Career Expectations
vs. Experiences:
The Case of Academic Women

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This qualitative study explored how women who filed complaints against their universities initially formed expectations when they joined their universities and how they later discovered their expectations were not met. Interviews suggested that as applicants the women assessed: 1) whether the university would provide an environment that would foster the achievement of their goals; 2) whether the university would reward their efforts and success; and 3) whether their individual characteristics matched the university's needs. They also assumed that the university would be fair. Upon entering their universities, the women expected to exchange their abilities and hard work for the organization's provision of an environment fostering success as well as rewards for that success. These expectations were not met when the women found they had to work in a difficult environment with inadequate resources and when they experienced few rewards from the organization for their achievements.

Universities are one type of organization in which career setbacks often occur, especially for women. Although academia portrays an image of being an egalitarian, nurturing, protected environment (Dzeich & Weiner, 1990; Grauerholz, 1996; Toren, 1990), decades after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, discrimination is still a problem. Two reviews have concluded that, despite well-publicized affirmative action programs, women are still underrepresented as faculty in academia (Rai, 2000; Wylie,

1995), and other reviews have noted inequities still exist in terms of rank, salary, and working conditions such as sexual harassment (Caplan, 1993; Dziech & Weiner, 1990; Grauerholz, 1996; Nettles, Perna, Bradburn, & Zimbler, 2000; Valian, 1998). In addition, these inequities increase as women achieve higher education and status, which has been called the funneling effect. For instance, discrimination is greatest at financially affluent universities and at universities that have higher prestige or are more selective (Benjamin, 1999; Dey, Korn, & Sax, 1996; Szafran, 1984; Valian, 1998). Also, the proportion of women drops significantly at each step up the academic ladder from undergraduates to women at the full professor level. Various studies indicate that women hold approximately 60 percent of master's degrees and 40 percent of doctorates, but make up only about one-third of associate professors, and between 3 and 20 percent of full professors. (American Association of University Women, 2004; Kite, Russo, Brehm, Fouad, Hall, Hyde, & Keita, 2001; Krefting, 2003). It is important to understand the continuation of discrimination at universities because it may play a role in perpetuating discrimination in other organizations. Students learn as much through the behaviors modeled for them, and perhaps more so, than they do through traditional methods (e.g., Bandura, 1986), and these students eventually become corporate America, presumably taking with them the behaviors they have learned in college.

Some researchers have suggested that women's setbacks in career achievement such as those found at universities are attributable to women not investing as much as men in their human capital related to productivity, such as experience and education (for a review, see Kemp, 1994). There is some evidence supporting the suggestion that individual factors such as education can explain a portion of the difference (e.g., Haberfeld, 1992). However, research also indicates that much of the difference between men and women is not accounted for by this explanation. Instead, discrimination and organizational variables frequently substantially influence women's opportunities (e.g., Blum, Fields, & Goodman, 1994; Reskin, 1977; Haberfeld, 1992; Robinson, 1973; Toren, 1990). For instance, studies on sex differences in publication rate in the physical and social sciences have indicated that men and women differ in terms of organizational contextual factors predictive of publication rates, such as graduate program characteristics and departmental reputation, rather than on individual characteristics (Keith, Layne, Babchuk, & Johnson, 2002; Xie & Shauman, 1998). When organizational factors were controlled for, the difference between men and women in publication rate was no longer significant. In addition, when women and men match on publication rate, the major performance determinant in academia, women still receive fewer rewards than men and are promoted more slowly (Toren, 1990). A model of sex discrimination (Fitzgerald, Hulin, & Drasgow, 1995) suggests two major organizational factors affecting women's career experiences of discrimination. First is the masculine job gender context—inequities in career achievement, including at universities, are explainable by findings that women are consistently underrated, particularly when doing what is considered to be men's work (e.g., Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Krieger, 1995; Valian, 1998). The second factor in the model is an organizational climate tolerant of sex discrimination—the presence and effectiveness of policies and

procedures designed to address inequities is associated with the degree to which these inequities occur in organizations (e.g., Gruber & Bjorn, 1986; Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1997).

However, it has been suggested that a more productive approach to explaining women's career setbacks may be to examine individual characteristics such as women's attitudes and behaviors within the aversive organizational contexts they find themselves in (e.g., Liff & Ward, 2001). It has been noted, for example, that the delays in university sexual harassment complaint procedures result in most cases being resolved by victims leaving, rather than by solving the harassment problems (Dziech & Weiner, 1990). Similarly, research indicates that women often leave their jobs because they are unwilling to continue to work in masculine cultures (Marshall, 1995). Thus, this approach examines not only how organizational factors adversely affect women and their careers, but also how women respond in these contexts.

The literatures on recruitment and careers as well as the literature on organizational justice provide models that can be helpful for understanding these interactions between women and their organizational contexts. In the recruitment and career literatures, it is thought that the organization and individual jointly determine the individual's career experiences from the time of organizational entry via a series of ongoing negotiations (Herriot, 1992). Applicants use their insights into their own desires and capabilities to determine how well they match up to what the organization desires from them and has to offer in exchange (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Once the employee is hired, the organization and worker have expectations of each other based on their negotiations during recruitment, such as future commitments and obligations of each party (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Parks, 1993; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

The mental model of the exchange agreement that is held by each of the parties has been termed a "psychological contract" in the research literature (Rousseau, 1995). Psychological contracts are interpretations of promises that were made, either explicitly or implicitly by each party. These mental models are formed during the initial hiring process, but are modified over time because negotiations continue during the individual's employment at the organization and commitments by the organization are often signaled through personnel actions, such as the discussion of future plans involving the employee (Rousseau, 1995). Violations of these expectations can occur when the organization either knowingly breaks a promise or when the employee and organization have different understandings regarding what the employee has been promised (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995). In any case, the organizational justice literature indicates that violations of these expectations often result in lower employee commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

Thus, research indicates that to better understand women's careers, the interaction of their expectations with their experiences should be taken into account. However, despite the clear presence of an academic funnel, there has been little research on underlying interactions between women and their universities. Quantitative studies of the numbers of women in academic ranks or percentages of women reporting harassment experiences (e.g., Cole, 1986; Fischer & Good, 1994; Holahan, 1979; Kulis, 1997; Myers & Dugan, 1996; Reid, 1987; Szafran, 1984) rarely collect

information on the possible determinants leading to the statistics. Furthermore, most studies that have examined possible determinants have focused on individual characteristics rather than organizational factors; this is particularly true of the research on gender inequality in the university setting (e.g., Collins, Parrish, & Collins, 1998; Rama, Logan, & Barkman, 1997). Past qualitative analyses on women in academia (e.g., Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Gersick, Bartunek, & Dutton, 2000; Siskind & Kearns, 1997) have examined the behaviors at universities that are associated with women's discrimination experiences, but they have not focused on how these violated the expectations the women had.

Thus, the purpose of the present investigation was to examine the discrimination women face at universities by considering the expectations they form when they enter their organizations and how their experiences at the universities violate these expectations. In the present study, twelve women who experienced sex discrimination at universities and later filed complaints against them were interviewed about how they chose their universities, how they formed their expectations of their experiences there, and how and when they perceived their expectations were not being met. Qualitative methods were used for this study because they were appropriate for the research question, meeting the criteria discussed by Bachiochi and Weiner (2002). Specifically, the research was exploratory; the context and participants' interpretations were both central to the research question, and the depth and richness of the data was important for understanding the dynamics underlying quantitative indications of ongoing differences in career experiences of men and women at universities. The women's stories were organized into theme clusters that could provide a basis for generating ideas for future theory and research concerning the difference between women's career expectations and their experiences, particularly at universities.

Sample and Method

The present study used a sample of twelve women who experienced sex discrimination at their universities and later filed suits against their universities after being unable to resolve their situations. This particular sample was appropriate for purposes of the present study because of the desire to examine career setbacks as a function of interactions between women and their organizations. Both graduate students and faculty were interviewed for the present investigation to examine the funneling effect in academia of women with advanced degrees including when they obtain those degrees. (Two of the three graduate students aspired to work in academia as professors. Also, the graduate students were working at their universities in positions related to their majors; one in a clinic, one in a lab, and one as a coach.) The material used for the present analysis was a subset of a larger entire interview. In particular, this analysis primarily concerned women's responses to the questions about why they went to the university and what their experiences of discrimination were. The remainder of the interview concerned the women's attempts to change their situations internally and their later use of legal processes (e.g., see Goltz, 2005).

To ensure that the discrimination claims of the interviewees for the study were not spurious, the sample was limited to women who had been plaintiffs in discrimination

cases that had been partially sponsored by a single non-profit organization. Sponsorship included some monetary funds for pursuit of the case as well as the use of the organization's name as a sponsoring party. Prior to sponsoring each case, legal professionals associated with the organization had reviewed a number of documents requested from the women and their lawyers in order to establish the validity of the case. Approximately forty percent of the women sponsored by the organization agreed to be interviewed for the study.

The women and their cases varied across a number of dimensions, some of which are displayed in Table 1. Cases concerned various types of discrimination, such as discrimination in athletics, sexual harassment, discrimination in compensation, and discrimination in promotion. Eight women sued public universities and six sued private universities, which were located across the United States. Women also varied substantially demographically. At the time of the interviews, the women varied substantially in their marital status, in whether they had children, and in age. Although information on race, religion, and sexual orientation was not requested, many of the women volunteered this information in their interviews. Women were Asian, Hispanic, African-American, Caucasian, and multi-racial; heterosexual and homosexual; and Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant. The women filed their court cases between 1980 and 1996. The interviews were conducted between 1999 and 2001, after most of their cases had been resolved. (This was done because the larger study also focused on their entire range of experiences, from the time they entered their universities through the legal process.) Interviews were conducted in person with the women in the towns and cities where they currently live, located across the United States.

Seven of the cases were settled before trial and one was settled three weeks into the trial. One woman's case was dismissed for not meeting the statute of limitations. Of the remaining cases, three women won at the lower level and two lost at the lower level. Of the cases won by the women, two were appealed by the university and overturned at higher levels of the court system. Both cases lost by women at the lower level were appealed. One of these appeals was denied; however, the university provided a small settlement to the woman so she would not appeal the case further. The other case was still in the appeals process when the woman was interviewed. These results are consistent with research indicating that, compared with other types of discrimination cases, employment discrimination plaintiffs win a lower proportion of hearings and trials, are more likely to have their cases appealed by defendants, and on appeal face more reversals (Clermont & Schwab, 2004) as well as research indicating that plaintiffs in academic cases fare even worse than plaintiffs in other employment discrimination cases (Hora, 2001; Pacholski, 1992; Valian, 1998).

The study used inductive methods, in that no preconceived framework was used to determine the questions asked other than to draw out the sequence of events in the women's stories. In addition, no preconceived framework was used in the identification of themes in the interview transcripts. The interview followed a semi-structured format in which an initial set of questions was developed to ascertain the women's experiences at their universities as well as their legal experiences. This method provides some consistency and control, but also allows additional questions to be tailored based on the direction of the responses of the interviewee (Neuman,

2000). Each interviewee's responses determined the time spent on each question and the introduction of additional issues. Interviews averaged 2 to $2^1/_2$ hours in length. Two women also supplied materials they had written about their experiences (one was a chapter in a book and the other was a speech).

Content analysis was conducted on transcripts of the taped interviews and supplemental materials to identify patterns of experiences. Themes of the transcripts were examined using QSR's N5 software. Similar comments were coded as a theme and then themes were organized into larger clusters of related issues, using the tree structure included in N5. Specialized software (Inspiration) that allows categories to be visually represented in a tree diagram was also used to help track and organize the themes into meaningful content groupings. Coding occurred iteratively in that initial themes and clusters were identified using the first few transcripts. Then additional transcripts were examined using the initial themes and clusters, and if a category cluster appeared inaccurate or incomplete, additional themes were added or the cluster was reorganized both in N5 and Inspiration. Following any reorganizations of categories, transcripts previously coded were re-examined and recoded if appropriate. Also, to increase the accuracy of coding, after a cluster was coded, reports which listed all coded phrases within a theme were generated using the software and used to examine the consistency of the coding. Items that were not coded consistently with other items within the category were recoded. Overall interrater agreement between the primary coder and a secondary coder who coded a sample of the data was 69 percent. This figure is not unexpected given the exploratory and inductive nature of the present study and is within the range acceptable for drawing tentative and cautious conclusions (Krippendorff, 1980). Following the analysis and interpretation of the data, participants were asked to read their interview excerpts along with the description of the study to verify accuracy and obtain feedback on whether the interpretation of the results was consistent with their experiences (e.g., Creswell, 1998). Interviewees' changes to interview excerpts were minor, not necessitating recoding, and their comments indicated support for the study's findings.

Development of Expectations

Themes from the interviews suggested that the women attempted to make a decision about whether to join the university based on the information they had about a certain set of characteristics of the university. They sought these characteristics based on their own skills, needs, and goals. However, in this decision process of trying to find the best option, they also faced some situational constraints that served to limit the opportunities they could consider. First, the most common sets of constraints the women mentioned are discussed. Next, the dimensions they thought were important when they decided to join their universities are presented.

Constraints
The constraints the women faced largely had to do with two aspects: family and personal lifestyle choices as well as the number and set of opportunities available at the time. Each of these constraints will be discussed in turn.

Table 1: *Description of Interviewees*

Interviewee	Role When Filed	Relevant Field/Area	University	Type of Sex Discrimination in Court Complaint
A	Faculty	Business	Private, Midwestern	Unequal pay & promotion
B	Grad. Student	Science	Public, Midwestern	Sexual harassment, Unequal educational opportunity
C	Faculty	Science	Private, Eastern	Unequal pay & promotion
D	Faculty	Medicine	Public, Western	Unequal hiring & promotion retaliation for complaint
E	Grad. Student	Phys. Ed.	Public, Western	Unequal educational opportunity & pay
F	Faculty	Soci. Sci.	Private, Midwestern	Unequal promotion
G	Grad. Student	Medicine	Public, Western	Retaliation for complaint
H	Faculty	Humanities	Public, Western	Unequal hiring
I	Faculty	Soci. Sci.	Public, Midwestern	Unequal pay & promotion
J	Faculty	Science	Public, Midwestern	Unequal promotion
K	Faculty	Humanities	Private, Western	Sexual harassment, unequal pay & promotion
L	Faculty	Soci. Sci.	Private, Eastern	Sexual harassment, unequal hiring, pay, promotion, conditions

Lifestyle choices.

Six women mentioned trying to balance their own needs and goals with those of their partner and family. In particular, most of the women who mentioned this aspect said they considered the jobs, schools, and religious institutions available in the community. Three of the women took a job at their universities because their husbands' jobs were in that location. One of these women even said explicitly that her decision was based only on the fact that her husband had a job offer from one of the universities she was considering and the decision had nothing to do with the two universities she was deciding between. Another woman was not as constrained as these three but did take her husband's employment opportunities into consideration. She looked at how flexible universities were in creating opportunities and space for her husband to do research. A fifth interviewee selected her university despite having to commute to another part of the country to see her significant other. She said she realized it was not ideal and didn't expect to stay there long because of that. Another was the sole support of four teenage children whom she reluctantly moved to another state to take her new position.

Available opportunities.

The number and nature of the options available at the time was a constraint discussed by several of the women. Two found the number of their options to be quite limited. One of these said she took a one-year, non-tenure track position that was open at the last minute. The other said she faced a tight job market and only had two job opportunities–the only two positions open in her area. These women were less able to get the kind of positions they desired. One of these women said she went to the university knowing it was not a good fit and intended to leave at some point. On the other hand, other women did not have such limitations, such as the woman who had post-doctoral training in molecular biology—a hot new area at the time—and the two women who discussed having additional opportunities due to affirmative action when they interviewed in the mid-seventies.

Three of the women were constrained by wanting to leave an unsatisfactory situation. Staying in their present situations were options, but not desirable ones. For instance, a faculty member reported she had worked in industry, found it unethical and then entered academia, thinking "the academic world was fair, challenging, interesting, all those good things." To her amazement, it was not. The first university she joined offered her very little compensation for the semester to teach a hundred students five afternoons a week, which stimulated her to look elsewhere.

In addition, four of the women spoke of their desires for a balanced, supportive situation that was not available at some of the universities they were considering. One faculty member, for instance, wanted a university that had a balanced approach to teaching and research and found that most schools emphasized mostly one or the other. Another reported that the other schools she could have selected did not have enough of the different positives she was looking for, including the flexibility of making something available for her husband. A third said some of her other options had a "factory feel." A graduate student said she had accepted an offer from another program, but was looking for a smaller program.

Dimensions of Expectations

When they were asked why they went to their respective universities in the first place, four themes emerged. Of most importance was that it appeared the university had an environment in which they could meet their goals. Women also discussed the likelihood they would be rewarded by the university for their efforts. A few women discussed whether their skills would meet the needs of the universities they were applying to. Finally, many women discussed their expectations that the university they chose had integrity and would treat them fairly. Specific examples from the interviews of women's discussions of these various individual and organizational dimensions are found in Table 2.

Suitable environment for goals. Personal goals varied across the women, given that they were at different stages of their educations and careers. The three graduate students discussed their hopes of getting a Ph.D. One who already had an M.D. degree said she wanted to get "more credentials than anybody else" so she could get a job as a professor at any university. Two of the three faculty who were not hired into tenure-track positions mentioned having the goal of eventually being hired into one. Tenure

was mentioned by four of six faculty who were looking at tenure-track positions, including one who said she "consciously made choices that included potential for tenure." The three remaining faculty members discussed their desires to teach and/or do research in their fields.

For many women, an important aspect of the belief that they could achieve their aspirations was that they thought the university would provide the right kind of environment for them to achieve their goals. Just as the goals varied across women, the types of environments they were seeking varied. Factors mentioned included the reputation of the department, the financial situation of the department, the programs offered at the institution, the type of students at the institution, the rank of the position offered, the salary offered, the mix of teaching and research at the institution, the opportunities available for spouses, and the equipment available for research.

Rewarded for efforts. A very strong theme that emerged from the interviews was that the women expected to be successful and receive rewards for their efforts in terms of degrees for the students and job security for the faculty. The graduate students discussed their expectations that they would complete and receive their degrees. Seven of the nine faculty discussed their expectations that if they did a good job they would be rewarded in terms of their career (e.g., receive a permanent position, a tenure-track position, or tenure).

For four of the women, one factor that appeared to have given the university the edge over the other offers extended to them was the fact that it appeared people at the university really wanted them. This is evident in some of the women's responses to the question of why they went to the university in the first place. For example, one graduate student said, "I think they recruited me highly." A faculty member said, "Well, actually, come to think of it, they offered me the job on the spot and I accepted it." Another one said, "Members of the faculty were enthusiastic in their invitation for me to join them." Given the absence of complete information about the job opportunity, the women may have interpreted this aggressive recruiting as a signal that they would be valued and treated well at the university; in other words that the organization would both provide the environment they needed for success and reward their efforts.

Fit with organization's needs. Six of the women also noted that it appeared they had the skills, knowledge, experience, interests, and/or abilities that were needed at the organization. Several women noted how their qualifications were well suited for the opportunity. For instance, one graduate student discussed how the university initially supported her plans for her education, implying she found a fit between her plans and their program. This finding of a fit wasn't true of all the women, however. One faculty member said she determined there was not a good match and decided it would probably be a short-term position for her.

Will be treated fairly. Finally, throughout the interviews, women often reiterated their initial expectations of fairness by the organization, meaning the delivery of what was promised in exchange for their efforts. This factor didn't appear to be something the women consciously looked for when they made their decisions to join their universities, but fairness was an assumption they had made and that they realized in

retrospect. The concept of fairness often came up when the women discussed their expectations that hard work would pay off in that rewards would follow. Some women explicitly said they had expected the university to be fair. For example, one said of her university's legal moves, "when you're brought up with a sense of fairness, any of these sort of tactics are just outrageous to you and you just can't believe people engage in them." Others conveyed their assumption that they would be treated fairly more indirectly such as by discussing their surprise when they found they had to work under unfair conditions. There was one exception, however. One woman said about the people around her, "They believe the institution is in some fundamental sense fair. And I never felt it was, I suppose. But I was surprised at the number of people who did and the kinds of mental gymnastics they would go through to make a ridiculous situation seem fair."

Discovering Unmet Expectations

Discovery Process

The women reported discovering the discrimination they experienced anywhere from immediately upon entry to the university to six or seven years later. The detection process appeared to take different forms for different women as well as for different types of expectations. Sometimes this discovery was an unfolding over time of patterns, sometimes it was triggered by a discrete event, and sometimes it was a combination of the two. For example, one woman stated, "The incidences probably started the minute that I walked in the door, but I wasn't looking for them and a lot of them were small and somewhat subtle. And so at first they didn't tend to hit my radar screen." When the discovery of unmet expectations was an increased awareness over time, the detection generally concerned the unequal treatment in terms of resources, tasks, interaction patterns, and so forth awarded to women at the university; in other words, the observation that the organization was not providing the environment necessary for goal achievement. Detections occurring through major discrete events primarily were of two forms: 1) the rejection of an application to a job, which was generally a permanent position in contrast to the woman's temporary one; and 2) the dismissal of the woman from her position–either as a student or faculty member (e.g., tenure denial). Thus, these discrete-event detections, in contrast to more gradual detections, mostly concerned the university not rewarding the women for their achievements. Also, it appeared that the large time span of the university experiences of the women interviewed for this study, which ranged from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s, appears not to have differentially affected the themes emerging in the study, with the exception of the overtness of the discrimination the women reported experiencing and their detection of it. Women who joined their universities at later dates were more likely to report experiencing more subtle, less obvious discrimination detected over a period of time because of its subtle but insidious nature. For instance, one interviewee who began her career in the mid 1980s likened her experiences to "a thousand little paper cuts."

Table 2: *Initial Perceptions of the University*

Factor	Examples
Suitable environment for reaching goals	There were wonderful facilities, outstanding students, a beautiful campus. I thought this is paradise. . . And what more could you want? Good equipment, a beautiful campus, interesting people, opportunity to get grants. They gave everybody a suite of an office and a lab. So I had a lab space and I had to get my own equipment. But it had tremendous opportunities. (C)
	The course load was light, the students were quite bright, and I could easily commute from a vibrant urban neighborhood, so I accepted. (F)
Good likelihood of receiving rewards for achievements	Unlike [university], where most assistant professors are not awarded tenure and accept their assignment as a "stepping stone," [university] was described as a place that rewarded scholarship and good citizenship with tenure. (F)
	Their expectations seemed reasonable in terms of research. So I thought if I worked hard and if I had reasonable success in publication that I had a good chance at achieving tenure. (A)
	So my hope was that it would become a permanent position and they told me if I did well, that I would end up with a tenure-track position there. That's what I expected. (H)
Opportunity matches skills	I had what I thought was a wonderful offer from [university] to come in as Associate Professor, albeit in Sociology, but to start a women's studies program. (L)
University has integrity	I went to [university] after leaving a very discriminatory position at a small Catholic college because I expected at a women's college I would receive fair treatment, that there would be no discrimination, and that I would be promoted and judged fairly. (C)
	I was naïve enough to think the process was fair, and I was taken by surprise when late in the year, one of my colleagues let me know things were not going so well. (F)
	But basically, I had done such a good job there that I really felt that I was going to be kept on the merits of what a good job I'd done and the people to compete against me were so weak that I felt they were just no competition. It hadn't occurred to me that it was their intention to hire a really weak person. (H)

Four of the women discussed how they had been given indications all along that they were doing a great job and had assumed that meant they would be rewarded until they were told suddenly they didn't get a job or tenure. Two of these women as well as another who had detected problems more gradually reported they had been somewhat aware of sex discrimination at the university in a number of different forms, but had

tried to "rise above it." They discussed how they thought that if they worked hard enough, the university would have no choice but to deliver the rewards promised.

Discussions of Unmet Expectations

Recall that the women joined their universities because the universities appeared to have an environment in which the women could meet their goals and because the women expected that they would be rewarded for their efforts and accomplishments. The women's discussions of their unmet expectations centered around three themes: 1) their belief that they had delivered their obligations to the organization in the form of their effort and accomplishments, 2) their belief that they had done so even though the organization had not provided a good environment or rewards for their work; and 3) their observation of discrimination patterns within the organization over time. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

I delivered. Eleven of the interviewees discussed their perceptions that they had done more than their part in terms of working hard and achieving at the university. As one woman said, "I had delivered on all my promises." In particular, the women discussed the extra hours they put in and additional tasks they took on. One said, "I took my labs home. I dissected on the kitchen table for the anatomy course. I sat there hours counseling students. I wrote dozens of letters of recommendation. I joined every committee." Another discussed how she worked ten and twelve-hour days $11^{1}/_{2}$ months of the year when her coaching job was supposed to be part time. A graduate student said while the men didn't have to do clinical duties if they did research, she had to do both. The women also discussed other achievements, such as the scholarly articles they had published, graduate students they had trained, and grants and high teaching evaluations they had received.

The university did not. The women also perceived that their universities did not carry out their part of the expected exchange. For instance, the graduate students experienced sexual harassment as well as a shortage of resources in terms of faculty time, grants, scholarships, and equipment for athletic and laboratory activities, particularly as compared with the male students. Faculty also experienced harassment and a lack of resources. Two faculty experienced sexual harassment directed at them, and several others saw harassment directed at other women, such as the female graduate students. Four of the faculty discussed their experiences of more subtle hostile behavior directed toward them, such as intentionally being left out of introductions, social activities, and meetings. Five faculty women discussed how their universities didn't provide adequate or equal resources for teaching and research, as compared with what the men received. This lack of resources as well as the presence of a hostile environment significantly affected women's abilities to succeed and provide their part of the exchange (i.e., scholarly achievements).

The lack of rewards from the university for goal achievement was another unmet expectation the women discussed. This was mentioned by all of the faculty and graduate students. They mostly discussed unequal salaries, and the lack of provision of salary increments, promotions, and positions commensurate with the woman's achievements, as compared with those given to male cohorts. However other rewards were also mentioned, such as the lack of recognition of the women's accomplishments

in both public and private meetings, such as individual performance reviews and end-of-the-year dinners. Specific examples from the interviews of the women's discussions of how the university didn't provide a suitable environment and rewards for achievements are presented in Table 3.

Not the first time. Contextual factors—historical and situational—were also important to the women's assessment of the situation. When the women sensed the university had not delivered its part of the exchange, they were not always sure as to whether this was intentional or unintentional as well as what the underlying reason for it was. Thus, they often sought additional information on context that helped them answer these questions. Some of this information came in the form of their own observations, but information gathered from others at the university, particularly women, was also important to perceiving patterns of discrimination. One type of contextual factor was the pattern of treatment by the university across male and female colleagues. Eleven women reported noticing not only that they were not treated well, but also that other women at the university were not treated as well as males with equivalent or lesser qualifications and achievements. In addition, six women noted that there were very few women in their departments or at the university. Women also reported observing many different types of discriminatory treatment in their departments and at the university as well as noticing that some of these behaviors were repeated across time, sometimes by the same people and sometimes by different people. Table 4 presents examples of discussions of each of these contextual factors.

Discussion

The present study builds on the emerging research that indicates women's organizational careers are a function of both the actions and perceptions of the women themselves and aspects of the organizations they study and work in (e.g. Liff & Ward, 2001). The interviews suggested the story of women's experiences at their universities began much like that of others engaged in education and job searches. They looked for the institution that would best fit their abilities and goals given certain constraints they faced. In particular, themes from the interviews suggested they considered three factors: whether the university would provide a suitable environment for them to meet their goals; whether the university would reward their achievements; and whether they had the set of skills the university needed. Thus, as has been found with other applicants (Breaugh & Starke, 2000), the women used their insights into their own desires and capabilities to determine how well they matched up to what the organization desired from them and had to offer in exchange. Also, as has been found with many job applicants, the women didn't have complete information about these institutions, so they made a few assumptions about each of them (Dipboye, 1992). Some of them made some assumptions that they would be treated well based on the fact that the university seemed to really want them. Many assumed their universities would be fair. This is consistent with the recruitment literature, which suggests that applicants make assumptions about organizations based on cues such as recruiter friendliness (Rynes, 1991).

Table 2: *University Violations of Expectations*

Factor	Examples
University's lack of provision of a good environment, resources	I didn't even have any paid coaches, I had to ask people to volunteer . . . and yet the counterpart sport had a full-time coach, had a paid assistant coach which was full time, had a restricted earnings coach, and a graduate assistant . . . And then scholarships . . . usually had between four and five. Yet again, baseball had their full complement of scholarships—as many as the NC2A allowed . . . My field looked like a city park field. We didn't even have a bathroom. We had to run over to that science building during games . . . We slept four to a room where the guys' teams would sleep two to a room. (E)
	I had thought I was going to have classes of thirty or fewer students. And there I had a large lecture class with 125 and no budget. No budget for audiovisuals, for outside speakers, or graduate assistants . . . And the lack of a budget included a lack of a budget for copying and a lack of a budget for secretarial services . . . So that meant that I was in a constant, literally, paper chase. There was a whole department meeting held on my use of paper. (L)
University's lack of provision of rewards for hard work	And they hired him at a higher salary than I was getting—that was the end of my first, beginning of my second year. They hired him at a higher salary. And I already had more publications than he did. And I said, this is blatant! (L)
	I'd had a fantastic sabbatical year. I'd pulled in two major—it was something like $210,000 of NSF grant money, which was—for an undergraduate college, it was extraordinary. I had written papers, I had gone to France and given a symposium in France, worked in a laboratory in France . . . I'd been invited by NSF to a meeting to discuss how to fund undergraduate colleges and I got one of the first grants that they called RIUIs, research in undergraduate institutions . . . And with the salary letter, they said I had a less than usual sabbatical year. But I knew something was wrong. They were setting it up. (C)
	I was doing good work, publishing and all that sort of stuff. But I wanted something more secure at that point and so I felt I had established a track record. I went to him and talked to him about it and the story that I kept getting all through the 1980s was that I couldn't have a tenure track position in that department, in internal medicine, because only M.D.s could get that kind of position and that Ph.D.s could not get that kind of position. And I knew that that was a lie because there were other guys, other men, Ph.D.s in my department, in internal medicine, that were getting tenured positions and basically all they were doing was just sort of going into the department chair and saying, look, I want this position, and they were being given tenured positions without any searches or any hesitation on the part of the chair. (D)

Table 3: *Patterns of Violations*

Factor	Examples
Poor environment, no rewards for other women	You could tell during, for instance, job searches for open positions in the department that there never was the apparent enthusiasm for a female candidate as there would be for a male candidate, when I would be looking at it thinking, what's he got that's so great? (J)
	I could observe the men at the meetings. If she said anything, which I always thought was like some of the most intelligent things that were ever said at these meetings, the men would roll their eyes and look at each other. (F)
	There was a real problem with sexual harassment in the department and it was really targeted primarily at the graduate students. But it was one that was very well documented at the time and did also involve some of the men that were involved in my case. (I)
	There was one female in the lab who had had several children while she was there. But of course, she was a hard worker, and was getting through very quickly. But he would make comments at the awards banquet about, you know, go give the praise to every male in the lab and when he gets to her he'd say, well, and she's always popping out babies. Not even mention her work. (B)
Good environment/ rewards for male cohorts	There was a male student that I was actually friends with in the lab, who was a senior student in the lab. He would always talk to him instead of talking to me. Nothing would go through to me; it would always go through him. (B)
	I asked one of the women that I was co-teaching with that first semester — I grumbled about him getting promoted with lesser credentials. He was put on tenure track and I was on the one-year renewable contracts. And this woman who was a friend — I mean, I did a lot of favors for her — without thinking she said, oh, you know, these nice young men, if we didn't put them on tenure track, they'd leave. (C)
	And those students asked me to talk to the chair, which I did. And he totally just, you know, no, no, no, no, no. Ok, well, a couple weeks later, a male grad student goes, asks for the exact same thing. Oh, great, sure, yeah. That'd be wonderful, you're so wonderful for asking for these things. (B)
	The boys get the extra help, like, for instance, people who did research, they didn't have to do clinical duties. I had to do full clinical duties plus the research. (G)
Scope of discrimination	Well, it is strange that even in such a huge university when there are so many women, there is nobody or almost nobody getting ahead. You should be able to make it and get ahead. (G)

The women accepted the opportunities and entered their institutions with expectations that they would provide hard work and achievements in exchange for their universities' provision of a suitable environment and rewards for success. This formed the women's "psychological contract" with their universities, in other words, their mental model of the unwritten exchange agreement between themselves and their universities. The women's psychological contracts appeared to be largely determined by their assessment of fit during the job or university search process. In addition, they had no expectations of any problems down the road, assuming the organization would honor the contract. But it turned out that the institution didn't provide what they expected. They had to achieve their successes in an impoverished and sometimes hostile environment, and then they did not receive rewards for those successes. Since this was counter to everything they had expected, they sought reasons for the university's behavior and found clues in terms of the patterns of discrimination they observed across people, situations, and time.

One contribution of the present study is that it was apparent that interviewees' assessments of their fit with the organization and their establishment of psychological contracts were not two separate processes–the information women gleaned for assessment of fit was used for establishing the contracts. Unfortunately, however, to date, these two processes have been studied separately, with the literature on fit occurring in the recruitment field and the literature on psychological contracts found in the work motivation area. Thus, future research should study these two processes together whenever possible because they are very much related. For example, the present investigation suggested that women may have assessed fit in terms of being able to develop a mutual exchange agreement since there were three exchanges that appeared important to applicants' determination of fit. In the recruitment literature, however, discussions of applicants' assessment of fit have focused more on the organizational characteristics applicants are attracted to rather than the possible exchanges the applicant is attending to (e.g., Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

In the case of unmet expectations, presumably the women were trying to assess whether the violations of their psychological contracts with their universities were intentional or under the control of their universities; as Rousseau (1995) suggested this assessment is important in contract violation discovery. Their examination of the patterns of discrimination in the organization was probably important to this assessment. One model that could explain this is Kelley's (1967) attribution theory, which suggests that attributions of causality of a behavior are determined in part by examining the distinctiveness of the behavior and the consistency of the behavior. Thus, in the case of contract violations that are possibly motivated by gender bias, the women might have been trying to assess: 1) Does the university behave this way with other women but not other men? (A "yes" answer would suggest high distinctiveness, according to Kelley's model) and 2) Does the university behave in a discriminatory manner across time, situations, and people? (A "yes" answer would be high consistency according to Kelley's model). Patterns in the university that suggest high distinctiveness and consistency may indicate to employees that the violation was in

fact a display of discrimination by the organization and was under the organization's control. Future research is needed to further examine this possibility.

Results of the present study contain both the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research. The data is richer than data from quantitative studies, but conclusions about causality are tentative and generalizability can be difficult to establish due to the small sample size. For instance, it should be kept in mind that the conclusions made in the present study were based on interviews with women who had become frustrated enough that they eventually sought outside avenues for achieving justice. It is not expected that these observations necessarily represent the experiences of the typical woman at the typical university. In addition, the present study relied on self-report data, which focuses on individual perceptions of situations. Still, the study's results should be valuable for understanding the larger context of women's experiences in discriminatory environments, including both their initial expectations and how the discrimination they faced affected these expectations. In addition, the study suggests areas for further theoretical refinement and empirical investigation in terms of recruitment research and research on psychological contracts.

Another possible limitation of the present study is that the set of women interviewed might be somehow different than women who did not receive support from the organization that supplied the list of women for the study. The most apparent difference would be that, as women remarked in their interviews, the receipt of funding from the organization provided not only financial, but also emotional, support at a very difficult time. Women not funded by this organization may not have experienced that validation, which could color their perceptions of their experiences; however, they could have gotten help from other sources that would have provided the validation. Nonetheless, a conservative interpretation is that since this collection of interviews represents the experiences of a group of women who did receive some outside financial and emotional support, their overall experiences of trying to redress their situations are likely to have been more positive than that of other women.

Results of the present study have some practical implications for both women who are managing their careers and for organizations that are seeking to retain women and prevent lawsuits. The research literature suggests that with realistic expectations, an individual is less likely to experience violations of the perceived exchange agreement (Rousseau, 1995). Thus, when assessing possible employment and educational opportunities, women should make every effort to obtain credible information about the extent to which the organization has treated women fairly. Often, there are previous instances of the same problems. Two of the faculty women, for example, said they hadn't realized their universities had been previously sued for sex discrimination. A further implication is that without credible information about past treatment of women, women should be cautious about making any assumptions that the organization will be fair or honor any psychological contracts made. Women should also be careful not to engage in denial of what is happening all around them, such as by thinking: 1) if they work hard enough the organization can't possibly discriminate or violate the contract; or 2) discrimination at the organization may be targeted toward other women but will not affect them. In the present study, these were themes that were common with women who were surprised about the contract violations.

Implications for organizations seeking to recruit and retain women include the fact that it appears important to applicants to discover not only the match between their qualifications and the organization's needs, but also what the organization will provide in the form of resources, the environment, and rewards for goal achievement. Thus, organizations should seek to improve and advertise these aspects for potential employees. However, it is also important that organizations provide applicants with realistic previews of the work environment, resources, and rewards so they have accurate models of the exchange relationship (e.g., Rousseau, 1995). Unfortunately, most previous recruitment research has offered little help to organizations in this regard because, as Rynes (1991) noted, much of it has concerned effects of recruiter characteristics, recruitment methods, and administrative policies on applicants' attraction to the job. The present results suggest that organizations may need to focus less on these aspects of recruiting and more on what they can offer potential employees in terms of the environment and resources to do their work as well as rewards for their achievements.

It was also evident from the interviews that organizations can lose some extremely talented and hard working employees if they don't provide equity in terms of resources and rewards—discrimination can result in perceived violations of psychological contracts formed during recruitment and hiring. In the present study, the women, who were all quite able and accomplished, believed they would receive adequate resources for doing their work as well as rewards for their achievements. Consistent with the equity model of motivation (Adams, 1965) as well as the organizational justice literature on effects of the violation of psychological contracts (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), when these expectations were not met for the women, but were provided to their male peers, the women became much less satisfied with, and loyal to, their organizations. In the end, whether the women left their universities voluntarily or involuntarily, or stayed on in an unhappy situation, their employers lost what were previously very talented and productive employees. This suggests that perhaps too much attention has been paid by organizations to addressing discrimination primarily to avoid lawsuits. Although lawsuits are costly, discrimination costs organizations much more in terms of the loss of productive, valuable employees, either through turnover or reduced organizational commitment. However, with regard to discrimination, this is a cost that has been pretty much overlooked by corporations, which have focused much more on legal ramifications of discrimination in the workplace (e.g., Bisom-Rapp, 1999; Gutek, 1996; Edelman, Uggen, & Erlanger, 1998).

This is not to say that organizations should not be concerned with minimizing lawsuits. The present results contain a number of implications for avoiding discrimination lawsuits, including the implication that equitable treatment in terms of the provision of work environment, resources, and rewards to men and women is important. In addition, however, the present results indicate that employees tend to look for reasons behind their experiences of inequitable treatment, including whether there are patterns of discrimination in the organization across time, situations, and people. Their discovery of these patterns may lead them to file suits because they interpret this as an indication that the violation was intentional or under the

organization's control. Therefore, organizations should be aggressive in seeking to break these cycles and patterns of discrimination so that when inequitable treatment does occur, it is an anomaly rather than a part of an overall pattern in the organization.

In summary, the present study relied on interviews with twelve women in previous sex discrimination cases against universities in order to discover how the women chose to enter universities, how they developed their expectations, and how they discovered their expectations were violated. Results suggested the processes behind these choices and perceptions included the women's assessment of their fit with the organization, their development of psychological contracts, and their discovery of the university's violations of their expectations as well as an increased awareness of patterns of discrimination at the university. Results have some implications for theory as well as practical implications for women who are managing their careers and for organizations seeking to recruit and retain women. Among these implications, there is a need for further research that simultaneously considers applicants' determinations of fit, their development of psychological contracts, and their discovery of violations of contracts.

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