continue *Solving For Having It All*, but in this theoretical

proposition, they alone are solving the highest of conundrums, the problem of melding family

and work.

The professional woman doesn't fit in in the Culture of Work or the Culture of Marriage.

There is no comfort zone in either sphere. It is burdensome to attain peace when there are

literally no answers to resolving the gulf between work and home. Participants articulated work

roles and responsibilities that would not bend to a year's absence for parental leave even if

provided. In a technology driven, information driven, network driven economy, busy is the

status quo and thus is a benchmark for success. Parental leave not only punctures this profile,

but leaves were totally inconceivable to participants given role demands. There are few answers

on the business side of the equation. Small and medium sized businesses wrestle with the

feasibility of compensating parents and filling the gap in productivity for parents. Corporate

America has not come to the table with workable solutions.

Even when well-intended policies are in place, the execution is complicated and messy. "People gum it up," advises Dr. Kenneth Matos (personal communication, December 5, 2016) in regard to the shifting downward process associated with work and family policies implemented by organizations. Finding peace and flourishing between the personal and professional remains squarely on the shoulders of women who lead. There are corporations that are addressing this peacemaking, but, in this study, none were located that did not impinge some penalty or stalemate to career on the process. One example of the challenge is the Mass Career Customization initiative at Deloitte. It was created in 2008 so that employees could pace themselves in career. Deloitte has coined the phrase from ladder to lattice and suggests that:

> In the real world, lattices are living platforms for growth, with upward momentum visible from many paths. The corporate lattice model of career progression allows for multiple paths upward while taking into account changing needs of the individual and the organization at various intervals of time. (Benko & Weisberg, 2008, para. 4)

However, as Kossek and Distelberg (2009) suggest, there are discrepancies in the perception and execution of work-life policies and programs. An anonymous Deloitte employee who had accessed the Mass Career Customization plan, advised that while the program was timely and needed, she felt that her career had stalled during her period of access because she was unable to travel out of the country. It should be noted that this employee's experience might be exceptional with a majority of employees experiencing little to no career stall. This study did not pursue an exhaustive review of the Mass Career Customization approach.

This theoretical proposition connects to the previous proposition in that building a bridge between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage might suffice as a bridge to peace. In the meantime, women continue to make peace within themselves.

Proposition 4: Women are holding the paradox of hope and hopelessness as they live one day at a time. The final theoretical proposition is the paradox between hope and

hopelessness. W. Smith and Lewis (2011) define a paradox as "contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time" (p. 382). They are opposing in theory, but offer synergies within a system (Cameron & Quinn, 1988; Voorhees, 1986). There are very few elements to anchor hope in the experiences of women who lead. The lack of allies, cultural belonging and resources in the situation juxtapose a vast sea of hopelessness. The conceptual model (Figure 6.1) places women in the middle of this paradoxical sea; always trying to move culture to middle ground.

Yet, study participants chose to hold hope in tandem with hopelessness. They've invested in hope through education. Hope holds open the door to belonging—and "belonging and performing tensions emerge when identification and goals clash, often apparent in efforts to negotiate unique individual identities with social and occupations demands" (W. Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 384). By holding hope and hopelessness in paradox, women continue the desire to belong to the Culture of Work but are not reifying the consistent patterns of inertia that keep that structure in place; hope offsets the Culture of Work as we know it (R. Henderson & Clark, 1990). Hope imbues change.

Holding hope and hopelessness in paradox requires "cognitive complexity . . . and enables actors to host paradoxical cognitions" (W. Smith & Tushman, 2005, p. 391) and translates into an emotional state of equanimity that fosters more complex resolutions (Forgas & George, 2001; Maitlis & Ozcelik, 2004; W. Smith & Lewis, 2011). Holding paradox allows women to make iterative short-term choices that may have long term benefits that sustain overarching goals. W. Smith and Lewis (2011) refer to purposeful paradox as a dynamic equilibrium which "unleashes the power of paradox to foster sustainability. Individuals, groups and firms achieve short-term excellence while ensuring that such performance fuels adaption and

growth enabling long-term success" (p. 393). Thus, the experience of paradox and the holding of

contradiction will stimulate critical thinking and unleash human potential. It stands in service to

women's core dimension of growth.

What is sorely needed is collective action. But the very thing that might move women

out of hopelessness is counterintuitive to our American norms and expectations.

> Employees don't speak up enough. People in general don't like to talk about problems at
> work. It signals weakness. There is no systematic analysis of these issues. It is the
> individual who has failed to manage work. We are still in the period of saying nice
> things. (K. Matos, personal communication, December 5, 2016)

Holding the paradox of hope and hopelessness may stimulate critical thinking around voice.

This study does not seek to again rest the entire burden of change on the backs of women.

There are many structural points of entry into resolution. Participants named childcare resources

as the place to begin resolution and buoy hope. The study elucidates the complexity of

resolution and the many touchstones of disadvantage that keep women from achieving parity at

the top. Although women are not engaging the resolution through voice, they are holding the

paradox of hope and hopelessness by staying in the fray of work. Worth (2015), using Butler's

(2004) concepts of shared vulnerability as a platform for acknowledging interdependency,

suggests that it is this precariousness that Millennial women share in the neoliberal economy can:

> Expose our connections to others. We need to recognize the power of the affective realm
> . . . that feeling precarious has real consequences in the labour market. Feeling insecure
> can mean you stay in a job you are over qualified for, never even try to apply for work
> because you assume failure. (Worth, 2015, p. 11)

Although the women in this study articulated a non-relational, individualistic perspective,

there is a steeping power in their precariousness and shared vulnerability. "Agency is always

relational, and never completely autonomous" (N. M. Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2011, p. 11).

The locus of hope. Sen's (1987) framework of capabilities is a normative theory that provides a tool to juxtapose a conceptual intersection between the relational cultural framework as a hypothesis of disconnection with the Culture of Work and experiences of masculine hegemony. It guides in posing questions central to my study: What would women be if they had the capabilities to become what they want? Can women be leaders and mothers and partners simultaneously? Would changes in functionings (inputs or resources), changes in opportunities or both move them closer to this capability? What constraints can we foresee in the conversion of inputs/resources toward capabilities? Is it possible to live in partnership where both partners are able to achieve desired capabilities without having to make invalidating compromises? How do we value care in the capabilities equation? How do we balance the economy against individual capabilities? Sen's approach allows us to move away from gridlock and envision progress.

> The core claim of the capability approach is that assessments of well-being, or quality of life of a person, and judgments about equality or justice, or the level of development of a community or country, should not primarily focus on resources, or on people's mental states, but on the effective opportunities that people have to lead the lives they have reason to value. (Robeyns, 2006, p. 351)

Sen's capabilities approach conceptualizes not only the opportunities that might be available to an individual, but the combination of opportunities that an individual might exercise to achieve well being. Could inviting this approach into this study's findings lead participants to exercise the opportunity to rise in the ranks of the organization and also care for their children? At present, they could do this to a point. In capabilities approach fashion, participants were able to take the means, or resources available to them, and convert those inputs to enjoy a better outcome than most, by constantly *Solving, Stalking, Leading* and *Negotiating*. But these women leaders did not enjoy a high conversion factor in overturning the social norms of gender. They

failed to convert spousal support into a means by which to achieve the full functioning of work or convert work into a means by which to enjoy the full freedom of family. The Baby Boomers in the purposeful sample, did this by choosing one function to the exclusion of the other. There were conditions between spouses, or sets of capabilities, that thwarted the expression or functioning of each person in the set. This approach honored the reality of collective decision making in that there were conditions between children, women and the organization that constrained functions. These conflicting opportunities constrained women's ability to be and reflect what they value. The capabilities approach incorporates a lens of situated agency and honors the complexities of social, personal and environmental factors.

Participants melded family and work opportunities into a capability they could control without completely giving up the ability to hold both. Were participants capable of holding both work and family and live the life they wanted? Can we deduce that the current situation is the pinnacle of well-being? Given the internal paranoia they articulated, disconnections, and invalidations emanating from the Culture of Work, I would surmise, no. What means or functioning might women need to achieve gender equity in the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage? What would constitute a capabilities theory of cultural gender justice? One participant summed up the capability shortfall in this way: "So, long story short, I just couldn't see myself trying to commute to X. So, in my heart I wanted to work but I wanted it on my terms and it wasn't going to be" (Ella). Women need a way to work and belong on their terms.

While this study cannot provide the answers to execute Sen's (1987) approach, it provides an understanding of the complexities of the current context in which women lead and we can contemplate the prompts of Sen's framework to extend toward answers. In this thought-provoking space, Sen's framework asks us,

to consider not only what individuals do but also what their opportunities to be and do are. For Sen, the core issue is not only what individuals choose, but the choices that they would make if they had the capabilities to lead the kind of lives that they want to lead. (Hobson, 2011, p. 148)

Women must ask themselves: "Why do I do what I do?" (Robeyns, 2006, p. 356). And further, they need ask: what kind of life would I lead if I had the capabilities to do so?

Study Limitations and Scope

The Theoretical Model is conceptualized from the theoretical sample population study findings. This study was limited in size—a sample of 21 interviews— and scope, and was geographically narrow as well. Only two participants were not based in North Carolina. While diversity in industry was sought, because the participants were drawn from a particular region, many participants were affiliated with the financial industry. Study findings may have more transferability to the financial industry than other industries.

Diversity in ethnicity was also sought, and of the sample population, two women were African-American, one was Hispanic, and one was Asian. Although all participants had garnered an elite status educationally and professionally, statistically, women in senior management are White, educated and belong to an upper social class.

Seven participants comprised the original purposeful sample and averaged 52 years of age. These participants had employed one of two career choice strategies: remain childless, or engage a stay-at-home husband. Four of the purposeful sample participants had chosen to remain childless. These participants articulated a gender blind orientation—that is, not seeing gender in organizations. This did not reflect current academic trends in gender and identity research or the current social at-large debates concerning gender and work. Three of the purposeful sample had recently moved on to second careers as entrepreneurs and executive directors of nonprofits. Shifting organizations provided most of leadership fallout:

> The reason I left, we had merged with X, we were transitioning to the [X] America model. I had great opportunities in that space but I was exhausted. I was so tired and to be honest with you the organization was changing which is great, organizations change, I'm all for that. But it didn't look like it used to look and I didn't feel like I fit in anymore. (Cathy)

None of the displaced participants returned to corporate America, choosing instead to pursue personal ventures and community work. Additionally, most participants in this population found it difficult during interviews, to return in emotion and detail to periods in their lives when they were holding work and family in tandem. The one Millennial participant in the initial sampling proved to be an outlier by articulating her deep concerns in anticipation of children. Juxtaposing the older participant stories with this younger participant prompted a discussion with my dissertation chair around sampling. By 2020, 25% of the global workforce will be Millennial women (PwC, 2015). I therefore decided that a theoretical sample of younger women, late Gen-Xers and early Millennials, might prove more suitable for the resolution underpinnings of this study because it is they who are in the throes of managing work and family and can articulate experiences and understandings in real time.

There were early concerns about participant self-awareness and situational awareness but, while small deficits of awareness surfaced in the interview process, most participants proved to be extremely self-aware and willing to openly share their experiences.

It was also anticipated that access to elite professional women could prove an insurmountable research issue, especially given the personal and organizational risks involved, but this too remained unproblematic.

The conclusions of this study may be limited by the lack of longitudinal data. Theoretical study participants provided a snapshot of personal and professional life experiences that may shift in the future. Participants were in the midst of early childrearing; no theoretical sample

participant had middle- or high school-aged children. Passing through later developmental stages may confer different experiences.

The conclusions of this study are also limited by being only from a presumptively heterosexual work and family perspective, and primarily engaging women with children. The study is equally limited in including participants with single-parenting experience—only one of the participants raised children on her own. Given the preponderant importance of issues my participants raised around children and childcare, a more focused examination of the lived experiences of childless and single-parenting women leaders would be worthwhile. In terms of work context, my sample was only of leading women in corporate America and did not include the experiences of entrepreneurial women or women who lead nonprofits. Inquiry into their worlds would undoubtedly yield new and distinct insights.

There is a particular need to explore the issues faced by lesbian leaders, as changes are rapidly occurring in the United States and elsewhere in both in the incidence and prominence of same-sex marriage. The advance of same-sex marriage rights constitutionally and in terms of broader social recognition (Cathcart & Gabel-Brett, 2016) has meant that it will become more feasible to locate samples of lesbian leaders—and more urgent that research be undertaken (Umberson, Thomeer, Kroeger, Lodge, & Xu, 2015). Future research of female same-sex marriages or co-habitation might provide fertile ground to examine the subtle shifts between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage.

Although common themes arose in the coding, transferability of study findings may not be duplicated in future studies. Future studies may focus more pointedly on exposing gendered social norms that supplement and reinforce masculine hegemony and power.

Implications of Theoretical Propositions for Future Research and Practice

The theoretical propositions emerged from the blending of experiences of women who lead with an analysis of their context. These propositions provide an aggregate step forward in a long march toward gender parity in the workplace. This study situates the theoretical propositions in a complex environment where stepping is not linear nor direction fixed. Given the complexity of gender leadership parity, what direction should future research take? While the theoretical propositions integrate intent and action across many dimensions, future research stemming from the concepts of the theoretical proposition that No Woman's Land is the only route to sustain growth, purpose and hope, could certainly begin with the organizational redress of this zone. This requires shifting the organizational culture away from the grips of masculine hegemony. Future research might explore how an organization implements this cultural shift. While fixing the culture can be an abstract, difficult task, some organizations have been successful in doing so by changing key processes.

> CEOs who have successfully led major transformations . . . say that culture is not something that you "fix". Rather, in their experience, cultural change is what you get after you've put new processes or structures in place to tackle tough business challenges like reworking an outdated strategy or business model. The culture evolves as you do that important work. (Lorsch & McTague, 2016, p. 98)

A future study might explore how an organization identifies key processes or examine what might prompt organizations to do that important work. If productivity is still at peak and organizations can recruit and retain talent, they may not be motivated to take the business risk. Future research might make a business case for doing this ahead of a business case to do so. It might also address the development of a work and family business plan with wide margins for failure with metrics to understand the failure and tweak the program forward.

The second theoretical proposition about building a bridge between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage, might be extended by research that addresses feedback loops between the organization and employees. Kenneth Matos (personal communication, December 5, 2016) emphasized that employees, both men and women, need to vocalize family needs to employers. Women in this study did not go to the HR department or directly to managers for information about managing the responsibilities between work and family because they felt it might jeopardize perceptions of career commitment. Silence does not foster bridge building. Future research might explore where feedback loops are most productive and connected with action and change; or how to construct feedback loops that build trust between the organization and employee. Future research might also determine if there are correlations between successful organizational feedback loops and the Millennial generation's need for interpersonal relationships at work. Indeed, future research might explore if good feedback loops might foster growth in relationship. Additionally, it might explore the possibilities of the rise of a professional union much like the trade unions in the past especially given imperatives of overwork.

An additional future research avenue for bridging home and work cultures, would be to address the significance of increasing childcare resources. Where might these resources originate? Should we look to organizations to supply more resources or to our government? Who bears responsibility for our nation's children or our nation's future?   How might these costs be allocated? There is solid research in New America's *The Care Report* (Schulte & Durana, 2016) that touts the benefits of organizations' supporting early childhood care and education; yet no one has claimed this mantle. The business case has been made, what might catalyze action?

The third theoretical proposition, Peace as a Third "P" Between Personal and Professional, could be explored with future research that focuses on Millennial men. Why have they not kept pace with the evolved feminine? What socialization process might accelerate that process? Also, future research could explore the question posed in conversation with Field Expert 1 (personal communication, May 23, 2016): "Is it men who need to change?" Indeed, what is the new masculinity? What defines postmodern fatherhood? Michael Chabon notes: "The handy thing about being a father is that the historic standard is so pitifully low" (as cited in Romano, 2010, para. 9).

We are in a period of shifting foundations on many social dimensions: "Women's movement into the workforce calls into question the meanings women and men ascribe to their work and family roles and how they, as a couple, manage their time, energy and resources at the intersection of work and family" (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015, p. 75). Future research might explore the question of what equality in marriage looks like or what is perceived as marital equality for both men and women? Although there is a great deal of ongoing research on the trajectory of the institution of marriage, study participants conveyed an energy or outlet for initiative they derived from work that they could not channel domestically. Future research might explore how this increased centrality of work to life satisfaction for both men and women, impacts the family unit. Indeed, research substantiates both a culture of overwork (Padavic & Ely, 2013) and, paradoxically, a rise in "workaholism" (Aziz & Cunningham, 2008, p. 533), but there is little literature to extend these topics. Correlations between gender and workaholism have not been validated in the research (Aziz & Cunningham, 2008; Bakker, Demerouti, & Burke, 2009; Burke, 1999; Taris, Schaufeli, & Verhoeven, 2005). However, study participants

communicated an immense capacity for work drive. Future research could explore how this bodes for women as they continue to make strides at work and balance family.

The theoretical proposition of the Paradox of Hope and Hopelessness could be explored in future research examining factors that might break women's silence in the Culture of Work. What factors might foster collective agency?

Important future research could be undertaken on concrete ways in which Americans might shift the culture to value care. In a society of binaries, we've moved along a continuum of over-valuing work and under-valuing care. I don't think this is the world that Betty Friedan envisioned when she wrote *The Feminine Mystique*. As Slaughter (2015) observed:

> Not valuing caregiving is the taproot, the deeper problem that gives rise to distortion and discrimination in multiple areas of American society. When we open our eyes and change our lenses to focus on competition and care rather than women and work, we can see new solutions and new coalitions that can open the door to progress and change. (p. 87)

The business case for valuing care has been made. If care were valued and shared, and gender parity achieved in the workplace, it is estimated that GDP would grow by 9% (World Economic Forum, 2015). The cultural case, however, is complex and demands future research.

The theoretical propositions of this study hope to illustrate that movement toward gender parity requires simultaneous multi-dimensional inertia. Much like a set change on stage during a performance, many pieces need to be removed and many replaced nearly simultaneously before the curtain rises again. In this situation, however, the curtain never falls. This magnitude of cultural change requires the commitment of many actors and many social worlds. It requires monitoring for successes and failures.

Future research would also be important on looking at the experience, constraints and strategies of a wider ethnic diversity of women leaders. As noted above, most participants were White, upper to middle class, highly educated women. Ethnic participants were also upper to

middle class educated women, but though few in number, they provided a nuanced window that merits future research. The Hispanic participant and one African-American participant were childless and were heavily oriented toward servant leadership. "But it was seeing that action [of grandmother and mother] I realized that it being more than you staying in your own realm, that you can make an impact on other lives, that comes back to you" (Kaci). "I think part of it is that I have a sense that I need to take care of my family. So, I felt like I needed to be successful to help them in a different way. And I think that's where some of my determination comes from today" (Nora).

Another African-American participant, even though she has children, expressed a grounding leadership perspective: "Nothing is as humbling as learning something new and humility drives empathy" (Amanda). She takes up a new skill, some personal and some professional, each year to keep herself grounded in her humility. These nuances illustrate the value of possible future research to explore how women of ethnicity experience the challenges of leadership in different ways.

Future research with same sex couples might also lead to greater understanding as to how the model resonates between the Culture of Work and the Culture of Marriage with its "No Woman's Land" and "No Men Land" zones. What is the experience of crossing a zone together? How is it different from a heterosexual experience? What can we learn?

A last possibility for future research may be to apply Sen's framework to women and work. What do women want? What scenario will get them to that point? This framework has been successfully applied and concrete calculation rendered in several studies assessing gender inequality. Sen (1987) applied this framework to the study of gender discrimination in India and found that "if female fetuses and daughters were treated like male fetuses and sons, there would

be an additional 100 million women in the world" (as cited in Robeyns, 2006, p. 367). Imagine what kind of explanatory power this might have for women and work: 100 million more women who can do what they value.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand the experiences of women who lead. It is hoped that it has served to debunk previous research that lifts up a single scenario as explanatory and therefore uniquely central to resolution. Gender leadership parity in the workplace and gender parity in the culture at large can only be understood—and possibly resolved—with complex multi-dimensional approaches and long term commitments from many social worlds. The complexity elucidated in this study challenges any one component resolution.

The theoretical model and theoretical propositions provide a foundation for future research and advancement. This study focused on identifying social patterns that might be influenced to render different patterns. Much like the physics of liquids that swirl around each other and form an eddy before merging, there are many issues and actors that are swirling in this situation. We are caught in the eddy. With the knowledge this study imparts, the knowledge future research might add, and an unbending commitment to achieve equality, it is hoped that the fluidity of the situation will give way to a future of gender equality. It is hoped that women might build the lives that they want to live if choices were not limited.

Appendix

Appendix A: Final Code List from Constant Comparison Coding

accept and act on feedback
action oriented
adaptability
advocate
arial view
age
am I doing the right thing?
anticipating family demands
art of negotiation
authentic
be truthful
being political
believe in equality
born leader
business case for equality
can get on or off treadmill
career accelerator
caring too much
catalyst for change
challenging mentality
childcare
choosing new roles
commitment
communicate expectations
competitive
control
creative space
cultural differences
decision to change
disorienting
distance myself in business
diversity desirable
don't career plan
drive
empower others
facts and examples
failure
family time sacred
fearless
feel empowered
feeling supported
feeling awesome
female stereotypes
fighting for acceptance
focus on high performers
focused
follower versus leader

fresh set of eyes
frustration
gender
getting promoted felt super
global perspective
growing in leadership
humbling experience
identity
illness present challenges
impact
imposter syndrome
insecurity
integrity
internal paranoia
intolerant work culture
kept the bus rolling
lack of career control
leaders versus manager
learned leadership
lifestyle
listen
love and care for self
love of learning
make room at the table
male dominated industry
meaningless work
men
masters
miscarriage
modeling good behavior
money
need a plan
need to decompress
need to read the room
Network of Executive Women
never enough
never not been successful
no generational model
noninclusive work culture
not stay at home type
not valued
one day at a time
only female
opportunity
order out of chaos
organizational changes
outlet outside of work-family

paralyzed
parental influences
perceived as aggressive
politically correct
power
prepared
presence
prove them wrong
purpose
quotas
recognition
relationships
remain nonemotional
respect people
responsibility
results oriented
servant leadership
sibling influence
southern upbringing
spouse
strong personalities
stay at home dad
success contingent
success equals busy
success is simple
successes and mistakes
taking risks
team engagement
technology
they test me
thrive on chaos
time poverty
too political
transition
unsolicited promotions
vulnerable
wants respect
women getting along
women overthink
women's club
work as a system
work culture
work-life balance
working mother
workplace success
yelling and screaming

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Antioch University
Leadership and Change Ph.D.

Project Title: Exploring the Lives of Women Who Lead

Project Investigator: Susan Cloninger

Dissertation Chair: Elizabeth Holloway, Ph.D.

1. I understand that this project is of a research nature. It may offer no direct benefit to me.
2. Participation in this study is voluntary. I may refuse to enter it or withdraw from the study at any time without harmful consequences to myself.   I understand also that the investigator may drop me at any time from the study.
3. The purpose of this study is to understand how women in leadership positions engage and negotiate the totality of their situation.
4. As a participant of this study, I will be asked to take part in the following procedures:
   . Participate in a recorded interview
   . Participation in this study will take approximately one (1-2) hours of my time and will take place at a location convenient with me.
5. The risks, discomforts and inconveniences of the above procedure might be:
   . Any breech in confidentiality constitutes a risk. Strategies to minimize that risk include:
      a. The use of pseudonyms during the interview process and on all transcripts.
      b. The de-identifying of the organizational context in the dissertation or future scholarly publications or presentations.
      c. The use of a third party professional transcription service.
      d. The participant will be provided a copy of the transcript to edit for identifying information.
      e. The participant will be provided a copy of the final dissertation.
   . An increase in self-awareness may constitute some personal discomfort or strengthen self-confidence
6. The possible benefits of the procedure might be:
      a. Direct benefit to me: Increased self-awareness; the opportunity to reflect and the opportunity to "pay it forward"
      b. Benefits to others: Study has the potential to unlock the complexity surrounding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions at some critical mass therefore providing pathways to future benefits of representation in female leadership
7. Information about this study was discussed with my by Susan Cloninger. If I have further questions I can call her at ████████████
8. Though the primary purpose of this study is to fulfill my requirement to complete a formal research project as a dissertation at Antioch University, I also

intend to include the data and results of the study in future scholarly publications and presentations. Our confidentiality agreement, as articulated above, will be effective in all cases of data sharing.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Susan Cloninger at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or via email at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Philomena Essed, Chair of the Antioch University Leadership and Change Ph.D. IRB at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

_____   _____
Date   Participant Signature

Appendix C: Consent Form for Field Expert Interviewees

Antioch University
Leadership and Change Ph.D.
Informed Consent

Project Title: Exploring the Lives of Women Who Lead

Project Investigator: Susan Cloninger

Dissertation Chair: Elizabeth Holloway, Ph.D.

1. I understand that this project is of a research nature. It may offer no direct benefit to me.
2. Participation in this study is voluntary. I may refuse to enter it or withdraw from the study at any time without harmful consequences to myself.   I understand also that the investigator may drop me at any time from the study.
3. The purpose of this study is to understand how women in leadership positions engage and negotiate the totality of their situation.
4. Participation in this study will take approximately one (1-2) hours of my time and will take place at a location convenient with me or by phone.
5. The risks, discomforts and inconveniences of the above procedure might be:
   a. . The perspective of the interviewee may or may not reflect the views of the
   b. organization to which he/she is affiliated.
   c. . The participant will be provided a copy of the final dissertation.
6. The possible benefits of the procedure might be:
   c. Direct benefit to me: The opportunity to reflect and the opportunity to "pay it forward"
   d. Benefits to others: Study has the potential to unlock the complexity surrounding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions at some critical mass therefore providing pathways to future benefits of representation in female leadership
7. Information about this study was discussed with my by Susan Cloninger.   If I have further questions I can call her at (704) 433-9214.
8. Though the primary purpose of this study is to fulfill my requirement to complete a formal research project as a dissertation at Antioch University, I also intend to include the data and results of the study in future scholarly publications and presentations. Our agreement, as articulated above, will be effective in all cases of data sharing.
 9. The dissertation will appear in the following places:

   A. Proquest Dissertations and Theses Database and that Proquest is a Print on

      Demand Publisher https://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html

B. Ohiolink Electronic Theses and Disssertations Center and that Ohiolink ETD
   Center is an open access archive https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

C. AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive and that AURA is an open
   access archive. https://aura.antioch.edu/

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Susan Cloninger at ███████████ or via email at ███████████████

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Philomena Essed, Chair of the Antioch University Leadership and Change Ph.D. IRB at essed@antioch.edu.

_____   _____
Date   Participant Signature

Appendix D: Overview of Study Provided to Participants and Expert Interviewees

Exploring the Lives of Women Who Lead

STUDY OVERVIEW

This study seeks to explore how American women at senior levels of organizational contexts

have engaged with challenging situations around their professional and personal identities. It

seeks to understand how these women create and consign meaning around their experiences;

how they experience the fluidity and boundaries of multiple identities; how they experience the

entanglement of macro, meso and micro societal forces. It seeks to understand the relationships

among those factors that they name as influential in their experience in leading. Thus the

overarching purpose of this study is to theorize how women in leadership positions engage and

negotiate the totality of their situation.   This grounded theory study, empowered by the voices of

women who lead, has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Antioch University,

Yellow Springs, Ohio, as a requirement to confer a doctorate degree.

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