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## Women's Career Path Typologies in the Nonprofit Sector

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## Women's Career Path Typologies in the Nonprofit Sector

### Keywords

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### Disciplines

Gender and Sexuality | Labor Economics | Leadership Studies | Social Work

Senior Honors Thesis

# **Women's Career Path Typologies in the Nonprofit Sector**

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*Submitted to the Philosophy, Politics and Economics Program at the University of Pennsylvania*

*in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Honors.*

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### Women's Career Path Typologies in the Nonprofit Sector

*"Nonprofit leaders rarely get their due. In classrooms, government funding agencies and charitable foundations, in their own boardrooms, and throughout the vast literature on leadership, they are regularly required to lead like their corporate colleagues – or as the popular imagery about corporate leadership would require them to lead. The distinctness and complexities of their own worlds tend to be ignored. We intended to take up the mantle in their defense – to study them, to learn from them, and where deserved, to praise them"*

-Barry Dym and Harry Hutson, Introduction to *Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*

#### Introduction

Women have risen to positions of leadership at a much higher rate in the nonprofit sector than in the private sector; however, this trend has largely been attributed to women's "natural" inclination for nonprofit work. The gender breakdown of the nonprofit workforce and leadership has been largely overlooked- practically neglected – from academic investigation. Few studies have questioned why or how female leaders rise to leadership in this sector – an oversight "as curious as would be studying ghettos without noticing the race or ethnicity of the people who live in them," (Steinberg & Jacobs, 1994, p.80).

This study examines the various career paths that 22 female Executive Directors of Philadelphia-area nonprofits and emerging nonprofits women followed before ultimately becoming Executive Directors of nonprofits. I examine potential reasons for why the nonprofit sector has been a place where female leaders choose to invest their talents, particularly when many of these women are being compensated at rates significantly below market value, to try to understand what would motivate someone to pursue a career that reflects traditionally lower paychecks. The participants in this study defy the notion that women pursue work in the nonprofit sector as a result of lack of ability to find work in the private sector. Although women's career choices are inherently complex and multi-dimensional, I find that the women almost always have complete autonomy over their decision. The interviews help



reveal why such career choices are made, provide a characterization of the kind of work and work environments that women enjoy and shed light on factors that influence women's career decisions.

## **Literature Review**

### *History of women in the American private sector*

The presence of women in the private sector labor force is commonly attributed with World War II, during which women took up private sector jobs while men fought overseas. The "Rosie the Riveter" movement helped women recognize their own strength and encouraged them to pursue careers that were formerly considered unavailable to the female gender. Between 1941 and 1945, the American workforce saw a more than 57% increase in female workers and women were praised for entering the workforce as their patriotic duty (Marcano, 1997; Robbins, 2002). The rise of working women and mothers led the U.S. government to create childcare programs that made it possible for women to pursue a career and raise a family. However, when the war ended, the government and business sector joined forces to encourage women to return to the home, even though 75% of the women wanted to continue working (Levine, 1985). Many women obeyed these requests and returned their jobs to male counterparts; however, other women refused to let go of their jobs and remained in the workforce.

In the past six decades, women's representation in the labor market has continued to steadily rise. Between 1950 and 1970, women's rate of participation increased from 33.9 percent to 43.3 percent and by 1980, over half (51.5 percent) of women were working. The figures rose to 57.7 percent in 1990 and 61 percent by the year 2000 (Johnston & Packer, 1987). Recently, the statistics have focused less on the rate of women's participation and more on comparing female representation in the workforce with that of male representation. In the past year, American media sources and documents

such as the Shriver Report have bombarded the public with news that women are on the verge of accounting for 50% of the country's labor force (Mulligan, 2009; "We Did It," 2009). Women's representation in comparison to men has been especially accelerated due to the economic recession (also known as the "mancesssion") of the late 2000s, during which men were the victims of three out of four downsizing adjustments (Shriver, 2009). While the most recent update from the Bureau of Labor Statistics claims that women are not quite at the 50% mark yet, they are predicted to break the threshold in the next few years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

The recent celebration of women's accomplishments in the labor market should be appreciated; however, it should also be noted that the participation of women in the workforce is nothing new. Both women and men have been working since they set foot on earth, yet women have been systematically excluded from jobs that "count", hence excluded from the traditional (paid) labor force statistics. For millennia, women have actively contributed to productive society by working in the home, performing domestic duties, and by working outside the home, contributing to agriculture and artisanry to create goods to sell in the marketplace. However, during the rise of the industrial capitalist society, the establishment of the family wage led to strict gender roles in which men were expected to bring in an income substantial enough to support a family while women were expected to focus on unpaid domestic labor. This family wage set the standards for what constitutes valued labor in American society.

#### *History of women in the American nonprofit sector*

During the early twentieth century, many middle-class women became increasingly well-educated but their gender deprived them of opportunities in most careers. Not content with their limited domestic roles, many of these women directed their energy towards reformist activism, (Powell

& Steinberg, 2006). They leveraged their roles, often unpaid volunteer roles in nonprofits to earn respect and gain influence in more “prestigious” sectors of society, using nonprofit organizations to put pressure on government and for-profit organizations. Women joined the abolitionist movement, led organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union and started causes such as the suffragist movement. For example, pioneers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jane Addams and Dorothea Dix fought for social issues and found ways to make themselves heard in a man's world. This activism not only promoted causes important to women, but also opened new career paths for women, as many “helping professions” (such as nursing, social work and teaching) became established as nonprofit organizations. At these workplaces, often organized as nonprofit organizations, women often sat on boards and held staff positions, as opposed to private sector and government work environments, which continued to be male-dominated (McCarthy, 1987).

#### *Women in the modern American nonprofit sector*

Unlike the for-profit sector, the American nonprofit relies on a predominately female workforce, with female employees making up somewhere between two-thirds to three-fourths of the sector, (Preston, 1990). Women are more likely than men to work in then nonprofit sector when compared with employment in government and business, (Themudo, 2009). The vast presence of working women in the nonprofit field has led researchers such as Ronnie Steinberg to describe the nonprofit sector as “a female sector,” (Steinberg & Jacobs, 1994). Sternberg argues that the high presence of women in the nonprofit sector explains the economic devaluation of the sector, for the skills required for the jobs are often assumed to be natural attributes of women, deserving of no special compensation (Steinberg & Jacobs, 1994). In Steinberg's words, “the low wages paid in this sector is, in no small part, a function not only of the devaluation of women's work in the sector but also the result of the devaluation of the

nonprofit sector because it is heavily populated by women," (Steinberg & Jacobs, 1994, p. 90).

Steinberg's theory even extends outside of the nonprofit sector - according to a study done by Treiman and Hartmann (1981), the more an occupation is dominated by women, the less it pays. The high presence of female employees might also account for the negative stereotypes that characterize nonprofit employees. In the words of Barry Dym and Harry Hutson (2005), employees and leaders in the nonprofit sector are perceived as "well-meaning, not very talented or well-educated, social workers and community amateurs, cheered on by neighbors and supported by the largesse of our capitalist society. Most tellingly, they are not businesspeople," (Dym & Hutson, 2005, p. 51).

### *Female Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector*

The nonprofit sector is gendered not only in terms of the makeup of its labor force, but also in terms of its leaders. Women make up 51% of executive directorships and comprise 43% of nonprofit boards (Hrywna, 2009). Three-fourths of the students in master's degree programs in nonprofit management are women (Themudo, 2009). Moreover, 50 percent of women in the nonprofit sector occupy professional and managerial positions, compared to 21 percent in government and less than ten percent in the for-profit sector (Shackett & Trapani, 1987).

Although women have made great strides in leadership of the nonprofit sector, they still fall short of their male counterparts, for they are much less likely to hold executive positions in larger, more prestigious non-profits. Women have obtained half of managerial positions in small nonprofits, but only 34% of managerial positions in medium nonprofits and 14% in large nonprofits. In other words, more than six times more men than women lead large nonprofits (Themudo 2009).<sup>1</sup> According to Margaret Gibelman's (2003) study of 850 human service agencies, this lower representation of women in

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<sup>1</sup>With *small nonprofits* referring to nonprofits with expenditures lower than US \$1 million, *medium nonprofits* referring to organizations with expenditures between \$1 million and \$50 million and *large nonprofits* referring to organizations with expenditures larger than \$50 million

management, specifically in higher management, is consistent with the glass ceiling phenomenon. Along with facing a glass ceiling in the nonprofit sector, women also earn less money than men for the work they do at almost any level (Gibelman, 2003). Female executives of nonprofits have a median salary that is 85% of that for males (Portrait of Nonprofit Executive, 1999).

### *Female Leadership*

Scholars of female leadership are generally divided into two parties: those who believe that men and women have distinct leadership styles and those who believe that gender is not a factor in determining leadership style. While studies have proven both the presence, (Blumen-Lipman, 1996; Gilligan, 1982; Helgesen, 1995), and absence (Bass, 1990; Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995; Macoby and Jenkin, 1974), of gender differences in leadership, cultural stereotypes and media portrayals perpetuate the notion of gender differences in leadership. Such stereotypes also perpetuate the superiority of “male leadership” over “female leadership.”

During a 2005 lecture at the Wharton School of Business, management Professor Anne Cummings asked an audience of female executives to brainstorm a list of words that describe female and male leaders. Descriptions of female leaders included: multi-tasking, emotional, empathetic, strong, intuitive, compassionate, relationship building, verbal, consensus building, collaborative and gossipy while descriptions of male leaders included: strong, arrogant, intelligent, ego-driven, bravado, powerful, dominant, assertive, single tasking, focused, competitive, stubborn, physical, self-righteous and direct, (Knowledge@Wharton, 2005). Although these observations come from a biased cohort, these descriptors are commonly-used words and phrases to distinguish the gender differences in leadership. Taking these micro concepts and looking at them through a macro lens, Professor Judy Rosener uses James McGregor Burns' terminology to argue that men more commonly engage in “transactional

leadership," in which they view their motivate their subordinates to work through either rewards for a job well done or punishments for a job poorly executed, whereas women more commonly engage in "transformational leadership," in which they inspire subordinates to work by helping engage them in the broad mission of the group (Rosener, 1990). Women are also known to practice "interactive leadership that encourages participation as well as sharing of power and information," (Rosener, 1990, p. 120). Moreover, while men ascribe their authority to their declared position in the organization, women ascribe their power to "personal characteristics like charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, or personal contacts," (Rosener, 1990, p. 120).

Those who affirm the existence of gender differences in leadership cite various reasons for these differences. Leadership scholar Jean Lipman-Blumen (1992), believes that the differences stem from the divergent psychosocial trajectories of men and women, "differentially characterized by their respective needs for connection and separation," in which men mark success by their ability to competitively move out beyond others while women find success in "connecting to, caring for and taking responsibility for mediating the conflicting needs of others," (Lipman-Blumen, 1992, p. 4). Likewise, "new feminism" argues "that women are wired differently from men," leading women to be "less aggressive and more consensus-seeking, less competitive and more collaborative, less power-obsessed and more group-oriented," (Adrienne, 2010, p.1). On the other hand, Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim (1977) claim that gender differences in leadership arise from differences in sex socialization (such as differences in extracurricular activities) during childhood and adolescence, (Hennig & Jardim, 1977). Still other scholars cite biological differences to explain the development of masculine and feminine leadership. David Gelman et al (1981), finds that hormones cause men and women to experience the world differently: "they feel it with a different sensitivity of touch, hear it with different aural responses, puzzle out its problems with different cells in their brains," (Kelley, 1992). Although

gender differences are not inherently negative, the American workforce has been built upon masculine concepts of leadership. Therefore, the American public has been socialized to regard masculine leadership as “true” leadership, consequently devaluing feminine leadership.

Despite the negative stereotypes of feminine leadership, recent studies have shown that feminine leadership might in fact be more effective than masculine leadership. A 19-year study conducted between 1980 and 1998 by Pepperdine University found that “Fortune 500 firms with a high number of women executives outperformed their industry median firms” on measurements of revenues, assets and stockholders’ equity, (Adler, 1998). A 2003 study by Alice Eagly found that women apply five out of nine “leadership behaviors” (“People development,” “Expectation and rewards,” “Role Model,” “Inspiration,” and “Participative decision making”) more often than men, (Eagly et al., 2003). In the 2007 study *Women Matter* by management consulting firm McKinsey, companies with women in senior management positions were found to score more highly on their organizational performance criteria than companies with no women in management. Even critiques of the Great Recession of 2007-2010 have indicated that lack of female leadership was one of many causes of the problem. In January 2010, Katrin Bennhold of *The New York Times* questioned “Would we be in this mess if it had been Lehman Sisters [instead of Lehman Brothers]?” Likewise, Michel Ferrary, a professor of management at the CERAM Business School in France, has argued, “feminization of management seems to protect against financial crisis,” (Shipman & Kay, 2009).

Recent studies have also asked whether women aspire to the same levels of leadership as men. According to a 2004 survey by Catalyst that studied men and women within two to three reporting levels of the CEO of Fortune 1000 executives, the report *Women and Men in U.S. Corporate Leadership: Same Workplace, Different Realities?*, found that men and women reported equal desires to someday earn the title of Chief Executive Officer. The survey also found that men and women used similar

strategies to earn advancement. Both genders strove to exceed performance expectations, tried to successfully manage others, sought high-visibility assignments and tried to demonstrate expertise. Furthermore, according to the 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce, "for the first time, young women and young men don't differ in their desire for jobs with more responsibility," (Galinsky et al., 2008, p.1). This study found that women in the millennial generation are now, just as likely as men to want greater responsibility in their careers.

### **Creation of "The Female Sector": Why do women dominate the non-profit workforce?**

Below, I will outline some common theories used to explain the high presence of women and women leaders in the nonprofit sector. While academic studies on the nonprofit sector are on the rise, thanks to journals such as *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, the literature remains fairly thin. Nevertheless, through a mixed literature review of articles from gender studies, economics and political science, I have found four theories to explain female leadership in the nonprofit sector. First, women are perceived to possess the skills necessary for work in the nonprofit sector. Second, women are considered to be more public spirited and less selfish than men; therefore, they might pursue nonprofit leadership because they believe that the work better aligns with their values than work in the corporate world. Third, women have greater flexibility to pursue non-profit careers thanks to the economic provision by a male breadwinner. Finally, women rise to leadership in the nonprofit sector because they have faced barriers to leadership in the private sector.

#### *Women have nonprofit skills*

One could argue that women have risen to nonprofit leadership at a higher rate than for-profit leadership because they are naturally gifted with the skills needed for leadership in the nonprofit sector.



In his book *Why Beautiful People Have Daughters*, Alan Miller and Satoshi Kanazwa (2007), comment on the inherent differences between men and women: "In every human society (and among many other species), males on average are more aggressive, violent, and competitive, and females on average are more social, caring, and nurturing," (p.32). While Miller and Kanazwa believe that gender roles come about as a result of inherent differences between men and women, others might claim that these gender roles are outdated and oversimplified conceptions of the genders. These critics might instead propose that gender roles are socially constructed.

Whether gender roles are biologically or socially constructed, evidence shows that women do exhibit tendencies that would make them better suited for the nonprofit sector. Studies have found "that women are less selfish and more public spirited than men," (Themudo, 2009, p. 1), and that women "behave more generously when faced with economic decisions," (p. 664). Furthermore, some argue that women might also prefer the managerial structures of nonprofit organizations. For-profits generally employ hierarchical "male managerial models," (McGregor, 1967), in which "the good manager is aggressive, competitive, firm and just....not feminine....[and] not soft and yielding or dependent or intuitive in the womanly sense," given that "the very expression of emotion is widely viewed as a feminine weakness that would interfere with effective business processes," (McGregor, 1967). Unfortunately, women managers "do not identify with hierarchical structures; rather, they prefer webs of interaction," (Wilkof, 1995, p.1). Rather than working in hierarchies, women prefer working in centrarchies, in which there exist "circles with central coordinators but no hierarchical leaders," creating "relationships of greater equality and lesser status," (Jardim, 1993, p.3). Given the structure of nonprofits, in which the Executive Director must share leadership with his or her board and therefore does not exert ultimate authority over decisions, non-profits function in a more centrarchical manner than for-profits. Although the entrance of women into positions of leadership in for-profit leadership

has shown that women are able to adapt to hierarchical leadership structures, the higher presence of female leadership in nonprofit organizations might be explained by women's preference for more centrarchical management structures.

### *Women have unique values*

While some might attribute women's leadership in the nonprofit sector to their inherent skills, others might argue that they have ended up in these leadership positions because of their unique values. Perhaps women place a higher value on the social impact of their work or the peripheral benefits of their job than they place on the size of their paycheck? This "labor donation" argument, put forth by scholars such as Anne Preston, asserts that certain individuals are willing to give up a bit of monetary compensation in order to gain psychological benefits of performing socially beneficial work, (Steinberg & Jacobs, 1994). This labor donation might also be made in exchange for the intrinsic benefits of a more preferable managerial structure or fringe benefits (Handy & Katz, 1998).

Taking a slightly different approach, but ending up with a similar conclusion, Alan Miller and Satoshi Kanazawa (2007), focuses not on what nonprofit employees are willing to sacrifice (monetary gain), but rather, what they are NOT willing to sacrifice (emotional well-being). In Miller and Kanazawa's words (talking specifically about women in the field): "It is not that women do not want money or prefer less money to more; nobody in their right mind does. It is instead that women are unwilling to pay the price and make the necessary sacrifices (often in the welfare and well-being of their children) in order to advance in the corporate hierarchy and earn more money," (Miller & Kanazawa, 2008, p.1)

Women might also value the nature of nonprofit leadership. Nonprofit leaders are expected to be multi-taskers. Using the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Mirvis and Hackett, 1983), find that

“nonprofit employees saw more variety and challenge in their jobs than did those in government, and those in government saw more than those in for-profit employment,” (Mirvis & Hackett, 1983, p. 8).

Perhaps women value this variety?

*Women have freedom to pursue low-paying careers*

While the first two theories have focused on female characteristics that make them a better fit for the nonprofit sector, this third theory argues that it our economic system has simply made it more feasible for women to choose careers in the nonprofit sector. Since the establishment of the “family wage” at the turn of the 19th century, men have been tasked with the responsibility of serving as the breadwinner, providing for the financial needs of the family (Marshall, 1998). Since non-profit salaries are rarely lucrative enough to support a family, purely financial considerations might deter men from considering a non-profit career. However, thanks to this family wage, married women in middle to upper class families were relieved of the responsibility of having to bring in an income. As a result, many women have chosen the uncompensated career of motherhood, while other women have chosen to pursue paid careers, but without the pressure of having to pursue a financially lucrative career. Relieved of this pressure, middle to upper-class married women were able to pursue jobs that they enjoy rather than jobs that simply pay the bills.

This theory can be supported by examining how men and women approach work. Many studies have found that while women are more likely to approach work as a “calling,” men are more likely to approach work as a duty or responsibility, (Betz, 2007). In a Harvard-Radcliffe senior thesis, Emma Cordelia Cheuse (1998), finds that women interviewed twenty Harvard-Radcliffe women activists whose formative high school and college years fell between time periods of significant social movement activity in America. From these interviews, Cheuse noticed that nearly every one of her respondents felt a

powerful draw to nonprofit political work. Cheuse referred to this “draw” as a “calling” – defined as a “philosophy that unites a person’s deepest beliefs and most prevalent, self-defining actions in a systematic life work in the world,” (p. 18). One interviewee explained: “There is a fine line between my job and my personal life because it’s all so connected and all-consuming,” (p.4).

#### *Women are excluded from the private sector*

Another theory argues that women pursue leadership positions in the nonprofit sector as a result of encountering barriers or restrictions in the private sector. Although the family wage system can be blamed for putting a burden on men, the family wage system can also be blamed for creating a private sector that caters to male interests and work styles. Because men dominated the workforce in the early development of American capitalism, men created male-friendly management structures, traditions and work cultures. Over time, these structures and behaviors became embedded with and began to define corporate culture so much that the private sector became a “gendered institution,” in which “masculinity is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power (Acker, 1992).

When women began to enter the workplace in mass movements, they were expected to adapt themselves to fit the established structures. This trend was particularly popular in the era following the second-wave feminist movement, when radical feminists yearned to be treated like equals, which, from their perspective, meant “being judged by the same standards as men,” (“Female Power”, 2010, p. 49). Women entered Wall Street in droves, wearing business suits and taking on aggressive behavior of their male counterparts. Although women were successfully able to adapt to male culture, they continued to bang their heads against a thick glass ceiling. Women were often routed into less prestigious “pink

collar" jobs such as nurses, secretaries and hair dressers. Women also faced challenges in obtaining positions of leadership, (Morrison, 1993).

Early arguments for these glass ceilings stated that there weren't enough women in the leadership pipeline or that those who were in the pipeline didn't have the educational preparation to succeed in the business world. These arguments are now essentially null and void, for women have been earning more bachelor's degrees than men since 1982 and more master's degrees than men since 1981, (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Nevertheless, women continue to struggle to rise to leadership in both the private and government sectors in the United States. As of February 28, 2010, women filled a mere 18.9% (8,404 out of 44,665) positions in parliament around the globe, (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2010). Only 2% of the bosses of America's largest companies are women. As of May 4, 2009, 15 women led American Fortune 500 companies, (Fortune 500, 2009).

If women are academically prepared for for-profit careers and they aspire to positions of high-level leadership, why aren't they obtaining that leadership? Some argue that women are affected by stereotypes and social pressures to regard themselves as having different competences. These perceived competences lead women to pursue "feminine" academic studies at a young age, thus setting women on limited career paths before they have even made any firm decision about their career choices are made, (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). These perceived competences might explain the dominance of women in careers such as nursing, primary education and library science and the dominance of men in mathematics and engineering fields.

Along with being influenced by stereotypes about skill competencies, women's career choices are also affected by expectations for women's success in particular fields. The aforementioned 2004 Catalyst survey showed that female executives in the Fortune 1000 often faced cultural barriers such as gender-based stereotypes, exclusion from social networks, lack of role models and inhospitable corporate

cultures. Women might be scared of the logistical constraints that exist in a for-profit firm, such as long work hours or heavy travel requirements. Even though as of 2009, four out of five families with children are not the traditional male breadwinner, female homemaker family structure, the American capitalist system was built on the assumption that women would care for things at home, so men could work their way up the corporate ladder, spending 60-80 hours per week in the office, (Hymowitz, 2006). Nancy Peretsman, the managing director and executive vice president of Allen & Co. investment bank, found that such embedded structures discourage even Millennial women from pursuing corporate careers. In a dinner with a group of senior-class women at Princeton, her alma mater. Peretsman recalls many of the women expecting to restrain their career ambitions in order to attain fulfilling lives. Ms. Peretsman's response? "They're already compromising themselves at 22, and that isn't OK," (p.2). In their book *Why Women Mean Business*, Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland argue that women will never reach their full potential in the workplace unless corporate structures change and they challenge women to, "audit the entire [office] building for "gender asbestos"...[to] root out the inherent sexism built into corporate structures and processes," (Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland, 2008).

While the for-profit sector has created a culture that is not female-friendly, the nonprofit sector has been more attentive to creating a female-friendly work environment. A study by Karen Hohl (2006), of 156 Illinois nonprofits found that 85% of nonprofits offered at least one of eight flexible work arrangements. In comparison, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has measured that only 61% of for-profit organizations offer such an option. Nonprofits recognize that caring for the needs of personnel, such as by providing flexible work arrangements, gives their organization a competitive edge over other organizations because they are better able to attract and retain qualified personnel.

## **Study**

### *Overview & Methodology*

Now that women are on the verge of representing half of our nation's workforce, it is time that the private sector evaluates the way that its structures are hindering female leadership. Although the nonprofit sector still has its flaws, small and medium-size nonprofits provide a good model for how to create a female-friendly work environment.

This research was designed to further the understanding of female leadership in the nonprofit sector by using a sample of Executive Directors of nonprofits in a northeast metropolis of the United States. Given that much of the academic literature on leadership is prescriptive, this study takes a descriptive approach by recording the career histories, self-described leadership characteristics and career motivations of 22 nonprofit executive directors. By analyzing this data, I did not hope to generalize about women's leadership in the nonprofit sector, but rather hoped use this small sample to gain insights and a better understanding of how women's values, skills, financial freedom, and past experiences with the private or public sector affect their path to leadership in the nonprofit sector.

### *Subject Recruitment*

Given geographic and time restraints, I planned to interview approximately two dozen participants for my study. I primarily recruited women's-focused nonprofits to minimize the variation that might occur from the focus of the organization; however, I did not limit my study to these organizations.

When looking for participants to interview, I searched keeping in mind four criteria:

- 1) Is this an Executive Director leading an active nonprofit organization?
- 2) Is this organization located in Philadelphia?

- 3) Is this a local branch of an organization rather than a chapter of a larger national organization (to ensure that we were interviewing the Executive Director of the entire organization rather than the Executive Director of just one chapter of an organization) and
- 4) Is the Executive Director willing to meet with me for a face-to-face interview to discuss her career history?

Guidestar, an online nonprofit database, identifies certified 501(c)3 nonprofits in the United States. Using this database, I searched for organizations using the keywords "Philadelphia" and "women." This search provided me with 63 organizations, which I screened via phone call and email using my four criteria listed in the paragraph above. I compiled the contact information for the Executive Directors of organizations that passed all of these requirements. From Guidestar's list of 63 organizations only ten organizations fulfilled my screening criteria- only half the number of participants that I had hoped to interview. From prior experiences, I knew about other organizations that fit my criteria; therefore, I sought out further participants using my personal network. I emailed Penn faculty familiar with the prominent players in the Philadelphia nonprofit sector to request recommendations, (Appendix A), I actively attended events attracting female nonprofit leaders, such as an information session for a social innovation competition (Women for Social Innovation, 2009), and I searched for Philadelphia news articles highlighting prominent female figures in the nonprofit world (WeNews Staff, 2009). Once again, I screened these women using the three criteria listed above and ultimately compiled a database of 46 potential participants. I subsequently sent each of these contacts a "Request for Participation," (Appendix B), email in which I asked to meet for a 30-minute interview to discuss the Executive Director's career motivations and perspective on the nonprofit sector. Out of those 46 Executive Directors, 29 agreed to participate in an interview, 1 opted not to be interviewed and 16 did



not respond. Due to scheduling conflicts, I was only able to arrange interviews with 22 of the willing participants.

During the process of my interviews, I discovered that two of my participants are not Executive Directors of official 501(c)3 organizations. One is the Executive Director of a donor-advised fund and one is the Executive Director of an organization awaiting 501(c)3 status. Although these two women did not officially meet my subject criteria, I decided to include them in my results because both of their organizations function under the same constraints as nonprofits.

### *The Interviews*

Over the course of three months, I completed 22 interviews. I made my best effort to conduct each interview during the work week at each Executive Director's respective office. Using an interview guide, (Appendix C), I talked with each of the women about their career history, their values, their skills, their monetary and non-monetary compensation and their current and past family life. The interviews ranged in time length from 18 minutes to 75 minutes, with an average length of 43.8 minutes.

The 22 participants range from ages 27 to 66, with an average age of 46.7. All of the women have attended at least some college and have an average of 6 years of post-secondary education. Two women only completed a few college courses while 20 hold undergraduate degrees. Of the 20 with undergraduate degrees, 2 went on to get their J.D., 2 received an MBA, 10 received other masters' degrees, and 2 received doctoral degrees. Interestingly, one of the women with a doctoral degree was initially a high school dropout.

While some of the participants started their organizations, others have only been with their organization for a short time. While one woman has served as Executive Director of her organization for

27 years, another woman has only served her role for 6 months. The women have served as Executive Directors of their organizations for an average of 8 years.

The average age of the nonprofits studied is 17.7 years. The women primarily lead human service organizations, engaging in issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, addiction recovery, education, job training, mentorship and advocacy. The remaining women serve in organizations ranging from the arts to public interest law to real estate development to economic development. Two women lead grant-making organizations.

### **Career Path Typologies**

While each of my participants had a unique story to tell, I found that there exist two categories and four distinct typologies of female nonprofit Executive Directors. Category number one, which I name "the Transitioners," includes those who begin their career in the for-profit world and ultimately transition into the non-profit sector. Within this category, there exist two typologies: the Monied Transitioners and the Non-Monied Transitioners. Category number two, which I name "the Lifers," encompasses those who spend the majority of their careers in the nonprofit sector. Within this category, there exist two other typologies: the Single-Issue Lifers and the Multi-Issue Lifers. In the following case studies, I will use a compilation of my interviews to give a summary of these typologies and then I will present a profile of one subject who best models that that typology.

#### The Transitioners

Transitioners spend the majority of their career in the for-profit world and then eventually decide to make a career switch into the nonprofit sector. The majority of these professionals make their

career switch after committing at least ten years to the private sector. Therefore, the nonprofit career is considered a secondary career path that is completely separate from the individual's initial career path.

Within the typology of the Transitioner, there exist two sub-categories: the Monied and the Non-Monied. Out of my subject pool, I classified 6 out of 22 women as Transitioners. Of those Transitioners, I classified 5 as Monied and 1 as Non-Monied. Below, I will outline a case study of both types of Transitioners.

### Monied Transitioners

#### *Overview*

Monied Transitioners are characterized by their access to resources when they decide to enter into the nonprofit sector. These women classify themselves in either a middle or high socioeconomic bracket. They have an average of 7.3 years of post-high school education, in which two went to law school, one went to business school, one received her Master's in Fine Arts in directing and one received her PhD. Four out of five of these women attended Ivy League institutions for either undergraduate or graduate school. Each of these women spent the majority of her career thus far in the private sector before moving into the nonprofit sector. While in the private sector, these women worked on Wall Street, in Public Relations, in Law firms and for Fortune 500 corporations. All of the Monied Transitioners are married, with spouses who are lawyers, academics, engineers or composers.

#### *Example*

Of the women I interviewed, the most typical case study of a Monied Transitioner was Mrs. Samantha Acierno,<sup>2</sup> age 54, from the Lawyers for the People, a public interest law firm in Philadelphia. Samantha completed her undergraduate degree at Dartmouth University and went on to receive her J.D. from Columbia Law School. Upon graduation, Samantha secured a job as an antitrust lawyer at a prestigious law firm in New York City and ultimately went on to become a partner at another prestigious law firm in Philadelphia. Samantha's career path is likely to have been influenced by her lawyer father. Even she herself admits "I'm probably a lawyer because he is a lawyer." However, she also made it clear that she enjoys the nature of the work: "I really like being a lawyer, I've always been very happy about being a lawyer....the things that are great about being a lawyer are the facts and the law and the clients and getting yourself deeply engaged in the issues. And for many years being a partner in a law firm allowed me to do that," (S. Acierno, personal communication, January 27, 2010).

With time, Samantha became dissatisfied with the legal world. She understood that law firms are businesses; however, she grew frustrated when, "the business aspect of it came to overshadow the joy of being a lawyer- the law and facts and clients. The billing and collecting and hourly rates...all of those things became more important at my law firm." Around the same time when Samantha was growing more and more frustrated with her law firm, she was also working with Lawyers for the People on a pro-bono case, suing the state of Michigan for not giving healthcare to poor children as required by federal law. While working on the case, she recognized that she was able to connect back to the aspects of law that she enjoyed compared with feeling "how oppressive all of the money-making seemed" at her corporate law firm. Lawyers for the People invited Samantha to run their organization. Though it took two years, she eventually accepted.

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<sup>2</sup> All participants' names and all organization names have been replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Samantha described her epiphany as a moment of clarity after spending time with a famous architect friend of hers:

...he was so excited about his work. He was 60 and I was 50 or something like that and he was going to start a landscape architecture school in China and he was going to [landscape the area surrounding] the Washington Monument...and I was amazed by this person who that much older than I was and still so engaged and just so excited about what he was doing and I just did not feel that way about my job. I liked my job, but I didn't feel that kind of "wow"...this everyday ready to go into work feeling. And [the people at Lawyers for the People] had been talking to me about coming here, so it was really that experience that made me say, "I really have to come here and do this."

Samantha made the transition into the nonprofit sector when she was 50 years old. While this age is a bit higher than the average (43.2 years) for this group, she transitioned at a similar life stage as some of the other Monied Transitioners.

While career transitions often occur when individuals are in search of a more lucrative or prestigious position, the Monied Transitioners decided to take on positions that substantially reduced their incomes. By leaving her corporate job, Samantha watched her salary decrease to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of what she was making as a partner of a law firm. Nevertheless, she claims that she "is not dissatisfied" with her salary. Samantha has other incomes and resources, such as retirement savings, savings from her previous job and shared income from her husband's job as an employee of the University of Pennsylvania, to pull from to support herself.

Samantha's ability to accept a low-paying salary without complaint is characteristic of Monied Transitioners. Because they are coming into their positions as second careers, their jobs are almost looked upon as hobbies. Brooke Baker, Executive Director of Women of the World Fund, currently

absorbs the operating costs of the organization. However, this sacrifice is diminutive thanks to Brooke's savings from her former career as a Wall Street banker and thanks to her husband's success as a securities lawyer, (B. Baker, personal communication, December 18, 2009).

### *Career Motivations*

In listening to the participants' career history narratives, I have gathered that most Monied Transitioners' primary motivation for pursuing their Executive Director role was to find a job that would provide more than just monetary satisfaction. Heather Asghari, who ran a Public Relations firm in her first career, decided to start her own nonprofit after an interesting encounter recognizing her own materialism. After a particularly successful year in which her company made a good bundle of money, Heather attended a craft show with the intention of treating herself to something nice. Then, while walking around, she had a change of heart. She recalled:

I felt like I had permission to spend a significant amount of money on myself. But...although there were some beautiful things and some things I would have liked to have, nothing seemed worth it....I walked all through the craft show and although there were some beautiful things and some things I would have liked to have, nothing seemed worth it and nothing seemed like a really lasting reward would be derived from buying something. So I left empty handed and decided to start a nonprofit. So I figured that if I could enable a situation where I could do what I wanted to do then that would be a longer-lasting reward.

While Heather's primary motivation to start her nonprofit was to create a "longer-lasting reward," she also acknowledged that working in the nonprofit sector would provide her with the added perk of being less stressful. Unfortunately, Heather found that stress remained in her new job, for she had "recreated another impossible dream" to fulfill. Heather often asks herself, "what made me think I could work this

hard again?!" However, she cannot envision herself leaving the nonprofit sector, (H. Asghari, personal communication, January 22, 2010).

Like Heather, Samantha Acierno also found that the nonprofit sector forces her to face some difficult challenges. She feels the "huge weight of responsibility" of ensuring that the office functions on a daily basis. At the same time though, Samantha recognizes that her new job gives her the chance to "really think about important issues like education" and she finds it rewarding to "analyze what works and what doesn't work...and not just think about it but really talk to people and make proposals," (S. Acierno, personal communication, January 27, 2010). Although the Monied Transitioners acknowledged that their work in the nonprofit sector is challenging due to the lack of resources and 4 out of 5 Monied Transitioners believed that they are underpaid, each of these women actively chose to forego a higher salary in exchange for a different kind of job. It is unclear whether this desire stems from guilt or simply wanting to do work with a more socially-oriented purpose. Five out of 5 women asserted that they wanted to work for an organization that was mission-driven rather than profit-driven and 5 out of 5 felt a desire to "give back" through their work. Along with feeling initial motivations for to transition to transition to the nonprofit sector, these women also feel continued motivation to dedicate time and energy to perform their work.

Although each of the Monied Transitioners experienced a change in their financial situation when they moved from the for-profit to nonprofit sector, the effects were as not crippling because each of the women is married to an income-earning spouse. All of the Monied Transitioners are married to men who bring in an income through their jobs in law, musical composition, engineering and academia.

### Non-Monied Transitioners<sup>3</sup>

#### *Overview*

Non-Monied Transitioners have spent the majority of their careers in private sector jobs; however, at some point late in their career they decided to transition into the non-profit sector. Unlike the Monied Transitioners though, Non-Monied Transitioners made their transition at a time when their financial status was not sufficient to allow them to make the transition without economic concern. Nevertheless, Non-Monied Transitioners felt so compelled to serve a certain population or work on a particular cause that they were willing to sacrifice their financial well-being to do so.

#### *Example*

The only case of a Non-Monied Transitioner from my subject pool was Camila Neruda. Camila spent the majority of her career as a paralegal. However, after many years in this job, Camila developed carpal tunnel syndrome and was unable to continue working in the same field. While out of work, she realized that she was going to use her time on unemployment to do something for her community.

Camila remembered:

When I was younger, the private sector was great. I worked, I got paid, paid my bills, went out, did what I had to do. But as I got older, it just felt like I wasn't fulfilling...it felt like it was repetitive, boring, cold... I got tired of it. I got tired of working for someone else to get rich, basically. While so many people...

Here, Camila took an extended pause to carefully reflect on her next words. After gathering her thoughts, she continued, "I know that organization and lawyers give money to charity and all that but there was something in me that wasn't being fulfilled. And it was building up and building up and

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<sup>3</sup> Note: From my pool of participants, there was only one woman who classified as a Non-Monied Transitioner. This small sample size might cause some of the data to be slightly misrepresentative of the Typology.



building up. So I got laid off from the city and said 'that's it- I'm going to start my own nonprofit,'" (C. Neruda, personal communication, December 11, 2010).

Camila was 48 years old when she started Studio de Serenidad. As a Philadelphia native and an involved member of the Philadelphia Hispanic community, Camila had noticed some disturbing health trends in her neighborhood. In an area where the most affordable food options are almost always the least healthy food options, Camila saw that children were getting more and more obese and parents were not realizing the dangers of junk food. Therefore, Camila had an idea to start an obesity prevention program that would "target women and children in the Hispanic community [to educate them about] fitness and nutrition...things that many lower-income Hispanic households do not understand." Along with obesity prevention, the organization would also help with obesity and abuse recovery. Camila has personally benefitted from the physical and emotional aspects of yoga and wanted to share them with other women who were recovering from obesity and/or abuse.

Though Camila did not have the resources readily available to invest in this endeavor, she took out a \$10,000 loan on her home to get the necessary capital. She used the money to rent a facility, pay 501(c)3 filing fees, to cover travel expenses. Within a year, however, all of that money had been depleted. Camila had to give up her facility, so now she travels to teach classes within various preschools.

### *Career Motivations*

Why was Camila so willing to sacrifice her time and money into this endeavor? Is the desire for a career with a greater purpose enough to explain Camila's significant investments?

Camila's personal connection to her cause seems to be the primary motivation that led her into the nonprofit sector. Throughout her life, she remained connected with the Philadelphia Hispanic community and thus was always in tune with the needs of those constituents. Looking beyond herself,

Camila noticed this trend in other women: "Usually people who start things, it comes from personal experience. I've come to notice that with most of the people I've met who start their own nonprofits - most of the women - it's usually surrounding childhood issues or other issues in their life. And they say well you know 'I've fixed myself. Maybe what I did will help other people.' And that's where I'm coming from," (C. Neruda, personal communication, December 11, 2010).

Along with wanting to share knowledge about an experience she's overcome, Camila also seemed to draw motivation from everyday encounters with her students. Glowingly sharing anecdote after anecdote about her students' progress from the classes, Camila explained that physically, the children were becoming more flexible – now able to touch their toes whereas before fewer than 25% could do so. Behaviorally, the yoga was affecting the children's behavior, making children as young as three years old kinder and more cooperative. Nutritionally, the children were gaining exposure to new foods and nutritional tips. For example, Camila introduced the children to pistachios and breathing strategies.

Now that Camila has entered the nonprofit sector, she has no desire to leave. She has already decided, "I'm in it for good. I'm going to make it work, one way or another." Although her nonprofit is a bit financially unstable at the moment, whenever she faces moments of self-doubt she remains optimistic and reminds herself, "there's a reason why I've had all of these extensions on unemployment." Camila has big ambitions to help Studio de Serenidad grow and expand. She envisions: "a couple of years from now, we'll be in grade schools, we'll be in high schools...who knows." Camila also has hopes of expanding her programming to teach Street Yoga to homeless youth.

In Camila's mind, it's easy to start a nonprofit because "anyone can go on the organization bureau website" and pay the \$750 filing fee. Although the logistical barriers to entry are low, it seems as though the barriers to entry for leadership are quite high.

The fact that only one of my participants fit into this typology is interesting to note, for it indicates that the ability to transition into a leadership position in the nonprofit sector requires one to have a certain degree of economic stability before doing so.

### **The Lifers**

Lifers are leaders whose primary career path has been in the nonprofit sector. While their nonprofit career path might not have been their first career path, it is the one in to which they have dedicated the majority of their professional life. Whereas many Transitioners see the nonprofit sector as choice after a mature career in the for-profit sector, the Lifers recognize that the one can make a career in the nonprofit sector.

In observing the Lifers, there is a noted distinction between women who commit themselves to a certain cause and women who commit themselves more to the nonprofit sector and have explored a broad array of causes within the sector. Therefore, I've divided the Lifer typology into two subcategories- the Single-Issue Lifers and the Multi-Issue Lifers. Out of my subject pool, I classified 16 out of 22 women as Lifers. Of those 15 Lifers, I classified 10 as Single-Issue Lifers and 6 as Multi-Issue Lifers. Below, I will outline a case study of both types of Lifers.

#### Single-Issue Lifers

##### *Overview*

The Single-Issue Lifers are distinguished by their commitment to one particular issue or cause. Whether due to a personal experience or simply a strong interest in a certain subject area, these women have a pattern of serving one kind of cause or constituent group throughout their career. For example, some of my participants dedicated themselves to fighting homelessness, while other women focused their energy on economic development while other women were committed to serving the African-American community. While some Single-Issue Lifers commit themselves to an issue because they have

the skills to contribute in a significant way, other Single-Issue Lifers simply feel an emotional or moral attachment to a certain issue.

*Example*

Out of the ten Single-Issue Lifers that I identified in my subject pool, Pavi Dethrow best exemplified the Single-Issue Lifer typology. Pavi is the Co-Founder and Assistant Executive Director of No Place Like Home. Though Pavi started her career working as an accountant in the private sector for seven years, she has dedicated the past 20 years to fighting homelessness. During her years in the private sector, Pavi volunteered in homeless shelters and battered women's shelters around the city. One day, while working at the Pennsylvania Homelessness Center, Pavi met Annette Peters, with whom she volunteered in an effort called Nightwatch, which provided temporary housing during the coldest months of the year. While working together in that initiative, Pavi met the future co-founder of No Place Like Home and the two discovered that they "really could solve homelessness" and worked together to open up a permanent shelter.

During a temporary period of unemployment following her accounting firm's bankruptcy, Pavi decided to put off looking for a job and instead focused on helping develop this permanent shelter. Soon, Pavi realized that she was not going to return to her life as an accountant. This reality came to light as Pavi waited for an interview with a public accounting firm:

I went into the interview and had my suit on and was just sitting there...and all I kept thinking about was Horace- Horace Green – who I just absolutely thought the world of. And I looked out and I thought, "there's [sic] a dozen people out there that want this job, and nobody really wants to be with Horace. So that was it. I broke the news to family and friends and said "this is what I'm going to do." (P. Dethrow, personal communication, February 2, 2010).

Over the past twenty years, Annette Peters and Pavi have developed what was one shelter into the \$12 million organization known as No Place Like Home. Pavi appreciates being able to do work that “reinforces what really matters” rather than being distracted by “things that are much to do about nothing.” Daily reminding herself “tonight, there will be homeless people sleeping outside, Pavi maintains a sense of urgency about homelessness that she finds crucial to her work. She asserts, “if I ever lost that sense of urgency and it became another day, then I’d need to go,” (P. Dethrow, personal communication, February 2, 2010).

### *Career Motivations*

On multiple occasions, Pavi alluded to her goal: the eradication of homelessness in her lifetime, (P. Dethrow, personal communication, February 2, 2010). This goal not only motivates Pavi to do her work, it also gives her work a purpose. Like Pavi, other Single-Issue Lifers seem to have a desired future state towards which they direct their efforts. Kirsten Wright of the Advocates for the Poor has been offered a few jobs within the nonprofit sector that would have doubled her salary. However, as tempting as it was to work with big, well-funded institutions, Kirsten rejected the offers because “they just weren’t something [she] was personally committed to.” While she could sympathize with the causes of the other organizations, she knew that she cared most about poor people and only considered job offers where she could work with that constituency, (K. Wright, personal communication, February 3, 2010).

Although many of the Single-Issue lifers have actively chosen the issue on which they want to focus, just as many Single-Issue lifers had an experience in which the issue chose them. Molly Hosea grew up with a father who struggled with addictions and always used running as a form of therapy to help her through tough times. Therefore, when she established a relationship with a group of homeless men, Molly realized “running could help these guys in the same way that it helped me” and started a

running club which eventually morphed into Endurance. Molly believes that “the trick to service is finding something that’s relevant to your own life” and thanks Endurance for helping her make sense of all of the struggles she experienced in her own family.

Although Pavi has committed her entire nonprofit career to one organization, that is not the case for all of the Single-Issue Lifers. For example, though Ellen Williams has had a plethora of experiences working for different organizations and even in different sectors, the majority of her work has been focused on community development programs. She entered the working world by serving for two years in the Peace Corps in Tonga, worked with an entrepreneurial program for at-risk youth, received her graduate degree in post-conflict development, has filmed two documentaries about post-conflict life in Africa, ran governance strengthening programs in Azerbaijan and Ethiopia and worked on disaster response in New Orleans. Although each of these efforts has been fairly distinct, the majority have fallen within the broad category of community development. Also, each of her experiences has informed her highly specialized interest in promoting what she calls “the most important cause of our time” - getting women involved in post-conflict development, (E. Williams, personal communication, January 25, 2010).

### Multi-Issue Lifers

#### *Overview*

While the Single-Issue Lifers have specialized in working towards a particular cause, Multi-Issue Lifers have dedicated their time to a number of causes. Multi-Issue Lifers are certainly committed to the causes for which they work; however, they also seem committed to the nature of the nonprofit sector in general.

#### *Example*

Of the women I interviewed, Michelle Wible is the best embodiment of a Multi-Issue Lifer. Michelle is the Executive Director of the Melinda Foundation, an organization that provides breast cancer health services to women who are uninsured or underinsured. However, neither foundations nor the cancer field are familiar to Michelle. Growing up, Michelle was “always somebody who volunteered,” and she knew it was in her personality to “help the underdog.” Her natural instincts were encouraged by her grandmother, who taught her to recognize the needs of others, (M. Wible, personal communication, January 15, 2010).

During college, Michelle decided to use her natural instincts to train for a career as a therapist. However, after recognizing her dislike of the style of psychology popular at the time, Michelle decided that she was more cut out to be a social worker instead. Immediately upon graduation, Michelle pursued a Masters in Social Work, which led her to lead a job as a full time case manager at a mental retardation program. After a few years in that position, Michelle went to LaSalle to get her MBA. However, unlike most of her classmates, Michelle was determined to pursue her degree with the intent of using it in the nonprofit sector rather than in the corporate world. She became the director of a mental retardation program for 12 years, then went on to work for a child welfare agency for three years, then worked her way up to the position of Executive Director of the Berks County chapter of Easter Seals. As of this year, she has been with the Melinda Foundation for 9 years. While Michelle does not plan to leave her current job anytime soon, she claims that if she were to leave, she would consider working in a grant-making organization.

#### *Career Motivations*

Michelle's career path is unique, but characteristically similar to the path of other Multi-Issue Lifers. Like Michelle, other Multi-Issue Lifers can be characterized by their commitment to the nonprofit sector as a whole more than their commitment to a particular cause or issue. These women recognize

that they have skills that suit them for leadership in the nonprofit sector; however, they do not necessarily have strong personal connections or experiences that tie them down to one particular cause or issue. For example, whereas Non-Monied Transitioner Camila Neruda was committed to Studio de Serenidad due to her own experiences with yoga as therapy, Multi-Issue Lifers do not generally have as close a connection with their organization. Michelle Wible does not know what it feels like to be a cancer patient, like her current clientele, nor does she know what it feels like to be disabled, like her clients from her days working at Easter Seals. Lack of personal experience does not make Michelle any better or worse at her job; however, it does affect the way in which she emotionally responds to her clientele.

Because Multi-Issue Lifers did not have a personal connection to any one particular issue, they generally choose masters programs that equip them for skills in management or general leadership rather than deep knowledge of one particular subject area. For example, the only three participants with Master's degrees in Nonprofit Management were Multi-Issue Lifers. On the other hand, Single-Issue Lifers held degree is specific participants such as a Masters in Conflict Resolution and a Masters in Kinesiology.

### **Shared experiences across typologies**

Despite the distinctions between the different typologies, the Executive Directors had several striking commonalities:

#### *Sacrificial Behavior*

*"Oh yeah, it's a huge sacrifice, it's a huge sacrifice, it's a huge challenge and I think for a long time this sector has been expected to pick up the slack as government programs have been pulled back. And there*



*are really really talented people who have made a choice that they're not going to make as much money.*" – Amanda Buckhout, Grants for Girls

In deciding to take on their current position as the Executive Director of a nonprofit, every one of my participants made a sacrifice. While some of these sacrifices were big and some were small, their conscious decisions to contribute their presence, their gifts and their labor on behalf of entities other than themselves should be admired.

Some of my participants exhibited sacrificial behavior by giving up financial security. Most of the women are currently accepting (and for most of the Lifers, have always accepted) salaries that compensate at rates well below their marketable value. For some women, the financial sacrifice is temporary: Pavi Dethrow spent her first year with No Place Like Home living on unemployment compensation and leaving the financial security that came from her prior career as an accountant; however, she now considers herself overpaid. Chloe Barlow, who provides consulting services to nonprofits, struggled a long time to understand her own worth. She began by offering her consulting services for free, sometimes throwing in a faint plea for compensation by saying: "if you pay me, that's great." However, now Chloe feels that she has "gotten to the point where [she] can invoice and draw up a contract that is valued properly."

For other Executive Directors, the impact of the financial sacrifice has been more long-lasting. Casey Walker was only employed part time during her first three years as Executive Director of Tree House Books and thus spent that time bouncing back and forth between her job at the fledgling nonprofit and a job as an office manager of an architecture firm. Walker recognizes that her arrangement was "stupid" and "almost financially ruinous" and does not miss having to "start [her] day at one office and ending at another, working two intense jobs where [she] was responsible for everything." Christine Pian, the Executive Director of Parenting Partners and lifelong advocate for

homelessness issues, currently pursues her work while living off unemployment, even at her current age of 55, (C. Pian, personal communication, January 22, 2010). Kirsten Wright, the 65 year-old, 27-year veteran Executive Director of the Advocates for the Poor, plans to seek a new job upon her retirement this summer, for, despite her loyal commitment to the Advocates for the Poor, she "literally cannot afford to retire," (K. Wright, personal communication, February 3, 2010).

### Challenges

*"Funding is a fucking nightmare" – Kirsten Wright*

Across all typologies, funding was cited as the primary frustration for the Executive Directors, with 19 out of 22, or 86.3%, of Executive Directors responding positively to the question, "Is fundraising a difficult aspect of your job?"<sup>4</sup>

Unlike organizations in the private sector, in which the responsibility of generating income is everyone's job, the responsibility of generating income in nonprofit organizations is placed on the shoulders of the development department and ultimately, on the shoulders of the Executive Director. The Executive Director must focus the majority of his or her time on sustaining the income stream for the organization, even though the funding is only a prerequisite to enable the organization to execute its overall mission. Executive Directors must juggle the simultaneous tasks of "creating something that is going to please [their] constituencies, at the same time thinking about where [they should] go for the money, which avenue will be the most productive [and] how to arrange for the future in a generous way," (H. Asghari, personal communication, January 22, 2010).

For some women, this constant need to obtain outside funding makes the women feel like they are "constantly in a boat sucking wind," (Topanga Jackson, personal communication, February 5, 2010),

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<sup>4</sup> "Fundraising" as a frustrating aspect of work was followed closely behind "bureaucracy and politics," which 17 out of 22 women cited as a frustration

because “there’s never enough money floating around,” (J. Matsui, personal communication, February 1, 2010). Not only must nonprofits execute their primary task of service-delivery, they also must constantly prove a need for those services and evaluate the effectiveness of those services in order to compete with “hundreds of thousands of other organizations all going to the same corporations, all going to the same donors, all looking for some help and some reprieve,” (T. Jackson, personal communication, February 5, 2010). The women often feel drained from having to prove success in a field where success is fairly intangible. Although Chloe Barlow loves her work, she expresses her frustration with invisible results by admitting, “there are times when I’m like ‘let me make widgets or something so that I can say I made 100 widgets today.’”

Sarah Briggs feels frustrated with the dependent nature of the nonprofit model. She explains: “in corporate America, as long as the almighty buck is coming in, you can do whatever you want – you don’t answer to [anyone]... It’s much more straightforward and easy to manage I think.” However, in the nonprofit sector, Pavi Dethrow explains, “the market doesn’t work.” In the words of Amanda Buckhout, “there isn’t [a] product that you can sell on the other end.” Without the laws of supply and demand, Executive Directors must figure out ways to make others feel the same level of compassion for their causes as they do. Courtney Wong often feels frustrated with this approach, for “it’s so hard...to talk about our women in terms of numbers or rates...they’re not...they’re people.” Courtney faces a particularly difficult situation because of the nature of her clientele – women in addiction recovery, a population known to have a 70% rate of relapse. Since funders feel little incentive to invest in recovery programming, Courtney must dedicate a substantial amount of time and energy in defending the program “like a business” to “prove the value of the program.” Courtney works hard to help her funders understand that “every one of these women is worth ‘investing in,’” and often feeling like she’s “fighting tooth and nail for every penny,” (C. Wong, personal communication, January 19, 2010).

### Broad Range of Skills

During my interviews, I asked each of the participants to evaluate their nonprofit skills (as defined by my understanding of useful skills one might want as an Executive Director). I examined this by first asking whether the women either currently possessed or needed to develop skills in five categories: fundraising, public speaking, management, technology and marketing. I also took an inventory of each subject's formal trainings in six categories: business training, leadership training, nonprofit leadership training, public speaking training, supervisory experience and quantitative training. The results from both of these sections were fairly inconclusive – none of the women possessed skills or training in all of the categories that I considered essential to the job. The most commonly possessed skill category was management skills, with 81.2% (18 out of 22) of participants responding positively. On the other hand, the least commonly possessed skill category was technology skills, which 59% (13 out of 22) of participants responding positively.

While the business world had long streamlined the training of its leaders through MBA programs, comparable training programs for nonprofit leaders has only recently emerged. While three of the women went through formal nonprofit leadership training programs, the other 20 women made their way into nonprofit leadership by acquiring formal or informal training in other ways. Whereas an MBA is pretty much a prerequisite for leadership in the for-profit sector, there seem to be no such official or unofficial prerequisites for non-profit leaders. There even seems to be disagreement within the community of Nonprofit Management and Nonprofit Leadership graduate degree programs about how to train nonprofit leaders. While some of these programs are based out of Social Work schools, other graduate programs are found in business schools, hence preparing individuals for nonprofit leadership in very different ways.

Although a lot of literature and organizations suggest that the nonprofit sector benefits from the application of business principles, nonprofit leaders assert that they need more than just business skills to succeed. Sarah Briggs argues “you have to manage [nonprofits] like corporations;” however, she asserts that leaders also have to use other skills to account for “the complexity of all the different funding streams.” Likewise, Topanga Jackson agrees that nonprofit leaders “have to be business people;” however, she thinks they have to be advocates and politically savvy as well, (S. Briggs, personal communication, December 18, 2009).

### Purpose over paycheck

*“To love what you do and feel that it matters—how could anything be more fun?”*

*-Katharine Graham, the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 enterprise (the Washington Post Company)*

Aside from having the skills to lead nonprofit organizations, each of my participants also had an intense desire to work in the sector. To find out whether my participants performed their work for a paycheck or a purpose, I asked each of my women whether they had ever experienced an “epiphany moment” that called her to or reassured her of her work in the nonprofit sector. One woman argued that she felt that the sector was just the best fit for her passions and interests (S. Miller, personal communication, January 20, 2010), while another woman pursued the nonprofit sector with a strategic eye, (J. Matsui, personal communication, February 1, 2010). However, the remaining twenty-two participants shared vivid anecdotes about both ordinary and extraordinary epiphanies.

Ellen Williams’ epiphany came in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. In light of the tragedy, she realized that she wouldn’t be happy doing nonprofit work. Instead, she “wanted to get involved in foreign policy and understand diplomacy and what makes people view countries in a certain way.”

Chloe Barlow recognized her calling to the nonprofit sector during college. Growing up, she “wanted to be a lawyer with every blood cell of [her] body;” however, while teaching an LSAT course she recognized that her real passion was teaching. Ever since then, Chloe has made a commitment to “stay attuned to where [she] feel[s] strongest.” She asks herself “After what things do I feel a high?” and then creates opportunities to do more of those life-giving activities. Conversely, she also pays attention to when she feels drained or exacerbated and stays away from those de-energizing activities.

The nonprofit sector provides something that the for-profit sector simply lacked. Although Chloe Barlow never worked in the for-profit sector, she is reassured that the nonprofit sector is the right place to be because everyone she knows “in corporate America is either disillusioned or feeling disconnected from what really matters or just hating their job but loving the money or thinking about how to transition into the nonprofit sector.” Jane Matsui recalls the hardest part of working in the for-profit world was not being able to find her “center.” Sue Baker remembers her time on Wall Street as “very satisfying monetarily” and “very very exciting,” (B. Baker, personal communication, December 18, 2009), and Molly Hosea remembers feeling excited when working for a political nonprofit that was in line with her academic interests. However, both Sue and Molly expressed feeling like their jobs weren't what they were “supposed to be doing” with their lives, (B. Baker, personal communication, December 18, 2009; M. Hosea, personal communication, February 3, 2010). Now, both Sue and Molly enjoy their work. Sue Baker is “passionate about the work that [she does] in a way that [she] was never passionate about [her] private sector work.” Much of her passion lies in feeling like she is adding value. Sue recognizes that “the world doesn't really need another investment banker. But the world does need somebody with skills and resources to help in the social sector,” (B. Baker, personal communication, December 18, 2009).

Many of the women derive their purpose from the people with whom they get to interact on a day-to-day basis. Pavi Dethrow feels that she has a “blessed life” because she gets to “be changed by

people that many people would walk past and not know what they're missing." Both Pavi Dethrow and others enjoy defying expectations and overcoming harsh odds. During the first few years with No Place Like Home, Pavi remembers that "the perception was...nobody's going to come in...they want to be out there. And then the second perception is – if they do come in they're going to kill each other. I'm sure it's a violent group and you're not going to be safe." However, the reality was the complete opposite: the shelter filled up in a week, there were no instances of violence, and the men were generous to the point of literally giving each other the clothes off their backs. These kinds of surprises draw Pavi to continue with her work and give her hope for that she is engaging in meaningful work, (P. Dethrow, personal communication, February 2, 2010).

Courtney Wong's motivation for doing her work comes from the women. She describes "the day that a woman first gets out on a bike after being incarcerated for 9 months" as being "the most fulfilling day for everyone" - the volunteers, herself and the women.

For some women, the purpose is vaguer. Leila DiMarco, who has been with The Enterprise Center for 18 years, plans to stay with the organization until she retires. When asked why she has remained committed to the organization, she explained: "it continues to stir my soul. And I'm very excited about what I do here."

Eight out of 22 participants cited religion or religious values as an influential factor in their decision to pursue a job in the nonprofit sector. Chloe Barlow puts into practice a few basic Biblical principles, such as "it's better to give than to receive" and "the love of money is the root of all evil." Likewise, Sue Baker believes that her empathy for others comes from being reminded to "love thy neighbor as thyself" from her Christian upbringing, (B. Baker, personal communication, December 18, 2009).

### Characteristics

Although employees in the nonprofit sector are often characterized as idealistic, my participants seemed to have had enough experience in the nonprofit sector to surpass the honeymoon stage of working with nonprofits. When asked "On a scale of 1-5, with one being an idealist and five being a realist, how would you rate your ideology when you first entered the nonprofit sector?" the average response was a 2.5, a perfect balance between idealism and realism. However, when asked for their present ideology, the women averaged 3.25, leaning slightly more towards realism.

Along with being moderate realists, the participants also hold many qualities commonly associated with leadership. When asked to describe themselves from a list of personality characteristics, 100% of the women describe themselves as persevering, 81.8% of the women describe themselves as self-confident, 86.4% consider themselves visionary and 90.1% consider themselves innovative.

### Salary

Despite the common perception that nonprofit employees are vastly undercompensated, over a third of the sample 36.4% (8 out of 22 participants) are comfortable with their current salaries. Just over half (54.5%, or 12 out of 22 participants) believe that they are underpaid, while the remaining 9% (or 2 out of 22) believe that they are overpaid. Of the twelve women who believed that they were underpaid, most expressed their intentional decision to accept a lower salary for the benefit of the organization. Amanda Buckhout explained that she'd like to make "at least half to double the amount she's currently making" which is "not something that an institution [the size of Grants for Girls] could ever afford," yet it would be "a fraction of what [she] was making at the law firm," (A. Buckhout, personal communication, December 15, 2010).

Along with making a labor donation to enjoy the psychological benefits of pursuing a socially beneficial career, some women make a labor donation out of commitment to democratic pay scales. Susie Dickson recognizes that she is underpaid, but argues "I don't feel it." When she compares her



salary with that of her partner - who works in a similar position in the private sector - Dickson sees that she is "definitely underpaid." However, when she compares her salary with the salary of the lowest-paid person at the Restoration Philly, she knows that she wouldn't feel comfortable making much more, (S. Dickson, personal communication, January 22, 2010). Amanda Buckhout attributes this attitude of democratic governance to explain the lower salaries of non-profit Executive Directors. Amanda explains that if she were to get a large increase in her salary, "it would be really demoralizing to everybody under me who would then be in this enormous gap and we couldn't bring all of those along," (A. Buckhout, personal communication, December 15, 2010).

Along with valuing the nature of their work, these women also value the unique managerial structure that exists in nonprofit organizations. While most private sector firms have a hierarchical structure, many nonprofit organizations have a more centrarchical structure. Many of my participants viewed this flatter structure positively because they felt uncomfortable in organizations with wide gaps between the highest and lowest-paid worker in the company. For example, Susie Dickson understands that her role is to "eat with the fancy folks but also do the mundane stuff." However, she attributes that to being a women's organization, claiming that when she worked for male-run organizations, "the people who ran them never took out the trash," (S. Dickson, personal communication, January 22, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

This small study of 22 Executive Directors reveals the diversity of career paths that can lead a woman to nonprofit leadership. The stories of these women show that leadership does not come in one shape or size; rather, leaders emerge from a variety of circumstances and leaders exert their authority in a variety of ways. The typologies of Monied Transitioners, Non-Monied Transitioners, Single-Issue

Lifers and Multi-Issue Lifers provide broad categorizations to explain some general routes that female Executive Directors have followed in their path to leadership. These typologies reveal some diverging motivations for leadership in the nonprofit sector. However, despite their differences, the women seem to share more similarities than differences.

Although many question whether the nonprofit sector is “the best option or the only option,” (Preston, 1990), for female leaders, my study found that women actively pursue nonprofit careers as their primary choice. None of the participants resorted to her position as a fallback career; rather, each and every participant actively sought out work in the nonprofit sector. Whether the women came to their current positions as a result of dissatisfaction with the private sector or they actively pursued nonprofit work throughout their entire careers, these women are working in the nonprofit sector because it provides them with some degree of intrinsic satisfaction which motivates these women to continue doing challenging, undervalued, undercompensated work.

If all of the women from this small sample actively chose to pursue positions of leadership in the nonprofit sector, then the aforementioned statistics comparing lower relative female leadership in the private sector compared with in the nonprofit sector should be considered with a new perspective. While those statistics are generally thought to indicate the presence of barriers or a glass ceiling for female leadership in the private sector, perhaps those statistics are also partially indicative of women's active choice to pursue female leadership in the non-profit sector instead of in the private sector. The women in this study have communicated a desire for a job that does more than just pay the bills- they have sought out jobs that provide meaning and purpose.

Recent literature has proposed that the nonprofit sector can learn from the practices of the for-profit sector; however, when it comes to creating a work environment friendly to female leadership, the for-profit sector should be taking lessons from the non-profit world. Men and women exert leadership in

different ways, yet the for-profit sector has only catered to male leadership styles. In general, female leaders seem to care more about fringe benefits of their careers than about the number on their paycheck, female leaders prefer more democratic management structures and female leaders care more about the purpose of their work. While it is inevitable that “women as half of all workers changes everything,” (Shriver, 2009, p.1), about the private sector, it is yet to be determined whether the private sector will make the necessary changes to adapt to their changing faces in leadership. If the private sector wants to create a work environment that caters to women's needs, then they should take lessons from the female-friendly environment of the nonprofit sector or prepare to lose women to transition out.

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Appendix A  
Recruitment Email

Dear Professor,

I am conducting a senior thesis project on female executive directors of non-profits in Philadelphia and am currently recruiting subjects to participate in my study.

I'm hoping to compile a collection of stories of female non-profit executive directors. I want to find out what drives them to do their work, what encouraged them to pursue a career in the non-profit field, what jobs led them to where they are now and so on.

I know that you have experience in the nonprofit sector of Philadelphia; therefore, I was wondering if you have any contacts who might serve as appropriate candidates for my study. If so, would you be willing to introduce me to them through a quick email?

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Lindsay Eierman

Appendix B  
Request for Participation Email

Hi, my name is Lindsay Eierman and I am an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm conducting a senior thesis project on female executive directors of non-profits in Philadelphia and I was wondering if I could ask you a few quick questions about your organization. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

I'm hoping to compile a collection of stories of female non-profit executive directors. I want to find out what drives them to do their work, what encouraged them to pursue a career in the non-profit field, what jobs led them to where they are now and so on.

But right now, I'm just doing a preliminary screening to find subjects who would be interested in taking part in this study. Any questions you answer would be kept confidential.

*Would you be interested?*

*When was your organization founded/how long have you been around?*

*What is your rough annual budget?*

*How many paid staff members do you have?*

*Do you utilize volunteers?*

Appendix C  
Interview Guide

A study on Philadelphia-area  
Female Nonprofit Founders and Executive Directors

The following survey is part of a research study aimed at understanding the characteristics of female Executive Directors of Philadelphia-area nonprofits. I am interested in your personal journey to your current job as well as your attitude towards the nonprofit sector in general. I am also interested in understanding the origins of your organization; therefore, I plan to contact someone involved with the founding of your organization. Completing this survey should take about 30 minutes. With your consent, I will record this interview. All recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the research project.

The only risk of participation is possible loss of confidentiality, however your responses will be kept confidential and will be published under a pseudonym. Your responses will be aggregated with the responses of 19 other Philadelphia-area female nonprofit Executive Directors. In the event that the results of this study are published or presented in a public setting, your organization will be referred to by its assigned pseudonym.

If you have any questions regarding this study please feel free to contact: Lindsay Eierman at the University of Pennsylvania, 404-275-4511 or [Lkeierman@gmail.com](mailto:Lkeierman@gmail.com). You may also contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.

You are not obligated to answer any of this entire questionnaire and can withdraw from the research study at any time. There will be no consequences for withdrawing participation. By contributing to this study, we hope you will be adding valuable knowledge to the under-researched nonprofit sector.

Interview Guide (ctd)

<b>Date of interview</b>	
<b>Interview location</b>	

**Biographical Information about Executive Director**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Name of nonprofit</b>	
<b>Years with the nonprofit</b>	
<b>Address of organization</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Website</b>	

**Tell me about your organization:**

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

<b>Main activities of nonprofit:</b>	1)
	2)
	3)
	4)
	5)

**What is your mission statement?**

**Career History**

**Brief summary of your career path from graduating college until you started your current job:**

<b>Did you help found this nonprofit?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If not, who was the founder?</b>		

**What kind of career experience did you have prior to joining this nonprofit?**

<b>Private</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Other non-profits</b>

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

*If they worked in other sectors....*

**Why did you make the shift to the non-profit sector?**

--

**Which is most challenging?**

Private	Government	Non-profits
Elaborate:		

**Which is most rewarding?**

Private	Government	Non-profits
Elaborate:		

**Would you consider leaving the nonprofit sector? Why or why not?**

Yes/No	Elaborate:

**Looking back on your past experiences, did you ever have a clear direction on where your career path was heading? If so, what did you realize? When did that epiphany occur?**

Yes/No	Elaborate:

**Did you ever have moments of self doubt about your career path?**

Yes/No	Elaborate:



Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**Did you experience a reduction in your salary when you transitioned into nonprofit sector? If so, by what percent was your salary reduced?**

Yes/No	% decrease:
--------	-------------

*If they didn't work in other sectors....*

**Which do you perceive is most challenging?**

Private	Government	Other non-profits
Elaborate:		

**Which do you perceive is most rewarding?**

Private	Government	Other non-profits
Elaborate:		

**Would you consider leaving the nonprofit sector? Why or why not?**

Yes/No	Elaborate:
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Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**Reasons for working in the nonprofit sector**

**Values**

**Did you do any volunteer work prior to working with this organization?**

Yes	No
Elaborate:	

**Were your family members involved in volunteering or some type of social work?**

Yes	No
Elaborate:	

**Were your parents influential in your choice of work?**

Yes	No
Elaborate:	

<b>Religious affiliation</b>	
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**Did your religion play any role in choosing to work in the nonprofit sector?**

Yes	No
Elaborate:	

Appendix C  
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Please tell me how important each of the following is to you:

<b>Making a lot of money</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Helping people in need</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Being successful in work</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Making the world a better place</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Living a happy, comfortable life</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Being able to do what you want</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Having a religious faith</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Choosing my own goals</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Promoting social justice</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Promoting feminist ideals</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Living an exciting life</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>
<b>Respecting traditions</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Fairly Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Absolutely Essential</b>

How do you define success?

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

To what extent do you agree with the statement: “In general, most people can be trusted”?

Completely Agree

Completely Disagree

1	2	3	4	5
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On a 1-5 scale, with 1 being liberal and 5 being conservative, how would you rate your political affiliation?

Liberal

Moderate Conservative

Political Affiliation	1	2	3	4	5
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Do you consider yourself a feminist?

Yes	No
If so, how do you define feminism?:	

On a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being an idealist and 5 being a realist, how would you rate your ideology when you first entered the nonprofit sector?

Idealist

Moderate

Realist

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

On a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being an idealist and 5 being a realist, how would you rate your present ideology?

Idealist

Moderate

Realist

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

To what extent do you agree with the statement “You can’t be too careful in dealing with other people”

Completely Agree

Completely Disagree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**Skills**

Please state whether each of the following characteristics describes you:

Perseverant	Yes/No
Self-confident	Yes/No
Outgoing	Yes/No
Disciplined	Yes/No
Organized	Yes/No
Shy	Yes/No
Talkative	Yes/No
Cautious	Yes/No
Visionary	Yes/No
Driven	Yes/No
Innovative	Yes/No
Patient	Yes/No
Competitive	Yes/No
Emotional	Yes/No
Independent	Yes/No
Risk-taker	Yes/No
Curious	Yes/No
Honest	Yes/No
Courageous	Yes/No
Stubborn	Yes/No
Other (specify)	

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I’m going to list some common skills of Executive Directors. Please tell me which of these skills you currently have and which of these skills you still need to develop.

	Need	Have
<b>Fundraising</b>		
<b>Public Speaking</b>		
<b>Management</b>		
<b>Marketing</b>		
<b>Technology</b>		
<b>Other: _____</b>		

For the following subject areas, please explain what kind of knowledge/experience had before joining this organization

<b>Formal business training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Leadership experience</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Supervisory experience</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Quantitative training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Public Speaking training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Formal nonprofit leadership training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>

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**Why did you choose a career in the non-profit sector?**

<b>More flexibility in work schedule</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Less hierarchy</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Mission-driven rather than profit-driven</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Desire to “give back”</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Elaborate</b>
<b>Other?</b>		<b>Elaborate:</b>

**Why did you choose to join or start this organization?**

Appendix C  
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**Work-Life Balance**

<b>Marital status</b>		
<b>Number of Children</b>		
<b>Who looks after kids during work hours?</b>		
<b>Do you work from home?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Is your work place close to home?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Spouse’s occupation?</b>		

**What motivates you to come into the office every day?**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Clients (people being served)</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Results</b>	

**What is the most difficult aspect of your job?**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Funding</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Clients/people being served</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Bureaucracy/politics</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Lack of motivation</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>



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Interview Guide (ctd)

**Compensation**

Do you receive any compensation from the nonprofit for your work?	Yes/No	
Do you have any other sources of income?	Yes/No	
Nonprofit compensation accounts for _____% of total income		

Do you think you overpaid or underpaid working in the nonprofit sector?

Underpaid	By how much?
Overpaid	
No difference	

**Socio-demographic Data**

Age	
Years of education after high school	
Universities attended	
What is your highest degree (diploma)	

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**Current Household Income class (check one)**

<\$15,000	
\$15,000-\$31,999	
\$32,000-\$72,499	
\$72,500-\$199,999	
\$200,000+	
Mother’s occupation?	
Father’s occupation?	

**Organizational Structure**

<b>Founding year:</b>	
<b>Annual Budget:</b>	<\$25,000
	\$25,000-\$250,000
	\$250,000-\$500,000
	\$500,000-1,000,000
	\$1,000,000+
<b>501(c)3 status?</b>	
<b>Number of Staff</b> <b>(Full time equivalents- includes part time staff)</b>	
<b>Number of Volunteers</b> <b>(Full time equivalents – includes part time volunteers)</b>	

Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**Background on Founding the Organization (only for founders)**

<b>Entrepreneur’s age at founding</b>	
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<b>Source of Funding to start nonprofit</b>	<b>Self</b>
	<b>Family</b>
	<b>Spouse</b>
	<b>Bank</b>
	<b>Friends</b>
<b>Marital Status at Founding</b>	
<b>Age of children at founding</b>	

<b>Were your finances sufficient at the time of start-up to give you the freedom to start the nonprofit without financial worries?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Elaborate</b>	

**From whom did you receive encouragement and mentoring to join start own nonprofit**

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Appendix C  
Interview Guide (ctd)

**What motivated you to start your own nonprofit?**

<b>Professional Independence</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Independence from family</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Boredom/need something to do</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>To get social connections</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>To enhance reputation/status</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Availability of funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Opportunity to serve multiple roles</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Wanted to try something new</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Encouraged by family or others</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>To make a difference</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Want to help others as a result of personal experience</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Other (specify)</b>	

**Why this particular nonprofit?**

<b>Discovering a niche that needed to be served</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Wanting to work in an area dealing with the particular subsector</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Chance and opportunity</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Related to professional expertise</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Other (specify)</b>	