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CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

The Nonprofit Gender Leadership Gap:
Data-Driven Systemic and Inclusive Solutions

by
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Abstract

The gender leadership gap has maintained its divide throughout world history. There have been positive advancements in gender leadership equity within the political arena and in the for-profit sector, however, it is within the nonprofit sector that the most progress has been made in collapsing the gender leadership gap. Women make up a large percentage of the nonprofit sector's workforce, so it would seem that the nonprofit sector is poised to lead the economic world to close the gender gap and achieve equity within its top managerial ranks. Research on leadership theories relating to skills, traits, and styles will demonstrate how women and men differ in action and how these perceived differences can affect women in attaining top management positions. This project proposes that the nonprofit sector can be the influencing force to uplift women into positions of power, including C-suite, executive director, and general manager positions. Data-driven systemic and inclusive solutions can be formulated to support nonprofit organizations to take innovative steps to lean in and close the gender leadership gap. This research will ascertain existing barriers preventing women from rising to high level leadership positions, specifically in the nonprofit sector. By synthesizing secondary data obtained through meta-analysis, primary data analysis, and expert interviews, the goal is to produce a systemic and inclusive change model that nonprofit agencies can implement to diminish the inherent social biases fueling the gender leadership gap. This study can be the foundation for deeper research and discourse to transform cultural mindsets at organizational and societal levels beginning with the nonprofit sector.

Keywords: women leaders, gender leadership gap, nonprofit leadership, women, diversity, equity, inclusion, systemic change, gender bias, social biases

Acknowledgments

This research is dear to me because I come from a long line of strong females. My mother is a leader at heart and one does not need a title to lead from the heart. I want to embrace such leadership and the University of San Francisco provided me with the tools and guidance to release the strong woman leader inside of me.

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Live. Love. Learn.

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Section 1. Introduction

There exists deep-seated sexism, misogyny, and gender inequality within state, governmental, and corporate infrastructures throughout the world. In the United States, gender inequality is second nature; an inherent bias. As Seager (2018) noted when mapping women's world experiences:

> For many millions of people, the world over, states and aspirant state actors create chaos and crisis. States set the terms of discrimination that are then enacted in structural, institutional, small and everyday way. All states are patriarchal. Even at the individual level, and in countless ways, men benefit from the ubiquity and apparent normalcy of patriarchy in ways that women do not. (p. 11)

Implicit bias against women is directly related to women facing barriers in attaining leadership positions within the private, public, and government sectors. As Gibelman (2000) reported, "Overt discrimination in employment has become less acceptable in theory in this society, but in practice there is an abundance of documentation that minorities and women still face barrier to hiring, advancement, and equal pay" (p.253). Prior to the early 2000s most research examined the gender leadership gap within the private and government sectors, but over the last 20 years, more information exists about the effects of the gender leadership gap within the nonprofit sector. As the American Association of University Women (2018), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of women leaders, reported in *Broken Ladders: Barriers to Women's Representation in Nonprofit Leadership*, "Though most people are aware that women, and women of color in particular, are underrepresented in leadership in the corporate world, many may be less aware of the pervasive impact of bias against women in nonprofit leadership." Additional analysis found that 63 percent of the 20 largest charitable foundations in the United States are led by men while almost 90 percent of the lower-level staff and about half of the higher-level staff are women (AAUW, 2018).

There is an abundance of leadership theories and studies on leadership and gender, which help to understand the inherent biases against women. There are also myriad obstacles women leaders face in the workplace that paint a picture when trying to recognize the gender dichotomy of leadership. Rhode (2003) concluded that gender stereotypes, lack of mentorship and network support programs, and inflexible work schedules limit women's opportunities for leadership (p.7). Women have been running into obstacles at every step towards top management and it is at the very early stages of women's careers that they fall "dramatically behind men in promotions, blowing open a gender gap that then widens every step up the chain" (Wall Street Journal, 2019). Reviewing empirical data regarding the gender leadership gap will be essential in creating a model of change that will be specific to the nonprofit sector, but can be implemented in the private sector and in government as well. It is acknowledged that gender, culture, and race are interrelated when discussing the leadership gap, and although this area of intersectionality is touched upon in this paper, it will not be the main

focus. The traditional gender leadership dichotomy will be the main reference throughout the paper. Limiting gender to the traditional context allows for simplifying the application of systemic solutions within the nonprofit sector and the generalizability of implementation into the private and government sectors. Ferree (1995, as cited in Ayman and Korabik, 2010, p. 158) defined gender as, "both a hierarchical structure of opportunity and oppression as well as an affective structure of identity and cohesion." Gender in this report is mostly referring to the hierarchical structure of opportunity.

To begin answering why women continue to face obstacles in attaining executive level leadership positions, where executive level includes C-suite and senior level (e.g. executive director, general manager, and operation manager positions) in the nonprofit sector, this research will review three main areas of organizational leadership in the context of systemic barriers built into the economic platform. The literature outlined in Section 2 provides information on the historical context of gender bias in the workforce and the established leadership theories on characteristics, qualities, and skills, including the perceived gender differences in leadership styles. Information about obstacles women face in the workplace is also examined to provide further background about the effects of gender discrimination on leadership advancement. Literature about the nonprofit sector and its female workforce is included to understand the effects of the sector's lack of women leaders to advance its collective mission to provide services for the benefit of society. Guerrero reported in Mission Box Global Network (2020) that although women are highly visible in the nonprofit sector and a large percentage of the sector's labor force, women are fighting an uphill battle to attain top leadership positions within the larger nonprofit organizations; specifically, in organizations with annual operating budgets exceeding $50 million.

Section 3 and 4 will outline the methods and approaches and data analysis, respectively, for this research. The subsequent two sections will provide evaluation on the state of women leaders within various sectors or industries, including the nonprofit sector, the private sector, and inter-governmental organizations; as well as the model of change and conclusion. The purpose of this research is to use data to find systemic solutions to collapse the gender leadership gap beginning with the nonprofit sector. By understanding the status of women leaders within the nonprofit sector and comparing women leadership in the private and government sectors, the goal is to emphasize the nonprofit sector's responsibility and ability to create systemic change in gender leadership equity. This research paper will serve as a platform for continued data analysis and development in the area of women leaders in the nonprofit sector.

Section 2: Literature Review

Comparative archival data analysis reveals there has been an increase in women in leadership within the private, social, and public sectors, but the persistent gender divide remains. Women make up 75 percent of the nonprofit workforce, but only 45 percent of leadership positions (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2019). Women are not on equal footing with men as senior leaders of nonprofit organizations. This data parallels that of private sector and

government, regardless of the inherent human rights nature of the nonprofit sector. Women make up 44.7 percent of total employees of the S&P 500 companies with only 5 percent of women in CEO positions as illustrated in Figure 1. The percentage of women ascending the corporate ladder shows a significant drop as the level of responsibility increases.

Figure 1: Women CEOs of the S&P 500 Companies

Source: Catalyst, Women CEOs of the S&P 500, 2019.

Data also shows (see Figure 2) that women hold under 30 percent of government positions with more women holding State Legislature positions at 24.8 percent. Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers (2017) drew a comparison between the rhetoric of the 2016 elections and the barriers women face in leadership by stating, "Given the pervasiveness of misogynistic rhetoric in the 2016 presidential campaign, it is nearly impossible to resist drawing comparisons between the ways in which implicit bias, stereotype threat, and the empathy gap undermine equity for communities of color, despite legislative reform, and how they manifest themselves and act as generative forces in shaping and reshaping the narrative around the role of women in the public sphere." Despite women making up almost half the workforce at 46.9 percent (Catalyst, 2019), there is a lack of women leaders in top management where decisions are made—decisions that dictate institutional policies and procedures and the support programs for women to utilize mentorship and network support programs for career advancement. This is compounded by a lack of political representation.

Figure 2: U.S. Government Positions Held by Women in 2017
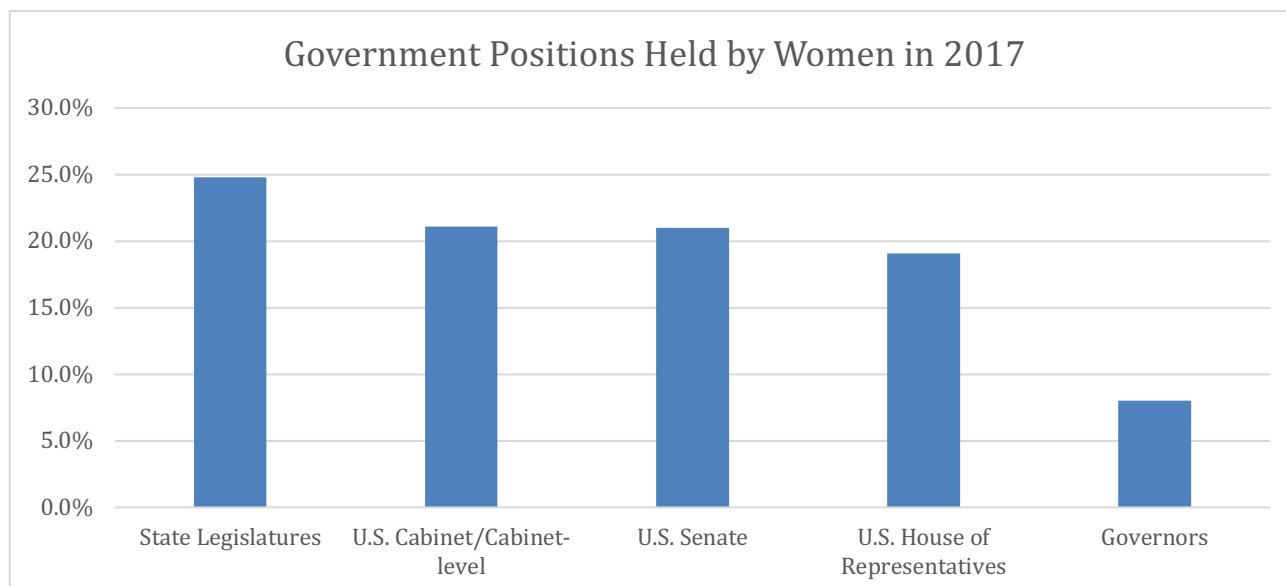
Source: Author, using data from The Pew Center: The Data on Women Leaders, 2017.

Women continue to face obstacles in attaining executive level leadership positions where executive level includes C-suite and senior level positions (e.g. executive directors and general managers) in the nonprofit sector. In reviewing main areas of organizational leadership, the question of why the gender equity gap in nonprofit leadership is not shrinking at a faster rate becomes a driving force to formulate systemic and inclusive solutions. Given research and data support the effectiveness of female leadership in the workplace, a comparative literature review of the state of women leaders will help to explain organizational leadership behavior and its effect on women advancing as leaders. Leadership theories explaining traits, styles, and characteristic gender associations will be reviewed to provide a contextual foundation about the perception of women in society.

A Historical Lens: Women, Society, and Data

Understanding the historical perspective of how society views women is necessary to examine the underlying barriers and obstacles that women continue to face when trying to advance into leadership positions. The cultural and societal makeup of the United States reveal how women have been held back, ignored, and kept at a distance from achieving great heights within politics, business, and government. Wollstonecraft (1792) wrote in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*:

> For man and women, truth, if I understand the meaning of the word, must be the same; yet the fanciful female character, so prettily drawn by poets and novelists, demanding the sacrifice of truth and sincerity, virtue becomes a relative idea, having no other foundation than utility, and of that utility men pretend arbitrarily to judge, shaping it to

their own convenience. Women, I allow may have different duties to fulfil; but they are *human* duties, and the principles that should regulate the discharge of them, I sturdily maintain, must be the same. (p. 140-141)

Science, politics, and industrial advances are some factors that formed the accepted subjugated view of women by society. As feminists throughout the 1700s and the 1800s tried to turn the tide, a counter movement of restrictions and laws dictated the fate of women. The industrial age created a patriarchal society that seeded male dominance in the global economic platform. As Saini described in *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong - And the New Research That's Rewriting the Story*, "With the domestication of animals and agriculture, as well as denser societies, specialized groups emerged. Systems of male control—patriarchies—emerged that exist to this day" (2017). In the 1900s, the right to vote became a focal point that suffragettes won in 1920 in the United States. However, women won the right to vote in national elections between 1893 and 1919 in nations such as Russia, Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, and Germany (Seager, 2018, p. 184). The female desire to be equal to men is an age-old struggle that continues to play out in today's society.

In science, data on the whole has been designed for men and the results exclude women; this directly affects the results of thousands of scientific studies. Findings that result in how cars are built, how seatbelts are created with a man in mind, and how the availability of public sanitary facilities, are just a few examples. These instances of ignoring women in the construction of how people live their day to day lives creates inequity. The gender data gap affects many facets of women's lives and as Perez points out in *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*:

> One of the most important things to say about the gender data gap is that it is not generally malicious, or even deliberate. Quite the opposite. It is simply the product of a way of thinking that has been around for millennia and is therefore a kind of *not* thinking. A double not thinking, even: men go without saying, and women don't get said at all. Because when we say human, on the whole, we mean men. (p. xii)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent amendments have strengthened the rights of women, specifically in the workplace. Gibelman (2000) reports that many of the government-backed studies and recommendations about overcoming barriers women face in the workplace reference only the corporate world and government (p. 254). Data gaps related to women in the workplace produce questions about the implications of not including women where decisions are made. Recently, Perez (2018) noted that the presence of women actually fills in the data gap and stated, "recent quantitative data analysis has found 'compelling evidence' that countries where women are kept out of positions of power and treated as second-class citizens are less likely to be peaceful. In other words: closing the gender data gap really is better for everyone" (p. 295).

Literature indicates that the nonprofit sector, or the charity venue, of the economic society provides an area where women naturally gravitate to, or are naturally accepted. Outon (2015) writing for a GuideStar series about women in nonprofits then and now stated, "If you look at a chart beginning in the early 1970s that shows the number of women entering the workforce and the number of existing nonprofits, you will see a hockey stick drawing of both numbers going straight up. For young idealistic people shaped by the civil rights, anti-war and women's movements, the nonprofit sector offered a rich place to live their values through work" (para. 3).

Women, Work, and Leadership

Researchers Zappert and Weinstein (1985) examined the physical and psychological impacts on men and women in relation to their work (managerial or junior executive positions). This study observed how men and women responded to work and interpersonal conflicts due to work. The Framingham study by Haynes and Feinleib (1980, as cited in Zappert and Weinstein, 1985, p. 1175) noted that "the dual role of raising a family and employment, especially in a lower status occupation, may produce excessive demands on working women." Zappert and Weinstein showed that there are coping skills utilized by both men and women, but that women feel negative effects more than men. They asserted, "while both women and men appear to use similar adaptive mechanisms, women appear to be exerting greater pressures on themselves to achieve in the day-to-day work situation. Consequently, it is in the costs of attempting to respond to the environment that significant sex differences emerge" (p. 1178). Vongas and Hajj (2015) surmised that cultural evolution could be the driving force of women's empathy over men "evolved through the transmission of social expectations and reinforced by the actual empathetic behaviors of female caregivers toward group members" (p. 9).

This venue of research exposes questions about why women seemingly accept their inequitable work status and how women retain the role of full-time home giver while working in similar managerial positions as men. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1997) researched women finding their own voices and moving from passivity to action; an emergence of subjective knowing. "In a world that emphasizes rationalism and scientific thought, there are bound to be personal and social costs of a subjectivist epistemology. Women subjectivists area at a special disadvantage…when they go about learning and working in the public domain" (p. 55). Women were entering the workforce in higher numbers due to the women's movement during the 1970s and 1980s. The Zappert and Weinstein research showed that women have always struggled in leadership positions in the workplace and that it had been an accepted issue; accepted even by women. Leadership research by Rhode (2003), explained that the disparities that women experience in the workplace are difficult to pinpoint. The cultural lag attributed to discriminatory practices, although illegal, set women back for leadership positions and women candidates with equal qualifications to men are not receiving the same opportunities. "Women's opportunities for leadership are constrained by traditional gender stereotypes, inadequate access to mentors and information networks of support, and inflexible workplace structures" (p. 7).

Women facing barriers in reaching top level leadership positions was scrutinized by Zillman (2019), reporter for Fortune, about the power dynamics of Wall Street CEOs. The Congressional House Financial Services Committee questioned the top executives regarding the accountability of banks following ten years of financial crises. The represented companies, including J.P. Morgan, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, and Bank of America, boasted diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, but none could confirm that their successors would be a woman. Rep. Al Green (D-Texas) continued with a comment that the panel shared common traits; they were all male and white. Women are excluded from heading major financial institutions and this is not a secret. Fuhrmans (2020) reported for the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) that the barrier is not only a glass ceiling, but also an invisible wall that "sidelines them [women] from the kinds of roles that have been traditional steeping stones to the CEO position" (para. 3). The leaders are aware of this issue and continue to foster the current culture of exclusion. Zillman (2019) continued to state that outright sexual harassment and misogyny have dramatically decreased, but "The obstacles that remain are the smaller, more subtle barriers that range from microaggressions to over-mentoring and under-sponsoring'" (para. 7). Rhode (2017) explained, "Organizations that are struggling may also value qualities that are disproportionately associated with women, such as interpersonal skills and collaborative leadership styles' (p. 63). Rhode (2017) is referring to high-risk positions posing more of a challenge for women because they do not have the peer support comparted to male-counterparts. Fuhrmans (2020) reported that analysis performed for the WSJ by Equilar, Inc. concluded that women who are promoted to C-suite positions are often in roles such as head of human resources, administration or legal

There are implicit biases that are difficult to overturn even when companies promote diversity. Inclusion is still held at bay. Zillman's report in conjunction with the research shows how women who do ascend are often placed in a precarious position to fail: the glass cliff phenomenon. The deeper the private market remains entrenched in gender inequality, the harder it may be for the public sector to elevate women into leadership positions. Money influences power, and if the power stays in the hands of a particular gender, there will be little forward movement. This spurs status quo behavior in the workplace (2019).

Research by Mastracci and Herring (2010), showed that nonprofits provide a space for women to establish public roles by fostering expansion opportunities because women hold mission-critical positions that are central to nonprofits' purpose as opposed to for-profit companies. "Employment dynamics and management practices of for-profit firms are increasingly relevant to nonprofit management because they compete with for-profit firms in many service delivery areas and therefore complete in many of the same labor markets" (p. 156). Women in nonprofit work seem to have more opportunity for advancement due to inclusive governance practices and human resource management practices that are more transparent and innovative (p. 172). Applying for-profit practices to nonprofit management processes help to promote more women to higher positions within the nonprofit sector.

Leadership Theories and Gender-typing

Organizational Leadership has been studied using quantitative methods to create concise theories. Bolman and Deal (2017) created a summarized exhibit as seen in Figure 3, which provides a historical context of the major leadership theories, some which are further examined in this section.

Figure 3: Summary of Leadership Theories

Exhibit 17.1.
A Short History of Quantitative-Analytic Leadership Research.

Leadership Theory	Examples	Central Idea	Current Status
Trait theory: how are leaders different?	Galton, 1869; Terman, 1904; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2007	Leaders possess distinctive personal characteristics (intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, extraversion, and so on).	Fell out of favor in the 1950s when reviewers found weak empirical support, but has returned to favor in recent decades.
Leadership style theory: how do leaders act?	Lewin, Lippitt, and White, 1939; Likert, 1961; Fleishman and Harris, 1962	Leadership depends on style (democratic vs. autocratic, task-oriented vs. people-oriented, etc.).	Mixed evidence stimulated move toward contingency theories, which often include leader style variables.
Contingency theory: how do circumstances affect leadership?	Fiedler, 1967; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Evans, 1970; House, 1971, 1996	Effective leadership depends on the characteristics of followers and context: what works in one situation may not work in another.	No single contingency view has found consistent empirical support or wide acceptance, but most modern leadership research incorporates the idea that leadership depends on circumstances.
Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory: what happens in the leader-follower relationship?	Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 2008	Leadership is rooted in the quality of the relationships between leaders and individual followers.	Advocates of LMX theory have been actively conducting research since the 1970s; many LMX propositions have empirical support, but the approach is criticized for complexity and viewing leadership too narrowly.
Transformational leadership theory: how do leaders transform followers?	Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1998	Transformational (or charismatic) leaders use inspiration, idealized influence, and the like to generate followers' trust and willingness to go above and beyond.	Evidence suggests transformational leadership makes a difference, but more research is needed on when and how it works best.

Source: Bolman & Deal Reframing Organizations, Reframing Leadership, 2017.

Women are often associated with leadership styles that are democratic, people-oriented, and collaborative. Women tend to use their innate communicative and relationship traits to lead. Researchers Huszczo and Endres (2017) found that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of performance using leadership self-efficacy (LSE). Their data showed that gender and personality traits are important in predicting leader outcomes. "Despite some limitations, this study established the relative importance of key individual difference for females versus male in the identification and development of belief in oneself as a leader" (p. 314). Women use their inherent leadership traits to become effective and transformational leaders, whereas men attribute successes to self-worth measures. Kark (2004) concluded that relationship between

gender and transformational leadership through a feminist lens pointed to an
expansion of research studies that specifically examine "gendered organizations" (p. 173).

When studying gendered leadership styles, the feminine style includes the combination of feminine personality traits, such as empathy, communicative skills, or understanding that are accepted to be more desirable in women than in men, referred to as communal. Agency refers to traits associated with masculine leadership traits (opposite of communal traits), including independence, ambition, or assertiveness. A study by Gartzia and Baniandré (2017) reviewed how gender traits of leaders influence employees and found that women who take on agency attributes (traditionally masculine traits) may suffer worse employee evaluation outcomes, but are not necessarily seen as ineffective leaders. Men who take on communal (traditionally feminine traits) get better evaluations from employees, but are actually seen as less effective. Organizations should analyze "the relevance of stereotypically feminine traits of leaders and their abilities to show female-typed behaviors such as social concern or people orientation becomes critical and lies at the heart of leadership effectiveness for both female and male leaders" (p. 136). There are perceived leadership traits traditionally associated with male and female leaders, but with women still falling behind in leadership roles, organizational work is needed to steadily advance women into leadership. Rhode (2017) explained that "most of the traits that people attribute to leaders are those traditionally viewed as masculine: dominance, authority, assertiveness" (p. 10).

Ayman and Korabik (2010) conveyed that women leaders were increasingly devalued when they took on the stereotypically masculine leadership traits, specifically when they were male-dominated positions or being evaluated by male subordinates (p. 163). The leadership theories shown in Figure 4 includes a summary of gender attachments to the extensively researched leadership theories.

Figure 4: Leadership Theories Showing Gender Attachments

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

Source: Author's creation based on Bolman & Deal Reframing Organizations, 2017

Transformational leadership is greatly associated with women, but this leadership style is used by both male and female leaders. Gender studies help to provide data on what effects gender and corresponding leadership traits have on DEI in the public and private market sectors. Jones, E.L. and Jones, R. C. (2017) found that inspirational motivation was a strong component utilized by women using transformational leadership and these women leaders experienced positive career success. Kark, Manor, and Shamir (2012), noted, "characteristics that are stereotypically viewed as 'feminine' and those that are stereotypically viewed as 'masculine' contributed to subordinates' identification with the manager" (p. 39). The researchers found that blending the feminine and masculine leadership characteristics will help subordinates associate with female managers more easily. By not inhabiting androgynous traits, women face more backlash, while men avoid this phenomenon whether or not they embrace an androgynous leadership style. Ayman and Korabik (2010) proposed that androgyny may offer women leaders a way out of the double bind when organizations expect women to use their inherent feminine leadership qualities in conjunction with the organizational prescribed leadership attributes. They conclude, "Thus, adopting an androgynous leadership style may help women to negotiate their way through the labyrinth" (p. 162).

E.L. and Jones, R. C. (2017) also established that transactional women leaders utilized a contingent reward leadership component and had greater career success. " The implication exists that women who employ a transactional style with emphasis on contingent reward enjoy

greater career success than women who utilize transformational, inspirational behaviors" (p. 44). This follows with the reality that men leaders use this mode of leadership and reap great rewards, however, this style of leadership creates conflict because it is not organically attached to women leaders. Women tend suffer rejection from other women and men who are in subordinate positions. There is also a set of attributes associated with women who experience successful careers as nonprofit leaders, which indicates a relationship to leadership style. Women hold more leadership positions in the nonprofit sector than in the for-profit sector, but are still grossly underrepresented as leaders (p. 44). As Gartzia and Baniandré (2017) observed, women tend to lead using certain inherent traits and experiences Transactional leadership style yields a higher level of success as determined by the market. Researchers suggested further qualitative research for a deeper dive into the why and how questions relating to the "phenomenon of career success as related to leadership style and behavior" (p. 45).

There continues to be a gap between women and men in decision-making managerial levels (executive, board, top management positions) and mid-level managerial positions (Cuadrado, García-Ael and Molero, 2015). Female underrepresentation in managerial positions remains embedded within organizations and Cuadrado, García-Ael and Molero (2015) found that male traits are valued more important than female traits in relation to managerial positions and success. Females believe women exhibit more transformational leadership qualities, but see males as being more managerial (pp. 241-243). Ayman, Korabik, and Morris (2009) noted that the relationship between women's transformational leadership style and their performance resulted in female reports resorting to gender-role stereotypes, harsher attitudes toward women in management, and acceptable masculine leadership characteristics when evaluating leadership.

The Barriers Women Face

Literature affirms that women make-up almost half of the workforce in the United States and that women are gaining leadership positions. As Rhode (2017) stated, " The point is not that there is some single 'woman's point of view', or woman's leadership style, but rather that gender differences matter in ways that should be registered in positions of power" (p.3). "Although great strides have been made, women are still largely excluded from the most powerful corporate positions in our economy" (AAUW, 2018). The AAUW produced a report stating that people are aware that women, especially women of color, are underrepresented in leadership in the corporate world, but are less aware of the "pervasive impact of bias against women in nonprofit leadership" (para. 2). Rhode (2017) continued to note that behaviors that are acceptable for men are not acceptable for women and this frustrates women leaders (p. 11).

Glass Ceilings and Glass Cliffs

The glass ceiling phenomena includes salary discrimination, gender-biased personnel practices, inequitable performance evaluations, and the normalization of men's authority and historical

contributions. Gibelman (2000) contributed that men are disproportionately represented in management and women are overrepresented in direct-services and lower management positions. Coinciding with this is the disparity in pay within the hierarchical levels of organizations (p. 263). The AAUW (2016) reported:

> There is no shortage of qualified women to fill leadership roles: Women make up almost half of the U.S. labor force. They outnumber men in earning bachelor's and master's degrees and are nearly on par in getting medical and legal degrees. Yet from corporate boardrooms to Congress, from health-care companies to the courts, from non-profit organizations to universities, men are far more likely than women to rise to the highest paying and most prestigious leadership roles (para. 1).

Vongas and Hajj (2015) argued in their study on women's empathy and glass cliffs, "that, similar to the way in which glass ceilings have represented gender inequality in promotion opportunities, glass cliffs can now be seen as representing gender inequality in assignment opportunities" (p. 2). In a performance review study, Snyder (2014, as cited in Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers, 2017, p. 10) examined whether the tone of the reviews or content differed based on the employee's gender and if the perception of female abrasiveness undermines women's careers in technology. Women received 87.9 percent of the total negative comments compared to 58.9 percent men received. Perez (2019), further discussed that white men are rewarded at a higher rate than women and ethnic minorities who comparably perform—as high as a 25 percent difference in performance-based bonuses between women and men in the same position (p. 94).

With women using interpersonal and relationship skills to fuel their transformational style of leadership, many studies revolve around the glass cliff effect, where women are promoted to high-risk positions. Rhode (2017) observed, "women may face less competition from men for these positions and may face more pressure to accept in order to demonstrate their ability" (p. 63). Rhode explains that organizations may want to utilize the skill sets of women leaders to signal to stakeholders that the company is taking a bold new direction (p. 63). Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers, (2017) stated, "Not only are women more likely than men to accept and occupy positions that have a higher risk of failure, they are less likely to be given second chances after a failure" (p. 11). This phenomenon according to research conducted by Bruckmüller and Branscombe (2010) showed that in a crisis interpersonal skill are linked to the "think crisis-think female stereotype, and men are not perceived to possess these types of crisis management attributes than women. There are certain leadership characteristics, as Gartzia & Baniandré (2017) referred to as communion (female) and agency (male), that seem prevalent when participants were choosing a leadership candidate during a crisis situation. Yaghi (2018) proposed that the very creation of the glass cliff theory inadvertently created a "glass prison" for women leaders in the workplace because it reaffirms stereotypes associated with female leaders. Women leaders are different and research by Vasavada (2012) proposed that creating an androgynous leadership framework offers a possible solution in eliminating gender inequity in the workplace.

Broken Rung, Leaky Pipe Syndrome, and Implicit Bias

According to a survey of 3,000 professionals conducted by LinkedIn and Censuswide (as cited in Stych, 2020), half of the mothers surveyed noted they believed that hiring managers would dismiss candidates who return to work after a career break and that a gap in their resume would spark negative attitudes. Stych (2019) also reported that the 'broken rung' effect hits women's careers at the middle management level before they even get to the glass ceiling. The AAUW (2018) shared data that for charitable foundation leadership 90 percent of the lower-level staff are women, but only half are in senior level positions. In higher education, 58 percent of college presidents are white men, and only 25 percent are white women, with ethnic or racial minorities making up only 5 percent. Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers (2017) noted, "the significance of the absence of ladders for women within higher education administration is revealed by the statistic that approximately 70 percent of college presidents have been faculty members" (p. 8). The broken rung can be attributed to lack of benefits, such as family and medical paid leave, equitable pay, and making lateral moves with the hope of proving themselves worthy of advancement. Career choices and lack of role models are also the effects of women not being able to climb the career ladder to senior management at an equal pace with men. Guerrero with Mission Box Global Network (2020) reported that contributing factors may come down to the "age-old observation that people like people who remind them of themselves. This behavior falls into play not just when the members of a board are looking to make new hires, but also when they're making connections to powerful donors" (para. 7). This alludes to the issue of white men comprising such a high percentage of the C-suite leadership positions in all three sectors and their control over recruitment decisions for leadership positions. In response, Gates (2019) wrote an article for *Time Magazine* and announced that she is committing $1 billion to expanding women's power and influence in the United States. "I want to see more women in the position to make decision, control resources, and shape policies and perspective. I believe that women's potential is worth investing in—and the people and organizations working to improve women's lives are, too" (para. 9).

Implicit bias against women is a major obstacle for women in the workplace - it often can manifest itself in the form of microaggressions and sexual harassment. Horowitz (2018) with the Pew Research Center reported on women and leadership and found that "women are far more likely than men to see structural barriers and uneven expectations holding women back from these positions." The bias women face in the workplace is experienced by women, but the survey showed that men do not agree that women facing discrimination is what holds female candidates back (para. 3). Rhode (2003), explained, "unlike previous, more overt forms of discrimination, current inequalities are typically a function of unconscious bias and workplace structures" (p. 17). The risk of being blackballed, or facing backlash for reporting discrimination claims, stop women from reporting incidents. "The absence of information masks the true costs of gender inequality in leadership" (p. 17). Perez (2018) noted, "Workplaces that are either male-dominated, or have male-dominated leadership are often the worst for sexual harassment" (p. 137).

Women Leaders and the Nonprofit Sector

Research shows women are grossly underrepresented in for-profit and nonprofit leadership positions, Jones and Jones (2017) found that inspirational motivation was a strong component utilized by women using transformational leadership, and these women leaders experienced positive career success. As Gartzia & Baniandré (2017) observed, women tend to lead using certain inherent traits and experiences. Evans, Mayo, and Quijada (2018) suggested that implementing policies (local, national, global) to promote women empowerment does benefit the nonprofit sector. Themudo (2009, as cited in Evans, Mayo, and Quijada, p. 865, 2018) found a positive correlation between women's empowerment and the development of the nonprofit sector (p. 857). Evans, Mayo, and Quijada (2018) define women's empowerment to mean women working for financial gain and bargaining clout; that women are self-sufficient and have the tools to advance policy change in their communities. Women who experience greater economic security are better able to further their education, contribute to family prosperity, and advocate for their causes. Women who have political clout can effect change for all. The conclusions from this study led to an argument for nonprofits to advance policies that encourage female leadership (p. 867).

Lansford, Clements, Falzon, Falzon, Aish, and Rogers (2010) proposed that more importance is given to leadership traits than to managerial skills. Their findings suggest the creation of a formula or set of skills that help shape impactful leaders and noted a correlation between nonprofits that serve public interest and the large percentage of women working in the nonprofit sector. The researchers found that women leaders in the nonprofit sector bring a unique set of leadership skills to tackle the challenges arising from societal needs (p. 56). Vasavada (2012, researching cultural feminism within Indian nongovernmental organizations, found there are certain leadership styles necessary for the NPO sector to thrive. Findings revealed that feminine leadership values are not perceived as an indication of strong leadership but rather feminine skills are necessary for leadership—facing the challenge of being "tough" and "soft" at the same time. Vasavada determined it necessary to restructure and redesign routines and organizational structures to include feminine traits and skills in order to promote an androgynous leadership style (p. 494). Vasavada also believes that this would help to change gender discrimination; almost by eliminating the idea of gender within the workplace.

The National Council of Nonprofits (2016), which has taken a stance against racism, bigotry, and intolerance, created a best practices resource hub for nonprofits to use in human resources, management, and leadership. Nonprofits can start by opening up internal conversations about DEI and how to integrate education, attitude shifts, and behavioral changes within nonprofit organizations. Shankie (2015) reported that although there are many women with power in the nonprofit sector, the barriers go up when big money comes into play. The richer the agency, the more likely these organizations are led and controlled by men. Shankie reiterates that although diversity is a hot topic and many organizations tend to implement programs and policies to increase diversity, there can only be real behavioral change

when inclusivity is also introduced within organizational structures. Rhode (2017) proposed three strategies for change:

> Strategies to counteract these dynamics and promote board diversity fall into three main categories. The first focuses on increasing women's capacity for service. The second included legal strategies that might expand the pool of qualified members and level the playing field for their appointment. The third category involves ways to encourage voluntary corporate diversity efforts. (p. 121)

The National Council of Nonprofits (2016) compiled information to share with the nonprofit sector that include DEI programs and internal organizational policies that promote internal organizational change, but noted that true change would need to come from the political arena. Legislative changes to truly reflect inclusivity are needed to make changes at the root level of organizations. As it is, the corporate, government and nonprofit sectors stand on ground that is completely controlled by men.

Section 3: Methods and Approaches

This research proposes that the nonprofit sector is poised to initiate the necessary steps to equalize leadership advancement. The contextual literature review is the foundation for the research questions posed in this study. In order to discover why the gender leadership gap, specifically in the nonprofit sector, persists, answering the following questions delineates the subsequent research, findings, and recommendations of this paper.

A mixed methods approach was used for comparative and action research.
There are three main research questions this study attempts to answer based on the literature review and data analyses.

> **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 percent of the nonprofit workforce?
> **RQ3:** What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?

Literature Review

A thorough literature review more than 30 academic articles, books, and online sources (videos, reports, and websites) was conducted to ascertain the state of women leaders, including a historical context and relevant leadership theories. Leadership traits, characteristics, and skills, were reviewed to outline the challenges women face when trying to reach top level leadership positions. The literature also examined how business, specifically the nonprofit sector, and government have failed women by not elevating qualified leaders into top management positions at a more gender equitable pace.

Secondary Data Collection

For comparative research analysis, data was collected from various online databases and online published reports, including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the University of San Francisco Gleeson Library's online Statista Database, the Pew Research Center, FastCompany.com, American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). Data was retrieved and compiled into Excel spreadsheets to create comparison graphs and charts for this report in order to analyze the gender leadership gap over the last 10 years for nonprofit, private, and government sectors. Data on the international government leadership gap was available by decades and used to provide a historical world view of women leaders. The literature review and the analyses of the secondary data collected relates the first and third research questions.

> **RQ1:** What systemic factors prevent women from reaching top leadership positions in the nonprofit sector?
>
> **RQ3:** What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?

Primary Data Collection

The action research component included content analysis and expert interviews. Content analysis was conducted to produce a cross-sector (nonprofit, for-profit, and international organizations) gender comparison of current leaders in top management positions. Expert interviews were conducted with female leaders of nonprofit agencies and institutions to gather thematic observations and recommendations from those who are working in nonprofits today.

Content analysis of 230 organizations.

Because the literature review provides the foundation of the persistent gender leadership gap, a deductive content analysis was conducted to seek more specific systemic and inclusive solutions to shrink the nonprofit gender leadership gap. The purpose of this analysis is to re-examine the existing data in light of the second research question.

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

> ***Methods.*** A total of 230 organizations were pooled from the nonprofit sector, the for-profit sector, and from international government organizations (IGOs). The body of material used for this content analysis were organizations' websites. The coding categories developed to collect data from each organization's website are noted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Content Analysis Coding Guide

Category	Definition
Sector	1 = Nonprofit, 2 = For-profit, 3 = IGO
Industry	1=Healthcare, World Public Health, Cancer Research; 2=Education, 3=Arts, Museums, Media, Library; 4=Human/Social Services, Human Development, Hunger, Poverty, Human Rights; 5=Animal Welfare; 6=Environmental, Climate, Ocean, Rivers; 7=Religious; 8=Finance, Investment, Banking; 9=Industrials, Constructions, Households; 10=Energy, Petrol, Clean Energy, Mining; 11=Insurance, 12=Food/Beverage/Tobacco; 13=Technology; 14=Telecommunication; 15=Aerospace, Defense; 16=Transportation, Air, Train, Shipping; 17=Agriculture, Agricultural Research, Agricultural Development; 18=Political Integration, Economic Development; 19=Legal, Tribunal, Criminal Court; 20=Youth; 21=Disaster Relief; 22=Retail, General Merchandising
Gender of Leader	1=Female; 2=Male (the traditional forms of gender to conform to the purpose of this gender study)
Position Title	1=Chair and CEO; 2=Executive Director; 3=Secretary General, Secretary, National Commissioner, 1st Vice Chair; 4=President and CEO; 5=General Manager, Director General, Chief of Staff, COO, Executive V.P.; 6=Other, Host, Chair of Council
Race/Ethnicity	1=Caucasian; 2=Asian; 3=African Descent; 4=Latinx; 5=Pacific Islander; 6=Indonesian; 7=Middle Eastern; 8=Indian, Pakistani

Each organization's website was reviewed to obtain the data on the leader, most of which was available in the "About Us" webpage under "Leadership". Visual confirmation of gender was utilized based on the traditional definition of female and male. This method was supported by biographical descriptions of the leaders, if available. Race/Ethnicity was confirmed by reviewing available biographical descriptions of the leaders and if this was not available, further research using search engines was utilized to ascertain this information. Using the coding categories in the above table, the collected data was inputted into PSPP for Chi-Square proportional differences and basic T-test analysis in relation to the gender leadership gap. Race/Ethnicity were included because intersectionality is a component of leadership theories and organizational make up.

Sample. The top 100 nonprofits in 2019 were selected from Nonprofit Times Top 100 list, the top 100 firms from the 2019 Fortune 500 list were selected, and a list of 277 international government organizations were selected from Wikipedia for this study. For the Nonprofit Times top 100 and the Fortune top 100 organizations, the following parameters were set using number randomization tool on SurveySystem.com. With the population of 100 for the

nonprofit and the for-profit lists, the random sample generated was 63 each. The confidence level set at 99 percent determined how likely the results would be duplicated. In this case, 99 times out of 100 the same results would be produced with a confidence interval of ±10. The confidence interval for the ensuing results will be discussed in the data analysis section. To obtain a comparable sample for the 277 IGOs, the number randomizer generated 104 with the same 99 percent confidence level and a ±10 confidence interval. The confidence level determines how the data is interpreted.

Expert interviews

In order to fully paint the picture of the gender leadership gap, gaining actual experiences and insights from women nonprofit leaders was essential in developing solutions to the three research questions proposed in this paper.

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 70 percent of the nonprofit workforce?
RQ3: What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?

Methods. Using a semi-structured interview guide, four nonprofit female leaders were interviewed to provide personal experiences and reflections about their individual leadership styles, their perceptions of what makes a good leader, and suggestions about what women nonprofit leaders need to do to find equity in the leadership ranks in the nonprofit sector, and eventually in the for-profit and government sectors. The following Table 2 displays the targeted questions prepared prior to the interviews, which afforded the collection of reliable and comparable qualitative data (see Appendix A for full guide). The semi-structured interview tool allowed the freedom for interviewees to be reflective and allowed the interviewer to listen and follow-up with the probe questions in order to illicit candid responses.

Table 2: Semi-structured Interview Guide for Expert Interviews

Topic	Questions
Reflections on Leadership Styles, Skills, and Traits	1. To begin, can you describe your leadership style and share a bit of your journey? 2. What was the framework that helped you stay on the leadership path? Who has helped you gain promotion, and why do you think they helped? 3. What leaders have you looked up to? Why do you admire them? What made them good leaders? How did this affect your leadership journey?

	4. Thinking about leadership styles, research often describe women as nurturers. How do you think this helps or holds back women from rising to top leadership levels?
	5. What reflections do you have about the gender differences within the nonprofit sector? Other sectors?
	6. Are there unique aspects that might make it possible for women to rise into leadership positions? Leadership styles and traits?
Challenges and Opportunities	7. What can women do to change this reality?
	8. If women are falling behind, why do you think this is and what can women do to remove the obstacles and barriers to top leadership positions?
Final Touchpoint and Suggestions	9. My research shows that men still dominate C-suite/ED positions in the nonprofit, private, and IGO sectors. Does this surprise you?
	10. Why do you think this continues to be an issue?
	11. What suggestions do you have to counter this persistent gender gap?

With permission from the interviewees, all interviews were conducted via Zoom conferencing and recorded for posterity purposes and for recording visual cues. The duration of each interview was 30 minutes and each interview session was transcribed for coding and analysis. The first section of questions centered on interviewees' personal leadership values, skills, traits, and personal experiences and are related to the first research question. The second interview topic section related to the second research question, which concentrated on the challenges and opportunities the interviewees believe women leaders face, specifically in the nonprofit sector, but included the for-profit and government when applicable. The third section centered on the final touchpoint relating to their thoughts on the primary data analysis. This information was shared with each interviewee as a verbal summary to learn their reactions and to gain their recommendations, suggestions, or final thoughts about the third research question.

RQ3: What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?

Sample. Four interviewees were randomly selected based on their leadership position, location within the Bay Area, and situated within nonprofit institutions and organizations. The purpose of using expert interviews for this research is to gain professional insights from women leaders working in the nonprofit sector in relationship to leadership style, experiences, and the gender inequity for women leaders (see Table 3) below.

- Interviewees 1 and 4 are CEOs from direct social services agencies
- Interviewees 2 and 3 are academic scholars from higher education institutions

Table 3: Expert Interviewee Descriptions

Interviewee 1	More than 30 years of experience in development, finance, marketing, political fundraising; for-profit and nonprofit experience; currently, CEO of mid-size nonprofit direct human services agency
Interviewee 2	Doctor of education with a focus on international and multicultural education at a university; experience in women's gender studies and human rights in the context of neoliberalism
Interviewee 3	Doctor of psychology with other 40 years of experience Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at a university; experience with women in STEM
Interviewee 4	More than 20 years of experience in the Bay Area working with nonprofits; for-profit and nonprofit fund development experience and finance, advocacy, education; currently CEO of a direct services agency working for economic equity/development for underrepresented people

Thematic summaries of the expert interviews will be shared in the Data Analysis Section of this research paper.

Method Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that time constraints did not allow for more in-depth quantitative and qualitative data collection processes. Having only one year of content analysis data does not allow for a stronger empirical analysis of the trajectory of past leadership gender inequities within the three sectors. For the content analysis, using visual confirmation of gender was based on the traditional societal acceptance of how males and females appear. When possible, online biographies of individuals were used to confirm traditional genders. For the expert interviews, the accepted theory of successful qualitative data collection would ask that interviews be conducted until data saturation is achieved, or no new information is collected. For this research, four interviews were conducted to obtain *thematic summaries* that will provide insights, recommendations, and suggestions to the research questions. Because researcher bias may exist, steps were taken to keep data collection bias-free when possible. Zoom recordings for all interviews, semi-structured interview guide, extra steps to confirm visual data collection, and expressing the very nature of possible bias for this research.

Section 4. Data Analysis

Meta-Analysis: Archival Data Paints a Picture

Meta data was compiled from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics database to demonstrate the extent of the gender leadership gap for the last 10 years (2010-2019). The graph illustrated in Figure 5 visually displays the leadership gap between female CEOs and male CEOS inclusive of nonprofit and for-profit organizations. The gender leadership gap remains steady over the last 10 years for CEOs, and Figure 6 exhibits the leadership gap between female and male General &

Operations Managers for the last 10 years. These graphs provide visual context that supports the literature review and the data analysis in this section. The comparison serves to show that although women have been making strides in attaining leadership positions at the C-level and top leadership positions, there remains a clear and persistent leadership gap based on gender.

Figure 5: 10-Year Comparison of CEOs
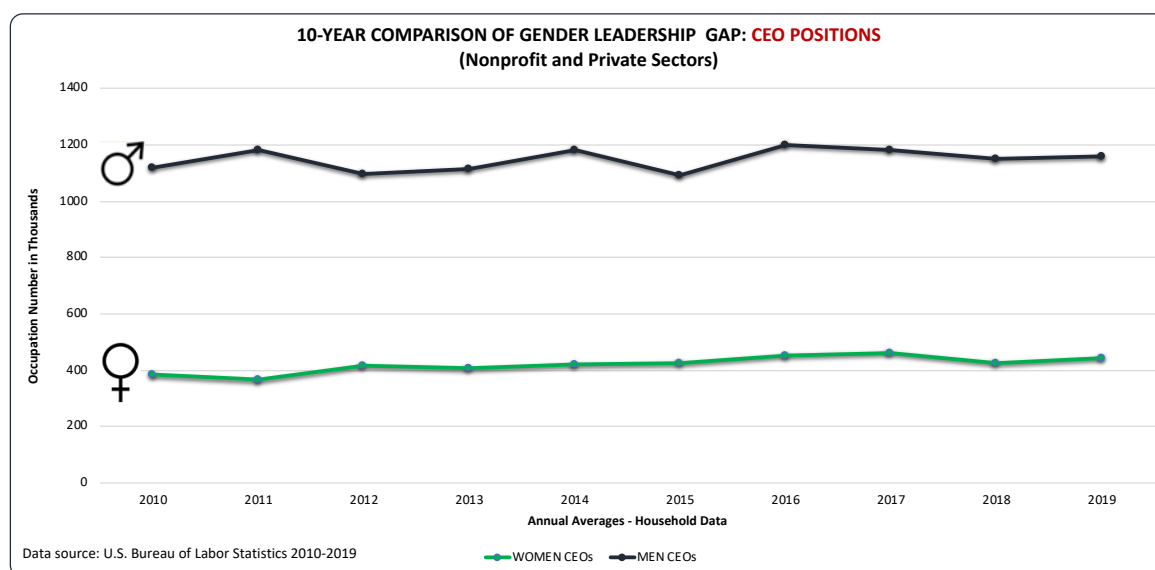
Source: Author's creation, employment data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-2019.

Figure 6: 10-Year Comparison of General & Operations Managers
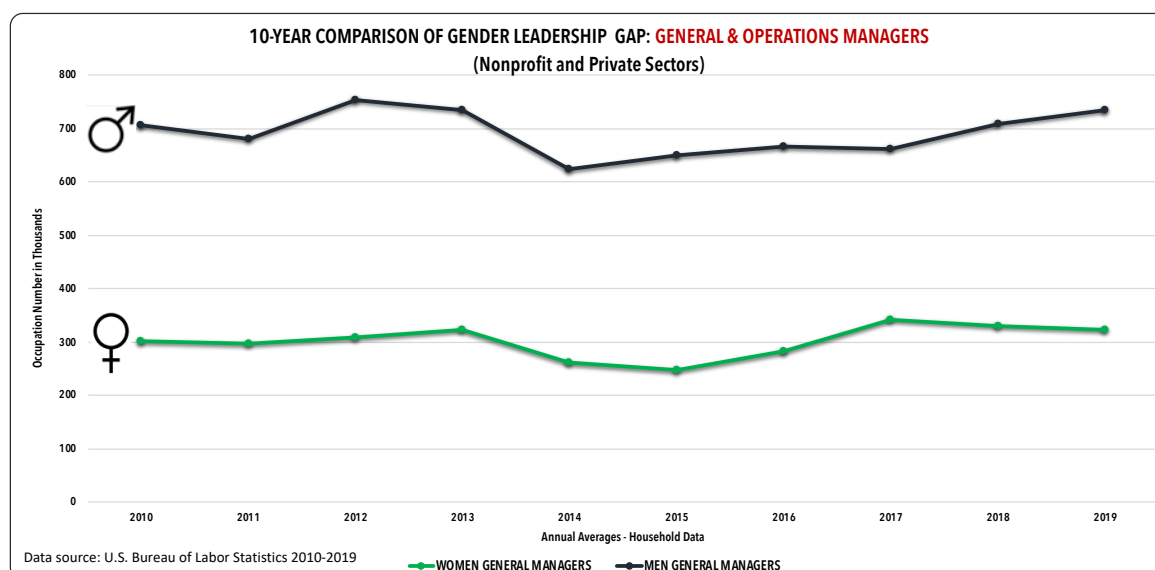
Source: Author's creation, employment data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-2019.

In order to examine the status of female leadership specifically in the nonprofit sector, 2017 data was extracted from the Pew Research Center and FastCompany.com as shown in Figure 7. This chart shows that 45 percent of female CEOs work in the nonprofit sector compared to 5 percent in Fortune 500 companies, 8 percent of governors, 19 percent of U.S. House of Representatives, 21 percent for U.S. Senate and U.S. Cabinet and Cabinet-level positions, and 24.8 percent of State Legislature. This data corroborates the literature review showing the women excel to greater leadership positions within the nonprofit sector. The 45 percent appears to be a positive data point 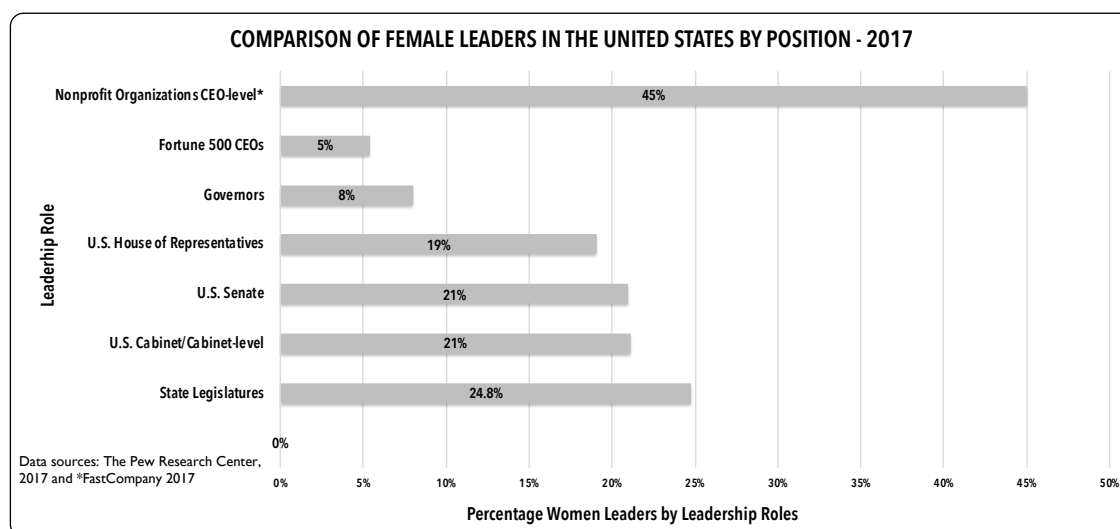showing the nonprofit sector is heading toward gender equity in leadership. However, a different story appears when operating budgets for nonprofits are examined as seen in Figure 8.

Figure 7: Comparison of Female Leaders by Position - 2017

Source: Author's creation, data from The Pew Research Center and FastCompany.com, 2017.

Gender equity in the nonprofit sector looks strong until organizations have operating budgets over $5 million. Nonprofit agencies with less than $2.5M have more female leaders than male leaders. The leadership gap expands when nonprofit annual operating budgets exceed $5-10M; as shown in Figure 7, 45 percent of female leaders are in top leadership positions, but the chart illustrated in Figure 8 expands the data to show that notable 45 percent data point drop to less than 10 percent for organizations surpassing $50M in annual operating budgets. Reflecting on the literature review, the meta-analysis supports the opinion that social and implicit biases about the confidence in women leaders may, in fact, play a role in the gender leadership gap. Understanding what factors prompt the persistent gender leadership gap will help to provide solutions. Primary data collected to ascertain how likely women are to take a leadership position in the nonprofit sector in comparison to the for-profit sector or government will be reviewed next.

Figure 8: Gender Equity Based on Nonprofit Operating Budgets
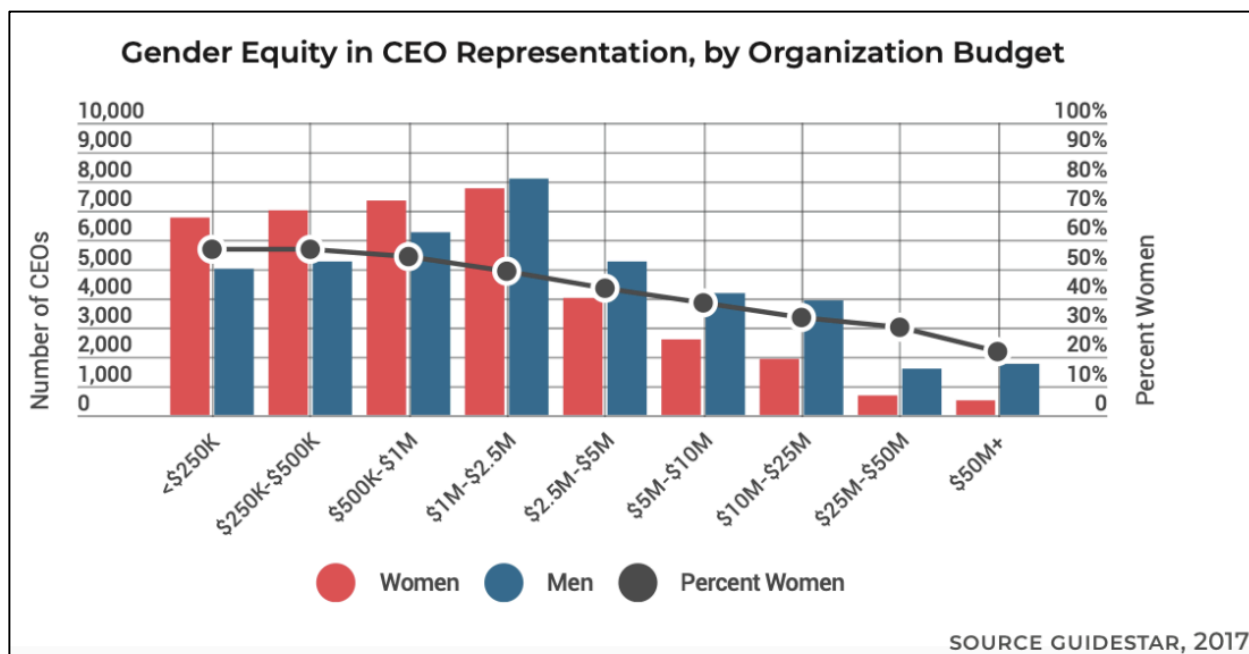
Source: AAUW, Broken Ladders: Barriers to Women's Representation in Nonprofit Leadership, 2018.

Primary Data Analysis: Data Talk

As the nonprofit sector seems poised to be the leaders in collapsing the gender leadership gap, it is beneficial to produce current data analysis that compares the three sectors to the number of female leaders in C-level positions. The results of the three-sector comparison (see Table 4) revealed that women are more likely to take a leadership position in nonprofits and government than they are in in for-profits. Women leaders are almost a 1:2 ratio for nonprofits, 1:11 for for-profit, and 1:30 for government. These results, along with the literature review and meta-analysis, point to the nonprofit sector being in a position to help collapse the gender leadership gap (see Figure 9).

Table 4: Three-Sector Comparison

Gender: Three Sector Comparison (N=230)

Sector	Female Leaders	Male Leaders
Nonprofit Organizations (NPO)	19	44
For-Profit Organizations (FPO)	5	58
International Government Organizations (IGO)	24	80

x^2=9.98, df=2, p=.007

Figure 9: Percentage of Leadership Roles – Three Sector Comparison
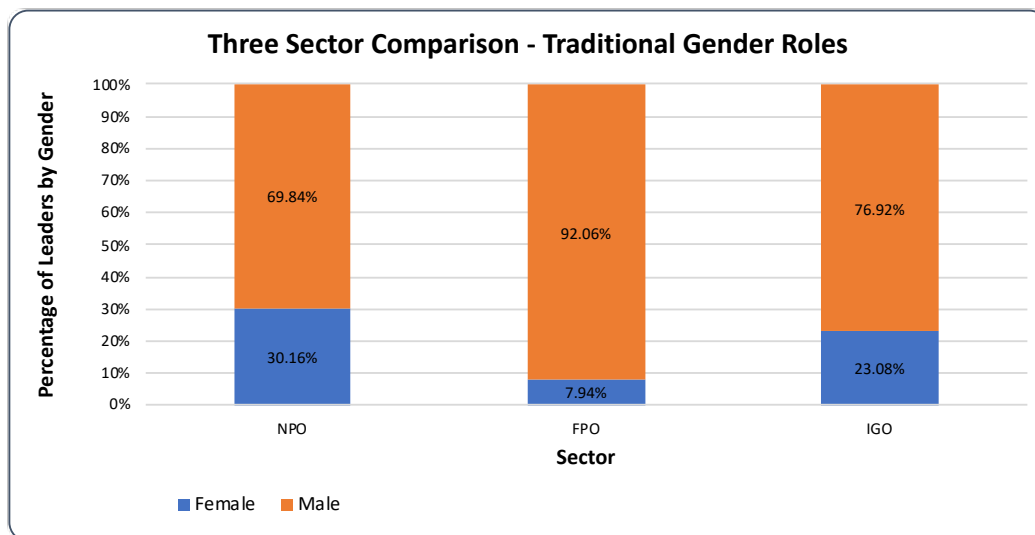
Source: Author's creation, primary data collected via content analysis, 2020.

Additional findings note that the difference between women leadership percentage in nonprofits and international government organizations (IGOs) are not statistically different. The advances of women leaders within the nonprofit sector, therefore, can be further evidence of women finding leadership opportunities within sectors that are concerned with the public and societal needs.

Table 5: Nonprofit and IGO Comparison

Sector	Female Leaders	Male Leaders
Nonprofit Organizations (NPO)	19	44
International Government Organizations (IGO)	24	80

x^2=1.03, df=1, p=.362

Figure 10: Nonprofits and IGOs
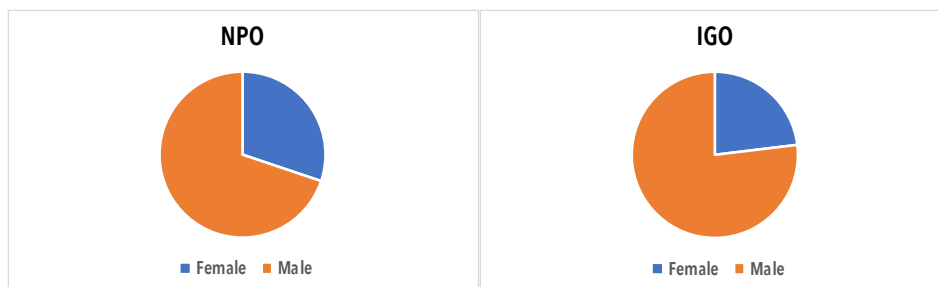
Source: Author's creation, based on content analysis, 2020.

Gender, culture, and race are invariably connected and although this area of intersectionality does not directly influence the findings of this report, it is worthy to note the data for discussion. There is an abundance of white male leaders that make-up the top leadership of all three sectors (see Table 6). The relevancy of this information is that the lack of women in leadership is compounded by the dominance of white men. This corresponds with the issue of power dynamics that cause many of the leadership barriers women face in the workplace as discussed in the literature review.

Table 6: Race and Ethnicity for Three Sector Comparison

Race/Ethnicity: Three Sector Comparison (n=230)

Race/Ethnicity	NPO	FPO	IGO
Caucasian	53	57	52
Asian	0	1	23
African Descendant	3	1	12
Latinx	5	0	12
Pacific Islander	0	0	1
Indonesian	1	0	0
Middle Eastern	1	1	4
Indian/Pakistani	0	3	0

$x^2=62.55$, df=14, p<.001

The top five industries that women leaders occupy and the least female led industries within the three sectors are shown in Table 7. The findings are statistically significant in that of the 230 organizations, females tended to lead in healthcare, human services, the arts, education, and youth. The least female represented industries include finance, political, industrial, and animal welfare. This information indicates that women do tend to lead organizations that require a level of empathy and transformational or communal leadership styles as described in section 2 of this report.

Table 7: Race and Ethnicity for Three Sector Comparison

Industry by Gender (N=230)	Female	Male
Human/Social Services, incl. Hunger, Poverty, Human Rights	**14.00**	19.00
Environmental, Climate, Oceans, Rivers	6.00	12.00
Legal, Tribunal, Criminal Court (international)	2.00	4.00
Arts, Museums, Media, Library	3.00	6.00
Education	2.00	6.00

Animal Welfare	0.00	2.00
Finance, Investment, Banking	0.00	22.00
Retail, General Merchandising	0.00	4.00
Healthcare, World Public Health, Cancer Research	8.00	20.00
Industrial, Construction, Households	0.00	6.00
Energy, Petro, Clean Energy, Mining	1.00	21.00
Food, Beverage, Tobacco	1.00	7.00
Technology	1.00	5.00
Telecommunications	0.00	3.00
Aerospace and Defense	2.00	6.00
Transportation, Air, Train, Shipping	1.00	6.00
Agriculture, Agriculture Research, Agriculture Development	0.00	4.00
Political Integration, Economic Development	5.00	25.00
Youth	1.00	0.00
Disaster Relief	1.00	4.00
Totals	48.00	182.00

$x^2=32.62$, df=19, p=.027

Expert Insights: Shine a Light on Experience

The experience of women leaders in the nonprofit workforce gives deeper context to the data and the literature review presented in this report. The four expert interviewees are women who do not know each other but have told a communal story of what it means to be a woman and a leader. They will be referred to in this section by their initials. The questions (see Table 2 or Appendix A) were categorized into three sections.

1. Leadership styles
2. Barriers and challenges women face when reaching top management positions
3. Suggestion and recommendations, including reactions to primary data collected and analyzed for this research

Thematic summaries will be presented to provide tangible experiences relating to the data and the literature review. This in turn will provide answers to the research question posed for this research paper.

> **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 percent of the nonprofit workforce?

RQ3: What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?

Leadership Styles

In asking the expert interviewees about their leadership styles and leadership attributes that are associated with women leaders, the consensus was that women leaders are collaborative, communicative, authentic, and inspirational. R.D. expressed that "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." Partnerships and humane leadership were important factors for the experts. Working with people creates innovation and creativity to expand so that problems can be solved. As A.M. stated, "I think that that [relationship-building] is a uniquely a female trait and I think it is time to start owning that because there are so many good traits associated with men; and I think of all the great traits associated with women, such as listening, going through a process, working in groups, team-building, and being supportive." Compassion and kindness are attributes women tend to radiate in their authentic leadership. C.A. commented that "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."

Education and knowing your trade were also important factors in describing women's leaderships styles. Having the financial acumen and international experience can really make a difference in how a woman is perceived by hiring committees. As A.M. stated, "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." Building confidence is essential for all women in the workplace and even more so when attaining leadership positions. A.G. summarized this idea, "I think it is important as women gain confidence and power that we redefine what is a strong leader. I think that the way women work in groups, [creates] group think. There's not a lot of top down, and I think that that's a much more successful way to run an organization." A summary of the main thoughts the interviewees shared about leadership styles and women show many common themes and some uncommon areas, such as the achievement gap in education and leading without the title (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Leadership Styles

CATEGORY	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 1	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 2	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 3	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 4
Leadership Styles	Develop people Education - financial expertise, skills Sponsorship from Men/Women Mentorship/Coaching Gain confidence Take opportunities Partnerships Communicative	Collaboration Challenge team, individuals Providing situations for advancement Education Professional development Remain in position to use one's own skills - work the back-end instead of front-facing positions Lifting women up alongside one's own elevation Women leadership valued Nonprofit Univ. working like for-profits Male-oriented infrastructure Power differentials (gendered and race-based) Flexibility, creativity, movement	Inspirational Kindness Feminine over masculine style Compassionate/Empathy Relationship-based Networking with other women Support from male professors, Mentorships Women research groups like the Clayman Institute - inspirational leaders Humane leadership Know your skill/trade	Financial expertise International experience Connect values to work Achievement gap in education for people of color Work with people - collaboration, partnerships Compassionate leadership Communicative Human-centered perspective Courageous leadership Authentic leadership - bringing the whole self

Source: Author's creation, summary of interviews, 2020.

Barriers and Challenges

The experts concurred that implicit bias practiced by both males and females can often create the barriers and challenges women face in the workplace. Institutional infrastructures are controlled by white men who may not promote professional development and sponsorship programs for women leaders. L.Z. added, "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." She continued with, "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." Some obstacles women face in the workplace include taking career breaks, a lack of laws that allow flexibility with their schedules, and deficient or absence of professional development, especially for women returning to the workforce. R.D. mentioned that "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."

Figure 12: Barriers and Challenges

CATEGORY	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 1	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 2	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 3	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 4
Barriers and challenges women face when attaining top management positions, specifically in the nonprofit sector	Lack of laws supporting women in the workplace/family care/paid leave Accommodations for women having and supporting families Looking at women having children as a liability Mysogyny Women socialized to think a certain way about being female	Tokenism - white women doing better than WOC, MOC, but does not necessarily mean women are respected Incorporate the acceptance of women steathily - sneak in like vegetables - change the narrative - instead of saying "this is something I do because I am a woman, I would say, I do this because I am a person and this is how I work" Normalize leadership traits associated with women Network - mentorships Representation - issue of women not understanding gender inequities - behaving like men to make it Emotional Tax Women socialized to think a certain way about being female	Feminine style of leadership maligned Treated like odd ducks before women truly were entering academia Power dynamics - not seen as threats if the industry was not lucrative - teaching in universities as an example Taking jobs from men Feminine style of leadership does not hold women back - how people feel about it does - BIAS Used as excuse to not promote women Women having families is not supported - Universities making strides Women imitating men styles not the way for women to propel into leadership positions Prove your worth - change the narrative Second class citizens Men have gender privilege, education, and power	No support - not learning about opportunities available Deepen acumen Implicit bias Gender stereotypes Women taking on male leadership traits can be twisted and misconstrued Nonprofit heavily supported by females, but no in leadership positions Lack of sponsorship and opportunities Lack of finance skills, professional development Multi-factored barriers, not just gender - race, economic statuse, access to education High-paying jobs in fundraising, philanthropy, leadership positions go to men Women's credibility is doubted - bias Women socialized to think a certain way about being female

Source: Author's creation, summary of interviews, 2020.

Often women take on male attributes in their leadership style and this can be misconstrued. C.A. added, "If you have a woman trying to be more in the realm of what of what are considered male or masculine characteristics, then of course, things are twisted and misconstrued. I think the more people focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, unconscious bias, and implicit bias and start to uncover that and the more organizations are committed to that work, the less we'll see, but it's a trajectory, right? You can't flip a switch." Mentorship and sponsorship from men is imperative for the success of women finding equity in leadership. There is opportunity and growth for women leaders when men provide guidance and support. A.G. shared a story of a male sponsor on her board that gave her guidance early on in her tenure as CEO, stating that "[he] was true mentor. He was an older guy, and an entrepreneur who owned a lot of businesses and he came on my board early on – very early on. He helped me run that organization and turn it in the direction it needed to go to grow."

When discussing the California law that required all boards to have at least one woman on the board, R.D. responded, "Actually, that has nothing to do with that woman, unfortunately. And that job is going to be really hard for her when she the one woman surrounded by a room full of men who have been operating the same way for generations, and generations. So, I think that things are changing but not necessarily for the right reasons I guess is my short answer. Things are changing because it's in the best interest of capitalism for women to look like they made it, but at the end of the day everybody knows that we are not on an equal playing field. When you add in race, when you add in class, the equality line just keeps getting farther and farther away."

Suggestions and Recommendations from the Experts

Forming coalitions, allies, networks, and partnerships emerged as a major theme from the interviews with regard to suggestions and recommendations (see Figure 13) for women leaders facing the leadership gap challenge. R.D. added, "I think that the best that we can do is form coalitions amongst people who understand the power of women-minded leadership – knowing that even men can have women-minded leadership. And, if we can head in that direction, where we can form coalitions that have men that have gender non-conforming, that have people of color, then perhaps there will be enough of a ground-swell to put pressure at the top – to make the top realize the error of their ways." Education and professional development are essential tools that women leaders must utilize to take on leadership in conjunction with confidence. A.M. emphasized, "the answer for me was becoming an influencer and becoming a leader myself – becoming the one that runs the outfit."

Figure 13: Suggestions and Recommendations

CATEGORY	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 1	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 2	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 3	EXPERT INTERVIEWEE 4
Suggestions, recommendations, and reaction to primary data collected for this research	Redefine what a value is in the workplace Become an influencer, a leader Education - women's studies	Women put into leadership positions for the sake of business and the bottom line - optics of company's reputation Build your skills set constantly Form coalitions Promote the power of women-minded leadership Gender non-conforming from the bottom to create pressure at the top Education of historical context of gender inequity Support from leaders, who can be family Questions of gender inter-related to capitalism Economic system impacts gender and racial identies Always have to be strategic	Education Allies with the male community to achieve change When money left academia, men left and women came in stronger - take the opportunities - male brain drain and females filling Partnerships with men Keep pushing Take opportunities Government taking a larger role to change laws, to have a female leader Mentorship Access to education Be good at what you do Confidence - trust yourself Keep pushing Choose mentors, good people	Create social change and movement Support marginalized people Advocacy Grassroots movement to give power to people facing bias, discrimination Communication, listen Compassionate leadership Having the skills to perform the work Sponsorship, people willing to take the chance on people with skills - regardless of gender and race Support from those in leadership Confidence - trust self Support one another Partnerships Keep learning Mentoring

Source: Author's creation, summary of interviews, 2020.

Action became an important recommendation from the experts. Each interviewee mentioned that grassroot actions, community organizations, advocacy, and becoming an influencer, mentor, or sponsor as imperative for women leaders to advance and break the barriers to top leadership positions. A.M. declared, "We need to take the opportunities when they come, we cannot stand back and let things happen. And I would say that is the biggest step for me. That when I realized that I can advocate for myself, there are no holds barred."

In order for change to occur in the workplace and in society, there needs to be a change in the economic balance of power through an intersectionality lens. One cannot separate gender, race, and economic status when discussing the leadership gap, pay equity, and racial inequality. R. D. stressed, "I just want to emphasis that for me questions about gender are never separate from questions about capitalism. For me, gender is deeply tied to our economic system and deeply tied to our racial identities and our other identities, so they all operate together. So, I think it's important to isolate it out, gender, but I also see all the things that are impacting and affecting around it."

In synthesizing the interviews three top priorities emerged that influenced the recommendations in section 5 of this report. The first is to redefine what value means in the workplace. The second is to systemize sponsorship programs specific to the needs of women. The third is grassroots action for social change. Each priority is focusing on changing society's perception about women and women leadership. No small feat, but necessary to create the long-term change for future generations.

Section 5: Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

Implications

The literature review provided an exhaustive reiteration of leadership styles and gender-typing. Women leaders have made vast advancements in leadership and are perceived as authentic and transformational leaders. However, institutional infrastructures are steeped in traditional patriarchal hierarchies. Linscott (2011) explained, "Organizational structural limitations that obscure avenues to career advancement are additional frustrations among entry-level and veteran nonprofit professionals." Linscott noted that smaller nonprofit organizations lack the ability to guide career transition and promotions because of their flat hierarchies. They simply do not have the structures in place to manage career ladders (p.34). Data presented indicates women leaders find more leadership opportunity in nonprofit sector, specifically in organizations with annual operating budgets of less than $2.5 million. Linscott (2011) concluded that without strong support and collaborative investment by nonprofit organizations there will be a leadership deficit (p. 47). The research questions posed in this paper have been answered and are highlighted below.

RQ1: What systemic factors prevent women from reaching top leadership positions in the nonprofit sector?
- Deficient laws and policies regarding family and medical leave and flexible schedules
- Implicit bias against women in the workplace and in society
- Patriarchal infrastructures
- Gender biased data and research

RQ2: Why is the nonprofit sector slow to advance women to senior leadership positions when women make up over 75 percent of the nonprofit workforce?
- Lack of confidence in women leaders to lead organizations with annual operating budgets greater than $2.5 million
- Gender bias
- Patriarchal infrastructures
- Narrow mindsets prohibiting the promotion of women to top level leadership positions
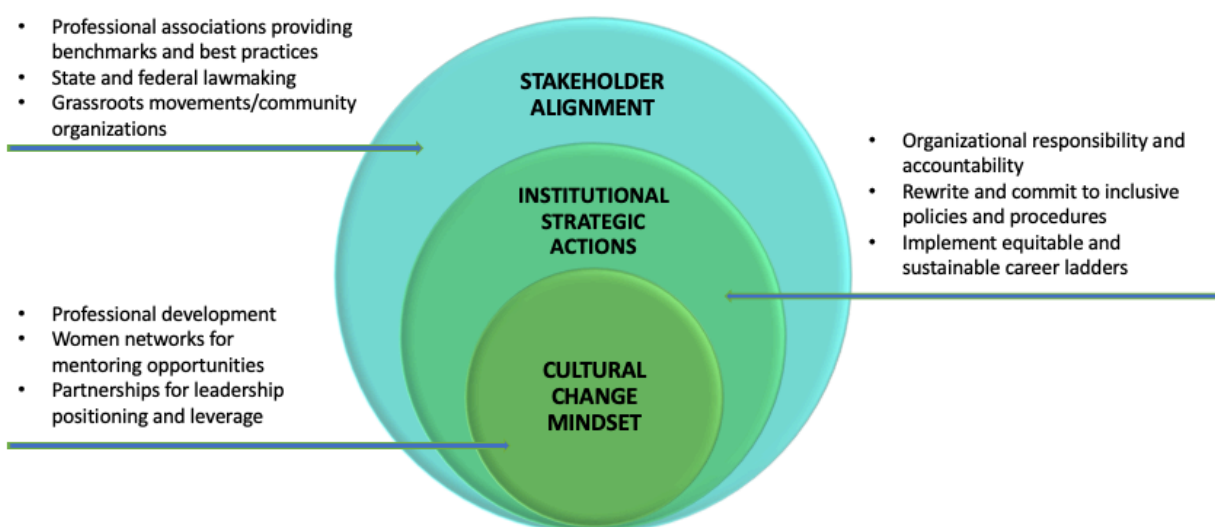
RQ3: What are the systemic and inclusive practices needed to increase female leadership in the nonprofit sector?
- Mentorship and sponsorship programs
- Networking and partnerships
- Professional development
- Organizational accountability and commitment
- Inclusive legal and policy-making

- Benchmark and best practices from professional associations

Research substantiated by the experts interviewed and supported by the data in this paper point to certain systemic and inclusive responsibilities and solutions as illustrated in the model below (see Figure 14). This model of change encompasses three concentric circles representing three different, yet connected layers of crucial actions necessary to collapse the gender leadership gap. The inner, core circle is where *cultural change mindset* is initiated by individual transformation; this includes women leaders seeking networks, mentors, sponsors, and professional development. The second circle widens to include *institutional strategic actions*, where organizations can rewrite and commit to inclusive policies as well as integrate more inclusive career ladders for women. The third circle is *stakeholder alignment*, which entails government, corporate, and community endorsement. This is the area where grassroots movements and community organizations are required to advocate for the adoption of inclusive laws and the creation of benchmarks and best practices for the nonprofit sector. This model is adaptable within the for-profit sector and in government, as well. The responsibility for change lies with the individual, institutional infrastructures, and the political realm.

Figure 14: Systemic and Inclusive Responsibilities and Solutions

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

STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC ACTIONS

CULTURAL CHANGE MINDSET

- Organizational responsibility and accountability
- Rewrite and commit to inclusive policies and procedures
- Implement equitable and sustainable career ladders

- Professional development
- Women networks for mentoring opportunities
- Partnerships for leadership positioning and leverage

Source: Author's creation, created by Katya Alcaraz-Minnick, 2020.

Limitations

This research focused on the traditional gender types of female and male. Much of the available literature on leadership relies on the two main gender types. Researchers should allow for gender neutrality and gender identity scholarship for leadership studies so that new data can begin to breakdown the gender stereotyping. The findings in this paper allude to androgynous leadership and the attachment society has to gender stereotypes. Bringing diversity, equity,

and inclusivity into leadership research can bring society closer to gender-neutral mindsets. As noted by Johnson and Smith (2016), it is important "to keep in mind that even these well-established gender patterns in the neuroscientific literature must be interpreted in light of social stereotypes. For example, two consistent gender differences, multitasking and emotionality—typically attributed to biological differences—are in part connected to different life contexts for men and women" (p. 33).

Economic power and capitalism are areas that also need to be studied in conjunction with gender studies, including the leadership gap. The status quo of materialism and commercialism keep the wheels of capitalism turning. As this paper shows white males in power do not want to cede their authority and turn a blind eye to the marginalized people of the world.

Racial and ethnic discrimination in the ranks of leadership is abundant and requires its own research. This paper did not study the gender leadership gap in relation to minorities facing the same leadership divide that women face. Intersectionality is an issue that should be researched together with economic status and gender.

As for the primary data collected, it would have been beneficial to use the content analysis methodology for the past 10 years to have a true comparison to the meta-analysis. Due to time constraints, this was not feasible, but is promising for future research.

Recommendations

Polk and Chotas (2014) researched women and partnerships to explain the rewards of women leadership when shared between two women.

> There simply is nothing like having a trusted ally who is standing on the same ground, who has traveled as far, who has just as much at stake, who understands, with whom you can freely talk things out and make sense of your work and your life. From bedrock comes grace, comfort, and exponential power for women to co-lead equitably and equally. What does being women have to do with it? The answer is: everything. (p. 43)

Collaboration between women creates an environment conducive to creativity as the experts mentioned as well. To counter centuries of bias against women as validated by the literature review, the data analysis, and the thematic summaries of the expert interviews, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Invest in gender data-driven research
   a. Improve data science to understand implicit bias against women
   b. Collaboration with government agencies and professional associations to collect, analyze, and disseminate research findings
2. Support workforce development specific to women
   a. Provide clear career ladder based on equity
3. Change culture by rewriting the narrative
   a. Redefine what value means in the workplace

b. Implement equitable organizational policies & procedures
4. Engage in grassroots movements/community organizations
  a. Advocate for laws relating to paid family and medical leave
  b. Advocate for gender pay equity, flexible work schedules

Section 6: Conclusions

The gender leadership gap is a ubiquitous issue prevalent in the for-profit sector, in government, and in the nonprofit sector. Women leaders face an uphill battle to reach top management positions, such as C-suite, executive director, and general operations manager leadership positions. Leadership theories provide a substantive understanding of the effects of gender-typing that lead to tangible barriers and challenges for women in the workplace, such as the glass ceiling, leaky pipe syndrome, and implicit bias against women. By studying empirical data regarding women in leadership, it is clear that women are advancing to top leadership positions, but at a snail's pace. One sector stands out as being in the position to take initiatives to equalize leadership advancement, and that is the nonprofit sector. Women makeup 75 percent of the nonprofit workforce and hold 45 percent of the leadership positions. However, there are systemic issues that prevent the total collapse of the gender leadership gap, including institutional status quo, patriarchal hierarchies, and implicit bias against women.

A systemic model of change that includes cultural change in mindsets, institutional strategic actions, and stakeholder alignment, can help the nonprofit sector collapse the gender leadership gap. This involves the restructuring of organizational policies and procedures, collaborating with communities and grass roots movement to advocate for inclusive laws, and partnering with professional associations to promote best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Women leaders lead from the heart and as one expert interviewee underscored when asked for her final reflection about why the persistent gender leadership gap remains and what can women do to change that reality:

> There are two things. The first is as I said before, support women, go out of your way to support women; and the other is to go out of your way to call people on their bias. So, if you are in the work environment, and you have an opportunity as a leader—especially if you're a person in a position of power—to say "excuse me…and sort of name it." Whatever it is, and it could be a moment where a woman has been spoken over in a meeting or someone has stolen their idea, and say, 'now wait a second didn't she just say that, or how is what you're saying adding to the conversation?' Giving people the floor and allowing them not to be interrupted. All of the very basic stuff that needs to still happen in a very explicit way. And if leaders, and I don't just mean positions, but if people are courageous and willing to step into that role of calling people on it, particularly people of privilege, then that is what we need—that's what ally ship is about. And we need more of that! (personal communication with C.A., March 27, 2020)

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Appendix: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Semi-structured Interview Guide

Research Purpose: The purpose of this research is to begin answering the question of why women leaders continue to face obstacles in attaining executive level leadership positions where executive level includes: C-suite, senior level (e.g. executive director, general manager positions) in the nonprofit sector.

Introduction Script: Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today about the nonprofit leadership gender gap. The interview should take about 30 to 45 minutes to complete via Zoom Conferencing. Please note that that anything you share with me will be transcribed and logged into thematic categories. I will share with you the transcriptions of your answers for your review to confirm my understanding of your answers. No specific research information, names, or data will be shared with anyone outside of this study. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am only interested in your expert opinion. If you wish to decline to answer, you may do so. If you need to take a break at any time, please let me know. If you have any questions, please let me know. If you have questions about this project, I will try to answer these at the end of the interview. Before I begin, do I have your permission to audio-record/video record our conversation? Do you have any questions before we begin the interview? (START AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDER) This is an interview with (name of interviewee) on (date) and expert interviewee understands that this interview is being recorded. Is this correct?	
Reflections on Leadership Styles, Skills, and Traits	1. To begin, can you describe your leadership style and share a bit of your journey? 2. What was the framework that helped you stay on the leadership path? Who has helped you gain promotion, and why do you think they helped? 3. What leaders have you looked up to? Why do you admire them? What made them good leaders? How did this affect your leadership journey? 4. Thinking about leadership styles, research often describe women as nurturers. How do you think this helps or holds back women from rising to top leadership levels? 5. What reflections do you have about the gender differences within the nonprofit sector? Other sectors? 6. Are there unique aspects that might make it possible for women to rise into leadership positions? Leadership styles and traits?
Challenges and Opportunities	7. What can women do to change this reality? 8. If women are falling behind, why do you think this is and what can women do to remove the obstacles and barriers to top leadership positions?
Final Touchpoint and Suggestions	9. My research shows that men still dominate C-suite/ED positions in the nonprofit, private, and IGO sectors. Does this surprise you? 10. Why do you think this continues to be an issue? 11. What suggestions do you have to counter this persistent gender gap?

Author's Bio

Katya Alcaraz-Minnick, MNA, is a Training Compliance Associate at Stanford University, where she administers the Title IX graduate student training and the Postdoctoral Scholars harassment prevention training. Kat is responsible for communications, delivery, and compliance for these required training programs; she helps to develop harassment prevention online courses and live theater workshops. Kat designs program promotional and communication materials, and aids the coordination of the agency-wide staff and student harassment prevention and Title IX education programs to achieve the University's mission to empower the Stanford community to thrive in an equitable, safe, and just campus that supports diversity and promotes inclusion.

Having deep roots in institutional governance, Kat began her career in training and compliance at the Archdiocese of San Francisco working as a liaison between the Auxiliary Bishops' Office and the Office of the General Counsel. Kat directed the state, federal, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) tax-exemption compliance by coordinating the yearly tax-exemption audit of the Archdiocese's parishes and organizations within three counties (San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin). Kat counseled priests through the established Archdiocesan retirement process and was a supporting member of the Archdiocese's Retirement Board.

In establishing a livery transportation corporation, Kat gained experience with governance, personnel management, and strategic communications. As CEO of Executive Livery Service, Kat supervised employee relations, internal communications and dispatching flow, and administered the financials and budget for the fast-paced Bay Area transportation service.

Kat graduated Cum Laude from the University of San Francisco obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and now holds her Master of Nonprofit Administration from her alma mater. Receiving a Jesuit education from the University of San Francisco afforded her a strong sense of business ethics and resilience, which are the foundation of her experiences with the private service sector and nonprofit social sector. In 2019, Kat earned the University of San Francisco and Sustainable Capacity International Institute (SCII-ONLUS) Sustainability Reporting Professional Certificate. Recently, the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council awarded Kat lifetime membership into Nu Lambda Mu, the international society for nonprofit management, philanthropy, and social entrepreneurship and enterprise. The MNA program at the University of San Francisco has provided Kat with the necessary tools and confidence she will use to affect systemic change within her home, workplace, and community.