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## Managing Multicultural Collaborations in a Reality of Power Differences

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### Introduction

This chapter tells the stories of 16 women managers who built collaborative projects, overcoming cultural gaps as well as social and organizational power differences. The study aims to learn from their practical experience in facing various personal and organizational challenges: differences in work practices, cultural gaps, conflicting interests, and financial uncertainties. Following a series of in-depth interviews with these managers, three models of collaboration were identified. For each model, we describe how the collaboration was perceived and understood, and the work practices that were developed to build and sustain it. Finally, we analyze each model in light of the academic literature on power, conflict, and collaboration.

The general area of this chapter is trends in women's leadership and conflict management. We focus on practices that enable women managers to cope with the challenges of multicultural collaborations, undertaken in a reality of social and organizational inequalities. Specifically, we studied collaborations between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) of pluralistic Judaism and community-based organizations of immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU). These managers worked in dyads to build joint ventures, aimed at introducing pluralistic Judaism to FSU immigrants in Israel. Pluralistic Judaism seemed suitable for the immigrant communities because of its open and tolerant approach to religion. Collaboration between the two types of organizations was also supported by foundations that promote pluralistic Judaism in Israel. These foundations hoped that the endorsement of pluralistic Judaism

by FSU immigrants would turn it into a stronger alternative to the prevailing orthodox approaches.

We started this research project expecting to learn more about multicultural collaborations between the veteran Israelis and the FSU immigrants. To our surprise, we found that the most meaningful challenge that emerged from the interviews was not culture but power. The pluralist Jewish NGOs were stable and large organizations located in central cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Their managers and staff members typically came from a high socioeconomic background, and were paid for their work. Conversely, the community-based immigrant organizations were small and financially unstable. They were located in peripheral towns, based their activities on volunteer work, and their members typically came from a low socioeconomic background. As a result, the collaborations were embedded in a reality of power differences, which were extant at the social, organizational, and interpersonal levels. This chapter aims to learn from the creative solutions developed by women managers to cope with the challenges of power and cultural differences within their collaborative efforts.

The chapter is composed of several parts. We first present our conceptual framework, providing a theoretical overview of two approaches to power and collaboration in the organizational and psychological literature. We then describe our research methodology and present our main findings: three ways of understanding and managing power differences that emerged from the interviews. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, focusing on the way power can be transformed and managed in collaborative efforts devised by women managers.

### **The social psychology of power**

Research perspectives vary in the way they define, understand, and study power. In this chapter we focus on social-psychology perspectives, which attempt to understand power by considering the situation, the individual, and the interaction between them. The first approach focuses on situational power, exploring the effect of powerful versus powerless positions on behavior, cognition, and emotion (Magee and Smith, 2013). The second approach focuses on power as a personal goal or value, investigating the motivation to gain control and dominance over others (Schwartz 1992; Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004; Rohan, 2000).

As a situational factor, power is often defined as asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations (Magee and Galinsky, 2008; Dépret and Fiske, 1993; Keltner, Gruenfeld and Anderson, 2003; Thibaut

and Kelley, 1959). The word “asymmetric” is used to capture the relative state of dependence between individuals or groups (Emerson, 1962; Magee and Galinsky, 2008). Studies of power consistently indicate that power increases self-focus and decreases behavioral and mental inhibitions. Compared to the powerless, powerholders are more attentive to their thoughts and subjective experiences (Briñol, Petty, Valle, Rucker and Becerra, 2007; Weick and Guinote, 2008), feel more confident to reveal their interests (Anderson and Galinsky, 2006), and are more likely to translate their thoughts into action and realize their personal goals (e.g., Guinote 2007; Smith, Jostmann, Galinsky and Van Dijk, 2008; Galinsky, Gruenfeld and Magee, 2003). Power also increases social distance (Magee and Smith, 2012), and is likely to decrease the attention that powerholders devote to others. Studies consistently suggest that power reduces accuracy in estimating the interests and emotions of others (Anderson and Berdahl, 2002; Galinsky, Magee, Inesi and Gruenfeld, 2006; Keltner and Robinson, 1997) and increase stereotyping and objectification (e.g., Fiske 1993; Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske and Yzerbyt, 2000; Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee and Galinsky, 2008).

As a personal value, power is defined as expressing the motivation to gain dominance and control over people and resources (Schwartz 1992). Motivationally, it conflicts with benevolent and universalistic values, which express the motivation of concern and care for others – even at the expense of personal interests. The content and relations of these values have received vast support from empirical research in over 70 cultures. Findings indicate that the meaning people attribute to power values is similar across cultures. They also show that women across cultures attribute less importance than men to power values, and more importance to values of benevolence and universalism (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz and Rubel, 2005). Furthermore, the differences between men’s and women’s value priorities become larger in countries with more gender equality. These findings may suggest that when women reach a position of social power, they are able to promote an alternative set of values, instead of endorsing a dominant male discourse (Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009).

So far, only a few experimental studies have explored the interaction between situational power and power values. These studies support the notion that situational power has a disinhibiting effect, and allows powerholders to better pursue their personal goals and values. Studies suggest that high-power individuals with a communal orientation demonstrated greater generosity than others (Chen, Lee-Chai and Bargh, 2001), and that prosocial individuals were more interested in building a relationship with their opponent in a negotiation task (Galinsky et al.,

2008). Some studies point to motivational and emotional ambivalence among women powerholders, who are often expected to display both dominant and communal behaviors (Fong and Tiendes, 2002). Although these studies point to the challenges facing women who wish to use the power in a prosocial manner, they do not specify the practices that enable them to do so.

The current study aims to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the managerial practices developed by women in organizational power positions, which hold prosocial values. Specifically, the study explores ways in which women managers perceive and manage situational power differences, in collaborative efforts that promote values of equality and social justice. How do they interpret and understand their power position and the interaction with their partners? And which practices do they use to cope with power differences in their collaborative efforts?

## Methodology

Sixteen in-depth interviews were conducted among NGO managers. Eight were managers of pluralist Jewish organizations, and eight were managers of community organizations of FSU immigrants. All the managers led dyadic joint ventures aimed at introducing pluralistic Judaism to FSU immigrants in the year prior to the interview. The interviews lasted from one to two hours. The interviewees were asked to describe their collaboration with the other organization, sharing the “life story” of their collaboration, from the time they first met their partners to their current relationship. We asked them to describe meaningful experiences related to the collaboration, including the main challenges and turning points. These semiconstructed interviews allowed us to obtain a rich and detailed description of various collaboration experiences. When content-analyzing the interviews, we focused on the ways the managers perceived the relationship with their partners, paying special attention to the managerial mechanisms they employed. The next section describes three models of collaboration that emerged from this content analysis.

## Major findings: three models of collaboration

### Bounded collaborations: managing by defining

The basic assumption of all the collaborative efforts was that each organization could bring unique resources to the collaboration, and that by combining these resources a new and attractive project could be formed.

In “bounded” collaborations, these resources were protected by setting clear boundaries: well-defined roles and responsibilities, which allowed each partner to perform tasks and make decisions in her area of expertise. The main resource of the FSU immigrant organizations was perceived as their relationship with and credibility among the community of FSU immigrants. Consequently, they were often responsible for marketing the workshops and organizing the groups of participants. Pluralist Jewish organizations in this model were seen as having a deep understanding of Judaism, as well as knowledge about fundraising processes and a large network of potential funders and collaborators. Consequently, they were often responsible for the content of the workshops, as well as for fundraising processes.

Creating clear boundaries offered many advantages. It allowed each partner to work independently in her area of expertise and minimized the risk of sharing unique resources. The clear division of labor also enabled quick and effective performance of tasks. Since many tasks were promoted independently by one of the collaborators, communication was largely based on coordination rather than joint decision-making. This type of interaction minimizes the need to cope with differences in values and ideologies, which may reveal conflicts and gaps. Moreover, setting clear boundaries helped the FSU immigrants cope with their biggest fear – being taken advantage of. Specifically, they were afraid that once their collaborators had created a meaningful relationship with their community, they would not be needed any more. As described by one of the FSU managers,

She wants my territory, that’s the problem. Many people want it, but I don’t get the money to develop it, I don’t know how to succeed and how to approach funders. My community is a golden resource and everyone knows it. I have gold and the other side knows how to sell it.

The strong connection to the FSU immigrant community is described here both as “territory” and as “gold” – two precious resources that have to be protected. The threat is the partner – who wants these resources to herself. Consequently, in case boundaries were crossed, they were immediately protected and reinforced:

I heard that my partner approached my target audience directly without my knowing. I called her immediately and told her that I prefer to contact the participants. This was enough; I didn’t have to

really 'open' the matter. That's why I like working with her – a hint is enough, I can gently suggest that the line was crossed and she will understand.

The FSU immigrant organizer describes her collaborator as a threat to the special relationship with her community. In this state of mind, boundaries have a restricting but soothing impact, which allows the managers to restore their security. Bounded collaborations helped contain any conflict and soothe anxieties, but they also left each side inside her "territory." Consequently, each manager was also left alone when dealing with problems and dilemmas, and the ability of both collaborators to support one another remained limited.

#### *Power in bounded collaborations*

In bounded collaborations, roles and responsibilities were often defined not only as a function of organizational and professional expertise but also as part of the social context. Among the FSU immigrants, the immigration process reflected a movement from strength to weakness, from centrality to periphery, and from high to low socio-economic status (Gomel, 2009). The experience of unstable power is also familiar to the pluralist Jewish organizations: these organizations may be "strong" in comparison to the immigrant organizations, but they are "weak" in the context of Israeli society, in which they try to offer an alternative to the orthodox Jewish establishment. They were therefore familiar with the experience of low power in the social arena, and with the potential transience of success. Their commitment to values of equality and social justice was translated in these collaborative efforts into a large investment of time, energy, and funds in the joint project.

Managers from both sides openly discussed how the collaborative effort can become a mechanism that enables the pluralist Jewish organizations, with their greater social and financial resources, to empower the FSU organizations. Issues related to power often appeared in the interviews when managers described fundraising procedures for the joint project:

She is up there. She has to find out when we can get funding for the project, and she can write the application. If I had an employee that could write applications...but I don't. So I used her abilities, her experience, her network. She meets our funders in the neighborhood grocery store – I don't.

Fundraising abilities are therefore seen as resulting from social power – one side has access to knowledge and social connections that the other side cannot reach. The FSU managers perceived the collaboration as a way to attain social resources that were lost in the immigration process. The other side was therefore seen as a means of meeting organizational goals and needs. Managers of pluralist Jewish organizations also described the influence of the social context on their work practices, recognizing that they come from a more privileged starting point:

I felt that our organization has to do most of the work in terms of writing grant proposals and approaching funders. I knew that our knowledge, connections and skills allow us to do things that our partner cannot do, but I also felt like a gambler: I had no idea if all this effort would pay off. At some point I decided that I can't invest so much time in fundraising anymore – I have to limit myself.

Interestingly, while the FSU managers were focused on setting boundaries for their partners – the pluralist Jewish managers set boundaries for themselves. Their investment in fundraising for the project became easier when viewed in a wider social context, as part of a larger effort to create a more equal and just society:

Our organization believes in equality values. The collaboration with the immigrant organization gives a practical meaning to these values, a part of our *tikun olam*.

*Tikun olam* in Hebrew means “repairing the world,” and it constitutes one of the basic Jewish obligations: to act as individuals in ways that will help make the world a better place. Here, the asymmetrical division of labor within the collaboration is described as a way of correcting injustice and inequality in the larger social context. Both sides were reluctant to be in a collaboration, enabling the stronger side to use her power to control and oppress the other. Seeing the collaboration in the context of societal power relations allowed them to interpret the asymmetrical division of labor as part of a larger effort for social change. However, the two sides did not utilize the collaboration to change themselves – their abilities, expertise, connections, and resources all stayed as they were before the collaboration occurred. The same boundaries that contained conflicts and relaxed anxieties also bounded the possibility of internal transformation.

### **Ad hoc collaborations: helping each other grow**

I know that I can always pick up the phone and call her for help. Things that used to take me such a long time – she does in a single phone call. And that works the other way around: if she needs to know something or reach someone – I am always there for her.

In ad hoc collaborations, each partner acted to promote her own goals, asking the other for help in specific areas. Each organizational entity was perceived as inherently strong and independent, but with some shortcomings that the partner could help overcome. The collaboration was based on a motivation to benefit from the connection between the two sides, and resources such as knowledge, connections, and public legitimization were made available on demand:

We call or email each other at any hour, and we help each other in all areas: giving advice, facing the Israeli bureaucracy... We never said 'no' to each other, we always made an effort to help and support one another.

Ad hoc collaborations ranged from large-scale initiatives such as promoting legislation for civil marriage, to local projects such as promoting a specific media story. These collaborations were mostly based on existing resources, which were utilized toward new ends. As a result, ad hoc collaborations were easy to manage and consumed little time and energy. One of the pluralist Jewish managers described the benefit of the collaboration in her efforts to change legislation:

There are 300,000 families in Israel that pay taxes and perform military service but they can't have a normal life – they can't be buried or get married. When we try to promote laws of civil marriage and burial the collaboration with FSU community organizations is crucial.

Ad hoc collaborations were often based on a warm, informal relationship, which went beyond the professional or organizational interactions, as two collaborating managers describe each other:

She is an amusing women, I love working with people that have brains and a sense of humor. She is also very active and does a lot. We are both 'doers,' that's why I thought that we could work together.

My partner is woman of culture, like me. She loves music, literature; we share the same appreciation of culture. When I enter a room I look



around and search for people that are like me. I found a collaborator with the same culture and the same standing – that’s a good fit.

The strong personal connections appear important for several reasons. First, these collaborations often operated without a formal organizational structure that provides regulation and accountability. Once a resource (knowledge, connections, exposure) was transmitted, there was no way to supervise how it was used. The strong personal ties provided some psychological safety in the absence of a clear organizational framework. The interpersonal relationship also helped bridge organizational and cultural differences. The personal similarities enabled people from very different places to work together in sensitive and complex situations, which were not amenable to more formal collaboration.

Another characteristic of ad hoc collaborations was flexibility in separation and in reconnection. Connections were formed, detached, and formed again constantly. Joint action was based on the willingness to act together for a certain task at a specific point in time. This flexibility was evident in the legitimacy granted to using the knowledge, connections, and insights gained during the collaboration in other contexts, as put by one of the one of managers:

The collaboration helped me frame our messages better and understand what would attract the FSU immigrants and what would deter them. Today when I interview in the Russian media I think about the conversations I had with my partner

And as expressed by her collaborator concerning her future plans:

Today we have moved forward – we have activities related to Jewish identity and we don’t need collaborators. We no longer need help from a ‘veteran’ organization... When we have time and money we can do another joint project. There is still a lot of potential for a good partnership. We have many ideas: building a Jewish library, initiating family activities, concerts. We are still in touch, she visits me from time to time to say hello

The ability to learn from the partner and consequently become more independent, which was seen as a threat in the “bounded” collaborations, is described as a legitimate achievement and as a source of pride. In addition, the separation is not seen as absolute but as a temporary break, which carries the potential for joint action when conditions are ripe

again. The high flexibility allows managers to separate without losing the trust that was already established, or the opportunity to resume the relationship in the future.

*Power in ad hoc collaborations*

Power differences in ad hoc collaborations were hardly discussed among collaborators. Nevertheless, power played a central role in the way managers chose to cope with conflict. Interviews with managers of FSU immigrant organizations yielded several areas of conflict and disagreement at the ideological and organizational levels. While the pluralist Jewish managers frequently mentioned the benefits of revealing the collaboration, the managers of the FSU immigrant organizations realized that such public exposure could also produce threats, as demonstrated below:

I like it that she promotes civil marriage, but not that she legitimizes marriage between Jews and non-Jews... Her statements on this issue personally offend me and many of the people in my organization. They may also offend some of our funders. That's why I sometimes avoid mentioning this collaboration.

As indicated by FSU manager,

Her workshops cost money, a lot of money. The families in my community tell me that other pluralist Jewish organizations offer similar workshops for less money, and the ideology is not as 'leftist' as well.

The relationship with a pluralist Jewish organization is portrayed here as something that could potentially harm the positioning and reputation of the FSU community organization. The manager cannot promote a workshop that is too expensive for her target audience, or display messages that are considered by this community as illegitimate or radical. Interestingly, despite the warm informal relationship between the partners, these conflictual issues were never discussed, and sensitive situations were resolved unilaterally:

I gradually identified the problematic workshops, and started sending my community members only to the workshops on holidays and 'bar/bat mitzvah.' I am willing to provide my target audience and she will make money – but only in areas that do not harm my organization and my personal beliefs.

The FSU managers were highly selective in the information they passed on: when the information could bring personal or organizational benefits, it was quickly transmitted, but when it could hurt the organization or the relationship, it was absent from the communication with the partner. We interpret this mechanism as an attempt of self-protection by the “weaker” side in the collaboration. Conducting a meaningful dialogue on ideological and organizational issues is a process with uncertain results: open dialogue could promote positive change, but could also harm the relationship or even destroy it. The partial and selective communication pattern allowed the “weak” side freedom of action: the FSU managers acted in ways that ensured their independence and protected their organizational interests, without harming the relationship with their partner.

### **Transformative collaborations: changing through interaction**

Our joint work produced a new model of working with parents and their children. We use it in our organization and teach others how to apply it.

A third model was “transformative” collaborations, which emphasized learning, creativity, and change as central elements. These collaborations produced new projects and initiatives, mutually created by the two sides. The mutual creative work processes produced a shift on both sides, which moved from a position of “knowing” to a position of doubt, curiosity, and openness, as described by a manager from one of the pluralist organizations:

Through the work process I received a lot on the personal level. A lot of things that I thought I understood – I realized that I didn’t. I realized that I was born with opportunities that other people don’t have. I had to start asking questions about my identity, go deeper inside.

Transformative collaborations usually started as bounded or ad hoc collaborations. Over time, some of them changed: in addition to promoting organizational projects, they became invested in meaningful learning processes that transformed their basic assumptions and often resulted in the mutual creation of new projects and products. Transformative collaborations often started with clear roles and boundaries to protect the unique resources of each organization. These boundaries defined areas in which each side was responsible and could make the decisions. In most cases, it was the FSU organization that set these boundaries,

mostly to protect its relationship with the community, as stated by one of the FSU managers:

I had a lot of concerns. People that came from Russia know what brainwashing is and they are not interested. She wants me to market our project in the newspapers and on TV, but I object. I think that publicity will make children and parents go elsewhere.

While managers of bounded collaborations mostly acted to protect and preserve these boundaries, managers of transformative collaborations were interested in changing them once a more meaningful understanding was achieved, as demonstrated below:

Today she understands us better. There are things that are still impossible, like working with the parents. She still doesn't understand them. But with the staff and with the children it is already easier. In the beginning I attended every seminar, every lecture. Now I can stay out of class and be calm.

Initially, each manager seems to be committed to protecting her cultural and organizational practices. The meaningful encounter with the partner allowed the partners to gradually increase the areas of mutual understanding, and consequently enabled the managers to exercise less control over the actions of their partners. For the managers of pluralist organizations, the hardest thing was losing control over the workshop contents, and allowing the FSU organization staff members to facilitate the workshops:

The most difficult thing was when the staff members worked in a foreign language or without us being present. We had to count on them and give up our need for control. We had to realize and accept that we can never know everything that is going on.

Despite her concerns, the process of losing control was seen as essential to creating a deep and meaningful partnership. An important practice that allowed for meaningful dialogue between the partners was long staff meetings, in which differences and misunderstandings were discussed. In bounded as well as in ad hoc collaborations, short meetings without any conflict were seen as the most successful, because they were pleasant and efficient. By contrast, in transformative collaborations a lot of time was set aside for meetings, and they were seen as a

space in which conflict could be transformed into learning. Rather than “drawing the lines,” as in bounded collaborations, conflict was seen as an opportunity to reach a deeper understanding of one another:

In our meetings the atmosphere is that you can say anything. No one will ever tell you that you are wrong. This is our ground rule – we want to understand the interests and needs of everyone and find a solution that takes them into account. I know that no one will tell me that I am wrong or that they disagree with me. We have other words for that, we ask: what do you think about this? Is there something we can do differently? Everything between us is different but we have something in common: we try to listen, understand, and contribute to the discussion.

The two sides spent time not only in the meetings themselves but also in preparing for them. Preparation made it possible to process concerns and dilemmas into constructive propositions and options, particularly when sensitive issues were discussed:

Before the meeting I discuss things with my VP. We think together what we don't want, what we do want, and what we can suggest as an alternative. We learned that things have to be explained: we think that what you are offering will be problematic to our community members, and because of that we want to offer an alternative.

When conflicting interests surfaced, the two sides invested time and energy in looking for a creative solution that would meet the basic needs and goals of each organization. The staff meetings were described as a creative place, in which the two sides could invent new solutions to existing challenges:

One of our most successful projects is family trips to places with an interesting Jewish heritage. It started because our partners wanted to reach the parents in our community, but we were afraid that they would see lectures on Judaism as religious coercion. We thought about this project together, and it turned out to be a very powerful idea.

#### *Power in transformative collaborations*

As in bounded collaborations, managers of transformative collaborations discussed social and organizational inequalities, and took them into account in work practices and role definitions. However, pluralist

managers in transformative collaborations did not just allow their FSU partners to enjoy the financial efforts but asked them to be in charge of the financial aspects of the collaboration:

My partner talked once about a past experiences of feeling used, when she worked with government officials who managed funds that were supposed to reach immigrants but no one knew where the money went exactly...I realized that in our partnership I had to give her the reins in any aspect related to funding, so that she could be free of worry that I might act like the establishment. I didn't have to talk about this directly and tread on her toes, I simply offered that she take charge of the financial aspects of the collaboration and she was very pleased.

Managers of both types of organizations described how control over funds helped promote trust and overcome the anxiety of being used, as demonstrated below:

When I met my partner for the first time I felt a wish to approach, but at the same time suspicion and mistrust. They thought that we want to 'take over.' In the course of time, more trust was established and they were less afraid that we would take the money. They understood that we are together in this, and became less suspicious of us.

As a manager of an FSU organization put it,

Over time I saw what the money is used for, and I see that they deserve it. Today I understand the value of their work and I want to pay them for it.

Another work practice that transformed power relations was the willingness of the managers from the pluralist organizations to attend various activities organized by their collaborators. This willingness seems to have developed over time: in the early stages, managers sought to be efficient in connecting the knowledge and experience that already existed within each organization. Over time, some of them realized that investing more time and energy in the relationship could be worthwhile. As one of the FSU managers stated,

In the beginning we wanted the collaboration to be smaller. They wanted to work with each of our staff members to build their

programs, but I said no – our people are smart and experienced, you can give us some lectures, and my staff members will build their programs alone.

In this collaboration, the first step was conducting a workshop on Jewish pluralism for the NGO staff, and then helping the staff members develop and conduct workshops for the FSU community members. The FSU manager asked the pluralist manager and her staff to participate in the entire workshop:

When we started the seminar my partner said that I had to facilitate this workshop myself. The plan was to send them my best facilitators, but she said no – I want them to meet you. And so I came. Even if the lecture was in Russian – I was there.

In a collaboration based on the assumption of efficiency, this could never happen. Not only did the manager of the organization perform work that her facilitators could do but she also spent her valuable time listening to a lecture in a language she does not understand. Under business logic, this is a waste of time. But from a multicultural perspective, it was a worthwhile experience:

Being in the seminar created a situation in which the staff members and I met face to face. This was one of the most important things that happened: the medium is the message. If we talk about multicultural collaboration, the way we handle the project must reflect this. The fact that I and my staff members took part in the training seminar allowed them to feel that they are seen and heard in Israeli society. This presence consumed a lot of our time, but I think it was important. Even when the class was in Russian, we came. We didn't understand a thing. But that was also important – we could experience the meaning of 'not understanding.' This is what immigrants feel.

Practically as well as symbolically, the presence of the manager and her staff sent a message of equality and recognition. Both sides took part in an experience of learning, as well as in an experience of helplessness due to cultural differences and language gaps. Another advantage was that the manager of the pluralist organization started to be perceived as part of the FSU organization, and not as an outsider. The possibility of speaking with the FSU staff members directly and respectfully was essential to building trust, as demonstrated below:

For me it was important that she teach the materials herself. Now my staff members like her a lot. She doesn't speak down to them, as if they know nothing because they are immigrants; she speaks with respect and dignity. Now my staff members see her as a partner, and that helps them accept the contents. Now they know that she is one of us.

Conducting the staff meetings in the offices of the FSU organizations, often after conventional work hours, was another practice that compensated for social inequalities:

I realized that my partner doesn't own a car, and that her staff is composed of volunteers that come after work. Although the evenings are usually my time off, I decided to come to their offices in the evening. I realized that for me this is not so difficult, since I have a car and I get paid for the hours I invest in this project.

This manager describes an increasing awareness of her social positioning, made salient by the comparison to her partner. Things that are usually taken for granted, such as having a car or getting paid for work, become social privileges, and this realization is transformed into more considerate work practices. The movement to a more flexible and curious position seems to carry over into encounters with people from other groups as well:

Today I learn from meeting people that are different from me: veteran Israelis, religious people, Arabs. I am right wing, not extreme but right wing. Last week I met Arabs in a training course for NGO managers. The encounter was very interesting because I don't know a lot about them. The collaboration created a desire to enjoy learning, a curiosity to meet and understand someone different.

In sum, managers of transformative collaborations describe a challenging work process, which involved a vast investment of time and energy, and the willingness to lose control. At the same time, they describe a meaningful learning process, which promoted personal and organizational growth. This is how one of the managers describes the collaborative process in retrospect:

This process is about opening doors. If you open a door – people come in, and if you don't, they stay out. The most important principle is



opening the door – tell me your story and I will tell you mine... Cats and dogs can come in because the doors are open. Who knows what frightening things may happen. It isn't easy to learn how to lose control, and to realize that the other can also control – even if she is a new immigrant and her Hebrew is not so good. It's a lot of work and it's a waste of time – but it opens the heart.

## Conclusions

The current study contributes to the existing literature by introducing three ways developed by women managers that allowed them to cope with social and organizational power differences and build sustainable collaborations. Many women strive to reach power organizational and social positions, overcoming explicit and implicate barriers. However, once women become managers (become organizational powerholders), they face a new set of challenges. Women are more likely than men to endorse prosocial values such as benevolence and universalism (Schwartz and Rubel, 2005), particularly when gender equality is achieved (Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009). Such women are motivated to develop prosocial managerial practices, which allow them to use the power vested in their hands in responsible, respectful, and communal ways.

Past experimental studies suggest that although power positions often lead to stereotyping and objectification processes (e.g., Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Fisk, 1993), powerholders who endorse prosocial values can demonstrate generous and relationship-oriented behaviors (Galinsky et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2006). The current study contributes to this literature by demonstrating how organizational power positions and prosocial values can interact in complex and uncontrolled real-life situation. Focusing on women managers, it describes the experiences of women in organizational power positions who developed novel, creative, and thoughtful managerial practices in their attempt to overcome structural inequalities.

The study identifies three types of collaborative models developed by women managers. Each model coped with power dynamic in distinct ways, which had benefits and shortcomings. In bounded collaborations, respect for boundaries promoted trust building and the protection of existing resources, but at the same time limited the possibility of learning and change. Power dynamics in this model were therefore restricted, but not challenged. In ad hoc collaborations, power dynamics were minimized by the lack of dependency between the two sides. Each side acted independently, asking for resources or providing them in times

of need. Power in this model was manifested indirectly, through the unilateral management of conflictual issues. Transformative collaborations invested in communication and in joint experiences to turn power dynamics into creative and learning processes, but they also entailed a vast investment of time and energy, and a willingness to lose control.

The current study focused on a specific group of women managers, who belong to two particular groups in Israeli society. Future research could explore how the models and practices developed here apply to other groups and organizations. Particularly interesting aspects are the cultural environment in which the collaboration occurs, as well as the size and nature of the power differences between the collaborating groups. Despite its limitations, the current study offers managers various ways in which power can be managed constructively. Awareness of the benefits and costs of each practice can promote more strategic management of power in collaborative efforts. Furthermore, the managerial stories of the women interviewed here could inspire others interested in using their power position to transform prosocial values into novel, responsible, and communal managerial practices.

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