Moving Ahead or Just Moving?

AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SENIOR CORPORATE MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS

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Prior research has shown that employees learn by coping with new experiences. However, we examined gender differences in job moves described in 952 *Wall Street Journal* announcements of senior management appointments and found that women's new positions were more similar to their previous positions than was true for their male counterparts. Women were less likely than men to be promoted to the management level or move to new organizations, and a greater proportion of women than men were appointed to line positions with prior female incumbents. Among managers in staff positions, women were less likely than were men to move to line positions or different organizational functions. Taken together, these findings raise questions about whether women's job moves offered career benefits that were comparable to those received by men.

Keywords: gender differences; career development; senior managers

Despite women's progress at moving into managerial positions in recent years, only a small percentage of senior management positions are held by women, suggesting that there is still what some have termed a "glass ceiling" that limits women's advancement in large, private-sector organizations (e.g., Lyness, 2002; Powell, 1999). Scholars such as Jacobs (1992) have said that we need to gain a better understanding of processes that perpetuate the glass ceiling and limit career advancement for women. One such potential process

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that has received relatively little attention in prior research is mobility among upper-level managers. In other words, are there gender differences in mobility patterns of upper-level managers that could disadvantage women? This issue is explored in the present study.

Greater opportunities for learning and development are generally provided by jobs that expose a manager to new challenges or unfamiliar contexts than by jobs that are similar to previous work experiences. Prior research supports this idea with evidence that transitions to novel (i.e., unfamiliar) job situations were developmental for managers (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994) and that organizational advancement for managers was related to the breadth and diversity of their prior job assignments (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Thus, for women to remain competitive for future career advancement, it is important that they continue to be exposed to new developmental challenges, such as transitions to new organizational roles and work environments, that are comparable to developmental challenges received by their male counterparts.

For reasons described below, however, we think that, particularly at senior management levels, men's job moves are more likely than women's job moves to provide these types of new experiences and learning. We designed the present study to test predictions that when upper-level female managers moved to new positions, their jobs would be more similar to their previous jobs and less likely to represent transitions to new functions, hierarchical levels, or organizations than would be true for moves by their male counterparts. This is important because if our predictions are correct, these women may be disadvantaged by missing out on potential developmental benefits associated with their job moves, leaving them less competitive than their male counterparts for future career advancement opportunities.

We have been unable to locate prior research that has addressed these issues by examining gender differences in lateral, vertical, and interorganizational mobility patterns among senior-level managers, the focus of our study. In fact, most of the prior research about gender differences in career mobility has used broader samples of managers or employees and has focused primarily on advancement issues, typically showing that women were less likely to be chosen than were men when selection or promotion decisions were made, particularly at upper levels in management hierarchies (e.g., Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991; Hartmann, 1987; Lyness & Judiesch, 1999). Thus, these studies suggest that offering women opportunities to move to new positions will help to address gender gaps in career advancement.

Our study differs from this prior research, however, because we examined mobility patterns of men and women who *were* selected for new positions to find out whether these job moves were comparable in potential benefit to the

individuals. Specifically, we wanted to see if women were less likely than men to move to new jobs that differed from their prior jobs in organizational role (i.e., line or staff), management level (i.e., promotions), or organization (i.e., interorganizational moves). Thus, the present research raises a new explanation for the gender gap in career success by examining the possibility that even when women managers are not denied mobility opportunities, their job moves may not be comparably beneficial as those received by their male counterparts. In addition, such findings would have important implications for organizations, suggesting that simply offering women opportunities to move to new positions will not necessarily ensure that their career development will keep pace with that of comparable male managers.

We tested our ideas by studying an elite group of men and women who were selected for new senior management positions that were announced in the *Wall Street Journal*. Specifically, we were interested in finding out whether the women managers' job moves were as likely to offer exposure to new challenges, as represented by functional, vertical, and interorganizational moves, that were comparable to those of the men managers. Although some prior studies of managerial careers used potentially biased self-report data or were limited to single organizations (e.g., Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991), our study was based on archival data about job moves in more than 600 U.S. companies representing more than 50 industries. Also, as we explained above, our study is the first empirical examination of gender differences in lateral, vertical, and interorganizational moves for a large sample of senior managers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Continuous learning and development are critical for success in today's turbulent work environment (London, 2002), and adult development theories indicate that an important way that people learn is by coping with new experiences and novel work environments (McCauley & Hezlett, 2002). In addition, organizational downsizing and delayering of management have resulted in less functional specialization among managers and increased organizational value placed on flexible, multiskilled employees (Batt, 1996; Kanter, 1989; Mirvis & Hall, 1996). Furthermore, in contrast to earlier conceptualizations of career success as hierarchical advancement in one organization, some career theorists have introduced the idea of "boundaryless careers" that span multiple organizations and require portable skills and knowledge (e.g., Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996; Sullivan, 1999). Both adult learning theory and these organizational trends suggest that the value of a job move to

an employee depends on whether the new job offers opportunities to learn additional skills that will be useful in multiple organizational contexts. In particular, prior research has found that employee development was associated with moves to new organizational functions and hierarchical levels and moves to different organizations (Nicholson & West, 1988).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TRANSITIONS TO NEW ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES OR LEVELS

The prior literature offers several theoretical explanations about why, especially at senior management levels, women are less likely than men to move to different types of organizational roles or be promoted to new organizational levels. One reason that women's organizational mobility may be limited is that jobs, job families, and organizational hierarchies are often segregated by gender (Blau, Ferber, & Winkler, 1998; Jacobs, 1999). Several decades ago, Doeringer and Piore (1971) developed the dual labor market model that suggested that even within the same organization, there were primary jobs with important responsibilities, high wages, and good promotion opportunities and secondary jobs that were less important, paid less, and offered fewer promotion opportunities. Blau et al. (1998) suggested that this model could be used to explain gender discrimination in employment because men would typically be concentrated in primary jobs and women would be concentrated in secondary jobs. Consistent with this idea, prior research has shown that jobs held mainly by women tend to have more limited promotional and mobility opportunities because of shorter career ladders than jobs held mainly by men (Baron, Davis-Blake, & Bielby, 1986).

Although dual labor market theory was developed to describe jobs in general, it might also be useful for understanding differences in mobility opportunities associated with the specific types of management positions that are held by men and women. For example, women are generally confined to jobs that are lower in power and influence than those of their male counterparts (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Moreover, female managers are more likely to be found in staff support service roles, whereas male managers are more likely to be found in line jobs that involve revenue-generating activities (e.g., Reskin & Ross, 1992). Even women who reach senior management are more likely to hold staff jobs than line jobs (Catalyst, 2002). Moreover, staff jobs, such as those that may be held by women senior managers, are less likely than are line jobs to lead to promotion to the very highest management levels (Catalyst, 2002). Thus, taken together, these findings suggest that there is gender segregation in management jobs along both horizontal (i.e., line vs. staff) and vertical (i.e., level in the management hierarchy) dimensions of organizations,

with jobs typically held by men offering better mobility opportunities than jobs typically held by women.

Moreover, women may face obstacles associated with gender stereotypes that can make it difficult for them to move into jobs typically held by men. Prior studies have shown that jobs often become gender typed such that they are perceived to be more appropriate for men or for women based on either the gender of the usual job holder (Cejka & Eagly, 1999) or because attributes thought to be needed for success are similar to stereotypic attributes associated with one gender (Heilman, 1983, 2001). According to Heilman's (1983, 2001) lack of fit model, men are more likely than women to be selected for male gender-typed positions, such as senior management jobs, because men are perceived to be a better fit with job requirements and thus more likely to perform successfully. It is also possible that even at senior levels, jobs in female-dominated job families or service-oriented staff jobs, such as human resources, may be considered less strongly male gender typed and thus more appropriate for women than more strongly male gender-typed line jobs.

Even though not all staff functions are numerically dominated by women, women may be more likely to succeed in staff roles, such as human resources, where success depends on acquiring specialized expertise, than in line roles, such as business manager, where success is more likely to depend on perceived leadership ability. As Eagly and Karau (2002) explained, the female gender role is generally perceived to be incongruent with leadership roles, resulting in less positive evaluations of women than men as potential leaders. Consistent with these ideas, there is prior evidence that female executives were less likely than male executives to report that they had been given critical line leadership roles, such as starting up new businesses or turning around businesses in trouble (Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990).

Prior research has shown that bias against women is more likely when staffing decisions require judgments about future success and decision criteria are ambiguous (Nieva & Gutek, 1980); both of these conditions apply to decisions about managerial promotions or lateral, developmental moves to novel job situations (i.e., that are new for a particular manager). Also, because unfamiliar jobs require managers to use previously untested skills and to acquire new knowledge (Davies & Easterby-Smith, 1984; McCauley et al., 1994), these types of developmental moves may entail perceived risk to the organization as there is some uncertainty about whether or not the manager will succeed (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Evidence that greater perceived risk may be associated with selecting women than men for these types of managerial moves comes from prior studies showing that women were held to higher standards than were men for promotions (Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991), and women were more likely than were men to be

promoted to jobs with familiar responsibilities (Ruderman, Ohlott, & Kram, 1996).

We could not find prior research about whether there are gender differences in the likelihood that senior managers will move from staff jobs to line jobs. However, we think that it is less likely that organizational decision makers will select women in staff jobs for moves to line jobs because of women's perceived lack of fit with strongly male-typed line job requirements, such as leadership, that are incongruent with the traditional female role (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Another possible explanation for gender differences in transitions to new organizational roles or unfamiliar business areas is that women are less willing than are men to make these types of job moves. According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive framework, contextual factors, such as organizational barriers, may limit women's own perceptions about their career opportunities, resulting in gender differences in career interests and goals because of women's lower self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. For example, women's career aspirations could be affected by the dearth of prior successful female role models in particular types of jobs, such as senior-level line management positions.

However, recent research by Ostroff and Clark (2001), using a survey of employees at a large (*Fortune* 100) organization, did not find that women reported less willingness than did men to make lateral moves that involved career changes. Nevertheless, because Ostroff and Clark's respondents included employees from all levels of the organization, we cannot be sure about whether these findings would generalize to upper-level managers or if self-reported willingness to change jobs accurately reflected actual willingness to make these types of moves. Although this study found that female respondents were not less willing than were male respondents to make career changes, the research did not shed light on specific types of moves that respondents had in mind or the likelihood that women would be offered these types of job changes by their organizations.

In summary, we predicted that women would be less likely than would men to be appointed to positions that differed from their previous positions because of organizational barriers, such as gender segregation of jobs and gender stereotyping, that could limit women's mobility opportunities. Specifically, we predicted that women in staff roles would be less likely than would men to move to line positions or different organizational functions (e.g., human resources, legal services, etc.). In addition, we predicted that women would be less likely to be promoted than would men and that when women were promoted, their promotions would be smaller (i.e., within-level moves to jobs with greater responsibility) than would men's promotions,

which would be more likely to be promotions to higher management levels. Finally, we posed a research question about whether there would be gender differences in likelihood of moves from line positions to staff positions because we were unsure whether women's prior experience in line jobs would offset their perceived lack of fit with line positions in general and allow them to get appointments to subsequent line positions.

Hypothesis 1: Among managers whose previous positions were in staff roles, women will be less likely to move to line roles or to new functions than will men.

Hypothesis 2: Women's new positions will be less likely to be promotions than will those of their male counterparts, and women's promotions will be more likely than men's promotions to be within-level promotions than promotions to higher organizational levels.

Research Question 1: Among managers whose previous positions were in line roles, will there be gender differences in the likelihood of moving to staff roles?

RELATIONSHIPS OF APPOINTEE'S GENDER AND PRIOR INCUMBENT'S GENDER

Although relatively little is known about factors that increase the odds that women will be chosen for senior management positions, we think that one such factor is the most recent prior job incumbent's gender. For example, if a woman has held a particular management job, it may be more likely that organizational decision makers will perceive the job as appropriate for women. Some support for this idea was provided by Konrad and Pfeffer's (1991) study of educational administrators, where in jobs with only one incumbent, a woman was more likely to be hired when the prior incumbent was a woman. If line management jobs are perceived to be more strongly male gender typed than are staff management jobs, a prior female incumbent might temper the perceived male gender typing for that particular line position and make it more likely that a subsequent woman will be chosen to fill the position than would otherwise be the case. However, a prior female incumbent in a staff position might also make it more likely that a subsequent woman would be appointed. Therefore, we posed a research question about the relative strength of these relationships for line positions and staff positions.

Hypothesis 3: A larger proportion of women than of men will be appointed to senior management jobs where the prior incumbents were women.

Research Question 2: Will the relationship between prior incumbent's gender and proportions of men and women appointed be stronger for appointments to line jobs than for appointments to staff jobs?

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TRANSITIONS TO NEW ORGANIZATIONS

The possibility of interorganizational job moves is an important characteristic that differentiates boundaryless careers from traditional organizational careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Rosenbaum and Miller (1996) concluded that the external hiring process is often flawed, however, because organizational decision makers do not effectively gather accurate information about job candidates' past achievements and capabilities. This finding has serious consequences for women because gender stereotypes may sometimes be overcome when unambiguous, job-relevant performance information is available to organizational decision makers (Heilman, Martell, & Simon, 1988; Tosi & Einbender, 1985). For example, prior research has shown that female executives reported that having a proven track record was more important in facilitating their career advancement than did comparably successful male executives (Lyness & Thompson, 2000) and that women were more likely to be promoted to senior management when they worked in the same department as the job (Powell & Butterfield, 1994), so that presumably their performance would be known to organizational decision makers.

Because more information is available about performance and qualifications of internal employees than external applicants, gender bias against women may be more likely in external hiring than internal job moves. Also, there may be less perceived organizational risk in selecting internal women because their qualifications are better known than are those of external women. Consistent with these ideas, a prior longitudinal study of managers in a large organization found that, in comparison to men, women were more likely to attain new management positions through internal promotion rather than external hiring (Lyness & Judiesch, 1999).

There could also be gender differences in self-selection for external moves because of lack of interest or willingness to change organizations. According to Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive framework, contextual factors, such as selection bias, that limit interorganizational moves for women could lead to lower self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Also, prior research has shown that changing companies benefits men more than women in compensation growth (Brett & Stroh, 1997; Dreher & Cox, 2000), suggesting that men may have more reason than do women to seek interorganizational job moves.

Hypothesis 4: In comparison to men, women will be more likely to attain new management positions through internal organizational moves than through external hiring.

External career moves sometimes require geographical relocation, which might pose difficulties for women with family responsibilities or dual career relationships. We were unable to locate prior research about gender differences in relocations associated with upper-level managers' interorganizational job changes. However, prior research about gender differences in intraorganizational relocations found that women managers and executives had worked in fewer locations than had their male counterparts (Lyness & Thompson, 1997; Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1992) and that women professionals were less willing than were men professionals to relocate to keep their jobs (Turban, Campion, & Eyring, 1992). Although prior research has not examined relocations in connection with interorganizational job moves, it seems reasonable to predict that female managers would also be less likely than male managers to undertake these types of relocations. Therefore, we predicted:

Hypothesis 5: In comparison to men, women will be less likely to make external moves that require relocation.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES

We downloaded from the ProQuest electronic database the announcements of senior management appointments published in the "Who's News" section of the *Wall Street Journal* in 1998 ($n = 2{,}806$). These announcements represent high profile career moves in large or otherwise newsworthy companies (C. Mahr, former editor of "Who's News," personal communication, February 1, 2002; K. Scafranski, editor of "Who's News," personal communication, January 25, 2002). We adapted our procedures from Forbes and Piercy (1991), who analyzed similar announcements in 1985 to study executive career paths but did not report on gender differences.

We reduced our data set to announcements of corporate management moves by eliminating other types of announcements, such as retirements, board of director appointments, non-private sector positions (e.g., government positions), non-U.S. organizations, and temporary appointments. Of the 1,831 appointments that fit our criteria, only 118 (6%) were women's appointments. Because of the skewed gender distribution, we oversampled women by including all of them ($n = 118$) and randomly selected 75 men per month ($n = 900$) for coding. Our final sample included appointments in more than 600 companies and more than 50 different industries.

Graduate students from business and industrial-organizational psychology programs coded the appointee's gender, the prior incumbent's gender, whether the move was internal (same organization) or external (new organization), and whether the move coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition. We dropped 66 cases because of missing information, resulting in a final sample of 952 cases, including 113 (12%) women and 839 (88%) men.

Based on job titles and the graduate students' notes about job responsibilities (but without reference to appointees' names or gender), both authors independently coded new management level and job function, previous management level and job function, and whether the move was a promotion. Agreement in coding ranged from 85% to 94% on the five variables; we discussed disagreements and used consensus values in the analyses. We checked reliability of coding for the other variables by randomly selecting 100 cases for coding by the second author; agreement ranged from 100% for gender to 90% for mergers. We combined mergers and acquisitions into a single code because information was often insufficient to determine which had occurred.

MEASURES

Gender. Gender of newly appointed managers and prior incumbents was coded female (1) and male (0). Prior incumbent's gender was available for only 67% of the sample ($n = 639$).

Management level. We used information from the announcements to code previous jobs and new jobs into three management levels: top management (e.g., CEO or president), general management (e.g., head of a division or multiple functions), or functional management (i.e., managing or working in a single organizational function, such as marketing), using management level definitions from Forbes and Piercy (1991). Gender was significantly related to hierarchical level, $\chi^2(2, n = 952) = 26.37$, $p < .001$, with men having greater representation in top management positions. We created dummy variables contrasting the two higher levels (general management and top management), with functional management for use in the analyses.

Organizational mergers or acquisitions. Whether the appointment coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition was coded yes (1, $n = 51$) or no (0, $n = 901$).

Organizational roles and functions. We coded organizational role and function for previous positions and new positions based on job titles and job

responsibilities. Line jobs (coded 0) had responsibilities for directing and controlling the organization's core business functions (e.g., business management, sales, or operations), and staff jobs (coded 1) provided support or expertise (e.g., human resources, advertising, or legal; for explanations of line and staff jobs, see Catalyst, 2002; Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2002). Appointees' previous jobs included 263 staff jobs and 689 line jobs, and new jobs included 269 staff jobs and 683 line jobs. We created a variable indicating whether an appointee's previous organizational role (i.e., line or staff) was the same as his or her new role, coded yes (1, $n = 806$) or no (0, $n = 146$). In addition, for managers in staff roles, we coded specific organizational functions for their previous jobs and new jobs. The most common staff functions were finance or accounting ($n = 194$) and legal services ($n = 14$). We created a variable indicating whether the previous function was the same as the new function, coded yes (1, $n = 174$) or no (0, $n = 89$).

Promotion. We created three promotion variables based on different definitions of promotions; each variable was coded yes (1) or no (0). First, promotions, defined as moves to higher levels of management (i.e., from functional management to general management or from general management to top management), were computed by coding management levels from 1 (functional management) to 3 (top management) and subtracting the level for the previous job from the level for the new job. Second, promotions, defined as within-level moves to jobs with greater responsibility, were coded by comparing the previous job title and duties to the new job title and duties. For example, a move from chief financial officer of a small business unit to chief financial officer of a larger organizational unit would be considered a within-level promotion but would not be defined as a promotion in management level (because both jobs were functional management). The third promotion variable represented all promotions, including promotions to higher levels and within-level promotions. Out of 705 promotions, 254 were promotions to a higher level ($n = 234$ men, 20 women), and 451 were within-level promotions ($n = 392$ men, 59 women).

Internal or external appointment. By comparing old and new company names, we coded each job move as internal (within the same company, coded 1, $n = 528$) or external (a move to a different company, coded 0, $n = 424$). Moves to a different subsidiary of the same organization and moves that coincided with mergers or acquisitions were coded as internal moves.

Relocation. We created a relocation variable for managers who had made external job moves ($n = 424$) by comparing location (i.e., state) for

the previous job with location for the new job. When announcements did not indicate location of the previous job, we obtained this information from Hoover's Online database, using names of companies, divisions, and managers. Company headquarters locations were used for top-level executive positions. Whether or not a job move required relocation was coded yes (1, $n = 252$) or no (0, $n = 134$). We could not determine previous job locations for 38 managers, often because the individuals had worked for privately held firms or been self-employed.

ANALYSES

We used chi-square tests to examine gender interactions with categorical variables, such as prior incumbent's gender (Hypothesis 3). We tested Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 with hierarchical logistic regression analyses because the criterion variables were dichotomous. Tests of Hypothesis 1 were limited to appointees who previously held staff jobs, the test of Research Question 1 was limited to appointees who previously held line jobs, and the test of Hypothesis 5 was limited to managers who had made external moves. The test of promotions to higher levels excluded top-level managers because they could not be promoted to higher levels. In the logistic regression analyses, we controlled for characteristics of jobs (i.e., management level and organizational role) and characteristics of appointments (i.e., internal or external and whether the appointment coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition). We used previous job characteristics as controls in tests of hypotheses about gender differences in mobility and characteristics of new positions as controls in testing Hypotheses 4 and 5 to control for the type of position being filled. We entered control variables in Step 1, followed by variables of interest, using simultaneous entry of all variables within a step. Significance of results was determined from regression coefficients and the χ^2 improvement for the last step.

RESULTS

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TRANSITIONS TO NEW ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES OR LEVELS

Table 1 provides means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the variables. We tested Hypothesis 1, predicting that among managers whose previous jobs were in staff roles, women would be less likely than men to move to line roles or new functions, with two logistic regression analyses, controlling for whether the new appointment was internal or external, or

coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition (see Table 2). We did not control for hierarchical level because all staff roles were in the functional management level. We found that, as predicted, women were significantly more likely than were men to have new jobs in staff roles, $B = 1.24$, odds ratio = 3.46, $\Delta\chi^2 = 6.18$, $p < .05$. The odds ratio indicates that women's odds of remaining in staff roles were almost three and a half times greater than were men's odds of remaining in staff roles (after controlling for the other variables). Also, women were significantly more likely than were men to remain in the same function, $B = .90$, odds ratio = 2.46, $\Delta\chi^2 = 4.44$, $p < .05$. In fact, women's odds of remaining in the same function as their previous job were close to two and a half times greater than were men's odds of remaining in their previous function.

We carried out a similar logistic regression analysis to test Research Question 1 with managers whose previous jobs were in line roles, except that we added a control for management level because line jobs could be found at all three management levels. We found that gender was not significantly related to whether managers remained in line roles, $B = .12$, odds ratio = 1.13, $\Delta\chi^2 = .09$, $p = .77$. This result indicates that women in line roles were no less likely than were their male counterparts to be appointed to new jobs in line roles.

We tested Hypothesis 2 about gender differences in promotions with three logistic regression analyses: (a) all promotions, (b) promotions to higher management levels, and (c) within-level promotions (see Table 3). In each analysis, we controlled for previous job characteristics (i.e., management level and organizational role) and whether the appointment was internal or external, or coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition. The analysis for promotions to higher levels was limited to managers whose previous positions were below top management ($n = 665$) because top-level managers could not be promoted to higher levels. As predicted, we found that women's new positions were significantly less likely to be promotions, $B = –.56$, odds ratio = .57, $\Delta\chi^2 = 5.05$, $p < .05$, or promotions to higher levels than were men's, $B = –1.13$, odds ratio = .32, $\Delta\chi^2 = 17.85$, $p < .001$. But the gender difference for within-level promotions was marginally significant and in the opposite direction, $B = .41$, odds ratio = 1.50, $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.34$, $p = .07$. The odds ratios indicated that women's odds of getting promotions were more than half as high as were men's odds, and women's odds of getting promotions to higher levels were only a third as high as were men's odds. However, women's odds of getting within-level promotions were one and a half times men's odds of receiving within-level promotions. In addition, we conducted a chi-square analysis among all appointees receiving promotions and found that, as predicted, women's

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of the Variables

Variable	M	SD	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
1. Gender	0.12	0.32	—										
2. New management level	2.18	0.87	–.14**	—									
3. Previous management level	1.98	0.79	–.09**	.59**	—								
4. Previous organizational role	0.28	0.45	.03	–.55**	–.76**	—							
5. Same organizational role	0.85	0.36	.05	.22**	.21**	–.19**	—						
6. Same function	0.66	0.47	.12*	–.78**	—	—	.84**	—					
7. Prior incumbent gender	0.03	0.17	.10*	–.04	.01	–.07	–.11**	–.06	—				
8. Within-level promotion	0.47	0.50	.04	–.15**	.18**	.03	.23**	.48**	–.05	—			
9. Promotion to higher level	0.38	0.49	–.14**	.86**	.10*	–.21**	–.13**	–.83**	–.01	–.62**	—		
10. Internal or external appointment	0.55	0.50	.03	.20**	.06	–.09**	.05	–.21**	–.05	.24**	.14**	—	
11. Relocation	0.65	0.48	–.02	.15**	.09	–.10	.07	.00	.03	.03	.15*	—	—
12. Organizational merger or acquisition	0.05	0.23	–.07*	.04	.05	–.03	.00	–.01	.03	.00	.01	.11**	.06

NOTE: $N = 952$, except relationships with prior incumbent's gender ($n = 639$), same function for staff managers ($n = 263$), promotion to higher level ($n = 665$), and relocation for external move ($n = 386$).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

TABLE 2
Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Appointment to Same Organizational Role (Staff) and Same Function for Staff Managers With Gender

	Same Organizational Role		*Same Function*	
Variable	B	SE B	B	SE B
Step 1				
Internal or external appointment[a]	–1.19***	0.30	–0.96***	0.27
Organizational merger or acquisition	0.04	0.66	0.32	0.66
Step 2				
Gender[b]	1.24*	0.56	0.90*	0.45
Summary statistics				
χ^2 for Step 1	16.60***		12.34**	
χ^2 improvement for Step 2	6.18*		4.44*	

NOTE: $n = 263$. B = unstandardized regression coefficients from the full models.
a. Coded internal = 1, external = 0.
b. Coded female = 1, male = 0.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

promotions were more likely than were men's promotions to be smaller (within-level) promotions rather than larger promotions (to higher management levels), $\chi^2(1, n = 705) = 4.43$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .08$. For example, 25% of women's promotions versus 37% of men's promotions were promotions to higher management levels.

RELATIONSHIPS OF APPOINTEE'S GENDER AND PRIOR INCUMBENT'S GENDER

We tested Hypothesis 3 with the subsample of appointments where prior job incumbent gender was available ($n = 639$) and found a significant relationship between prior incumbent gender and gender of new appointee, $\chi^2(1, n = 639) = 5.77$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .10$. Although only 10% of this subsample were women, women were appointed to 26% of the positions previously held by women. In addition, we tested Research Question 2 by conducting separate chi-square analyses for appointments to new jobs in line roles and staff roles. We found that the appointee's gender was significantly related to the prior incumbent's gender for appointments to line jobs, $\chi^2(1, n = 439) = 8.74$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .14$, but not for appointments to staff jobs, $\chi^2(1, n = 200) = .04$, $p = .85$, $\phi = .01$. In fact, although only 9% of the subsample appointed to line jobs were women, women were appointed to 33% of the line jobs previously held by women.

TABLE 3
Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Promotions With Gender

	All Promotions		*Promotion to Higher Level*		*Within-Level Promotion*	
Variable	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
Step 1						
Previously general management (vs. functional management)	–1.03*	0.52	–1.52***	0.37	1.23**	0.43
Previously top management (vs. functional management)	–1.57**	0.52			2.79***	0.44
Previous organizational role	–0.89†	0.52	–2.24***	0.38	2.05***	0.44
Internal or external appointment	1.95***	0.18	0.56**	0.17	1.18***	0.15
Organizational merger or acquisition	–0.80	0.35	–0.19	0.40	–0.42	0.32
Step 2						
Gender	–0.56*	0.25	–1.13***	0.29	0.41†	0.22
Summary statistics						
χ^2 for Step 1	155.40***		55.84***		165.67***	
χ^2 improvement for Step 2	5.05*		17.85***		3.34†	

NOTE: $N = 952$, except promotion to higher level ($n = 665$). B = unstandardized regression coefficients from the full models.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TRANSITIONS TO NEW ORGANIZATIONS

We tested Hypothesis 4, predicting that, in comparison to men, women's appointments would be more likely to be internal moves than external hiring, using a logistic regression analysis with controls for characteristics of the new job (i.e., management level and organizational role) and whether the appointment coincided with an organizational merger or acquisition (see Table 4). The relationship between gender and whether the job was filled internally or externally was very close to statistical significance, $B = .41$, odds ratio = 1.50, $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.63$, $p = .057$. The odds ratio indicated that women's odds of obtaining their jobs through internal organizational moves rather than by being hired externally were one and a half times those of men's odds.

Finally, we tested Hypothesis 5, predicting that women's external job moves would be less likely than men's external job moves to involve relocations, with a logistic regression analysis using the same control variables as the prior analysis but limiting the sample to managers who made external moves and for whom relocation data were available ($n = 386$). As can be seen in Table 5, gender was not significantly related to relocation, $B = –.06$, odds ratio = .94, $\Delta\chi^2 = .03$, $p = .87$. In fact, very similar proportions of women's (62%) and men's (66%) external job moves involved relocating to a different state.

DISCUSSION

Earlier we raised the possibility that at upper levels of management women's job moves might differ from men's job moves in ways that could limit women's opportunities for further career advancement. Consistent with this idea, we found that even among this elite group of women who were selected for new senior management positions, the women's moves appeared to be narrower and their new jobs more similar to their previous positions along both horizontal and vertical organizational dimensions than was true for their male counterparts. For example, we found that women's new positions were less likely than were men's new positions to be promotions to higher management levels. Also, we found that among managers whose previous positions were in staff roles, women were less likely than were men to move to line positions or different organizational functions. Finally, women's appointments were marginally less likely to be external appointments ($p = .06$), representing moves to new organizations.

TABLE 4
Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Internal or External Appointment With Gender

Variable	B	SE B
Step 1		
General management level (vs. functional management level)	–0.01	0.46
Top management level (vs. functional management level)	0.17	0.44
Organizational role[a]	–0.90*	0.45
Organizational merger or acquisition	1.14**	0.36
Step 2		
Gender[b]	0.41[†]	0.21
Summary statistics		
χ^2 for Step 1	58.58***	
χ^2 improvement for Step 2	3.63[†]	

NOTE: $N = 952$. B = unstandardized regression coefficients from the full model.
a. Coded staff = 1, line = 0.
b. Coded female = 1, male = 0.
[†]$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 5
Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Relocation With Gender

Variable	B	SE B
Step 1		
General management level (vs. functional management level)	0.10	0.75
Top management level (vs. functional management level)	–0.28	0.73
Organizational role[a]	0.44	0.73
Organizational merger or acquisition	–0.86	0.80
Step 2		
Gender[b]	–0.06	0.34
Summary statistics		
χ^2 for Step 1	9.93*	
χ^2 improvement for Step 2	0.03	

NOTE: $n = 386$. B = unstandardized regression coefficients from the full model.
a. Coded staff = 1, line = 0.
b. Coded female = 1, male = 0.
[†]$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

These findings may have implications for the women's future career opportunities because, as Van Velsor and Hughes (1990) explained, "insufficient challenge can ruin the careers of otherwise talented people who are judged too narrow at an advanced stage of their careers" (p. 38). Our findings are of particular interest because we analyzed 952 appointments in more than

600 U.S. companies. Perhaps the most important contribution of our study is that cumulating data across many companies revealed patterns that may not be apparent from studying a single organization where few senior management appointments are made during any given year. Also, studying job moves in many different organizations reduced the likelihood that our results were biased by the characteristics of any particular organization.

These results extend our understanding about gender segregation and more limited career ladders for jobs typically held by women (Baron et al., 1986). For example, we examined mobility patterns among senior-level managers, whereas the prior research focused on broader samples of employees, with many women in lower-level positions. Prior descriptive research has shown that when women reach senior management, they are more likely to hold staff jobs than line jobs (Catalyst, 2002). However, our research reveals that there are also gender differences in subsequent job moves for those in staff jobs, with men more likely than women to move into line jobs or to change staff functions. Thus, the limited opportunities for mobility associated with these senior-level staff jobs appeared to apply more to women than to men in our sample.

Our findings about gender differences in promotion patterns also suggested that promoted women were making smaller moves than were promoted men. Whereas men's promotions were more likely than were women's promotions to involve vertical moves to higher organizational levels, women's promotions were more likely to be lateral moves to jobs with greater responsibility that were within the same management levels. These findings help to shed light on prior research with broader samples of managers and professionals showing that although women reported receiving as many or even more promotions than their male counterparts, women's advancement in terms of hierarchical level attainment lagged behind that of the men (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Eddleston, Baldridge, & Veiga, 2004).

A possible explanation for our finding that the odds of women making interorganizational moves were smaller than those for men is that women were less willing to relocate. However, contrary to this explanation, we found that among managers who moved to new companies, women were no less likely than were men to relocate to a different state, with about two thirds of the external moves for both men and women involving relocation. Prior research has found that gender differences in reported willingness to relocate were related to women's greater family responsibilities (Eddleston et al., 2004) or perceptions that their spouses' careers were more important than their own (Landau, Shamir, & Arthur, 1992). It is possible that these factors were less relevant for the female senior managers in our sample than for lower-level managers or employees as prior research has shown that

women executives are less likely than men executives to have partners or live with children (e.g., Lyness & Thompson, 1997). Also, even if they were in dual career relationships, these senior-level women may have considered their own careers to be as important as their partners' careers.

PERCEIVED RISK

One interpretation of our findings is that women were less likely to receive larger job moves because organizational decision makers perceived greater risk associated with offering women rather than men these types of opportunities. Because women sometimes overcome gender bias in selection through establishing a track record of successful performance (e.g., Tosi & Einbender, 1985), we think that the similarity between a woman's new job and her previous job may be key to understanding this process. In other words, there may be less perceived risk in appointing a woman if she has proven herself successful in a similar job than a dissimilar job. Types of moves that we found to be less likely for women than men (i.e., promotions in management level, moves from staff roles to line roles, or moves to new organizations) represented major changes and thus might be considered more risky than moves to more similar positions, such as moving to a new job in the same staff function, which was more likely for women than for men.

LINE ROLES VERSUS STAFF ROLES

An important implication of these results is that whether women hold staff jobs or line jobs seems to have major consequences for their future mobility. Prior research suggested that lack of line experience is a major barrier to women's advancement (Wellington, Kropf, & Gerkovich, 2003), and our findings illuminate a process by which this might occur. Our results showed, on one hand, that women who had attained line positions were no more limited than were their male counterparts in making future moves into other line positions. On the other hand, women in staff positions appeared to be more constrained than their male counterparts in future mobility as these women were less likely than were the men to move into line roles or different organizational functions.

Perhaps after women have proven themselves in line jobs, the perceived risk of giving them new line jobs is reduced, and these women may be viewed similarly to their male counterparts when future staffing decisions are made. This finding is consistent with prior research about "subtyping," a cognitive process whereby individuals who do not fit a stereotype are removed from the stereotyped group and perceived as a subcategory with different attributes (Allport, 1954; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

Moreover, we found that among managers appointed to line jobs, a greater proportion of women than men were appointed to positions where the prior incumbents were women. Although line jobs may be strongly male-gender typed, a prior female incumbent may have increased the likelihood that a woman would get the job by reducing the perceived male-gender typing of that particular position. Although this finding highlights one path that may help women move into line jobs, the majority of senior line jobs are still held by men, so only a small proportion of women are likely to benefit from opportunities to move into line jobs previously held by women.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Our findings about gender differences in job moves have important implications for employee development in organizations. For example, these results suggest that just making certain that women receive opportunities to move to new jobs may not be sufficient to ensure that they will derive as much career benefit as their male counterparts. Instead, organizational decision makers should consider the extent to which positions provide developmental challenges and opportunities for women to acquire new types of skills and knowledge.

Interestingly, Avon, an organization that is widely recognized as a good employer for women, identified reluctance to take risks on women as a factor that might limit women's advancement. Marcia Worthing, former head of human resources, concluded after analyzing employee performance reviews, "You tended to promote men based on what you saw as potential, but you promoted women based on what you felt they'd accomplished to date" (Morris, 1997, p. 78). If this applies to other companies as well, organizational decision makers should be made aware of this potential bias so that women are not less likely to be offered developmental opportunities involving risk or held to higher standards for promotions than are men. This is particularly important in today's turbulent environment where women may not be given as much time as in the past to prove themselves sufficiently to offset decision makers' concerns.

An alternative theoretical explanation is that women may be less likely to seek opportunities to move into male gender-typed positions because of lower self-efficacy beliefs or concerns that they may fail. If this is the case, supportive managers and mentors could play a critical role by encouraging talented women to undertake these types of career risks and helping them succeed with support and coaching that men receive from their informal social networks. It is also possible that women might not be interested in male gender-typed positions if they perceive that the work requirements or

cultures for these positions would make it more difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. However, these are barriers that can be addressed by ensuring that managers understand the benefits of a supportive organizational work-family culture (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

LIMITATIONS AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although it is possible that there was unmeasured bias about which announcements the *Wall Street Journal* published, this would pose more of a threat to observations about women's overall representation than to our primary focus on similarity in the managers' prior jobs and new jobs. Our conclusions are limited, however, because we analyzed only one job move per person rather than an entire career. In addition, the low base rate of women in our sample reduced the power for our statistical tests. Another limitation is our inability to control for alternative explanations, such as differences in human capital, other than those that were associated with management level (which was a control variable). However, this concern may be offset to some extent by the fact that prior single-organization studies with controls for human capital also found gender differences in promotions at senior management levels and more internal than external job moves for women managers compared to men (Hartmann, 1987; Lyness & Judiesch, 1999).

Our results both underscore Sullivan's (1999) recommendation that we need to learn more about the effects of boundaryless careers on women's career experiences and suggest some possible directions for future investigations. For example, it would be useful to conduct further research about gender differences in job moves and to identify career patterns, such as accumulation of portable skills and knowledge, and interorganizational moves that might be related to success in today's career environment. Also, it would be helpful to conduct additional research about women and men in senior management to gain further understanding about our findings, such as the lack of gender differences in relocations associated with interorganizational job moves, that appear to differ in some respects from prior research with broader employee samples. We suggest that future studies should address these issues by investigating organizational decision-making processes and by collecting more detailed information about participants' backgrounds, career aspirations, and family status, such as involvement in dual career relationships and living with dependent children, as these variables might provide additional insights about observed mobility patterns.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analyses of a year's worth of senior management appointments in many organizations revealed distinct gender differences in the nature and

degree of mobility represented by these upper-level career moves. With women receiving a mere 6% of these appointments, it can be argued that women's progress in moving into upper organizational echelons still appears to be quite limited. Although these women were fortunate enough to receive visible senior management appointments, they may have been disadvantaged relative to their male counterparts if the women's new jobs provided fewer developmental opportunities than did the men's new jobs. Because these announcements appeared in the country's largest business newspaper, they take on added importance because of their potential influence on readers. For example, these announcements could perpetuate gender-based assumptions about the types of job moves that are typically given to women, thus influencing organizational decision makers' beliefs about normative practices and hindering women readers' career aspirations.

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