THE NONPROFIT GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP: Data-driven systemic and inclusive solutions

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Marco Tavanti, Ph.D.
OVERVIEW / INTRODUCTION

- Women make-up over 75% of the nonprofit workforce
- Only 45% of the C-level leadership positions in the nonprofit sector are held by women
- The nonprofit sector appears equipped to reconcile its gender leadership gap
OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

- Woman empowerment
- Gender equity
- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Justice

- Identify barriers women leaders face
- Generate systemic & inclusive solutions
- Collapse the gender leadership gap
RQ1: What systemic factors prevent women from reaching top leadership positions in the nonprofit sector?

RQ2: Why is the nonprofit sector slow to advance women to senior leadership positions when women make up over 75% of the nonprofit workforce?

RQ3: What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?
## Literature Review: Leadership Theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Theory</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Gender Attachments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trait Theory</strong></td>
<td>Leaders possess distinctive personal characteristics, including self-confidence, assertiveness, extraversion, integrity</td>
<td>• Acceptable and expected for men to possess these traits</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Backlash for women to portray these traits whether affected or inherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style Theory</strong></td>
<td>Leadership is categorized as democratic v. autocratic, task-oriented v. people-oriented, transactional (reward v. punishment), communitarian v. agentic</td>
<td>• Women are associated with democratic, people-oriented, communal styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Men are associated with autocratic, task-oriented, agentic styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Men reap more rewards as leaders and women experience punishment for perceived failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contingency Theory</strong></td>
<td>• Effective leadership depends on the characteristics of followers and the context of situation - what works in one situation may not work in another</td>
<td>• Women leaders leading all women groups (people-oriented) have high LPC scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leader's work orientation defined by the Least Preferred Coworker Scale</td>
<td>• Women leaders with all-men groups (task-oriented) have lower LPC scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory</strong></td>
<td>Leadership is rooted in the quality of the relationship between leaders and individual followers</td>
<td>• Women and men can utilize LMX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• If men are the subordinates, women leaders experience lower LMX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• This practice is associated with androgynous leadership approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformational Leadership Theory</strong></td>
<td>Charismatic leaders use inspiration, idealized influence, empathy, experience to gain followers’ trust and loyalty</td>
<td>• Women tend to be perceived as nurturers, so they excel in inspiring trust and loyalty from followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Men take on transformational leadership tactics that are perceived positively by followers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bolman & Deal Reframing Organizations (2017)
LITERATURE REVIEW: BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP

Glass Ceiling/Broken Rungs
- Salary discrimination
- Gender biased personnel practices
- Women judged by past performance
- Authority and historical contributions of men normalized

Leaky Pipe Syndrome
- Career choices
- Lack of role models
- Women making lateral moves
- Breaks in career to raise families
- Perceptions of leadership styles

Obstacles to Advancement
- Implicit bias against women
- Poor or inadequate performance evaluations
- The “Queen Bee” effect
- The “Glass Cushion” effect

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# Methods and Approaches

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<tr>
<th>QUALITATIVE</th>
<th>RECRUIT/SAMPLE</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT TOOL</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>META-ANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>Online databases and published reports (e.g., U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP))</td>
<td>Retrieve raw data to analyze and create visuals</td>
<td>Keywords established for online search: women leaders, nonprofit leadership gap, gender leadership gap, women and nonprofits, female leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPERT INTERVIEWS</strong></td>
<td>Recruiting via personal and professional connections Four expert interviewees - Two CEOs of direct human services agencies - Two academic scholars working with DEI at two different universities</td>
<td>30-Minute Zoom conference calls, recorded, transcribed, coded for themes</td>
<td>Semi-structured Interview Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONTENT ANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>Organizations selected for 2019: - Nonprofit Times Top 100 list - Top 100 from the Fortune 500 - 277 IGOs queried from Wikipedia SurveySystem.com randomization tool used to sample 230 of the 477 organizations for statistical analysis</td>
<td>Organization websites - About Us, About the Leadership webpages</td>
<td>Categorization Matrix: Gender, Position Title, Sector, Industry, Race/Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
META ANALYSIS: GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP

10-YEAR COMPARISON OF GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP: GENERAL & OPERATIONS MANAGERS
(Nonprofit and Private Sectors)


MNA Master of Nonprofit Administration
META ANALYSIS: NONPROFITS POISED FOR ACTION

COMPARISON OF FEMALE LEADERS IN THE UNITED STATES BY POSITION - 2017

Nonprofit Organizations CEO-level*: 45%
Fortune 500 CEOs: 5%
Governors: 8%
U.S. House of Representatives: 19%
U.S. Senate: 21%
U.S. Cabinet/Cabinet-level: 21%
State Legislatures: 24.8%

Data sources: The Pew Center, 2017 and *FastCompany 2017

NONPROFITS ARE THE PATH FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP
META ANALYSIS:
NP CEOs BY OPERATING BUDGET

DATA ANALYSIS: THREE SECTOR COMPARISON

Women are almost a 1:2 ratio for nonprofits, 1:11 for for-profit, and 1:3 for government.

Chi-square results show women are more likely to take a leadership position in nonprofits and government than they are in for-profits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Female Leaders</th>
<th>Male Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Organizations (NPO)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-Profit Organizations (FPO)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Government Organizations (IGO)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 9.98, df = 2, p = .007 \]

Composite data: NP Times Top 100; Fortune 500; and Wikipedia IGO list
Samples obtained using randomization tool on SurveySystem.com
### Expert Interviews: Women in Leadership

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<th>MAJOR THEMES</th>
<th>EXEMPLARY QUOTATIONS</th>
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<td><strong>Leadership Styles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>&quot;Collaboration is the name of the game for me. I like to see the skills of the people around me and to let them use those skills, but also to recognize how those people might be challenged and create the situation which both me and my team are able to learn skills that are beyond our comfort zone—so, that we are really prepared for anything.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>&quot;When I talk about authentic leadership, what I’ve learned is not just that I can bring my spiritual self, my work self, my mother self together to be who I am. It’s that from the inside out, I can lead from a place of what motivates me and that can be inspiring to others.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>&quot;I am really lucky that I had a little bit of for-profit experience so that I could learn the way companies operate but more importantly, how they communicate their brand; it’s all about getting everybody to sing off the same page.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers, Challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Dynamics</td>
<td>I think if there is power or money to be made, men are not going to cede territory, and I think that is generally what we are seeing.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Bias Against Women's Competence</td>
<td>&quot;There are power differentials and the power differentials are very gendered and very race-based, and all of those have the effect of having women stay at mid-level administrator positions for the most part.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>&quot;In the 70s when women came in [to the workplace], that’s when [women] started to “take jobs” from men. That’s when all the harassment and the gender discrimination, etc., really started to escalate.&quot; - Expert Interviewee #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPERT INTERVIEWS: TOP PRIORITIES
Transforming the cultural mindset of implicit bias at the individual level is essential to collapsing the gender leadership gap.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INVEST IN GENDER DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH
   ◆ Improve data science to understand implicit bias against women
   ◆ Collaboration with government agencies and professional associations to collect, analyze, and disseminate research findings

1. SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIFIC TO WOMEN
   ◆ Provide clear career ladder based on equity

1. CHANGE CULTURE BY REWRITING THE NARRATIVE
   ◆ Redefine what value means in the workplace
   ◆ Implement equitable organizational policies & procedures

1. ENGAGE IN GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
   ◆ Advocate for laws relating to paid family and medical leave
   ◆ Advocate for gender pay equity, flexible work schedules
WOMEN LEADERS IN TIME OF CRISIS

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS BROUGHT WOMEN TO THE FOREFRONT OF ACTION, EMPATHY, AND SOLIDARITY

Source: UN Web TV: The United Nations Live & On Demand
REFERENCES

American Association of University Women (AAUW).
https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/barrier-bias/


Please contact Katya Alcaraz-Minnick at ktalcarazminnick@usfca.edu for complete research paper and resources.
THE NONPROFIT GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP: DATA-DRIVEN SYSTEMIC AND INCLUSIVE SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS
Katya Alcaraz-Minnick, MNA | Master of Nonprofit Administration | Capstone Project

SUMMARY

Data-driven Systemic and Inclusive Solutions: By formulating a leadership systemic change model, nonprofit organizations, as a collective sector, can take the innovative step to lean into closing the gender leadership gap.

- Women make up over 75% of the nonprofit workforce
- Women only make up 45% of C-suite positions, and less than 10% for organizations with operating budgets over $50M
- Women are more likely to gain a leadership role in nonprofits and government than in for-profits

The purpose of this research is to produce a leadership systemic change model that can help the nonprofit sector transform the inherent social biases that fuel the gender leadership gap.

PURPOSE

- EXAMINE LEADERSHIP THEORIES, focusing on successful characteristics, gender differences in leadership, and organizational leadership; review the historical context of how women are perceived in society
- ANALYZE secondary data and primary data to study the gender leadership gap, which can be used to evaluate the barriers women face
- ADDRESS SYSTEMIC ISSUES that exist in keeping women from reaching top leadership positions, specifically in the nonprofit sector
- RECOMMEND FORWARD MOVEMENT for the nonprofit sector to collapse the gender leadership gap

RESEARCH

RQ1: What systemic barriers prevent women from reaching top leadership positions in the nonprofit sector?
RQ2: Why is the nonprofit sector slow to advance women to senior leadership positions when women make up over 75% of the nonprofit workforce?
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METHODS

- Literature Review: State of women leaders meta-analysis and review of perceived best leadership practices and theories
  - Books (8)
  - Academic Articles (23)
  - Trade Articles (13)
  - Web Interviews (3)
- Primary and Secondary Data Analysis
  - Content Analysis of 230 websites, including nonprofits, for-profits, and international organizations cataloging gender, position title, and race
  - Archival data analysis to compare the trajectory of the gender leadership gap for the nonprofit sector, the private sector, and government
- Expert Interviews: Four semi-structured interviews with female leaders of Bay Area nonprofit organizations; two CEOs of direct human services, and two academic scholars from universities

DATA AND ANALYSIS

10-YEAR COMPARISON OF GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP: CEO POSITIONS
(Nonprofit and Private Sectors)

- Women are almost a 1:2 ratio for nonprofits, 1:1 for for-profit, and 1:3 for government
- Chi-square results show women are more likely to take a leadership position in nonprofits and government than they are in for-profits

REFERENCES


RESULTS

Systemic and Inclusive Responsibilities and Solutions

- Professional associations providing benchmarks and best practices
- State and federal lawmakers
- Grassroots movements/community organizations

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