LEARNING FROM ACADEMIA:
THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS
IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE

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In-depth interviews with business school faculty members suggest that work relationships are more than strategically chosen means to career mobility. Relationships are career-defining ends as well, and negative relationships may be as consequential as helpful ties. Findings also showed significant gender differences: women, more than men, told stories about harm; men, more than women, told stories about help. Workplace relationships may play different roles for professionals and managers, and men's and women's different relational experiences may foster different career logics, or ways of striving for success.

Researcher: Why are these relationships important to you?

1a. Because I have to work with [these people]! You know, we have decisions we have to make here. . . . Because they're going to vote on my tenure. . . . If there's something rolling that's damaging toward me, and Sid adds to it—that's just fuel to the fire. . . . That's why it's important, and also, you don't like to have the negative. You know, you see these people on a regular basis! . . . Sid just treats me like a child, and I don't respond well to that! (Junior female faculty member [JrF2], speaking of colleagues in her home department)[1]

1b. Sometimes you lose confidence. And then you get with this group. And—you're rejuvenated! You're excited again! They value what you do! They think what you do is interesting! They ask you the right questions! They—they're sort of everything! (Same junior woman [JrF2], of her professional association)

2. I haven't chosen this relationship to be important to me. It just—is. She's always there, in the back [of my mind]. . . . She has had such an impact on my thought of how I should run my life—how I should be a female faculty member. (Junior female faculty member [JrF3], of her dissertation chair)

3. Because I think . . . the most positive and most negative relationships . . . spell out the career. (Junior male faculty member [JrM1], of colleagues in his home department)

To join a profession is to plunge into a community of people. Much more than the meeting rooms and offices where we work, our relationships with individuals and groups constitute the environment in which we live our professional lives. Such environments can be nurturant sources of learning, inspiration, and enjoyment, or they can be destructive sources of frustration and injury. They send us powerful messages about who we are and how we are valued. They shape our expectations about what our careers can be, or ought to be.

Commensurate with the relevance and impact of these forces, there is a considerable literature on the importance of workplace relationships for indi-

[1] Identifying numbers for excerpts (1a, 1b, 2, and so on) run through the article. All names are fictitious. Codes (for instance, JrF2) identify specific individuals.

viduals' careers. One of the most influential streams in that literature is the study of social networks (e.g., Brass, 1985; Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973; Ibarra, 1992, 1997; Uzzi, 1997). Drawing essentially on a social exchange model, network researchers have typically construed relationships as resources instrumental for career mobility over which organization members actively compete (Podolny & Baron, 1997; Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997). Scholars (e.g., Ibarra, 1997) have focused on such key derived questions as: How do people acquire and use relationships to benefit their careers? Why do men fare better than women in the competition for network relationships and career gains? How do women catch up?

As indicated in the quotations above, however, the relationships that affect us most are not exclusively those we choose, and they are not exclusively positive. Although network studies and similar approaches have fostered valuable progress, they have also left out pieces of the picture. For a variety of reasons, scholars have begun to call for more complex, exploratory research on relationships (Gargiulo, 1993; Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997), for better attention to variation in relational content and context (Podolny & Barron, 1997) and, most recently, for coverage of negative as well as positive relationships (Labianca, Brass, & Gray, 1998). One of the most serious critiques of current research is that, despite consistent findings of gender differences, "no comprehensive perspective on networks and women's careers has been offered" (Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997: 359). We believe this theoretical problem ties directly to the need for additional complexity in research exploring how and why relationships matter.

This article reports the findings of an interview study that showed the impact of relationships outside the domain usually recognized as formative of professional careers. We (the three authors) hypothesize that men's and women's positive and negative relationship experiences reflect interlinked forces in an occupational realm where true inclusion is treasured—and jealously guarded. We speculate on how relationships in such a realm may shape individuals' conceptions of what career success requires, with fundamental implications for their career (and network) strategies. By expanding on the assumptions of the dominant research paradigm, we hope to contribute to a fuller portrayal of the human environment professionals experience, as well as to suggest new possibilities for understanding how relationships affect men's and women's careers.

We did not initiate our research with such issues in mind, nor did we design it as a network study.

Rather, we wanted to investigate systematically our sense that women and men live in different relational environments in academia (Dutton, Bartunek, & Gersick, 1996). We formulated a very basic research question—How do academics experience relationships as important to their professional lives?—and we set out to interview, in depth, junior and senior men and women in business school faculties. We focused particularly on stories in order to capture something of the content of these relationships, in rich and concrete detail.

Though we chose academia partially because it affects us directly, this setting offers other advantages for studying the effects of relationships on careers. Like consulting, architecture, law, research, and other creative fields, academia exemplifies Kanter's characterization of the professional career arena: "Monopolization of socially valued knowledge is the key determinant of occupational status, . . . 'reputation' [is] the key resource for the individual" (1989: 510). In professional arenas, peers' attachments to each other across organizations may be more important for them than their attachment to their employers. Network research to date has sampled from professional and managerial contexts without distinguishing between them but, as we discuss below, it may be fruitful to do so.

Academia is also a critical setting in which to investigate gender differences in career experiences. As Valian (1998) documented, academic institutions continue to reward women significantly less for professional achievements than men. In particular, although women faculty members have achieved tenure in growing absolute numbers, "There has been zero progress in closing the tenure gap between men and women" in the past two decades[2] (Valian, 1998: 234). A recent account of women's experiences in the sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is a reminder of the force of the dynamics that contribute to women's experience of exclusion in academic settings (Goldberg, 1999). In the current study, we did not look at specific career attainments, but we did examine differences in day-to-day relational experiences that may contribute to the gap between men's and women's career outcomes.

This study reports descriptive and exploratory research. It charts the types of relationships our participants described as consequential in their professional lives and presents statistical and qual-

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[2] Reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (1992: 236; 1996: 249) show a consistent gender gap of 28 percentage points at universities and 22 points at four-year colleges.

itative analyses of similarities and differences among junior and senior men and women. We draw on participants' stories and on literature searched after data collection (see Eisenhardt, 1989) to generate tentative theoretical interpretations for future study.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITS OF THE NETWORK APPROACH

Organizational researchers have consistently described workplace relationships as providing two types of benefits: instrumental career help and emotional support. Career development researchers, for example, discuss *instrumental assistance,* such as advice, contacts, coaching, protection, and advocacy, and *emotional support,* such as counseling, friendship, and role modeling (Kram, 1988), that "helps participants develop self-esteem and professional identity" (Thomas, 1993: 170). In view of this research, many network scholars have assumed that relationships are beneficial for career success and that individuals pursue relationships strategically. Empirical work characteristically starts by asking organization members to identify the set of individuals from whom they get (prespecified) positive resources such as task advice, strategic information, "buy in," social support, and mentoring. Stepping back from the interpersonal dynamics of career development, network studies have focused on identifying ties within prespecified types of relationships. Scholars have emphasized the importance of organization members' portfolios of strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973; Uzzi, 1996), their centrality, and the pattern of ties among others in their networks (Burt, 1992). Ultimately, ties with the right others, in the right configuration, improve individuals' access to organizational influence and career mobility.

In an ideal market, individuals' talents, plus their human capital—self-investments like education—would directly determine their success. In reality, outcomes filter through the imperfect signals, including appearance, demographic attributes, and past attainments, that color organizations' evaluations of people and through the career nurturing that organizations provide to a favored few (Rosenbaum, 1989). Such signaling, evaluation, and selective nurturing reverberate through networks; research highlights how organization members' network success is influenced by their attractiveness to potential contacts and by the structures of opportunities available, as well as by the members' human capital (Burt, 1992; Ibarra, 1992).

One of the challenges for network researchers has been to understand "the profound effects of gender on structuring opportunity" (Pfeffer, 1989: 392). Researchers have examined gender differences in the networks that men and women form and in the consequences that follow. In general, women tend to be less integrated than men into their immediate colleague groups (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992), and women tend to be less likely to find that professional activity and rank translate into central network positions and advancement (Ibarra, 1992). These discrepancies have been partly attributed to homophily (people's predilection to interact with like others) and partly to women's lower opportunity to interact with high-status, same-gender others (Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997). (A recent study of networks in a master of business administration [M.B.A.] student cohort questions the completeness of this explanation, however. Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass found that women were marginalized even in a nonstratified setting, "more from exclusionary pressures than from their preferences for women friends" [1998: 441].)

Alongside these differences in how much men and women benefit from workplace networks, there are qualitative differences in network structures. Men draw primarily on other men for both instrumental and expressive support, but women's networks tend to cross gender lines, including more men than women for instrumental resources and drawing on both men and women for expressive resources (Ibarra, 1992). Men have been found to benefit from networks with "structural holes" (people in one's network are unconnected to each other, increasing one's power to broker exchanges between them). Senior women, in contrast, seem to need the same kind of legitimacy-building networks as entry-level males: strong, multifaceted ties clustered around a strategic (well-situated) partner (Burt, 1992: 157; Podolny & Baron, 1997).

Debate exists about whether these kinds of differences are dispositional (due to socialized or inherent gender differences) or structural (due to men's and women's differential access to opportunity). Ibarra (1997) offered a strong structural argument with her evidence from a study set in four *Fortune* 500 service firms. Women overall did *not* differ from men in their network-building strategies, but high-potential (fast-tracked) women employed unique strategies. She found high-potential women sought especially close instrumental ties with others inside their organizations, to increase men's comfort and decrease gender bias; in addition, they sought extraorganizational relationships with other women, with the intent of learning "strategies for overcoming gender-related obstacles" (1997: 94).

Research on network gender differences is subtle

and useful, especially in explicating the consequences of differential networks for men and women. However, existing research has tended to focus on the structure of relationships and not on the meaning of the ties that compose networks. It has focused on relationships as resources, tending to allude to negative relationships without examining them or their importance directly. This omission leaves significant dynamics regarding ties, their meanings, and career consequences unexamined. For example, if active exclusion, and not only homophilous disinterest, marginalizes women, how and why are such exclusionary pressures conveyed, with what repercussions over and above lowered mobility? If women get the message that—even as senior professionals—they are considered to be as unproven as junior men, how does that affect their basic career strategies and aspirations, beyond any tactics for gaining network centrality? When we asked people open-ended questions about their work relationships, these issues and others emerged; traditionally studied ties took on new meanings, as respondents fleshed out their relational contexts.

METHODS

Participants

The three of us interviewed a sample of 37 faculty members (10 junior women, 9 senior women, 9 senior men, and 9 junior men) from six management schools divided evenly among East Coast, West Coast, and Midwest locations. These schools ranged from Masters Comprehensive University and College 1 to Research University 1 in the Carnegie Classification (Evangelauf, 1994); all gave at least a master's degree in business administration. Since respondents often described relationships or events from graduate school and other settings, many additional universities are represented in the data. To ensure some distance between ourselves and our interviewees, we restricted the sample to faculty outside the organizational behavior and organization theory areas. None of the participants were people we knew well at the time of the study. The research participants' fields included marketing, management communication, finance, business law, computer science, strategy, and accounting. We stratified the sample in order to explore whether interviewees' experiences differed by rank and gender, using a mix of school directories and referrals to locate at least nine participants in each of the four cells we wanted to cover.

Data Collection and Analysis

Our research was explicitly exploratory and therefore employed qualitative and inductive methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Ragin, 1994). Each author conducted 12–13 interviews of 45 to 90 minutes with people divided almost equally between junior (untenured) and senior (tenured) faculty men and women. The interviews consisted of three sets of questions. In part 1, we requested background information about the interviewees' career histories. Parts 2 and 3 were designed to uncover what relationships an interviewee saw as central and why they were so perceived. This approach departed from previous studies in which researchers have asked for names of individuals from whom participants seek prespecified benefits. We were careful to keep our questions open-ended, to avoid biasing replies.

In part 2, we gave the interviewees ten blank cards and asked them to use these cards to record the names of persons or groups important to them as part of their professional lives. They could name people from the past or present, and they could use fewer than the ten cards. They then told us who was identified on each card and the type of relationship they had. In part 3, we asked them to choose, from the set of ten, the two relationships that, for better or worse, made the most difference in their professional lives. We asked the interviewees why these two relationships were important and requested an example of an encounter—a story—that illustrated each relationship's importance to them. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts provided the foundation for our analysis.

Analysis of reasons for choices. We first analyzed the research participants' stated reasons for each relationship's importance. Since we wanted to discover, rather than prejudge, why the relationships were important, we needed to let categories emerge from the data. One of us excerpted the interviewees' transcribed answers to the question and then iteratively grouped similar responses to arrive at a coding scheme. Interviewees often gave more than one reason, and our coding process accommodated multiple responses. Two of us coded each answer. Overall interrater reliability was 68 percent. We reconciled disagreements through discussion. As a further check, a research assistant, blind to participants' ranks and genders, recoded all responses. The interrater reliability between the reconciled researchers' coding and the blind reviewer's coding was 76 percent.

Analysis of the stories. We used stories to explore in depth, and to surface tacit knowledge

about, how relationships are experienced as important. As Staude (1994) noted, narrative has always been the preferred medium for understanding and explaining human experience. Stories are particularly well suited to convey "the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs" (Carter, 1993: 6; see also Bruner, 1986; Martin, 1986; Mishler, 1995; Scholes, 1982). In Louis and Sutton's (1991) terms, telling a story about an event helps storytellers move from automatic to conscious processing of that event, processing characterized by awareness, attention, and reflection. As a result, knowledge that is normally hidden comes into view.

We used a basic anatomy of stories to shape our analysis. Carter (1993), summarizing previous work (e.g., Brown, 1990; Labov, 1972; Mishler, 1986), suggested that characteristics that define stories include: (1) a situation involving some type of "complicating action," frequently a predicament, conflict, or struggle, (2) a protagonist who engages in a situation for a purpose, and (3) a response through which the predicament is resolved or responded to in some fashion. Complicating actions and responses together constitute the fundamental plot of a story.

Our analysis proceeded in several steps. Again, since the research was exploratory, we needed to let categories emerge from the data, rather than impose them a priori. First we extracted the stories, verbatim, from the interview transcripts. We then created abstracts; these were literal condensations of each story, designed to make the data compact enough to work with. Next, one of us sorted iteratively through these abstracts, ultimately grouping similar stories together to create a comprehensive set of categories for the complicating actions and responses (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994: 55–69). Working in pairs, we then coded each story. Our overall agreement rate was 72 percent; we discussed disagreements until we resolved them.

This process resulted in a fairly long list of complicating actions and responses, some given in only a few stories. We constructed a table of all the coded stories, identifying all of the pairs of complicating actions and responses that occurred together. This process enabled us to discern a smaller number of basic types of action-response plots. In this article, we focus on the four prevalent plots we found, each of which appeared in at least 20 percent of the stories.

In addition to telling us stories about their two most important relationships, many interviewees told us stories about one or more of the other relationships they had listed for us. Our statistical analyses are based on the first story told about each of the two people or groups our participants identified as most consequential for them ($n = 74$).[3] Our qualitative descriptions make use of all the stories told ($n = 123$). Our statistical analyses, along with the detail provided by the stories themselves, flesh out the picture of how academics construe relationships' importance to their professional lives.

RESULTS

We present our findings in two main parts. First we summarize the relationships most frequently identified on the ten cards and indicate the reasons that these relationships were depicted as important. This general overview illustrates how the participants' significant professional relationships extended beyond the individual, strategically chosen, positive instrumental ties prominent in previous research. We then flesh out this material and develop a more nuanced comparison of the men's and women's experiences by describing the stories participants told.

Part 1: Overview of Interviewees' Relational Environments

The interviewees named several different kinds of ties on the ten cards. Although 32 percent of the participants mentioned mentors and 32 percent named dissertation chairs, the most frequently chosen relationships were not clearly developmental ones. Sixty-eight percent of our interviewees chose coauthors; 57 percent chose people described as both friends and colleagues; 54 percent chose colleagues; 51 percent chose professional societies; and 32 percent chose friends. On the average, participants named 7.6 relationships, choosing 3.38 men, 1.46 women, and 2.22 groups as important in their professional lives. There were no significant differences based on gender or status in the numbers of men or groups chosen. As in previous research, women ($\bar{x} = 1.95$) chose significantly higher numbers of women than did men ($\bar{x} = 0.94$, $F_{1,33} = 6.19$, $p = 0.02$).

Next, participants named the two relationships that had the biggest impacts on their professional lives. They most often chose colleagues (51 percent of our sample chose at least one colleague), people

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[3] We used two stories per person in order not to create potential sources of bias owing to the fact that some people told more stories than others. There are still some potential problems with the log linear analysis, since we are including more than one story per person (cf. Marsden, 1988).

who were simultaneously friends and coauthors (46 percent of our sample chose at least one such person), senior faculty members from their graduate programs (chosen by 30 percent of our sample), and influential senior faculty from their current institutions (chosen by 22 percent of our sample). Of course, these categories sometimes overlapped; an influential senior faculty member might also be a friend and coauthor, for example. Thirty-five percent of the participants singled out at least one group as highly significant in their professional lives. Groups mentioned included employing universities, schools within universities, departments within schools, colleague groups, graduate schools, professional societies, and outside networks.

Table 1 presents the reasons given for relationships' importance, along with sample quotations to illustrate. Participants primarily cited positive reasons for a person's or group's importance to them, but these accounts intertwined noninstrumental and instrumental explanations. For example, one interviewee noted her admiration for a colleague's intellectual capacity, and another interviewee described looking forward to the interest and amusement he experienced in one of his significant relationships. The categories of reasons include both services that identified others provided, such as mentoring, support, and validation, and feelings induced by relationships, such as safety, pleasure, and satisfaction. Table 1 makes evident the importance both of friendship and of simply being known in relationships of long duration.

Although many of the reasons reported in Table 1 support the constructions of workplace relationships developed in past research (e.g., Thomas, 1993), three categories depart from existing assumptions. The most prevalent reason for a relationship's importance, given by 39 percent of our sample, was _collegiality_. These descriptions concerned relationships in which respondents worked side-by-side with identified others, in pairs or in larger groups. Participants' statements conveyed a sense of the others as compatible partners with whom they jointly created value—not as instrumental resource-holders they tapped for assistance toward gaining private ends. The data indicate that good colleagues, in and of themselves, represent a central reward of professional life; we discuss this point further below.

Another twist on traditional conceptions of the role of choice in relational network building is evidenced in the 16 percent of relationships described as important because of their _power and control over_ the participant or over the resources that he or she needs. These reasons, as shown in Table 1, emphasize the participant's dependence

on or vulnerability to the other person and remind us that power over another draws attention to a relationship (Fiske, 1993). This category captures a less discretionary reason for the importance of a relationship than implied by the attraction of positive mentoring, admiration, validation, friendship, safety, and pleasure (Podolny & Baron, 1997).

The final category suggests a very different view of why relationships matter than is typically implied in the literature. Eight percent of the people chosen were not described as helpful providers of resources, but as _negative influences._ In the second-to-last excerpt in Table 1, a male junior faculty member, discussing a male peer, describes combative sparring that worsened in arguments over the critical resource of faculty recruitment. In the next excerpt, a senior woman describes a relationship as a troubling source of doubt about whether she belonged and could succeed in her professional work setting. Such reasons for the importance of a relationship, although numerically few, are important, because negative experiences tend to have disproportionate effects on attitudes and behavior (Labianca et al., 1998; Taylor, 1991).

To supplement this overall map of chosen relationships, we assessed whether the interviewees differed by gender or rank in their cited reasons for relationships' importance. We used a hierarchical log linear model (Fienberg, 1980) to determine this. Log linear analyses are a variation on the logic and procedures of multiway cross-tabulations that are appropriate for analyses involving two or more categorical variables. In log linear models, all the variables used for classification are independent, and the dependent variable is the number of cases in a cell of the cross-tabulation. When there are three categorical variables, as in the case of many of the analyses in this study (for both reasons given for relationships' importance and types of stories told), log linear analyses allow for the simultaneous documentation of association among all the variables and between two variables while the effects of a third variable are held constant (cf. Lee, 1999). In the case of the reasons given for relationships' importance, results of the log linear analyses indicated that the gender and/or the status of an interviewee had no significant impacts on the reasons given for relationships' importance.

In summary, the interviewees' accounts reflected both traditional views of relationships as vehicles for resource acquisition and past findings that men are less likely than women to include women in their relational worlds. However, participants departed from the traditional picture by describing relationships more as ends-in-themselves than as means, by indicating that relationships are not nec-

TABLE 1
Interviewees' Reasons for Choosing Their Two Most Important Relationships[a]

Reason Why Relationship Was Important	Percentage of Relationships for Which Reason Was Given	Example
Collegiality	39	This group—we named ourselves the Fab Four. (laughs) This is a group of four women who began the [X] program . . . at the university. The group was important because [we] were thrown in together and told "develop a . . . program." . . . We just sat down and said "OK, we can do it. . . . We don't know a whole lot about doing it—we'll find out." . . . For me this was—the collaboration . . . the working together to accomplish a goal. (JrF5, of colleague group of four women peers)
		P has totally crazy ideas about nearly everything, all of which are almost always founded in something really correct, and I find it really stimulating to talk to him about teaching issues in particular. (SrM4, of departmental colleague)
Admiration for other	31	I really admire his intellectual capacity. (JrF8, of male colleague)
		I look forward to seeing this person. I know the exchange is going to be interesting. And it's going to be amusing. . . . There's a high level of mutual respect. (SrM1, of colleague)
Positive mentoring	31	My relationship with K is really important to me because, one, he obviously had a tremendous influence on my whole Ph.D. program. . . . He was very helpful and more than anyone else in terms of thinking about schools I should apply for, and getting my stuff together, and all that kind of stuff. (JrF4, of dissertation cochair)
		He was one of those people I just got motivated by, and probably is more responsible than anyone else for my . . . decision to go into an academic life. Over the years after that he acted as kind of an informal advisor. . . . He was an advisor for a long time. And then . . . he was instrumental in getting me into the Institute . . . which was the platform from which I was able to do my doctoral work. (SrM3, of a master's level professor)
Support and validation	24	I can remember going to him with very fuzzy ideas and coming away thinking I was brilliant. He had put them into order for me. And I value that. (SrF4, of dissertation advisor)
		E in many ways is one example that stands out in that he was willing to believe in what we were doing. (SrM7, of person who provided funding for him)
Personal friendship	22	I just like her, admire her, have fun with her. (SrF8, of colleague)
		We were good friends in grad school. For at least one year we rented the house together, so we knew each other pretty well. (SrM6, of graduate school classmate)
Other's power and control	16	Because these are the people I work with most regularly at school. They're the people that will judge how I'm doing. They're the people that assist me in what I'm doing. (JrF13, of her home department)
		Jack has the data, and soon Jack may have money as well. (JrM3, of senior faculty member in his department)
Feeling of safety	15	S is somebody who when an issue comes up for me at work, S is somebody who is a close enough friend and a friend I trust enough that I can tell, no holds barred . . . what's going on, what I'm concerned about. (JrF9, of friend and coauthor)
		I know that she will always have my interests in mind whenever we discuss something so there is no fear there. (JrM6, of his wife and coauthor)
Pleasure and satisfaction in the relationship	14	It's been very nice, and we happen to get along, despite all the minor arguments that we have along the way. (JrM8, of colleague)
		I just enjoy this guy! It's not so much the intellectual stimulation, but he's got a big grin, and he's always positive—it's nice to see him come in, and he'll talk to me about things that are going on inside his life, and I'll talk to him about mine, and we'll laugh about it. (SrM1, of student)

[a] The first two letters in each identifying code designate whether the interviewee was a junior (untenured) or a senior (tenured) faculty member. The "F" or "M" designates gender. The number is a unique participant identifier.

TABLE 1
continued

Reason Why Relationship Was Important	Percentage of Relationships for Which Reason Was Given	Example
Long-term relationship	8	I started out as his RA . . . and continued having a relationship with him in one capacity or another through now . . . and I'm still working with him! (JrF4, of dissertation cochair)
		He's known me through a long time. I guess I've known him since 1975, when I was just a young kid! And he really had an influence on me. We actually kind of developed an initial relationship in 1977. (SrF8, of faculty member from her doctoral program)
Negative influence on me	8	It's especially important because the first year and a half here, it made—I couldn't wait to leave this place. . . . I was ready to take a job anywhere, that's how I felt. . . . The knife jabbing was always there. . . . Recruiting made it all come to an even bigger head. And it's always, if I say black, he says white. To be honest with you, it's a lot less important to me [now]. I finally took the attitude, if I'm going to be here, I'm going to make it as pleasant as possible. (JrM1, about male peer colleague)
		This is a rocky relationship, but very significant to me, about—am I really in a business school, and is he really saying, "You are one of us," or [is he saying], "This is a risk. I don't know whether this is going to work; look at this funny outlier person. . . . Is she really a business school [person] or is she trying to [come in] through the back door?" It was a challenge, like "I'm not so sure you can do it." It made me turn up the ratchet, saying, "I'm just going to pull out all the stops." Always feeling insecure . . . (SrF6, about her dean)

essarily consequential by choice, by depicting the importance of negative relationships, and by describing their ties to groups, not just to individuals, as significant relationships. Finally, these accounts showed men and women to be similar in their stated reasons for relationships' importance.

Part 2: The Stories of Relationships

The stories we gathered flesh out this skeletal view, and they evidence gender and rank differences in how relationships affected our research participants' lives. Our analysis is based on the four basic plots that each appeared in 20 percent or more of the stories, dealing with help, harm, emotional support, or joint work/collegiality. (We later modified one of these categories, as we show below.) Table 2 presents the numbers of stories that included each plot, classified by participants' gender and status. This table shows both the total number of stories told ($n = 123$) and the two stories per participant we used for our statistical analyses ($n = 74$).

The most common stories involved *help*. In these stories, a protagonist needed some type of help—career resources or advice, for instance, or help in

TABLE 2
Number of Stories by Plot Type and Interviewee Gender and Status[a]

Interviewee Gender and Status	n	Number of Stories in Total Data Set	Number of Stories in Analyzed Data Set	Help Total Data Set	Help Analyzed Data Set	Harm Total Data Set	Harm Analyzed Data Set	Emotional Support Total Data Set	Emotional Support Analyzed Data Set	Joint Work Total Data Set	Joint Work Analyzed Data Set
Men											
Senior	9	30	18	15	10	1	0	14	8	10	6
Junior	9	29	18	19	12	6	2	2	1	5	3
Women											
Senior	9	37	18	14	7	12	5	6	4	7	3
Junior	10	27	20	11	11	7	5	10	8	5	5
Total number[a]		123	74	59	38	26	12	32	21	27	17

[a] Stories often had more than one plot, so the total number of plots is likely to be more than the total number of stories.

getting through a situation of acute risk or difficulty. In response, someone provided help or resources in a way the protagonist recognized as positive. A second type of story involved *harm.* In these stories, the protagonist (the research participant) needed help (as above), and the identified other responded with problematic, unfair, or damaging treatment that the protagonist experienced as harmful. A third type of story involved *emotional support.* In these stories, people described situations in which they felt able to be themselves, able to have fun, relax, or exchange emotional support in a relationship. In contrast to the first two types of story, these stories described mutual sharing. The fourth type of story dealt with *joint work.* In these stories, the protagonist and the identified other were described as taking a professional initiative together, such as writing a professional paper or organizing a conference, or as enriching each other's work in ongoing ways. In both the emotional support and the joint work stories, the emphasis was often more on an initiative being taken together than on one person experiencing a predicament and the other responding.

Each of these themes is discussed below and illustrated with several stories, which we have placed within the text to make it easier to follow our qualitative analysis. We chose excerpts that exemplified both the overall themes and the gender and/or status differences we observed. The results of the log linear analyses of the associations among gender, status, and the various stories are shown in Table 3. Odds ratios associated with significant effects are shown in Table 4.

Helping stories. This category, which included the largest number of stories, comes closest to the depiction of relationships in network and career development research. Women's and men's helping stories overlapped; each group had stories about relational partners contributing to their development or pulling them through difficult situations. When we looked simply at the presence or absence of the general helping plot in the stories (Table 3), hierarchical log linear analysis indicated no significant differences for gender or rank; the preferred model was one in which each variable was independent (likelihood ratio chi-square [G^2] = 3.35, df = 4, p = 0.50). However, when we examined the content of the stories more closely, we found a qualitative gender difference in the nature of the help given. Men often described getting direct, advancement-related help with *career* strategies and opportunities, in implied contexts of abundance and of doing well. Women were less likely to tell these kinds of stories; women's stories more often described being given thoughtful atten

tion or a kind welcome in contexts where they felt at risk. Thus, we modified this category to include only career help.[4] As shown in Table 3, a log linear analysis addressing the presence or absence of a career help plot in the stories indicated a significant result. The preferred model (G^2 = 3.19, df = 3, p = 0.36) included an interaction of gender and career helping (ΔG^2 = 5.42, df = 1, p = 0.02). Table 4 shows that the odds of a respondent telling stories that incorporated a career help plot are more than three times higher for men than for women.

The stories below illustrate some of the differences in the type, magnitude, and meaning of the assistance that men and women reported. In excerpt 4, a junior faculty man relates how his department chair routinely strategized with him about which opportunities would be good for his career. He then describes being helped to decline a request from a "big guy" without closing off future possibilities:

> 4. I get this opportunity to do some professional service thing. And, you know, "Gee, is this going to be worth the time?" And so I send him a little E-mail note or something—He says "Yes! This would be a *good* use of your time." . . . There was another request I had to do some other service things, for the X Institute. I was a little less interested in that, but you know, it was a big guy that asked me to do it, and so I asked Kevin, "What do you think about this?" And he said, "Hmmm. This doesn't sound good for you." And he helped me by . . . sending an E-mail to this guy, who he knows very well, and sort of saying, "Look, this isn't the thing for Steve to do at this time." You know, "Get him—get him a few years from now!" (JrM2, about male department chair)

In excerpt 5, a senior man recalls how his dissertation chairman helped him as a new faculty member to establish contacts and visibility that contributed to significant later opportunities. In this case, the respondent describes a fairly spectacular rise from a "no name sort of place" to a top-ranked institution:

> 5. I took the first job at Middle State, and it was my first year there. I was invited back to [my graduate school] to give a talk . . . and my chairman had also invited _____, the Nobel laureate, to a work-

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[4] For this test, we used the fine-grained coding done for our penultimate pass through the data, isolating helping story predicaments that had been coded "needs career-oriented resources" and "needs professional or career advice or help." Other helping story predicaments included "person felt at risk or disadvantaged in a situation of acute need," "person is taking a professional initiative," and "predicament involves a combination of personal and professional dimensions."

TABLE 3
Results of Log Linear Analyses for Associations among Gender, Status, and Stories Told about Relationships

Model[a]	χ^2	G^2	df	p^d
Helping stories				
[Status] [gender] [helped][b]	3.24	3.35	4	0.50
[Status] [gender × helped]	0.67	0.67	3	0.88
[Gender] [status × helped]	2.85	2.88	3	0.41
[Helped] [gender × status]	3.26	3.30	3	0.35
[Status × helped] [gender × helped]	0.19	0.19	2	0.91
[Status × gender] [gender × helped]	0.61	0.61	2	0.74
[Status × gender] [status × helped]	2.83	2.80	2	0.24
[Status × helped] [gender × helped] [status × gender]	0.05	0.05	1	0.82
[Status × gender × helped]	0.00	0.00	0	1.00
Career help stories				
[Status] [gender] [career help]	9.00	8.67	4	0.07
[Status] [gender × career help][b]	3.19	3.25	3	0.36
[Gender] [status × career help]	6.21	6.40	3	0.09
[Career help] [gender × status]	9.14[c]	8.62[c]	3	0.04
[Status × career help] [gender × career help]	0.97	0.98	2	0.61
[Status × gender] [gender × career help]	3.14	3.20	2	0.20
[Status × gender] [status × career help]	6.17	6.35	2	0.04
[Status × career help] [gender × career help] [status × gender]	0.56	0.54	1	0.46
[Status × gender × career help]	0.00	0.00	0	1.00
Harming stories				
[Status] [gender] [harmed]	6.86	9.33[c]	4	0.05
[Status] [gender × harmed][b]	2.21	2.97	3	0.40
[Gender] [status × harmed]	7.08	9.05[c]	3	0.03
[Harmed] [gender × status]	6.74	9.28[c]	3	0.03
[Status × harmed] [gender × harmed]	1.97	2.70	2	0.26
[Status × gender] [gender × harmed]	7.02[c]	9.00[c]	2	0.23
[Status × gender] [status × harmed]	2.16	2.93	2	0.01
[Status × harmed] [gender × harmed] [status × gender]	1.96	2.69	1	0.10
[Status × gender × harmed]	0.00	0.00	0	1.00
Emotional support stories				
[Status] [gender] [support]	8.58	9.88[c]	4	0.04
[Status] [gender × support]	8.70[c]	9.49[c]	3	0.02
[Gender] [status × support]	8.25[c]	9.04[c]	3	0.03
[Support] [gender × status]	8.56[c]	9.83[c]	3	0.02
[Status × support] [gender × support]	7.99[c]	8.64[c]	2	0.01
[Status × gender] [gender × support]	8.21[c]	8.99[c]	2	0.01
[Status × gender] [status × support]	8.64[c]	9.44[c]	2	0.01
[Status × support] [gender × support] [status × gender]	7.93[c]	8.56[c]	1	0.00
[Status × gender × support][b]	0.00	0.00	0	1.00
Joint work stories				
[Status] [gender] [joint work][b]	2.00	1.97	4	0.74
[Status] [gender × joint work]	1.78	1.80	3	0.61
[Gender] [status × joint work]	1.78	1.80	3	0.61
[Joint work] [gender × status]	1.94	1.91	3	0.59
[Status × joint work] [gender × joint work]	1.64	1.62	2	0.44
[Status × gender] [gender × joint work]	1.72	1.75	2	0.42
[Status × gender] [status × joint work]	1.72	1.75	2	0.42
[Status × joint work] [gender × joint work] [status × gender]	1.58	1.60	1	0.21
[Status × gender × joint work]	0.00	0.00	0	1.00

[a] Brackets indicate main effects and interaction terms present in the model. For example, [gender] [status × helped] represents a model containing gender, status, and helped in the model as main effects, plus an interaction between status and helped.

[b] Preferred model.

[c] The notation indicates goodness-of-fit statistics in the upper 5 percent tail of the corresponding chi-square distribution, with df as indicated.

[d] The p-values correspond to the likelihood ratio chi-squares (G^2s).

TABLE 4
Odds Ratios Associated with Significant Effects Related to Gender, Status, and Stories Told about Relationships

Type of Story	Odds for Men	Odds for Women	Odds Ratios, Men/Women
Career help	0.58	0.18	3.30
Harm	0.09	0.38	0.22
Emotional support			
Junior faculty	0.09	0.68	0.13
Senior faculty	0.81	0.31	2.61
Odds ratios, junior/ senior	0.10	2.19	

shop. He managed to have us go back on the same plane flight. He orchestrated the whole thing, and during [the flight], I had this Nobel laureate to myself—and the next thing I know . . . I had a call from Prestige University to see if I was interested in a permanent job. . . . This all evolved out of that orchestrated encounter. . . . Just the idea that they were interested was amazing at that stage, [given my] coming from a sort of no name sort of place. . . . I think that relationship and contacts made it even easier to publish in Prestige U's journal as well. (SrM8, about his dissertation chair)

The women's stories, in contrast, often described help as a rare extended hand in a hostile world. For example, the following story told by a senior woman also portrays a helping relationship, but it suggests an early career situation dramatically different from those described in the two excerpts above. One reason this relationship meant so much to the respondent was that she got so little assistance from anyone else in the chill environment of her first academic appointment:

6. He was one of the few people at Top Tier—*Nobody* would spend any time on me. And he actually would read my referees' reports and give me advice on how to respond to them—what they're really saying. And he would read papers and say "Jill, this is—" I remember one—"You're just making all the classic mistakes!" (laughs) And he helped me restructure the paper in a very simple way, to save it! One of my favorite papers. And this was in my third year . . . after the dean of the business school told me I should change what I do *completely* and do—a whole different line of research. It was just "hopeless!" (laughs) And the dean was one of my strongest supporters! (laughs). (SrF9, about SrM colleague from first academic job)

Finally, a senior faculty woman discussed the kinds of personal, as well as professional advice, she received from an older woman mentor. This example illustrates additional types of help that women were likely to describe:

7. I've known Colleen since graduate school. She is a coauthor and was on my dissertation committee. She makes a very conscious effort to talk to me not only about our research, but about certain decisions she's made in her professional life. For example, she talked to me extensively about her decision to leave her current university where she had tenure and go to another without tenure. The professional concerns, the personal trade-offs, how she handled it, who she contacted. . . . Our conversation allows me to hear and talk about professional and personal together. (SrF3, about a member of her dissertation committee)

Harming stories. These stories show a dark side of workplace relationships—a reality that is much less discussed in the literatures on networks or career development. Yet the underlying themes of these accounts are somewhat consistent with the more familiar stories above. The first excerpt in this section, an interview with a junior man, is a story he told while describing his progress toward establishing his reputation and career, themes central in men's helping stories and in their cited reasons for relationships' importance. A colleague's unscrupulous attempt to publish the same material twice cost this interviewee considerable extra effort. Excerpt 9, the only harm story from a senior man, indicates the deadly seriousness of the recruiting issue touched on more briefly in excerpt 5 and in the negative influence section in Table 1. Control over faculty appointments equals power over a department's identity and, simultaneously, over one's own standing as central or peripheral to the group.

8. I have published by now six papers . . . in top journals. They have been extremely . . . well received. What else? I had some unpleasant experiences with coauthors from other universities, which made publication of some work difficult. During my job talks I met a gentleman I decided to write a paper with. Which worked out fine, and the paper was about to be published, and then the editor called us up and said part of our paper had appeared in another journal. I had quite a shock. And that took an extra year of effort. . . . I was tempted to let his university know. But I decided, ultimately, against that. That is pretty much over, as far as I'm concerned. (JrM8, about a colleague from another school)

9. I had a vision of what [my field] is like. And that vision was shared by the department for the first 10 or 12 years I was [at my previous school]. But through some critical appointments in the department, it started shifting, intellectually, in a direction I thought was a major error . . . and I expressed my

opinions. . . . They blew up! So I was spending a lot of energy negatively, trying to get the department to move. . . . There was maybe a general support for me and my position, but I was bearing the brunt. I had one guy come into my office, and [tell] me he wanted to kill me. He said "I wish I could kill you!" He was angry! . . . I just sort of sloughed it off. It got to be an uncomfortable situation and I came [here] to escape the negative—I didn't want to spend my life . . . in this negative way. . . . I have opportunities in lots of other places. So I didn't sit and say, "My God, what will this do to me?" . . . I didn't really have much to lose. (SrM1, about faculty group in a former school)

The next three excerpts typify harming stories told by women. Two mutually reinforcing themes were prevalent in these stories: perceived marginalization or rejection and denial of resources perceived as available to others. Note the importance of faculty recruitment in excerpt 12, in which a woman interprets the destruction of her favored job candidate's talk as a forceful demonstration that she is "just a token person" in her group.

10. When I arrived that summer, my group hosted a reception for all the faculty in the business school. I got a call from the chairman's wife, asking if I would serve punch with the other faculty wives. Well, I hemmed and hawed. . . . She was persistent, so I said yes. And I started thinking more about it, that this was going to be my first time to *meet* other faculty! And it's not that I think less of faculty wives, it's just that I wanted to be recognized as a faculty member! So I went to the chair, and explained my dilemma, and how I was willing to do my part, but I really didn't—I'd do whatever the men were doing. They were serving wine. I'd do that. So he was very sympathetic, [but] I got this call from his wife—She lit into me, that I didn't have a faculty wife to contribute—how selfish I was. . . .

As it turned out, I shouldn't have brought a date [to the event], even though this was spouses and everything, because everyone introduced themselves to *him*, and asked *him* what department he was in. . . . That was kind of "Welcome to Stalwart U." (SrF8, about faculty group at her first academic job)

11. When I first got asked to [edit] *New Journal,* I got notes from Ted Baker in my department, and people would say "The School's not supporting this! Secretaries shouldn't type acceptance letters! That would have lowest priority!" And that, at my stage in my career, I'm not senior enough to be editor. I got all negative, nothing positive from the School. Since then . . . I found out about the editor of *Journal X.* He gets a two-course reduction out of being editor, and I hear people are getting course reductions for being associate editors. . . . I would like something for me, but it's never happened. (SrF10, about her faculty group)

12. I had a person come out [to give a talk] who I was really interested in [who does work like mine], and this was before I—really accepted that I'm just—a token—person. And he already had his dissertation done. He already had *two* articles in *Prestige Journal*—just a really sharp guy! And he started presenting. And Sid absolutely did not let this guy talk! Was all over him! And Robert Sims said "Look! Let him get through his talk!" and—(claps) Sid didn't stop! He just went on. (JrF2, about her faculty group)

A full 55 percent of our senior women and 70 percent of our junior women interviewees told at least one story of harm at some point during their overall interviews; only 33 percent of the junior men and 11 percent of the senior men told at least one such story. The preferred model ($G^2 = 2.97$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.40$) resulting from the hierarchical log linear analysis included an interaction of gender and harm ($\Delta G^2 = 6.35$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.01$); also see Table 3). The odds of respondents telling stories that incorporated a harm plot, as shown in Table 4, are more than four times higher for women than for men.

Stories about emotional support. These stories depicted relationships that participants experienced as providing emotional support—whether that meant having light-hearted fun, relaxing, exchanging emotional support, or some combination of these activities. Unlike the stories in other categories, some of these were set outside the work context, and many portrayed no one encounter, but a stream of daily interactions. In these stories, contact was casual and spontaneous. Although helping and harming stories often highlighted respondents' junior status in relation to powerful seniors, the emotional support stories portrayed interactions characterized by minimal hierarchy, ease and freedom to be one's offstage self, and mutuality. The stories evoke the anchoring relationships that Kahn (1998) described as providing "safe harbors" at work and reflect the preciousness of colleagues with whom one can develop such rapport.

13. When I came here, she invited me to this women's lunch, and I thought that was so wonderful, because I felt so welcomed here. . . . And then she was denied tenure. . . . It enabled us to form a deep personal friendship, because we had some things to talk about that were meaningful to her, and to me. . . . As she was leaving, we became closer and closer, and she was one of the very few people I could relate to here. (SrF4, about female peer colleague)

14. After I had the baby, Jim came over and fixed us dinner. . . . It was wonderful! And then we talked about work! . . . I should [say] we talked about school. [That's how] the relationship with [Pam and

Jim and me] is. We talk a *lot* about school, about the politics of the department, and about . . . all the little—icky stuff! (laughs) And (frowning; concerned) we almost never talk about research. (JrF4, about a male peer colleague)

A junior male told a story in which a relationship with someone else made work more enjoyable. He described how his relationship with his wife (who was also a colleague) changed the way he experienced work:

15. What comes to mind is really not a single encounter but several events, like whenever I get a paper accepted I have to tell her first, or when I get a paper rejected I have to tell her first. . . . It's just reinforcing—she shares in my successes as well as disappointments and that helps. You are not sulking alone. And in all cases, she has always been very supportive, and I find that very comforting. (JrM6, about wife/coauthor/colleague)

Excerpt 16 shows the kind of enjoyment depicted in emotionally supportive stories told by the senior men. Senior men have plenty of people seeking support and help from them; it appears that they especially appreciate those they perceive as "more casual"—more fun. The value of these relationships for senior men may be the felt *absence* of focus on the kind of instrumental exchange emphasized in the network and career development literatures.

16. These things all start out very formal. "Professor Z" and all that stuff. And then . . . as you get to know each other, we both get more casual with each other. And you come to trust the other person, too, in lots of different ways. . . . I tend to leave my door open . . . there aren't a lot of people walking by. But he'll come walking in—we'll joke around about what's happening in his life, or what's happening in mine, a little bit, and we'll talk about these projects. He's working with me on several projects. . . . And he'll talk to me about the comps that he's taking. . . . I look forward to seeing him! . . . It's just an enjoyable interchange. (SrM1, about male student)

For the emotional support plot, hierarchical log linear analysis (Table 3) revealed that the preferred model ($G^2 = 0.00$, $df = 0$, $p = 1.00$) included a three-way interaction among gender, status, and the presence of emotional support ($G^2 = 8.56$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.00$). As Table 2 shows, senior men and junior women were most likely to tell this kind of story. Table 4 indicates that the odds of senior men telling stories incorporating an emotional support plot were about ten times higher than for junior men. Further, the odds of junior women telling stories incorporating such a plot were about eight times the odds for junior men.

Stories of joint work and collegiality. These stories centered on working together or collaborating on intellectual work. The other discussed was usually a person but could also be a journal or a professional organization. Stories that fit this plot ranged from simple descriptions of papers two people wrote together, to depictions of ongoing, synergistic interactions that invigorated the interviewees' work and infused it with fun and excitement.

17. We decided to collaborate his interest in country of origin and mine in [technology]. And so we did a study where we actually collected multinational data . . . from Chile, France, and the U.S. And worked on an article that was published in *International Journal.* So that was the encounter—an in-the-hall discussion of "Let's do something," and then we actually did carry it out, and do something. (JrF6, about a male peer colleague)

18. We've written three papers together . . . and we are still finding more things to do. It's becoming a very rich field of work. . . . [An example is] I'll send him a copy of what I've written and he'll come back with all kinds of negative things that need work. It's very frustrating sometimes, but it's good. Our relationship is very open so that . . . we can insult each other and not care, we tell each other that we are doing crazy things, and usually it's true. (SrM4, about male former student, coauthor)

This type of story, featuring productive work more than any kind of emotional or instrumental assistance, was essentially the same for junior and senior faculty members and for men and women (Table 3). The preferred model is one of independence of each of the variables ($G^2 = 1.97$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.74$).

DISCUSSION

We began this study with a desire to understand better how relationships affect professional life and particularly, how men's and women's experiences compare. As expected, the research participants described instrumental, helping relationships as important. We found, though, that the more mutual bonds of colleagueship were even more prominent in their accounts than the helping theme and that negative relational experiences were powerful forces in many of the interviewees' professional lives. Although gender and status made little difference in people's stated reasons for why relationships were important to them, the relational worlds described by women included significantly less career help and significantly more harm than the relational worlds described by men.

In reviewing the literature to get help interpreting our findings, we gained valuable insights and

also found some gaps to which our findings are pertinent. The importance of this study is not that it contradicts existing research—it does not. But because it illuminates critical areas that have been neglected, it suggests a fresh theoretical context for existing findings and for future inquiry. In large part, network research has been designed to explore relationships in managerial careers and has primarily framed relationships as a positive means to the end of career mobility. Two central themes in our findings fall outside that paradigm. First is the prominent portrayal of relationships as valued ends in themselves. We believe this theme may reflect the nature of our research setting. As we argue below, both careers and relationships may have distinctive meanings for professionals—meanings underappreciated in network research focused on managers. The second theme is the impact of negative relationships on professionals' careers and identities; this theme emerged more obviously for women but was present for men as well. We believe these themes together suggest a view of relationships, careers, and the links between them that is more complex than the currently prevailing view. For this speculative discussion, we have mined supporting literature as well as our entire body of data, including some material outside the stories and reasons excerpted for quantitative analysis.

Relationships and Careers

Relationships as ends in themselves. Our findings are saturated with interviewees' depictions of relationships as ends in themselves, from the preeminence of collegiality as a reason for relationships' importance, to the across-the-board significance of stories about joint work and colleagueship. We believe this valuing of relationships reflects not a unique tendency of academics to appreciate each other, but the centrality of peers in professional work and careers. As the interviewee in excerpt 1b, presented in the very beginning of this article, said, a good colleague group is "sort of everything." Since colleagues help to define what counts as good and interesting in one's field, they heavily influence one's potential to obtain day-to-day respect and enjoyment at work.

Where relationships fit into careers. Kanter's comparison of bureaucratic and professional careers shows how this distinction matters for network research and theory. In particular, she focused on career logics—people's reasoning about how to pursue success, given what success involves. In bureaucratic (managerial) careers, "defined by a logic of *advancement,* . . . 'career' con-

sists of . . . movement from job to job, changing title, tasks, and often work groups in the process" (Kanter, 1989: 509; emphasis in original). For studying managerial careers, it makes theoretical sense to focus on relationships as means and to treat mobility as the chief end goal and hierarchical rank as the key dependent variable. In contrast, the logic of professional career structures is "defined by craft or skill, with . . . 'reputation' the key resource for the individual . . . [Reputation and skill are] intermingled [through] the determination of career fate by fellow professionals" (Kanter, 1989: 510). The customary network focus on relationships as a means and on hierarchical movement as an end does not fit the professions well. Here, "winning" also includes being able to choose one's group, to attract desired colleagues from outside, to influence which recruits are chosen and promoted, and to be welcomed into groups one would like to join. In professional settings, inclusion in desired groups is crucial in and of itself. Such inclusion is inherent in the meaning of achieving tenure or of being promoted to partnership. Implicitly, winning implies an ability to exert control over one's reputation and enjoyment of work by controlling the membership of one's group. Relationships are both means *and* ends; measures of hierarchical rank must be supplemented with measures of reputation and group membership to capture professional career outcomes.

Gender differences: Inclusion, exclusion, and the logics of reputation and skill. The importance of inclusion in a desired group implies the existence of boundaries between insiders and outsiders and raises the comparable importance of exclusion. As excerpt 9 shows, letting the "wrong" people in can reverse one's fortunes and move one from the inside to the outside of a group.

Scholars of both networks and career development have remarked that men and women live in different worlds (e.g., Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997). The stories we heard from both men and women faculty members echoed this observation, suggesting that the world of men is more inside the center of the profession and that the world of women is more outside that center. Paralleling Kanter's (1989) distinctions among the career logics of different occupations, our findings suggest that these worlds foster overlapping but different emphases, or sublogics, within the overall professional logic of reputation and skill. The first sublogic, evident in the stories told by the men we interviewed, involves the game of reputation, in which insiders help each other strategize on how to win. The second sublogic, evident in the women's stories, in-

volves the test of skill, in which outsiders struggle to prove their fitness to "play the game" at all.

Considering patterns of the help and harm stories as a whole and comparing their frequency and content for men and women is instructive. Men's help stories most often described instrumental assistance and meticulous career strategizing about the right relationships and projects to pursue (review excerpts 4 and 5, above). The following fragments, indicative of several similar comments from men's interviews, capture a sense of the strategic game of reputation and of planning in order to gain stature as a "player." In the first, a junior man reflects on how he and a coauthor discussed what kinds of papers to write and which journals to approach. The next fragment, excerpt 20, reinforces this picture of men basing their work on a market strategy. It also raises the question, Where does this logic direct one's passions? The third excerpt in this group suggests how performance evaluation may become less personally threatening if it is "just part of the game."

> 19. There are people that are gonna be players in the field. . . . We're working on several different things and have kind of a game plan for what we're gonna do in the future. (JrM2)

> 20. We talk about what I should be doing . . . choice of problems, choice of coauthors, building up a vita, what that should look like . . . conditional with what today's market is like. What I can do and what I shouldn't do. (JrM3)

> 21. The review process I definitely don't enjoy that much. But nobody does. It's just part of the game. (JrM1)

Men's few harm stories were about nasty tactics, cheating in the career game, and fights over group membership. The others described in their harm stories treated them, albeit offensively, like competitors in the game. Within this approach, negative encounters may be framed as part of the play, to be put behind one. Men explicitly told us that these incidents were over (see excerpts 8 and 9). The prominence and quality of emotional support stories from senior men may complete this picture of inclusion, indicating both the pressures it involves (needing relief from "fortune hunters") and the rewards of elite membership.

The contrasting and complementary picture told in women's stories portrays struggles with exclusion from the club. In line with previous research (Burt, 1992; Cohen & Gutek, 1991; Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994; Umberson, Chen, House, Hopkins, & Slaten, 1996), the women interviewed here told significantly fewer stories about receiving career help than did the men. In addition, they often expressed gratitude for relationships in which they found acceptance, could consider both personal and professional dilemmas, and were valued and/or rescued from destructive treatment. Excerpts 1b, 6, 7, and 13 show how much it meant to some of these women to be included or treated as colleagues, even in simple ways. Excerpts 10, 11, and 12 illustrate the experience of exclusion, despite their formal faculty status—being treated as invisible at a faculty welcoming party, being angrily denied resources that others got, having hopes of recruiting a new group member shut down. The quest for inclusion that McGowen and Hart (1990) noted as typical of women's professional identity formation seems clear in our data.

There are hints in our interviews that exclusion—perhaps by making people feel disqualified from "play"—stimulates a logic other than the logic of strategizing for reputation. We hypothesize that exclusion instead fosters an emphasis on gaining inclusion by proving one's skill. The women's help stories (see excerpts 6 and 7) convey a notable lack of strategizing for reputational gain. Interactions with others at key moments—when preparing a pivotal paper, for instance—raise doubts about status, converting the episode into a test of whether or not the interviewee belongs. Table 1 includes a woman's description of her feeling that she had to "pull out all the stops" to prove herself when her dean questioned whether she belonged on the faculty. In the following excerpts from interviews with junior faculty women, the emphasis on proving one's worthiness strongly contrasts with the emphasis on strategy in the excerpts from men's interviews above (excerpts 19–21). Excerpt 23 explicitly links the feeling of rejection from the group with the need to prove oneself and with subsequent alteration in relationships with others:

> 22. Anne and I try to write the best papers so we won't embarrass her, so she'll be proud of us, and that kind of thing. And I don't know if we've succeeded! . . . Sometimes it's tough on you, because she has such high standards.

> Researcher: It sounds like you feel you have to prove yourself.

> A lot! Still! Seven years out. (JrF1)

> 23. When I got here I found out that the majority of junior faculty were strongly opposed to hiring me. . . . I totally freaked out and I was feeling insecure about being here . . . wondering whether I was going to succeed at teaching. . . . I think now things are OK 'cause a couple of things are moving along in first-tier journals . . . I think now those people would say "We'd still rather have hired the person with the name degree, but . . . it's not like we

thought it was going to be and she can't do the job." But I just dwelled on it for months, inside, and it showed up in my relations with people . . . I haven't been able to get beyond it. (JrF9)

Unlike the men, who universally asserted that negative events were behind them, the women we spoke to were more likely to describe the lingering effects of the harm described in their stories. For example, the senior woman whose excerpt appears in the "negative" section in Table 1 said, "These wounds haven't healed." The tenacity of negative effects may be another contrast between framing a negative encounter as part of an (impersonal) game and framing it as a (personal) assertion that one does not belong.

Experiences of being devalued may be common in many professions. There has been insufficient attention paid, however, to the possibility that many women may have to approach their careers and network-building efforts through a different logic than men can employ and that women may begin from a position of insecurity rather than from an assumption of support with regard to essential career resources. Such a logic could easily foster a more hesitant or defensive approach toward relationships and network building. For example, one junior faculty woman who described talking with a woman colleague about how "We're supposed to be networking—and we're not," also noted she didn't even come in to school much, saying "I don't like this place. I'm tired of feeling like a second rate citizen." The "legitimizing" structures noted by Burt (1992) and the "disarming" structures noted by Ibarra (1997) would also be consistent with such an approach. In addition to such structural implications, this logic could affect the content of relationships. As excerpt 14 suggests, the need to use relationships to cope with harm may decrease the extent to which those connections can be devoted to more positive pursuits.

Implications for Theory and Research

The results of this exploratory study and our reflections on its underlying meanings suggest a refocusing of theoretical and research lenses on considering how relationships affect people's careers. Several research pathways are promising. First, and most generally, as researchers we need to better understand the full spectrum of workplace relationships important for careers, and we need to ask how these relationship types may fit together into self-reinforcing ecologies. How can we understand what keeps whole categories of people systematically advantaged or disadvantaged in their careers and daily work lives if we do not comprehend the constellations of relationships that actually impinge on them and the system dynamics that keep these constellations in place?

The present research thus suggests the importance of asking broader questions than "To whom do you go when you want X-, Y-, or Z-type of help or resources?" Not only instrumental work relationships, but also mutual partnerships, need to be examined carefully. Most urgently, we need to look at harmful relationships. Although social scientists have recognized the potent, damaging effects of negative relationships in the home domain (e.g., Gelles, 1985), little is known about the impact of these relationships in the workplace. Especially in the professions, where careers may depend on one's reputation in diffuse peer groups, negative relationships may be harder to circumvent than they are in managerial hierarchies, where an employee may progress through a series of bosses, and where one powerful ally may be able to neutralize an enemy (Gargiulo, 1993).

Second, it is important to recognize that the links between relationships and career success may vary across occupations and to test for interactions among relationships, career logics, and career outcomes. For professionals, relationships are likely crucial in the creation and sustenance of reputation. Kanter (1989) suggested other occupational arenas and career logics that could be explored productively. Our findings suggest the value of exploring both how relationships compose the everyday experience of work and their cumulative impact on long-term career success, as construed within an occupational arena.

Third, future research should address the possible existence of sublogics for different groups within occupations. We saw how men and women may experience the same occupation quite differently if they are swept into separate positions within a complex relational ecology. Not only may subgroups fare differently because they use different tactics for achieving the same strategy (for instance, they may form or use networks differently); but also, subgroups' different relational experiences may lead them to have different understandings, or sublogics, about what success requires, and thus, they may pursue different strategies. Longitudinal methods should be used to investigate how relational experiences affect career logics.

The possibility that there are different career sublogics, such as career as a test and career as a game, also invites further research on how the framing of the career quest affects a person's performance. Research on framing demonstrates the powerful ways that situational definitions affect levels of anxiety

and the associated use of different strategies for approaching tasks (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If approaching a career as a test creates greater anxiety, stress, and restriction of attention (the career is framed more as a threat than as an opportunity), these outcomes could affect individuals' capacities to carry out their tasks well. At a practical level, this formulation suggests that interventions that help reframe the career in performance-enhancing as opposed to performance-damaging ways could help to alleviate some of the difficulties associated with employing different career logics. However, this research also suggests that such interventions would not be sustainable unless the relational context for the career supported the use of the new logic.

Finally, our research suggests it is important to focus on ways relationships are valuable as ends in themselves, as well as instrumental. Collegial relationships help to compose the daily experience of a professional career. Research could address both what creates and what sustains collegial ties at work and how gender and other differences ease or hamper the creation of relationships with this quality.

The study we have reported here suffers from all the limits of any study relying on a small sample and self-reported data. We cannot make claims about the treatment of academics in business schools, only about their perceptions of this treatment. At the same time, we take very seriously the experiences reported by our male and female, junior and senior interviewees. They raise important issues with significant theoretical and practical implications.

Implications for Practice

The study has several general practical implications. The results suggest that, in the short term, it is important to prepare people, perhaps especially women and members of other demographic minorities, to deal with hurtful relationships at work. People treated as outsiders in a relational setting may need help distinguishing empty dismissals of their worth from valid critical feedback. Insiders may need help learning to see and appreciate outsiders' value. Outsiders focused on proving themselves in a test of skill may need concrete encouragement and guidance to expand their repertoires of career strategies as well as practical advice on overcoming bias (Ibarra, 1997) and general personal assistance. Insiders focused on playing the strategic game of reputation may need encouragement for nurturing their passions in their work.

Even more than such remedial measures, the contexts that encourage or discourage inclusiveness and foster mutuality in relationships are important and should be treated as such (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). The impressive success of programs to improve the status of women faculty members at Johns Hopkins Medical School (Valian, 1998) and at MIT (Goldberg, 1999) evidence the role of systemic practices—practices that can be changed—in both causing and solving the dysfunctional dynamics of exclusion in the workplace. As professionals participating in the creation (or destruction) of relational contexts, as administrators, as teachers, and as researchers, we need to ask ourselves how to make contexts more conducive to colleagueship, emotional support, and joint work—to more help and less harm. Such interventions may be consequential for particular individuals on a small scale. On a grand scale, they may also alter the relational foundation of a profession.

CONCLUSION

Existing scholarship has done much to illuminate some of the dimensions of professional relationships: who gets what and for what purposes, what relational networks look like, and what the connections are between what people bring to and extract from their relationships with others. These are important issues, but they do not comprise the whole picture. Through the reasons they gave and the stories they told, the participants in our study made it clear that researchers miss much of the importance of relationships if they construe relationships primarily as resource exchanges. Relationships are important in their own right. They are also complex, potentially including various degrees of joint work and emotional support and of helpfulness and harmfulness. The extent to which each of these qualities is present depends partly on the gender of the relationship partners. Researchers who appreciate this complexity along with the career logics to which it gives rise can increase understanding of how relationships affect professionals' sense of who they are and what they can expect from their social environments at work.

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