THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
National Catholic School of Social Services
Of The Catholic University of America
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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By
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Washington, DC

2016
Nonprofit organizations in the social service sector are critical instruments for providing programs and services that meet the needs of vulnerable individuals. Although new and persistent social problems demonstrate a compelling need for the existence of these organizations, environmental shifts have created uncertainty with regard to long-term sustainability (Mulroy, 2004; Schmid, 2004). While the existing literature has expanded knowledge regarding strategies employed by nonprofit organizations during times of environmental turbulence (Board Source, 2005; Independent Sector, 2007), few studies have utilized a qualitative approach or resource dependence and contingency theories to understand how boards of directors and management staff work together in fundraising to achieve organizational sustainability (Ahmed, 2005; Brown, 2005).

This study employed a multiple case study design utilizing qualitative research methodology to explore nonprofit board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. A grounded theory approach to data analysis, guided by a constructivist epistemology, helped describe the multiple realities that exist in the nonprofit social service sector concerning fundraising. The study included a non-probability, purposive sample involving nine nonprofit social service organizations serving children and families.

The findings suggest that environmental shifts such as changes in funding, social or public policies, and client demographics influence perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Additionally, management staff, as opposed to the board of directors, are
recognized as critical in leading fundraising efforts. Further, boards of directors and management staff are perceived as a “dynamic duo” for engaging in boundary-spanning activities. Finally, organizational demographics such as revenue sources for the annual budget, board structure, and board composition influence perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. These findings have the potential to shape future empirical research studies and inform the development of educational programs that prepare social workers for leadership as executive-level administrators.
This dissertation by Ruth Tamar Jones Nichols fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Social Work approved by Wendy Whiting Blome, Ph.D., as Director, and by Joseph J. Shields, Ph.D., and Susanne Bennett, Ph.D. as Readers.

_____________________________________
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Susanne Bennett, Ph.D., Reader
Dedication

In loving memory of Connie Allen, Carroll Hardy, and Hortense Canady

Thank you for being my mentors and encouraging me to stay the course until I finished this journey. Although you are not here on earth to see me reach the finish line, I thank you for always believing that this day would come. I hope you are smiling down from heaven saying, “Job well done my sister and Soror. We knew you could and would do it!” The vision was for an appointed time, and this is my season.
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Acknowledgements

With all of life’s trials and tribulations, there were so many reasons why I could have given up or given in to the potential reality of not finishing this journey. However, there was one person who guided me from start to finish and pushed me to keep moving forward. The support of my program advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Wendy Whiting Blome, helped to sustain, encourage, inspire, and motivate me to keep going even when the end seemed so distant. Often, I was tired, stretched thin, and pulled in different directions, but she continued to remind me that my research was valuable and completing it would add value to our sector. My dissertation committee members, Drs. Susanne Bennett and Joseph Shields, helped to keep me focused, as well. Thank you, Dr. Bennett, for literally sitting with me on several occasions to talk about qualitative research methodology and grounded theory. Dr. Shields, thank you too for helping me reflect on the evolving role of boards in several classes. In a program that is largely clinical, you gave me the space to explore topics that had significant meaning for my career.

I am also grateful to my Ph.D. program cohort for serving as a source of motivation, particularly Dr. Jeronda Burley. As each of you completed the program, I watched in amazement and imagined myself following in your footsteps one day. For all my friends who followed me on Facebook, you rock! You didn’t get tired of my posts and your words of encouragement were always exactly what I needed to hang in there. For my closest friends from undergraduate and graduate school, Tevera and Shasta, I can’t thank you enough for putting up with me as I talked about finishing this dissertation year after year. Friends believe in you even when you quietly stop believing in yourself. Thank you for being there for me when it mattered most to cheer me on toward the finish line.
For all the children, families, and colleagues throughout my career who encouraged me to be my very best in order to effectively serve you as a leader, I am grateful for your presence in my life. You always said that I was your inspiration, but the truth is that you were mine. For my big brother Earl who stood in place of our mentor after she passed away, you are my reminder that God places people in our lives for a reason and every season. It’s hard to believe that you’ve known me since I was a kid in high school. Thank you for being my big brother, friend, and “Dean Hardy” surrogate.

At the very moment when I started to believe finishing my dissertation was far from a real possibility, God allowed me to meet my husband, Breon. I needed someone who would stand by my side and finish the journey with me. I needed someone to stay awake with me at night. I needed someone who would push me out of bed and encourage me to write a few more pages each day. I needed someone who would constantly say, “You’re doing a great job. Now, go back to that computer.” I needed someone who would help me find the balance between having a successful career and achieving this personal goal. Breon, you’ve been all of what I needed. Certainly, God knew the plans when He allowed us to meet and get married. You, Breon, are the one He kept for me.

Without God, none of this journey would have been possible. I give Him the praise for affording me an opportunity to learn, grow, and prosper. My belief in God’s sovereign power to perform the good work that was started in me helped to sustain my faith throughout the journey. Indeed, God did exceedingly abundantly above all that I could ask or think. What a blessing!
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Nonprofit organizations in the social service sector are critical instruments for providing programs and services that meet the needs of vulnerable individuals. Although new and persistent social problems demonstrate a compelling need for the existence of these organizations, environmental shifts including changes in funding availability, client demographics, and public policies have created uncertainty with regard to long-term sustainability (Mulroy, 2004; Schmid, 2004). These environmental shifts have forced nonprofit social service organizations to reassess their structures, programs, policies, procedures, and consider new ways of leveraging resources (Campbell, 2009; Greyser, 2009; Voelpel, Leibold, & Mahmoud, 2004). In the past two decades, persistent challenges related to leveraging resources to sustain nonprofit social service organizations have become an area of intense focus among practitioners and academicians (Salamon, 2012).

The nonprofit social service and management literature has increasingly provided attention to the manner in which nonprofit social service organizations have acted upon their environments to secure financial and human capital necessary for survival, growth, and sustainability (Herman & Renz, 2000; Kearns, 2000). Empirical studies conducted by Board Source (2005) and the Independent Sector (2007) indicate that roles and responsibilities of boards of directors and management staff are often interdependent in nonprofit organizations that effectively secure financial resources to sustain programs and services. Although these studies have contributed to the knowledge base regarding strategies employed by nonprofit organizations during times of economic uncertainty, few studies have utilized a qualitative
approach to understand how board of directors and management staff in the sector can work together with the goal of achieving organizational sustainability through strategic fundraising (Ahmed, 2005; Brown, 2005).

**Background of the Problem**

**Prevalence of Nonprofits and Revenue Base**

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2012), a total of 1,447,471 million registered nonprofit organizations existed in the United States in 2012. These organizations included public charities, private foundations, and other 501(c) nonprofits such as civic or business leagues, fraternal beneficiary societies, chambers of commerce, and social or recreational clubs. Of these nonprofits, 25% were classified as human service organizations. The human service nonprofit organizations reported revenue of over $244 billion on their IRS form 990. However, that revenue represented only 12% of the total revenue reported by all nonprofit organizations in the country (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012).

**Figure 1:**

*Total Revenue for Registered Human Service Nonprofits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$249,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,000-$499,999</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000-$999,999</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1-$5 million</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1.* There were 354,501 registered human service nonprofits in the United States in 2012. Collectively, the total revenue for these organizations was $244,412,560,408. Overwhelmingly, each organization received less than $100,000 annually to support their operating budget. Adapted from National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012.
In spite of the overwhelming presence of nonprofit human service organizations across the nation, 77% had an annual budget of less than $500,000 (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012). Only 5% of the total human service nonprofit organizations in the country had an annual budget between $500,000 and $999,999. Approximately 8% had an annual budget of more than $1 million. Roughly 10% of the registered human service nonprofit organizations did not report their total revenue or annual budget size. Given the uncertain environment in which these nonprofit organizations operate and compete for limited resources and support, a clear understanding of the manner in which nonprofits survive and thrive throughout their life cycle could potentially support organizational development and change management efforts, particularly for nonprofit social service organizations. Largely supported by the public sector and private philanthropy, nonprofit social service organizations play a crucial role in society. Historically, this role has been guided by the values and standards of the social work profession.

**Values Guiding the Nonprofit Social Service Industry**

Nonprofit social service organizations are sanctioned by society to “serve the health, welfare, and educational needs of its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable” (Lewis, 1989, p. 8). This sanction is affirmed in the Code of Ethics for the National Association of Social Workers which articulates a mission for the profession focused on helping individuals in need. Inherent within the mission is a commitment to six core values which include service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (Lewis, 1989). These values are further expressed in the principles and standards of the Code of Ethics, which have the effect of guiding behavior in social service agencies.
Specific standards that are especially relevant to nonprofit social service organizations navigating their way through uncertain economic environments are those related to the responsibility of social service organizations to clients, social work professionals, practice settings, the social work profession, and broader society (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

Although individuals and organizations within society recognize the sanction and core values of nonprofit social service organizations, key environmental shifts have challenged the common mission of these organizations and presented managerial dilemmas, particularly within the context of resource acquisition to sustain organizational programs and services (Schmid, 2004). These dilemmas center on the need to modify programs, services, and staffing patterns to ensure long-term organizational financial sustainability in the midst of environmental turbulence. One significant environmental shift within the last decade that created environmental turbulence and impacted nonprofit, social service organizations was the Great Recession of 2008 (Salamon, 2012; Themudo, 2013).

As the financial crisis and economic downturn resulting from the Great Depression of 2008 intensified in depth and scope, the needs of vulnerable individuals increased which created more demand for nonprofit social services. However, philanthropic and government financial support for nonprofits decreased as individuals, corporations, foundations, and government institutions attempted to navigate an environment filled with financial instability (Calabrese, 2013). During this time, the number of nonprofits increased each year for three consecutive years and then decreased significantly over the next two years. Revenue declined for three years
and ultimately started to increase beginning in 2010. Figure 2 provides an illustration of these shifts.

**Figure 2:**
Annual Growth Trends from 2008-2012

![Graph showing number of nonprofits and total revenue from 2008 to 2012](image)

*Figure 2.* There were a total of 1,514,810 registered nonprofits in the United States in 2008, but that number decreased to 1,447,471 by 2012. Conversely, the total revenue reported by nonprofits in 2012 was $1,891,204,253,470, but that amount increased to $2,042,198,917,077. Adapted from National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012.

Grounded primarily in resource dependence theory, various research studies have examined the extent to which nonprofit social service organizations have co-opted their environments to leverage resources necessary for survival, growth, and sustainability (Kearns, 2000; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Scott, 2003). Although these studies have contributed to the knowledge base regarding the manner in which nonprofit social service organizations can respond during times of uncertainty (Hodgkinson & Nelson, 2001), few studies have
conceptually developed a model for understanding how boards of directors and management staff can collaborate to achieve organizational sustainability (Brown, 2005). The extent to which the roles and responsibilities in fundraising shared by boards of directors and management staff can be conceptually defined will potentially impact organizational performance and long-term sustainability (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999; O’Connell, 2003; Tweeten, 2002). This outcome can have far reaching implications for practitioners and researchers in the field of social work administration and management.

**Interest in the Problem**

As a trained social worker with experience in direct practice, program development, fundraising, capacity-building, and executive leadership within the nonprofit social service sector, the author is keenly aware of the challenges facing social service organizations. Some of the greatest challenges experienced by the author have included inadequate financial resources available to deliver comprehensive, sustainable programs for vulnerable, oppressed, and disadvantaged individuals. Increased competition for limited resources available from various funding sources has presented additional challenges. Throughout a career that has spanned two decades, the author has been faced with ethical dilemmas resulting from these challenges related to staff restructuring, program retrenchment, and dissolution of one nonprofit social service organization. A desire to better understand how nonprofit social service organizations can strategically utilize their boards of directors and management staff as key actors who influence their environments and leverage financial support was the impetus for the author’s interest in this problem.
**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore nonprofit board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Using a qualitative approach, the study developed a conceptual model for structuring effective fundraising activities in nonprofit social service organizations focusing on board and management staff roles and responsibilities. Three primary research questions guided this study. First, how do board chairs and executive directors in the nonprofit social service sector perceive board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising? Second, how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to critical events experienced by the organization such as changes in funding, client demographics, and public policies? Third, how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to individual and organizational characteristics? To answer the three research questions, this study employed a multiple case study design utilizing qualitative research methodology. A multiple case study design was appropriate for investigating and describing the diverse realities experienced by boards of directors and management staff in the nonprofit social service sector when fundraising during turbulent times (Yin, 1994). This approach was a more naturalistic method of inquiry that could potentially uncover nuances embedded within the research questions. The method of inquiry was guided by a constructivist epistemology that valued the subjective experience of research participants in order to create a conceptual model for practical application in the field of social work administration.
Significance to Social Work

There is relatively little research in the field of social work that builds upon resource dependence and contingency theories to explore how boards of directors and management staff at nonprofit social service organizations can collaborate to leverage the limited financial resources available within their respective communities. This study expands the knowledge in this area and offers several implications for social work administrators and leaders. The research findings provide social work management practitioners and boards of directors with a conceptual framework that can enhance fundraising activities within nonprofit social service organizations to impact organizational growth and sustainability. The findings also build upon existing knowledge about the changing roles of boards of directors and management staff in the 21st century. The findings will further inform future research that explores the significance of key variables identified in the conceptual model for shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit social service sector. Additionally, this research has the potential to shape future social work educational programs that prepare practitioners for effective clinical practice and leadership as executive-level administrators.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the problem, researcher’s interest in the problem, purpose of the study, and significance of the research to social work. Chapter II will offer a review of the literature on critical roles and responsibilities of boards of directors and management staff within nonprofit social service organizations. Chapter III will summarize the methodological approach for answering research questions pertaining to this study. Chapter IV
will present descriptive and qualitative findings that emerged from the data analysis. Finally, Chapter V will examine the findings and draw conclusions that offer implications for enhancing social work practice, building knowledge, and informing future research utilizing quantitative and qualitative methodology.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Government funding has traditionally represented the most significant portion of the annual budget for nonprofit social service organizations (Lu, 2015). Studies examining funding sources for nonprofit social service organizations found that approximately 30 to 50 percent of the total revenue for nonprofits is generated from government funding rather than contributions from individuals and private corporations or foundations (Klein, 2007). Economic and social changes in the external environment of nonprofit social service organizations, however, have resulted in decreased government funding within the last several years. Given recent changes in the external environment, leadership in the nonprofit social service sector requires a unique set of skills, expertise, and training to navigate financially difficult times (Salamon, 2012; Themudo, 2013).

For managers and boards of directors, traditional roles and responsibilities are evolving. Historically, managers within the nonprofit social service sector were able to lead by managing the day-to-day operations of their organizations that focused primarily on service delivery, program evaluation, and administration. Similarly, boards of directors could lead by engaging in governance activities that focused primarily on fiscal oversight, policy development, and performance evaluations for their executive directors or chief executive officers. As financial resources to sustain the mission-impact work of nonprofit social service organizations became scarce and harder to secure as a result of competition, managers and boards of directors became increasingly involved in activities such as fundraising to ensure organizational financial stability (Hodge & Piccolo, 2005; Shea & Hamilton, 2015).
Developing a model for how management staff and boards of directors can become a “dynamic duo” through shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising could enable nonprofit social service organizations to reach their full potential at a time when survival has become the day-to-day reality for leaders in this sector. Consistent with the upper echelon theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), key organizational actions such as fundraising are guided by the values and demographic characteristics of influential organizational actors such as management staff and boards of directors in the nonprofit social service industry. These actors not only formulate strategies pertaining to processes, but also make decisions regarding the manner in which the process-oriented goals will be achieved (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). A conceptual model grounded in organizational theories and focused on organizational sustainability could provide key insights for nonprofit social service organizations that seek to maintain or expand programs and services that meet critical community needs. The purpose of this study is to develop the theoretical framework for this conceptual model. This model will be integral to helping nonprofit organizations achieve their mission and effectively address constraints within their external environments.

In an effort to build knowledge in this specific area, theoretical concepts from the nonprofit management and social service literature will be linked in this chapter to establish a foundation for building a grounded theory of shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit social service sector. This grounded theory will lead to model construction that identifies potential relationships between roles and responsibilities in fundraising and organizational sustainability. The chapter is organized in three sections focused on providing a theoretical framework for the study, an overview of the evolving board and management roles in
the nonprofit social service sector, and key insights from the theoretical and empirical literature that explain and justify the study’s research questions.

**Theoretical Framework**

Nonprofit organizations in the social service sector have generally played a critical role in providing programs and services that enhance the well-being of individuals in society. As the needs of individuals and communities have changed over time, the nonprofit social service sector has encountered growing demands from policy makers, community stakeholders, and concerned citizens to increase the quantity and quality of programs and services in a manner that is consistent with identified individual and community needs. This section will describe the theoretical framework for understanding how nonprofit social service organizations can engage their boards of directors and management staff in new roles that address these demands and emerging trends.

Although the role and function of nonprofit boards of directors and management staff vary according to internal and external organizational factors (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003), the primary responsibilities remain the same. Managers administer the daily operations of their organizations, and nonprofit boards of directors provide effective governance and oversight in a variety of environmental contexts (Baysinger & Hoskisson, 1990; O’Connell, 2003). In this regard, nonprofit management staff and boards of directors fulfill several primary roles and functions related to agency, institutional, and resource dependence theories (Miller-Millesen, 2003). According to Miller-Millesen (2003), agency theory can be used to explain the manner in which nonprofit managers and boards monitor the organization and provide leadership to ensure that the mission of the organization is fulfilled. Nonprofit board roles consistent with agency
theory include selecting and evaluating a chief executive officer, providing fiscal oversight, engaging in strategic planning, and periodically reassessing the mission of the organization. Similarly, management staff roles consistent with agency theory include human resource management, program development, financial accounting, and compliance with funder agreements (Burke & Cooper, 2012; Golensky, 2011; Lawler & Bilson, 2010).

Institutional theory can also be used to understand the role and function of nonprofit managers and boards of directors. To this end, institutional theory focuses on the manner in which nonprofit managers and boards transform their structures and processes to reflect institutional pressures, rules, norms, and sanctions (Miller-Millesen, 2003). Nonprofit board roles consistent with institutional theory include ensuring the organization adheres to laws and regulatory guidelines, establishing committee structures to provide effective oversight of organizational finances, programs, and resource development, and monitoring organizational behavior to assure consistency with stakeholder values and expectations (Gibelman, Gelman, & Pollack, 1997). Management staff roles consistent with institutional theory include managing organizational culture, establishing work flow processes, and brokering strategic partnerships (Golensky, 2011; Lawler & Bilson, 2010). While institutional theory has practical implications for understanding the role and function of nonprofit management staff and boards of directors, resource dependence theory is one of the more critical theories for understanding the manner in which nonprofit social service organizations leverage the scarce resources within their environments that lead to growth and sustainability (Brown, 2005).

Resource acquisition efforts facilitated by management staff and boards of directors have been linked in the research literature to high organizational performance and long-term
sustainability (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999; Tweeten, 2002). These efforts are also directly related to resource dependence theory. Within this context, resource dependence theory can be used to understand how organizational leaders link their respective organizations to the external environment and secure resources essential to organizational survival (Boeker & Goodstein, 1991; Pfeffer, 1973; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Management staff and board roles consistent with resource dependence theory include participating in public relations efforts to improve the image of the organization, accessing social networks that ensure adequate financial and human capital for programs and services, and engaging in boundary-spanning activities that create interdependencies between the organization and its environment (Alexander & Carlson, 2005; Gibelman et al., 1997; Herman & Renz, 2000; Miller-Millesen, 2003; Sargeant & Jay, 2010; Scott, 2003). Although agency, institutional, and resource dependence theories have independently and collectively been used to explain the role and function of nonprofit management staff and boards (Brown, 2005; Miller-Millesen, 2003; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003), further examination of the resource dependence theory is necessary to understand distinct roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

**Resource Dependence Theory**

Resource dependence theory, for many years, has served as a plausible theoretical framework for understanding how organizations sustain themselves in various environmental contexts within urban, rural, and suburban communities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Schmid, 2004). In this regard, the theory utilizes an open systems approach to emphasize the reciprocal nature through which external environments and organizations exert control over each other and maintain a high degree of interrelatedness (Miner, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Scott, 2003).
Resource dependence theory asserts that in order for organizations to survive and leverage resources in unstable environments, these organizations must adapt to the constraints present in the environment or develop alternative coping strategies (Vibert, 2004). These adaptations and coping strategies must be sufficient to respond to complexities, uncertainties, and frequent changes within the environment that present significant challenges for nonprofit organizational leaders in the nonprofit social service industry (Carpenter & Westphal, 2001).

According to Schmid (2004), one alternative coping strategy used to manage constraints in unstable environments is to transform the organization’s “power-dependence relation[ship] with the environment” (p. 104). Scott (2003) asserts that this can be accomplished using various organizational tactics including joint ventures, strategic alliances, contracting, and mergers. One organizational tactic that is specifically applicable to nonprofits in the social service sector, however, is cooptation. Cooptation is defined as, “the incorporation of representatives of external groups into the decision making or advisory structure of an organization” (Scott, 2003, p. 204). Within the context of nonprofit social service organizations, cooptation tactics can be used to connect the organization to institutions in the environment that have control over resources necessary for sustainability. These resources could include funding from private foundations, corporations, individual donors, and government agencies (The Foundation Center, 2007). Resources could also include individuals with expertise in key administrative areas such as human resource management, accounting, law, marketing, public relations, and special content areas within the social service field (Foundation Center, 2007). When cooptation is used as an alternative coping strategy to addressing multiple uncertainties within the environment, nonprofit organizational leaders must be sensitive to the internal organizational factors that
should guide the development of cooptation strategies. These internal factors could include an organization’s size, age, professionalization of staff, and primary sources of revenue (Keats & Hitt, 1988; Miller-Millesen, 2003; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). These factors are related to another theoretical framework that is relevant for this study.

**Contingency Theory**

A second theoretical framework for understanding how organizations survive in various environmental contexts is contingency theory. The primary assumption of contingency theory is that organizational structures should be aligned with the environment in order to leverage resources necessary for growth and sustainability (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Longenecker & Pringle, 1978; Luthans & Stewart, 1977). The second assumption of contingency theory is that one correct way of structuring an organization and its internal characteristics within a particular environment does not exist (Bradshaw, 2009). Instead, organizational structures should be aligned with the environment to ensure an effective fit.

Several research studies examining the relationship between organizational structures and nonprofit funding sources, board involvement practices, and organizational strategy found that contingency theory is relevant for understanding organizational behavior in uncertain environments (Bradshaw, 2009; Lu, 2015; Shepard & Hougland, 1978; Siciliano, 2008). Guo (2007), for example, examined the effects of public funding on board practices and found that organizations receiving the majority of their financial support from government entities were less likely to recruit board members that reflect the diversity of their communities. Bradshaw (2009) also found that contingency factors such as organizational age, size, and complexity influence strategic choices designed to link internal structures with external environments.
Contingency theory builds upon resource dependence theory to offer a framework for understanding how organizations link with their environment to acquire resources. Expanding knowledge about the manner in which organizational leaders navigate their environments to resolve managerial challenges related to fundraising depends on a firm understanding about how internal characteristics of organizations potentially shape strategies (Hopkins & Hyde, 2002; Marlin, Ritchie, & Geiger, 2009; Miller, 2002; Samuel, Wolf, & Schilling, 2013). Consistent with contingency theory, strategies should be aligned with and contingent upon the environment where organizations are situated to optimize the ideal fit for fundraising. According to resource dependence theory, environments contain the resources necessary to survive, but organizations can use their internal resources to influence relationships. Internal resources with potential relevance to fundraising roles include age, size, board composition and structure, as well as board commitment.

**Organizational characteristics.** The size of an organization, as measured by the number of employees and non-paid volunteers, is a critical contingency variable that can influence the extent to which it is necessary for nonprofits in the social service sector to engage in cooptation strategies (Boeker & Goodstein, 1991; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). In this regard, nonprofit social service organizations with fewer staff may require larger boards in order to ensure critical linkages to community resources. With regard to the age of the organization, younger nonprofit social service organizations may also require larger boards to co-opt their environments by enhancing the organization’s public image and perceived legitimacy (Scott, 2003). In addition, small and younger nonprofit social service organizations may also require more diverse boards in order to fulfill administrative functions (Eadie, 2001). Further, small and younger nonprofit
social service organizations that have professionalized staff, as measured by the level of education of key administrative employees, may use diverse boards to focus more on boundary-spanning activities and less on monitoring behaviors (Miller-Millesen, 2003). Boundary-spanning is a process that links an organization to its external environment in a manner that establishes codependent relationships (Sheppard, 1995). Finally, primary sources of revenue for an organization could also influence cooptation strategies utilized by nonprofits in the social service sector (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Schmid, 2004). To this end, nonprofit social service organizations that endeavor to increase their income or contributions from a particular segment within the philanthropic sector may include members on their board from that sector to provide a critical linkage (Sheppard, 1995). An example in this regard could include an organization that targets individuals from the corporate sector for board membership to increase corporate contributions. Another example could include an organization that targets individuals from the government sector for board membership to increase awareness of and access to government funds that support the organization’s programmatic areas of expertise.

Although the organizational factors mentioned previously have the potential to influence cooptation strategies utilized by nonprofit boards of directors and management staff to link organizations with community resources, three additional board factors also impact the extent to which leaders are successful in making these connections. These factors include board composition, structure, and commitment of board members to helping the organization achieve its mission and purpose (Miller-Millesen, 2003; Pfeffer, 1973; Pfeffer, 1972). Based on findings from research studies conducted by nonprofit management scholars, these factors are directly related to organizational sustainability (Dalton, Johnson, & Ellstrand, 1998; Goodstein, Gautam,
An understanding of how these three board factors influence resource acquisition is integral to helping social service organizations achieve long-term sustainability.

**Board composition.** Numerous research studies have examined the impact of board composition on organizational performance and sustainability. While some studies have operationalized board composition using occupational diversity, age, and gender as measures (Boeker & Goodstein, 1991; Siciliano, 1996), other studies have identified race, ethnicity, and the number of individuals on the board with linkages in the community as measures of board composition (Provan, 1980; Zald, 1969). In a study examining the impact of having individuals with multiple linkages on a board within the social service sector, for example, Provan (1980) found that boards composed of individuals with connections to several entities in the community were more successful at obtaining resources from the environment. Similarly, Zald (1969) found a positive relationship between the inclusion of leaders from the business community and contributions to the organization from corporate entities. Siciliano (1996) also investigated the impact of demographic characteristics of nonprofit boards such as age and occupational diversity on organizational performance outcomes related to sustainability. In this regard, Siciliano (1996) found that boards that had a greater spread in age and were more diverse according to distinct occupational fields experienced greater levels of organizational performance, as measured by resources leveraged to sustain programs and services. Boeker and Goodstein (1991) also found that boards having greater diversity in occupational backgrounds generally brought increased value to organizations specifically when they were co-opting resources in uncertain environments. Although race, ethnicity, and gender have not been investigated to a large extent
in the management literature, research studies examining the impact of these variables on giving patterns and strategic posture may inform nonprofit board development efforts focused on enhancing a board’s composition. In a research study investigating the impact of demographic characteristics on giving patterns, Mesch, Rooney, Steinberg, and Denton (2006) found that race, ethnicity, and gender influence charitable giving. To this end, African Americans, as well as other minorities, were more likely to give to organizations that serve populations with similar demographic characteristics. Additionally, Mesch et al. (2006) found that women were more likely than men to give to charitable organizations. Williams (2003) also found that boards composed of higher proportions of women were more likely to prioritize short and long-term performance and financial benchmarks that were consistent with the organization’s mission and purpose. With this in mind, race, ethnicity, and gender are viewed as additional measures for board composition.

**Board structure.** Based on findings from the nonprofit management literature, board structure is another variable that has been linked to organizational performance and sustainability (Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1992; Dalton, Daily, Ellstrand, & Johnson, 1998; Goodstein et al., 1994; Provan, 1980). In this regard, Pfeffer (1972) found that board size is one predictor of an organization’s ability to adapt to changing environments and exert control over the supply and demand for products and services. More specifically, larger boards that were representative of multiple community entities generally engaged in extensive boundary spanning and, as a result, experienced greater success in accessing shifting and limited resources in the organization’s task environment (Pfeffer, 1973). Board size is further linked in the literature to the existence of board committees, which are the primary mechanisms through which actual decision-making at
the board level occurs (Kesner, 1988). To this end, boards with more members are better positioned to utilize structured committees to address specific challenges facing organizations during times of uncertainty. While typical boards of directors generally include executive, finance, fundraising, and program committees (Tweeten, 2002), the existence of at least an executive committee can positively influence a nonprofit board’s ability to effectively execute its primary roles and functions (O’Connell, 2003).

Formalization is another measure of board structure that impacts nonprofit organizational performance and sustainability. According to the Foundation Center (2007), boards that have formalized written policies and job descriptions with detailed expectations about attendance, committee participation, and fundraising requirements are more likely to achieve resource development goals that support program operations. Additionally, boards with formalized structures for orienting new board members and implementing board policies could also help to enhance resource development efforts (Eadie, 2001). Further, boards that have “a minimum of three evenly spaced meetings per year of the full governing body with a majority in attendance, with face-to-face participation” are more likely to be effective in their governing role (O’Connell, 2003, p. 202). While formalization is one of the more common elements of nonprofit board effectiveness, there is at least one additional variable that has the potential to significantly impact organizational performance and sustainability.

**Board commitment.** Board commitment represents the final board factor that impacts nonprofit organizational performance and sustainability. In a study examining the relationship between board member commitment and individual performance, Preston and Brown (2004) found that the affective commitment of board members, as measured by emotional attachment to
or identification with the organization, was a significant predictor of board behavior. Based on findings from a survey administered to board members and executive directors in 38 nonprofit social service organizations, board members with a strong affective commitment to the organization were perceived as more likely to be involved in board behaviors that impact general measures of performance. In this regard, board members with a strong affective commitment were more likely to “make larger financial contributions, donate more hours to the organization, have better attendance at meetings, and serve on more committees” (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 233). Normative commitment, as measured by a sense of obligation to continue with the board, was also a significant factor related to board performance. To this end, board members who felt a sense of normative commitment to the organization gave slightly more time than other board members (Preston & Brown, 2004). According to these findings, board member commitment can impact organizational performance if members feel a sense of affective and normative commitment to the organization and exhibit behaviors consistent with these feelings.

**The Evolving Roles of Boards of Directors and Management Staff**

According to Taylor, Chait, and Holland (1996), nonprofit organizational leaders must focus their management and governance efforts on four main items in order to meet organizational financial needs and ensure moral responsibility to individuals. These items include a focus on “crucial, do-or-die issues central to the institution’s success, results that are linked to defined timetables, clear measures of success, and engagement of the organization’s internal and external constituencies” (Taylor et al., 1996, p. 36). Taylor et al. (1996) elaborate by asserting that this focus is the “new work” of nonprofit leaders. They also contend that nonprofit boards of directors, in particular, must move beyond conventional roles and
expectations of the past toward a more refined role in ensuring organizational sustainability. Taylor et al. assert that this role includes an expectation that nonprofit boards of directors will become familiar with key stakeholders, consult with experts to increase their knowledge about their industry, act on the things that matter to the organization and its constituents, and provide visionary leadership that promotes trust and integrity. When management staff and boards collaborate to fulfill these expectations, according to Gulliver, Towell, and Peck (2003), staff morale and stakeholder loyalty increase and job-related tension, dissatisfaction, and a propensity of staff to leave decrease during times of financial uncertainty. Implementing transparent processes of communication between and among stakeholders and constituency groups is also an integral new role for management staff and boards of directors who are leading during times of financial vulnerability (Themudo, 2013).

Facilitating strategic innovation will increasingly become a part of the changing roles of nonprofit leaders, including management staff and boards of directors, when negotiating relationships within their external environments (Eadie, 2001). This term represents the process of creating new systems, structures, and relationships that do not currently exist. Examples of strategic innovation opportunities for the social service field include the identification of modified performance indicators for programs and services, diversification of funding by revenue stream, and the development of long-term organizational plans that integrate shifts in social welfare policies and priorities (Hodgkinson et al., 2001). Although some leaders may not quickly embrace this new role within the context of former roles and responsibilities, several empirical studies have found a significant relationship between leadership performance in this
area and overall organizational performance (Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1992; Brown, 2005; Herman & Renz, 2000).

Building upon the role related to strategic innovation, strategic planning within nonprofit social service organizations has also been linked in the theoretical and empirical literature to organizational performance and sustainability (Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1992). To this end, strategic planning includes the formulation of strategies that build on an organization’s core competencies (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990) and can range from growth, diversification, and retrenchment strategies to the facilitation of collaborations and strategic alliances (Kearns, 2000). The focus of these strategies should be to “exploit the organization’s internal strengths, through responding to environmental opportunities, while neutralizing external threats and avoiding internal weaknesses” (Barney, 1991, p. 99). Strengths in this sense would include organizational resources that: 1) encompass physical capital, human capital, and organizational structures, processes, and informal networks (Barney, 1991); and 2) further the principles of social justice and moral philosophy that are a hallmark for social service organizations (Rawls, 1971).

Engaging in strategic planning and developing a common vision for the organization’s activities are perceived as more critical roles that positively influence organizational performance and change outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 1992; Brown, 2005). Strategic plans that adapt to emerging community needs and the goals of funding entities are more likely to move their organizations toward sustainability (Breda, 2000; Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Schmid, 2004). Upon developing and finalizing strategic plans, additional new roles for management staff and boards of directors include implementing ambitious strategies that enable nonprofit social service organizations to navigate changes in the environment. Table 1 provides a
summary of sample strategies identified in the management literature. Increasingly, these strategies will fall along a continuum developed by Covin (1991) that ranges from conservative to entrepreneurial.

According to Covin (1991), strategies that are conservative are risk-averse, non-innovative, and reactive to market forces. Conversely, strategies that are entrepreneurial are risk-taking, innovative, and proactive (Miller, 1983). Zahra (1996) elaborates further on the dimensions of entrepreneurial strategies by explaining that they are focused on business creation, venturing, and strategic renewal. Similar to strategic innovation, the strategic creation of strategies for nonprofit social service organizations should focus on the development of new programs, service delivery processes, and formal systems that did not previously exist. Venturing is also defined as expansion or entry into new or existing markets, which is a critical element of entrepreneurial strategies (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Finally, strategic renewal is conceptualized as a revitalization process that redefines an organization’s scope and programmatic approach to build upon strengths and capabilities (Zahra, 1996).

Porter (1990) characterized the innovation process involving creation, venturing, and strategic renewal as one that does not come easily. He elaborated on this point stating,

The company that successfully implements a new or better way of competing pursues its approach with dogged determination, often in the face of harsh criticism and tough obstacles. In fact, to succeed, innovation usually requires pressure, necessity, and even adversity: the fear of loss often proves more powerful than the hope of gain. (Porter, 1990, p. 75)
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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Advantages/Disadvantages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
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<td>Sources:</td>
<td>Kearns, 2000; Lewis &amp; Crook, 2001</td>
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<td>Growth</td>
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<td>Diversification</td>
<td>Concentration – build on current programs and</td>
<td>Concentric Diversification – develop</td>
<td>Advantages: Allows an organization to be innovative, venture out, and engage in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>services.</td>
<td>programs and services related to those the</td>
<td>risk-taking activities.</td>
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<td>agency currently provides.</td>
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<td>Disadvantages: May not effectively build upon an organizations strengths and capabilities.</td>
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<td>Vertical Integration – gain increased control</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>over supply and distribution channels.</td>
<td>May also move the organization away from its stated vision, mission, and purpose.</td>
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<td>May exhaust agency resources on ventures that will ultimately not succeed.</td>
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<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Resource Sharing – allows organizations to share</td>
<td>Interagency collaborations focused on a</td>
<td>Advantages: Lower administrative and transaction cost associated with service delivery.</td>
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<td>Sources:</td>
<td>cost and responsibility related to service</td>
<td>particular service need.</td>
<td>Partnerships can be informal and reduce staff responsibilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>delivery.</td>
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<td>Disadvantages: Organizational cultures may clash and lead to battles over territory.</td>
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<td>Commitment of leaders and participants may decrease due to conflicting responsibilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Joint Ventures – allows two or more organizations</td>
<td>Comprehensive service centers offering a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>to undertake a major project and jointly address</td>
<td>one-stop approach for child care, job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>community needs.</td>
<td>training, adult mental health services, and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>case management.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategic Alliances – allow organizations to join</td>
<td>Think tanks and advocacy networks.</td>
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<td>forces to address a variety of issues that impact</td>
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<td>each organization’s ability to achieve goals and</td>
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Porter (1990) further asserted that organizations that are able to achieve an advantage over their competitors through innovative strategies can only sustain this advantage by constantly improving programs and services to avoid imitability. In order to accomplish the goal of establishing a sustained competitive advantage over other organizations in a similar organizational field, nonprofit social service organizations will have to engage in boundary spanning to respond proactively to the four primary reasons why organizations embark upon change. These reasons include, but are not limited to, a need to become more knowledgeable about marketplace trends, develop alternative business models, exceed the progress of competing agencies, and leverage limited resources within the community (Montuori, 2000).
Leaders play an influential role in managing change. Although the empirically-grounded literature does not extensively investigate the significance between leadership styles and behavior and organizational performance in the area of resource acquisition, the theoretical literature does imply that charismatic leaders who are able to intellectually stimulate, inspirationally motivate, and provide individual consideration for their followers generally achieve more favorable organizational outcomes during times of transformational change and economic uncertainty (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999). The theoretical literature further suggest that organizational leaders who embrace an adaptive style of leadership that promotes and maintains organizational learning and environmental adaptability are more likely to achieve positive organizational outcomes (Montuori, 2000; Pawar & Eastman, 1997). This claim in the theoretical literature is supported by findings from empirically-grounded research studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of adaptive leaders in helping to resolve stakeholder uncertainties and manage change initiative ambiguities (Giffords & Dina, 2003; Parry, 1999).

While organizational change is inevitable in a constantly shifting environment, resistance to change is also a natural occurrence during this process (Lines, 2004; Moxley & Manela, 2000). In order to minimize resistance and increase organizational commitment and identification, leaders should utilize communication strategies that engage individuals in the change process and create meaningful opportunities for leader member exchanges (Chreim, 2002; Trader-Leigh, 2002). Further, leaders should facilitate ongoing evaluations of the internal and external environment in order to develop appropriate change management messages and implementation plans (Moxley, 2000; Mulroy, 2004). Additionally, leaders should maintain a high level of behavioral integrity to ensure stakeholder trust and avoid resistance precipitated by
perceived inconsistencies in espoused leader values and behavior (Simons, 1999). Finally, leaders should skillfully negotiate the influential role they play in ensuring the success of change management processes, particularly those related to fundraising and achieving organizational sustainability (Eisenbach et al., 1999; Woodward & Hendry, 2004). In this regard, leaders must simultaneously help stakeholders engage in creative problem-solving and assist in creating a holistic and sustainable vision that is embraced throughout the agency and surrounding community (Glover, Friedman, & Jones, 2002).

**Summary**

In an effort to build knowledge in this specific area, theoretical concepts from the nonprofit management and social service literature were linked in this chapter to establish a foundation for building a grounded theory of shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit social service sector. This grounded theory will lead to model construction that identifies potential relationships between roles and responsibilities in fundraising and organizational sustainability. This model will be integral to helping nonprofit organizations achieve their mission and effectively address constraints within their external environments. The next chapter discusses the methodology for conducting research to build knowledge in the field.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the study to explore executive director and board chair perceptions about shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit social service sector. Three primary research questions were used to guide the study. First, how do board chairs and executive directors in the nonprofit social service sector perceive board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising? Second, how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to critical events experienced by the organization such as changes in funding, client demographics, and public policies? Third, how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to individual and organizational characteristics? This chapter provides an overview of the specific qualitative approach that serves as the primary means of exploring the research questions. It describes the research study’s epistemological framework, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis procedures, methods for increasing rigor and trustworthiness, and ethical considerations for the protection of human subjects.

Research Design

The research design for this study used a constructivist epistemological framework to explore the multiple realities that exist in the nonprofit social service sector concerning fundraising in turbulent environments. According to Guba (1990), a constructivist epistemological framework is essential in research studies that “seek to inquire into, portray and
interpret the realm of intersubjective meanings” (p. 264) within contexts. This constructivist epistemological framework was the foundation for a multiple case study research design utilizing grounded theory as the qualitative approach for answering the “how” questions of this study. A multiple case study design is appropriate when “investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life contexts” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The design allows the researcher to explore the “depth and richness” (Padgett, 1998, p. 30) of a particular phenomenon. When utilizing grounded theory as the qualitative approach and basis for the exploration, the researcher is able to apply a “nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

Grounded theory as the methodological approach for this study fits the epistemological stance and theoretical underpinning for the research because the nature of knowledge related to the core research topic can be effectively developed by reconstructing the subjective realities of individuals within organizations responding to various environmental events. In this regard, inquiry involving a constructivist epistemological stance should include methodology that occurs in natural contexts. These methods should be designed to “capture realities holistically, to discern meaning implicit in human activity, and to be congenial to the human-as-instrument” (Guba, 1990, p. 78). Data gathered in this study will contribute to the development of knowledge about how the nonprofit social service sector can utilize boards of directors and management staff to act upon their environments to leverage limited resources that sustain critical programs and services. This result is consistent with grounded theory methodology,
which is used in qualitative research designs to “offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12) for practitioners.

**Sampling Strategy**

The study included a non-probability, purposive sample involving nine nonprofit social service organizations serving children and families in Baltimore, Maryland. For the purpose of this research study, organizations were considered nonprofit, social service entities if they: 1) were tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and “organized and operated for purposes that were beneficial to the public interest” (Internal Revenue Service, 2015, p. 28); and 2) promoted the mission of the social work profession, as articulated in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers, by delivering programs designed to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (National Association of Social Workers, 2008, p. 1). The board chair and executive director of each organization were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews and represented a matched pair. If one agreed to be interviewed and the other did not, the agency was not included in the sample.

The sample size was selected in order to ensure the inclusion of nonprofit social service agencies that were representative of the population in terms of size and variation of funding sources including government contracts, foundation grants, corporate grants, individual donor contributions, events, fee-for-service contracts, investment income, and other revenue such as United Way or federated campaign contributions. Organizations for the sample population were identified using the public online membership database of the Maryland Association of
Nonprofit Organizations and public online database for Guidestar, an entity that collects, organizes, and disseminates information about nonprofits registered with the IRS as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. The mission of each organization in the sample varied, but all of the organizations offered mission-impact programs that ranged along a continuum from counseling, substance abuse treatment, and family self-sufficiency case management to afterschool enrichment for low-income youth and advocacy for victims of child sexual abuse. These organizations embodied the diversity of the nonprofit social service sector working to meet the needs of children and families. The organizations were grouped into three categories based on the size of their annual budget: 1) $250,000 to $500,000; 2) 500,001 to $1 million; and 3) over $1 million. Three organizations from each category were selected for the research sample.

Data Collection

Qualitative interviews were used as the primary means of data collection in this research study. According to Charmaz (2006), “qualitative interviewing provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight” (p. 29). Grounded theory approaches to interviewing expand upon this exploration by affording the researcher opportunities to systematically collect and analyze data throughout the interview process and begin formulating theories based on themes emerging from the data (Charmaz, 2006; Weiss, 1994).

The board chair and executive director from the nine nonprofit social service organizations in Baltimore, Maryland were invited to participate in the study by a formal letter (See Appendix A). Data were collected via 18 in-person interviews with the board chairs and executive directors. Board chairs and executive directors were interviewed separately. Each
interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and included a series of open-ended questions that explored board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising from the perspective of board chairs and executive directors. The interviews were conducted during a 12-month timeframe from 2011 to 2012.

The semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix B) utilized in this research study was developed based on the existing literature about challenges facing the nonprofit social service sector as a result of shifting environmental trends (Hodgkinson & Nelson, 2001; Montuori, 2000; Mulroy, 2004; Schmid, 2004), as well as prior theoretical and empirical research about the role of boards of directors within the nonprofit sector (Brown, 2005; Herman & Renz, 2000; Miller-Millesen, 2003). The initial interview format was reviewed by one expert rater in Washington, DC to establish face validity. In this regard, the expert rater provided a judgment about the extent to which research concepts were clearly measured by the interview questions. The semi-structured interview format was modified based on feedback from the expert rater. The researcher also conducted pilot interviews with one board chair and executive director matched pair from a local nonprofit social service agency to field test the interview format prior to conducting interviews with the sample organizations. The final interview guide included multiple sections to solicit feedback regarding the general information for each organization such as mission and largest programs, the perceived environment in which each organization was operating, board/staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising, and board/organizational fundraising structure. The researcher conducted the in person, audio-taped semi-structured interviews with board chairs and executive directors from the nine organizations.
A survey soliciting organizational demographic data were also used to collect basic information from each nonprofit social service agency included in the sample. The survey had five key areas: 1) General Information; 2) Chief Executive Characteristics; 3) Organizational Structure; 4) Board Structure and Composition; and 5) Document Request Checklist (See Appendix C). The survey was provided to executive directors immediately following each interview and returned to the researcher via a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The survey information was supplemented by public documents available online at the Guidestar website and each agency’s website. The researcher also maintained field notes in a journal that were recorded before and following each interview. The purpose of the field notes was to document observations from the field, such as participant behavior and neighborhood characteristics, which might not be captured in interviews or through the Organizational Demographic survey. Additionally, memo writing was used by the researcher to document the research process, including defining core concepts and themes.

**Data Analysis**

An external company transcribed the 18 semi-structured interviews to yield a set of raw data for analysis (See Appendix D). The researcher entered the transcribed data from each semi-structured interview into the qualitative software program ATLAS.ti 7.5, which was used to facilitate management and coding of the data. Using the grounded theory approach, the researcher analyzed transcriptions through constant comparative analysis of the raw data, which included three phases – open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding identified initial categories based on concepts from the interview data. During this phase of constant comparative analysis, the researcher organized data by
assigning narrative strands to general codes and categories. After completing this first phase of constant comparative analysis, the researcher used axial coding to group similar categories into constructs or emerging themes. During this second phase of data analysis, connections were made between the initial categories to begin exploring relationships among constructs or emerging themes. An inductive process of data analysis was utilized during axial coding until saturation occurred, meaning that no new themes emerged from the coding. The final phase of constant comparative analysis, selective coding, was employed to identify a core category emerging from the data. The researcher continued the process of exploring the interconnectedness of categories to build a grounded theory that addressed the three primary research questions.

In addition to constant comparative analysis, content analysis was used to examine agency documents collected from the nonprofit, social service organizations. The researcher reviewed organizational information from the sample such as bylaws, annual reports, board giving policies, and IRS 990 forms to code textual information and triangulate it with qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews.

**Rigor and Trustworthiness**

To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of findings, the researcher used *memoing* to document how codes were derived, defined, and modified throughout the study. Further, the researcher used *member checking* (Padgett, 1998) to review the progress of the data analysis with the respondent and solicit feedback via one telephone contact with the respondents within 30 days of completing each interview. Additionally, the researcher used *debriefing* sessions with her dissertation committee members to increase self-awareness and minimize the influence of
researcher biases. Finally, the researcher used *data and theory triangulation* to interpret the data. In this regard, multiple data sources such as interviews and organizational documents were used to corroborate emerging themes in the data. Resource dependence theory, which utilizes an open systems approach, was utilized as a framework for understanding perceptions about how nonprofit boards of directors and management staff develop and implement fundraising strategies that link their respective organizations to the external environment in order to leverage and maintain resources (Miller-Millesen, 2003; Miner, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Contingency theory, which postulates that strategies developed by organizations are contingent on the environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), was another framework the researcher used to examine perceptions about how boards of directors and management staff define and redefine roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Together, these theories were used to analyze the data and develop a theory grounded in the data about roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit, social service sector.

**Ethical Considerations**

There were four major ethical considerations involved in this research study: informed consent, voluntary participation, the privacy of agency information, and reflexivity. To address these considerations, the researcher provided a consent form for each agency and requested that executive directors and board chairs sign a copy of the form indicating their consent to participate prior to data collection (See Appendix E). The board chairs and executive directors were assigned an agency code prior to data collection. Prior to obtaining the signed consent forms, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the research study with each participant, explained that his/her participation was voluntary, and emphasized that agencies could withdraw at any
time for any reason without consequences. Once the executive directors and board chairs returned their consent forms to the researcher indicating their consent to voluntarily participate in the study, the researcher used several methods of ensuring privacy of agency information.

Confidentiality of agency information and data were maintained by adhering to a chain of custody for audio recordings, transcriptions, and backup devices (See Appendix F). In addition, confidentiality was protected by removing identifying information for study participants from interview transcriptions. Transcriptions from interviews, field notes, and organizational documents were maintained in a locked file cabinet and on a password protected computer in the investigator’s home office. Transcriptions, investigator’s notes, and audio recordings will be destroyed after five years of study completion.

Reflexivity was the final ethical consideration addressed in this study. As a macro-level social work practitioner involved in management and fundraising for nonprofit social service organizations, the researcher had prior professional experiences that required constant examination and scrutiny throughout the research process. Reflexive examination and scrutiny of the researcher’s potential biases were achieved by facilitating multiple conversations with the dissertation committee chair and using a journal prior to and during the data collection and analysis processes to document her own beliefs and ideas as a form of self-reflection. A more in-depth discussion of reflexivity is in the next chapter.

**Summary**

This chapter described the methodology for the current research study and included details about the design, sampling plan, data collection and analysis procedures, measures for enhancing rigor and trustworthiness, and an overview of ethical considerations. The following
chapter will present findings of this study and begin to establish the framework for a grounded theory of shared roles and responsibilities in fundraising within the nonprofit, social service sector.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

Board chairs and executive directors from nine nonprofit, social service agencies in Baltimore, Maryland provided a narrative of their perceptions about board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising to address the three research questions for this study: 1) how do board chairs and executive directors in the nonprofit, social service sector perceive board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising; 2) how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to critical events experienced by the organization such as changes in funding, client demographics, and public policies; and, 3) how do board chair and executive director perceptions of roles and responsibilities in fundraising vary according to individual and organizational characteristics?

The narrative is captured in this chapter as two primary sections. The first section of this chapter provides a summary of the descriptive findings to highlight organizational and individual characteristics for the sample agencies. The second section of the chapter offers the qualitative findings regarding board chair and executive director perceptions about: 1) critical events experienced by the organizations in the environments where they offer services, and 2) management and board roles in fundraising to sustain mission-impact programs and services during times of environmental change.

Descriptive Findings

General information about each agency included in the sample was gathered from executive directors using an Organizational Demographic Survey to develop a baseline understanding of characteristics that might cause variations in perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. The information included characteristics about the organization,
executive director, board chair, and board structure and composition. The following sections provide a summary of the data gathered.

**Organizational Characteristics**

All organizations included in the sample were 501(c)(3) nonprofits that promoted the mission of the social work profession, as articulated in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. The age of each organization in the sample varied with the majority, five out of nine, being founded before 1980. The remaining four were founded between 1980 and 2010. The primary service area for all organizations was the city of Baltimore. Two organizations provided services to surrounding areas, as well, including Anne Arundel, Prince George’s, Howard, Harford, Carroll, and Baltimore counties. The number of clients served annually for each organization ranged from 250 to over 8,000, which depended largely on the level of service provided along a spectrum from prevention to intensive intervention. Staff size for each organization varied with six organizations reporting fewer than 25 staff, two organizations reporting between 26 to 50 staff, and one organization reporting more than 50 staff. Similarly, the number of volunteers for each organization varied, with seven organizations reporting fewer than 25 volunteers and two organizations reporting more than 50 volunteers who served in their organizations during the prior fiscal year.

There were three organizations for each annual budget size category: 1) $250,000 to $500,000; 2) 500,001 to $1 million; and 3) over $1 million. The sources of revenue for all nine organizations included government contracts, foundation grants, corporate grants, individual donor contributions, events, and program fee-for-service contracts. Three organizations also reported revenue from investment income. Five of the organizations reported income from the
United Way. Additionally, one organization reported rental income as a source of revenue. When closely examining the percent of revenue from each major funding source, seven out of nine of the organizations received 50% or more of their annual budget revenue from government contracts. Only two organizations reported receiving a majority of their revenue from foundation grants, corporate grants, individual donor contributions, and events. Fundraising strategies employed by the organizations included mail solicitations, email solicitations, in-person solicitations, solicitation of non-government and government grants, and special events. With the exception of one organization, phone solicitations were not used as a fundraising strategy for obtaining income. These strategies were largely implemented by staff. Five of the organizations reported having dedicated fundraising staff positions. Only two of the five organizations had two or more dedicated fundraising staff positions responsible for donor relations, events, grant writing, and annual fund campaigns.

**Executive Director Characteristics**

The executive leadership for organizations in the sample appeared relatively diverse by gender, race/ethnicity, age, length of service with their respective organizations, highest level of educational attainment, experience as a nonprofit chief executive prior to current position, and annual salary. Overwhelmingly, executive directors in the sample were female – six out of nine. More than half were also African American (N=5), and the remaining were White (N=4). Two executive directors were under 40 years of age, six were between 41 to 59 years of age, and one was over 60 years of age. With regard to highest level of education, one executive director had a bachelor’s degree, three had a Master of Social Work degree, three had a Master’s degree outside of social work, and two had Doctor of Social Work degrees.
Eight executive directors reported that their length of service with the organization was more than five years, and one reported being with the organization for less than three years. The majority of executive directors – seven out of nine – had less than five years of experience as a nonprofit chief executive prior to their current position. Two of the executive directors had more than 10 prior years of experience as a nonprofit chief executive. The annual salary for five of the executive directors was less than $100,000, and four were paid between $100,000 and $150,000. According to the bylaws of each organization and information from the survey, none of the executive directors had voting member status on their board of directors.

**Board Chair Characteristics**

The board chairs exhibited the most significant diversity in the areas of gender and race/ethnicity. Two board chairs were White males, two were Black or African American males, three were White females, and two were Black or African American females. In contrast, the board chairs were a homogenous group by age with nine out of nine between 41 to 59 years old. The vast majority were highly educated with one board chair having a doctorate degree, three having a Juris Doctorate degree, two having a Master’s degree, two having a Bachelor’s degree, and one having an Associate’s degree. One board chair had a high school diploma as the highest level of educational attainment. The majority of board chairs – seven out of nine – had served their organization for more than five years. The length of service for one of the remaining board chairs was three to five years, and less than three years for the final board chair.

**Board Structure and Composition**

In this sample, board structure and composition varied considerably when examining the number of voting board members, number of board meetings each year, number of standing
committees, names of standing committees, in addition to gender, race/ethnicity, age, and sector representation for board members. With regard to the number of voting board members, the majority of organizations - five out of nine - had fewer than 10 board members. One organization had between 11 and 20 board members. The remaining three organizations had more than 20 board members. Data gathered regarding the number of board meetings each year revealed that the organizations, overwhelmingly, held four or fewer board meetings per year. Specifically, three held one to two board meetings per year, and six held three to four board meetings per year. None of the organizations reported having more than four board meetings per year.

The majority of organizations were homogenous when examining other aspects of board structure including number and names of standing committees. For example, five out of nine organizations had one to two standing committees. Two organizations had three to four standing committees, and two organizations had more than four standing committees. All organizations reported having an Executive Committee and Finance Committee for their board of directors. Another standing committee reported by three organizations was a Fundraising Committee. One organization also reported having an Investment Committee. In addition to these board structure variables, the organizations were surveyed about board member terms and term limits. However, survey responses were missing for three organizations on these two items and, therefore, data have been omitted for the entire sample.

The final area of board composition focused on gender, race/ethnicity, age, and sector representation. The boards appeared to be relatively equal with men and women representing 51% and 49% of all board members, respectively. However, women were in the majority of
total board members in five out of nine organizations. The overwhelming majority of board members were between the ages of 41 to 59 for all nine organizations. Only three organizations reported having any board members under the age of 40. Five out of nine organizations had one or more board members over the age of 60. Sector representation was extremely diverse across organizations with regard to the number of board members from the for-profit, nonprofit, and government fields, as well as those who were retired, community volunteers, or self-employed. However, in six out of nine organizations, individuals from the for-profit sector represented approximately 50% or more of the total board members. For one of these organizations, in particular, community volunteers were the second largest group representing approximately 35% of the total board members.

**Qualitative Findings - Main Themes**

Constructivist grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2006), views data and analysis as “social constructions” that are “contextually situated in time, place, culture, and situation” (p.131). A constructivist grounded theory approach was utilized throughout this study to guide data analysis and develop the major themes described in this chapter. Through the process of constant comparative analysis, a hallmark of the grounded theory approach, initial concepts from the research data were first identified and subsequently reorganized into key categories that ultimately resulted in three emerging themes. The themes reflect the overall perceptions of board chairs and executive directors about board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

The first theme, *Organization-In-Environment*, describes the critical events external to nonprofit, social service organizations that influenced board chair and executive director
perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. These events included funding changes, public and social policy changes, and client demographic changes. The second theme, *Perceived Role of Management in Fundraising*, describes three key roles and their corresponding responsibilities that are integral to the success of nonprofit, social service organizations. These roles included two boundary-spanning activities – buffering and bridging. In addition, leadership was identified as a key role of management staff when pursuing resources available to sustain mission-impact programs and services. The third theme, *Perceived Role of Boards of Directors in Fundraising*, describes two boundary-spanning activities - buffering and bridging – that can be viewed as complementary to the boundary-spanning activities of management staff. Although boundary-spanning emerged as a perceived role in fundraising for boards of directors and management staff, the specific responsibilities articulated by research participants were distinct but interrelated.

**Organization-In-Environment**

**Introduction.** From an open systems perspective, organizations are viewed as systems of interdependent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants. As systems, organizations are embedded within large environments that shape, support, and penetrate their boundaries. The degree to which organizations are able to survive and remain viable depends significantly on environmental influences. For the nonprofit, social service organizations included in the sample, environmental influences included funding changes, public and social policy changes, and client demographic changes. These influences are illustrated in Figure 3.
The next sections tell the story, from the perspective of board chairs and executive directors, about major shifts and critical events experienced by the nonprofit, social service agencies in the environments where they offered services. These shifts and events influenced each agency’s ability to deliver services to vulnerable individuals, families, and communities.

**Funding changes.** One of the primary environmental shifts or critical events experienced by nonprofit, social services agencies in the sample was a change in funding. There were several different ways the participants discussed this change with an emphasis on a loss of funding from traditional entities such as United Way and the government. Nonprofit board chairs and executive directors from five out of nine sample agencies indicated that a loss of funding from the local United Way was the most critical event to happen in their external environment within the last three years. The executive director from Agency C indicated that the loss of funding was not targeted to one group of agencies, “it was across the board.” Although the loss of funding varied from $15,000 to over $1,000,000, all participants indicated that the loss had a similar impact on their agency – an overall reduction in staff, programs, and
organizational resources. When describing the loss, the executive director from Agency A stated, “We have seen, over the last number of years, an enormous erosion of United Way funding, both for the general community and specifically for us. That’s been very difficult and it led to a lot of staff and program cutbacks.”

According to the board chairs and executive directors, the loss of funding from their local United Way was a major shift in how the funder previously operated. In addition to reducing funding, the United Way changed its funding priorities, decision-making structure, and competitive application process. The board chair from Agency A elaborated on the desired goal of the United Way stating:

Rather than be the catch-all agency, our United Way is now trying to focus its giving more. Now it picks areas of need and funds those. If you fall into their designated areas of need, that’s great. If we have a program that’s outside that area of need…it’s no longer eligible.

This shift in how the United Way conducts business was not fully anticipated by all funded agencies. The shift that seemed to come suddenly, according to reflections by the board chairs and executive directors, forcing the agencies to make difficult decisions about how they could best respond in a moment of crisis. One executive director from Agency B recounted how the change impacted his agency stating:

We had been funded about $150,000 annually by United Way, and then United Way announced that they would be withholding 10% of our funds…not just from us, but from everybody. So we had lost money that had been budgeted to us, and they had also pulled
back the RFP that they put out, which would have provided us with another $150,000 in funding.

United Way represented an important source of funding for most agencies in the sample. However, this source of funding complemented government funding to nonprofit social service agencies, which was also reduced during the same period. These two sources of funding totaled over 50% of most agency budgets, according to quantitative data gathered from IRS 990 forms and the organizational demographic surveys.

In addition to the environmental shift resulting in a loss of United Way funding, the executive director from Agency D stated that “the biggest shift was the decreased government dollars. And it was quite significant.” “The federal government cut back a lot so therefore the states cut back and a lot of cities cut back,” according to the board chair from Agency E. When describing how significant the environmental shift was for her agency, the executive director from Agency D shared:

The cumulative amount [of the loss] was about $800,000. Not from one source, but several sources including local dollars. Then the state grants were cut by a percentage. That was the biggest change…the government just really retrenching. The dollars they had on the street out to bid, they didn’t renew or they decreased the amount quite a bit.

Expanding upon the significance of this loss of government funding, the board chair from Agency E indicated that the loss for her organization was “about $75,000” which represented 15% of the annual budget that was less than $500,000 prior to the decrease. For one agency, the loss in government funding over time was even more drastic. In this regard, the executive director from Agency C stated, “100% of the funding here came from grants. Within the last
year, 66% of those grants were cut. By August, 100% [of the grants] were cut,” and the new model of funding was fee-for-service only. These decreases in funding were devastating to the nonprofit social service agencies, as described in multiple interviews with board chairs and executive directors. “Trying to continue to do the same thing we’ve done with less money,” according to the executive director from Agency F, created managerial dilemmas for the nonprofit social service leaders that could not be resolved quickly. These dilemmas increased in depth and scope as the leaders recognized that community needs were growing beyond their organization’s control and financial capacity.

When discussing the board chair and executive director perceptions about what precipitated losses in funding for nonprofit social service agencies in Baltimore, the perceptions were consistent – it was largely the economy. The board chair from Agency G explained, “I would say that the changes have been really tied to the economic situation…which is pretty much all over America right now.” As a result of the economy and decreased funding, the board chair stated, “we found out that we have more needs than we have funds to actually help… We can’t do everything for everybody, and whatever we do, we want to do it well, yet sometimes we are [under-resourced].”

The board chairs and executive directors expressed that their funding limitations resulting from the economy were not simply felt with large institutional funders such as the United Way and government sector, but also with other stakeholders such as churches and corporations. According to the board chair from Agency E, the impact of losing even smaller amounts of funding created uncertainty around program sustainability. This board chair stated:
One of our biggest churches who would donate a couple thousand dollars, but they’ve pulled back because they’ve been hit. Their parishioners aren’t giving as much. This year, we’ll have to either dig deeper into our own pockets or find another major sponsor for certain program activities.

The economic environment that was directly impacting the nonprofit social service agencies was also affecting them indirectly through their stakeholders’ shared experiences. The board chair from Agency A stated, “Baltimore used to have a lot of companies that were headquartered in the city. That’s gone away….I think [remaining] corporate foundations are getting more and more requests, so they’re more particular about where they give.” The board chair further explained:

I think a couple of years ago, when the economy first got bad, people really felt like they could see people struggling and they wanted to step up. I think it’s going to get harder and I think it is getting harder now because as things stay down for a while, more and more people are affected, even people that are making good salaries might not have received raises. Other expenses have gone up…and people feel they have as much disposable income as they used to. I think if the economy continues to be down, we’re going to start seeing more of a serious problem.

The problem referenced by this board chair seemed to be linked not only to funding, but also to public and social policy changes that impacted resource availability.

**Public and social policy changes.** There were a number of public and social policy changes that impacted the nonprofit social service agencies in the sample. These changes ranged from Medicaid expansion to regulations regarding permissible funded grant activities. All of the
changes reported by board chairs and executive directors seemed to have a detrimental impact on funding availability to sustain programs and services. These changes are highlighted in this section and focus on rules and regulations.

A prevalent theme that emerged in the interviews was the perception by executive directors that the rules of funding institutions and key decision-making stakeholders changed frequently creating a sense of uncertainty and financial vulnerability for nonprofit agencies. Reflecting on this perceived trend, the executive director from Agency I noted:

You have changes in the federal level about how they will allow funding to be used. Then you have the state that constantly changes the rules on everything from the requirements for administering programs to how programs are funded. With those rule changes happening all of the time, it’s very hard for smaller to medium sized non-profits to create stability because you’re always trying to keep up with this changing tide.

One legislative policy change that seemed to have impacted four of the nine agencies was Medicaid expansion in the state of Maryland. This legislative shift created a new framework for how funding would be awarded and distributed to agencies delivering services. The shift also precipitated a change in how the agencies receiving funding would have to conduct business. The executive director from Agency C described Medicaid expansion as “the biggest legislative shift” impacting Baltimore nonprofits within the last three years. When describing the shift, she stated:

January 1, 2010 marked the beginning of the expansion of Medicaid, and this Medicaid expansion really reduces grant funding because the money they use for the Medicaid expansion was money that was taken from grants. It increased our ability to bill for
services now. This organization and 40% of the other organizations in the city had never billed before. It is a whole new business model. Now you are no longer able to do what you’ve done before because the rules don’t apply the same anymore. We have to rethink and reconstruct our entire mindset.

The executive director from Agency E also commented on how Medicaid expansion impacted her agency that had been 100% grant funded since its inception. With the expansion of Medicaid, her agency lost almost 50% of its funding and were required to begin billing for services. Regarding this change, she stated:

About two years ago, [the funders] let us know that we would be moving from a cost reimbursement to a fee-for-service business model. We now bill Medicaid for services. We bill for all of our young people who have insurance. Those who do not have insurance are then on our Block Grant. It sounds easy, but it's actually extremely complicated because we are still held to the same benchmarks, the same criteria that we have always had in order to maintain our grant funding. But just by definition, anybody who has insurance cannot be on our Block Grant or is not considered a part of our Block Grant.

According to the executive director from Agency E, this contradiction in standards had the potential to reduce funding for the agency if the fee-for-service reimbursement model was unequal to grant funding in terms of compensation for delivering services. With an annual operating budget of under $500,000, the effects of continued decreases in funding could result in this agency going out of business.
Another major shift highlighted in the interviews was a change in regulations regarding foster care. The executive director from Agency A described this shift stating, “Maryland has shifted or adopted in its services to children ‘place matters’ as their approach or philosophical underpinning for their approach to foster care.” He further described the shift and its impact on his agency by stating:

We have a treatment foster care program that over the last three years has seen the census drop from 65 to 12 [due to kinship care]. The [children in our program are] easier to place in kinship, especially when they’re infants. We’ve done our job and we’ve gotten kids out of care. They haven’t been replaced and that has had a profound budget effect.

Another major shift that impacted several agencies largely dependent on government funding was a rule change regarding allowable agency activities. Three of the executive directors and one board chair expressed that their agencies were not allowed to engage in “fundraising” activities because the governmental institution providing funding to them said that they “could not do it.” According to the board chair from Agency E, “We are funded by [government entity], and they would not allow us to do any fundraising. But now, they’re cutting back.” The reductions in funding were precipitated by the legislative shift around Medicaid expansion and resulted in modified expectations for grantees. Prior to the reductions in funding, however, three executive directors were adamant in interviews about not having the ability to fundraise. As stated by the executive director from Agency F, “We can’t fundraise. That’s the bottom line.” When asked to elaborate on her perception about not having the ability to fundraise, the executive director from Agency F stated:
We need to do fundraising, but you can’t fundraise on work time… I just sent my Board some information on fundraising and we are in discussion on how the Board can respond as far as doing fundraising. Currently, our Board does not do any fundraising. They have purely just been there for oversight and volunteers. Now, they are looking at how they can step up and maybe do some fundraising. We’ve had a golf tournament in the past, but it is so, so time consuming. So we don’t do any fundraising. None.

The executive director from Agency E also elaborated on her perception stating:
It was my understanding when I came on board that [our primary grantor] stated, if we give you $100,000 to run your agency and you determine that you're able to raise $25,000, then we don't need to give you $100,000. We can give you $75,000 because now you still have $100,000 and that's $25,000 we can reallocate somewhere else because you're able to raise that.

Due to the legislative shift and corresponding changes in expectations from their major funder, the board chair from Agency E expressed, “we are losing some of our funding.” She continued, “because of the fact that they have changed they are allowing us to [fundraise], and we’ve been getting better educated.” The executive director from Agency C appeared skeptical about her agency’s ability to effectively engage in fundraising in response to the new demands. She stated, “Fundraising as a concept may have to be semantically operationalized differently and until it is, I don’t think we’re going to be able to move toward the real future. You know?”

**Client demographic changes.** A third environmental shift that impacted the nonprofit social service agencies in the sample was client demographic changes. There were several ways that board chairs and executive directors discussed changes in client demographics ranging from
an increase in the number served to a shift in who they were serving. The board chair from Agency A stated, “because other organizations have either gone out of business or changed what they do, that has affected our clients.” When other organizations were unable to survive in response to environmental shifts and losses of funding, she continued, “We took a big influx of clients.” The executive director from Agency G elaborated on the rise in demand for services stating, “We’ve seen an increase of Hispanic families coming to us for services. We’ve seen an increase in men who are, you know, responsible for their children, coming to us needing services. So that’s a change in demographics.” The executive director from Agency F indicated that their program census increased based on the changing needs of those they serve. She stated, “I hate to say this. We’ve seen an increase in the, in the young people using drugs. When I say drugs, I’m speaking other than marijuana. And the gang involvement. Oh, that has been heartbreaking.” The increased demand for services required agencies to reconsider their framework for programs. Overwhelmingly, the executive directors articulated a need to broadly look at how to deliver programs differently, as well as a need to more specifically take into consideration new clients being served.

In addition to experiencing an increase in the number of individuals served, board chairs and executive directors highlighted client demographic changes with regard to those they serve. The board chair from Agency F stated, “We’ve traditionally served a group of young people who were lost in the eyes of many. They weren’t succeeding in school and failing miserably in the community. Now, we’re seeing more young people who are on the margin.” The executive director from Agency D discussed the “new” client group they were serving stating:
…there have been people who were holding on, never thought they’d have trouble with their kids, never thought anything would happen, and they have now seen themselves in a different situation. The stress has really made it more difficult for them and then if they had any kind of negative experience in addition to losing jobs, losing housing…that’s been a large number of people who are new to really managing it all.

The board chair from Agency G expressed a similar observation regarding this change in clientele. He shared:

In the past year, we’ve noticed that people outside the city - our primary service area - have been asking for assistance where before they did not because they were able to supply their needs. Because of the economic situation, our clientele has changed. There are people who are actually working and making what before was a good living for them, but now they cannot really keep up and find that they need to take advantage of programs we offer.

Changes in the environment external to the nonprofit social service organizations precipitated changes in perceptions about the role of management and boards of directors in fundraising to sustain and grow services. These perceptions are discussed in the next two sections.

**Perceived Role of Management in Fundraising**

**Introduction.** Only two out of nine agencies in the sample reported having more than two individual staff positions dedicated full-time to a development role, which placed a great deal of fundraising responsibility on the executive director. These responsibilities converged under two boundary-spanning strategies, buffering and bridging. A detailed account of board
chair and executive director perceptions regarding the role of management in fundraising with emphasis on buffering and bridging tactics, in particular, is offered in the following sections.

The role of leadership will also be discussed. These three aspects of the management staff’s role in fundraising are captured in Figure 4: Perceived Role of Management in Fundraising.

**Figure 4: Perceived Role of Management in Fundraising**

- **Buffering**
  - Forecasting
  - Adjusting Scale
  - Leveling

- **Bridging**
  - Contracting
  - Conformity
  - Co-optation

- **Leadership**
  - Inspirational Motivation
  - Idealized Influence
  - Individual Consideration

*Figure 4.* The external environment of the organization is filled with actors who influence key opportunities and threats. Management staff link their organizations to the environment by engaging in boundary-spanning activities focused on buffering and bridging. They also provide leadership to influence fundraising outcomes.

**Buffering.** Buffering is a strategy used to protect the core of an organization (Scott, 2003). In the case of nonprofit social service organizations, the mission and programs represent the core. Throughout the interviews, in countless ways, the board chairs and executive directors
underscored the role and importance of management in fundraising. When asked about the role
of the executive director in fundraising, the board chair from Agency C best captured the
perception of a majority of those interviewed stating, “What does the executive director do?
Leads the organization.” In addition to being responsible for overall administration of agency
operations in support of sustained funding from key stakeholders, the board chair from Agency C
further stated that executive directors in nonprofit social service agencies “guide the whole
process.” One critical aspect of guiding the process, as articulated by those interviewed,
included implementing buffering tactics that were designed to protect the technical core of each
agency. Buffering tactics that appeared to have significant importance for the management role
in fundraising were forecasting, adjusting to scale, and leveling.

**Forecasting.** Environments where nonprofit social service agencies delivered their
mission-impact programs were constantly changing to present opportunities and challenges, as
well as demands and constraints. The changes created modified resource dependencies for the
nonprofit social service agencies that had to be anticipated, identified, and managed as part of the
management staff’s role in fundraising. Anticipating, identifying, and managing changes were
routine aspects of forecasting (Scott, 2003). Organizations that were able to manage the
changes, as well as stakeholder demands and expectations that came with those changes,
experienced greater success with leveraging resources necessary for survival.

According to the board chair from Agency E, executive directors play a key fundraising
role in forecasting by “definitely looking at grants and keeping aware” of emerging trends with
institutional donors. One of the emerging trends was a mandate by funders for organizations to
have a strategic plan that links community needs to services provided by the respective agencies
with an ultimate goal of offering a rationale for funding requests. Only two of the nonprofit social service agencies in the sample had current strategic plans. Recognizing the limitations of her agency to financially support the development of a strategic plan, the executive director from Agency G provided an example of how her ability to engage in forecasting resulted in a major grant award that helped buffer the organization from potential losses in funding. She stated, “I saw an RFP that would help us build the infrastructure for our organization, I applied [for the grant specified], and we received it.”

The executive director from Agency G further explained:

This past summer, through that grant, we were able to receive training for the board of directors to begin developing a strategic plan. As a result of the training that the board of directors and the staff went through, we were able to develop our one to three year strategic plan. We are still continuing with that grant and working with another technical advisor who is helping us develop our logic model, outcome measurements, and even identify a data collection system that would better meet the needs of our agency. I’m excited about that because grants are asking for more information of that nature.

Based on the ongoing results of forecasting, two things emerged as important outcomes of implementing this buffering tactic, as articulated by board chairs and executive directors: visioning and planning.

Visioning, within the context of fundraising, was a process of seeing, imagining, and conceptualizing a picture of the organization’s future according to changes within the environment (Novom, 2007). Board chairs and executive directors indicated that effective visioning enables an organization to engage in planning around short and long-term fundraising
goals that impact sustainability. Overwhelmingly, board chairs expressed that the primary responsibility for visioning is part of the executive director’s fundraising role. According to the board chair from Agency D:

Our executive director is very connected in the community. She is also keenly aware of what’s happening in our organization at all times and how changes in the community will impact the work we do. There have been a number of changes in the community that were huge for us, but she helped lead us in the right direction as an agency by pointing to a place on the horizon and saying that is where we should be in the next five years. That was important given the size of our board and varied levels of experience among members.

When speaking of the role of his agency’s executive director in visioning, the board chair from Agency H stated:

She knows what she is doing, and she knows why she is doing it. She is collaborative and helps to bring people along. She is a person of vision and she knows how to bring the board along with that vision in such a way that she is not dictating the long-range plan or the goals but certainly the long-range plans and goals are largely informed by her experience, her knowledge, and her vision. She’s really the heart and the head of the organization and has the complete confidence of the board of directors.

One way that executive directors gained confidence from their boards to take on leadership in visioning was to involve board members in the process. The board chair from Agency F shared about his organization’s executive director, “She is good at providing information, seeking feedback, and mapping trends to create a shared vision of what we should
be doing. I don’t take that responsibility for granted. It is hard and time-consuming work that requires skill and aptitude.” The board chair from Agency I expressed a similar thought stating, “When this organization was started years ago, our vision was simply to offer family-centered programs that met the needs of disenfranchised parents and children. We have to take so much more into consideration now when it comes to that original vision.” He further stated, “Our executive director is ahead of the curve in that regard. He is on it, and people respect and follow him. That’s how we have grown and survived in the midst of challenges.”

In a recurring fashion, board chairs not only talked about their perceptions regarding the executive director’s role in visioning, but they also expressed an expectation that the executive director would understand this as part of their role. The board chair from Agency C indicated:

The executive director is supposed to provide the vision. The job of the executive director, as far as fundraising for the Board’s sake, is to give a very clear depiction of what that vision is going to be with all possible outlooks. If she can see three years from now we're going to build a new building and this is coming down the pike and could be a reality for us, she should give us as clear a picture as she can because it's almost like thinking of a submarine. The periscope? Only one part can see outside, so she has to give us as clear a picture as possible so we'll know what to do down here. And that's pretty much her role. The executive director is the eyes and ears of the organization. He or she is always mostly entrenched in everything that's happening in the community - the immediate community and the broader community. So she needs to tell us what to do.

Building on the previous thought, the board chair from Agency I stated that board members are “too busy to get into the weeds and define vision or strategy. We would be all over
the place. I just think that is the job of the Executive Director when it comes to fundraising.” He elaborated further stating, “He is working closely with things including programs, budgets, funders, and policy makers. He has a good feeling of where we should go based on feedback from lots of folks, and we need to embrace guidance from him.” The executive director from Agency B clearly understood the role of visioning and accepted it as his responsibility stating, “I have to see the forest through the trees, and I have to figure out what the big picture is and how we are going to raise money for it.” When forecasting, visioning played a key role in buffering the organization from environmental changes. As a complement to visioning, planning was also identified as another important fundraising role of management.

Board chairs and executive directors indicated that management played a leadership role in planning, which was largely informed by their leadership role in visioning. Planning, as a supplement to visioning, helped them outline the goals, objectives, strategies, and desired outcomes to help their organizations garner and sustain funding support from environments. The board planned with the executive director and management, but the executive director largely took the lead, according to feedback during interviews. This perception was emphasized by the executive director from Agency D who stated:

We really work as a team because we have such a large board. What we do, what I do, is set the plan for the year, but it’s really based on everybody’s feedback. We put it together, and we lay it out. It’s a lot of work to do that. We do have a director of development and two other full-time staff in development. Each one of us has a certain role that we have to play every day. So, we really set up the plan and it’s [very] detailed.
Like every “ask” you have to make and to whom; if you don’t get that, what do you have to get instead. I mean down to the nickel.

The executive director shared that comprehensive plans similar to the one developed by her agency can be overwhelming for board members who do not understand the full scope of changes in the environment, day-to-day agency operations, and resources necessary to manage programs. As a result, she indicated that their 20-page fundraising plan is an internal document for staff that is condensed to a two-page document for their board of directors. According to the executive director from Agency D, when speaking of the 20-page document, “We don’t give them that. We’ll review that with the board president and development chair so they understand the greater depth of it. And then at each meeting, we’ll take different chunks of it, rather than overwhelming people.”

In the absence of having a detailed plan, which was the case for seven out of nine agencies, board chairs remained consistent in their perceptions about the role of management in planning. The board chair from Agency F stated, “Aside from our annual budget, we don’t have a fundraising plan. We haven’t needed one. More than 75% of our funding is government sources.” When reflecting on the changes impacting his agency, he continued and stated, “We need to develop a plan now given recent cuts in funding. I would think the Executive Director should do it with feedback from staff, board, and community representatives.” The board chair from Agency C also perceived the executive director as crucial to the planning process. Speaking of the executive director’s role in planning and managing environmental demands, she stated, “You tell us what that means for our organization as far as the day-to-day operations and what you're seeing with our clients or programming and what you're hearing from your
colleagues and different programs.” The board chair from Agency C further indicated an expectation that the executive director, through the visioning and planning processes, would describe, “What is it going to look like for us in five years? What do you think could happen? Give us an idea so that we can start planning with you.”

The executive director from Agency B expressed some limitations in his ability to assume a leadership role in planning. He stated, “We need to do a retreat to sort of talk about some of these things.” Lamenting over the challenges, he continued, “They know they need to help support me. They know it can’t just be me raising money. They have to do this. But they want to know how to do it. That will be one of the retreat topics.” He also expressed a desire to engage board members in the planning process for maximum buy-in and long-term success. Thwarting his efforts were limitations around time. As stated by the executive director from Agency B:

It hasn’t evolved to the point where I actually have time to sit down with every board member on a regular basis, and I need to. I’m still putting out fires here. I’m still dealing with a lot of the day-to-day [nonsense]. I should be meeting with the board members, but I’m spending too much time on the 20% and not enough on the 80%.

The executive director from Agency I expressed a similar managerial challenge related to time and leadership in planning. He stated, “I always knew that you needed to have a plan for funding and getting funding. But I was also, from a business standpoint, I was in reality recognizing what I would need to make that happen.” He continued stating:

There’s an old adage that’s not completely true but has a lot of truth to it - it takes money to make money. So you cannot, unless you can somehow foster the ability within
yourself and within your small circle to divest from all of the intense work that you have
to do for building infrastructure, providing quality services, and just keeping your
funding alive so that everybody has a paycheck, most of the time you’re working already
day and night so that you don’t have time to focus on anything else. I always recognized
[the need for a plan]. Now, there are certain significant events that have, you know,
reinforced it even more to me why it is necessary.

Length of service for the executive director appeared to serve as a factor in management
taking leadership in the planning process. According to the board chair from Agency E:

The last executive director, she was going out as I was coming in, but she was very
hands-on so the board didn’t have a whole lot to do. The new executive director, even
though she’s been there for six years, is much more involved and wants us to be more
involved. Now that she feels a little bit more comfortable that it’s her organization now,
we’ve decided to step things up a little bit.

As a way of supporting the executive director in planning and looking at how to best
leverage the board of directors to acquire financial resources from the environment, the board
chair from Agency E continued, “The board has been traditionally an advisory board, so we’re
getting ready to look at the structure and see if that’s the type of board we really need to be or
what type of board should we be.” In order to thoughtfully reflect on these questions, she
concluded by stating, “We will be doing some strategic planning.” The board chair from Agency
A shared that her organization was also taking a similar path to determine how they could
support the executive director in planning for the future. Referencing their upcoming planning
retreat to discuss funding as a key consideration, she stated, “At the end of it, you know, we hope
we’ll have a more focused road map. It’ll be exactly how we want to approach this challenging environment.”

Adjusting scale. Another buffering tactic used by management in response to environmental changes was adjusting scale. This tactic involved finding the fit between available resources from the environment and programs that were delivered by agencies in their communities (Scott, 2003). With continued decreases in funding and shifting priorities, board chairs and executive directors indicated that the main way for them to adjust scale and ensure organizational sustainability was retrenchment in programs and staff. The executive director from Agency F stated:

We’ve had to discontinue some of the activities we were able to provide for the kids such as cultural events and trips. We can’t do that anymore because we have no funds for transportation. We used to maintain food here so when the children came in hungry, we were able to feed them. We can’t do that any longer. We don’t pay our counselors for transportation any longer. We’re bare bones.

The executive director from Agency D also offered an example of how she implemented this buffering tactic in response to decreased funding from the environment. She stated, “Well, a lot of programs went. We had a family preservation program, which probably accounted for the largest dollar for dollar [investment], and I guess that average grant was maybe $200,000 or $300,000.” The executive director made a strategic choice to scale back the program in a manner that was consistent with funding trends. The executive director from Agency B shared a similar example regarding retrenchment as a way of adjusting scale for his organization. He stated, “Recognizing we were losing $150,000 annually caused us to restructure. We let go of
some staff. We put prevention on the back burner and had to figure out how we could be more cost effective, leaner, and meaner.” One area of focus for staff restructuring involved their contractual interviewers. According to the executive director from Agency B:

Our interviewers were contractual and they had been with us a long time. We paid them on a per interview basis, which was a money-losing proposition for this agency. We shifted from contractual to full-time staff interviewers who would then: one, be able to be granted funded; and two, it wasn’t dependent on the number of interviews but the hours that they worked. Now, we were able to do more interviews. Our cost per interview ratio went down significantly. And three, they would be able to be on call so we could expand to overnight programs, which allowed us to then avail ourselves to grants that would fund the program. The program became as close to self-sustaining as it could be.

Adjusting scale required effective integration of business practices that were transferrable to the nonprofit social service sector. These practices included conducting environmental scans to determine the best fit between environmental resources and agency programs, as well as the use of growth and retrenchment strategies built upon sound business planning (Golensky, 2011). Integration of these business practices created a managerial challenge in some organizations, as expressed by the executive director from Agency E who stated:

I have to work from the point of view, just with profit and losses, I only can pay out what I can bring in. It’s a business. I’m on my counselors. I’m trying to help them or get them to understand the importance of continuing to give quality treatment, however, there is a dollar attached to it. I need them to make sure they see a certain amount of kids per week, per day, per hour. It has been broken down into literally how many kids each
counselor needs to see in order to ideally sustain his or her salary. That's never been the case before.

The executive director from Agency E also indicated that managing her agency in such a manner was “pretty frightening.” She expounded upon this feeling by stating, “If you're not careful, it really will take you away from the purpose of really why we're here. That, in and of itself, has been a challenge. I'd say that it's something that we're still really working on.” In spite of experiencing similar challenges, another executive director expressed optimism following a decrease in funding, staff restructuring, and having to take a closer look at profits and losses. The executive director from Agency G stated, “I’m responsible for the day-to-day operations; responsible for identifying new or additional funding; responsible for just developing programs that respond to the needs of families in general.” Despite the fact that her organization lost a major grant in the previous fiscal year, she stated, “I’m looking at new funding and I now have some of the freedom to do that. That’s really going to support what our, you know, what our vision is for this organization.”

**Leveling.** Competition within the environment where nonprofit social service agencies operated was increasingly a shift that had to be managed primarily by executive directors. Competition from new and existing organizations had the potential to lead to decreased funding and support from institutions that held critical resources. As a buffering tactic, board chairs and executive directors stated that serving as ambassadors and engaging in social networking were instrumental roles that helped to increase awareness about their agencies and sustain interest among stakeholders in offering support. When speaking of the executive director’s role in achieving these outcomes, board chairs and executive directors described what is defined in the
resource dependence literature as leveling. This concepts points directly to “attempts by an organization to reduce fluctuations in its inputs and outputs” such as funds, people, and services (Scott, 2003). The executive director from Agency C stated, “When I first got here I ran around and I met with anybody I thought had resources to offer.” The executive director from Agency B stated, he had been “doing a great deal of outreach, just getting the name out there. It’s being chief spokesperson and cheerleader and coming up with what the public relations moments can be to get the Center noticed on the map.” He further stated:

I’m not afraid to go introduce myself to people and set up meetings. One of my roles is…to meet as many people so that we expand our network and our base, so that people know who [the agency] is, know that there is a need in this community, and know that we need to be funded.

The board chair from Agency H elaborated on the role of the executive director in leveling efforts stating:

Anybody who is the executive director or president of an organization needs to know how you meet people, how you thank people, and encourage generosity. I would not say that she is the chief fundraiser in the sense that University presidents have to be the chief fundraiser, even with their extensive development departments, but I would say that she is a very good person to send and it is her work that makes the organization so excellent, that makes people want to give too. So her role is crucial.

With leveling efforts, the desired goals articulated by executive directors were increased awareness and relationship building, both of which were viewed as factors in resource distribution decision-making among stakeholders. The executive director from Agency H stated,
“I certainly do ask people to give money, but a lot of my fundraising is really the connections and the relationships with people.” A similar perception was articulated by the executive director from Agency B who stated, “So, yeah, it’s having coffee and meetings with people so they know what’s going on. You’re not just talking to them one time a year asking for money, but it’s a relationship. It’s all about the relationship.” Various tools were developed by management staff to support the goal of increased awareness and relationship building. “Our development director writes a newsletter” that is distributed to funders and stakeholders, according to the executive director from Agency H. She and the director of development also “together work on a lot of the brochures and publicity pieces but the website is a major tool.” The executive director from Agency G indicated that in order to buffer the organization from continued losses in funding and level the playing field for her smaller nonprofit social service agency, she focused a great deal of attention on “networking and constantly telling our story; keeping our story out in the forefront, being visible, all of that.” When things seemed unequal with regard to funding support, board chairs and executive directors seemed to perceive “relationships” as a key factor in leveling the playing field and creating a competitive advantage in their environments.

**Bridging.** In order to strengthen important connections in the environment, the sample nonprofit social service organizations used a variety of bridging activities, including contracting, conformity and adaptation, and cooptation. All bridging activities were perceived as critical factors in securing limited resources from institutional and individual donors. According to Scott (2003), “bridging…is viewed as a response to – as well as stimulus for – increasing
organizational interdependence” and resource exchanges between two or more organizations (p. 203).

**Contracting.** Social services delivered by nonprofit organizations are largely funded by the government (Themudo, 2013). According to a report by the Urban Institute (2009), the government provides more than $100 billion each year to the nonprofit social service sector through contracted and fee-for-service programs. Maintaining the connection with government entities was a significant focus for nonprofits in this study within the context of fundraising and resource development. The government represented a source of institutional funding for all of the agencies.

The majority of funding for all nonprofit social service agencies in the study came from institutional sources such as government contracts and fee-for-service reimbursements. Leveraging this form of institutional funding was perceived as a critical role of management, as reported by board chairs and executive directors. According to the executive director from Agency E, “our agency started off at its inception as a totally grant-funded program, and when I came here in 2003, it was grant-funded, so I've been writing grants to maintain the program.” In Agency A, where the organization is dependent on government grants or fee-for-service reimbursements for more than 75% of their annual budget, the executive director stated when referring to management’s role in fundraising, “We take care of the grant making, institutional funding.” The board chair from Agency A corroborated that perception stating, “A lot of our funds come from [government] grants and that’s something that definitely has to be done by the staff.” When offering additional detail regarding the specific responsibilities of staff in managing government funding through contracts and fee-for-service programs, she stated:
I think they’re good at identifying opportunities for fundraising. Some are a little more comfortable than others in pursuing them, but they all will pursue them because they feel strongly about what they do. Their programs matter to them a lot. For most of the people there, I’d say it’s not just a job. They clearly aren’t being paid a lot of money but they show some real passion and dedication to their jobs.

Government funding distributed via contracts and fee-for-service programs was multifaceted and required attention to detail. According to the executive director from Agency F where the agency is almost 100% dependent on government funding, she took full responsibility for managing the contracting process from beginning to end. She stated, “I’m responsible for all of our grant writing, all of our reports to our funding agencies, and being the liaison between us and any community organization that we partner with.” Overwhelmingly, executive directors saw this function as a critical aspect of their fundraising role. The executive director from Agency C emphasized this thought and stated, “My job is to bring money into the organization. Now to me that means [fee-for-service] billing is my job. That’s how we do it now so that is my role.”

The board chair from Agency H identified an extended aspect of managing government funding and contractual demands. He stated, it is the role of management to, “make sure that the staff is doing what they’re supposed to do because we do have quite a number of [government] grants that are really specific in how you manage them.” He further shared that the agency’s executive director, “knows how to write applications for grants so therefore we have certainly received more grants than we could have normally expected.” Contracting, as a bridging tactic, was an effective strategy for acquiring resources to sustain programs and services, as emphasized
by this board chair. However, the executive director from Agency C offered caution about excessive use of contracting stating:

We chase the dollars that become available and then try to accommodate that piece. Then you’re all over the place, you know? Now we had successes but that was a lot of work. Having 7, 8, 10, 12 different grants that you’re running at one time. That’s a lot of work. It’s not really all that it’s cut out to be because if you’re always chasing the dollar, when are you serving?

**Conformity and adaptation.** Organizations dependent on resources from their environment face tremendous requirements that dictate structural and procedural mandates for continued resource allocations (Scott, 2003). Nonprofits in the sample, as business entities, were held to a number of regulatory and program-quality standards that impacted their ability to leverage funding. These standards were developed and monitored by governmental entities and key funding institutions. The standards ranged from administrative requirements such as annual audits, accounting principles, and reimbursement guidelines to service-delivery components and performance measures. The board chairs and executive directors voiced their perceptions about the role of management in ensuring agency conformity and adaptation to these standards. As an example, the executive director from Agency E stated:

Six times a year, I'm responsible for payment requests that are done in advance of our spending. We send these reports to our funder. Our funds come from the federal government to the [state government entity], and it's allocated to [local government entity]. That's where our checks actually come from. So, I'm responsible to them for making sure that I send these payment requests in in a timely fashion.
The board chair from Agency E emphasized the importance of conformity and adaptation to the requirements of their primary funding entity. She stated, “The [government entity] requirements are very stringent. You have to follow their procedures and policies to the tee or you will be cut off.” The executive director from Agency C highlighted some of the requirements of this funding entity from which they also receive support. Describing the structure that was formalized at her agency to ensure conformity with [government entity] requirements, the executive director from Agency C shared:

The counselors do the assessments, the licensed person signs off on the assessment, the staff faxes them to the respective [managed care organizations], then the authorizations come back, the authorizations are then submitted to the database, they go to the billing company and then when the billing company has questions and concerns about why this claim didn’t go through or some information was missing, then I have people in place to [address] that. I still have a very heavy hand in it because it’s still new. I’m the only one who knows everything so trying to get other people to know as much as I know and understand about it has been my challenge and my chore.

The executive director from Agency A also discussed the organizational structure instituted at his agency to ensure conformity and adaptation to funder expectations. He stated:

We have our management group, which consists of me, three assistant directors for programs, and our chief fiscal officer. Below us are all the supervisors of programs, and then line staff. The supervisors are responsible for writing the proposals to the institutional sources. We do not have grant writers. That’s part of running a program. Because funding is local in a lot of instances, we want our people to really be involved in
their jurisdictions, to know the funders, to know what the needs are, to be able to write
effective proposals and manage them.

The nuances involved in using conformity or adaptation as a bridging tactic to acquire
resources from environments were enormous when considering their associated tasks. The board
chair from Agency F stated, “It seems that we are jumping through hoops all the time to please
this funder and adhere to that regulation. I often question the real costs of doing business as a
result of efforts expended by our executive director.” The board chair from Agency I stated, “In
my business, we have compliance standards, so that isn’t unfamiliar to me. But, it seems that
this sector is crippled by a lack of resources to manage similar standards beyond the executive
director who is often stretched thin.” The executive director from Agency D, building on this
thought of feeling “stretched” when ensuring conformity and adaptation to stakeholder demands,
stated:

I swear. Now some of the things you only have to do once, you know, like your IRS, you
know, certain things, we do once. But other things, no, they got to be done all the time.
Like conflict of interest [statements] for every staff, every board member. To run a
nonprofit, it’s a business. When I hear people saying oh, they want to start a nonprofit,
I’m like you fool, you obviously don’t get it. Unless you have like a couple million
dollars to give yourself each year, don’t go there.

Co-optation. One of the most effective bridging tactics employed by nonprofit social
service agencies in the sample to survive and thrive during times of financial uncertainty was co-
optimation (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). This tactic was employed when agencies were interested in
developing linkages between the organization and environment that shifted the level of
dependency by the agency. The board chairs and executive directors identified several ways that management staff worked to co-opt their environments. First, however, they shared reasons why it was important to engage in co-optation tactics. According to the executive director from Agency A:

We have to step up and be looking for more major givers and more potential in the community for support of the agency if we’re going to be able to withstand the pressures of the cuts and really be able to chart our future instead of losses in funding dictating our future. And we want to be in charge of our future.

At times, for the agencies, leaders expressed feelings of disempowerment because resources were not always allocated equally for all programs targeting vulnerable populations in a manner that enabled the leaders to chart the future. The executive director from Agency C stated, “Substance abuse doesn’t raise millions of dollars. Never has. Not substance abuse.” She elaborated further stating, “AIDS might, if you can get Elton John, you can raise some money. Some of these big ones that they can bring in that have big coffers.” In lieu of having internally-renowned advocates like Elton John working on behalf of each organization, the board chairs and executive directors expressed that management was largely responsible for using the board of directors as a vehicle for co-opting the environment. The executive director from Agency A stated, “We rely on our board to give us the names of corporations where we think we can make some inroads.” The board chair from Agency A emphasized the role of management staff in facilitating those linkages. She shared, “Well, he identifies opportunities. He’s happy to reach out to people. He’s happy to meet with them. He communicates with the donors and supports the Board in efforts it makes to get funding.”
According to the board chair from Agency H:

The board frequently has connections into a world that the staff may not have. And we have chosen our board wisely for either, for their expertise, their interest and like all boards sometimes because these are people of great influence in a lot of communities and they’re heavy hitters… that’s every board, that’s every board.

The board chair elaborated further stating, “You don’t get on the symphony board if you’re not going to write a five figure check. Now we don’t do that, but some of our board members certainly are there because they’re persons of wealth and influence.”

Generally, executive directors expressed that they don’t have the same level of influence as their current or idealized boards. They also expressed a level of dependency on their boards to help facilitate connections or linkages. The executive director from Agency A stated, “I work with the board” to access resources that might not otherwise be available without their involvement. He further reiterated, “There are executives who have the connections, who have the relationships and are the primary fundraisers. That’s not been the model here.” As a result, he was clear that a large part of his role was to help identify and recruit board members who could provide entry and access to resources across environmental boundaries. According to the executive director from Agency D, such recruitment had to be strategic in order to form the necessary linkages to resources. She stated:

One could think that [board members] are supposed to bring additional money to the table. For us, some have. Some don’t because they don’t have that capacity. It’s not because they don’t have an inclination to do so. So you have to know when they’re coming in the door what their capacity is. You have to understand that and even base
succession planning on that. We’re constantly doing that balancing, not just with things like gender, but also capacity. You couldn’t have three [new] board members in a row that didn’t have capacity to bring new money in. You’d get killed.

Successful recruitment and engagement of board members to leverage limited resources from the environment proved to have favorable outcomes for Agency D. This was illustrated in an example offered by the executive director from Agency D who stated:

They raise $1.2 million every year. You know that’s every, every year. And they do that first by starting with their own gift which is usually, you know, average gift is $10,000 and some of them give more than that. Some of them give less. And they also give not only to annual fund, but they give to events. Like we have a big event coming in April and the goal is to net a half a million dollars, which we will. But we’re doing that because of board members. I mean we have sponsors at $50,000. And they are just, they make me…They’re just amazing, you know. And I’m not saying everyone, but a lot of them.

Co-optation was perceived as an integral role for management staff in large part because it had the potential to alter relationships between their organizations and task environments. As expressed throughout the interviews, strategies used to co-opt environments were focused primarily on finding individuals with multiple linkages in the environment to serve on boards, as well as finding donors and advocates who could connect the organization to others with influence and affluence. Management staff were critical in defining and executing co-optation strategies to ensure fundraising success.
Leadership. In six out of nine agencies, board chairs and executive directors identified leadership as a final component of the management staff’s primary role in fundraising to sustain critical programs and services. Perceptions regarding leadership closely aligned with three key attributes of transformational leadership, which focuses on how leaders collaborate with followers or organizational members to guide change (Burke & Cooper, 2012). These attributes included idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration.

According to Lawler and Bilson (2010), idealized influence addresses the manner in which a leader serves as a role model for change and gains admiration from followers. Inspirational motivation addresses the manner in which a leader inspires and motivates followers to embrace and act upon change. Finally, individualized consideration addresses the manner in which a leader exhibits sensitivity to the needs of followers toward the goal of maximizing their investment in and efforts on behalf of change.

Board turnover and leadership transitions were compounded by newly defined roles for boards which often precipitated the need for management staff to lead fundraising efforts. Although board chairs and executive directors expressed varied thoughts about the role of boards in leadership capacities, they were consistent in their perceptions about management staff roles. As stated by the board chair from Agency C about the executive director, “Every day, she is the thermometer. She is the barometer for how this works.” She continued stating, “The executive director plays a leadership role in fundraising by giving direction for where the organization is going.” Due to the leadership examples set by executive directors, board chairs expressed that their members wanted to become engaged in fundraising. According to the board chair from Agency A, “I think it’s something the Board does have to get more involved in than we have
been. We need direction.” The executive director from Agency B recognized this need for support with fundraising at the board level within his organization stating:

We don’t have a senior board member who has been able to show [our newer board members] what to do, so they don’t know how to lead yet. They’re still looking to me to lead, which is fine.

The board chair from Agency B reinforced this perception and stated, “Our executive director wears so many hats that I think at times he gets stretched thin. It’s probably a lot of pressure on him too. But, he’s been the primary reason that donations have skyrocketed in the past several years.” When referring to the role of management in providing leadership for the board related to fundraising, she continued stating, “It’s the organization’s responsibility to support the Board in making them the kind of a presentation that allows the board member to reach out to their contacts so that they can actually do some effective fundraising.” The executive director from Agency A embraced that concept of leadership in fundraising stating, “I’m there to support them.” He offered examples of what support was provided indicating, “I’ll get them information about how we’re doing, the number of donors, and other data. If they need me to go with them on meetings or work up some documents, I’ll do that too.”

The executive director from Agency F also provided a depiction of what leadership in fundraising might look like for her organization. She stated, “I don’t have to be up front. I can work in the background and make sure the little details are done. And I will be fine with that.” The key to successfully offering leadership for boards, according to the executive director from Agency B, was to “make them part of that process.” He elaborated on the process stating they
are “…not just passive observers, but they’re active participants. Even if they’re just in the room when the Ask is taking place, they still feel a part of it. And I think that’s important.”

Another important element in providing leadership was ensuring that board members were inspired to participate in fundraising, which was expressed by board chairs and executive directors. The board chair from Agency I stated, “When I come to meetings, I want to feel excited about the future and motivated to do something. I don’t just want to hear about agency finances and the doom and gloom. I can turn on the news for that.” Instead, the executive director from Agency D stated:

You know, board members like to be inspired by leadership, and they are. It’s just like in a marriage. You have to keep interest and synergy going. If people get bored, they walk out the door, you know. And fundraising is all about keeping people on the seat of their chair interested, and it’s exhausting. But, you know, it’s what you do.

Commenting on the leadership role of management staff in fundraising, one of the most poignant thoughts expressed was articulated by the executive director from Agency B. He stated, “I can’t fail in the mission of raising money because if there is no money here, I can’t pay staff and I can’t pay me.” This perceived realization was important because it captured the sense of urgency surrounding effective implementation of tactics and strategies to sustain mission-impact work of nonprofit social service agencies. Without funding, the mission cannot be delivered to vulnerable individuals and marginalized communities.

**Perceived Role of the Board of Directors in Fundraising**

**Introduction.** A key role of nonprofit, social service boards of directors that has been linked in the research literature to high organizational performance (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai,
1999; Tweeten, 2002) is facilitating access to financial capital that ensures long-term sustainability of programs serving vulnerable individuals and communities. Throughout the interviews, board chairs and executive directors described their perceptions about how boards of directors should link organizations to the external environment in order to leverage and maintain resources essential to organizational survival. Similar to the perceptions espoused for management roles and responsibilities in fundraising, emphasis for the board roles and responsibilities was focused on two boundary-spanning strategies - buffering and bridging. A detailed account of board chair and executive director perceptions regarding board roles and responsibilities in fundraising is offered in the following sections. These two aspects of the board’s role in fundraising are captured in Figure 5: Perceived Role of Board of Directors in Fundraising.

**Figure 5:**
**Perceived Role of Board of Directors in Fundraising**

![Diagram showing the external environment of the organization with buffering (leveling) and bridging strategies.](image)

*Figure 5.* The external environment of the organization is filled with actors who influence key opportunities and threats. Boards of directors link their organizations to the environment by engaging in boundary-spanning activities focused on buffering and bridging.
Buffering. A key boundary setting role identified throughout the interviews as germane to perceptions about board roles in fundraising was buffering. One of the buffering tactics expressed by executive directors and board chairs that was key to the board of directors fundraising role was leveling. As explained in the prior section, buffering is used to protect the core of an organization and leveling is an attempt to maintain organizational inputs and outputs toward mission-fulfillment. In this study, the majority of nonprofit, social service agencies were dependent on government grants and fee-for-service reimbursements for more than 50% of their annual revenue. However, the revenue streams did not always cover staff salaries or basic operational expenses that were key to running organizational programs.

As a result, board chairs and executive directors expressed that it was necessary for board members to engage in fundraising activities that helped to leverage funding to help cover these expenses. For example, the Executive Director from Agency C stated:

I need the steps fixed. I need the maintenance of the building. You can’t raise enough money to do the job that needs to be done. We need hundreds of thousands of dollars. It takes a half a million dollars to run this place minimum and that’s with giving everybody a fair salary but not one that they’re going to be able to retire on.

Expounding on a similar point, the Executive Director from Agency E stated, “The agency cannot sustain itself just from billing and collections. The biggest portion of our [budget] goes to salary and administrative costs, and we do not bring in $200,000 a year in billing and collections to cover that.”

Recognizing that board members could play a critical fundraising role in leveling and diversifying resources, the board chair from Agency A stated, “the question becomes whose job
is it? It’s not fully the Board, it’s not fully the Executive Director… It’s some combination.”

When speaking of the board’s role in fundraising toward the goal of resource diversification, executive directors and board chairs expressed throughout the interviews that the board’s role was “critical and primary.” Specifically, the executive director from Agency A stated:

They should be giving and getting us money. I mean they are policy makers and they are our community representatives overseeing the overall operation of the agency, but they also have a responsibility as fiduciaries to get money for us. We take care of the institutional funding, and we need them to help with the private donor.

The board chair from Agency H reinforced this perception stating that the board’s role is to “support the fundraising efforts of the agency, and to understand that the board has to be a leader and not a follower.” The board chair from Agency E also stated, “I think it starts with us. If we’re not committed, why should anybody else be committed to us? That’s something that we did discuss and we told them to think about how much they would be willing to commit.”

In six out of nine of the agencies, a policy specifying a minimum annual gift did not exist. However, executive directors and board chairs expressed that an expectation was communicated each year for the need to have 100% participation in giving. The executive director from Agency E indicated, “There's not a certain amount. We just ask them to give what they're able.” She continued:

I mean usually, it's like $50. Nobody has ever given less than that. We have one board member who is very, very generous who gives several hundred dollars every year. But generally, it's between the $50 and $100 mark. And, we have six board members, so you can kind of calculate that.
Recognizing the need to offer more support, the board chair from Agency E stated, “we want to do something a little bit more substantial” in order to help balance the loss in funding from other sources. As a result of experiencing a similar loss, the executive director from Agency F stated about her board of directors, “Each member is going to be requested to make a financial commitment on an annual basis to the organization.” She continued:

Hopefully, that is going to segue them into realizing that they can actually do some fundraising through some type of event or something. And I have no clue what will come up. None. I might have some suggestions on what they can come up with, but I don’t know what they’re going to come up with.

Although the perception among executive directors and board chairs was consistent regarding the critical role of board giving as a tactic to ensure resource diversification, all of the agencies in the study had not achieved 100% participation in giving. According to the executive director from Agency B, “I think they are just trying to dip their toe in the water and sort of understand it. We aspire that they have 100% giving, which is sometimes like pulling teeth.”

The vast majority of board chairs and executive directors acknowledged that their board of directors should participate in fundraising activities in support of their nonprofit, social service organizations. They recognized, however, that the goal would take some time. In this regard, the executive director from Agency A stated, “It’s been a long time coming [for them to realize] they must roll up their sleeves and help us get some money, but we’re there now.” According to the executive director from Agency F, “I think they’re ready to expand now because they realize they need to step up their game and do a little something different.” Expressing a similar thought, the executive director from Agency G stated:
This is all new for the board. And so it really is going to be a trial and error this year in terms of what they do that works and what they do that doesn’t work and just…getting acclimated to the understanding that that is one of their key roles.

The board chair from Agency E indicated, “We’re revamping the board to determine what type of board we should be. Really focusing on the fundraising committee and how that should be structured.” The board chair from Agency G stated, “We know what direction we want to go in. We began to work on strategies for fundraising. In the past we only had a few fundraisers and for whatever reason, they didn’t generate a lot of funds.” Despite the incremental approaches and moderate successes, the board chair from Agency A emphasized the importance of their board trying new things and finding the right fit in strategies. The board chair stated:

As a Board, we have to do more and the Executive Committee recognizes that role. We’re taking baby steps in some ways. We held a cocktail party for donors at one of the Board members’ homes. We’re going to do that again. I think we invited about 60 people and maybe 30 people came. We also did a letter writing campaign where we picked a certain number of our top donors and every board member wrote handwritten notes to them on special stationery that included a list of board members. Part of what we’re trying to do is just get out to people who we are, with the understanding that we support the organization and they should too.

Ultimately, there was a consistent perception among the executive directors that a part of the fundraising role for boards of directors was to serve in a manner that helped me the basic needs of their organizations. The executive director from Agency G stated a desire for board
members to, “develop a fundraising plan, execute that plan, and bring additional monies to the organization.” The executive director from Agency C expressed that in order to assist in leveraging additional funds, it would be beneficial if a board member could “help me build the website” to attract potential donors to their organization. The executive director from Agency B stated, “You know, when we have a golf tournament, they’ll sell some tickets. And we have, you know, a breakfast event, they’ll sell some tickets. So they are starting to do that.”

Recognizing the need for an incremental approach to engaging board members in fundraising activities without overextending the organization by adding costs, the executive director from Agency C emphasized:

I want them to learn to serve us in more practical ways… because to me your ability to raise money is only as strong as your ability to stay viable. Helping us with the website—that to me is a skill I would like to see them bring. I want people that bring tangible skills…good fundraising costs money… I mean just to do the tickets for our bowling party cost $250, and they didn’t have $250, so we had to pay for that and that killed me. I almost choked on it.

**Bridging.** Another significant theme that emerged when analyzing the data from interviews with board chairs and executive directors was the perception about how boards of directors could participate in bridging, a concept in the resource dependence theoretical research literature that is focused on linking the organization to its external environment. Three bridging tactics expressed by executive directors and board chairs as fundamental to the fundraising role of the board of directors were *bargaining, co-optation, and government connections.* These tactics focused on individuals facilitating exchanges between groups within the environment to
ensure positive organizational outcomes. The tactics were all designed to increase linkages between the organizations and their environment. When speaking of the significance of these tactics, executive directors and board chairs expressed the manner in which they helped to increase financial stability.

**Bargaining.** Bargaining was primarily viewed as a form advocacy that board members could utilize as a strategy for engaging potential donors and avoiding dependence on any one stakeholder or source of funding. The board chair from Agency F stated, “It doesn’t always seem that the right people know us, which could impact our ability to raise funds beyond government grants. We need a board that can advocate with a diverse group of folks who can then give gifts.” According to the executive director from Agency D:

> One area that we’re really just putting our toe into is really the role of advocacy…the whole idea is that every week, board members can invite their friends in for a program - usually breakfast or lunch. The idea is to make new friends and keep the old ones while sharing the impact of our services. We don’t ask for money at all during the presentations. Invariably, at least half of the audience will want to do something.

When reflecting on how board members could participate in bargaining activities that addressed advocacy, the board chair from Agency A shared a desire for board members to:

> …invite donors not only to a cocktail party at someone’s home but invite them to go to one of our sites that deals with teenage girls because when you see them, the building is not great but these girls are pretty amazing and for the staff to work with the limited conditions, it’s incredible. More donors might feel compelled to give if they could see our work.
The board chair from Agency I also shared, “we’ve had a problem trying to get support from some stakeholder groups. Board members could help by engaging these groups and advocating for our mission, clients, and agency.”

**Co-optation.** Perhaps, one of the most salient themes from interviews with executive directors and board chairs was related to co-optation as a key bridging tactic for the board of directors. “Co-optation is the incorporation of representatives from external groups into the decision making or advisory structure of an organization” (Scott, 2003, p. 204) to gain support. Consistently, executive directors and board chairs shared their perceptions regarding the critical nature of this fundraising role in relation to the board of directors. Reflecting on the diversity of their board and how their relationships in the community could be leveraged to bring funds into the organization, the board chair from Agency E stated, “We all come from diverse backgrounds. Each of us was put on the board for our connections, as well as what we do professionally, so I think tapping into those around us” is important to achieving fundraising outcomes.

Expressing a similar thought, the board chair from Agency B shared, the board of directors should “be the public face and get the mission of [Agency B] out to not just the people it serves but to people who are in a position to donate money.” When speaking of the role of her agency’s board of directors in fundraising, the executive director from Agency D stated, “They have to be our number one ambassador and huge fundraisers. You know, and that’s pretty much what they are. A fundraising board. And they know it, you know.” When acting in this capacity, the executive director from Agency A expressed an expectation that the board of directors would “help do a big boost in the major giving area from individuals.” The executive director from Agency A continued:
Our board has stepped up and increased its support of the agency and they’ve become more willing to reach out to their friends and encourage them to contribute to the agency. So we’ve been able to maintain our contributions. We haven’t been losing in this environment, and we see some evidence this year of gains. We had our first donor prospect event where board members invited their friends to another board member’s house where we had a little cocktail party and then gave a little talk about the agency and, while that night we didn’t ask them for gifts, they all knew they would be asked for gifts and some have stepped forward….We’re planning to do another one in January, so there is definitely developing more of a culture of, “you have to help us on the fundraising side.”

When delving more deeply into specific ways the board of directors could play an essential role in fundraising by co-opting the environment, board chairs and executive directors identified several areas. One of the prominent areas was donor identification and cultivation. In this regard, the executive director from Agency H stated, board members “contribute and connect us to other people. It’s kind of the way we built the network of people that support [Agency H]. They ask their friends and colleagues to become involved with us in different ways.” Similarly, the executive director from Agency D stated:

A lot of money now in the world is going into family foundations that require an invitation. Well, if you don’t know those people, you don’t get that invitation. So a lot of it, the work…is really having individuals think of us.

To ensure this outcome of fundraising efforts initiated by the board of directors, the executive director from Agency B expressed that board members “should be ambassadors and
they should be talking about our agency to their companies, their cohorts, to help get that corporate support. And some of them are.” The executive director from Agency D specified, “Our [goal] is to create more people who know what the mission is and to always kind of keep out there our message, and it’s not just talking. You have to do something.” The board chair from Agency B described the concept of acting stating:

    Well, I think when we have some of these events such as the speaker series, you know, we all go out and invite people, our contacts, so they now know about the [agency]. And, it’s really giving the [Agency B] access to our phone books.

    The executive director from Agency E indicated that the organization’s board of directors had the capacity to help co-opt the environment even if they had not done so in the past. She stated:

    They network and know a lot of people and I think if we really ever had to get down to it, I think that I could call on them to say I really need you to look in your circle of people and ask for some money or some donations.

Although the process of getting board members involved in fundraising had not been easy or swift, according to the executive directors and board chairs, the executive director from Agency A shared:

    They get that we’re at a critical juncture, and they’re putting themselves more into it. That’s coming out through their willingness to go to friends and say we need your help. They were much more reticent to do that in prior years. They may still be reticent, but they’re doing it. I can see signs of that happening.
Focused on success, the executive director from Agency D emphasized, “We try to have people have a singular mission that they love and are passionate about because then they will go out to be our ambassadors. They’ll be our cheerleaders and help us get a really big job done.” She continued by stating, “They do the Ask. They have the access, but we really work as a team with our Board recognizing that every board member has a different capacity.” Providing a description of how this co-optation is facilitated, the board chair from Agency H shared an example.

Our board has been very active with the development function from a board member and her husband who gave one of the transitional houses, to a Jewish board member who introduced her Jewish uncle to [agency], and he is giving money to start an endowment fund. The money he’s giving, I think will be between $200,000 and $250,000 dollars in memory of his son… Well, most of us can’t do that, but everybody does something within their means.

The board chair from Agency A reinforced the perception that board members have an ability to co-opt the environments stating, “I think we have some high-level executives who have connections in the city, connections with other donors of wealth, and connections in their companies.” However, the board chair from Agency A continued by stating:

It has not been historically our role to request direct gifts. I mean, it is a role to try to get gifts from our companies, invite friends, family to events that might support the agency, and I think be available if the agency is soliciting somebody and needs assistance in that solicitation, either attending a meeting or answering questions.
The executive director from Agency I captured the underlying premise of these shared perceptions stating, “We’ve been working and continue to make strides in getting people on our board who represent various donor groups. However, a key challenge has been their lack of time, which is something we need to reach others.” The board chair from Agency B elaborated on this perception stating,

We have had a number of smaller signature events over a number of years. One of the board members puts on a golf charity event. There should be a board member whose task it is to shepherd the event and be the spokesperson for each event.

Development infrastructure is key to the board of directors maximizing their fundraising role. Infrastructures includes human and financial capital, as well as volunteer engagement. According to the executive director from Agency D, the organization has structured its development volunteers based on best practice standards for fundraising. The executive director stated:

We have a very robust development committee…, although our motto is every board member is on the development committee. It’s not just the poor souls that signed up for the development committee. We have about four different categories. One is the events. We raise a lot of money at the events. I would never suggest people do that. It’s just that our board is large and social. We have three events a year. And then we have the annual fund [subcommittee] which is board members, their friends, and anybody we can enlist, and then foundations and grants.

Overwhelmingly, board chairs and executive directors from organizations in this study – six out of nine – expressed that their board of directors had not been actively involved in
fundraising in spite of identifying several key fundraising roles that are well suited for a board of
directors. The executive director from Agency A explained his perception of the reason for this
lack of participation stating:

This has not ever been a fundraising board per se. People have never come on it thinking
I’m going to be responsible for getting a certain amount of money for the
organization…We’ve always been gentile with discussions about personal commitment,
personal financial commitment, and things of that nature. So this board has never been
structured in that way.

In order to increase board participation in fundraising, the executive director from Agency A
stressed the importance of “having a clearer focus so that when [board members] do try to
fundraise, it’s easier for them.” He stated, “Rather than trying to describe 13 programs, you
know, they want it simpler and they want it more understandable.” This approach, according to
the board chair from Agency F could help “enable them to act” on the organization’s behalf.

Government connections. The final bridging tactic that emerged as a recurring theme
was government connections. Several executive directors expressed that navigating the system of
government politics was becoming increasingly important to their fundraising efforts.

Overwhelmingly, they shared a perception that boards could serve as a bridge between their
organizations and external environments by making connections with government that resulted
in meaningful relationships. The executive director from Agency D stated, “I think we have to
get more sophisticated with federal, of course, and government, frankly. It’s a whole new ball
game out there.” The executive director from Agency D said that though the agency was “very
close to the City and to this government…we don’t have the kind of relationship where we can
say: ‘Can you tell us if any government dollars are coming out that we can get on the inside track?’” The executive director added, “Now I know some people have those relationships. We do not....” In organizations where the relationships existed, board members were effective in making connections. According to the executive director from Agency B, “Our previous person was board president for 10, 15 years and had a considerable amount of power and influence in the city.” This influence helped the executive director “make some connections” that were beneficial for the organization. Highlighting this point when speaking of the organization’s former board president, the executive director from Agency B stated:

As board president, she opened the door for me in a lot of occasions when I was still new so that I could get respect. She opened the door too with the police commissioner who is now a friend of [Agency B]. And now that [former board president] is no longer president, the police commission is my inside guy. And, unlike [former board president], he helps me raise money, which has been great.

The executive director from Agency F reinforced this point by underscoring the importance of having influential board members participate in meetings with government funders and make connections at a “higher level” of advocacy. As non-paid staff and community leaders, the board members were able to navigate the relationships differently as compared to executive directors or staff, which was emphasized by the executive director from Agency F.

The times that I have needed him to go with me to a meeting with one of our funding agencies, I haven’t had to say anything. And he has been pointed with them. And he has educated himself prior to going there. He would be clear about what my position was, and he would articulate it very well. And when necessary, he doesn’t have any issue with
saying to a government funder, we need to investigate other avenues politically to see why this can’t be different.

**Reflexivity**

An ethical consideration discussed in the prior chapter was reflexivity. As a trained social worker with executive leadership experience within the nonprofit social service sector, it was important for the researcher to pay close attention to her own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs throughout the data collection and analysis process. When serving as instruments for data collection in qualitative studies, Padgett (1998) asserts that researchers “do not seek to eliminate or repress beliefs and feelings, but to identify them so that they do not interfere with the study” (p. 41). Two areas required reflexivity by the researcher.

First, when the executive directors described the challenges they faced as a result of environmental changes, the researcher felt concerned and unsettled. The executive directors expressed how the environmental changes created managerial dilemmas for them that had been difficult to manage. The researcher at times felt torn as the participants would request consultative advice about ways to mitigate the changes. Experiencing such an emotional response as a researcher was natural, but professional boundaries were maintained as the interviews took place to ensure the integrity of data collection and trustworthiness of findings.

Second, as an African American woman, the researcher was especially sensitive to the particular challenges expressed by African American executive directors related to fundraising. Five out of nine of the executive directors in the study were African American, and four of the African American executive directors were women. As these executive directors expressed similar challenges in fundraising throughout the interviews, the researcher often wondered about
the impact of race and gender on perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. It seemed that the African American, female executive directors, in particular, were less hopeful about their ability to fundraise. Consistently, they indicated that “it was not allowed” for them to fundraise. They stated that their boards, which were largely composed of African American members, did not have access to channels that could ensure the success of fundraising endeavors. Overwhelmingly, there was a stark difference between the older facilities in impoverished neighborhoods where they provided services, in contrast to the modernized facilities in gentrified neighborhoods where their non-minority executive director peers were located. Internally, the researcher wrestled with feelings of conflict and questions about whether these executive directors experienced unique disadvantages that informed their perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

It was inevitable for the researcher to be sensitive to managerial dilemmas expressed by the executive directors in the sample given her status as an executive level administrator in the nonprofit social service sector and as an African American woman with significant fundraising experience on behalf of the nonprofit social service sector. The researcher used debriefing with the committee chair and members as a means of challenging any potential preconceived notions about the data as they were presented and analyzed. The debriefing sessions helped the researcher guard against forcing preconceptions on data analysis and reporting (Charmaz, 2006), while being attuned to the possibility that race and gender may influence fundraising outcomes. Recommendations for future research regarding these issues will be discussed further in the following chapter.
Summary

This chapter summarized the descriptive and qualitative findings from the research study. The findings provide critical insights into board chair and executive director perceptions about changes in the environment that impacted their organization’s ability to deliver mission-impact programs. The findings also offer continued support for understanding how boards of directors and management staff can participate in fundraising to obtain financial resources for organizational and program sustainability. The next chapter will summarize the overall study, identify implications for theory development, and further knowledge in the fields of social work and nonprofit management.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study employed a multiple case study design utilizing a qualitative research methodology to explore nonprofit board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. A grounded theory approach to data analysis, guided by a constructivist epistemology, helped describe the multiple realities that exist in the nonprofit social service sector concerning fundraising. The study included a non-probability, purposive sample involving nine nonprofit social service organizations serving children and families in Baltimore, Maryland. This chapter will provide a discussion of emerging ideas from the findings. It will also present the strengths and limitations of the research design. Finally, it will offer implications for social work, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Emerging Ideas: Interpretations and Comparisons

There were four key ideas that emerged from the findings. First, environmental shifts such as changes in funding, social or public policies, and client demographics influence perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Second, management staff, as opposed to the board of directors, are recognized as critical in leading fundraising efforts. Third, boards of directors and management staff are perceived as a “dynamic duo” for engaging in boundary-spanning activities. Finally, organizational demographics such as revenue sources for the annual budget, board structure, and board composition influence perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. These findings are illustrated in Figure 6.
Figure 6:
The “Dynamic Duo” Model for Fundraising

Environmental Shifts

Organizations operate within and respond to a larger environmental context. This organization-in-environment framework has been explored by numerous scholars interested in understanding the interdependency of environmental factors and organizational functioning (Mano-Negrin, 2003; Mulroy, 2004; Mulroy & Tamburo, 2004; Schmid, 2004). Consistent with prior scholarly research, the first emerging idea of this study suggests that environmental shifts influence perceptions about board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Specifically, decreased funding from traditional sources such as the government, United Way, corporations, and foundations increased the perceived need for boards and management staff of nonprofit social service organizations to explore new revenue sources for existing programs and
services. Without new sources of revenue, executive directors expressed concern that programs, services, and staff positions were at risk of elimination.

In multiple instances throughout the interviews, executive directors also described the extent to which public and social policy changes in the external environment precipitated a need for boards and management staff to explore new revenue sources. The policy changes described by executive directors had the effect of reducing available funding to sustain programs, services, and staff positions. Overwhelmingly, the nonprofit social service organizations in the sample were able to maintain their general programs, but some services and staff positions were inevitably eliminated.

Another environmental shift that appeared to influence perceptions about board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising was client demographic changes. Executive directors and board chairs identified an increased demand for services from individuals who had not previously participated in their programs. The increased demand resulted in increased costs for delivering programs at a time when funding was declining. In order for these organizations to survive in their rapidly changing environments, perceived board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising were critical for helping organizations act upon their environments to leverage limited resources that could ensure program sustainability.

**Executive Director as Leader**

The second idea that emerged from the findings was the perception of management staff, as opposed to the board of directors, as critical in leading fundraising efforts. The executive director, specifically, was identified as the individual who should be responsible for establishing
the strategic direction of fundraising efforts even when other dedicated fundraising staff positions were present within the organizations. Board chairs in multiple nonprofit social service organizations included in the sample described the executive director as pivotal in monitoring the task environment and developing strategies that would enable the organization to secure resources necessary for survival and growth. More importantly, another key aspect of leadership described for the executive director was related to inspiring and motivating board members to remain engaged in fundraising activities.

The leadership role described for executive directors in fundraising was a new idea. In prior research (Harrison & Murray, 2012; Iecovich, 2005; Jager & Rehli, 2012; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), boards of directors were identified as the essential actors in fundraising outcomes for nonprofit organizations. According to Chait et al. (2005), however, executive directors are instrumental in affecting “the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals” (p. 44). This proposition is consistent with theoretical frameworks that examine the relationship between leaders and members. More specifically, it is consistent with the assertion that leaders influence the behavior of individuals around them.

Research studies examining how management behavior impacts organizational outcomes have found that leaders hold the potential to increase organizational citizenship behavior including affective and normative commitment of board members (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005). Affective commitment focuses on feelings of connectedness to an organization while normative commitment is related to a sense of obligation that one feels regarding their duty to the organization. Such outcomes are especially important when fundraising during difficult times and in environments characterized by economic uncertainty. This notion was
reinforced by board chairs who described the manner in which their executive directors offered inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration. Although the executive director was perceived as playing a key role in providing leadership for the organization in fundraising, race and gender as variables appeared to influence the perceptions of executive directors regarding this role. For example, the executive directors who were African American females defined their leadership role in fundraising more narrowly as compared to the non-minority or male executive directors. Often, they limited their role to grant writing, billing, and program compliance due to a belief that these things were “allowed” by key stakeholders. While race and gender appeared to influence the perceptions of these executive directors, understanding how these variables affect perceptions about leadership in fundraising is not known at this time.

**Dynamic Duo in Boundary-Spanning**

The third idea that emerged from the findings was related to the roles and responsibilities in fundraising shared by boards and management staff. A majority of participants interviewed perceived boards and management staff as a “dynamic duo” for engaging in boundary-spanning activities. While boards and management staff were perceived as important in fulfilling distinct buffering and bridging roles in boundary-spanning activities for fundraising, which is illustrated in Table 2, both were perceived as essential in co-opting their environments to level resources.
Consistent with Resource Dependence Theory, co-optation is a process that enables an organization to acquire and maintain resources from its environment necessary for survival. It is a bridging tactic utilized by organizations to increase linkages with resources found in the environment that support organizational sustainability (Hodge & Piccolo, 2005). The co-optation strategies identified by board chairs and executive directors as essential to their perceived roles and responsibilities in fundraising included: 1) identifying and recruiting board members who have key relationships in the community that will influence funding decisions, and 2) brokering relationships with individuals and institutions that will champion the importance of continued or increased investments in the organization.

Board chairs and executive directors in the sample perceived co-optation strategies as fundamental in leveling the resources of an organization. This finding was consistent with prior research on boundary-spanning outcomes in the nonprofit sector. In a study examining perceptions about board performance, Cumberland, Kerrick, D’Mello, and Petrosko (2015) found that effective implementation by board members of boundary-spanning roles such as co-optation was viewed as a key factor impacting organizational effectiveness. One measure of
organizational effectiveness was new revenue acquired to maintain programs and services.

Similarly, Shea and Hamilton (2015) found that nonprofit managers are instrumental in prioritizing co-optation strategies that link their respective organizations to resources when confronting funding uncertainty. Perhaps, however, the most important factor in linking the organization to its environment is finding the “fit” between the organization’s internal characteristics and external context.

**The Internal and External Environmental Fit**

Contingency Theory was another theoretical framework used in this study to triangulate the data and findings. When analyzing the data through this theoretical lens, a final idea emerged. Organizational demographics including sources of revenue, board structure, and board composition influenced perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising. Finding the right “fit” between these organizational demographic characteristics and task environments was a priority for management staff, in particular. This finding is consistent with previous research examining funding sources, resource diversification, and adaptive tactics used by nonprofit organizations confronting financial vulnerability (Calabrese, 2013; Froelich, 1999; Goldman & Kahnweiler, 2000; Guo & Acar, 2005; Hodge & Piccolo, 2005; Mosley, Maronick, & Katz, 2012).

Board chairs and executive directors at nonprofit social service organizations that were highly dependent on government grants and fee-for-service contracts perceived their roles differently compared to board chairs and executive directors from organizations with diverse revenue streams. Participants from organizations with government grants representing 50% or more of their annual budget were more likely to describe the role of their boards in fundraising...
as advisory. These organizations were less likely to have formal board committees and board member job descriptions outlining fundraising expectations. Additionally, they were more likely to have a board size of 10 or fewer. Finally, they were less likely to have diverse boards based on race, gender, age, and sector representation. Their loosely coupled structures appeared to support the status quo in funding, but they did not enable the organization to achieve resource diversification in a manner that would sustain programs over a period of time.

Consequently, organizations that had more diverse revenue streams were more likely to have larger boards, as well as increased contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. They were also more likely to engage their board members in traditional fundraising activities such as prospect identification, donor cultivation, and event planning for house parties or galas. These organizations had written job descriptions outlining fundraising responsibilities. They also had formal committee structures at the board level with at least a Finance and Development Committee. Their board members were linked to all facets of the external environment including government, for-profit companies, and family foundations.

**Strengths and Limitations of Research Design**

This research study was designed to embrace the distinct nature of social work as a profession. The profession values human experiences and a person-in-environment framework for developing effective interventions that improve lives and transform communities (Riessman, 1994). Consistent with the profession and its values, the research study utilized a qualitative methodology guided by a constructivist epistemology. This approach offered several strengths and limitations for the research design.
There were three primary strengths of the research design. The first was the methodology used to address the study’s research questions. Qualitative methodology enables researchers to explore nuances of meaning in data that are not generally captured in quantitative studies. This was especially important due to the multiple realities that can exist when exploring perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. The methodology and approach to data analysis allowed the research participants to contribute to the construction and reconstruction of reality as they described and reflected upon their individual experiences.

A second strength of the research design was the sampling method. A nonprobability, purposive sample of nine nonprofit social service organizations from Baltimore, Maryland was selected and clustered in three groups according to annual budget size. The sample was representative of the nonprofit social service organizations in the city which allowed the researcher to gather data toward the goal of theory construction. This form of sampling is appropriate in pre-experimental research designs utilizing qualitative methodology. It is also appropriate when the goal of research is to expand knowledge about a particular phenomenon for which a select group has relevant experience.

A third strength of the research design was a systematic collection of multiple sources of evidence. To address the study’s three primary questions, the researcher collected qualitative data via semi-structured interviews with board chairs and executive directors. In addition, descriptive data were also collected using an Organizational Demographic Survey. Further, documents from each nonprofit social service organization were collected including 990 forms, bylaws, job descriptions, annual reports, and marketing collateral. Data collection and analysis
were completed in tandem which allowed the researcher to examine the “convergence of multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 1994, p. 93). Identifying the points of intersection or convergence occurred during data and theory triangulation.

Although the research design had several strengths, there were also limitations. These included the sample size, multiple case study design, and generalizability. The sample size represents the first limitation. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2012), there were 990 registered human service organizations in Baltimore, Maryland. While the sample was representative, it only accounted for .01% of the city’s total human service nonprofit organizations.

The second limitation was the multiple case study design and the associated timeframe during which data collection occurred. Consistent with the case study approach, each group was studied only once. However, there was a 12-month time lapse for data collection between the first and last interviews. As a result, perceptions of board chairs and executive directors could have been influenced by history or change producing events. Natural growth or maturation that occurs with the passage of time could have also influenced their perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

Due to the sample size and multiple case study design, a final limitation was generalizability. While the findings have implications for nonprofit social service organizations experiencing similar environmental shifts and funding uncertainty, they are not applicable to the entire universe of 354,501 registered human service nonprofits in the country. Instead of generalizing the findings to a larger population, however, the goal was to provide a rich description of the subjective experiences of individuals to inform theory development.
Implications for Social Work

Changing the way organizational leaders think about and pursue strategies to stabilize funding during times of economic uncertainty is a complex process that involves multiple variables. Although the social service literature provides very little indication of the relative importance of the variables discussed in relation to fundraising, practitioners in the field must increasingly develop a better understanding of the impact management staff and boards of directors have when working to influence the very environments that provide financial resources (Barney, 1991).

Leaders in the nonprofit social service sector should reassess the evolving roles of management staff and boards of directors to maximize their fundraising capacity. Additionally, nonprofit social service organizations should focus future board development efforts on attracting and retaining individuals representing diversity by occupation, age, gender, race, ethnicity, and community linkages. Further, leaders should find the ideal board size to allow their respective organizations to access resources in the community. Furthermore, boards should establish and maintain structures that allow them to engage in strategic decision making related to organizational responses to changes in the environment.

Leaders should also engage board members in practices that allow them to develop a sense of affective and normative commitment toward the organization. Ultimately, emotional attachment and feelings of obligation to the organization can impact involvement in and support of various priorities, including fundraising endeavors that create additional streams of revenue for mission-impact programs. Finally, leaders should reflect upon the individual characteristics and practices that help facilitate change in organizational practices that lead to increased funding
for mission-impact programs and services. These key insights drawn from the findings and supported by the social service management literature are the foundation for developing and testing future models of management staff and board roles in fundraising.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although the recent environmental shifts have forced nonprofit social service organizations to rethink the manner in which they leverage needed resources and lead in times of uncertainty, the adaptive fundraising strategies utilized by management staff and boards can positively impact long-term organizational outcomes. In an effort to integrate and build upon existing knowledge about this topic, explanatory and descriptive research studies investigating the impact of specific fundraising strategies that help to sustain programs are recommended. In addition, descriptive research studies that examine the significance between revenue sources and boundary-spanning activities of boards and management staff during environmental instability could also provide practice and organizational development implications for leaders.

Future research that examines the impact of race and ethnicity of the executive director and board members on fundraising outcomes in the nonprofit social service sector is recommended. Although this research study collected demographic data on race and ethnicity, the sample size was too small to discern if race influenced perceptions about roles and responsibilities in fundraising or effectiveness in achieving fundraising outcomes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the researcher’s reflexivity led her to sense that race and gender may have influenced the perceptions of the participants regarding fundraising. However, questions that explored how race, ethnicity, and gender influenced fundraising outcomes were not included in the study design. Future research is recommended to explore how race and gender influence
the personal perceptions of executive directors and board members regarding their roles and to examine how internalized or institutionalized racism may affect the success of fundraising in general. Additionally, a mixed methodology research study using prolonged engagement with the sample could help to further uncover nuances related to board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. These recommendations would expand the existing literature and offer practical guidance to social work students, direct service practitioners, and mid and upper level administrators.

**Conclusions**

Nonprofit social service organizations are critical in providing services vital to families and communities. The health of the nonprofit sector depends not only on the effectiveness and efficiency of the service provision, but also on the financial viability of the organization. This research has illuminated the importance of the “dynamic duo”, board members and management staff, in examining internal structures and understanding external threats and opportunities affecting the organization. These roles are dynamic and work in tandem to position the organization for sustainability and growth. Given the reciprocal relationship that organizations have with their environments, it is important for management staff and boards of directors to read and anticipate external factors in their environments that will impact fundraising outcomes. Finding the right “fit” between organizational structures and strategies to influence the environment should increasingly become the new work of management staff and boards of directors in the nonprofit social service industry.
Appendix A

Invitation Letter

CUA

The Catholic University of America

National Catholic School of Social Service
Washington, DC  20064
202-319-5458
Fax 202-319-5093

<Date>

<Name>
<Address>

Dear <Name>:

My name is Ruth Jones and I am a doctoral student at The Catholic University of America National Catholic School of Social Service. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Social Work, I am conducting a research study to explore nonprofit board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

You have been identified as a potential research participant based on your organization’s membership with the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations and your role as a Board Chair or Executive Director for an agency providing services to children and families. Today, I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study. At a date, time and location convenient for you, I welcome the opportunity to interview you about your perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed. Information obtained during interviews will be kept confidential. The information from interviews will be used to develop a model of effective fundraising for board and senior management staff in the nonprofit sector.
I will contact you via telephone within the next week to explore your interest in the research study, as well as confirm an interview date, time and location if you agree to participate. If you desire to reach me before my follow-up outreach to you, please contact me at [xxx] or [xxx]. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Wendy Whiting Blome, at (202) 319-5486 or blome@cua.edu.

Please review the enclosed consent form and kindly let me know if you have any questions. The consent form explains the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the research study further. You must sign a copy of the consent form prior to an interview in order to participate.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to receive your assistance in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ruth T. Jones, MSW
Ph.D. Candidate/Principal Investigator
Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Format

Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant Interview Data Sheet</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ CEO or President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ CEO and President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Board Chair/President</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector Representation:</strong></td>
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<td><em>(Board Chairs Only)</em></td>
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<td>☐ Other: _______________________</td>
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<td>☐ MSW Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Other Master’s Degree</td>
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<td>☐ Doctorate/Professional Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ More than 5</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Date/Time of Interview: ___________________________/___________________________

Agency Code: _______________________________________________________________
Introduction:

I want to start by thanking you for taking the time to speak with me today. As you know, I am a doctoral student at The Catholic University of America, National Catholic School of Social Service. I am studying nonprofit board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Everything you say in this interview will be confidential. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed. Do you have any questions for me at this time? May I have your permission to begin and audiotape the interview? Excellent!

General Information:

*Investigator: Let's begin by talking a little about you and your organization.*

- How long have you been with [insert name of organization] and in what capacity?
- What is your current role with the organization?
- What is the mission of your organization?
- What are the three largest program services provided by your organization to fulfill this mission?
  - By number of clients served?
  - By amount of revenue allocated to support the program?

Environmental Context:

*Investigator: Now, let's talk about the experience of your organization in the environment where it operates.*

- What critical events has your organization experienced within the past three years?
  - Changes in National, State, or Local Public Policies?
Changes in Funding Availability?
Changes in Client Demographic?
Increase/Decrease in the Number of For-Profit and/or Nonprofit Organizations with Similar Mission?

- How did the organization respond to these changes?
  - Strategic Planning?
  - Organizational Restructuring?
  - Program Expansion/Retrenchment?
  - Rebranding?
  - Leadership Transition(s)?

- In the midst of these changes, how has funding for your organization’s program services changed within the past three years?
  - Increased/Decreased Contributions?
  - Increased/Decreased Grants?
  - Increased/Decreased Program Revenue?
  - Increased/Decreased Investment Income?

**Board and Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising:**

*Investigator: Given the importance of funding in the delivery of program services, let’s transition now to board and staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.*

- In your opinion, what is the board of directors’ role in fundraising?
  - Prospect Research?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Event Coordination/Implementation?
  - Making Contributions to Organization?
  - Proposal Writing?
  - Attending Solicitation and/or Information Meetings?
  - Attending and/or Inviting Friends to Events?

- What are 2 or 3 specific examples of things this board has done to actively participate in fundraising for the organization?

- In your opinion, what is the Executive Director’s role in fundraising?
  - Prospect Research?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Long-Range Planning?
Event Coordination/Implementation?
Making Contributions to Organization?
Proposal Writing?
Attending Solicitation and/or Information Meetings?
Attending and/or Inviting Friends to Events?

- What are 2 or 3 specific examples of things the Executive Director has done to actively participate in fundraising for the organization?

- (Board Chairs Only) What kinds of strategies do you, as the Board Chair, utilize to help the board of directors understand the organization’s fundraising needs and goals?
  - Financial Reports?
  - Program Reports?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Other?

- (Executive Directors Only) What kinds of strategies do you, as the Executive Director, utilize to understand the organization's fundraising needs and goals? To communicate to the board of directors the organization's fundraising needs and goals?
  - Financial Reports
  - Program Reports
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Other?

- In what ways do you and the Executive Director (or Board Chair) collaborate to make sure the fundraising needs of the organization are met?
  - Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly Meetings?
  - Discussions about Program-Related Goals and Fundraising Needs?
  - Other?

**Board and Organizational Fundraising Structure:**

*Investigator: Now, let’s spend some time talking about the fundraising structure of your board and organization.*

- How is your board structured to meet identified fundraising needs and goals?
  - Board Committees?
  - Fundraising Policies and/or Procedures?
• How is your organization structured to meet identified fundraising needs and goals?
  - Fundraising/Development Staff or Consultant Position(s)?
  - Program Staff Write Proposals?
  - Fundraising Software/Donor Tracking Databases?
  - Fund Development Plan?

• What skills, knowledge, or experience do your board members have that enable them to effectively meet fundraising goals?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Prospect Identification?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Grant Writing?
  - Event Management and Coordination?

• (Board Chairs Only) What skills, knowledge, or experience does your Executive Director have that enables him/her to effectively meet fundraising goals?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Prospect Identification?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Grant Writing?
  - Event Management and Coordination?

• (Executive Directors Only) What skills, knowledge, or experience does your Board Chair have that enables him/her to effectively meet fundraising goals?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Prospect Identification?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Grant Writing?
  - Event Management and Coordination?

• What skills, knowledge, or experience would you like to develop among the board members or within yourself to more effectively meet fundraising goals?
  - Long-Range Planning?
  - Prospect Identification?
  - Donor Cultivation?
  - Grant Writing?
  - Event Management and Coordination?

Investigator: I’d like to spend a few moments discussing leadership style and your perceptions about how leadership style is related to fundraising outcomes in the nonprofit social service sector?
• Tell me a little bit about your leadership style? What five words would you use to describe it and why?

• (Board Chairs Only) How would you describe the leadership style of the Executive Director? Give me a few examples to illustrate that description.

• (Executive Directors Only) How would you describe the leadership style of the Board Chair? Give me a few examples to illustrate that description.

• When thinking about how the two of you work together to achieve the organization’s fundraising goals, what name would you use to describe your combined leadership styles? Give me a few examples to illustrate that description.

• In what ways do you believe your combined leadership styles have influenced fundraising efforts and outcomes for this organization?

   - Inspired/Discouraged Board Members or Staff
   - Unified/Fragmented the Board or Staff
   - Challenged/Maintained the Status Quo (e.g. strategies or desired outcomes)
   - Other?

Investigator: We have talked a great deal about your perceptions related to board and staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising. You have provided insightful information. Is there anything we have not discussed that you deem important for me to know regarding board and management roles and responsibilities in fundraising?

If there isn’t anything additional that you would like to add, let’s take about 5 minutes to review the organizational demographic survey discussed briefly before we started the interview. As stated previously, I am providing an organizational demographic survey for you to complete and return to me in a self-addressed envelope within the next seven days.

The purpose of the survey is to collect basic information about your organization that will help to inform research findings of the study. The survey has four components including general information, chief executive characteristics, organizational structure, and board structure and composition. The survey also requests several documents from your organization that will be reviewed by the investigator only.

I will follow-up with you via email or a telephone call if for some reason I have not received the completed survey within seven days. I will return to your agency to obtain the survey if that is more convenient for you.
Do you have any questions at this time that I may answer? If not, please feel free to contact me via email or telephone if you have any questions after this interview.

Thank you again for your time and feedback! It has been a pleasure for me to speak with you today.
Appendix C
Organizational Demographic Survey

Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising

Organizational Demographic Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A: General Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Founded:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Areas Served:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Clients Served Annually (Unduplicated):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Annual Budget: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Revenue for Last Fiscal Year: (Please &quot;&quot; all that apply.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Donor Contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue from Funding Sources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Contracts: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants: $</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Grants: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Donor Contributions: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Fee-for-Service Contracts: $</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income: $</td>
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<td>Other: $</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising Strategies Used by the Organization: (Please &quot;&quot; all that apply.)</td>
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<td>Mail Solicitations</td>
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<td>Email Solicitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone Solicitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Person Solicitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solicitation of Non-Government Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications for Government Contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Fundraising Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part B: Chief Executive Characteristics

| **Gender:** | ❑ Male  
            | ❑ Female |
|-------------|---------|
| **Race/Ethnicity:** | ❑ White  
                         ❑ Black or African American  
                         ❑ Hispanic or Latino  
                         ❑ Asian  
                         ❑ American Indian  
                         ❑ Other: |
| **Age:** | ❑ under 40  
                ❑ 41-59  
                ❑ over 60 |
| **Executive Director Length of Service with Organization:** | ❑ Less than 3 years  
                                             ❑ 3-5 years  
                                             ❑ More than 5 years |
| **Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Executive Director:** | ❑ Less than High School Diploma  
                                       ❑ High School Diploma/GED  
                                       ❑ Some College  
                                       ❑ Associate's Degree  
                                       ❑ Bachelor's Degree  
                                       ❑ MSW Degree  
                                       ❑ Other Master's Degree: ____________  
                                       ❑ Doctorate/JD Degree |
| **Executive Director's Experience as a Nonprofit Chief Executive Prior to Current Position:** | ❑ Less than 5 years  
                                             ❑ 6-10 years  
                                             ❑ More than 10 years |
| **Executive Director a Voting Board Member:** | ❑ Yes  
                                             ❑ No |
| **Annual Salary Range of Executive Director:** | ❑ Less than $100,000  
                                            ❑ $100,000 - $150,000  
                                            ❑ $150,000 - $200,000  
                                            ❑ More than $200,000 |
### Part C: Board Chair Characteristics

| Gender: | ☐ Male  
| ☐ Female |
| Race/Ethnicity: | ☐ White  
| ☐ Black or African American  
| ☐ Hispanic or Latino  
| ☐ Asian  
| ☐ American Indian  
| ☐ Other: |
| Age: | ☐ under 40  
| ☐ 41-59  
| ☐ over 60 |
| Board Chair Length of Service with Organization: | ☐ Less than 3 years  
| ☐ 3-5 years  
| ☐ More than 5 years |
| Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Board Chair: | ☐ Less than High School Diploma  
| ☐ High School Diploma/GED  
| ☐ Some College  
| ☐ Associate’s Degree  
| ☐ Bachelor's Degree  
| ☐ MSW Degree  
| ☐ Other Master's Degree: ___________  
| ☐ Doctorate/JD Degree |

### Part D: Organizational Structure

<p>| Number of Paid Staff: (as of 11/01/10) | Full-Time:_____  Part-Time:_____ |
| Number of Volunteer Staff: (as of 11/01/10) | Full-Time:_____  Part-Time:_____ |
| Number of Paid Fundraising Staff and/or Consultant Positions: (as of 11/01/10) | Full-Time:_____  Part-Time:_____ |
| Titles of Paid Fundraising Staff and/or Consultant Positions: (as of 11/01/10) | ☐ |</p>
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<th>Part E: Board Structure and Composition</th>
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<td><strong>Number of Voting Board Members:</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>☐ 3 Terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 4 Terms</td>
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<td><strong>Gender of Board Members:</strong></td>
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<td># of Males: ___________________</td>
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<td># of Females: ___________________</td>
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<td># over 60: __________</td>
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<td><strong>Sector Representation of Board Members:</strong></td>
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<td># Nonprofit: __________</td>
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Part F: Document Request  
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return the completed survey with the requested attachments no later than June 15, 2012 to:

Ruth T. Jones, MSW  
[xxx][xxx]

Thank you for your time and support!
Confidentiality Agreement for Transcription Services

I, ____________________________, transcriptionist for the research study, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from the Researcher, Ruth T. Jones, related to her doctoral study on “Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising.”

Furthermore, I agree:

- To keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., tapes, transcripts, thumb drives) with anyone other than the Researcher, Ruth T. Jones.
- To keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., tapes, transcripts, backup devices) in a locked file cabinet or on a password protected computer while it is in my possession.
- To return all research information in any form or format (e.g., tapes, transcripts, backup devices) to the Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
- To not make copies of any audiotapes or computer files of the transcribed interview texts.
- To erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive or backup devices) once the project is completed.

I am aware that I can be held liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber’s Name (Printed): ________________________________
Transcriber’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
Appendix E

Consent Form

The Catholic University of America

National Catholic School of Social Service
Washington, DC  20064
202-319-5458
Fax 202-319-5093

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Name of Study:  Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising

Principal Investigator:  Ruth T. Jones, MSW

Research Supervisors:  Wendy Whiting Blome, Ph.D.; Susanne Bennett, Ph.D.; Joseph Shields, Ph.D.

Purpose:  I understand that the purpose of this research study is to explore board chair and executive director perceptions of board and management staff roles and responsibilities in fundraising.  This study is being carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Ph.D. degree in Social Work at The Catholic University of America.

Description of Procedures: I am aware that I have been asked to participate in this study because of my role as a board chair or executive director for a nonprofit, social service agency providing programs for children and families.  I understand that my participation will include involvement in one interview that will be audio-taped and transcribed by the investigator.  I understand that the interview will last for approximately 60 minutes.  I am aware that my participation is voluntary.  I understand that the audio-tape, transcription, and investigator’s notes from the interview will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the investigator’s office.  These items will remain in the sole possession of the investigator.  The audio-tapes, transcriptions, and investigator’s notes will be destroyed after five years.
I understand that my participation will also include completing an organizational demographic survey immediately following my interview. I have had an opportunity to review the survey and understand the kind of information I have been asked to provide. I also understand that submission of agency documents is voluntary. The investigator will provide a self-addressed envelope to me at the time of my interview to return the survey and requested documents. I understand that the investigator may return to my agency to obtain the survey if I do not return it via postal mail within seven days.

**Discomforts and Risks:** No discomfort is anticipated. Information obtained during the study will be kept confidential. However, I understand that it could be possible for someone to determine which agencies were included in the research due to the small sample size. Therefore, anonymity cannot be assured. I understand that I am free to discuss any aspect of this study with the investigator. I also understand that I may choose not to answer any particular question or choose to withdraw my participation at any time. I understand that the interview will be scheduled at a time and location convenient for me. I also understand that the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicions of harm to me, to children, or to others.

**Expected Benefits:** I understand that my participation in this research may not benefit me directly. However, the information obtained may be useful in developing a model of effective fundraising in nonprofit organizations focusing on board and management roles and responsibilities.

**Withdrawal from Study:** I understand that I do not have to take part in this study, and my refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of rights to which I am entitled. I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled.

**Contacts:** If there are questions regarding this study, I can contact Ruth T. Jones at (301) 442-1295 or 36jonesr@cardinalmail.cua.edu.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that all information collected for this study will be kept confidential. I understand that any identifying information will be removed at the point of transcription. I understand that direct quotes from my interview may be published, but that my name or my agency’s name will not be attributed to the quotes. I understand that findings from this study will be published. I also understand that my name, or the name of my organization, will not be used in any publications.

**Research Subject Rights:** I have read all of the above. The research investigator, Ruth T. Jones, has explained the study to me and answered all of my questions. I have been told of the risks or discomforts and possible benefits of the study.
I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the research study as described. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

_________________________________________________________
Printed Name of Participant

_________________________________________________________
Signature of Participant  Date

_________________________________________________________
Signature of Investigator/Researcher  Date

Any complaints or comments about your participation in this research project should be directed to the Secretary, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Services, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064; (202) 319-5218.
Appendix F

Chain of Custody

Nonprofit Board Chair and Executive Director Perceptions of Board and Management Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Fundraising

Chain of Custody Procedures

The research will provide the transcriptionist with the audiotapes for the interviews immediately following the individual interviews with the board chair and executive director from each nonprofit social service agency. Prior to receiving the audiotapes, the transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. The transcriptionist will transcribe each interview and maintain the electronic file for the transcriptions on a password protected computer.

The audiotape and an electronic file of each transcription saved on a thumb drive will be returned to the researcher by the transcriptionist within two business days of completing the transcription. The transcriptionist will not make copies of the audiotape or electronic files of transcriptions. After returning the audiotapes and electronic files of each transcription to the researcher, the transcriptionist will delete or destroy all files saved on the computer hard drive or backup devices.

The researcher will receive the returned audiotapes and electronic files for each transcription from the transcriptionist and secure the items in a locked file cabinet in the investigator’s office. The electronic files will be transferred to and secured on a password protected computer. All audiotapes will be destroyed upon conclusion of the dissertation study. The electronic files of the transcriptions will be destroyed by the researcher after five years of completing the research study.
References


