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Lean on Me: Leadership Beyond the Patriarchy

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Lean on Me: Leadership Beyond the Patriarchy

By

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A culminating thesis, submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of Humanities

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

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Abstract

Leadership styles have taken various forms throughout humanity's trajectory on earth. Indicative of patriarchal systems, the most prominent styles of leadership that are widely recognized in the public and private sectors routinely favor individuals who portray characteristics of ambition, confidence and assertiveness that at times crosses over into aggression. When one considers which gender fit the stereotype of exhibiting leadership qualities under these assumptions, often hyper-masculine men fit the mold.

In contrast, when women are successful at ascending and working in higher ranking positions, the characteristics that are mapped on to their personas are often associated with collaboration and relationship-building. Scholarship in leadership theory indicates that collaborative and team-building styles of leadership are far more conducive for achieving success in many different endeavors of business and politics. My investigation into this topic critiques the assumptions informed by a patriarchal culture that confuses good leadership with common attributes of hyper-masculinity. I will also discuss how women have most effectively pushed for social change throughout history by supporting each other emotionally and collectively in order to overcome patriarchal systems of domination and oppression. Thus, contrary to leadership theories that purport that women should seek to lead as aggressively as men under a patriarchal setting, this thesis argues that the systems of power that encourage dominance, strict hierarchies and ruthless competition are counterproductive and even damaging to most individuals within traditional organizational structures. Hence, a new vision for positive leadership attributes must be adopted if the goal is to foster and support equitable systems of organization and successful leadership.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“People sometimes say that we will know feminism has done its job when half the CEOs are women. That’s not feminism; to quote Catharine MacKinnon, it’s liberalism applied to women. Feminism will have won not when a few women get an equal piece of the oppression pie, served up in our sisters’ sweat, but when all dominating hierarchies—including economic ones—are dismantled.” – Lierre Keith (McBay & Keith, 2011, p. 72)

Background and Context

My interest in the general topic of women in leadership began prior to 2016 and prior to Hillary Clinton’s ultimate defeat for the prestigious, political position of President of the United States. At the time, I was confident that the United States, my home country, would finally realize the first female president, following on the heels of the first Black president. As I naively concluded, the cultural tide had turned, and there was a widespread awakening occurring among a majority of Americans that would finally acknowledge and celebrate leadership qualities among a diverse demographic beyond white males. Thus, my original intention with this thesis was to document how women bring different and more inclusive qualities when leading in high-ranking political positions.

To my dismay, in the Fall of 2016 the United States would not realize its first female president. In fact, it seemed that feminism had hit a major setback when it came to breaking the glass ceiling. However, to my shock, surprise and complete elation, the President that was elected inadvertently rejuvenated the women’s movement in ways that I could not have foreseen when I first started this graduate program. Given the contemporary movements that have led to a revitalization and reconstruction of feminist values and objectives, I will argue that women ascending to leadership positions in both the business and political fields must focus

their energies on leading differently from the traditional patriarchal model of leadership in order to break the patriarchal system of hierarchy that has kept so many women from achieving success within these organizational structures. In order to do so, women in leadership positions will have to dispense with the traditional, competitive, male-driven models that ultimately keep women in competition and divided from each other and other men. If women are able to break from the old business and social models, then I suggest that women at all levels of organizational structures can benefit from the removal of obstacles and deterrents that have traditionally kept women from sitting equitably with men in positions of power.

As a second part to this thesis, I will argue that, as women need to focus on adopting non-competitive leadership models that are more collaborative with other women and men, men also need to challenge themselves within these structures to let go of the traditional patriarchal models that have kept their gender in power for so long. Although this proposal will be challenging to implement, I will present gender theories that run counter to dominant patriarchal modes of power and control, and suggest that men will need to be partners in this movement toward a more diverse and cooperative leadership model that is a departure from patriarchal structures of domination and competition.

In the final section, I will discuss an interview that I conducted with a Leadership Recruiter at a local Bay Area Human Resources and Leadership Recruitment Firm. The purpose of my interview was to gather insight on traditional hiring practices, as well as industry standards on selecting individuals for leadership positions, especially when it comes to gender dynamics. This interview provided some additional insights for future study that could be considered on this topic, and on leadership theory beyond the gendered lens. Hence, my

conclusion will include an overall humanist approach to leadership, and explain how the traditional “feminine” attributes that are often overlooked or underappreciated for leadership may be exactly the type of leadership qualities that are needed in order to break away from the dominant, patriarchal framework that is widely viewed as the norm.

Defining my Terms

For the purposes of this paper, I will discuss feminist leadership theories in relation to patriarchal structures of power and oppression. In order to define “the patriarchy,” I shall rely on a definition best described by Veronica Beechey in her article titled, “On Patriarchy,” wherein she discusses the patriarchy more generally: “At the most general level patriarchy has been used to refer to male domination and to the power relationships by which men dominate women” (1979, p. 66). In essence, no matter the political or economic structure that is adopted and conformed to by a prevailing culture, the “patriarchy” is the system of cultural norms that keep women siloed by their gender classification in unequal positions of power with men. Beechey further elaborates on the theories presented by Marxist Feminists, which argue that women as laborers are controlled as capital by the patriarchy as a means of production. However, for the purposes of this paper, I shall focus on feminism as it is informed through capitalist and democratic structures, since these structures prevail in the United States and much of the Western world.

In order to be fully cognizant of the changing landscape with regard to gender definitions, I wholeheartedly recognize that currently non-binary genders are becoming more normalized, and different references are being adopted and even created by those who identify

as “trans” or other non-binary gender terms. However, for the purposes of this paper, I shall only focus on gender norms as they relate to genders that fall within the traditional category of “cisgender.” According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, “cisgender” denotes groups of people who conform to the binary genders assigned to them at birth by the prevailing mainstream cultures of the world (Merriam-Webster Inc., 2019). Therefore, as I discuss women in leadership, especially in comparison to men within leadership more broadly, I am drawing on the “cisgender” binary of women and men under the cisgender definition.

Chapter 2: Common Leadership Styles

“Leadership consists of nothing but taking responsibility for everything that goes wrong and giving your subordinates credit for everything that goes well.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower (Eisenhower as quoted in Puryear, 2000, p. 285)

Defining Leadership Styles

According to J. Roland Pennock, who wrote *Democratic Political Theory* (1979), the definition of a leader at a basic level is someone who influences others more than they themselves are influenced (p. 471). There is a wide range of leadership styles on a spectrum that can range from authoritative figures who guide others without too much control, all the way to domineering micromanagers who assert strong control over subordinates under their authority. Hence, some leadership styles thrive via a cooperative approach wherein decision-making is commenced on a more egalitarian basis between the leader(s) and the people who are under the power of the leader(s). Along the spectrum, leadership can range all the way up to a dominating dictator or group that sets the agenda and fiercely controls the actions of the group under their authority.

It's important to note that leadership styles are influenced and dependent upon the social contracts from which the leaders are operating. For instance, in the democratic theory of leadership, the electorate has the power to control who is functioning within leadership positions over the populace via elections. This requires that prospective leaders persuade the voters to vote for them by advertising why they would be ideal candidates for the leadership positions. In the democratic theory, leaders are elected by consensus based on the values, promises, and assurances that they are representing as part of their campaign. Additionally,

they are accountable to their electorate, which provide checks and balances to their powers. In an authoritarian system, the people in leadership positions are beyond reproach by the people in subordination within the system, and authoritarian leaders maintain domination and strict control over the agenda, focus, and execution of the rules and moral codes that are adhered to by the populace.

Beyond the theories of leadership styles, leaders in alleged democratic systems have a certain amount of privilege and advantage that their subordinates do not have. As an example in the private sector, Marissa Orr, who wrote *Lean Out, The Truth About Women, Power and the Workplace* (2019), discusses how CEOs in technological companies have certain checks and balances imposed on their power in the hopes of maintaining some semblance of a democratic structure. However, decisions for the company are rarely made by consensus within the company, and the CEO has near absolute authority over the direction of the company and decisions that are made. As an example, she states,

Despite the progressive ethos of Silicon Valley tech, CEOs have near-absolute power, and not a single company has instituted even the simplest, most basic checks and balances of power. One might argue that this isn't entirely true, since CEOs are accountable to a board of directors or shareholders (if the company is publicly traded). Still, CEOs control all communication to these constituents and can easily design messaging to serve their own interests. (p. 144)

Thus, it seems even democratic models or structures that maintain democratic principles in theory can ultimately support a top-down, hierarchical leadership approach, even if the intention was to provide for a collaborative or cooperative style of management.

Gendered Leadership Trends

Leadership theory scholars Christy Glass and Alison Cook assert that socially, in patriarchal cultures, women are trained as young girls to be more cooperative with an emphasis on relationship-building, as opposed to boys that are trained to be more autonomous, individual-oriented, and competitive (Glass and Cook, 2018, p. 824). As such, when women ascend to leadership positions, they bring this social conditioning with them and are more likely to share leadership roles and decision-making processes cooperatively with others in the company. Moreover, women as CEOs tend to value longer term goals over short-term gains, and their approaches tend to serve stakeholder and employee interests more than their male counterparts. Their argument is that by having more women as leaders, or leaders who bring these qualities to their leadership positions, it diversifies the leadership roles and expectations simply because the approach to leading is different than the norm under a hierarchical system.

However, even with the apparent benefits of having more diversity and women as CEOs, the number of women who achieve these higher-ranking positions remain notably low. Robin J Ely, Herminia Ibarra and Deborah M. Kolb in their article "Taking Gender Into Account: Theory and Design for Women's Leadership Development Programs" (2011), assert that as of 2011, only 2.2% of Fortune 500 companies had female CEOs. As an update to those figures, Crystal Turner-Moffatt in "THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP: Strengthening Women in Leadership Roles" (2019), explains that as of 2019 only 5.2% of Fortune 500 companies have CEOs that are women. Ely, Ibarra and Kolb claim that gender bias is the main culprit as to why women do not ascend to higher ranking positions, regardless of how much companies may commit to

encouraging or promoting gender diversity within their management ranks. Turner-Moffatt propose that women in private-sector companies need better access to mentorship opportunities in order to continue to grow in their careers (2019, pp. 17-18).

In the next chapter, I will explain Sheryl Sandberg's "lean in" theory and counter it with some critiques, including a critique of the patriarchal system of power that not only is counter-productive to women who become leaders, but also harms both men and women who arguably could become better leaders if the organizational structures of power were restructured.

Chapter 3: Women Ascending the Patriarchal Ladder

“One could get the impression that a woman should campaign in a sultry whisper, but of course if she did that she would not project power. But if she did project power she would fail as a woman, since power, in this framework, is a male prerogative, which is to say that the setup was not intended to include women.” – Rebecca Solnit (Solnit as quoted in Harding, 2017, p. 126)

Breaking the Proverbial Glass Ceiling

The prevailing foundations for both the private sector and public sector models of organizations are based chiefly on hierarchy and competition. Given that the structures were created to serve a capitalistic mode of operation, Marxist Feminists such as Veronica Beechey argue that these systems were not created for the purposes of allowing women to succeed as equal players with men, but were meant to control the means of labor and production, which has an oppressive effect on women working within these systems (Beechey, 1979, p. 67). Under Marxist theories, the only way for women to be successful at all is to dismantle the capitalist systems that keep them oppressed and subjugated under the patriarchy.

However, modern feminists such as Sheryl Sandberg promote a different approach that relies on women embracing and adopting leadership principles under a patriarchal order, and in doing so, aggressively outcompeting men and other women for leadership positions. Hence, Sandberg’s book *Lean In Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (2013), encourages women in corporate America to “lean in” to these capitalist structures of labor and production. One of her main points on how to do this is to encourage women to evaluate internal barriers that are placed on women by cultural norms and by themselves, and then work to remove those internal barriers so that they can more efficiently compete with men in the labor and leadership

marketplace. Sandberg makes it very clear that her personality naturally lent itself to adopting this strategy. In her own autobiographical context, she claims that she possessed the qualities of leadership that fit within these patriarchal models of organization to the point that she was labelled “bossy” as a child by other kids (2013, p. 19). Thus, the “lean in” model promotes the idea that prospective leaders need to have qualities that make them more emotionally and mentally assertive, more driven and, some might argue, more stubborn, and less negotiable or willing to compromise with others for achieving their own ends.

In contrast, Marissa Orr’s *Lean Out The Truth About Women, Power and the Workplace* (2019), takes issue with the idea that ideal female leaders must change themselves or even adopt qualities of “bossiness” or domination over others in order to ascend to positions of power. Orr’s main argument is that women already in leadership positions (such as Sheryl Sandberg and others) should not expect women at lower levels to ascend to leadership positions using the “lean in” model, but instead should begin dismantling the systems of power by pushing for collaborative approaches to leadership within these structures. In other words, Sandberg’s approach of pushing for more women in positions of leadership just for the sake of having more women in leadership positions is not effective for addressing some of the larger issues with the system as a whole. As Orr argues, the system is not designed to cater to women’s best leadership qualities and, in fact, this may be the reason why when surveyed, women scored low when asked if they desired to ascend to higher ranking positions. To Orr, this begs the question, why is the system of leadership so unattractive to so many potential women leaders? (pp. 25-26).

As Orr explains in her book, the hierarchical system that is based on strict competition and a “zero/sum” game caters to a certain type of dominant personality—such as Sandberg’s more aggressive form of leadership. Even if Sandberg’s wish could come true and more women could remove their alleged internal barriers and ascend to leadership positions, this would not mean the satisfactory end to the distinct disparities of power. In essence, as Orr is arguing, it is the patriarchal hierarchal system of power that is problematic, and not women’s internal barriers and assumed gender roles (Orr, p. 26).

Furthermore, Orr argues that when both men and women were surveyed regarding whether or not they would be desirous of a CEO position, 36% of the men as well as 18% of women responded that they were hopeful for a C-level position (Orr, p. 26). In other words, a majority of both men and women surveyed were not aspiring to ascend to higher-ranking positions, such as CEO. Work/life balance was named as one of the main reasons for the lack of interest in achieving a higher-ranking position, but it’s important to note that both men and women equally shared this concern at 42% of the responses (Orr, p. 25). Thus, Orr argues it is not the women who need to overcome their imposed socialization and internal barriers, but instead the system that rewards “bossiness,” aggressiveness or domination over subordinates.

It's worth noting that both Orr and a few other Sandberg critics call attention to the fact that a range of men also do not benefit from the patriarchal system that rewards aggressive leadership personality traits. Rosa Brooks who wrote “Recline, don’t ‘Lean In’ (Why I hate Sheryl Sandberg)” (2014) discusses how she attempted to “lean in” at her job and parenting via Sandberg’s career advice, and found herself facing burn-out. She also observed that men who attempted to “lean in” to too much commitment at work or at home were equally unhappy.

The “lean in” philosophy encourages people to push beyond reasonable limits and makes almost no mention of the need for self-care and rest. As she points out, “If we truly want gender equality, we need to challenge the assumption that more is always better, and the assumption that men don’t suffer as much as women when they’re exhausted and have no time for family or fun” (Brooks, 2014). In other words, although the “lean in” concept is meant to encourage women to push themselves forward in the labor force, it doesn’t work well for either men or women more collectively.

As Orr points out, even when more women are desirous of ascending to positions of leadership, chances are that many will still be shut out at large numbers from achieving higher positions within the patriarchal set up. As an example, Hillary Clinton who ran against Donald Trump in the 2016 election was clearly, far and away, much more qualified than her Republican opponent. I would argue that Hillary Clinton did everything possible to “lean-in” to the challenge, although criticism of her campaign strategies have been widely acknowledged and/or debated by political pundits. Nevertheless, her opponent ran on a platform of open misogyny, racism, and xenophobia, hardly the qualities of a trust-worthy leader. Yet he was able to win with enough electoral votes despite the fact that he was wholly unqualified for the position, among his many shortcomings as a potential leader. So, if Hillary Clinton was “leaning in” and her efforts were not enough to win the presidency, what happened? As Rebecca Traister’s *Good and Mad the Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger* (2018) suggests, it’s due to the fact that the system was not designed for Hillary Clinton, or any woman, to win:

The vitriolic hatred for Clinton was sometimes only slightly less muted on the left, in part because of the sticky truth of her position: she did have power, she was one of the

exceptional women to have risen within a white patriarchal capitalist system that hadn't been built for her, and she'd risen in part by participating in it. (p. 17)

Thus, as Orr suggests, it's not that women need to change their behavior in order to ascend to positions of leadership, it's the system that needs to change so that power is not so concentrated by a few aggressive people in leadership positions, but more broadly amongst organizations (Orr, p. 95).

Intersectionality and Feminist Principles

In addition to the problems that arise when women feel compelled to aggressively ascend the patriarchal ladders of power by "leaning in," it's important to consider which women are being oppressed or held back from leadership positions while their colleagues get ahead. Often other voices that come from marginalized subgroups of society are no less champions of feminist causes, but are routinely left out of the narrative when feminist causes are being championed. As Collier Meyerson wrote in her essay: "Pulling the Wool over their Eyes; The Blindness of White Feminists" (Harding, 2017), which was included in the collection of essays featured in the book *Nasty Women, Feminism, Resistance, and Revolution in Trump's America* (Harding, 2017), white feminists, believing themselves to be benevolent, are often behind the claims that women should modify their behavior in order to succeed in a patriarchal structure. However, these arguments seem to forget the positionality and societal constraints of feminists of color. Meyerson claims, "It's [white] feminism like this that ignores issues for women at the margins, women who have already been, as my friend and writer Doreen St. Felix said in an Instagram post, 'marching every day'" (Harding, p. 118). Moreover, women of color

are often not privileged enough to take on more aggressive approaches to leadership without being labelled by white feminists and men as irate, unjustified, or out-of-control.

Kimberly Seals Allers details this paradox in her Huffington Post article, “Black Women Have Never Had The Privilege Of Rage” (2018), as she states:

Being labeled as angry and harsh ensures black women aren’t seen as real human beings with a full suite of emotions, including fear, fragility and vulnerability. When the media, pop culture and society have already framed you as angry, you live every moment trying to disprove a lie. And because we know you think we are angry, we diminish ourselves to appear happy, passive or docile. (2018)

Similarly, other feminists criticize Sheryl Sandberg’s “lean-in” advice and point to the fact that “leaning in” bolsters the patriarchal systems that keep people of color marginalized in the first place. As a prominent feminist of color, bell hooks comments on the Feminist Wire, “Sandberg uses feminist rhetoric as a front to cover her commitment to western cultural imperialism, to white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (Uyehara, 2018). Hence, Sandberg’s “leaning in” strategy might work well for women who are white, but not so well for women of color.

This leads me to question, when Sandberg and other feminist scholars are touting the benefits of “leaning in” to patriarchal structures of power, are they considering women of color who are forced to live by a separate set of rules? It seems clear that white feminists who encourage women’s efforts to ascend to positions of power in the patriarchal system are only supportive of feminism when it applies to a certain subset of feminists. However, they are either not cognizant or are apathetic to the fact that feminism is bolstered not just by white feminists, but also by feminists of every race, religion, and culture. Thus, aggressive leadership skills as the path forward to equality is not conducive to attracting as many women as Sandberg

and others think it could. Either that or Sandberg's argument can only attract certain feminists from certain backgrounds and demographics, but dismisses whole segments of feminist groups that are not as privileged in their cultural statuses or identities to display the same aggressive features without suffering harsher consequences for their efforts. Hence, the "leaning in" concept seems to be based on a double standard that "leaning in" is appropriate for white women, but not necessarily useful or appropriate for women of color.

Chapter 4: Women's Rage, #MeToo and Leading with Feeling

"It is time we trash the idea that empathy = leadership weakness. When people hurt, we should hurt too. That's what good leaders do. It adds urgency & humanity to our decision making. Suppressing emotion can lead to aggression, impulsivity, & other erosions of leadership ability."
–Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (2019)

Emotional Strengths

Another way in which women are typically penalized or considered unfit for leadership positions, especially as evidenced as women run for high-profile public positions, is the stereotype that women are too emotional for positions of power. I will begin by examining anger as it is interpreted in political elections when women candidates in particular are perceived to display emotion. I will then move on to discuss how women within collective groups have relied on other unifying emotions to rally around a shared cause. To name a few, grief, betrayal, hope, and solidarity are other emotional glues that have inspired women to rally around a cultural or political issue in order to promote feminist causes. When these unifying emotions are called out by those in opposition to feminist messages, the emotional glues that are the strengths of these movements are often characterized as weaknesses in women more broadly. These perceived emotional weaknesses have been cited as reasons why there is a cultural distrust or prejudice against women seeking to ascend to positions of leadership. However, the range of emotions that galvanize women-led movements are often the most productive in leading to long-lasting change and cultural shifts in consciousness. I will discuss how crafting and the art of creative political resistance has been another outlet where women have been able to channel their emotional energies toward a movement, as well as the pain and disillusionment that was brought to the public spotlight through the #MeToo movement.

All of these different movements included strong emotional bonds that the women who participated within them could share and empathize with each other.

Rebecca Traister's main thesis in her book *Good and Mad the Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* (2018), regards anger as the fuel that drives social justice movements forward and compels women and men to organize and rebel against injustices (xxiii). To her point, Traister contrasts Martha Nussbaum's thesis in her book *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, generosity, justice* (2016) wherein Nussbaum asserts that anger is inherently vengeful and counterproductive when used in both personal relationships and in political movements. Traister counters this notion and describes how women's anger is rarely recognized or celebrated as the catalyst for social change. Traister notes:

Anger has often been the sparking impetus for long-lasting, legal, or institutional reform in the United States. It is, in fact, the founding, canonical narrative of the nation's revolutionary rupture from England. Yet somehow the rage has rarely been acknowledged as righteous and patriotic when it has originated from women, though women have often taken pains to mimic or reference the language and sentiments of America's founding while making their own angry demands for liberty, independence, and equality. (Traister, 2018, xx-xi)

As a recent example of how anger has shaped a modern women's movement, after the election of Donald Trump in 2016, women throughout the United States mobilized in a widespread Women's March, and sister Women's Marches that took place all over the United States the day after the inauguration on January 21, 2017. Leading up to the marches, women and supportive men led organizational efforts that included crafting do-it-yourself signage that protested the election of the new president, as well as the now famous, pink, knitted (or crocheted) "Pussy Hats." Shirley Wajda, a curator at Michigan State University Museum who was collecting symbols and other iconic materials following the Women's March of 2017,

described the pink Pussy Hat symbol “as a form of political craftivism, and there are historical precedents for this sort of voluntary production for patriotic purposes, dating back to the Revolution” (Wadja, as cited in Walker, 2017). She goes on to discuss how the American colonists during the Revolutionary War crafted homespun cloth to replace the British textiles as a symbol of protest against the British Empire.

The Pussyhat Project among many other symbols in the Women’s March were evidence that when women collectively channeled their anger and fear about a perceived and imminent threat to women’s freedom and liberties more broadly, it was manifested through the shared and collective experience of crafting with productive and iconic results. Thus, as Traister argues, anger is not only useful for sparking movements against oppressors, but in this and many other cases, collective anger is the prerequisite for those who feel oppressed to tap into a creative outlet that signals dissension and discord. The Pussyhat Project also bonded women around a shared cause, wherein women used crafting activism to share knitting and crocheting patterns, create knitting circles and share Pussy Hats with others in a show of solidarity and support for the cause.

In addition to anger, pain, fear and disillusionment are emotions that have played a part in driving women’s movements and been used as catalysts for sparking social change. On October 16, 2017, Alyssa Milano, a women’s rights activist and Hollywood actor, tweeted #MeToo, encouraging women and men to share their stories of sexual harassment and abuse in order to find solidarity with each other (Komonibo, 2019). The #MeToo hashtag had already been in circulation prior to this, created in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a black activist who founded a non-profit to help sexual abuse survivors. With the #MeToo, Burke hoped to offer a safe space

for black women and other sexual abuse victims to express their pain publicly, and also to provide an outlet for support and understanding for the victims. Beyond a search for healing, the #MeToo movement became a powerful rallying cry to expose perpetrators of sexual abuse and bring them to justice. As Traister notes, Catherine MacKinnon summed it up when she said that the #MeToo movement went further than addressing existing sexual harassment laws by legitimizing victim's stories and allowing a mass of victims and survivors to feel solidarity in calling out their abusers (Traister, 2018, p. 214). Moreover, even if the abusers could or would not be brought to justice via the legal system, they were finally being held accountable in the court of public opinion. Traister notes that public figures like Woody Harrelson called it a "witch hunt"; however, in reality, people of power had rarely if ever been brought to justice for any sexual abuse allegations (Traister, 2018, p. 192).

This point was also mentioned by Chanel Miller in her powerful impact statement that she read during the sentencing of Brock Turner, who had been discovered sexually assaulting her while she was unconscious on the Stanford campus in January 2015. As she eloquently stated, "The consequences of sexual assault needs to be severe enough that people feel enough fear to exercise good judgment even if they are drunk, severe enough to be preventative" (Miller, 2019, p. 355). Her impact statement was picked up as a BuzzFeed article in 2016, quickly went viral, and was read in the House of Congress during that same year (Miller, 2019, p. 248). Later, the Stanford University Administrators hoped to dedicate a plaque in Miller's honor on campus at the location where she was found during the sexual assault. However, there was a disagreement between Miller and the Stanford administrator about a quote to be used on the plaque. The Administrators wanted the quote to be uplifting and

include a positive message to inspire others to believe rape and sexual assault survivors would be okay. Miller rejected this offer saying that her pain was still very real, and to choose a quote that would diminish her pain would be disingenuous to the cause.

Moreover, she reflected that her original statement was full of emotion, and likely the reason why it became so provocative and effective for pushing the cause forward. As she asserted, “But when I wrote the ugly and painful parts into a statement, an incredible thing happened. The world did not plug its ears, it opened itself to me” (Miller, 2019, p. 311). In essence, Miller’s Impact Statement became a powerful iconic message because, not in spite of, the emotion that it conveyed. The pain resonated with so many people that it went viral, and her written statement became a powerful precursor to the viral #MeToo movement.

It’s also worth pointing out that emotion coming from men is not characterized as a weakness in the same way that it is attributed to women. Miller points to the Supreme Court nomination hearing wherein Brett Kavanaugh was called to testify on attempted rape allegations brought prior to his confirmation for the Supreme Court of the United States (Miller, 2019, p. 326). His accuser, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, testified in front of the Senate Judiciary committee on September 27, 2018, wherein she showed careful restraint in her emotions as she recalled the traumatic events that had occurred years ago when she says Brett Kavanaugh and his friend had attempted to rape her (Ford, as cited in Edwards, 2018). Kavanaugh was also called to testify, and his testimony was remarkable in that he showed very little restraint in his range of emotions, which included outrage, anger, distress, grief, defiance, loathing, and obstinance as he was being questioned on the sexual assault allegations. Nevertheless, his extremely emotional testimony was not enough to disqualify him from being confirmed to the

United States Supreme Court, by both men and women Senators alike. Thus, when emotions were being clearly displayed by a male candidate nominated for a high-ranking position on the United States Supreme Court, the Senators perceived Kavanaugh's emotional outbursts as justified and strong in his outrage to the rape allegations, instead of being labelled as overly emotional and therefore unfit for the position.

As clichéd as it seems, herein lies a double standard: when women galvanize together using emotion, be it anger or shared pain at injustices, women are seen as being overly emotional. But, by classifying women as being overly emotional, it becomes apparent that oppressors or those opposed to these movements have the power to rob women's movements of their fuel that were not only the impetus to get the movement underway, but also the fuel to keep it going for creating lasting change. In addition to anger fueling these movements, it cannot be overstated how much compassion and collaboration are powerful tools that also drive these movements, which ultimately lead both women and men to break from the strict patriarchal structures of domination, power, and control.

Distribution of the Powers of Leadership

Another notable characteristic that has defined women's causes, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, is the fact that these movements tend to be led, not by one woman in particular, but by at least two or three prominent activists. A prominent, defining feature of the Black Lives Matter movement is that it was started by three women in particular, all of whom did not want to receive overwhelming credit or publicity for their contributions (Christopher, 2019). Unlike other social justice movements in which one person becomes the face of the

movement (e.g. Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Che Guevara), some of the most prominent women's movements have not been led by one woman or person in particular, but by a team of women, or at least by more than one woman. Of course it can be argued that certain notable women became the face of the Women's Suffrage movement, such as Susan B. Anthony and Sojourner Truth; however, it wasn't until the late 19-teens when American Suffragettes were able to successfully lobby Congress to pass the 19th Amendment. The group of Suffragettes who were instrumental in this cause were led mostly by a group of women, notably Alice Paul and Lucy Burns (Mayo as cited in Stevens, 1995, pp. 16-34). However, even in their struggle, the movement was never about them as charismatic figures to be worshipped, but about the cause for women's suffrage. This phenomenon has also been evident with the Women's March that took place in 2017, which was organized by a group of women of differing backgrounds, races, and religious persuasions.

The fact that these movements are not being led by one specific, prominent leader, but by a team of women working together to further a cause, indicates that when women organize effectively, there generally isn't one matriarchal leader at the top of the power structure of the organization. In fact, the group is much more effective and less vulnerable to attacks when the leadership duties are distributed amongst a group of people behind the cause.

The other important point when it comes to having more than one leader acting behind the scenes to further a righteous cause, is that people within organizations can more easily move past the idea that an effective leader needs to bring charisma or a strong/dominant personality to their leadership role in order to push a movement forward. I am not arguing that women behind all the movements that I have mentioned above are absolutely lacking in any

charismatic, dominant, or narcissistic characteristics. However, as Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic claims in his article “Why do so many incompetent men become leaders? And what can we do about it?” (2020), when selecting leaders, people of all genders and demographics generally tend to select personality types based on cultural biases and judgments that are not necessarily conducive to effective leadership. For example, the idea that charismatic leaders are more desirable often leads to selecting leaders (male or female) who are potentially narcissistic and overconfident about their abilities. As he states in his TedTalk:

There is a pathological mismatch between the attributes that seduce us in a leader and those that are needed to be an effective leader. If we want to improve the performance of our leaders, we should focus on the right traits. Instead of falling for people who are confident, narcissistic and charismatic, we should promote people because of competence, humility and integrity. Incidentally, this would also lead to a higher proportion of female than male leaders—large-scale scientific studies show that women score higher than men on measures of competence, humility and integrity. But the point is that we would significantly improve the quality of our leaders. (Chamorro-Premuzic 2020)

Chamorro-Premuzic’s solution to this conundrum is for us to re-train ourselves to seek out candidates for leadership positions that do not have the traditional qualities that we tend to think of when we envision an ideal leader. In other words, some of the qualities that might be more desirable for effective leadership could come across as self-deprecating, too humble, or just downright boring. However, these types of leadership qualities can be more effective because people who bring these qualities to their leadership roles are more likely to be concerned with the best interests of the group, accept criticism when they are overreaching, and assume responsibility when they’ve made mistakes. All of these qualities exhibit far more integrity than a leader who is overconfident, self-serving, and grandiose in their ideas.

Additionally, less charismatic leaders are more suitable for leadership positions because they

bring a different set of priorities and are more likely to be responsive to the pragmatic needs of the group that they're leading. Again, keeping leaders in check no matter their personality traits can be most effective if the powers of the leadership are distributed between more than one leader. Multiple leaders who have certain additional responsibilities in leading the group, but are also kept in check from asserting ultimate control over the group are the most effective in this leadership model.

Chapter 5: Guys, it's you not us.

"I don't want men to be allies. I want you to be traitors. I want you to be traitors to the system that violently holds you up at the expense of women. I want you to betray the silent pact that patriarchy makes with you to have your back so long as you don't make waves. Revolt." – Sidrah Ahmad (2018)

Leadership Styles Amongst Our Closest Relatives

When I first introduced the topic of women in leadership to my fellow graduate candidates, a man in my class asked me, "Will your thesis include information on what men can do to help women in leadership?" I was taken aback by the question, and didn't know how to respond at first. I gave an offhand answer of, "No, I was going to focus on scholarly research on women's leadership." But, the more I considered his question and the more I researched this topic, it became abundantly clear that men comprise the other half of the equation when considering the gender binary system that a patriarchal culture has used to define gender roles, and more specifically, acceptable behavior for leaders. Thus, this section has been added to offer a more complete picture, in recognition that while women tend to be better leaders when they approach leadership differently from the traditional male-model of leadership, men certainly need to have a new narrative or understanding of their roles and contribution within these patriarchal organizations.

As a means to envision alternate ways of organizational systems and leadership, Marissa Orr introduces organizational structures of a specific primate species. Her analysis includes research and scientific observations of some of our closest primate relatives. As she notes, previous researchers had pointed to Chimpanzees when looking at human ancestors, and noted that Chimpanzees organize themselves in a sort of patriarchal order where an alpha-male

dominates a group of chimps, including the females and weaker males, and the chimps tend to be more aggressively inclined towards other primates and other groups of chimps. Orr discusses how researchers had pointed to this organizational set-up as being natural to humans because our genetic relatives had established this as the framework long before *homo sapiens* came into existence (Orr, 2019, pp. 61-62).

However, Orr also calls attention to the 1990s primatologist, Amy Parish who established a competing philosophy when she studied another set of primates, also closely related to humans, known as the bonobos. In the world of the bonobos located in the Congo, generally the females form very strong social bonds and collectively make the decisions for the group. Most notably, males are included as part of the group; however, they do not attempt to control the decision-making or overrun the females in their positions of authority (Orr, 2019, p. 62). Some researchers have alleged that this is because bonobos, unlike chimpanzees, are not as food insecure given that their habitat ranges do not overlap with gorillas. This hypothesis has not been well-studied since bonobos live in areas of the Congo that are harder for humans to access, and bonobos by nature are elusive and wary of humans observing them (Roach, 2011, pp. 52-55). The most startling and interesting difference that Orr points out is that since competition and conflict are not the main attributes of bonobos as observed, it seems bonobos are well-known for their sexual drives and compassionate acts toward each other. This leads me to believe that an organization can either be motivated by making love *or* war, as it were, but the main focus of the collective has to choose between those two modus operandi.

As also noted by Orr, primatologists have found that even when bonobos occasionally become adversarial toward other groups of primates and/or bonobos, the females are less

likely to initiate or be involved in the aggressive actions (Orr, 2019, p. 63). As such, even under female leadership, the bonobo males are more likely to be the aggressors in a conflict.

However, primatologists have also noted that bonobo males that lose a fight are often consoled by female bonobos in the group via sexual or non-sexual acts. This severely reduces stress behaviors commonly seen in bonobo males after losing a power struggle (Clay, 2014, pp. 314-318). The fact the females would engage in sexual activity not tied to reproductive actions (i.e. copulation) seems very telling as to the motivations of the bonobos. Bonobos collectively seem very concerned with relationship-building or maintaining good rapport amongst the males and females of the group. Moreover, since the sexual acts are not tied to procreative processes, it seems that their actions are intended as acts of compassion, soothing, or recreation as noted by researchers (Clay, 2014, p. 314).

Whatever the true intentions of the bonobos are, it seems clear that the males in the bonobo setup have thrived or at least remained content for a couple of reasons, including: first, they do not dominate over the very closely bonded female groups (to the point that the females engage in homosexual acts with each other very frequently), but instead serve as protectors of the group against potential threats. Second, the males are able to engage in acts of sexual fulfillment that do not always involve copulation or reproduction of bonobo offspring. Orr describes them as such: “While male-dominated chimp societies are characterized by aggression and physical force, female-dominant bonobo societies are better described as a commune of horny hippies” (p. 63).

Bringing this back to humans, Christina Page in *How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America; Freedom, Politics and the War on Sex* (2006) touches on the need for humans to

engage in recreational sex when she discusses how contraception, but more specifically the birth control pill, revolutionized the United States as people were able to take control of family planning and decide if and when to procreate. Family planning as a result of contraception allowed both men and women to feel sexually fulfilled while limiting the number of children that couples would bring to this world. Hence, the more that people have the option to engage in recreational sex while not running the risk of over-populating their families, the more that both males and females can potentially thrive and feel fulfilled without having an emphasis on competition and control over individuals in the group (Page, 2006, p. 35).

As such, it seems apparent that when birth control or family planning has been framed as a “woman’s issue” or chiefly addressed in Western Medicine as a means of regulating a woman’s body in order to prevent pregnancy, a subtle but important underlying message is not being widely acknowledged. Specifically, how much has the invention of birth control impacted and even enriched men’s lives as they have not been forced into parenthood as a consequence of engaging in recreational sex. As mentioned earlier, the research showed that male bonobos who were consoled by the bonobo females with “make-up sex” after they had lost a battle were far less likely to show behavioral signs of distress (Clay, 2014, pp. 328-329). Thus, it seems that men in particular must widely acknowledge that the need for sex is healthy and natural, but this need should not be linked with domination or control over women’s bodies, or even procreation for that matter. This should also spur men into action if policymakers and/or leaders are seeking to curtail reproductive rights, as this won’t just affect women and their sexual health, but most certainly, it will affect men too.

Relating this back to Orr's assertions, the lessons that we can learn from the bonobo species includes three important points with regards to leadership and alternate organizational structures. First, it is not preordained by humanity's biological makeup that humans must exist within a patriarchal order, or something similarly hierarchical. Second, if we are to follow the bonobos as an example, then sexual freedoms must be consciously considered paramount and crucial to both men and women's wellbeing and happiness living within an egalitarian society. Finally, males among the bonobos maintain the protector status within their community of bonobos, but that sense of chivalry is not automatically tied to domination over the group. In other words, there are alternate, potentially healthier ways for men to behave and move through a culture that do not include the machismo attitudes commonly perpetuated by a patriarchal framework.

Toxic Masculinity and the Quest for a Healthy Replacement

Grayson Perry's *The Descent of Man* (2017) discusses how toxic masculinity and gendered lenses surrounding toxic masculinity are ingrained in men's lives from a very early age through adulthood. He wrote his book from the perspective of a transvestite in the United Kingdom, who was identified as male at a very young age, but who also enjoyed cross-dressing in women's clothing. He argues that masculinity as it is taught to boys is framed as natural, which does not allow men to question the strict rules of masculinity that boys learn from a young age. Consequently, most men don't realize how much they are performing their assigned gender roles in their day-to-day activities, and they consider their behavior as natural, even though it is mostly based on a learned social construct. Moreover, toxic masculinity suppresses

men's full humanity and leads to psychological and emotional problems that are vastly unhealthy for men. As Perry eloquently states:

Boys grow up steeped in a culture that says that their feelings are somehow different from girls'. Boys have fewer feelings and theirs are simpler than girls'; boys are more robust, they don't care about things as much. But this downplaying of their emotional complexity is, I think, the aspect of masculinity that we most urgently need to change. Men need to transform their relationship with violence, performance and power. That change must begin with their emotions, by allowing boys and men more emotional space. A positive change in masculinity would be a massive positive change for the world. Emotional illiteracy is difficult for boys to deal with, yet they are brought up to accept this as readily as their beards growing and voices breaking. (p. 109)

Perry also argues that men are far more likely to commit suicide due to the fact that masculinity, as it has been defined within these cultural "macho" principles, does not offer men a means to adequately cope with stressors in a constructive way. In addition, men are not encouraged to critique this version of masculinity openly, and men within this culture act as regulators over each other whenever one of them should question masculinity as it has been defined under a patriarchal setup.

For example, in Perry's particular case, he cannot understand why men's fashion, or power outfits, are so narrowly defined by a few colors in the color spectrum. He talks about the gray, dark blue, or black suit as the only colors that represent power or authority in the corporate world. In his own case, he feels very comfortable wearing women's clothes, which often range in colors and styles and allow him to feel free to dress as his true self. He questions, what does the severe lack of latitude in men's fashion say about how much men are constrained to perform their gender roles as cool, impassive, strong, idyllic men who blend in with each other and with the patriarchal forces at play. It speaks to the idea that men are unconsciously performing and engaging in the male gaze, and thus their attire is not meant to

be gazed upon or remarkable by others. As he mentions, “The business suit is the uniform of those who do the looking, the appraising. It rebuffs comment by its sheer ubiquity” (Perry, 2017, p. 50).

In addition to fashion, he argues that men are taught to publicly display few feelings beyond anger, and thus any other displays of feeling could be considered signs of weakness. His thoughts on this are consistent with Rebecca Traister’s argument that public displays of anger coming from women are often used as evidence that women are too emotional, which disqualifies them from consideration for leadership positions (Traister, 2018, p. xxii). Perry is arguing that men as human beings have a full range of emotions as well; however, they are taught to suppress all of them, with the exception of anger and rage in public. As in the Kavanaugh case that I mentioned earlier, other feelings might be acceptable for display if they are bolstered or supportive of the indignant anger that is on display at the forefront. The problem with this logic as Perry points out is that men are not given the proper tools to cope with other emotions, and are thus denied the full range of a healthy masculine potential as well as their humanity. In other words, a healthier version of a masculine identity has been stifled and strictly defined by a toxic version of masculinity that is accepted as the norm under a patriarchal social order.

In drawing comparisons between feminism and toxic masculinity, as if opposing forces, Perry makes the argument that feminism is very forward-looking, whereas toxic masculinity is nostalgic for a pastime that defined masculinity based on strength, violence and brute force. On the one hand, “Feminism has always been forward-looking... Women seem to embrace change, not just in society, but in themselves” (Perry, 2017, p. 90). On the other hand:

Men, though always seem to be harking back to some mythical golden age (for men) when men were “men.” A time of hunting (dangerous, hungry), a time of war (dangerous, hungry), a time of heavy industry (dangerous, hungry, boring), times when all the vintage man equipment—anger, violence, physical strength—could be put through its paces. A time also when men dominated women. (pp. 90-91)

Thus, he argues that men need to be extremely critical wherever they see propaganda, messaging, or advertising that glorifies this mythical standard for men. As he goes on to argue, it is healthy for men to grow and change within their gender roles (as the feminists are striving for) and not stay siloed within gender constraints that define masculinity so narrowly. Without consciously realizing it, by supporting masculinity within such a narrow definition, men not only do harm to others (such as women who are held back), but also to themselves as they are not able to adapt to a changing world that is no longer in need of the “macho,” brave knight type of men to conquer enemies or slay dragons.

Not only do men inaccurately see themselves within a patriarchal structure, but they also misinterpret or narrowly define women’s gender roles to women’s detriment. Val Plumwood in her book, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993), discusses how women’s gender roles as defined by the patriarchy have vacillated between wild and therefore connected to nature, which required rational men to control them, to being more chaste and domestic, while men were more wild and forceful and unable to control themselves. Both gender roles as assigned to women are used to reinforce male dominance over women (Plumwood, 1993, p. 20).

Plumwood’s point is especially poignant when one thinks of the Brock Turner case (which I discussed earlier from Chanel Miller’s perspective), wherein his defense attorney attempted to justify his actions by saying that he was intoxicated and could not help himself

given the fact that his victim was wearing a short dress and intoxicated to the point of being unconscious. The framing of the crime as somehow her fault since he could not help but sexually assault her is a clear example of the gender roles as being defined by the patriarchy. Miller discusses how the defense framed their questions so as to suggest that she should have known that in a vulnerable situation like this, she was setting herself up to be raped by a man who could not control himself given his wild nature and his level of intoxication (Miller, 2019, 340-344). Brock Turner himself would not admit to the crime of raping her, but only admitted to drinking to excess, which seemed to imply that the alcohol dulled his sensibilities to the point of releasing his inner, wild self that could not help but prey upon a helpless, unconscious woman at a Stanford fraternity party.

On the flipside, as Rebecca Traister argues, the American Suffragettes and other women's rights advocates were seen as irrational, wild and angry, and thus needing to be subdued by the rational men who were presumably more level-headed (Traister, 2018, xx). Perry takes issue with the patriarchal cultural presumptions that emotions aren't part of the equation for either gender. As he claims, "The conflation of the description 'emotional' with 'tearful' needs to be knocked on the head. Every moment of everyday is emotional for everyone; we can't turn our feelings off" (2017, pp. 26-27). Needless to say, both versions of women's gender roles under the patriarchy are limiting and distorted and do not serve women's movements that strive to establish a more egalitarian society. However, as Perry argues, men's gendered roles also cloud men's perceptions of how women experience the world under the patriarchy, which unfortunately informs men's perceptions of feminist movements to the point that women's movements seem threatening to men's power. Thus,

men fail to see how both gender role assignments are oppressive and sadly limiting under the same patriarchal set-up.

In addition to the blind spots that this gives men with regards to the purposes and reasons behind women's movements, men also seem blissfully unaware of the opportunities that they enjoy that are not so readily available to women. Women's arguments that the patriarchy holds them back from achieving their full potential, especially when it comes to leadership, may be justified, although most men at large are unaware of how pervasive these cultural obstacles are for women. On this point, Perry spoke with men in high-ranking positions about their successes within their respective businesses to find out more about how they attributed their ascension up the ranks. As he states:

I talked to several very successful men who worked in the financial sector, and time and again they would describe themselves as mavericks, individuals who stand out against the herd. They are very aware of the boundaries they break because they are carefree spirits, but they are blissfully unaware of the boundaries that hold everyone else back. (p. 16)

Thus, this blissful unawareness only supports the patriarchal order, and also supports the gender biases that keep women and women's movements from appreciating more support from men more broadly. Sheryl Sandberg also speaks to this double standard in hiring practices in *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, as she states, "A 2011 McKinsey report noted that men are promoted based on potential, while women are promoted based on past accomplishments" (2013, p. 8). Men might think that they are promoted based on their own efforts and skills, but both Perry and Sandberg are speaking to the fact that men do not widely recognize how much their gender, and assigned gender roles within a patriarchal framework are giving them an unfair advantage when it comes to promotional opportunities. At the very

least, it seems that a sincere acknowledgement by men on this point is very much needed if men are going to challenge the toxic masculinity that not only holds them back from expressing themselves emotionally, but at times allows men to ascend to leadership positions over better qualified women. As Perry questions, “One can’t help wondering, for every woman denied power in whatever context because of sexism, is there a man somewhere who has been promoted into incompetence?” (p. 24).

Other evidence corroborates Perry’s point that men are blissfully unaware of the privilege that comes from being born and assigned the male gender at birth. According to a *Time* survey that was conducted in August 2019, when both men and women were polled in the United States, only 62% of men agreed that women on average were paid less than men, compared to 86% of women who were polled (Barone, 2019). The *Time* article also noted that although women may have admitted to being less confident in asking for raises or pointing out the disparity in pay between them and their male counterparts, there seemed to be justifiable fear of retaliation for doing so. Erica Kaczmarowski, an accountant at a law firm in Buffalo, N.Y., explains why women are generally timid in asking for raises or promotions: “Some women may feel they might get fired or not get raises, depending on who their boss is. There’s a risk in bringing it up” (Barone, 2019). If only 62% of men agreed that women on average were being paid less than men, then it’s hardly surprising that women would feel intimidated asking for salary increases or promotions, since it’s probable that their male bosses might not be among the meager 38% of men who do believe that the pay disparity is a problem for women. In other words, the *Time* article made it clear that the odds are not on a woman’s side for seeking the promotion or raise.

A complete and well-rounded critique of toxic masculinity must include an offering of a better, healthier version for masculinity that would not be at the expense of other genders or groups. This alternate version is something that is hard to achieve and may not be as straightforward as one would hope. Nevertheless, given the bonobos example that Orr mentions in her book, it seems plausible that a more gender equitable system could be possible for humans as well. As much as the Women's Movement has become more vocal in recent years following the election of Donald Trump, more subtly and quietly there is another movement (that perhaps has yet to be named), which is also beginning to take shape, although it is not quite as well-defined or vocal.

As a complement to the Women's Movement, progressive men within patriarchal societies all over the world are questioning their roles and beginning to define new characterizations of masculinity for themselves as these social justice issues are being discussed. As Perry notes, "Progressive men are confused. They want to do the right thing but feel everything they do is tainted by millennia of bad male behavior" (p. 134). Thus, the quest to define a new healthier version of masculinity is not clearly organized or widely understood as of yet, but the potential is there for the dawning of a new masculinity to evolve past the nostalgic "macho man" image. A newer, healthier version of masculinity would be more emotionally and authentically fleshed out and acceptable for men. Perhaps it's even necessary that a more health-conscious form of masculinity will need to be the underlying driver if men are to grow beyond the unhealthy, toxic masculine features that have kept men from realizing their full humanity under the prevailing patriarchal systems. Suffice it to say that the widespread adoption of a healthier version of masculinity would not only benefit men and

women within modern, prevailing social orders, but would also likely complement or support a cultural shift toward more equitable systems of organization.

Intersectionality and Addressing Toxic Masculinity

Even in American Black cultural news and opinions, there is a growing realization that black women and the issues that predominantly affect them are not taken as seriously as their male counterparts when issues of equity and social justice are raised in public platforms.

Damon Young, one of the chief writers for *VerySmartBrothas.com*, a branch of *The Root*, an online publication for black opinions on culture, news, and politics, discusses the disparity in how predominantly black social justice issues are usually defined by issues that affect black men, more so than the issues that are faced by black women (Young, 2017). In Young's opinion, the most hurtful element about this disparity is that black women in some ways are treated to the same dismissal of their realities from both black and white communities. He states:

[Black women] face the same racism [black men] do and the same doubts from whites about whether the racism actually exists that we do, and then they're forced to attempt to convince their brothers and partners and friends and fathers and cousins and lovers of the dangers of existing as black women, and they're met with the same doubts. The same resistance. The same questions. They are not believed in the (predominantly white) world or in their (predominantly black) communities. And we (black men) remain either uninterested in sincerely addressing and destructing this culture of danger and pervasive doubt or refuse to admit it even exists. (Young, 2017)

However, even as Young is calling attention to the fact that women of color face inequities in both White and Black communities, it is worth noting that in more recent times, *The Root* and other similarly liberal publications that serve communities of color have begun to recognize the disparity in how women's issues are addressed by communities of color.

The blogs written by the men on *The Root* are consistently leaning more towards the inclusion of women's stories and realities as part of their regular messaging. As Traister similarly acknowledges, the Black Lives Matter movement was founded by women of color who were outraged and galvanized following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer, George Zimmerman, and also following the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri (Traister, 2018, pp. 8-9). This year alone a group of black mothers in Oakland banded together and squatted in a vacant house in Oakland in order to call attention to the housing crises in California, and the number of vacant homes that are available, yet kept vacant by their owners, while a growing homeless population goes unaddressed and dismissed (Hollyfield, 2020). Again, it is the women who are galvanizing and pushing forward an intersectional agenda, and more and more men of color are taking note of this shift in leadership within social justice movements, as *The Root* publication is indicating.

In addition to *The Root*, on an international scale, the United Nations in 2014 launched a powerful new initiative known as the "HeForShe" movement (UN Women, 2014). Although it is not clear how the United Nations plans to realize this goal, the HeForShe movement is concerned with furthering gender equality throughout the world by asking men in countries throughout the world to take a pledge to further gender equality ideals within their lives. As Elizabeth Nyamayaro mentions in her *TED talk*, over 100,000 men took the pledge within the first three days that HeForShe was activated (Nyamayaro, 2015). She was soon bombarded with email messages from men throughout the world who had begun implementing different initiatives in their lives to further gender equitable values. One such story was from a man who said that prior to learning about HeForShe, he had often heard his neighbor domestically

abusing his wife next door. He had taken the attitude to stay out of their marital issues, but after hearing about HeForShe, he decided not to let the abuse continue without intervention. He confronted his neighbor about the abuse, and to his amazement and delight, the domestic abuse was halted, and he felt so grateful to the HeForShe campaign for emboldening him to take a stand when he had previously felt disempowered to get involved (Nyamayaro, 2015).

Thus, although it is not as visible or obvious as the contemporary Women's Movement as personified by the Women's March in 2017, the Men's Movement in many ways has consisted of a more subtle shift of consciousness and an awakening of other possibilities for operating beyond hierarchies of power and control.

What's Next For Men?

As much as there may be a silent, subtle shift in consciousness occurring for progressive men's groups broadly, there still seems to be a knee-jerk allegiance to the status quo that has kept women from realizing leadership, or for allowing women to be seen as equally qualified for leadership positions as men. Even in my own life, I have felt that I've been the recipient of gender barriers that I did not foresee. During my time as a graduate student at Dominican, I have applied to three different promotional opportunities within my line of work. I have also shown increasing interest in leadership and have assumed informal leadership roles amongst my peers at my workplace. Since 2016, I have long since wished to study and write my thesis on leadership. This point is a testament to the fact that within my professional and personal experiences, I have seen leadership that is ineffective and also leadership that is commendable. By partaking in this study, I wished to learn more about the qualities of great leadership, of

which I still hope to embody and promote as part of my future opportunities for leadership positions.

However, to my frustration and sadness, for all three promotional positions that I've applied for, I have been shut out of the opportunity for similar reasons. Namely, my "lack of formal experience" within leadership positions has been used as a reason, and in a more egregious case, I was asked to send information about my current salary as justification for their decision to offer me a lower-level position. The frustration and despair that this has caused me in my own career and life has made this thesis topic seem all the more prescient and important since I recognize wholeheartedly that I am not alone in this struggle. The more that I read about the disparity in the hiring and leadership selection practices, the more I recognize that the systematic workings that call into question women's abilities for leadership roles are a product of a patriarchal system that keep both men and women from productively leading and changing the political and business landscape to be more equitable for women, men, other genders, communities of color, etc. Thus, I can only hope that men who read this thesis will see it as yet another call to action to evaluate how the patriarchal system not only keeps women from achieving their full potential as prospective leaders, but how the system has also denied men the opportunity to see leadership and all its possibilities from different perspectives.

Like the bonobos, systems of organization do not necessarily need to include domination, competition, or beating others down in order to be successful. Systems based on collaboration and equity as the founding principles tend to prioritize long-term goals as opposed to short-term thinking that puts profits and "winning" over communal justice. But this requires that men openly acknowledge the injustices that have perpetuated with the advent of

the patriarchy. Moreover, men would have to move away from the patriarchal dogmas and understandings that have defined masculinity for many generations. As tough as it may be for men to relinquish power when they have been raised and believed for so long that power (in the form of money, authority, or domination) is the only thing to strive for, men have to re-write that narrative for themselves and envision something different. At a recent leadership event in Singapore, former President Barack Obama alluded to this when he said, “If you look at the world and you look at the problems it’s usually old people, old men, not getting out of the way” (Duster, 2019). For saying that, Obama was heavily criticized, but perhaps there is a kernel of truth in those words.

As uncomfortable as it may seem to men who operate in positions of leadership, sometimes the best thing they can do to assist the women’s movement is to get out of the way, or at the very least, show support by not attempting to dominate the narrative. I fully recognize how these words may not sit well with men, and it seems like I’m asking them to do less rather than more to help. But, the other way to consider this request is in light of the many women who have had to routinely step aside as opportunities were awarded to their male peers. How often have women wanted to contribute their ideas, but have been shut down based on gender stereotypes? How often have promotional opportunities been granted to less qualified men when they were competing with a more qualified woman for the same position?

The counter option to men taking a backseat within these hierarchical systems of power is for men to openly hold other men accountable for the gender inequities, which may seem even more challenging than the former option of men assuming less power and domination by itself. An example of this is Benedict Cumberbatch, the actor who has been open about his

support for feminist issues. He has publicly urged his male colleagues and peers in Hollywood to not accept roles in films where the female actors are paid unequally with their male peers. As he claims, “Look at your quotas. Ask what women are being paid, and say: ‘If she’s not paid the same as the men, I’m not doing it’” (Cumberbatch as quoted in Hess, 2018). Consistent with this sentiment, he has established a production company that prioritizes women’s stories in movies that are written and directed from women’s perspectives. His vocal criticism of other men in his field who continue to work even as their female co-stars are being paid less is the type of support that is more active and challenging than my former suggestion that men step aside in order to allow women more opportunities to lead.

These suggestions among others are all consistent with what Perry argues when he envisions how masculinity may be transformed or redefined in a more equitable society. As he describes towards the end of his book:

The future of masculinity is a plethora of masculinities. The “ideal” future might just be increasing tolerance and celebration of a spectrum of masculinities born out of increasing awareness of what feels good for the individual and for society. Ongoing, pluralistic, messy negotiation may be the best that I can offer you, but it is a damn sight better than the suicidal rigidity of the cliché of masculinity held on to by so many. (p. 135)

Hence, it seems a departure from the patriarchal version of masculinity would not be so narrowly defined with qualities of the machismo, but would offer room and space for experimentation for new ideals that are a far cry from the ever-present, traditional dominant forms of masculinity. Dominant forms of masculinity have controlled humanity’s social orders around the world for some time, but the present and the future seem ripe for a change. If nothing else, perhaps this contemporary call from women and progressive men who are aware

that a shift in systems of power is needed will signal and define the change that must occur, not only for women's sake and wellbeing, but for men's as well.

Chapter 6: Embracing Ideal Leadership Qualities for a Better World

“If we took away the barriers to women’s leadership, we would solve the climate change problem a lot faster.” – Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland (Robinson as quoted in White, 2019)

Prioritizing Quality Leadership

Since the founding of the United States, when the words of the Declaration of Independence preamble stated that “all men are created equal,” there has been a prevailing, misguided sentiment that feminine principles do not thrive in mainstream political or business hierarchical power structures. Later, in the case of women’s suffrage, the former oppositional consensus was that if women were given the right to vote, they would vote along the same party and political lines as the men in their lives, and would thus be no different from the men who already represent them with their votes. How much these earlier sentiments still resonate in the unconscious collective is unclear, but research and evidence suggest a different story when it comes to how feminist principles may not be detrimental, but actually an enhancement to traditional leadership qualities. Contemporarily, it has been noted that perhaps when feminist principles become the cornerstone of the system of values, communities as a whole not only function better, but also live more mindfully on the earth. Although feminism by itself does not provide a clear nexus to better environmental policies and practices, there is good reason to believe that a value system supporting collaboration and compassion for each other (as opposed to competition) could be extended to the environment as a sustaining life force. This movement is known as the eco-feminist movement and is supported by the idea that violent or competitive tendencies are not only toxic or harmful to women on a broad scale, but

reverberate as being destructive to the earth more broadly. As Lierre Keith writes in *Deep Green Resistance* (2011):

With male entitlement comes a violation imperative: men become men by breaking boundaries, whether it's the sexual boundaries of women, the cultural boundaries of other peoples, the physical boundaries of other nations, the genetic boundaries of species, or the biological boundaries of ecosystems. (p. 82)

As a counter to the deep-rooted toxic masculinity, feminist principles are necessary when addressing broader imperative issues such as climate crises and other consequences of industrialized society. Some of the modern achievements of technology and industrialization have been a direct result of the dominant, toxic, masculinity power structures. Hence, in order to undo some of the problems that this has created for the earth as we know it, human cultures need to address the severe lack of feminist principles as a means to solving some of the greatest challenges facing humanity today.

Former President Jimmy Carter co-wrote a *Time* magazine article with Karin D. Ryan, Senior Advisor for Human Rights and Special Representative on Women and Girls at The Carter Center, urging world leaders to consider empowering women as a means of slowing or combating climate change. As Carter and Ryan explain in the opening of the *Time* article:

The only way we will solve the existential threat of climate change is to include everyone in the solutions. Yet women are far too often excluded from decision making at all levels of environmental policy making. Climate change is the most extreme human rights challenge of our time, and a human rights-based approach is needed to solve it (Carter & Ryan, 2019).

They also explain that it was an 1856 scientist named Eunice Foote who first made the connection between carbon dioxide and increasing atmospheric temperatures. Yet, because Foote was a woman, she was forced to publish her findings under a man's name in order for the

study to be taken seriously by the scientific community. As Carter and Ryan argue, the dire situation that humanity is facing due to the threat of climate change will require that modern human civilization dispense with patriarchal principles that keep women from working equitably with men in order to discover creative solutions. As they also argue, keeping women and girls mostly removed from the decision-making when it comes to climate change not only places a burden on women and girls, who must suffer some of the harshest consequences of climate change, but also creates a lost opportunity wherein perhaps these same women and girls could offer solutions that could help either reverse or combat the worst threats posed by climate change (2019).

Studies on leadership theory support Carter and Ryan's assertions. In their journal article, "Do Women Leaders Promote Positive Change? Analyzing the Effect of Gender on Business Practices and Diversity Initiatives" (2017), researchers Christy Glass and Alison Cook discuss diversity theory, which argues that promoting diverse candidates within the ranks of leadership can lead to businesses making better decisions due to the increasing opportunities for creative solutions to be debated and discovered, especially when there are complex and difficult challenges facing a company. As Cook and Glass write:

Leadership diversity facilitates debate, enhanced deliberation, and more effective problem solving that in turn benefit organizations. While under some conditions diversity is associated with increased conflict, lower-quality communication, and lower levels of trust, it can also be a source of enhanced information, network resources, and creativity (p. 826).

Moreover, they also assert that because women are expected via cultural norms to be more caring and inclusive, and also because women are often vastly over-qualified compared to their male counterparts who also enjoy high-ranking positions, women's style of leadership

under this framework often includes more discussion, strategy, collaboration, and thoughtfulness. They also agree that women tend to place a higher emphasis and focus on longer-term strategies for growth and success over shorter-term strategies, which can lead to better business models that are less risky and more carefully planned.

Similarly, in his book: *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders (and how to fix it)*, author Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic explains why women who are selected for leadership positions tend to lead more thoughtfully and strategically. He argues that social conditioning is not the only reason why women tend to outperform men when it comes to utilizing collaborative leadership skills. More often, women find that they must obtain higher credentials in order to be considered qualified candidates for the leadership positions that they desire. These gender biases are often rooted in false assumptions that overconfident men are ideal leaders regardless of their credentials, however women more generally are not granted the same benefit of the doubt. As he states:

Because women need to be more qualified than men to gain leadership opportunities, studies reporting that female leaders are more competent than men may simply reflect that women face tougher challenges than men do to become leaders. Such studies... are usually held up as proof that standards are unfairly high for female leaders. But I would reverse the argument; standards for male leaders are not high enough. Since we all want better leaders, we should not lower our standards when we select women, but we should raise them when we select men. (p. 10)

The problem, Chamorro-Premuzic argues, is that the leadership qualities that we seek in men often come across as both competent and confident, when often hiring professionals are enamored by overconfidence that masks incompetence. Women tend to come across less often as overconfident, and as he claims, competence often goes hand-in-hand with a healthy dose of modesty. In other words, people who are competent often know their own limitations and will

refrain from overselling themselves with unrealistic expectations about their abilities. In contrast, male leaders who come across as very confident in their abilities are more likely to take greater risks, are not often skilled at collaborating with others, place their egos above the needs of the team that they manage, and can often be perceived as unpleasant to work with by their subordinates. Thus, Chamorro-Premuzic argues that prevailing ideas about hiring and selecting leaders needs to be reconsidered in order to seek out the best qualities that promote good leadership and not rely on faulty instincts that often value overconfidence as a virtue, which often leads to the worst kind of leadership that favors aggressive, overly-ambitious men.

Chapter 7: Leadership and Recruitment

“Instead of redefining women, we must redefine power and embrace the idea that one’s position in a hierarchy means nothing about that person’s ability to affect the world at large.”
–Marissa Orr (Orr, 2019, p. 115)

Thoughts from a Recruiter

To discover other ideas and thoughts on how both private and public sectors hire leaders, I interviewed a managing and recruiting professional who works with a local Human Resources and Leadership firm. His firm specializes in recruiting executives for a variety of corporate offices across many different private sector enterprises. The questions on the survey are included as Appendix B. However, the findings and his summary/paraphrased answers to the survey are included here. Please note, the interview that I conducted with the Leadership Recruiter was approved by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board on February 19, 2020 pursuant to the letter referencing approval identification: IRBPHP IRB Application #10873. The letter of approval has been included as Appendix A for future reference.

When I asked him what he considers to be important qualities for good leadership, he answered that good leadership is often frictionless due to the fact that the leader is able to recruit resources for the company that they’re leading, set goals, and define the vision and direction for the group. He also iterated that good leaders are good communicators and are able to recruit others under their leadership to share the same purpose and goals.

When I asked him what are the differences between good leadership and poor leadership, he responded by saying that good leadership is responsible for the team, while a

poor leader lacks integrity, honesty, and decisive action. When I asked him if he believes that current hiring practices are successful in recruiting the best leaders, he answered that he believed so, generally. He admitted that optics, rewards systems, and personal opinion can get in the way at times. He also emphasized that it's important for all the onboarding of the new leaders to continue past the hiring and encourage more training so as to ensure that the leaders are continuing to improve within their roles as they settle into their positions.

When he was asked what he would change about the current hiring practices in order to make improvements, he suggested that it would help if recruiters utilized executive assessment tools prior to making hiring decisions. Tools such as the Myers Briggs, which assess personality types, would help recruiters in selecting/recruiting leaders based on desirable personality traits. However, when I asked him what advice he'd give to female candidates looking for upward advancement in their careers, his answer was that workers within the organizations that he worked with are on equal footing, and therefore he encouraged women to adhere to the three principles of "Commitment to the common goals, competency, and effective communication" (Leadership Recruiter, personal interview, 2020).

Although it seemed that his framework was built on the idea that women have an equal opportunity for advancement within their respective careers, when I asked him, "From an equity lens, can you think of any interview questions, or traditional hiring practices that might be reconsidered in order to assist female candidates so that their leadership potential could be just as recognized or appreciated as a male who is also seeking the same promotional opportunity?" this question took him aback. His answer surprised me when he said that "we tend to judge others based on what we see them doing vs. judging ourselves based on our own

intentions.” He also considered that companies ought to expand the hiring pool to include not just current employees with existing titles, but also employees lower on the spectrum that have ambition and drive. He also acknowledged that when he or his male colleagues have tried to encourage women in the workplace to “lean in” in order to ascend to higher positions, they have noticed a lack of confidence from the women to do so. This confirmed the statements made by Chamorro-Premuzic when he discussed how women often come across as lacking confidence as opposed to their male peers (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019, p. 31). The case may be that women even in these situations are not displaying traits of overconfidence, whereas their male peers, who are perhaps less competent than they purport to be, are able to successfully convey characteristics of perceived confidence. Thus, men are able to convince hiring managers that they can ascend to leadership positions that they may not be as well-suited to occupy.

Lastly, the Leadership Recruiter recommended that perhaps, especially in the private sector, employers need social pressures from companies that are succeeding with women in high-ranking positions in order to push other companies to feel pressured to hire more women into higher-level positions. He acknowledged that he’d like to see more companies embrace protocols seeking out more female leaders by actively recruiting and searching for qualified female candidates in particular. This sentiment seemed similar to the underlying intentions with affirmative action policies, but his idea was more thoughtful and intentional from an organic, perhaps grassroots perspective instead of it being mandated by some public policy/regulatory force. The idea of having some alternative to a government-sponsored affirmative action policy could be included in areas of study for future scholars to investigate beyond this paper. Following our interview, the Leadership Recruiter researched different local

women-led organizations that specialize in training women specifically for leadership positions. He also confirmed that the field of recruiting and identifying women candidates for leadership positions is growing, especially in certain parts of the United States where equity and progressive ideals are fostered and promoted in earnest.

Leadership Principles Beyond Gender

There is an anonymous meme that has been circulated online that says, “Equal rights for others does not mean fewer rights for you. It’s not pie” (Thatdawnperson, 2017). However, contrary to this hopeful sentiment, under a patriarchal system of organization, this does not appear to be true. Although the idea promotes equality, the concept of equality works best when the systems of leadership are not so hierarchical that only a few privileged individuals are considered for positions of authority and power over subordinates with less power. This can perhaps provide a perspective as to why white women voted for a President that does not represent their best interests.

As it has been noted by online bloggers such as Damon Young, white women who voted for Trump valued their white, privileged status in society above their gender (Young, 2017). Similarly, arguments against affirmative action stem from a fear that allowing people of color or other genders an advantage in hiring (no matter how small) will necessarily lead to the erasure of the opportunities for white applicants who may be equally or more qualified for higher-ranking positions. It’s important to recognize that fears of allowing more diverse players to ascend to positions of leadership are based on an understanding and appreciation of systems of power and control that are informed by the patriarchy. In other words, societies and cultures

that are based on more equitable structures of power and leadership would not engender these fears since the group dynamics would be based on more equitable power structures that rely on a shared responsibility of leadership. The only way to move past the gender and race barriers that have kept people of color and women from ascending to leadership positions is to do so with the full understanding by all players that the patriarchal/hierarchical set up must be dismantled and more equitable systems of leadership need to become the status quo and/or normalized. This occurs when people within these systems recognize the basis of their fears, and also recognize that the inherent fears and biases serve to protect the dominant patriarchal systems of power. Hence, a conscious effort must be made by people within these systems to demand change and demand that leadership perform differently within their roles.

At the time of writing this thesis, the presidential Democratic primary “Super Tuesday” in California has commenced, whereby voters in multiple states determined who they would select to be the next democratic nominee to run against the current, sitting President Donald Trump. To the dismay of many Elizabeth Warren fans, her campaign never seemed to garner enough widespread support, and she reluctantly announced that she was suspending her campaign as of March 5, 2020. Among some of the most salient comments, one of the resonating messages is that voters who may have otherwise voted for Warren feared that a woman could not defeat Donald Trump in the presidential election, especially given Donald Trump’s election upset over Hillary Clinton in 2016 (Terkel, 2020). As a female voter told the *Huffington Post*, “Unfortunately, I don’t really believe that a woman can win the general presidential election. Hillary sort of proved that for me” (Terkel, 2020). Again, this sadly reflects the idea perpetuated by a patriarchal culture that a candidate most qualified for taking on

another hyper-masculine male candidate must at a minimum be male, and have the potential to embody the hyper-masculine and/or toxic qualities that are often associated with ideal leadership in a patriarchal system.

In order to change the way in which leadership is appreciated and aspired to, both genders, and even the more contemporarily recognized spectrum of genders, must recognize leadership qualities in those who defy the dominant, patriarchal, normative ideals for leadership. This means that the qualities most often sought after for leadership positions will need to move beyond the familiar, charismatic traps and illusions in order to realize the potential in alternate leadership styles. Not only do women within patriarchal systems of power need to lead differently, but when they are finally able to ascend within the ranks, all genders need to lean on each other together to promote equitable systems of shared powers that allow for leadership to be dispersed and collaborative no matter if a man, woman, or any other gender is in a position of leadership. Recognizing and promoting different, more equitable systems of leadership and power not only allow more women to ascend in the ranks, but they also allow women to lead in ways that are beneficial to men, women and all genders within the system. In other words, if equitability is the goal, and an improved system of leadership is desirable, then new leadership attributes are a key ingredient to breaking down these patriarchal systems that have kept mainstream cultures from being able to move past a status quo of operations that are damaging to women's potential and also the collective potential to operate effectively and ideally.

In congruence with creating a more equitable system that encourages different genders to become leaders, and to lead differently than the norm under the patriarchy, it is evident that

the wellbeing of the earth as a whole would also benefit from this drastic social change. In other words, the health of the environment is more likely to be prioritized and better protected by human cultures and civilizations adopting more equitable organizational systems that necessitate leadership agendas that promote the importance of protecting the environment for the greater good of all humanity. Although it may appear idealistic or far-fetched, it seems plausible that if humans are to undo the many years of environmental destruction and damage that has threatened humanity's continued existence on this planet, collaborative leadership styles will need to become the new norm throughout the world as countries attempt to work together to define a future that is more equitable towards all genders and the planet holistically.

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Appendix A

IRB Acceptance Letter



2/19/2020

Tamara Taylor
50 Acacia Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Tamara,

On behalf of the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, I am pleased to approve your proposal entitled *Lean on Me: Leadership Beyond the Patriarchy* (IRBPHP IRB Application #10873).

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,



Randall Hall, Ph.D.
Chair, IRBPHP

Cc: Christian Dean, Ph.D.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Tamara Taylor's Thesis Research

Women in Leadership- Leading Beyond the Patriarchy

Questions for Participants

1. When you think of the qualities that make a successful or productive leader, what are some of the best qualities that come to mind?
2. In your line of work, have you experienced working under both successful and challenging styles of leadership? What were the main differences between the two?
3. Do you believe that the traditional system of hiring practices are catered toward recruiting the best/most qualified candidates for leadership positions? Please explain your answer.
4. If you had the opportunity to change the hiring practices of recruiting for leadership positions in order to promote or hire the best candidates, what are some of the aspects or functions about the current hiring practices that you would change?
5. What qualities in a candidate do you think should be a top priority when recruiting, especially for positions of leadership?
6. The topic for my thesis research is specifically about women in leadership. What advice would you give to aspiring female candidates who are desirous of leadership positions within their respective fields?

7. Scholarly literature in the field of leadership have cited that men seem to be promoted into leadership positions based on their potential, whereas women tend to be promoted based on their past accomplishments. From an equity lens, can you think of any interview questions, or traditional hiring practices that might be reconsidered in order to assist female candidates so that their leadership potential could be just as recognized or appreciated as a male who is also seeking the same promotional opportunity?

8. Can you think of any other ways that especially men in leadership positions can assist women who aspire to leadership positions to break away from traditional gender stereotypes or patriarchal norms that have kept women from ascending to leadership positions in the first place?