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A Qualitative Case Study of Black Women Nonprofit Founders:
Social Justice and Social Change in the Community

A dissertation submitted in its partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Social Welfare

by

Sara Elizabeth Terrana

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Qualitative Case Study of Black Women Nonprofit Founders:
Social Justice and Social Change in the Community

by

Sara Elizabeth Terrana

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Laura S. Abrams, Chair

Community-based nonprofit human service organizations (HSOs) are integral to providing neighborhood-level social services, yet founding and maintaining HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage often presents considerable challenges for founders. Previous studies have documented the underrepresentation of minority founders and leaders in such organizations. Vast differences often exist between the lived experience of people of color and non-Hispanic Whites, yet there is a dearth of research about minority founders and leaders of HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. This study begins to fill this gap by examining the experiences of five Black women founders turned executive directors of HSOs in a Los Angeles neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage from 1977–2017. Importantly, this study uniquely examines why individuals found HSOs in this context, how their identities shaped their founding experiences, and how they used their complex social positions to negotiate for

organizational establishment and growth. Social identity theory and concepts concerning intersectionality were used to frame the study.

The study design was a multiple case study. Data collection included 30 months of observational field research, 13 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five Black women founders and three community stakeholders, and an archival review of each HSO's IRS 990 tax-exempt forms, website data, and other publicly available documents, including published interviews, autobiographical books, and news articles on the founders or organizations.

A within-case analysis reveals that founders' intersectional social identities were shaped by key historical and institutional events and processes—from the devolution and privatization of social services, to the War on Drugs, to mass incarceration—which fueled their desire to establish organizations in their community. None of the founders adhered to a single strategy or tactic of accepting, adapting, or challenging one's social identity when interacting with those in more privileged positions of society. Rather, this was situationally dependent—they seemingly excelled in matching strategy (e.g., socially creative tactics, collective action) to situation. Thus, one's social identity appeared to guide how these women negotiated with the external environment for organizational resources. This research highlights the founders' processes and experiences of founding, including how the founders navigated structural and systemic barriers, and importantly, how they negotiated their identities while doing so. Therefore, this research deepens our knowledge of service delivery by minority founders who personally identify with the clients and the neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage they serve.

The dissertation of Sara Elizabeth Terrana is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2019

DEDICATION

To my mother, who never had the chance to see me in graduate school. I hope you are smiling somewhere. This degree is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	x
VITA	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Theoretical Framework.....	3
Social Identity Theory.....	4
Theorizing Intersectionality	5
Research Questions.....	6
Importance of the Study.....	6
Definitions.....	7
Overview	8
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	9
Founders.....	9
Black Women as Founders and Leaders.....	11
Neighborhoods of Concentrated Disadvantage: Human Service Organizations.....	13
Historical Factors Contributing to Neighborhoods of Concentrated Disadvantage.....	15
Theoretical Framework.....	17
Social Identity Theory.....	18
Intersectionality	19
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY.....	22
The Qualitative Research Paradigm	22
Research Design - Case Selection	24
Data Collection.....	26
Interview Data	29
Observation Data	30
Archival Documents	31
Data Analysis	32
Ethical Considerations	34
Rigor and Trustworthiness	35
Reflexivity Statement.....	35
CHAPTER 4: SHERWOOD.....	38
1920s - 50s: De Jure Segregation	39
1960s - 80s: War on Poverty, the Civil Rights Movement, & Rebellions.....	40
Mid 1980s - 2000s: War on Drugs, the Crack Crisis, & Mass Incarceration	43
Current Context	47
Gangs	50
Institutional Environment.....	52
CHAPTER 5: WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES.....	55
Community Parents Organization (Case Study 1	56
HOPE For Women (Case Study 2).....	65
OASIS (Case Study 3)	78

Kacee's Place 4 Positive Change (Case Study 4)	94
Mother's Against Violence (Case Study 5)	111
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS.....	121
RQ1a: Personal Biography.....	122
Resilience	124
Disenfranchised Grief.....	125
RQ1b: The Decision to be in Sherwood	126
RQ1c: The Process and Experience.....	127
Organizational Know-How	127
Social Capital	128
Criminal Justice System.....	129
RQ2: Accept - Adapt - Challenge: Social Identity	130
Resources	131
Legitimacy.....	132
Limitations and Future Research.....	134
Implications.....	135
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	139
Appendix B: Observation Notes Protocol	144
References.....	145

Tables

Table 1: Brief overview of founder data.....	28
Table 2: Brief overview of stakeholder data.....	28

Figures

Figure 1: Timeline of key historical and institutional events of Sherwood.....	122
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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Community-based nonprofit human service organizations (HSOs) are an integral part of the social service safety net (Hasenfeld, 2009). Location is critical to facilitating service utilization by, and access for, high-need populations (Allard, 2008; Allard, Tolman, & Rosen, 2003; Bielefeld, 2000; Bielefeld, Murdoch, & Waddell, 1997). Hence, HSOs are particularly important in *neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage*, which occur where both racial segregation and high poverty levels are present and which are characterized by high rates of unemployment, public assistance, violence, and single-parent homes, along with low rates of educational attainment (Jargowsky, 1997; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage are characterized by longstanding government disinvestment, including tactics such as redlining, reverse redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and urban planning disasters (Massey & Denton, 1993; Mitchell & Franco, 2018; Rothstein, 2017). Nonetheless, HSOs are noticeably underrepresented in these communities (Allard, 2008; Bielefeld, 2000; Bielefeld, Murdoch, & Waddell, 1997; Garrow, 2012, 2015; Grønbjerg & Paarlberg, 2001; Joassart-Marcelli & Wolch, 2003; Katz, 2014; for exceptions, see Corbin, 1999; Peck, 2008). Founding and maintaining nonprofit organizations in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage often presents considerable challenges for founders, including difficulties in collecting donations and charging fees for services, dealing with racial tensions and changing demographics, and safety concerns (Chambré, 1997; Sampson, 2013; Wolpert, 1993). Yet, despite the importance of HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage as well as the difficulties HSOs face in such contexts, little scholarly attention is paid to founders of HSOs who choose to locate their organizations in these neighborhoods. This is particularly true when these founders are women of color (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Scott, 1990).

Problem Statement

The nonprofit founding literature lacks a race and gender analysis (Gibelman, 2000; Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Scott, 1990; Teegarden, 2004; Themudo, 2009; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017). The nonprofit sector provides a number of professional opportunities for women (Handy, Kassam, & Renade, 2002; Mastracci & Herring, 2010), and women are the overwhelming majority of nonprofit volunteers and front-line service workers (Gibelman, 2000; Guidestar, 2017; Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009), yet the very term *women* within this context usually refers only refer to White women, as there is rare mention of women of color in founder and leader roles (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Scott, 1990). While researchers, foundation reports, and public discourse have explicitly noted the underrepresentation of minority founders and leaders of nonprofit organizations (De Vita, Roeger, & Niedzwiecki, 2009; Halpern, 2006; Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009; Lecy, Van Slyke, & Yoon, 2016; McGinnis, 2011; Teegarden, 2004; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017; Van Slyke & Lecy, 2012), few empirical inquiries actually examine founder identity (for exceptions, see: Handy et al., 2002; Handy et al., 2007; Terrana, 2017). The first large-scale empirical survey of nonprofit founders revealed that founders are overwhelmingly “White, middle-class, and well-educated” (Lecy et al., 2016, p. 20).

As a result, HSOs in poor urban communities that primarily serve people of color are often founded and led by White individuals with little or no direct experience with the very issues that the agencies address (Gooden, Evans, Perkins, Gooden, & Pang, 2018; Kivel, 2007). Vast differences often exist between the lived experience of people of color who are founders of HSOs, on the one hand, and non-Hispanic Whites, and even fewer of the former also identify as female; furthermore, the nonprofit founding and social welfare literatures often ignore the

experiences of women of color (Gordon, 1991; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Scott, 1990). Women of color, specifically Black¹ women, have a long-established presence within the human services sector (DuBois, 1899; Martin & Martin, 1985; Ross, 1978; Watkins-Hayes, 2009), yet their roles and experiences in founding organizations remains under-studied (Gooden et al., 2018; Gordon, 1991; Scott, 1990). Contemporary scholars have called for more research centered on diversity and inclusion, particularly regarding how to increase representation while accounting for the influences of organizational, community, and societal contexts (McGinnis, 2011; Weisinger, Borges-Méndez, & Milofsky, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate the experiences of Black women who establish and maintain HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. In particular, the study explores how the experiences of these women and the HSOs they found are shaped not only by key historical and institutional events and processes—from the devolution and privatization of social services, to the War on Drugs, to mass incarceration—but also by the intersectional social identities of the founders themselves. To examine these factors, this study investigates how the women launch and maintain their HSOs; this includes how these founders mobilize resources and establish legitimacy, with a particular focus on how the women interact with those in positions of privilege, who often control access to needed resources.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study combines aspects of social identity theory (SIT) with an analytical lens attentive to intersectionality to examine how founders' gender, racial and

¹ Throughout this text, the terms 'Black' and 'African American' are used interchangeably.

ethnic identity, and socioeconomic status shape their social identities and subsequent efforts to found and maintain HSOs.

Social Identity Theory

The term “social identity” refers to how individuals define themselves in relation to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). One’s social identity is a link to the social world, where a shared identity may function as a foundation for collective social action, or even a sense of belonging (Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010). The very term “social identity” is relational: it is developed through an understanding of one’s similarities and differences with others based on present-day occurrences and collective histories. Social identity theory posits that individuals develop a self-concept that integrates multiple collective identities (e.g., Black and female; Latino and gay; White, middle-class male) (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Stryker, 1987; Tajfel, 1982, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Often focusing on inter-group relations of large-scale groups (e.g., race, gender, age) in which social comparisons drive behavior, SIT helps to understand discrimination, prejudice, and social conflict and change, where the emphasis lies on the collective self, as opposed to the autonomous self (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Thus, comparisons shape interactions, as individuals continually compare their groups or categories with other groups or categories (i.e., in-group/out-group evaluations).

Scholars have long studied how individuals respond when relegated to devalued groups in a hierarchical society—for example, women in a sexist society, low-wage workers in a class-divided society, or Black people in a racist society (Reicher et al., 2010). Among various options, individuals can accept, adapt (assimilate), or challenge such devaluation through individual or collective strategies, depending on the permeability or impermeability of the group membership (Hogg, 2005; Reicher et al., 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this study, SIT helps to examine

how founders of HSOs negotiate their social identities, particularly in the context of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. How do these individuals choose to accept, adapt, or challenge the value assigned to their own identities—as well as those assigned to the community with which they work—while simultaneously seeking legitimacy, resources, and organizational survival? Furthermore, to what extent can their efforts to negotiate their own identities serve as a strategy to support the HSO itself?

Theorizing Intersectionality

Intersectionality is best conceptualized as an analytical lens through which to examine how intersecting social identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, age, religion, etc.) combine to shape one's social reality and identity (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; McCall, 2005). The interaction of multiple identities, moreover, is understood to have varied, rather than simply additive, effects that depend on the different levels of value assigned to each identity. For example, when a Black woman founds an HSO, her identity and experience are both “raced” and “gendered.” If she were also born and raised in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage, her experience would also be “classed” in manners distinct from someone with a middle- or upper-class upbringing (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; McCall, 2005). The key is that no single identity can be isolated and studied as if it were not somehow shaped by the others. It is not surprising that women of color themselves have pioneered this perspective, given how their experiences have so often been occluded by analyses attentive only to race *or* gender.

It is important to stress, however, that intersectionality characterizes the identity and experience of *all* individuals, only in vastly different manners. All too often, social identities are understood to matter only when *negatively* valued, yet their impacts are just as significant when affording privilege. Being Black, for example, may be readily recognized as a “raced”

experience, while being White is often considered simply “neutral” and thus unaffected by race. This, however, is precisely how the privilege assigned to certain identities operates—by remaining unnamed and invisible. In other words, middle-class White men have no less intersectional identities and lives than working-class Black women. By focusing on the latter, this study does not seek to reinforce the assumption that intersectionality applies only to this category of founders; rather, it aims to expand our knowledge about such founders precisely because it is their specific intersectional experiences that have been neglected in the supposedly “general” nonprofit literature.

Research Questions

RQ1. How do founders’ intersectional social identities (e.g., racial/ethnic identity, gender, socioeconomic status) shape their founding experiences? More specifically:

- What about the personal biographies of the women led them to become founders?
- How did their intersectional identities shape their decisions to found HSOs in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage?
- How did their intersectional identity shape their process and experience of founding the HSOs?

RQ2. How do the founders accept, adapt, or challenge their social identities in the process of seeking organizational resources, legitimacy, and survival—particularly when interacting with those in positions of privilege, who often control access to needed resources?

Importance of the Study

This research contributes to the broader field of social welfare nonprofit studies, which has rarely examined the motivations, experiences, or strategies of Black women founders of HSOs. The organizations run by these women are located in a neighborhood that presents

numerous barriers to nonprofit founding yet such service provisions are integral to the social service safety net. Previous research on HSO founders is overwhelmingly premised on the experiences of middle-class, well-educated, White individuals. As such, it has failed to explore how the intersecting hierarchies of race, class, and gender may shape not only the experiences of founders but also the services provided by the organizations they create and the experiences of the communities those organizations serve. By focusing on founders who identify as Black and female and who personally identify with the clients and neighborhood they serve, this study begins to fill that gap.

Knowing more about how these particular founders navigate structural and systemic barriers is also critical to deepening the knowledge base on service delivery in urban communities. This research is particularly critical given the pronounced role of HSOs in urban, low-income, communities of color in an era of increased privatization and devolution as well as the resulting macro social policy changes that have made such communities highly dependent on HSOs. As the nonprofit sector continues to grow and play a key role in safety net services in these communities, and as minorities, and particularly Black women, continue to found HSOs and take on leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, there is an increased need for scholarly attention to who shapes the work of HSOs and how.

Definitions

Nonprofit community-based HSOs are defined here as public charities that have obtained 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and are physically located in, and primarily serve, members of their local community (of which the vast majority are poor urban racial/ethnic minorities in this study context). The objectives of the five specific organizations in this study vary, but all aim to facilitate social change through providing a range of social services in the local community. The

term “concentrated disadvantage” is an indicator of neighborhood poverty and, more specifically, the intersection between racially segregated areas and high-poverty neighborhoods (Sampson, 2013). Neighborhoods are usually defined through census tracts as averaging 4,000 residents, and they are considered high poverty when at least 40 percent of residents are categorized as poor (i.e., living at or under the annual poverty line) (Danziger & Gottschalk, 1987; Jargowsky & Bane, 1990; Kasarda, 1993). Concentrated poverty is measured by the percentage of high-poverty neighborhoods in close proximity within a city (Jargowsky, 1997). Areas of concentrated poverty occur when there are numerous high-poverty neighborhoods clustered together, overlapping, and adjacent to one another. When neighborhoods are located at this intersection, they are labeled neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Notably, neighborhoods of concentrated poverty are overwhelmingly populated by people of color, which reflects the strong correlation between race and poverty in the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Danziger & Gottschalk, 1987; Jargowsky, 2013; Massey & Denton, 1993).

Overview

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the extant literature regarding nonprofit founders, specifically Black women in the human services context, and HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. In addition, Chapter 2 further elaborates on the theoretical framework, which weaves together aspects of SIT and intersectional analysis. Chapter 3 explains the study design and research methodology, including the selection criteria for the participants and HSOs studied, as well as the procedures used for data analysis and interpretation. In this chapter, I also address issues of trustworthiness, rigor, and ethical considerations, and I include a reflexivity statement. Chapter 4 provides the historical context of the selected neighborhood of study, as well as the current context, while in Chapter 5 I present a

within-case analysis of the five individual case studies. Chapter 6 discusses the findings, limitations, areas for future research, and raises the implications of the study for research, theory, policy, and social work practice.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Overview of Chapter

This chapter reviews prior research on nonprofit founders in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Through this review, I identify gaps in the current literature and I discuss the role of Black women in the human services context. The review also includes studies concerning the role of HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage and an examination of the historical factors that contribute to these contexts. Finally, I include literature regarding the guiding theoretical framework for this study, SIT, and the intersectionality lens that informs this research.

Founders

The founding literature suggests that nonprofit founders are inspirational, charismatic, and personable individuals (Carman & Nesbit, 2013; Chambré & Fatt, 2002; James, 2003) who are often ideologically motivated to establish organizations, given their deep passion for their organizations' missions (Carman & Nesbit, 2013; Handy et al., 2002; James, 2003; Rose-Ackerman, 1996). Several scholars note that a desire for self-employment also often motivates people to found new organizations (Andersson, 2016; Carman & Nesbit, 2013; Handy et al., 2002). Founders typically possess little experience in the nonprofit sector prior to starting an organization (Carman & Nesbit, 2013; Lecy et al., 2016), and over 90 percent of new organizations are founded by teams of people (Lecy et al., 2016).

However, in terms of understanding the racial demographics behind the research, a fundamental challenge exists to identify minority-founded and -led organizations (Gooden et al., 2018). Thus, unless founder's identity is explicitly stated within the research, most of the literature speaks only to and about the experiences of White, middle-class, well-educated, male

founders (Gooden et al., 2018; Lecy et al., 2016). Consequently, much of our understanding of the traits, behaviors, and experiences of HSO founders is prefaced on a default assumption of whiteness and maleness. As such, we know very little about the traits, behaviors, backgrounds, and ideological views of Black women who found HSOs and whose experiences may differ significantly from those of their White, male counterparts.

Notably, according to a recent report by Branch Associates (2016), compared to White-led organizations, nonprofit organizations led by African Americans are more likely to depend on government grants and have smaller staff sizes, fewer volunteers, and smaller cash reserves, and they are more likely to be located in low-income neighborhoods. Perhaps more crucially, the report details how African American-led organizations serve different clientele than their White-led counterparts—whereas Black organizations are more likely to serve low-income residents, teenagers, and African Americans, White-led organizations are more likely to serve adults, seniors, and White clients (Branch Associates, 2016). Gooden, Perkins, Evans, and Pang (2017) studied three African American-founded and -led nonprofits in New Jersey, Illinois, and New York and found that these organizations “teach African American youth how to excel while being Black,” as the youth learn from the first-hand experiences provided by the leaders of the organizations (p. 46). Similarly, Gooden, Evans, and Pang (2018) make the case to “make the invisible visible” in terms of researching, understanding, and incorporating African American-led nonprofits into the literature of nonprofit studies (p. 490).

Black Women as Founders and Leaders

Women of color, and specifically Black women, have a long-established presence within the human services sector (Gordon, 1991; Scott, 1990). Historically, overt racism and racial discrimination, including the eras of slavery, the sharecropping system, and Jim Crow laws,

contributed to the exploitation of Black women's labor. More recently, racially based economic policies, such as redlining and racially restrictive covenants, along with urban planning mishaps that have resulted in isolated and segregated neighborhoods, have fueled the need for social services within segregated Black communities (Allard, 2008). Black women, who face gendered, racial, and economic discrimination, have historically been the first responders for their own communities and families. They could provide social services within their communities with little pushback, knowledge, or care from White elites (Higginbotham, 1993; Hine, King, & Reed, 1995). Researchers have often described their work as "race work" that encompasses a set of values, beliefs, and principles—namely, to uplift the Black community and lessen human suffering (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Ross, 1978; Watkins-Hayes, 2010). Such conditions have created not only opportunities for Black women to perform various forms of welfare work in their communities but also a platform from which to pursue racial equality (Gordon, 1991), gender equality (Higginbotham, 1993), and social change (Ross, 1978).

Historically, private and public institutions were White controlled and openly neglected the well-being of Black Americans. Therefore, women in segregated Black neighborhoods created *self-help institutions* as workarounds to replicate the social welfare provisions provided to non-minority communities (Gordon, 1991; O'Donnell, 1994; Ross, 1976). Thus, although Black women are often absent from the mainstream history of social welfare, they were actually integral to the growth of the social service system (Gordon, 1991), and they continue to play key roles in human services today (Watkins-Hayes, 2009).

In the U.S., the concepts of race and racial and ethnic identity continue to be a pivotal part of collective and individual self-identity and life experience (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Omi & Winant, 2014; Yanow, 2003). Moreover, the role of gender is particularly important for Black

women due to the significance of gender and race in shaping one's life experiences (Higginbotham, 1992). Watkins-Hayes (2010) notes that given the history of Blacks in the U.S. and in human service work, these women's experiences are "informed rather than determined by race" (p. 314). For Black women founders, their social locations or group memberships (e.g., gender, racial/ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, age, religion, geographic location) provide opportunities for a continuous interchange of institutional and environmental dynamics in the neighborhoods where organizations are founded and in community members' personal and collective experiences (Watkins-Hayes, 2010).

Neighborhoods of Concentrated Disadvantage: Human Service Organizations

A large body of literature on HSOs centers on structural barriers to service utilization and access issues for high-need populations. The physical location of nonprofit organizations and their spatial accessibility often determine whether high-need populations can utilize them (Allard, 2008; Allard et al., 2003; Bielefeld et al., 1997). Bielefeld (2000) notes that social service usage decreases when organizations are more than one mile from clients' homes. Kissane (2003) similarly points out that service utilization decreases if organizations are not accessible by public transit. These findings, combined with low-income families often lacking cars or access to public transit (Ong, 2002), affirm the need for HSO founders to locate organizations near their target clientele.

Even given this knowledge, several scholars have noted the uneven geographic distribution of nonprofit organizations between neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and their wealthier counterparts (Allard, 2008; Bielefeld, 2000; Bielefeld et al., 1997; Grønbjerg & Paarlberg, 2001; Joassart-Marcelli & Wolch, 2003; Katz, 2014; but for exceptions see Corbin, 1999; Peck, 2008; Yan, Guo, & Paarlberg, 2014). Grønbjerg and Paarlberg's (2001) study of

HSOs in Indiana, for example, revealed that, paradoxically, HSO density is low where demand is greatest (i.e., neighborhoods of high poverty). Bielefeld (2000) likewise reported low HSO density in neighborhoods of high poverty and resource deprivation among the few HSOs that were located in such neighborhoods. And, in an exploratory analysis of location choice for human-service and educationally focused nonprofit organizations in six metropolitan areas, Bielefeld and Murdoch (2004) found that organizations tend to be clustered near one another, leaving numerous census tracts with no organizational presence.

Studying the local accessibility of nonprofit organizations in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., Allard (2008) found that low-poverty neighborhoods have more social service organizations than high-poverty neighborhoods. In Los Angeles, specifically, Allard (2008) found that in census tracts comprised mostly of African American and Latinx residents, access to human services was approximately half that of census tracts where residents were predominantly White. Adding nuance to this perspective, Wo (2018) examined census tracts in Los Angeles and found a nonlinear relationship between concentrated disadvantage and nonprofit density; violent crime, in particular, had a linear, adverse effect on all forms of nonprofit density.

Garrow (2012) considers race and ethnicity in analyses of HSOs in Los Angeles census tracts and revealed that the higher the percentage of African American residents, the lower the amount of government funding. Human service organizations typically serve a local community and depend on that community for various types of support (Wolpert, 1993). Therefore, compared to those in wealthier communities, HSOs in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods with a high percentage of African Americans (>20%) may not only have a harder time receiving government funds (Garrow, 2012) but may also have fewer local opportunities to generate income, collect donations, or charge fees for services (Wolpert, 1993). It is often difficult for

HSOs in these areas to access a locally based, skilled workforce (Ryu, 2008; Weng, 2014) because residents of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage may experience *compounded disadvantages* (e.g., low educational attainment, adverse physical and mental health outcomes, low levels of employment, high arrest rates, and increased risks of violence) (Sampson, 2013). Compounded disadvantages may further isolate residents from access to outside resources and thus limit the usefulness of local network ties (Sampson, 2013). Likewise, when HSOs are located in high-crime areas, they may face safety concerns (e.g., the threat of gang violence, building security, theft), which may negatively affect them (Wo, 2018).

Historical Factors Contributing to Neighborhoods of Concentrated Disadvantage

A confluence of historical factors has contributed to the creation of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage and allowed them to continue. These factors include federal, state, and local government disinvestment, such as urban planning schemas that isolated high minority neighborhoods from broader communities and economies, combined with the long-standing effects of institutional racism and the era of deindustrialization (Kushner, 1979; Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017). Postwar federal government policies geographically separated people of different races and socially engineered discriminatory housing, fiscal, and transportation policies that contributed to patterns of racial segregation and resulted in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage (Gotham, 2000; Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017).

Explicitly racist housing policies enacted through the Public Works Administration of the New Deal helped to create segregated neighborhoods. Notably, where integrated neighborhoods once existed, the New Deal's public housing developments were designated for only same-race residents, thus indirectly enacting segregation (Jackson, 1985; Rothstein, 2017). Another policy

stemming from the New Deal that lasted through the 1950s included the Federal Housing Administration's concessionary loans to finance subdivisions throughout metropolitan areas, with the stipulation that no subdivision could be sold to African Americans (e.g., Levittowns).

Other prominent practices that contributed to the development of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage include government-sanctioned racially restrictive covenants and redlining by banks. Racially restrictive covenants refer to contracts between White sellers and White buyers of private properties that explicitly stated that Blacks and other minority groups could not own, lease, or occupy the properties (Gotham, 2000; Massey & Denton, 1993). According to Gotham (2000), "racially restrictive covenants were designed to regulate the distribution of population, direct investment into certain geographical areas and away from others and shape the development of entire subdivisions and neighborhoods" (p. 629). Redlining occurred when banks did not provide loans to individuals or families living in certain neighborhoods, as they were considered financially risky; this practice began with the National Housing Act of 1934. The effects of redlining have persisted, as close to 75 percent of the previously redlined communities from the 1930s continue to struggle economically today (Mitchell & Franco, 2018). More recently, these same communities have also been subject to "reverse redlining"—whereby banks target them for subprime loans, which thus disproportionately results in foreclosures on Black- and Latinx-owned homes and helped lead to the 2008 financial crisis (Brescia, 2009; Fisher, 2009).

In areas where African Americans were permitted to settle, municipal policies were enacted that, for example, denied basic services, such as refuse removal, which were provided in White communities. With little housing stock available to Blacks through government laws and policies, minority-dominated areas often succumbed to "slum" conditions but still had to pay

rents higher than in comparable White areas, as limited supply existed (Jackson, 1987; Kushner, 1979; Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017). Real estate agents also engaged in the widespread and tacitly condoned practice of “blockbusting,” or using racist fears to convince White residents to sell their homes for below-market values and then selling those same homes to Black families for more than they were worth. While blockbusting first occurred in the early 1900s, it was most prevalent from after World War II until it was technically outlawed in 1968, with the passage of the Fair Housing Act. However, as with similar policies, this practice continued well beyond the passage of the law. A downward spiral effect often ensued in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, whereby these urban communities experienced reduced tax revenue, which inevitably led to reduced services, along with a transfer of power, given the political representation allocated based on populations. Such policies and procedures were pervasive and systematic in urban areas and continue to have lasting effects on the communities (Mitchell & Franco, 2018; Rothstein, 2017).

This history of devastating and destructive macro-level policies that helped to create and sustain neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage continues to influence the neighborhood of Sherwood, where the founders who comprise this study launched their HSOs. In summary, these communities continue to struggle due to historical factors and the modern realities of continued government disinvestment. Thus, the need for a robust social safety net of HSOs is ever present.

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative case study combines aspects of SIT with an intersectional analytical lens to explore how founders’ social identities (i.e., racial/ethnic identity, gender, socioeconomic status) shape their experiences and strategies of founding their organizations, mobilizing resources, and obtaining legitimacy. Together, intersectionality and SIT highlight multiple

categories of social group membership and provide a framework to analyze the meanings and consequences of membership; both focus on the socially located, socially constructed, and relational nature of differences (Love, Booysen, & Essed, 2015).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory posits that individuals develop a self-concept that integrates multiple collective identities across various axes of difference (Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker, 1987; Tajfel, 1982, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Researchers using SIT typically focus on memberships in large-scale groups (e.g., race, gender, age), in which social comparisons drive behavior (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Such comparisons shape interactions, as individuals continually compare their groups or categories with other groups or categories (i.e., in-group/out-group evaluations).

The term *social identity* refers to how individuals define themselves as part of, and in relation to, social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity is a link to the social world, in which a shared identity may function as a foundation for collective social action and a sense of belonging (Reicher et al., 2010). The term social identity is relational, meaning how one defines oneself happens through shared similarities and differences with others. These definitions are a product of present-day happenings and collective histories. It is posited that when dominant groups relegate individuals to devalued groups (e.g., women in a sexist society, low-wage workers in a class-divided society, Black people in a racist society) individuals may respond to this negatively valued group membership through accepting, adapting, or challenging such devaluation through individual or collective strategies (Reicher et al., 2010).

When a founder locates an organization where she shares many of the same social identities as those in the community, community members may, in turn, view the founder and

their organization as more legitimate (Hogg, 2001; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998). According to SIT, an individual's influence and legitimacy are greater within groups if the individual embodies similar values, behaviors, and prototypical attitudes (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). Sharing identities may provide an opportunity for the women to create deeper connections with the community and their clientele. The founders must also contend with outgroups that may create barriers to the acquisition of resources for their organization (Crotty, 1998). Four of the founders in this study began their journey with limited access to resources, power, or influence. As Black women, they must continually contend with dominant powers, which in the U.S. are typically considered White, heterosexual, and middle- or upper-class males (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). The founders in this neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage strive for access to and control of resources for their organization, as well as for legitimacy. What is not known is how the founders negotiate their social identities to acquire legitimacy, resources, and clients or how they interact with people in more privileged positions in society who often control access to organizational resources necessary for their HSO.

Intersectionality Lens

Intersectionality is a lens that researchers, activists, and scholars utilize to examine how overlapping and multiple social identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, age, religion) combine in manners that are multiplicative rather than additive. Our intersectional identities construct our social realities, as each identity is shaped by and reflective of different structures of power (Collins, 2009, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; McCall, 2005). A tenet of critical race theory (CRT), intersectionality emerged from a long-established history of Black feminist studies (Combahee River Collective, 1995; Davis, 1981; Glenn, 1985; hooks, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1984). Crenshaw (1989) coined the term *intersectionality* to describe how Black

women's experiences differ from those of White women and Black men by challenging existing institutions and structures of society. Black women's experiences require an understanding of race and gender together that highlights the multiplicative effect of gender and racial discrimination (Crenshaw 1989, 1991).

Collins (1990) describes intersectionality as interlocking systems of oppression, whereby power relations embedded in one's social identities must be understood. When using this lens, researchers must question the very power structures that center whiteness in conventional understandings of nonprofit founders. This study does not explicitly compare the experiences of Black founders to those of White founders, but it does use an intersectional lens, combined with SIT, to analyze how the selected founders—whose social identities and life experiences reflect the distinct influences of race, gender, and social class currently missing in the literature—found organizations in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage.

Employing both SIT and intersectionality is meant to provide a framework that intends not to essentialize the founders' experiences but to explore how their identities as Black women founders in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage shape their founding experience. It is acknowledged that their experiences will not all be the same, but as self-identified Black women, they may share experiences of marginalization and resistance with both each other and the majority of the clients they serve. Therefore, this study aims to explore these common experiences, in the hopes of providing a new understanding of what it means to be a founder and to value Black women founders' own understandings of their roles and strategies in the world of human services.

Summary

This literature review has examined nonprofit founders, Black women in the human services field, and the role of HSOs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. An understanding of the experiences of founders who do not identify as White or male is missing from current literature (Gibelman, 2000; Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Scott, 1990; Teegarden, 2004; Themudo, 2009; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017). Past research has generated a body of scholarship on the structural barriers and geographic unevenness of HSO locations in poor neighborhoods but has failed to focus on founders—and more specifically, founders who are women of color—who choose to locate their organizations in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Thus, utilizing a theoretical framework of intersectionality and SIT in this research, I explore how the social identities of Black women founders shape their experiences and strategies of founding their organizations, mobilizing resources, and negotiating for legitimacy.

Chapter Three: Research Paradigm and Methodology

Overview of Chapter

This chapter first discusses the qualitative research paradigm that frames the study. Next, I detail the study design, including case selection criteria and data collection, which comprised interview, observation, and document data. Following this discussion, I outline the analysis conducted and comment on ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with sections on rigor and trustworthiness, and a reflexivity statement.

The Qualitative Research Paradigm

In this study, I examined how five Black women founders' intersectional social identities have shaped their experiences of organizational founding and growth in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage, over a 40-year period. I was interested in learning how these founders, who are personally familiar with and connected to the challenges of the same community, were able to establish their organizations—more specifically, how their identities matter, how they interact and negotiate with dominant groups of society for organizational resources, and what particular challenges and opportunities they have encountered as founders in a highly racialized context. To achieve this goal, I relied on qualitative research as the methodology, and multiple case study as the study design.

My goal was to understand and describe how the founders themselves interpret and assign meaning to their experiences; to do this, I analyzed interviews, observation data, and documents collected from a small, nonrandom, purposeful sample of founders (Merriam, 2009). To augment interviews and observation data, I also included present and historical data from the U.S. Census on the community and fiscal data on each of the HSOs.

Through a series of five case studies, this research is situated within a constructivist paradigm. Epistemologically, I relied on an understanding of knowledge as “transactional” and “subjectivist” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 257–258). Consistent with the philosophical roots of qualitative inquiry, constructivism views truth as relative and dependent upon perspective, which depends in turn upon the social construction of reality (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Searle, 1995). I employed an analytical lens attentive to intersectionality to decenter the assumptions and normativity of existing literature, which has relied until now on the experiences and perspectives of “typical” (i.e., White, well-educated, middle-class) HSO founders (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). Rather than using those experiences as a standard of “truth” against which to judge the experiences of Black women founders, I sought to employ a “local and specific” lens attentive to the latter’s intersectional identities as well as “constructed” and “co-constructed realities” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 257).

The use of qualitative case studies is ideal when an in-depth inquiry is necessary to understand a phenomenon within a bounded system (Creswell, 2006; Merriam, 2009) and when the researcher aims to understand complexities of content and study in natural settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In this study, the bounded system was the neighborhood (i.e., a racially segregated neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage), where the unit of analysis was each founder. This method is most appropriate when research questions focus on the *how* and *why* of the phenomena under study; qualitative case studies are ideal for collecting data in great depth on a poorly understood concept, and “the interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). As noted previously, the research questions are the following:

RQ1. How do founders' intersectional social identities (e.g., racial/ethnic identity, gender, socioeconomic status) shape their founding experiences? More specifically:

- What about the personal biographies of the women led them to become founders?
- How did their intersectional identities shape their decisions to found HSOs in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage?
- How did their intersectional identity shape their process and experience of founding the HSOs?

RQ2. How do the founders accept, adapt, or challenge their social identities in the process of seeking organizational resources, legitimacy, and survival—particularly when interacting with those in positions of privilege, who often control access to needed resources?

Research Design

Case Selection

The research design is a multiple case study (Creswell, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Case studies are appropriate when the relevant phenomenon and behaviors cannot be manipulated and when the focus is on contemporary occurrences (Yin, 2009). The case study design also enables research that is “flexible, evolving, emergent” (Merriam, 2009, p. 18), rather than rigidly determined in advance. This multiple case study design includes five individual case studies, each comprised of one founder and her respective organization, followed by a within-case analysis. Each case in the study belongs to and is categorically bound by a collection of cases comprised of Black women founders who are also executive directors of their respective HSOs located in the same neighborhood. The inclusion of five cases aims to explore the variation across cases of Black women who have founded organizations in one neighborhood over 40 years (Stake, 2006).

I established numerous criteria for selecting founders for the study. Participants were first recruited through multiple-entry snowball sampling, a technique that provided access to a variety of founders of HSOs and saturation of the neighborhood. The entry points were key informants based on community engagement, networks from my institution (e.g., alumni contacts), and an Internet search of IRS 990 tax-exempt forms within the targeted geographic area (Sherwood). I then relied on respondent-driven sampling, given my outsider status in the community (Arayasirikul, Cai, & Wilson, 2015)—a subject I return to later in this chapter.

Initially, I identified 21 HSOs and their respective founders (or executive directors, if the original founder was no longer present); 19 agreed to face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Notably, two founders declined to be interviewed. After conducting these interviews, I was able to classify the organizations and their founders into distinct categories. The HSOs ranged in age, budget, services offered, target population, and mission statement. Similarly, founders ranged in age, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, gender, and racial and ethnic background.

I focused specifically on founders who self-identified as Black women, and who were also executive directors of the HSOs they established. Additionally, I focused on founders whose HSOs primarily serve members of the local community, and who personally identified with both the neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage and the HSOs' missions and target populations. The following factors guided this decision: (a) women found nonprofit organizations at a faster rate than men yet are still underrepresented in the literature on HSOs (Lecy et al., 2016); (b) little is known about how social identity shapes the founding of HSOs; and (c) the preliminary study of the founders in the selected neighborhood already revealed that the narratives of Black women founders of HSOs differed from those represented in the traditional founding literature.

Selecting women who identify similarly racially and socioeconomically, as well as in terms of gender, has benefits and drawbacks. Advantages include the opportunity to view the neighborhood as a constant while thinking inter-racially and over time about the politics of place and geography to distill a larger continuum of service provisions from these founders—a unique lens for viewing nonprofit founding. However, I am aware that the neighborhood underwent much change over four decades, which may dilute the potential for understanding the continuum of decision-making from these founders.

Data Collection

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection through interviews and observations (Merriam, 2009). To guard against this limitation, the case study design also included both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data included face-to-face, open-ended interviews, followed by phone interviews, when necessary, with each of the founders. This was augmented with additional face-to-face interviews from three community stakeholders (e.g., field deputy representatives, neighborhood council members) who also possessed knowledge about HSOs in the neighborhood, extensive field memos from interviews, personal reflections from fieldwork, and observation notes from a local community meeting that I attended at least once a month for 30 months. Arguably, one of the most important aspects of this research was gaining entry, trust, and rapport among neighborhood stakeholders to locate potential participants. I achieved this through prolonged community engagement, in particular, attending community meetings where nonprofit founders, executive directors, and other community stakeholders, such as politicians, law enforcement, and civically engaged community members, gathered. Other data sources included publicly available documents, such as autobiographical books written by two of the founders; interviews with each of the founders published in such

venues as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Sentinel*; other newspaper articles about the organizations and founders themselves as well as the neighborhood and greater community; social media/websites; documentaries about the neighborhood; and 990 tax-exempt forms from the HSOs (as if available) collected over the previous five years.

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews are considered optimal for building rapport, gaining trust, and ensuring synchronous communication in time and place, as well as being most appropriate for intensive case studies on a few individuals (Merriam, 2009). However, such interviews have some disadvantages, such as geographic limitations and the lack of anonymity (Opdenakker, 2006). However, given the focus of my research questions, the advantages of face-to-face interviews far outweighed the disadvantages. Through my attendance at community meetings and multiple rounds of interviews with some of the founders, I established a deeper level of trust with the women, which, in turn, enabled me to go beneath the surface of the usual accounts and encourage the interviewees to freely discuss their experiences of being Black and female and founding an organization in this purposively selected community (Hycner, 1985).

Table 1						
<i>Brief Overview of Founder Data</i>						
Founder Name	Interview Date	Time (min)	Published Interviews/Book	News Articles	990s	Other Documents
Shirley	6/20/13	61	Interviews	<i>LA Sentinel, LA Times, NY Times</i>	2007 – 2017	Website
Michelle	8/16/17	60	Interviews and Autobiographical Book	<i>Huffington Post, LA Sentinel, LA Times, NY Times</i>	2014 – 2017	Annual Reports, Independent Audits, Social Media, Website
Sandra	6/26/13; 10/27/14; 3/6/18	69; 15; 75	Autobiographical Book	<i>LA Sentinel</i>	2011 – 2013*	Social Media, Website
Kacee	5/27/14; 12/9/14; 6/17/18	145; 50; 100	Interviews	<i>LA Sentinel</i>	2011 – 2018*	Social Media, Website
Linda	6/21/18; 3/7/19	58; 27	Interviews	<i>LA Times, NY Times</i>	2015 – 2016	Website

*Organizations with less than \$50,000 gross receipts file 990-N e-postcards with limited data. s

Table 2		
<i>Brief Overview of Stakeholder Data</i>		
Position in the neighborhood	Interview date	Time (min)
NPO rep on neighborhood council	7/29/15	78
Field deputy representative for congressperson	3/25/15	58
Field deputy representative for council district person	5/29/14	83

Interviews

Initial interviews occurred at locations chosen by the interviewees, most often in naturalistic settings, such as their offices, a community center, or a local coffee shop. I recorded and transcribed all interviews, which averaged approximately one hour in length. The protocol included both open- and close-ended questions, encompassing six primary subjects: (1) community (e.g., changes in demographics, pressing social needs, issues of safety, barriers/opportunities to launching a HSO in that context); (2) founding (e.g., background of the founder, their visions, how they mobilized resources and legitimacy, strategies used to recruit clients, whether the HSOs have obtained 501(c)(3) status); (3) whom the HSO aims to serve (i.e., formerly incarcerated young adults, families in foster care, senior citizens, etc.); (4) boards of directors (e.g., their background, both ethnically and professionally, whether the board helps with resources and/or legitimacy), (5) sponsorships (e.g., religious congregations, corporations, foundations, private funding); and (6) politics (e.g., any political support of the HSOs, their connections to and/or knowledge of local politicians). Examples of open-ended questions included the following: What motivated you to start the organization? Why did you select this particular location? And What hurdles did you have to overcome? Examples of close-ended questions included the following: What is the professional background of your board members? Is there anyone who would never fund you? and Is your organization a member of a coalition? Follow-up interviews were typically conducted by phone and included specific questions related to the founders' intersecting identities—(1) racial and ethnic identity, (2) socioeconomic status, and (3) gender—and the impacts of these identities on their founding experiences and strategies. In addition, I asked each founder what she viewed as her personal strengths, weaknesses, assets, and advantages in relation to her role. Examples of these questions included the following: How

do you identify racially? What is it like for you, as a (Black/African American, ...) woman, here in Sherwood, founding an HSO? Can you tell me about a time when you felt empowered? Ignored or overlooked? Can you give me an example of people you may talk to for help with your organization that might be important for your organization? Who typically funds you? Who would never fund you? Why? Has there been anything or anyone that has not allowed you to grow? To get funding or more resources? Any roadblocks? Interview transcripts for the five founders resulted in over 350 single-spaced pages. Appendix A presents the full interview protocol.

Observations

The second form of data collection was the observation of a weekly community meeting. The community, along with its elected officials, initiated these gatherings to facilitate discussions among disparate groups of community stakeholders (including nonprofit leaders) after a significant uptick of serious violence within the neighborhood. The goal of the weekly meetings was to lessen violence through community collaboration. By attending these meetings, I became familiar with various community stakeholders, and vice versa. Furthermore, I collected diverse types of data, such as announcements of community events and occurrences, local politicians' reports, and information on newly formed HSOs that were attempting to attract clients. Such data helped me to triangulate sources, particularly in those instances when one or more of the founders included in the research were in attendance or when their names were mentioned during the course of the meetings. At these meetings, I observed how various stakeholders, including those representing HSOs, dealt with overt government disinvestment in their community, including exclusion from numerous county and foundation initiatives that resulted in the loss of millions of dollars in community funding. I heard stakeholders discuss the community concerns

and needs that they deemed important and learned who the community leaders were.

Additionally, I identified and recruited one of the five founders through these meetings.

Meetings were typically two hours long, with an additional 15–30 minutes of post-meeting informal networking and information sharing. I attended at least one meeting monthly for 30 months. I recorded data from the meetings in real time by taking notes on my computer, including data on who was in attendance, what information was presented, and who was presenting, along with the content of discussions and specific behaviors from both the committee members and attendees. At the end of each meeting, I processed and wrote field notes on my impressions, questions, and subjects to follow up on. I created a specific format for note taking during these meetings (see Appendix B—Observation Protocol).

Archival Documents

Document analysis provides another method to understand the HSOs, their founders, and this context. I gathered each HSO's IRS 990 tax-exempt forms for the previous five years (if available), documented their website data, and gathered other publicly available documents, such as published interviews, annual reports, meeting agendas, and administrative documents, as well as articles on the founders or their organizations in major newspapers (mentioned above) and other print mediums (e.g., autobiographical books). This process enhanced my knowledge of each HSO and helped me discern any inconsistencies between the data in the documents and the information aggregated from the interviews. Such analyses provided an arguably objective view of texts that exists independent of the research (Corbetta, 2003); as Yin (2013) notes, "For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 103). For example, the IRS forms helped to verify funding sources and salaries, websites enabled me to confirm mission and vision statements as well as gain information

pertaining to the boards of directors, and annual reports corroborated information about clientele and services offered. Such documents cannot be assumed to be completely factual or entirely free of bias (Yin, 2009); as such, they were consulted in conjunction with other methods. Nonetheless, I considered document analysis a primarily non-reactive technique that helped to counteract any biases I may have possessed.

Data Analysis

The data analysis strategy was inductive, recursive, and dynamic, with the end goal of interpreting the vast amounts of data (Merriam, 2009). The process of meaning making included consolidation, reduction, and interpretation. Paramount to multiple case study research is gaining an initial holistic understanding of each case (Merriam, 2009). The data analysis included a within-case analysis, in which I examined the five individual cases separately. To begin, I created an inventory, or a “case record” (Patton, 2002), that encompassed all of the data collected, including interview transcripts, observation notes, field notes, reflexive memos, reports and records related to the HSOs, and other relevant documents (e.g., tax documents, autobiographical books, published interviews, etc.) separated into five individual cases—in other words, all of the relevant information regarding each founder and her respective organization. Each case record entailed a detailed process of cleaning the data (i.e., consolidating and reducing data to edit out redundancies and organize information) so that each case was both complete and manageable (Patton, 2002).

Next, each case record and its related data were converted to primary documents in Atlas.ti 8.0. Using CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) to assist with data analysis has numerous advantages when working with vast amounts of data, particularly in my case, as I am very familiar with the software. The program has a built-in filing

system, which helps to free up time for more in-depth analysis and, some argue, even enhances the rigor of the project by enabling a closer examination of the data (Seale, 2000). Furthermore, the software aids in visualizations of data through concept-mapping tools using one's codes, themes, and categories, which can also help with the analysis process (Creswell, 2007).

To begin the within-case analysis, I first read through the first transcript of Case One, Shirley. This entailed a “conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments to it, and so on” (Merriam, 2009, p. 178), a process otherwise known as coding. Defined here as assigning words to various aspects of the data, coding was both an inductive and comparative process. During the initial round of coding, I engaged in open coding, whereby I created my own terms for the codes, which I assigned, as well as using *in vivo* codes, and codes related to key insights from the literature. I repeated this process for each of the five cases.

Through this open coding process, I began category construction, collapsing some codes into others and grouping codes that fit together. After the initial, more descriptive round of open coding, I completed a second round of analytical coding. This involved constructing categories through interpretation and reflection (Merriam, 2009). Again, this was a comparative process, in which I moved between codes and categories, as well as between pieces of data (e.g., observation notes, field memos, publicly available documents, etc.). During this time, I refined my codebook and wrote extensive memos to retain and reflect on the emerging categories. Memo writing augmented my data analysis through an inductive process, as I could discover new insights that I did not predict *a priori*. Further, in a deductive sense, memo writing helped me process how data fit into pre-established categories (Patton, 2002).

Throughout the analysis, I also deductively examined whether categories and themes from each case held true for subsequent cases. I sought to develop term categories reflective of

the research questions, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitized to the data, and conceptually congruent (Merriam, 2009). However, some sections of text were over-coded, or may have had more than one category assigned to them, while other sections of text had no code assignments, as they lacked relevance to my research objectives. For each category, I applied a label (inherent meaning of the term), description (limitations, scope, characteristics), and links (e.g., categories of “a” and “b” are linked by law enforcement) (Creswell, 2007).

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations exist in this research. First, informed consent must be clearly stated and understood. To the best of my knowledge, at no point during the research process did interviewees feel coerced to participate. Several factors may have aided in this: the non-threatening topic of study, participants’ pre-existing relationship with UCLA or other educational institutions, or their being referred to the study through a key informant. The initial 19 interviewees were not offered financial incentives to participate; however, for follow-up interviews with the five founders, I secured funding to offer each a \$50 gift card. During each interview, I explained that participation was completely voluntary and no consequences would ensue from declining to answer questions, refusing to participate, or quitting at any time. Data was stored both on a password-protected USB and in a password-protected, encrypted cloud service. Finally, due to the cultural and ethnic differences between myself and the interviewees, I focused on remaining respectful, non-threatening, and culturally sensitive throughout. I did not make available audio recordings or transcripts of the interviews to the interviewees unless specifically requested. However, I emphasized data confidentiality by noting that no interviewees would be identifiable in future publications. When certain quotations from

interviews are used in the presentation or publication of this research, pseudonyms are employed to ensure participant and neighborhood anonymity.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

Rigor and trustworthiness are critical aspects of qualitative research. To achieve such standards, I employed three of the eight strategies outlined by Creswell (2007). First, as noted below in my statement of reflexivity, I did my best to clarify my biases. Furthermore, I remained cognizant of my past experiences and current orientations to both social science as a whole and this research in particular to recognize such predispositions and attempt to avoid such an influence on my interpretation of the data. Next, a trained independent researcher (i.e., a mentor) examined the data to provide an external check of the audit trail. This step occurred during the data analysis period to aid in providing feedback regarding the coding scheme, clustering, and thematic abstraction (Hycner, 1985). Finally, thick descriptions were applied, which are necessary in this type of research to increase “transferability” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). While I do not plan to generalize the data from this sample to a larger population of Black women founders, I include descriptions of the Sherwood neighborhood and the HSOs founded by these women to illustrate a shared understanding and universality of interviewees’ perceptions, identities, and perspectives of running an HSO in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage.

Reflexivity Statement

As the researcher of this study, my background, upbringing, identities, and previous life experiences have shaped and will continue to shape my understandings and worldview. As a cis-gender, White woman, one must question how I became interested in this type of research, particularly as it relates to racial and ethnic identities differing from my own. While I was

growing up, my father worked as a program director for a local nonprofit, while my mother worked in public education, as a teacher and later an administrator at the middle-school level. Their careers have impacted mine in numerous aspects, including an initial examination of how nonprofits operate, what they are capable of, and the importance of public education. Following my undergraduate education in Hawai'i, I joined the Peace Corps and lived on an island in the Republic of Vanuatu in Melanesia for two years. This experience provided me a long-term perspective on working in places with marginalized populations, widespread poverty, and unequal access to public resources. The collaborative learning and cross-cultural experiences I gained from residing in a small village introduced me to the complex perspectives of gender and racial hierarchies. My time with the women and youth of Vanuatu continues to influence how I approach my doctoral research and my worldview in general. Furthermore, I became fascinated with the differences between non-government organizations' and nonprofit organizations' stated activities versus what I observed within the local communities and how vast this gap could be. As I continued my studies in graduate school in New York City and Los Angeles, I became aware of macro systems, urban poverty, and the relationships between power, racial and ethnic identity, oppression, and privilege, which have afforded me distinct opportunities, while disadvantaging those who did not resemble me. These diverse experiences of residency and education have shaped my view of urban poverty and fueled my desire to examine both the nonprofit industrial complex and those working on the margins of society, attempting to do good in their communities. Given the reality of fieldwork for this dissertation, I will always express respect for the interviewees, the residents, and community stakeholders, recognizing that they are the true experts.

Summary

This chapter described the constructivist paradigm that guides this case study research and provided an overview of the organizational context. I then discussed the case study design, followed by a section on data collection and management. The study draws on primary and secondary data in the form of interviews, observations, and archival documents. I described the inductive, recursive, and dynamic analysis, including open and analytical coding, and I explained the within-case data analysis. Finally, I discussed ethical considerations, rigor, and trustworthiness concerns and provided a statement of reflexivity.

Chapter 4: Sherwood

Overview of Chapter

This chapter presents an analysis of the macro considerations that comprise the structural context of the neighborhood in which the founders and their organizations operate. The analysis begins with the historical context of the 1920s and tracks key events and policies up to the present day. I discuss the significance of de jure segregation from the 1920s to the 1950s; the War on Poverty, the Civil Rights Movement, and various social and cultural rebellions during the 1960s and 1970s; and the War on Drugs, the crack cocaine epidemic, and mass incarceration from the 1980s to today. Finally, I examine the current context, including the institutional environment and gangs. The discussion draws on a combination of historical records, government policies, census data, and reflections from interviews with the five founders and three community stakeholders.

The Selected Neighborhood of Study: Sherwood

There are people that have everything—from Ph.D.s down to they didn't graduate from the third grade—but these are very brilliant, very beautiful, very smart, very dynamic, very engaged, very family-oriented people. Some of the housing developments, um, some people have lived there all their life, and their parents, and their grandparents, and their great grandparents... And there are parks, there's music. It's a great area. It just does not have enough, um, income, or career opportunities to sustain the community. There are a lot of people that, uh, unfortunately see people of color, whether they Black or Brown, or whatever the case is, and they're afraid. And they're afraid that they think they heard that Sherwood has all of these, um, mean, negative evil people, and they're not. They are beautiful people, who wanna raise their family, who want a job, who want a career. Who

want the best for their children just like everybody else (Kacee, founder of Kacee’s House 4 Positive Change).

Historical Context

1920s—1950s: De jure segregation. The neighborhood of Sherwood is one of several similar types of neighborhoods located close to the city center in Los Angeles that have gone through many iterations over the last century. In the early twentieth century, Sherwood was a city that was home to a diverse working class of immigrants, mainly from Mexico and Europe, and included African America, White, Japanese, and Jewish populations of the larger Los Angeles county. However, racialized government policies, programs, and laws designed to segregate these populations—also known as *de jure* segregation (Rothstein, 2017)—helped to create and sustain the Sherwood neighborhood of today.

In 1920, 14 percent of the population of the city of Los Angeles was Black. Yet, due to racially restrictive covenants—contractual agreements between owners and sellers of private property that prohibited any form of occupation by individuals of certain racial-ethnic backgrounds—most Black residents settled in the southern area of Los Angeles. Beginning in the 1920s and continuing through 1948, housing construction in Los Angeles was at a high point; and at the same time, the city became a national leader in the implementation of racially restrictive covenants and redlining practices (whereby the government and private banks cut off essential capital to minority neighborhoods) (Massey & Denton, 1993). The enforcement of these racialized policies transformed areas south of downtown from a multiethnic region to a predominantly Black area. A Sherwood neighborhood council representative describes the transformation during this era as follows: “Historically, Sherwood was created as an urban ghetto through redlining policies and racial covenants that segregated our neighborhoods ... So, I think

what attracts folks of color who largely have low socioeconomic status, is that it was accessible, affordable.” This history is not lost on the residents, as Sandra (founder of OASIS) explains: “Sherwood was intentionally designed to be an oppressive and segregated part of town ... That original area of Sherwood was, um, that's where they wanted to keep all the Black people. We weren't allowed to go outside of those boundaries.”

Sherwood’s population became primarily Black in the 1940s, during the second Great Migration of African Americans to California. When the thousands of Black Americans who migrated to Los Angeles first arrived, most settled in or around Sherwood due to extralegal factors, as well as the enforced racially restrictive covenants, threats of violence, and deed restrictions (Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017). Although the U.S. Supreme Court struck down racially restrictive covenants in 1948, deeming them unenforceable, neighborhood segregation and the perception of non-White neighborhoods as inferior continued (Gotham, 2000). Furthermore, in the 1950s, the Federal Housing Administration’s housing construction in Los Angeles County allowed less than three percent of its newly constructed housing stock to be sold or rented to non-Whites. The institutionalization of racist local practices into racialized federal policy regulations created an unjust and unequal environment for minority neighborhoods in this era that resulted in a surge of credit and home ownership in predominantly White neighborhoods at the expense of people of color (Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017).

1960s—1980s: War on Poverty, the Civil Rights Movement, & Rebellions. The 1960s was a decade of change, both nationally and locally. Residents of Sherwood—and other neighborhoods that shared its demographic characteristics—experienced widespread feelings of hopelessness thanks to pervasive poverty, high inter-racial tensions, and strained relations with law enforcement (Carter, 1986, 1987; Chandra & Foster, 2005; Myers, 1997). Nationally,

President Johnson's 'War on Poverty' efforts began and much of the work took shape through localized Community Action Programs that became an especially important means of fighting for economic, political, and social justice for Black Americans in urban areas. In Sherwood, this work happened through the local Community Action Agency, which became entrenched in the community and shaped the institutional environment for decades to come, as a backbone of civic life in the neighborhood.

In the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a decade of rebellions, riots, and uprisings across the nation ensued. Specific to Los Angeles was the Rebellion of 1965—the spark occurring when a White police officer pulled over a young Black man on suspicion of driving while intoxicated. Research has shown that when there is racial-ethnic competition for resources (e.g., employment opportunities) (DiPasquale & Glaeser, 1998; Myers, 1997) in poor communities (Carter, 1986; Chandra & Foster, 2005; Myers, 1997) that have strained relations with law enforcement (Carter, 1987), such uprisings and rebellions may occur. These intertwined dynamics all played a part in the 1965 Rebellion, which left an indelible mark on high-poverty, high-minority communities across Los Angeles and specifically in Sherwood.

The residents of Los Angeles' poor Black communities, including Sherwood, received many promises from the federal government of programming and increased economic aid for better primary and secondary schools, as well as unemployment relief, jobs, and healthcare centers. Here, Shirley, who founded Community Parents, recalls the events in the community in the mid-1960s:

What happened was during the riots and after the riots Governor Brown, he was the governor then, he founded a committee ... What happened was that they went back and they told Governor Brown the issues and the problems that we was having in the

community. [They] went back and said no medical facilities and no jobs. We had no medical offices. And we didn't, no hospital, no nothing. We had one doctor's office.

Shirley also recalls that, during these decades, Sherwood experienced divides between aspiring middle-class, first-time homeowners, and poor renters, as well as misunderstandings between the Latinx population and the Black population, making for tense situations that frequently turned violent.

What ensued became a decade of change in the neighborhood, as residents organized and advocacy became paramount. Sandra explains, "The Black Panther movement was very active in Sherwood. There were a lot of food and work and employment programs in Sherwood. Um, the people that did decide to become homeowners, they took pride in their homes and everything." Around this time, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 criminalized discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or sex, concerning the financing, rental, or sale of homes. For the residents of Sherwood, this change in the law opened up many new residential possibilities and thus began a two-decade transition of Black flight, whereby approximately one-third of the Black residents vacated Sherwood to live in other, less poor areas of Los Angeles (U.S. Census 1980; Wilson, 1987). As middle-income Black left Sherwood for other areas (e.g., Antelope Valley, Inglewood, Inland Empire, San Gabriel Valley, or returned to the southern states), they were replaced by mostly Latinx and Asian immigrants. The neighborhood council representative recounts:

In the 80s, we had the civil wars in Latin America. We know that the Mexican population dominates in terms of representation in the City of L.A. But we also started seeing immigration coming in from Central America, people escaping civil wars there. And so, we start seeing a rise in Latino population in L.A. And some of them ended up living in

Sherwood. I don't think it's that they're specifically attracted to the neighborhood, but I think it's that the reproduction of poverty by neighborhood in the city of L.A. is largely associated to race.

Migration patterns made for drastic demographic changes in communities such as Sherwood; and just as Black flight occurred out of Sherwood, White flight—in which blockbusting techniques were employed—led to the White neighborhoods adjacent to Sherwood becoming predominantly Black areas. Here, Sandra recalls: “Southfield, which borders Sherwood, has, was, used to be an all-White city, where they used to run Black people out of Southfield. And you know the White flight took over ... Again, these tactics helped to further isolate the neighborhood.” She explains that previous homeowners rapidly began to rent and sell their homes at above market value to African Americans. This resulted in a larger area of concentrated poverty, with many high-poverty, high-minority neighborhoods thus clustered together in the same geographic area, magnifying the deleterious effects.

Mid 1980s - 2000s: The War on Drugs, the Crack Crisis, & Mass Incarceration.

The crack-cocaine crisis hit Los Angeles in the mid-1980s, and it hit the neighborhood of Sherwood extremely hard. Rather than framing this situation as a drug epidemic and thus a public health issue, the militarization of policing—including the use of SWAT teams and skyrocketing rates of incarceration for non-violent drug offenses—was the government’s chosen approach. This originated in 1971 with the Nixon Administration’s arguably unfounded “War on Drugs,” yet the full effects were not felt until nearly a decade later when the Reagan Administration introduced zero tolerance policies through a series of executive-sponsored punitive campaigns against drugs (Murch, 2015). In attempting to unravel narratives of poverty, informal economies, and casual drug use in poor neighborhoods versus law-and-order narratives,

support from both political parties was strong for the militarization of law enforcement in dealing with these neighborhoods in crisis (Murch, 2015). Black Angelinos were mostly divided in their views, depending on class divisions, age, and faith (Murch, 2015); but the intermixed effects of the drug epidemic—including health issues, increased gang activity in the neighborhood, and mass incarceration—cannot be understated.

One neighborhood council member states, “In the 80s, we had this crack cocaine epidemic, right? We lost jobs in Sherwood. We had a number of Sherwood people leaving the area because of, with high unemployment comes, rise of crime, and all that activity.” Sandra recalls:

And just in that isolated city of Sherwood, you had 12- and 13-year-old kids that was smoking crack. So, I think, like I said, the boundaries were intentionally designed to be, to be oppressive and keep Black people in that area and I think as time grew and the drugs and the gangs and stuff came through, it just became difficult. So, I think when the whole crack cocaine epidemic became, um, a serious situation in the city like that's what changed it. 'Cause you gotta, you gotta go from like '85 until probably 2005 where people were like really hard and heavy smoking crack cocaine.

The recollections of Sandra and the council member are echoed in the documentation of unequal policing during this era, when the focus remained on historically Black and Latinx neighborhoods. The War on Drugs initiated a conflict without end, and neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage disproportionately bore the brunt of such policies: by 1992, approximately half of Los Angeles County Black men were listed as gang members. Thus, by virtue of being Black, in a certain geographic area, and of a certain age, brought high

government surveillance and, ultimately, incarceration for almost one-third of this population (Gilmore, 2007; Siegal, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

With overly punitive drug laws, compounded by a racially biased criminal justice system and poor relations with law enforcement, the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising also took its toll on Sherwood. Shirley remembers how she banded together with other local mothers and says, “It started ... but we stopped it. We couldn’t afford it. We went and stood in front of them stores and said you can’t come in here and mess these peoples stores up because we got children and families.” She notes—tapping into both her savvy of the power structure of the neighborhood and her political savvy—that, “there hasn’t been another [rebellion] since.”

Again, many promises were made by local and national politicians of increased funding in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles, help with the rising unemployment rates, and improved social services; but by 2000, the Black population was approximately 7 percent of the total Los Angeles County population, yet 31 percent of those incarcerated (Gilmore, 2007; U.S. Census, 2010). Here, Michelle, founder of Hope for Women, speaks to the devastating effect of this, both on herself and on the community:

So, Sherwood was hardest hit by the War on Drugs that sucked up so many women out of this community into prisons and jails. And those women were coming back ... me being one of them. They were coming back to nothing. They were coming back to social lies, discrimination, and um, exclusion. And they had paid their debt, they had paid their time. Michelle is describing is how the War on Drugs directly led to the hyper incarceration rates of Blacks and Latinx populations—essentially, a new form of Jim Crow (Alexander, 2012). Described as a “carceral state,” this had reverberating social effects, some lasting a lifetime

(Bobo & Thompson, 2006; Wacquant, 2001). The field deputy echoes, unsurprisingly, a shared sentiment among the residents of Sherwood:

I mean it gets difficult when you are from that community. It is one thing that the money is there, but it is a different thing to say: can I access that money? A lot of the people in that community that I have spoken with have said, “Hey Matthew, I am trying to access these funds but my criminal record won't allow it...” So, there are barriers there that don't allow them to access those funds and I think that goes back to racism, once again, you gotta put the barriers in there to make sure the slaves stay the slaves.

Often, when criminal justice is applied in a discriminatory manner, violence increases and gangs proliferate. As Leovy (2015) describes, the paradox of law enforcement in neighborhoods such as Sherwood, which are overpoliced, is that a clear majority of murders with Black victims go unsolved. Thus, when this system fails to prosecute murderers, a system of vigilante justice may take over (Leovy, 2015). When a field deputy for a congressperson representing Sherwood spoke on these issues and how the community was dealing with the high rates of homicide—mostly Black men killing other Black men, with the vast majority of these murders going unsolved—he bluntly describes the lived reality of many residents:

I would say the deaths. Like a young man in the community that everyone knows and loves and we watched him grow up, then see him laying on the sidewalk with a bullet through his head. I mean that would bring anybody together. Especially as you are seeing that every day, every day, as a repetitive cycle. I mean that eventually is going to trigger any human being to come together more to see how to solve that problem.

The community continued its demographic transition throughout the early 2000s, and it is today home to a Latinx majority. A field deputy for a congressperson who represents Sherwood discusses this demographic shift:

Well as it stands now, a lot of the Latinos are just migrating to the country so they aren't really as involved in the political system as the African Americans who have been in that community for 60, 70 years. They [African Americans] are obviously going to be more involved politically because they are there, as opposed to ... well, I think that goes to any race or any group that immigrates to a new land. It is going to take them awhile before they get involved in politics because it takes them years to just set up shop. To just get their feet planted on the ground. So, as of now, the African Americans kind of still control the political debate but the Latinos are definitely gaining ground, definitely.

Sandra, founder of OASIS, states, “So, if I had to describe Sherwood, I would think that Sherwood was a city that was originally where Black people tried to make the best out of it. I mean, there was a lot of pride in Sherwood.” She continues, “I think, um, I feel like the drugs and gangs just made everything go downhill and, and it's a lot of neighborhoods that was taken over by drugs and gangs but they never came back to revitalize Sherwood.”

Current Context

Numerous racialized policies and programs (e.g., redlining, reverse redlining, targeted taxation, discriminatory city zoning, covenants) and deliberate urban planning strategies (Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017), coupled with the impact of mass incarceration on minority neighborhoods (Alexander, 2012) and the underfunding of urban public schools (Fultz, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2006), adversely and disproportionately affect Sherwood and its residents, compared to less poor neighborhoods and their residents. This has led to issues of safety, concern

with gangs, and high levels of violence. As Shirley puts it, “Remember, around here is welfare and minimum wages.”

One neighborhood council representative discusses how these factors are simply the results of poverty: when individuals and their families are living in poverty, and particularly when it becomes generational poverty, they will ultimately seek to survive:

I think with this whole high unemployment rate, social dynamic and poverty, essentially that's the reproduction of the crime. It's not the people, it's not the youth, it's really that these are outcomes, I think you can call them symptoms of poverty. And so, if we don't address poverty at its root, this is what we're confronting. It's not surprising that this is happening. Just like you can go to Venice and Santa Monica, remove all jobs, remove you know, all positive potential resources, and you'll have the same conditions. And so, I really try to avoid this like, ‘Sherwood is violent. Sherwood is violent.’ It’s like, no, this is the result of the poverty.

Thus, what was true in the late 1960s of Sherwood is mirrored in contemporary times. This same neighborhood council member describes how a recent report detailing the current environment of the neighborhood echoes how Shirley (founder of Community Parents) describes the late 1960s, when she established her organization. The council member describes the outcomes of the report as such:

Their results were, oh, you know, ‘The community needs employment, quality housing, quality education, access to care, addressing law enforcement violence.’ And the only difference between these two reports is that in 1966 when the Commission report happened, Sherwood was about 90% Black ... So is it about the place that has led both Black and Latino communities to experience challenges and poverty, and all these social

implications that limit someone's human rights? Like, basic human rights are having a good place to sleep and live, food on your table that's good for your body, a good education, and somewhere where you can work, all in your neighborhood. But we don't have that in the community. And so, it's just saddening that, over the last 50 years, the residents, though the race is different, the demands are the same.

Sherwood exemplifies qualities of concentrated disadvantage (Sampson, 2013), as it is surrounded by similarly high-poverty, high-minority communities (U.S. Census, 2015). The residents experience almost double the rate of poverty as residents of the greater municipality and live in one of the highest population-dense areas in the county. Furthermore, the residents experience high rates of incarceration, homicide, and gang violence (U.S. Census, 2015). Predictably, Sherwood has very high rates of single-parent-headed households, large household sizes, low levels of educational attainment, and low median incomes—with almost half the households in Sherwood earning less than \$20,000 annually (U.S. Census, 2015). For Kacee, these statistics represent what happens when there are no jobs:

I just want Sherwood to be healthy. And I think that begins with ... it definitely begins with employment. I can't expect you to stop doing things if I don't give you strategies and opportunities to prevent and end things. So, if, if I don't have the resources for money, I'm going to continue to have violence. So, that's it.

Similarly, a representative from the neighborhood council describes what these statistics mean from a macro perspective for those she represents: unequal outcomes built into institutions, ensuring they produce inequality regardless of who lives in the community:

I think that's a narrative of Black and Brown violence.... Oftentimes, a lot of those in the community try to avoid that kind of narrative. It really just reproduces the stigma on the

community, when the community is struggling to navigate the systemic inequities that have been produced in the neighborhood. It's not necessarily that the people are ignorant or backward or violent. It's that the lack of investment and opportunities in the neighborhood have led to the dynamics that we have now.

While the neighborhood council member discusses systemic inequities that have occurred and persisted over time, the field deputy emphasizes the systematic wrongs that the neighborhood has endured—those that have been intentional and methodical: “It’s systematic. You have to change the system. I would argue that more focus should be on changing the system as opposed to marching and saying change the people, it's the people. It's not the people, it's the system.”

Gangs

The current context of gang activity and membership in Sherwood is important, as both are fairly active, compared to the rates seen in other Los Angeles neighborhoods. One representative for a locally elected official has an overtly negative view of the gang situation: “Well, gang violence is a big deal in Sherwood. That is one of the, well in my perfect world and before I leave this Earth, I want to eradicate gangs. That is the top of my agenda.” However, the other elected representatives take a more nuanced perspective, acknowledging the complexity that gang members, who in many cases are family members, also participate in community life in Sherwood. Here, one of the elected representatives who lives in the community explains: “I have family that’s gang members, of course. Growing up, you had to figure out what you wanted to do. It was easy to become a gang member, easy both sides of the family did it.” Another representative states that, when she worked with the youth of Sherwood, she noted how certain boundaries limited their movements:

We showed him a map of Sherwood, and he drew the gang boundaries of the neighborhood. He said, "I can't go there, I can't go there, and I can't go there." So, it seemed that just looking at youth, they can't cross certain boundaries and engage. So that also limits opportunities...

None of the founders identify issues with gangs or gang members, perhaps due to their all being 'insiders' in the community and thus having varying kinship ties with the youth who are active in this scene. Here, Shirley notes that while those from outside the neighborhood may have issues with some of the youth involved in gangs, she views it quite differently: "People call them gangs but they my neighbors. I know when some of them was born ... You know when they need some help, they got to come here. But we don't have a problem with them acting up." When asked if gangs had any effect on her organization, Kacee states bluntly, "No." She further explains her perspective:

So, for instance, you know, they [law enforcement] talk about gangbangers are all bad. Well, most gangbangers really became gangbangers as a need to protect themselves and/or to provide for their families. So, I don't have to steal and destroy if there were career opportunities here for me. Um, so, let's build jobs and let's build businesses, and let's build industry in the community.

Sandra describes her view as positive, highlighting the benefits that gang members can provide: "You know what, I don't have an issue with gangs because they love me." She went on to explain that these individuals help keep things in order when she holds events at the public housing developments:

I go to the projects and pop my trunk and, like, they know me. When I do my toy drives people are always like, ‘Whoa, you gonna go there and just pop your trunk like that?’ I pull up right in the middle of the projects, pop my trunk, and I have well over \$5,000 worth of toys and the gangbangers stand around and make all the kids line up in orderly fashion, they keep the riff-raff away. They let people know, Ms. Sandra is here.

Linda had a more personalized view: “My sons, they, um, they were gang affiliated.” Her organization began, in part, to “join all them color lines and all these different gangs that's you know, rivals.” Gangs, in short, are an elaborate yet complicated part of Sherwood’s social and institutional environment that cannot be described as simply “positive” or “negative.”

Institutional Environment

The lack of investment and opportunities afforded to the residents of Sherwood relative to other parts of Los Angeles is well known to the founders. In discussion of the important community institutions in Sherwood, their responses include Shirley’s comment that, “Well, we don’t have that many of them,” which was confirmed by Sandra: “It is like, what is there in Sherwood? There is like nothing in Sherwood.” For Michelle, the neighborhood consists mostly of churches and liquor stores: “It alternates with a liquor store on one block with a couple of churches followed by the next block with a couple of liquor stores and a church, and of course a lot of storefronts for loan sharks.” Kacee has a more tempered view, noting that, “There are some great resources, and then there's a lot that's not there, that's missing.”

Conversely Linda views the institutional environment in a more positive light, naming organizations and institutes that have helped either her personally or her organization: “The Institute for Leadership for one, that program is almost too good to be true. They’ve helped me so much, emotionally, financially.” Perhaps more importantly, she notes that community

members themselves constitute a type of resource—one that is not often looked at in these types of neighborhoods: “And then, you know what, you have a lot of community members who don't have a title, who don't have a nonprofit that does a lot of good stuff.” The field deputy representative agrees with Linda’s positive outlook on the institutional environment:

[The] Sherwood community has a lot of organization there and maybe that stems from lack of resources, because obviously Sherwood has the least amount of resources so that would kind of force people to come together and organize a little more. But the organization there is second-to-none. They are extremely organized, they just lack the resources.

According to this field deputy, the lack of local government and city resources flowing into the neighborhood, and thus to HSOs, is due to “racism.” When asked about the barriers in place for individuals who wish to found an organization in Sherwood, the field deputy representative states: “Well, the biggest barrier, strike one, is if you're a minority. That is a barrier just in and of itself. So, that is strike one.” He goes on to describe what could strengthen the role of nonprofit organizations in Sherwood and details how the criminal justice system, as a macro-level entity, governs the realities of life for much of the population in this community: “Well, first, we would have to start by eliminating mass incarceration because everyone is jail, how they gonna start a nonprofit organization behind bars? Fixing, just fixing the broken justice system in general.” When opportunities are removed and resources diverted, it becomes more difficult for individuals and communities to create change.

While Sherwood has a long history of resident organizing and advocacy work, beginning in the 1960s and with an active nonprofit scene to this day, it nevertheless suffers from a confluence of the factors listed above. Sherwood is similar in many respects to other urban

communities of concentrated disadvantage, both in California and other major metropolitan cities across the U.S. There is a shared history of government disinvestment, racialized policies, and concentrated poverty. Ironically, however, it is in part because of these macro effects that the people in the community bond through a shared identity. A field deputy for a city council person representing the neighborhood states, “Sherwood is a gem, Sherwood really is a powerful community. Now, they say with this racial stuff, but watch if something happens to somebody in Sherwood [*laughs*]. That is something you gonna see how strong this community really is.” This sentiment is shared by Linda, who founded her organization for grieving mothers who have lost children to violence:

So I'm just gonna see this as one family that, that, that some of us are mad at each other.

You know how family get mad at each other? And that's what I feel. I feel like we all one big family we just need to find ourselves.

Sherwood continues to strive for redevelopment through an active nonprofit scene and civic engagement to improve the community through the inclusion of museums, coffee shops, and parks. With its Latinx majority, Sherwood is also shaped by the current trend of racial and demographic transitions in Los Angeles County and throughout much of the U.S. (Frey, 2011). The neighborhood can be viewed as a microcosm of struggling communities exposed to destructive macro-level social forces, resulting in adverse micro-level consequences. While the selected neighborhood is clearly unique in many ways, structural inequities, government disinvestment, and strained relations with law enforcement cut across neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage in California and throughout the nation.

Chapter 5: Within-Case Analysis of Case Studies

Overview of Chapter

In this chapter, I present the five individual case studies. Employing a within-case analysis, I highlight the critical junctures of racialized policy efforts of different eras, as the founders deem important. The founders detailed how they rely on a continuum of strategies for organizational establishment and growth. I argue that knowing a person's intersectional social identity is imperative to understanding how founders negotiate with their external environment for legitimacy, resources, and clients.

Case Studies

The individual case studies are organized in a sequential manner, beginning with case one, which was established in the 1970s. Each case is presented with an organizational description, followed by a brief personal biography, incorporating the motivation for establishing the organization. Next is a section describing how the founders' intersectional social identity shaped their decision to locate in Sherwood, followed by sections detailing the actual process and experiences of being in the neighborhood. Each case concludes with a section on how the founders acquire both financial and political resources, legitimacy, and their strategies for survival, including how one accepts, adapts, or challenges their identity.

Four of the five founders experienced some kind of personal trauma related to being a woman, being Black, being poor, or a mix of these identities. Each was able to channel their trauma into founding an organization in a neighborhood where many of its residents share experiences of similar trauma. Each attempted to respond via service provisions that respond to that collective trauma. Personal experiences were translated into the motivation to found an

organization that reflected their own experiences—experiences that have shaped their ideologies—and the incentives to take action in a community in which many share the same trauma. Thus, each contributes in her way to the fight for social justice and social change in the Sherwood community.

Community Parents Organization—Case Study 1

Community Parents, originally founded in Shirley’s home in the 1970s, was initially set up to serve pregnant and teenage mothers with parenting classes, childcare support, and other related emergency services. Its focus quickly shifted to easing tensions between the Black and Brown populations in the neighborhood, while maintaining its focus on young mothers. It did not become incorporated as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization until the early 1980s. At this point, Community Parents expanded its service provisions to provide housing and services for the mentally ill and those experiencing homelessness. Always encouraging Sherwood’s children to stay in school, stay off drugs, and stay out of gangs, Shirley—the founder turned executive director and main service provider—has used the organization to offer everything from free school supplies along with food and clothing, to drug counseling, health seminars, job preparation, and vocational skills and licensure programs. The budget for the last decade has consistently been between \$125,000 and \$350,000, ebbing and flowing with the economy. Shirley’s vision for her organization is, “Not to see a problem—see the solution of the problem.”

Personal Biography

Shirley was born and raised in the South during the era of the Great Depression. She is deeply familiar with the struggles of poverty and its aggravating effects, having personally experienced bouts of homelessness, jail time, teen motherhood, and an education ending in junior high school. She recalls how she was once considered worthless by the greater society: “I know

what it feels like to be told you ain't nothing. No one wants to be that way. That is why I do the work I do."

Following the second great migration of African Americans from the South to the Midwest and the West, Shirley eventually made her way to California via the Midwest. She relocated to Sherwood in the late 1950s, when she was in the formative years of her late teens. She first lived in a public housing development, a few years prior to the 1965 Rebellion. Driven to "give a voice to the voiceless," Shirley has spent the better part of her life advocating for and standing with the residents of Sherwood.

Recalling her experience of needing help as a single teenage mother, and meeting the White family who provided her with employment when no else would, she has vowed always to help others in the "same shoes." Around the time at which she founded her organization, Shirley was able to earn her GED through a local nonprofit. And she did not stop there. She found immense value in education, attending a local community college to earn an associate's degree and later obtaining a bachelor's degree from a regional state college.

A woman of strong Christian faith, Shirley lives by the values of the Bible. She was raised in a religious home and that has clearly translated into her organizational values: "So, blessings don't come from receiving they come from giving. But the name of the game, helping the people." She is quick to point out the perils of helping blindly: "Be sure you are not throwing your pearls at the swans." She further explains "That young man walked by me and say 'I'm hungry.' I said, 'Come on, get in the car, let me go get you some food.' Now if it ain't food he wants, he ain't gonna get in that car." Ready to meet potential clients when they are ready, Shirley has made a name for herself in Sherwood. In a half century of activism, she has become a

community icon—drawing attention from politicians, local newspapers, and community stakeholders.

The Decision to be in Sherwood

Several years after Shirley arrived in Sherwood, Los Angeles's high-poverty, high-minority neighborhoods experienced the reverberations of the 1965 Rebellion. This tumultuous time, as Shirley recalls, was sparked by her community feeling ignored. Too many issues were going unaddressed, including police brutality, high unemployment rates, lack of basic health services, and extensive poverty. By the time the revolt ended, many lives had been lost and millions of dollars of property damage caused, yet Shirley made a vow: "Don't move, improve."

Shirley's identities of being Black, a woman, and at the time poor, reflected much of the population in Sherwood. Soon, Shirley was gathering young mothers together whom she identified with, having been through parallel life experiences herself a decade and a half earlier. This organizing led directly to the formation of Community Parents and its first program: "You know that was one of the major things. Now after that riot, we had started this program." Here, Shirley refers to the original program offered by Community Parents Organization:

First class we had was the pregnant class. A class for teens. We had the doctors, we had them giving out baby clothes if you went to that doctor. Then we had the food bank, so we was giving out food. Now, you could come here and get all the food you want. We started that pregnant mamas group, teen mothers, because they were the ones who was doing the fighting. We knew if we got the women, they would help us get the boyfriends. So, we got that started and it went so well.

Around this same timeframe, Shirley noticed a lot of activity at a vacant lot near her home. She wanted it cleaned up, as did her neighbors—all fearing that the scene would attract other vandalism. What she assumed would be a quick call to the elected officials representing Sherwood ultimately became a lengthy runaround with no solution: a futile endeavor that Shirley attributes to Sherwood being a low political priority. She took her concerns to the lawmakers' offices, where Shirley stood her ground until she was granted a face-to-face meeting with the policymakers. She emphasized that while Sherwood may not have the resources, the political clout, or high-status individuals that other zip codes of Los Angeles had, each person living there represented one vote and she was capable of organizing the Black and Latino vote. Later that day, the vacant lot was cleaned up and Shirley learned an important lesson about the power of politicians. Subsequently, she befriended many elected officials who had the power to create policies, enact legislation, and provide funding for her organization. From the mid-1970s onwards, Shirley's commitment to Sherwood and organizing voters has been unwavering.

The Process and Experience of Founding a Human Service Organization (HSO)

Process. When Shirley first established her organization, she relied on small contributions from regular supporters—primarily in-kind services and donations—and self-funding. To this day, she admits to often “working off my own money.” As she puts it: “I didn’t know anything back then about any grants. I thought if you want to do something, just do it. And that is what I did, just did it.” Indeed, this is the motto that Shirley has maintained for the duration of Community Parents: fixing and helping one individual at a time.

Shirley had been running programs out of her house for several years before she learned about the 501(c)3 designation: “I was already meeting at my house. But my house was the

headquarters, we didn't have nothing else." Everything changed when a high-ranking elected official paid her a visit:

He said, 'I ain't never heard so much talk about a lady called Ms. Shirley, I want to come see what you doing' ... he said to his staff, 'Get a copy of the 501(c)3, and when I get to Washington I am gonna help you.'

Initially unaware of the benefits of tax-exempt status, Shirley set about learning what it was, why she needed it, and how to obtain it. Soon thereafter, the elected official's staff was able to push through the necessary paperwork: "That was when we got our license in two days," thus formalizing Shirley's organization and forming a deep bond with the elected official who kept his promise that "whatever is needed, if you all can't do it, call me in Washington. I will get it done." This was not the last time an elected official would swing by to visit. As Shirley remembers after she received her 501(c)3 status, "They [politicians] would come in and see whatever I needed and they would help me get it. The word had gotten out about how good we were."

Experience. Shirley's experience of formalizing her organization also meant that she needed a board of directors. From the beginning until now it has always been three members: "The reason I have three because at the time we had no budget to have five and more, so I have three and have always had three. President, secretary, and treasurer." Functionally, however, the board does little. Shirley relies on herself to develop connections, find funding, and provide services. Her decision to stay small is by design. Rather than seeking high-profile individuals to serve on the board, Shirley has consistently asked family members and friends from the neighborhood. She seldom goes after large government grants, preferring instead to cobble

together a diverse range of small- to medium-sized funding streams. As she puts it, “I don’t think we need to grow bigger, we need to serve the people.” As a founder turned executive director, Shirley is the main service provider, physically out in the community solving problems: “I go to the schools for the IEP [individual education plan] meetings with the parents. I sit in and be sure that they are getting what they supposed to have.” Thus, when someone needs help and walks into her organization, they are met with Shirley’s unwavering policy: “That person is the priority ... Whatever the need is, let’s fix it.”

Organizational Resources

For Shirley’s organization, everything goes back to the political. She does not mince words when she describes how she runs Community Parents:

I got resources now. I can call and make a phone call. If they [politicians] don’t hear me, one of them will hear me when I make that phone call, tell them what they need to do and do it. That is what they put in this community for. Why they in office? We put them there. Do your job.

For over three decades, she held contracts with the county to provide services for the homeless and mentally ill populations. While not originally part of Community Parents’ mission, this became a cornerstone of service provision after an elected official asked her to provide such services in the community. As she recalls, “When he asked me, because no one wanted to keep the crazy people, and ... ‘If you will say you will keep them, I will help you get a break.’” This quid pro quo served Shirley’s organization well in providing a stable contract. “That program gave me a chance to enlarge because it was a little house and then it became a big house.” After receiving one county contract, it became easier to obtain others.

Political Resources. When discussing how political it has been for Shirley while running her organization in Sherwood, she says, “I would say it’s 80%.” After she received her tax-exempt status in two days, she learned an important lesson about the power of elected officials—not only in terms of what they could do for her organization, but also their power to bring resources to Sherwood.

And then that is when I learned it is not what you know, but who you know. Then I began to find out ... how can I get to know the right people? Get to know the people and I started with the local congresswoman. I volunteered my time with her for 10 years.

It was a volunteer position; thus Shirley was never paid, but she consistently delivered the votes: “I would go when the time to run [for office]. I got the people out.” Throughout the mid-1970s into the 1980s, Shirley was volunteering for the local congressperson and working in various capacities during election years for two other high-ranking officials. In the mid-1980s, Shirley knew she was ready to expand her organization: “So, I had three aces in the hole at that time. Then, after we got the license, and we really got started.” Her ability to organize the Black and Latinx vote proved beneficial for her organization, as its reputation grew, along with Shirley’s own. In the decades since, as Shirley describes, “When they [people running for public office] needed help, they come here.”

Shirley was replete with examples of various elected officials wanting her stamp of approval. Here, she describes a Senator who stopped by Community Parents and witnessed first-hand her working with a mentally ill client. “She said, ‘Well, I figured out all I need to know about you. You somebody. I want to work with you.’” At that time, Community Parents was already established and Shirley was a recognizable figure among the political elite. This gave her

the confidence to point out to the Senator the need to spend time in Sherwood and not just come by when it was time for votes. As she put it, “Well, you better be wanting to be here in this office in Sherwood.” In a quid pro quo situation, Shirley leveraged her power as a community organizer for promises of help for her organization later on: “‘But let us get you in Washington and you could help us.’ We helped her. With her fundraisers, I took two weeks off from the office and worked and we got her in that seat.” Soon after, Shirley was able to call on this Senator for help with fundraising, as Sherwood was experiencing the deleterious effects of the drug crisis: “We were getting too many crack babies, and I wanted to stop it.” Needing a new home to house the pregnant women and new mothers and provide wraparound services, Shirley made a phone call. “So, I called the Senator and I thought, will she help me with the down payment?” Much to Shirley’s surprise and delight, the Senator held a gala fundraiser on her behalf:

...she called. She said, ‘I want you to meet me downtown at a theatre.’ They have a basement where they have parties and things. She told me that she would meet me there ... The cameras were on her, and then about an hour -and-a-half, she raised \$150,000. The house was \$170,000. That was okay. I paid the rest.

A strong bond that has lasted decades has proved beneficial for both Shirley and the Senator. As Shirley states: “Anytime that I need something, and I don’t take advantage of that, but anytime I need something I would call her in Washington. She will pick up the phone and call me back.” And for her part, the Senator can count on Shirley’s stamp of approval when it comes to getting out the vote.

Legitimacy. Within the neighborhood of Sherwood, Shirley is well-known. Over the decades, she has helped generations of families—through holiday giveaways of food baskets and toy drives, as well as more in-depth service provisions. Other neighborhood founders are aware of Shirley and her organization. According to her, “If they [other nonprofit organizations] call me, they need me, I will go. And they know that. If they call and need me for something, they having something and they want me to be there, I will do that.” When it comes to other local institutions, such as churches, she describes how “They always calling on me to come and speak to the community or their congregation but that is about all.”

Shirley views her role in the community as follows: “One of the key things that I don’t think the people understand is if you are in a community, you are the one they should recognize because you around the people, you know them better than anybody.”

Accept—Adapt—Challenge: Social Identity

Outside of the neighborhood, Shirley is also very recognizable. She has spent decades organizing the voters of Sherwood, and thus has been savvy in her interactions with potential politicians and policymakers—applying a range of strategies, depending on the situation. In some ways, Shirley is challenging the negative social identities placed upon people from the neighborhood, by providing employment training and other tutorial programs for those deemed ‘unworthy’ (such as gang members, people formerly incarcerated, and drug addicts) and helping them to find gainful employment. She also brings understanding of inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations and how different groups respond to situations. Here, for example, she describes how this plays out in her organization:

But Blacks don't believe they are going to get nothing. But you got to get in school and learn it, then you get it. But I know how to go get them, to make the race better. I ain't gonna have all Latinos sittin' up in here and I ain't gonna have all Blacks sittin' up in here. Gotta be a mix.

Thus, she is able to adapt the tactics of a socially creative strategy, adjusting elements of the group comparisons.

Shirley's work with young single mothers and their children, mirroring her own experiences and intersectional identities, seems to resonate well with the White political elite, possibly because Shirley focuses on personal growth and improvement. She has been discerning in building her organization by buying property over the years on the street where she first began. Notably, she does not collaborate with other nonprofit organizations except when they call on her and her reputation to help them.

Shirley displays a strong identification with being Black, a woman, and a Sherwood resident. She has spent her career seeking to enhance the group status of residents of Sherwood through organizing voters, a strategy that has served her organization well. To ensure that city, county, and state resources are allocated to the Black and Brown residents of Sherwood—a group categorically disfavored and thus vulnerable to experiences of institutional discrimination and prejudice—Shirley deftly employs a combination of adapting and challenging strategies.

HOPE for Women—Case Study 2

HOPE for Women was established in the late-1990s to help former substance users, particularly women, from Los Angeles' poorest neighborhoods. Running her programs out of her home in Sherwood, Michelle soon realized the need for services was much greater than she could

meet, particularly given the institutional barriers encountered by former addicts. After its early years of struggling to keep its doors open and bills paid, HOPE became formalized with tax-exempt status and its budget multiplied. What began as a small operation meeting the basic needs of women who were former substance abusers has since become a multi-million-dollar organization that works to dismantle the system of mass incarceration. Nevertheless, the organization continues to provide direct services that “[assist] women in finishing their education, securing employment, regaining custody of their children, as well as support programs including twelve-step, peer support, and counseling.” As the organization’s founder turned executive director, Michelle has been at the helm for the last two decades. As she describes it, HOPE’s vision is

...to raise women up to know the depth of their power, their value, their strength, and to live in that place and to ensure that they reach back and help others to know that and live in it and, you know, understand they’re valued and to just feel that, sort of, like, inner strength and power outside of those [criminal justice] systems.

Personal Biography

Michelle was born and raised in and around Sherwood, shifting between the housing developments and run-down homes in the neighborhood. The only girl among several brothers, her childhood was marked by welfare, violence, and many forms of abuse. Having a front row seat to the 1965 Rebellion in Los Angeles and having recently dropped out of junior high school, Michelle learned the ways of the street when she became a runaway youth: smoking, drinking, and being defiant. Around that time, Michelle became a single teenage mother as a result of

sexual abuse. The next decade was spent on the streets, attempting to make ends meet in the only ways she was familiar with: prostitution and drugs.

Michelle had found sobriety, secured an apartment with her children, and was gainfully employed when her young son was killed in a hit-and-run automobile crash. Her son's death sent Michelle into a deep depression and she found herself self-medicating with alcohol and drugs because, as she explains, she did not have the means to access trauma support or grief treatment. Over the years, her bereavement spiraled into an addiction to crack cocaine, a drug that was prevalent in Sherwood at that time. Her addiction resulted in several stints in prison for petty drug offenses, before Michelle learned about addiction services for incarcerated individuals—resources which had been offered to her wealthier and White bunkmates, but not to her.

Seeing this racial discrepancy sparked a stark realization for Michelle: “I was always pushed down the same path leading nowhere, whereas the people there had been directed toward opportunity, diverted in the opposite way from prison.” These people to whom Michelle refers to were predominantly White individuals from the wealthy zip codes of Los Angeles. These White women were avoiding prison time for the same drug offenses that Michelle had committed. She describes this situation as an “alternate world,” where being White and having access to money equated to limited or no jail time and a set of diversion programs to help with addiction and trauma. Michelle knew that she wanted this kind of treatment, and she knew she wanted that option for the many women of color in her shoes who had likewise been sucked up into the criminal justice system. A self-described “helper, organizer, and rebel,” Michelle initially established HOPE believing that if women had safe homes, everything would be all right. She soon realized the power of advocacy and that “it was going to take a lot of us to make any real

change happen.” Thus, her organization was born out of a “Black woman’s journey.” As Michelle puts it:

I wanted to offer the support and refuge I wished I had had, a home of women helping women. I only had a GED earned while incarcerated, I didn’t have any mentors or funding. I just had my life experience, but I knew there had to be a better way.

Michelle’s experience of founding and running her organization in Sherwood has left an indelible mark on her, particularly as her identities as a Black woman who was formerly incarcerated are wrapped up in her organization’s identity. She states:

So, as a part of incarceration, I lost all my identity, and all of the individuality in everything, you know? But then I re ... you know, um, I found my value, worth, and strength through the work of HOPE. My abilities personally, they helped other women transform themselves as the executive director of HOPE. But the identity of Michelle, what did not, you know, rise, I became HOPE, not Ms. Michelle, but I revived. Then I woke up one day and I'm like, who am I? I'm not HOPE, I'm Michelle. And then I began to try to find my path to um separating myself from the organization. It was really hard. But now I've arrived at the place where I think I've done that pretty well. Both, spiritually and as, you know, an individual person. But it was a struggle. It was a, not only a spiritual, but physical type struggle to, um you know, with people's perception. To change that perception.

The Decision to be in Sherwood

As Michelle describes it, Sherwood—her home for much of her life—was experiencing an influx of women who were in some way caught up in the criminal justice system during the

1990s. Most of these women were like her: Black, poor, in many cases addicted to drugs and alcohol, and often without access to resources outside of their neighborhood. Many times, after being released from prison, albeit with no help or assistance from the state or HSOs, the women entered back through the revolving door of prison: “What was happening represented another form of racism, another form of exclusion for Black people. It's primarily, it was Black people who were excluded and penalized for being Black.” Just as Michelle had experienced this revolving door, so did many others from her community:

So, they [women from Sherwood] were taken away in droves, and they were coming back in droves. And they were coming back to, what you would say, barren soil. Landing back with no resources, no supports, no help. Just the weight of a criminal history and the exclusion of people's mind of them even being worthy to live in a house.

Michelle's first-hand experience of living through the ill-conceived effects of the War on Drugs, being incarcerated time and time again when what she really needed was addiction and grief counseling, was not an isolated experience. She knew she wanted her organization to be in Sherwood as the community was “hardest hit by the War on Drugs.”

When Michelle was released to a diversion program, rather than given jail time, she learned about another side of addiction treatment: help that was supportive and inclusive. This time, Michelle was able to join a program in a wealthy area of Los Angeles, one attended predominantly by well-to-do White women. In her rehab program, she also learned that, “In Santa Monica, people didn't do time for what we did time for in Sherwood.” Michelle's assigned sponsor was a professional White woman with endless connections and access to resources—a position so unfamiliar and unlike anything available in Sherwood that Michelle often found

herself in disbelief. With one of her brothers agreeing to pay the fees, Michelle was finally able to complete the program and stay sober. During this time, she made numerous connections with the wealthy and White west side of Los Angeles that would later prove advantageous for her organization. Michelle became empowered through her experiences, and she could see the larger picture: a discriminatory structural pattern that she had encountered in the criminal justice system and in access to rehabilitation services. It showed her that she wanted to return to her neighborhood and provide services to others with similar experiences and identities to her own, as a person who was Black, poor, addicted to drugs, and a sexual abuse survivor, and perhaps most importantly, as someone who had experienced the unforgiving and unrelenting effects of the criminal justice system.

The Process and Experience of Founding a Human Service Organization (HSO)

Process. Michelle took matters into her own hands when it came to establishing her organization. First, she saved money from her employment as a caregiver to the elderly, and with help from her extended family, she was able to make a down payment on a home in Sherwood. She then went to the places where she had been dropped off after release from prison, where she met other women like herself and offered them a safe space to be drug and alcohol-free. Soon, she was getting referrals from outside agencies, but the mortgage payment and costs associated with housing, feeding, and transporting the women were piling up. Michelle heard about a church offering bus tokens, something of which HOPE was in dire need. However, when she showed up to get the tokens, the church inquired about HOPE's tax-exempt status, much to Michelle's bewilderment. She replied, "What's a 501(c)3?" Despite having been operating mostly as a nonprofit organization for a few years at this point, this was the moment she first learned of their title. Relying on her connections in the neighborhood with others who were, like

her, in the hustle and struggling to improve the community by any means necessary, she found a person willing to walk her through the process for free. As Michelle describes it:

I think the background created the passion and the understanding of the need for the services. Out of the services and then the need that I recognized grew the capabilities, like on the ground learning. And, you know, I got fortunate to be able to tap into more organized learning institutions to understand how to comply with organizational law and be able to sustain the organization legally. I mean, there's no stretch that this organization would have thrived because of the need that it filled. But the legal compliances of an organization was, you know, the sort of factor that I had to learn to understand and build into, into the structure of the need.

Soon after Michelle applied for her tax-exempt status, she was asked to be a keynote speaker at a foundation fundraising event on the west side of Los Angeles. This invitation proved to be a real blessing, as Michelle was then introduced to the “power players” of the Los Angeles philanthropic scene. One connection she made at this event wanted to support her organization financially and asked for a list of the items she needed. Putting together her list of bus tokens, toilet paper, and so on, Michelle did not understand the financial depth of this kind of relationship. Thankfully, she was able to consult with her former sponsor, who helped her to understand that people with this kind of money were ready to support in the tens of thousands of dollars, rather than the hundreds.

I wanted bus tokens and transportation for the residents, and that required me to have a 501(c)3. Thomas, a billionaire, wanted to give money, and that required me to have a 501(c)3. So, I went after the 501(c)3 based on primarily the bus tokens, but Thomas was

above that, he was a little icing on the cake ... So, after getting that 501(c)3, it's when I began to understand the structural need of compliance of what the 501(c)3 is, which built into the whole organizational increase of the capacity of the organization and complying with the organizational laws.

Part of complying with the organizational laws meant forming a board. Michelle explains how, in the beginning, she relied on family members and laypeople from the community, as her access to social networks outside of the neighborhood was limited at that time:

Um, so, initially for the founding it was ... it was a close-knit group of my daughter, me, and my nephew, we needed three officers. But then I began to ... the IRS said to expand your board, and I began to reach out to people that, um, I knew in the community who were kind to my work and I expanded that board. It was the Sherwood community because my reach was limited.

As her organization grew and Michelle's reach expanded from the Sherwood neighborhood, she diversified her board: "But now, it's really broad. I have people from West LA." She has always kept a resident on the board as well, because "policy decisions should be made with the input of those directly affected." Furthermore, she was able to take part in a local foundation's board training program, where she learned about board effectiveness. Now, she relies on her board for significant fundraising efforts, both in terms of writing checks and providing help for her annual gala events.

Experience. Michelle encountered many barriers in the early years of her organization: "People didn't want to hear what I was talking about. You know, they didn't want to hear the truth of what this society was doing, and what it looked like, and I was telling the truth." The

resistance to helping and housing former addicts was not just from the elites of society, though; in the beginning, the residents of Sherwood were not welcoming either: “People threw rocks at us, in the night at our house, just because we were living there. That’s the type of mindset and frame society as a whole held for people who had been addicted and incarcerated.” Undeterred, Michelle pushed onward and did not let the attempts to damage and scare her or her residents away.

Still, even with the help of Thomas “the billionaire” over the years (which amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars in unrestricted funds), there were times when Michelle had to self-fund HOPE to keep it going, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, when she poured her own savings into the organization. At other times, she had to forego a salary and ask her employees to take pay cuts. Again, this highlights the perils of operating an organization in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage, serving people whom many in society consider the unworthy or undeserving poor.

Organizational Resources

When it comes to financial resources for HOPE, Michelle has learned many valuable lessons in the last two decades. The first lesson is, “All money ain’t good money.” State and federal funding have placed Michelle in a precarious situation due to the many strings attached to such funds. As she sees it, to qualify for such funding, one must “fit in the box ... and that such requirements can be counterproductive to actually helping people.” Often, the target population of former addicts and formerly incarcerated women of color are either precluded from receiving such funds or their access is under extensive restrictions that are paradoxical to HOPE’s mission statement. Such restrictions may go against what Michelle stands for as a person, as a founder,

and as an executive director. These included criteria such as permitting law enforcement raids disguised as compliance checks on the women residing in her home and information-sharing on the whereabouts of the women. Michelle describes the dilemma:

So, it's been a really delicate balance and approach. Government funding produces more of that [oppressive system]. When I am getting resources that tell me, you know, I have to report on everybody's everything, where am I sending information to? And what are they doing with that information? How are they using that information to further devise ways in which to harm people, to suppress and oppress people?

At the same time, these contracts and grants form a substantial part of her budget, creating a situation that required careful navigation: to accept the money and go along with the compliance checks and information-sharing or to discard the money and hope to secure other non-restricted funds, with the real possibility of having to limit services due to budget constraints. Michelle describes these times as “Very scary, because we have to feed our babies, we have to house our babies, and a couple hundred thousand dollars a year is a nice chunk of change. It pays some salaries and some rent and some stuff.” Ultimately deciding to terminate contract, Michelle describes this decision as guided by her core beliefs: “But it's having the, I guess what I call it, the moral value of the individual over the crave for the dollar.” In this way, she stayed true to her mission and vision for HOPE. She goes on to say:

Again, there are resources and structural things attached to the whole mechanism in which we have to live in and operate under that can damage the good that we do in the world, and can augment the good that we can do in the world, that can, ah, warp the good

that we do in the world to say, you know, how much good are we doing, who are we hurting, and who are we helping.

For Michelle, “Deep down inside of me, of where I worked from, I knew that I was doing a much needed and legitimate effort, morally, to provide women a way out, and myself too, a way out.” It was clear that this “way out” was not supposed to engage in the same oppressive system that the women were trying to escape. Michelle also felt that money with these kinds of strings attached are simply one more way in which systems, such as the criminal justice system, can maintain an oppressive hold on people: “The compliance part was part of the structure that continues, that is a part of the whole oppressive mechanism, and I recognized that ... As a result, I don't do much government funding.”

Political Resources. Michelle has close ties with a handful of elected officials in Los Angeles. They often drop by her home, attend her gala events, and publicly support her mission. Perhaps not wanting to meddle in the local Sherwood political scene, as HOPE's work has morphed into a larger advocacy movement, Michelle does not collaborate much with other organizations in the neighborhood. When it comes to national advocacy and the perspective she takes, she says, “So, I think that voice is powerful. When you, as a part of being true to yourself, you have to speak truth to power. That's been the lens in which advocacy, that we've built, this advocacy piece.” Taking the view that retaliation is not the answer to solving the problems HOPE aims to alleviate, Michelle is adamant that seeking retribution through a justice lens is a first step:

Do I believe that we're gonna correct the problem through the problem? No, I don't. I don't. But that doesn't mean that I don't raise my voice, propose policy, and keep trying,

because here's the only mechanism that we have as a country in the way that we operate. But do I believe that we gonna correct the problem through the problem? No, those policy things are the problem. You think they're going to free us up? You think they're going to free us up?

She goes on to highlight how, historically, the plight of Black people in America, and more specifically Black women who have been caught up in the War on Drugs and unfairly penalized, must deal with the reality of the discriminatory practices of reentry: “What was happening represented another form of racism, another form of exclusion for Black people. It's primarily ... it was Black people who were excluded and penalized for being Black.” Thus, while Michelle advocates and addresses such issues on a state and national level, gaining support from politicians who share similar perspectives, she continues to challenge those policymakers who do not believe in her mission.

Legitimacy. HOPE is an organization that, while rooted in Sherwood, represents something bigger than the issues encountered by local residents. While the other founders were not very familiar with Michelle or her organization, she is an established presence in greater Los Angeles. She does not collaborate much with the local churches in the neighborhood, but church members from outside of Sherwood often “adopt” the residents of HOPE and provide various gifts and items during the holidays. Michelle describes this relationship:

Yeah, I mean they come and they bring gifts. They bring supports in different ways. I don't specifically collaborate with one denomination or one specific church that, um ... but churches have a mission, and they want to get outside of the church to help the

community. So, this is a way that they can get involved, by you know bringing toiletries or doing drives, and things like that.

Now that HOPE has been established for a couple of decades, the word is out and beds are filled at Michelle's organization. Potential clients from Sherwood and other surrounding neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage are, while incarcerated, made aware of HOPE through word of mouth and presentations by HOPE staff. Having personally gone through the torments of losing a child, addiction, sexual and physical abuse, and imprisonment, Michelle connects with her clients on a personal level that can only be reached via this lived experience.

When it comes to local law enforcement, Michelle and HOPE provide an added level of legitimacy. Michelle has had several confrontations with law enforcement, and these clashes have affected both herself and her organization. As Michelle describes it:

I had a standoff a few times with law enforcement and their approach to coming into our homes. But there was this presence that I had to, ah, this stand that I had to take, really strong stand, that, you know, I was the only one in the community that took that stand. You know? Again, you know, I had to morally and consciously do what I knew was the right thing to do. Um, and that's the real of it. That's just the real of it. I think that when we don't morally take the stand that we need to take, for fear or for greed, or for whatever it is, that not only do other people suffer, but we suffer as an individual for not being our best and strongest self.

Through her actions, Michelle has been able to legitimize herself as a force that will not back down and will not stop fighting this system to do what she views as morally the right thing to do.

Accept—Adapt—Challenge: Social Identity

By what can best be described as challenging one's devalued identities in our socially stratified society—the identities of being Black, female, an addict, and an incarcerated person—Michelle seeks to re-value those identities through a collective action strategy. She challenges the dominant narrative that “the sense of what formerly incarcerated people, who they were, was the downtrodden scum of the earth and they didn't deserve to be living anywhere, but in prison.” In addition to her direct service programs, Michelle has spent her life post-prison engaging in this type of work through macro-policy advocacy work. She provides an alternative to the status quo, where formerly incarcerated individuals have worth and value and are seen to have paid their debt in full to society. Michelle realized early on that this work was not something she could accomplish by herself, thus she became an organizer to combat the institutionalized discrimination placed on the formerly incarcerated population. She provides a lens through which there is hope and a possibility for social change, as she continues on her mission to prove that people of these identities that she and her clients share are worth more to society than being locked up.

OASIS Organization—Case Study 3

Founded in the early 2000s in Sandra's home, OASIS helps women and children who are homeless and victims of domestic violence in the Sherwood community. OASIS provides emergency basic needs assistance (e.g., diapers, food, toiletries, transportation costs, utility bills) and educational outreach programs for mothers who would like to go back to school. The budget has ranged from under \$5,000 in the early years to just over \$20,000 most recently. Because her organization is small, Sandra wears many hats: she is the founder, the executive director, and the primary service provider. Sandra's vision for her organization is to have a multi-story regional

facility where wrap-around services, including temporary housing, can be housed in one place. She dreams of building a self-sustaining community that cares for and about one another.

Personal Biography

Sandra experienced a tumultuous upbringing that included multiple foster care placements, homelessness, teenage motherhood, several bouts of intimate partner violence, and only a documented sixth-grade education before she reached her 30s. She describes how she “was self-educated ... But the stuff I learned in the streets, you can’t go to school for that. I could go to school to get my masters, bachelors, whatever but what I have been through cannot be taught.” Though not born and raised in Sherwood, Sandra stated, “I come from being a foster kid. I’ve been on the streets since I was 12. Very little education, very little resources, and I found myself pregnant at 17, 19, 21, and 25. You see what I am saying?” Having to learn quickly on the streets, she developed a wide-ranging set of entrepreneurial skills to provide for her children: a skillset that was marked by determination that is remarkable by any standard. “I can’t give up. Like, for some reason, I don’t know what it is. All the stuff that I been able to overcome and everything that I been through, it’s just ridiculous and I just don’t give up.” She explains her biggest strength as tenacity because, in her reality, “failing is just, it’s not an option.” When describing how she was able to first get an apartment for herself and her children, Sandra talks about how she “tried to package the homeless up to make it look a little better.” Relying on her entrepreneurial skills, she describes how she would

... braid people’s hair; I would make little candy necklaces from the 99-cent store and sell them down at Redondo beach. I mean, just whatever I could do pretty much, you know? Besides prostitution. Literally it’s like, what do you do? And this is the city for that—the areas where I was actually homeless in, they were prevalent with things like

prostitution, drug abuse, and everything. So, I am like, I do not want to fall into that statistic because that would just add a little checkmark on the list of stuff that I was going through. I just thought of creative ways ... I would just like raise money at Redondo Beach. Redondo Beach Pier literally saved my life because it was a safe environment. It was primarily Caucasian, and when they would hear what I was going through, it was better than that lady sitting by the freeway begging for change.

Sandra's intimate familiarity with what it was like as a homeless, single, teenage mother with experience of domestic violence motivated her to establish her organization. Her familiarity with the lived experience of being in her clients' shoes allows her an insider perspective:

I would like go through the neighborhood [Sherwood] and I would see cars parked and I would notice that is how I used to park my car. That lady is sleeping in her car. You see the extra clothes, you see the back seat full of clothes, you see the stuff. So, I started OASIS because I wanted to be able to help moms that were in my situation.

As a self-described "helper," Sandra states "I really wanted them [her clients] to be able to see a transformation as I saw in myself." Throughout her adult life, she has vacillated between being a service provider and receiver: noting that her experiences directly mirror those of whom she aims to serve through her organization. "I, myself, even though I ran a domestic violence shelter, I ended up becoming one of my own clients ... I became a victim, and I became, actually, in need of the services that I had been providing for years." Thus, Sandra becomes a service provider when her personal circumstances allow her to do so; but there are times when she is on the receiving end of these same services. Sandra identifies as a working-class Black woman, identities that are common among the residents of Sherwood:

See, I don't look down on the community like I want to help them: I am the community. You know, it's not like I come from money and I want to help them. No, I was there—I lived it.

The Decision to be in Sherwood

For Sandra, founding her organization in Sherwood made sense. Having resided there for about 15 years, she was settled in an apartment with her children, and she finally felt she could be an asset to those with similar life experiences. She recounts her experiences of being poor and a single mother:

I got to thinking how the welfare office was turning me away, and I was like in my third trimester. Got a 1-year-old, 3-year-old, 7-year-old, and they telling me, 'No, we can't give you this, we can't give you that.' It was like, no food, no Medi-Cal. I was trying to figure out how I was gonna have this baby with no medical insurance. Trying to figure out who was going to watch the other kids when I go to have the baby. Will DCFS come in and try to take all my kids from me? I was faced with a lot of obstacles, and I just thought about how I didn't break down, I didn't quit. I exercised every option and every resource that was available to me.

Her experiences of being denied social services were formative for Sandra. This denial, resulting from the 1996 welfare reform bill (TANF) that cut cash assistance, imposed lifetime time limits and enforced work requirements, made it difficult for single mothers like Sandra to make ends meet. She would spend time at the library researching eligibility requirements, and as she puts it: "If one person told me no, I would try to get someone else to tell me yes." She was able to

determine which programs should be helping women like herself and, perhaps most importantly, how to navigate the barrage of eligibility questions:

I am pregnant, with three kids, I am not going to live on these streets like this. Now I found out there are programs designed to help me and if you ask me these questions and I say one yes when I should have said no, and you send me out the door ... So, I just got fed up. I studied that like I was studying for my SATs. When I went back in there, I was prepared. I knew what to say, I knew how to say it, and I knew what to answer and what not to answer and what to tell them and what not to tell them. So I walked out of there and I was like yeah! You know what I am saying? That was the turning point for me.

Having gained institutional knowledge and first-hand experience of receiving public assistance, Sandra knew she wanted to start an organization where one wrong answer would not disqualify someone. Furthermore, she understood what it was like to be homeless in Sherwood and the struggle, particularly as a Black woman, to keep her children.

There is a difference when you done stood in that welfare line yourself. There is a difference when you been denied services yourself. Just hearing about it, you say, ‘Oh, that’s horrible or terrible,’ but you don’t know how your heart feels when someone says, ‘I am not going to help you feed your kids. No, you still gonna sleep on the streets tonight. I am not going to help you.’ That is something that you just can’t ... you feel me?

Her empathy and familiarity with such hardship has stayed with her: “I said, you know what, this took a lot out of me. What if there are other women out there that are going through this?”

Sandra went on to describe how she would recognize other women who were in need of help and

yet, oftentimes, being taken advantage of due to their vulnerable state of being: “You’re battered, you’re homeless, you don’t have nowhere to go, nobody really cares. The people that should care don’t care and the people that act like they care, they just want to get your business.” Hence, founding an organization in a neighborhood where other women experience similar situations was, for Sandra, a logical decision.

The Process and Experience of Founding a Human Service Organization (HSO)

Process. “You know what, I didn’t let anything be a barrier,” Sandra says. When she received her first payment from a self-published autobiographical book, she decided to establish her organization out of her apartment. Sandra explains, “I got my first big check for \$1,021. I was like oh what can I do? That is when those wheels started turning ... the wheels of ‘how did I do this?’ started turning.” This “this” Sandra is referring here is keeping her children together, finding an apartment, and securing a job that could pay the bills while she wrote her first book. OASIS did not initially have 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Donations to her organization were small and there was no time to apply for grants, foundation funding, or government money as she was triaging with clients to get their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter met, while providing most of the funding for OASIS herself.

In the beginning, I was using money from my book. I would go sell books and raise money at fundraisers and book signings, and I was selling cookies, cakes, pies, and whatever I could do just to have some money in the kitty to help my business.

After a couple of years of operating, Sandra became aware of the benefits of becoming 501(c)3 tax-exempt, expanding her ability to accept donations so that donors could take tax deductions and making her eligible for state and national level grants. She read up on the steps to be taken to

acquire the status, and she states, “I didn’t let the financial part be a barrier. I did everything myself.” She also connected with an organization that specialized in helping other nonprofits obtain tax-exempt status: “I found a guy in Santa Monica who was able to do all my paperwork and everything and make it go through well. You know what, to this day, I do not know how I met Brian.” Brian charged a non-market nominal fee to Sandra, and she had her status confirmed in less than a month.

When it came time to finding individuals to serve on the board, Sandra was deliberate. She invited two community leaders, along with an attorney, a doctor, a psychiatrist, and two big names in the entertainment industry. These relationships came from Sandra’s comedy, her work in the community, and networking opportunities: “Just connections that I made through all my struggles, trials, and tribulations.” She is able to rely on her board for in-kind donations of professional services, as well as to leverage their connections to professionals living outside of the neighborhood, as “They [board members] go out to their social network and they bring in dollars as well. That is another reason that I picked doctors, lawyers, and things like that, because I knew that their friends would be able to donate.” Perhaps more strategically, she also wanted to have a variety of racial-ethnic backgrounds represented on her board:

I have got two of everybody, well, actually there are three Black people, two Asians, two Hispanics, and two White people because I wanted to mix it up. I wanted my board to reflect the world. I didn’t want to be all Black, but I didn’t just want to go that way if we need a liaison to the Asian community, we have one. If we need a liaison to the Hispanic community, we have one. I got soldiers I can send anyone into any neighborhood, any nationality, so there is a face of every race representing OASIS. So, if I need resources,

they may not want to see me but they may want to see somebody their own color, their own nationality, and they may be more willing to listen and more willing to help.

Sandra's board selection has proved beneficial in her quest to acquire resources for OASIS, as she often calls on these individuals to represent her organization when she feels that racial matching of potential donors is needed.

Experience. For the last decade, OASIS has had the ability to accept tax-deductible donations, yet Sandra has been unable to secure much in terms of economic resources: "I don't get monetary donations. That is what I am saying." Operating in Sherwood, she continually finds herself trying to assist families with only a shoestring budget: "Because I have learned to keep my costs low so that I could effectively help the community. I had to figure it out." Figuring it out means she proactively seeks out professional relationships that she can leverage for service provisions. She carved out this path as she repeatedly encountered others who were wary of her and her intentions with her organization:

'Cause being a Black woman, I mean, first of all, it's a skeptical ... you know, you gotta get past a whole layer of skepticism when you tryin' to make something happen anyway. Everybody feels like it's a scam, or, 'What you up to?' Or, "What you doing?"

Thus, she opts not to aim for monetary donations from potential donors but rather in-kind donations for her organizational needs (office space, professional services, ability to purchase basic needs relief for her clients, and so on). Here, she provides examples of how this works:

So, if someone say ... well, if you had an office, and part of your office had like a little alcove or a little closet and you didn't mind me putting a desk and phone line and a

couple of chairs in the little reception area, and you said, ‘Okay, you know, I like what you doing for the community. You can have this space.’ Never costs me anything.

When Sandra’s clients need professional services that she cannot provide, she is able to rely on her personal connections to professionals who volunteer: “I have behavioral therapists, psychologists, counselors, and doctors, and each one of them donates 30 hours a month to me that I can use.” Furthermore, she has established a program that enables donors to meet with individuals or families in need because, again, “Sometimes people may not want to do a cash donation.” Her role is that of a connector, whereby she links donors with recipients: “They [donor] might tell me to meet them at Target with a family. I will have people take the whole family shopping, and I am talking about clothes, bras, panties, dishes, soap, socks, whatever—see what I am saying?” This approach seems to resonate well with donors, as Sandra again emphasizes the wariness potential supporters may have about where exactly their money is going when donated to an organization like hers. “And that lady [donor] feel good because she is seeing the kids, she is seeing this mom, she is seeing this family, she walks away knowing exactly where her money went.”

Sandra depends on many types of other employment to keep her organization afloat. She is a part-time welfare advocate, which facilitates her access to potential clients. She is a comedian, and through her shows she connects individuals willing to help with those in need of support. She states: “I do standup comedy ... so what I do is I use those shows and comedy to help the community. So, the money that I raise at those shows goes into OASIS.” For Sandra, “comedy is therapy.” She is able to use her comedy shows to raise awareness of what happens in her neighborhood and as she strives to connect with those in the audience on a personal level, she also encourages audience members to join her organization’s basic needs relief efforts.

When I do a comedy show, we have membership [programs], and we ask people, we have a sign-in where we ask people if they would like to be a member. And what that membership itself is that if you are not living below the poverty line, if you are gainfully employed, self-employed, whatever, and someone in crisis needs your assistance—if a battered mom is trying to leave her abusive relationship, she is out on her own with her kids and she is struggling, having a hard time—as a member, would you be willing to help this family out? You know, the kid needs a coat or if one of their kids needs shoes or one of their kids needs ... you know, it is like whatever.

This unconventional organizational structure is unique in a number of ways. The idea of running an organization without a formalized budget—not only to launch OASIS, but to sustain it—is remarkable. “We don't deal with money. It doesn't take money to run a nonprofit. That is why I like what I do and I like how I do what I do because it doesn't take money to run a nonprofit.” Since she has been unable to secure funding from grants, foundations, or the government, she leverages her connections to obtain in-kind donations from individuals and corporations. “If Target can give somebody a coat or if Foot Locker can give someone a pair of shoes ... I mean, this is a billion-dollar company and the fact that they can, you see what I am saying?” She elaborates on her reasoning for not having a formalized budget: “I don't deal with money because there is no money.” This sentiment is often echoed in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage where resources are scarce. When Sandra describes trying to collect donations from community members, she states bluntly: “It is very hard.”

Organizational Resources

Sandra's skills and abilities to obtain economic resources have been limited, particularly with regard to winning government grants and acquiring foundation funding.

When discussing government grants her response was twofold. On the one hand, she laments:

No, they won't give me a penny... the money comes with stipulations and a lot of rules and regulations that they want to hold you to accountable for and they think that the average American, the average person, the average undocumented person here is not a contortionist. So everybody cannot fit inside this little social services box. Even if they squeeze their whole body in but just can't get the lid on, they deny you. So I did not want to be one of those agencies where red tape dictated who I am.

In a discussion of the oftentimes laborious strings attached to such funding, she raises a common issue that small, minority-founded organizations that serve niche populations of clientele often encounter: when providing services to populations not deemed worthy, the so-called "undeserving poor," resource acquisition becomes more difficult.

While it is clear that her organization does not have the capacity that a larger organization does—her most recent budget was approximately \$20,000—Sandra was quick to emphasize that every dollar donated to her organization is directed to helping individuals and families.

So, that's my struggle is I'm, on paper, when it comes to the application guidelines and all of that kind of stuff, on paper, I can't compete with larger organizations but in retrospect of what I actually do for the community and where that dollar goes and how much of an impact that dollar makes, I'm kickin' ass.

When reporting requirements call for complex evaluations that are time-consuming and costly, however, small organizations like OASIS may not have the expertise, the means, or the time to complete these kinds of reports.

Sandra also noted that her own identity could be an impediment: “When I apply for big grants like I said, nobody listens to me 'cause I'm ... Who is this lil' Black girl think she ta- ... who taught you how to read?” She elaborates with an explicit comparison:

I think if I was a White lady doing what I do and everything that I've done, I mean, come on, we got the comedy, we've got a book, we've got the nonprofit. No, I think if I was a White girl, I'd be a lot further ahead than I am now 'cause I would be able to talk to people that I really don't have access to talk to in my skin and I would be able to make moves that I really can't make in my skin.

This description of Sandra's struggle to access networks outside of her race and class identity groups and her constant struggle of having to legitimate herself to potential funders has been ongoing. Her experiences in obtaining donations and funds from individuals who are not Black or White can be described as an exercise in racial matching:

Like, say I wanna get some donations from some type of Asian program or something like that... I would actually have to go get a friend of mine, you know, a business associate, whatever you wanna call it, who was actually Asian to set up the meeting and do the phone calls and talk to all the people, to go to the meeting with me, and they would present everything. I would just sit there as CEO because in the past I've tried to deal with companies and, and I've had to like, if I'm dealing with a Hispanic company I have a Hispanic representative for OASIS go do the work...I learned, I mean, 'cause I been doing

this for years. But I learned that I have to, um, I have to get somebody of the culture that I'm trying to work with and to break, to get through the initial barrier and then I come in as CEO, owner of the company, or whatever but even through the whole process they're still dealing face-to-face and directly with the representative of their nationality.

She has been able to cultivate relationships with others outside of her neighborhood through exposure from her comedy shows, her book tours, and being actively involved in several business groups. As a result, she can call on these individuals, who have varying racial-ethnic and gender backgrounds, to assist her when opportunities arise. As Sandra puts it, "I understand the politics of it, and I understand how it works, and with me, I'm just tryin' to get funding for my organization so I don't mind playing their game."

However, when Sandra deals with potential donors who identify as either Black or White, she takes the opposite approach:

When I deal with Black companies and I try to get money and donations from my own people, I got to send a White girl in there. If it's a Black man who owns a company I'm trying to get money from, I'll send a White girl in there. If it's a Black woman that I'm trying to send the company from, I'll send a White boy in there.

In doing so, Sandra deliberately takes into account and uses to her advantage not only contemporary but also historical power imbalances in terms of race and class. As she put it, "it's the psychology of it, you gotta go back to the slave mentality." She further elaborates:

... you got a Black woman and you got this White man in front of her asking to help her lil' organization, that puts her in an immediate sense of power from 400 years ago where

she was oppressed, she had to ask for a favor, and this and that. So, it creates a sense of power in her head like, 'Oh, yeah, let me help this lil' White boy out.'

The converse is true when the roles are reversed: "When you get a Black man, and you send a White girl in there, that's just a situation where, 'Oh, he's got control over this White girl, and she needs him to do a favor and blah.'" Sandra is unambiguous in her views of how she views racial relationships and what this means for the viability of OASIS. "It's all an ego. I, you know what, I learned to cater to people egos... but I have to take my own personal situation out of the equation and I just do what's best for my company." She further explains that, principally, she employs her knowledge in order to keep her organization running:

If it means playing the race card or playing politics and when I say the race card, I'm sayin' to appeal to whoever I'm dealing with. If I have to appeal to their racial sensitivity, I'll play the game because I know that it's a game being played.

Political Resources. The political environment of Sherwood has undergone many significant changes over the decades, but Sandra, having lived in the neighborhood since the early 1990s, is still considered a newcomer. Nevertheless, she aims to remain neutral: "I try not to be political because when you side with a certain, say somebody is running against somebody and if you jump on the wrong bandwagon, that kind of puts a stain on your business so to speak." Perhaps what she means by not being political is that she realized that the political elites of Sherwood have substantial power and they can make or break one's operations in the community. She stated:

People always say, oh, you on their team. No, I am neutral. I love everybody, I try to stay out of that. And they try to get you to put up this sign or just say you know this person. I

try not to affiliate myself with anybody because it is dangerous. If you get on the wrong side then the people that win scrutinize you, and it feels like they got you in a headlock, and they tell you how to run your business. So to me, it is a lose-lose.

However, while Sandra states that she is “not a political person by any means,” when she needs to interact with individuals outside of the neighborhood, she admitted, “I mean, to be honest with you, like, I had to go, um, I had to go and start running with Republicans.” She then elaborated on how she wanted to institute a school-lunch program during the summer months for children who depended on free school breakfasts and lunches during the academic year. Her view was that “...even though the Democrats wanted to see change happen and they want to see the programs and services, the Republicans have the purse strings.” She details a type of tradeoff situation where “you have to kinda mingle with them and dance to their tune, you know, and do what they want you to do. You gotta promise them what they want, their agenda, so you can meet your agenda.” Sandra’s agenda was funding and running the lunch program, which she was ultimately able to do, albeit at a cost: “So, she had me do the lunch program from my program but then she took credit for providing healthy lunches to the inner-city youth.” When asked whether it was a White woman that she was working with, Sandra lamented, “of course it was,” again highlighting the power imbalances and often-fraught relationships when small organizations who have established relationships in a neighborhood are asked to do the groundwork for larger organizations that have the financial resources.

Legitimacy. Sandra discussed how living in the community provided a form of legitimacy that resonates well with community members and potential clients given the number of outside actors and organizations who may come into the neighborhood but leave when their endeavors fail. “I do [live in Sherwood]. Because I didn’t want to be one of those people

that live in Ladera Heights, in the Valley, or Beverly Hills, and oh, let me go to the ghetto. No. I am in the ghetto, I live here.” While Sandra may not know everyone in the neighborhood, she states that when she distributes toy or holiday baskets, she is welcomed as a friendly face: “People know that I am there to help. I am not the police, I am not the social worker, I am not coming to take your kids, I am coming to give.” This is an important distinction in Sherwood, given its history of law enforcement and social services.

Additionally, she became an ordained minister, and she recently went back to school and became a college graduate. While adding credentials to one’s name should help legitimize one’s stature as an executive director, Sandra’s struggle to access networks outside of her racial and socioeconomic identity groups and her difficulty legitimating herself to potential funders continues to be limited. As clarified by Sandra’s experience, those who hold the capital are clearly influenced race and class.

You gotta really give people the reason for the season. I feel like I gotta do a whole tap dance to get what I'm tryin' to make happen accomplished. Whereas other people can just walk in a room and say, ‘Hey, everybody, let's do this!’

Sandra also aptly noted the way in which capital reinforces capital, which perpetuates inequality: “Yeah, 'cause I ain't got no money. Usually, people with money give money to people with money.” Thus, her struggles for organizational and personal legitimacy have been ongoing.

Accept—Adapt—Challenge: Social Identity

Sandra’s founding experience is directly shaped by her intersectional social identities and experience of being Black, a woman, growing up in foster care, experiencing single teen motherhood, and being part of the working class. While she fluctuates between service provider

and service receiver, it can be inferred that Sandra's approach is one that is highly personal where she connects to the women her organization aims to serve through her own experiences. She is the hands-on service provider: distributing toys at housing developments, shopping for household items, and providing counseling when asked. When she needs professional services for her clients, she relies on her personal connections to professionals outside Sherwood who volunteer their time. Initially, Sandra depended on her position as a welfare advocate to acquire clients, which entails a highly personal process with no agency referrals. While Sandra engages in various strategies to keep her organization afloat—from racial matching of potential funders to code-switching when attending events—she also employs a social creativity strategy.

Noting the stratification system of the neighborhood and society, she reconstructs the meaning of being Black, being a single homeless mother who was a victim of domestic violence, and a survivor of physical and sexual abuse, through her comedy shows. In order to raise donations for her organization, she jokes about the perils of her personal situation while identifying with her social groups and coaxing feelings of group pride as she simultaneously connects with those who do not identify with her on a personal level. This in-group evaluation, whereby flattery is invoked on numerous dimensions of comparison, appears to resonate with audience members and individuals in more privileged positions of society. This is a strategy of adaptation, where her fundamental reality of being disadvantaged is not changed for her or her clients; rather, she uses it to contest views of her identities as negative by emphasizing instead the positive values of what it means to be Black, a woman, and a survivor.

Kacee's Place 4 Positive Change – Case Study: 4

Kacee's Place 4 Positive Change, which focuses on violence prevention among youth and young adults, was established about a decade ago. For the first several years, Kacee did not have an office space. Instead, she utilized community spaces and collaborated with other organizations for space. As the founder-turned-executive-director and main service provider, Kacee described her organization as providing four overlapping types of services relating to personal- and teen-dating violence, sexual assault, and bullying. These services encompass "youth development, professional development, community outreach, and [...] victim services." The budget has increased annually, and the latest budget approximated \$250,000. Kacee's Place focuses exclusively on communities of color such as Sherwood "cause no one is talking to us or about us." Kacee describes the ultimate vision for the organization as

helping everyone learn how to have healthy relationships.... I want to have a center. We will have a center that looks like a house. It will be a house. We will be providing workshops and training and programs for boys and girls, young men and women. We will also still be training providers to understand what trauma, violence and abuse looks like, from a cultural perspective.

Personal Biography

Kacee knows Sherwood; she and her brothers were born in the neighborhood: "Oh I'm very familiar with Sherwood, I've lived around here all my life." When Kacee was a young girl, her family moved to an adjacent neighborhood that, while only a couple of miles away, felt like an entirely different world. Thus, she grew up in a culturally diverse setting, and she recalls how "I had all kinds of friends, I had surfers and low riders, batos, gang members and everything in between, and they were awesome people and it was just a family."

When the drug crisis hit Los Angeles in the late 1970s, having recently graduated high school, Kacee describes how she "... remember(s) seeing battle rams driving down the street on TV." As the War on Drugs took hold in Los Angeles, Kacee recalls how "that was not my reality, although it was happening two to three miles away from me." These images remained with Kacee, and she remembers how her own neighborhood, a few miles from Sherwood, and other neighborhoods surrounding her, were transformed. She recounts:

So the crack cocaine episode hit and it hit me in that I didn't use it, but I knew all kinds of people, family and friends all around me, that did. But what it did do is what actually hit before crack cocaine was the angel dust episode. And to me, angel dust was the defining factor in how our communities, um, how our communities changed.

Instead, her reality became corporate America where she obtained a well-paying job in sales. She saw the world of corporate America as an eye-opening experience: "White people in corporate America were drinking and using cocaine. And not being prosecuted. Having inappropriate conversations and wilin' out and sexually assaulting people with immunity." Even though Kacee enjoyed much financial success in corporate America, after three decades, with all of her children grown, she was chronically stressed and became clinically depressed. Having been retrenched from a number of prior jobs, in her role as vice president of sales for a technology company, she says that "I loved it but I saw the writing on the wall." This was directly before the 2008 financial crisis. A larger company was purchasing her company, which triggered additional retrenchments. "I became very stressed and very depressed and I hated life. I hated people. You don't realize how even though you get laid off and it's not your fault, your body automatically starts taking in this." She took almost a year off, and she describes how she "...was so lost, just no idea of who I was anymore." At this point, she recognized that she needed a drastic change.

As she was “a very spiritual person,” Kacee describes how, while she was taking a leave of absence, she contemplated her purpose was in life “because I didn’t understand why this was happening to me, you know, everybody does the why me God? Why me? And I said one day, okay God, you’ve got my attention, what do you want me to do?” On the following day, a relative called to discuss the idea of a nonprofit organization. She says she initially “had no idea what a nonprofit was, I mean you know, you hear of them, but what is that?”

While living on her savings, she spent the following two years in the community: “I just volunteered in the community with every nonprofit I could find,” and she conducted a community-needs assessment. After this assessment, Kacee knew she had discovered a prevalent yet unaddressed factor among the youth and young adults of Sherwood: violence. She explained:

There is this thing about violence that is bigger than just dating violence, it's this interpersonal violence. I wasn't finding anybody talking about it, so I went back and I started doing more needs analysis and talking to youth... all these kids are dating violence and interpersonal violence and they're tapping each other on the butts, and they're hitting each other in breasts, and they're calling each other bitches and, and they're talking about having sex, and they're talking about being raped, and they're even seeing people be raped. And I'm like, wow, as I looked around, I could not find one agency that was focused on just teen dating violence. There was not a single one. Uh, all the domestic violence agencies were focused on people 18 and above.

Kacee could relate on multiple levels: “... I have been in an emotionally and verbally abusive relationship. He was emotionally and verbally abusive, and so was I.” As she views herself, the founder and executive director of her organization, she states that

You know, um, I relate just doing the work of being an advocate. I am the protector. And then looking at me, you don't know what to think when you see me. You know I'm a big mama, I'm a sugar mama. Uh, I'm all that. And as a woman, we all, doesn't matter your age, your race, your sexual orientation, your color, we all are basically the same. And so, when people, especially men, and even some women see us, uh, we just look like property, or a piece of meat, or something that they think that they want to get a hold of. And so, that's how I relate. I relate also as a teacher, and a mother, and a wife, and a woman, and a daughter, and a spiritual being. I relate as being a loving, giving life force.

The multiple roles and identities that Kacee takes on are intertwined into her life's work, of establishing and running Kacee's Place. However, for the last decade while managing the organization, she has taken a drastic salary cut. "I'm not in it for the money. I'm in it to change the community, so I don't have a lot of needs." She describes how she has never lacked for anything "so I don't consider myself, uh, by all typical standards, I am, um, below poverty level, but I don't feel like that. I don't operate like that." She further stated that, while she may not have the income, she regards her socioeconomic status as middle-class: "I consider myself to be, uh, middle class. Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah. I, I consider myself to be a middle-class person. But my salary says I'm below poverty level."

Kacee self-identifies as a Black woman: "Oh, I am straight Black. I'm a Black woman all day long and I call myself Black. I am Black and that is there's no apologetic to it. I'm not apologetic about it." She made an interesting personal distinction between calling herself "Black" versus "African American":

I'm not an African American 'cause I've never been to Africa and neither have my parents, but my fore parents have been. Um, clearly, based on certain people, I'm not an American, uh, because we don't have the same rights and if we did, then Black boys and Black girls wouldn't be killed and lynched today in 2018.

Thus, it is not just her personal mission but her organization's mission to end the violence that disproportionately affects Black people. "And so, you know, some people call it, uh, advocacy. Some people call it a passion. I call it what I have to do in order to live every day."

The Decision to be in Sherwood

For Kacee, the drug epidemic was not just a defining moment for Los Angeles but also for her as "a lot of the premise of the work that I do is because of this." She described how "when angel dust hits, no one thought about the man who was doing angel dust, who impregnated a woman, or the woman who was doing angel dust and was pregnant and the impact of that on her unborn child." She realized that "there's some drugs, especially the synthetic and manmade drugs that never leave your DNA, so I grew up seeing changes, things that were no longer normal." These experiences impacted Kacee, and when she was ready to establish Kacee's Place, she knew she wanted to be serving a community that was in greatest need of such services—one that she was intimately familiar with. Not just from being born in Sherwood, and living nearby (in the same council district,) but also because she identified with her potential clients from the neighborhood—Black women:

And also being a woman and being a Black person. I am still every day, Black, all day, every day. That is not going to change, and I'm focused on my community. So people, when they see me, I tell them, 'Look, we serve everybody, but my real focus is working

with communities of color and the reason why is because we had the greatest need.’ I can help everyone, and some people say, ‘Well, but you’re not being authentic,’ so does El Pollo Loco only sell to Latino speakers? No. They sell to everyone. Now, do they specialize in this? Yes, they do. It’s the same concept.

With regard to the neighborhood stakeholders of Sherwood, Kacee explains that initially she had to reacquaint herself, as

. . . some did [know me] because I came back and I started working but because I hadn’t been in this field there were some community partners that, you know, I did some things with but others were like ‘we don’t know you, we don’t wanna do anything with you.’

Thus, her decision to serve the youth and young adults of Sherwood, albeit an easy decision in terms of deciding on the need she wanted to address, also presented some trust factors. She recounted, “for me to partner with them (other NPOs), they were like, ‘No, mm-mm (negative), it’s okay.’ You know, people had their own people that they were working with. And none of the big boys and big girls wanted to partner with me.” She describes how “No one, no one, no one!” was addressing the violence—which is often a mediating effect of drug abuse—that the people of Sherwood dealt with; abuse and violence that begins for many in the womb. “On an everyday, ongoing basis, they [other NPOs] are so few and far between. But in Sherwood, nobody is. Even in this part of Los Angeles I’m the only one that you can find on a daily basis having these conversations.”

The Process and Experience of Founding an HSO

Process. The process of founding her organization was straightforward. Kacee first determined what she did not know about nonprofits, then she reflected on her skillset and combined that knowledge with what she did know: for-profit organizations.

I needed to understand what is a nonprofit and I think that has really helped me... so for me to take the time to understand, do a community assessment on my own of what the community needed, from my perspective as well as what I thought that I could personally give, because people need to understand that if you start a nonprofit, it's not just about the nonprofit, but it's also about you, and your commitment, what are you going to give, what value do you bring to the company?

Drawing on her managerial sales experiences, specifically lessons learned from corporate America, she describes how she "... walked into this not knowing about nonprofits, so I operated as a business." Namely, she explains,

[I] understand the needs of both the company and my employees. Most people don't understand both the internal and external customers. They always focus on the external customers, but if you focus on your internal customers, which are your employees, and your team, then you will have everything that you want. Everything that you need will be done, because your employees, if they're happy, and they're making money, they're going to make sure that your customers are happy and making money and so that's my philosophy and that's how I've been very successful.

She envisioned an organization that was a resource for and a benefit to Sherwood. While volunteering with other local organizations, she became familiar with 501(c)3 tax-exempt status and easily obtained it. Additionally, while volunteering, she "realized that half of them (HSOs)

didn't understand what in the world leadership was about. They had no idea..." Thus, she was able to transfer "things that I learned and that I was teaching in corporate America." More specifically, she brought her expertise in "effective communication, conflict resolution, and decision making," which she describes as "sorely missing" in these other agencies. From her perspective, "People were talking to people like they had tails. I felt like most of the people were just stealing money."

After Kacee served her first clients in early 2009, she decided that she needed "more experience and more knowledge." While she had prior volunteering experience with domestic violence agencies in Los Angeles, she "went back and I started, um, taking classes on, became certified, a domestic violence advocate. I became certified as sexual assault advocate, and then I started getting information and learning about bullying." These courses were integral to Kacee being the founder-turned-executive-director of her organization. For the first several years, Kacee describes how she "... didn't have any grants, funding, or anything, and those first few years I lived through money I actually had (saved) or through donations from people who said, okay, I know you need to pay your house note or whatever." Fortunately, Kacee had a savings account to carry her through those initial years so that, even without funding, she could still run her organization.

With regard to forming her board, Kacee recalls that "for like six months I didn't have a board, and then I realized I'm supposed to have a board, so I got my family and friends and I realized this isn't working, they're not doing anything." A few years after establishing her organization, a friend told Kacee about a local foundation that provided free board training for organizations like hers. This was a turning point for her organization. Now she states that, "I want it [board] to be more ethnically diverse. I want Black, I want White, I want Hispanic, I even

want Asian on my board. I want men and women.” She elaborates that she wants people who share her passion about violence prevention and awareness and “to fundraise, to help us to bring in other people who can bring in finances. And if that person can't bring in finances, that person is with a PR agency and can help do some of the PR work.” However, when she reconstitutes her board, it is with the knowledge that “they can decide later that I’m not the best nonprofit, the best executive director, and take my company and do something else with it. So that’s one of the reasons I haven’t been like just bring in anybody.”

Experience. While establishing Kacee’s Place was a relatively straightforward process for Kacee, running her HSO has been more complicated. Even though she identifies as Black, as a woman, and as someone who understands the needs of Sherwood, initially she had difficulties gaining trust from within the neighborhood of Sherwood. “I think my biggest barrier was getting people to know me, to trust me, and that’s because there’s been so many people that have come through that have said they could do this and that, and they couldn’t.” Furthermore, as with most new organizations, she also struggled to acquire funding. She explained, “because I started this in 2008, I didn’t get any financial assistance until 2010.” Furthermore, she felt that her social identities—particularly being a Black woman—intensified this struggle: “So, there are people that may not do business with me because I am in your face, unapologetically Black.” She explains how her racial identity, her hair, her body, and the way she speaks can affect people so profoundly that at times she is not taken seriously:

... um, sometimes people see me as a Black woman and think, ‘She's not important. She's not relevant. She doesn't have anything to say,’ um, and they're surely mistaken about that. It's funny because when I walk in the room, people just don't know what to think. They look at my hair and they think, ‘Hmm, she's a little old gray woman,’ but then they

look at my face and they're like, 'Wait, how old is she?' And then they look at my body and they think, 'Okay, she's overweight,' so and, you know, and then I start talking and then everyone changes, um, and then they're like, 'Okay, maybe she has something important and something valid to say.' Matter of fact, there's no maybe, it's a definite.

Kacee views her experiences of constantly having to validate herself, reflecting on the ways that her social identities are devalued by greater society, as parallel to those whom she serves: "So, I just want people to really look at people of color, not to look at our skin, but to look at our heart. And that we are the exact same people. We love our children. We work hard."

Before Kacee begins any trainings or presentations, she tells her audience that, while she may not have college degrees or professional licensures, she has real-world experience, something that is often lacking in the helping profession. "I tell them I am not a licensed professional. I'm not a social worker. I don't have the letters behind my name and whether you do or you don't, that's irrelevant." For her, the lived experience is most important, and "if you're operating from a book, you need to carry your ass back to school and tell them that you need to go on the streets and talk to people, work with people, see what's really going on." When further describing her experience of running Kacee's Place, she clarifies that the organization's mission can be a taboo subject, especially in the case of younger adolescents. Combined with her social identities, she often must counter pejorative stereotypes placed on her:

My focus is about creating, uh, awareness about violence and abuse of kids and women and children of color. And I think a lot of times people don't want to hear that. Um, they want it to look nice. They want it to look pretty, and because I am a, um, I guess, I'm going to just say it, I'm a loud woman, and I'm loud because I want to get a point across.

And I'm not angry, but I'm passionate, you know? And I'm serious about the work I do. I, I don't play. This is, I do this for a living. I do this to live, you know, and I do this so that other people live. This is not a job. This is what I do in my life.

Organizational Resources

Kacee aims for diversity with regard to resources. Her business model, which depends on charging fee-for-service along with an array of government, foundation, and corporation grants, began when she first established her organization and she was unable to attract grants from traditional foundations or government contracts. Relying on her business expertise, she reached out to for-profit corporations that engage in philanthropic activity. While cobbling together grants in the one- to ten-thousand-dollar grants, she decided to create programming that would enable her to charge for her services. “I created a program, and then I came up with a pay scale and it all depends on what I’m doing, who I’m doing it with, so my sliding scale is anywhere from \$75-to-\$300 an hour.” Kacee says that her sliding scale is “based on the expertise that I bring to the community from my prior experience, as well as all of the years of studying and learning.” Notably, she does not charge Sherwood residents or any of her youth clients for services. Rather, she provides training and services for larger government entities, such as the Department of Mental Health and the Probation Department, and community colleges. “We don't have a lot of funders. I think that is them not understanding who we are, and the work that we do. And so, I am not one to sit around and wait on you to fund me.” In her words, “I create opportunities. We don’t wait.” For the first five years, the budget for Kacee’s Place ranged from approximately \$10,000 to just over \$50,000. During this period, she faced significant obstacles to acquiring any form of government grants. In addition to her lack of an established track

record, she struggled to access sufficient funding to run her programs, even without taking a salary. This created what she describes as a no-win situation:

... funders will say, ‘Well, wait, you don't have any money? You don't have a salary?’

And, see, that's now, that's the funny thing is, funders will look at you, um, and say, they look to see when you submit a, a proposal, ‘Well, what is your salary?’ And if you don't have a salary, then they won't fund you, because if you don't have a self salary, you're not really doing the job. You're just playing. So my question is, well, how do you get a salary if you don't fund us? And in order to do that, you have to write yourself into the grants.

And so, but if my grant is \$10,000, where am I going to pull the salary from that?

To overcome these initial funding obstacles, Kacee states that, “it doesn’t take anything to run a program. You either run it or you don’t.” She realized that she could do many things in Los Angeles for free or at a minimal cost. Since she was living on her savings, any money donated to her organization went to running programs. “Do you know that you could go and get almost everything for free? Like field trips, other than the buses, I can take groups of kids every month on a tour around the San Pedro Harbor, for free.” Therefore, she was able to minimize the cost of running her organization on a shoestring budget in those beginning years “because I do a lot, I think a lot of the reason that things don’t cost me anything is because um I do a lot of networking.”

However, even after establishing her organization, Kacee encountered similar obstacles relating to a government grant that requires her organization to do the work first and seek reimbursement later—a dilemma that small organizations, particularly self-funded ones, regularly confront. According to Kacee, this funder stated that the funding would come with the

restrictions removed after a three-month probationary period, which would ensure that all the deductions were correct. Starting and implementing a program for three months was completely unrealistic for Kacee's Place, and they lost an employee because "it took so long for the grant to fund us." The preliminary restrictions placed on such money led to an organization like Kacee's not having other funding sources to draw from to sustain program implementation or reimburse participants. For example, when the grantees were required to fly in and present their work, Kacee bluntly stated, "I'm not coming to do a presentation on the work that we do 'cause we have not done any of this simply because you guys haven't funded us." Eventually, the restrictions were lifted and Kacee began her programming. Such are the growing pains of a small organization; Kacee's Place went from having only \$10,000 as its largest grant at one point to now receiving a six-figure government grant. Kacee is ecstatic about winning the latter, but she still struggles to navigate the bureaucracy of the strings attached.

Political Resources. Kacee describes running her organization in Sherwood as "very political." Some of her largest supporters are the locally elected city council members, house representative members, and county board supervisors. Prior to being in the nonprofit sector, she had little regard for politicians, but once she discovered the influence that locally elected officials could have on her community and on an organization such as hers, she started paying attention, attending events, and employing networking. She recounts:

And then I found out about these little people that I had heard about all along and really hadn't paid too much attention to them except for election time, and they are called politicians. And I realized, wow, there's a lot of politicians and they have a lot to do with nonprofits, so I started attending their meetings as well and getting on their mailing lists

and then they sent information out about nonprofits, um, so I pretty quickly learned the landscape: who's who and what's what.

Networking is a key component for Kacee. She spent time cultivating relationships with the politicians that represent Sherwood. According to Kacee, the local councilperson's office should be available to her: "I'm a homeowner, I'm a stakeholder, and the work I'm doing is in the community," so she relies on in-kind donations and smaller services, such as printing, from them. Initially, she just wanted information from the politicians that serve larger areas than just Sherwood, and to determine "...who's going to be a benefit to me and who's going to be a benefit to the community and I also needed to understand, well, what's their platform and what are they really about." Her networking method has served her well over the years:

I would position myself, every time I would go to a meeting, whether it's politicians or anyone else, I usually sit about three to five rows back, right in the middle. I want them to see me and I want to see them, and I also want to be able to see everybody else. And so I would meet a lot of people at the different meetings and I started meeting the politicians and my thing is when I meet people I always give them my card, I shake their hand, I tell them my name. The next time I see them I do the same thing. About the third time I start asking them what's my name, do you remember me, what's my name? Then I tell them my name again so that they would understand, I'm here, I'm not leaving and you need to know who I am.

Through the relationships that Kacee has established over the years, the local politicians know her and while she does not rely on them for funding, she does rely on them for public support of

Kacee's Place, which has been successful and has allowed her to be regarded as a legitimate service provider.

Legitimacy. Over the last decade, Kacee has continued volunteering and attending weekly meetings in the Sherwood neighborhood. Of her reputation among potential clients and community stakeholders, she states, "I have to say that I am highly respected and that everyone knows my credibility." This credibility, built on years of networking, acquiring credentials, and her skillset and program deliverables, can lead to time management challenges. She often feels the responsibility of diverse responsibilities, and she states, "I am sometimes challenged to do my work because people call me on the daily basis and ask for my help, my guidance, my direction, my support, or my mentorship, and I give it to them every time." Through her continued volunteer work and mentorship, she has also been the recipient of several awards for service and leadership to the Sherwood neighborhood. Kacee has translated this status to collaborating with more than a hundred community partners.

Because of her organization's work, she must cooperate with law enforcement, particularly when incidents need to be reported. Kacee has an interesting relationship with the local police and, while she does work with them in some of her workshops, she also explains that in Sherwood "the police hold the power in the community. Um, that's a good thing and a bad thing." She regards some as "really awesome police" while others need to find a different profession as they "are holding the community hostage... trying to make it like it was in the past, and it will never be like it was in the past." Regarding this latter group, she elaborates: "they want just a few people to have the power and the money." From her perspective, the community is invested in Sherwood, "but the community does not have the money." This relates to her younger clients, when law enforcement intervenes and labels an entire group of youth as bad, or

that all gang members are bad. She insists, “We have to do a better job of helping them (law enforcement) to understand maybe what skills they (gang members) have.” So she manages to strike a delicate balance of being viewed as an asset by the local police but also as a legitimate advocate for her clients in her organization—a difficult feat with respect to the youth of the neighborhood.

Accept—Adapt—Challenge: Social Identity

Kacee utilizes a direct approach when interacting with White funders, policymakers, and other founders. She questions the distribution of funds; for example, at a conference in northern California, which focused on the healthy outcomes for girls of color, she noted that all the attendees were girls of color yet most of the executive directors were White: “...in a room with over 300 girls and women and all of the girls were African American or Latina. And I think four or five of us were African American executive directors. The other 70, 80 of them were White women.” This racial breakdown on its own did not surprise Kacee, but she was somewhat shocked to discover that the organizations with White executive directors all had budgets of “\$500,000 to five, to \$20 million dollars.” This was when Kacee’s Place had a budget of around \$50,000. Many of the organizations attending had also been in existence for as long as Kacee’s Place had, leading her to bluntly pose the question: “So, we have to figure out why do we fund White women, why do we not fund women of color?” Furthermore, aside from which organizations receive funding and which do not, Kacee raised an issue that many consider an even larger discrepancy worth examining: “Why do we think that White women can teach Black girls? Now, there are certain things that you can, just like I can teach any girl as well. But there's certain things that need to be culturally specific.” Kacee elaborates: “.. because you [a White woman] don't understand. You don't understand about my hair. If another White person touches

my hair and says, ‘Ahhh, your hair is just so cute, and how do you get it curly like that?’” Kacee explained that such slights are not just derogatory but prejudicial, and they affect all aspects of running her organization. One of the main differences that Kacee sees between women of color and White women is the ability of women of color to accommodate and make everyone feel comfortable. “We will go places and people will intentionally not make us feel comfortable. Or they will question our ability to do the job. Or they will question our ability to talk. ‘You speak so well.’ How demeaning is that?” She has often been confronted by foundation funders and other founders who question her organizational wherewithal and are amazed that she is still operating Kacee’s Place:

I even have people say to me all the time, ‘Uh, you’re still in business?’ And I look at it in that they’re surprised simply because there’s so many other nonprofits that are no longer in business. But I look at it from the standpoint as, of course, I’m still in business. I had no intentions of not being in business.

Thus, as Kacee attempts to maintain a balance between discussing and dealing with the violence and abuse that occurs in communities of color, as “our culture grooms children for abuse and violence,” she also strives to avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes of the community she serves. While Kacee did not suffer the personal levels of trauma or grow up in a neighborhood of concentrated poverty, she employs strategies along a spectrum of accepting to challenging, matching strategy to situation. She is, as she puts it, “unapologetically Black,” but this does not mean being uninformed or naïve about how best to navigate and present this identity in different contexts and with different audiences.

Mothers Against Violence – Case Study: 5

Mothers Against Violence began with a small gathering of mothers in the early 2010s. Several years later it received its tax-exempt status. The founder, Linda, started this organization after her child was murdered. Beginning in her home, Linda has created a niche organization that provides programming and assistance to grieving mothers and families, services that were previously unavailable in the neighborhood of Sherwood. Hoping to bridge the gap between forgiveness and fear, Mothers Against Violence strives “To get everybody to at least be in a healing process. And to begin to know what it feels like to heal.” For the previous few years, the budget has hovered around \$50,000. Linda’s vision for her organization is multifold: to keep providing for her community, to acquire a space so that she can run her groups in one place, and to be employed by her organization so that she does not have to keep working other jobs to sustain herself and her organization.

Personal Biography

Linda was born and raised in Sherwood. She describes her childhood as “really, really good. It wasn’t until I got grown that I started seeing the struggles and the challenges.” For Linda, Sherwood was “all I knew at the time.” Her family is well established and well known in the neighborhood, as her parents were born and raised there and Linda also raised all her children in the neighborhood. Although she became a teenage mother, she still graduated from high school. However, once the crack cocaine crisis gripped the neighborhood in the early 80s, it also took hold of Linda. Soon thereafter, the War on Drugs led to the incarceration of many of the Sherwood population. However, Linda was able to get clean and avoid the tangled web of drugs, addiction, and prison. Some of Linda’s children became involved in the violence and gang rivalries that took hold of Sherwood during this era. Even though a couple of her sons were

gang-involved youth, Linda still regarded them merely as boys who were trying to do good things in the neighborhood.

Linda describes how her world collapsed 15 years ago; everything changed in a heartbeat. She relates, “I started the organization after my son was murdered because he um, he was gang affiliated. But he was, he was a boy.” It was not just that her son was murdered but that he was murdered while working on positively changing the neighborhood: “Well, he was on a path of changing the spirit of our neighborhood because my son was a leader among his own peers. Um, really among the community.” As Linda describes, “he was in a process of turning that, all that negative energy into something positive and he was killed in that whole process.” There was one man, though, who was the opposite of those who typically interacted with the youth of Sherwood: White, male, and wealthy, and he had been working with her son as a mentor of sorts and as a sports coach. He met with Linda to describe the work he had been doing with her son:

...he began to tell me stories about my son and how the relationship had grown from this to that and how his mindset was even changed from when he first met him up until he passed away. And that he didn't want to see all the work that my son had put into what he was trying to do go in vain so that he said, ‘There's just gotta be some kind of way we can continue his work.’

Linda turned her grief into action by discussing with her son’s mentor ideas on how to continue the work. She recalls, “So, now in my mind I gotta do something. But I had no idea what that something was gonna be at all, period.” He supported the idea of bringing together mothers who had similarly lost children to gang violence, and thus began the programs that eventually gave rise to Mothers Against Violence. Linda, who describes herself as strong, loving, and

determined, continues her ‘day job’ of working to prevent gangs in Sherwood as well as being a victim’s advocate. However, the organization she created has given her a new sense of purpose, as her work in establishing Mothers Against Violence has morphed into something far deeper than a passion: “My work (at my organization) is my life, and my life is my work now.”

The Decision to be in Sherwood

Linda had to leave the neighborhood she intimately knew in order to access services that facilitated her grieving. Outside of Sherwood, she was amazed to learn about support groups and other nonprofit organizations that provide an array of grief-related services—services sorely needed in Sherwood, but absent:

Well, it started out because there's so many different resources and stuff in all these other areas. My first meeting was a ‘Concerned Families’ meeting. It's a support group [for those who have lost a loved one] for siblings, parents and grandparents only. And so, someone took me to a meeting in Beverly Hills. When I first got involved in ‘Concerned Families’ all these uh groups were in Beverly Hills, Diamond Bar, you know all the nice areas.

There was no doubt that Linda would establish a similar support group in Sherwood. She had joined a club that no one wants to be a part of; yet she already knew so many others in her neighborhood who suffered similar losses. She describes how she felt after her first meeting of Concerned Families: “When I left that night from that meeting I was like, you know what, we need to do something like this in Sherwood.” She explains further:

Because before I lost my sons I have people that I grew up with who lost their sons before I lost mine and I never, I mean I would see them of course and give them my

condolences and stuff like that but I didn't know the impact and what they were going through because I hadn't been through it.

Linda sees the importance of founding her organization in the place she was born and raised, and seeking to help other mothers who have had similar experiences as her own, “Cause if I don't, nobody will go after these families, some of them won't acknowledge the pain.” According to Linda, one must first acknowledge the pain before the healing process can begin. Moreover, with the goal of ending the rivalries and eradicating the gangs, because “enough is enough” with the violence, Linda sees it as “what better way than to start bringin’ the mothers together.”

The Process and Experience of Founding an HSO

Process. Soon after her son’s passing, Linda held her first Mothers Gathering. She had the encouragement and financial support from her son’s mentor, and she states, “I guess he seen a strength in me I hadn't seen yet. So he said, he made a suggestion that I start an organization.” Being embedded in and knowledgeable about the perils facing Sherwood’s youth, his idea was to “help other mothers.” Linda, on the other hand, initially wanted to continue the work of her late son, but she describes how she “didn't know what helping other mothers was gonna look like but I agreed to do it and that's what I've been doing since.” What initially began as helping grieving mothers soon became weekly support group meetings, annual holiday toy drives and luncheons, sibling support, and any other individual help that Linda can provide to bereaved families.

Mothers Against Violence continued its programming for over half a decade before receiving tax-exempt status. As Linda was funded personally by her late son’s mentor and she had limited knowledge of nonprofit organizational structure, she says, “I was familiar but I didn’t even know how to get started.” However, in the mid 2010s, she teamed up with a local

foundation that provided such organizational know-how and support to small organizations like hers. They assisted Linda to complete the necessary paperwork: “they just put perspective to it and helped me.” It was then easy for Linda to establish a board of directors, given her long-standing relationships in the neighborhood. Once she applied for her tax-exempt status, she approached several prominent individuals from the neighborhood, including members of law enforcement, the housing developments, and other community stakeholders, “Because um, they believed in what I was doing. And we had a relationship.” After a couple of years, though, Linda had to replace the police officer on her board who after being promoted in the ranks had stopped answering Linda’s phone calls, attending events presented by the organization, and being a productive board member.

I use to talk to her on a regular basis. Uh, she hasn't missed none of the events until this year and now that her position has changed she don't answer her phone no more. But it was ah those type of situations of having me feel some type of way.

This experience, while not ideal, provided Linda an opportunity for further reflection on her board composition. Her board is now comprised of individuals who have the time to commit, are all familiar with Linda’s life history, and are supportive of her mission.

Experience. Tragically, Linda’s experience of losing her son to violence is far from unique in Sherwood, something she recognized immediately: “So, when I realized, okay I'm in this situation, I know I need to talk to somebody. I was wondering like why, you know, well maybe some of them [other grieving mothers] was going through something too.” Relying on her neighborhood knowledge, she started reaching out to other women who had lost children to violence, inviting them to attend a group similar to the Concerned Families group that she had

attended outside of the neighborhood. As far she knew, “none of them was really going to group or therapy or a counselor.” However, she soon faced her first obstacle:

And so uh, I started to ask around to people that I knew that had lost a child, if they want to come be a part of it. And no! And nobody did. Nobody wanted to do it. I didn't understand it. At first I was like, wow. And I understand now that my grief is not they grief. And theirs is not mine. And I didn't understand why they don't want no help but everybody just dealt they own way.

Alongside with grieving in one's own way, she also faced the obstacle of getting mothers of deceased youth of different gangs to come together, stating “It's not easy and hasn't been easy because some of these people don't wanna forgive. You know they holding on to it with, girl hmm. I don't get it.” Linda shares the same social identities as much of the population she aims to work with, but she often feels that her goal of uniting the gang-divided neighborhood is exhausting and seemingly never-ending. Over the years, though, her organization has grown, for positive and negative reasons. On the one hand, word of her work has spread, increasing her legitimacy and raising awareness; on the other hand, the organization has also grown because youth and young adult homicides continue to take place in Sherwood, ensuring a steady supply of grieving mothers needing her services. With regard to finding clients, Linda explained, “Some of them find me. Um, other people through other people. Through stuff that happens like if I find out about a murder or something I try and go to the crime scene if it's safe...”

Another barrier that Linda encounters, as do many organizations in Sherwood, is the lack of funding sources and actual funds. She describes this situation as “... just never having enough money to do what I wanted to do. I always made it enough 'cause you can only do what you

can.” After receiving her 501(c)3 status, Linda’s donations and grants have significantly increased as she has been able to apply for foundation funding. Nevertheless, she states “But I've always wanted to do more...”. By doing more, she hopes to fulfill her ultimate vision for the neighborhood:

My vision for Sherwood is peace all over Sherwood. Peaceful. You can just walk to the neighborhood parks without getting chased down or shot at. Cause that's what's going on now. Um, so peace. You don't have to hang out and be friends but just be able to be in the same vicinity without fear of getting yourself killed.

Organizational Resources

Linda’s first donor, her son’s mentor, has continued his financial support over the years. His sustaining support has allowed Linda unrestricted funds to continue her large annual gatherings of grieving mothers. After connecting with the local foundation that provided her with free training for organization leaders, this group has assisted her with capacity building and resource acquisition, both of which have been imperative to her growth. From this organizational guidance, she has since received numerous grants from local and national foundations that support an end to gun violence, particularly for youth populations. She also has a long list of private donors who provide things like gift baskets, gift cards, and other in-kind types of support for when she runs her annual programs.

Political Resources. Having lived for decades in Sherwood, Linda knows all of the locally elected officials but “I don't think much of them.” According to her, such officials and politicians only attend her annual events when it benefits their profile: “I done invited you into my world, you agreed to come, actually you wanted to come because you knew this was

something good or whatever, now I can't even leave a message for you. That type of stuff.”

Understandably, she feels ignored and overlooked by the local politicians because:

...they know about the organization. They've uh, been around from day one. You see 'em and now I can't even call and make an appointment. Basically, I've been inviting them back to the annual Mothers event. Showed up one time, couple of them. Couple of 'em never showed up. And these are our representatives.

Thus, Linda still approaches officials once a year with a donation letter and invitation to her events, but she does not rely on their support, publicly or financially, due to their lack of responsiveness.

Legitimacy. Most people in the neighborhood know Linda; she regularly attends community meetings and events, she holds community walks in memory of her son, and when it comes to supporting other organizations, “I try to support whoever I can.” She connects with an increasing number of women every year and, because of her personal experience with losing her son, her legitimacy is never questioned.

Her relationship with law enforcement, however, is complicated. For example, when she organizes a sibling support event, she must deal with the police and their restrictions, as many youths are gang affiliated while many others are guilty by family association. Linda described the difficulty of such gatherings:

I'm allowed to do it [the planned event], but I'm restricted. And most of the restrictions are valid but some of 'em is just because of how they look at the gang, uh. Well, I don't wanna call them gang members, but the gang members. They gonna pull up and try to find somethin' to say and it, and you know, the young people really don't like dealing

with LAPD. They will if I'm involved, but it, it really depends on how the LAPD is acting. You know it can get shut down at any time.

Thus, Linda strikes a balance between maintaining good relations with law enforcement while seeking to serve the grieving siblings and youth of Sherwood.

Accept—Adapt—Challenge: Social Identity

Linda's organization serves a specific population within Sherwood, one that is unique to neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. She draws on two contrasting themes when discussing the problem of gang violence, the reason for establishing her organization. First, as an individual problem: "Because I think the cause is a lack of, um, parenting for one. I think parents need to be more accountable." Such individual narratives may resonate well with outside funders who may not want to examine the systemic issues of why there are gangs in the first place or what the root causes are to the violence experienced in such contexts. Conversely, she also addresses some structural barriers, as evidenced when she talks about the need for "jobs for the older people who wanna work but can't because of uh background or, and another thing is that um, we need a good drug rehab." For Linda, through her intersectional identities of being a Black mother with low socio-economic status who has lost a child to violence, she is able to negotiate her identities in a uniquely personal, albeit tragic way. When asked how her identity has shaped her organization, however, she answers: "It hasn't, I don't think. If it has, I haven't seen it." She embraces an adapting strategy, one that has allowed her to cope with the loss of her son while simultaneously running her organization.

Discussion

This study investigated the experiences of Black women founders of HSOs in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage over a forty-year period. Previous studies and foundation reports have documented the underrepresentation of minority founders and leaders of nonprofit organizations (De Vita et al., 2009; Halpern, 2006; Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009; Lecy et al., 2016; McGinnis, 2011; Teegarden, 2004; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017; Van Slyke & Lecy, 2012). This study builds on this research by examining the experiences of these HSO minority founders turned executive directors. The theoretical frameworks of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) provide a framework for exploring how the founders' intersectional social identities shaped their experiences from pre-organizational conceptualization to organizational establishment and growth.

This discussion section comprises two main sections that mirror the two overarching research questions. First, I discuss the founders' intersectional social identities as they relate to their personal biography—including resiliency and disenfranchised grief, their decision to found an organization in Sherwood, and their process and experience of founding—including organizational know-how, social capital, and the criminal justice system. Second, I discuss the founders' processes of accepting, adapting, and challenging strategies with sections on organizational resources and legitimacy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and implications for research, theory, policy, and social work practice.

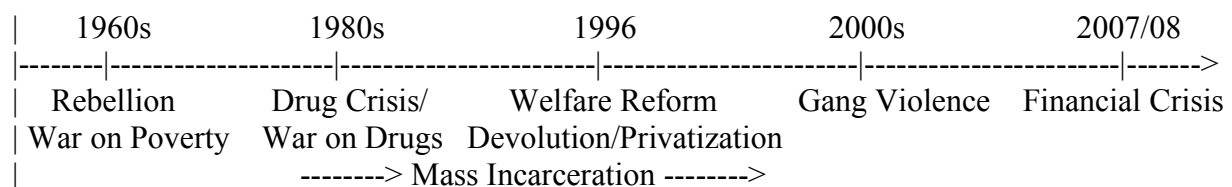
Intersectional Social Identities

The first research question asked how founders' intersectional social identities shaped their founding experience, and it included three sub-questions: 1) what was it about the personal biographies of the women that led them to become founders, 2) how did their intersectional identities shape their decision to found an HSO in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage, and 3) how did their intersectional identities shape their process and experience of founding the HSO? I first discuss the role of the founders' biographies in leading them to organizational creation, including the macro context, resiliency, and disenfranchised grief, followed by a short discussion of their reasons for selecting Sherwood as their location. I then conclude with sections on how their identity shaped the process and experience of establishing an HSO with a focus on organizational know-how, social capital, and the criminal justice system.

RQ1a: Personal Biography

Understanding a small part of each of the five women's biographies led to key insights into their motivations for founding their organizations. Figure 1, below, provides a chronological timeline that lists these events, as the founders identified them as relevant to their stories. It was not that these policies and events directly caused the women to create their organizations, but that the ramifications of the policies and events fueled the women's desire to do so. It was through their lived experiences of being Black, a woman, of low socioeconomic status, or a mix of these identities that these macro policies shaped their personal and professional life course.

Figure 1: *Timeline of key historical and institutional events of Sherwood*



For Shirley (case 1), it was a blend of her life experiences—including teen pregnancy and motherhood, poverty, and homelessness—and becoming acutely aware of the lack of services and resources afforded to the residents of Sherwood that provided the impetus for her to advocate for change. After witnessing the 1965 Rebellion, she also became concerned about the relations between Black and Brown people in her neighborhood. In the 1970s, she decided to advocate for change by translating her firsthand knowledge of the community’s challenges into the basis for her organization, Community Parents.

Michelle (case 2) pointed directly to the cascading effects of the War on Drugs, specifically, its framing of drug addiction as a crime rather than a public health issue. Had she had access to treatment rather than incarceration, her life would have been profoundly different. Further complicating this issue was the 1996 Welfare Reform that effectively banned anyone with a prior drug conviction from accessing public service benefits, which affected Michelle directly.² She created HOPE for Women in the 1990s to provide former addicts and formerly incarcerated women with basic needs such as housing, food, and safety. She has since expanded the organization to include advocacy regarding the deleterious effects of the War on Drugs and mass incarceration.

Sandra (case 3), a single teen mother, was also deeply affected by the 1996 Welfare Reform bill. As privatization and devolution were set in motion, she experienced the decentralized safety net coupled with a denial of welfare benefits. After experiencing this, she wanted to help others like herself so that they would not be denied services. Since the early

² California lifted its lifetime ban on April 1st, 2015.

2000s, Sandra has been connecting women who need assistance with individuals who can provide such assistance through her organization, OASIS.

Kacee (case 4) was somewhat different from the other four women. Her upbringing was not one of poverty, homelessness, or teen motherhood. Rather, she grew up in a stable household and was able to secure a job when she left high school, which led from one success to another, until she became the vice president of an accounting firm. After her retrenchment, however, she internalized this incident and became clinically depressed, just as the 2008 financial crisis hit. Nevertheless, she seized the opportunity to learn about the needs of the neighborhood she was born in and eventually found her calling when she created her organization, Kacee's Place 4 Positive Change, in the late 2000s.

Linda (case 5) personally experienced the drug crisis of Sherwood in the 1980s. As a teen mother living in public housing during this era, she became insulated in Sherwood. The increase in gang violence in the 2000s profoundly affected her when her son was murdered. This tragedy compelled her to seek help, but she discovered that no were services available to her in Sherwood. Linda thus went outside of the neighborhood to find support—an experience that inspired her to bring such services back to her community, and she founded Mothers Against Violence in the mid-2010s.

Resilience. As these personal biographies attest, these women had a host of racialized and gendered experiences that both engendered and exhibited high levels of resiliency, agency, and resistance. Despite the odds, they overcame numerous obstacles to found their organizations. Four of the founders detailed a personal odyssey of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles of pain and trauma, and perhaps more importantly, each displayed a belief in

themselves when others continually devalued and disregarded them. As Shirley aptly recalled, there was a time when society thought of her as “nothing.” Yet these women were resilient in the face of adversity. Despite having only junior high education (Shirley and Sandra) to high school (Linda and Kacee), or a GED (Michelle), at the time of founding, both Shirley and Sandra proceeded to earn college degrees. By taking the initiative to challenge society’s devaluation of their social status—whether as a single teenage mother, homeless, incarcerated, or poor, the founders carved a new path for establishing a nonprofit organization in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage.

Disenfranchised Grief. When questioned about their motivation for establishing their organization, two of the women pointed to the unthinkable tragedy of losing a child. Disenfranchised grief, when someone’s loss is not “openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly mourned” (Doka, 2008, p. 224), can be produced from racialized practices when either the neighborhood where the deceased resided or the personal character of the deceased is presumed disreputable (Lawson, 2014). For Michelle, this type of racialization arguably occurred because she was a grieving Black mother with limited access and means to resources, and thus, the person who ran over her young son—an off-duty city employee—never openly acknowledged his role or the city’s role in her son’s death. For Linda, her son’s death was viewed by many through the stigmatized framework of a gun-related death due to gang violence. Often, this type of death is not socially validated or publicly mourned in society. However, by insisting on the multiple layers of her son’s life and identity—as a father, a brother, a son, an uncle, and a changemaker—Linda constructs an oppositional narrative that challenges the reduction of his death to a criminal inevitability and reveals how even grief can be classified by structures of inequality (Lawson, 2014). The deaths of these two young men were separated by

20 years, yet far from being isolated cases of disenfranchised grief, they highlight yet another way in which founders shared similar experiences shaped by racial marginalization. Taken together within the broader context of Sherwood, both stories detail how the intersectional social identities of the women and their deceased children shaped their ideologies and motivations for transforming grief into action.

RQ 1b: The Decision to be in Sherwood

For four of the founders, Shirley, Michelle, Sandra, and Linda, the decision to found their organization in Sherwood was never a question at all. Each was already living in the neighborhood, where they saw plenty of potential clientele with similar life experiences and struggles. Their personal biographies rooted them in the community and they had access to neighborhood knowledge, so it made sense to locate their organizations at home. Kacee, the exception, was born in Sherwood, but she was not raised there and she did not live there when she formed her organization. Indeed, her experience *outside* of Sherwood, in corporate America, led her back to the neighborhood, where she spent time conducting a needs assessment and volunteering with several organizations in and around the area.

The target populations of each organization in many aspects reflect the demographics of Sherwood. While previous research documents the numerous barriers to founding an organization in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage (Chambré, 1997; Garrow, 2012, 2015; Sampson, 2013; Wolpert, 1993), there is a dearth of research on the advantages that one may have by locating in this context. For example, the social connections within Sherwood are quite strong, producing a type of “closed social capital” that facilitates information sharing across community organizations, events, workshops, trainings, and activities. Additionally, many

of the founders pointed to Sherwood's strong sense of cohesion and "community spirit," despite the lack of economic resources being invested in the neighborhood. Thus, while it is more difficult to charge fees-for-service and collect donations there, compared to wealthier communities, there seems to be a stronger neighborhood identity that is supportive of not only the clients of HSOs, but also their founders.

RQ1c: Process and Experience

Organizational Know-How. Moving from the pre-organizational stage to organizational formation is rarely a smooth process. Often, the idea for the organization is well formed and the target population is understood, but there is a lack of program development, program services, and established relations with funders (Andersson, 2016). This period, known as the nascent organizational stage (Reynolds & Miller, 1992), which precedes formally establishing the organization, is particularly important as it can have lasting effects on the organizational output, practices, and structures (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Stinchcombe, 1965).

Four of the women had no prior knowledge of the nonprofit organizational structure or benefits of receiving 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Yet this is crucial information for any nascent founder; one does not *have* to be formalized (i.e., obtain 501(c)3 status), but the benefits are numerous (e.g., individuals can receive tax deductions for donations, the organization can receive grants from foundations and government, and it gains protection from personal liability). The pre-organizational stage is typically marked by multiple actions such as acquiring critical resources, connecting with stakeholders, assembling a team, and developing services (Brush, Greene, & Hart, 2001; Gartner, 1985). As soon as Shirley, Michelle, Sandra, and Linda, were able, they opened their homes to provide services without assembling a team, and arguably for

Shirley, Michelle, and Sandra, without critical resources. Their experiences informed the services they chose to offer. All four targeted women, from mothers who had lost children as a result of gang violence, to single battered mothers, teenage mothers needing assistance, and women battling substance abuse and addiction, many of whom were trying to regain custody of their children. Thus, their choice of target populations was filtered through their own experiences with the macro context.

Without formalized tax-exempt status, one's ability to apply for grants and funding and to accept donations is limited, yet these women operated for several years unaware of nonprofit organizational structure. All the founders except Kacee led their organizations for an average of four years (ranging from two to seven years) before obtaining tax-exempt status. Each discovered the benefits of such status through individuals from outside of Sherwood. In Shirley's case, it was a politician, while Michelle found out when she was trying to acquire resources from a church for her organization, and Linda learned about it through a foundation that assisted with capacity building. When forming their board of directors, all five founders initially relied on friends and family. Shirley has retained this model while the other four have endeavored to include members from beyond their family and the Sherwood neighborhood.

Social Capital. Through the process of establishing and keeping their organization running, the founders demonstrated unique abilities to navigate the intersections of racial, spatial, and political boundaries. Sherwood itself serves as a racial and spatial divide because, in addition to being highly segregated, it has also suffered from several urban planning disasters over the decades that have physically isolated its population. This spatial isolation encourages high levels of social closure, which limits access to external social networks and the resources that these outside networks enable. Thus, the importance of social capital in the pursuit of acquiring

resources (e.g., funding, legitimacy) for one's organization cannot be understated. However, in many ways, Sherwood has also developed its own social capital system, which a number of the founders tapped into by attending community meetings, for example, and benefiting from the information-sharing there.

Confirming the scholarly finding that “social capital is often used as a mechanism for exclusion and as a way to maintain unequal power relations” (Schneider, 2007, p. 78) (e.g., DeFelippis, 2001; Portes & Landolt, 1986; Wacquant, 1998), and Sandra's (case 3) apt observation that “[u]sually, people with money give money to people with money,” traversing boundaries became an important process for the founders. Each woman deliberately and strategically fostered connections outside of Sherwood to support her HSO (e.g., finding funders, soliciting donations or in-kind services, developing organizational know-how, or seeking out sub-contracts). Each found ways through linking and bridging to increase their networks, and by proxy, their social capital (Schneider, 2007). For example, Shirley and Michelle fostered political connections—a vertical type of linking social capital—which often led to invitations to gala fundraisers, events with the Los Angeles philanthropic scene, or even being named a guest of honor at citywide meetings. Linda and Kacee, on the other hand, relied on a horizontal bridging social capital by developing relationships with other nonprofit organizations and local foundations for sub-contracts or other collaborative efforts. Through such network ties, the women were able to secure inter-organizational assistance, whether in the form of in-kind services and donations (e.g., Sandra's and Kacee's case), organizational compliance assistance (e.g., Linda's case), collaboration for advocacy initiatives (e.g., Michelle's case), and/or varying levels of financial help (e.g., Shirley's case).

Criminal Justice System. Four founders described negative relationships and interactions with the criminal justice system. In the case of Sherwood, and in most neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, this system (including the local police, court systems, and jail/prison) functions as a network of relations that structure significant facets of life (Allard & Small, 2013). The four aforementioned founders had to strike a delicate balance as their organizations served clients connected to this system either directly (e.g., formerly incarcerated women) or indirectly (e.g., gang members). This could be considered a barrier to maintaining an organization, particularly if clients or residents fear being surveilled by the police while interacting with staff. Given that over-policing often occurs in a context like Sherwood, and the added complication of three of the founders' personal involvement in the criminal justice system, negotiating a relationship with this system is crucial yet complicated. For most of the founders, their experience of running an organization in this context was filtered through a criminal justice lens: whether it is law enforcement placing restrictions on the youth with whom Linda engages, or Shirley dealing with compliance checks on her clients, the founders must contend with the additional barrier of serving clients deemed as the “undeserving poor.”

RQ2: Accept – Adapt – Challenge: Social Identity

The second research question investigated the ways in which the founders accept, adapt, or challenge their social identities while garnering resources and legitimacy for their organization. As discussed in SIT, when society devalues certain racial-ethnic backgrounds, or one's gender, social class, or other social identity, it is not known at what point that individual will join with others with shared identities to change their social world (Reicher et al., 2010). However, when there is permeability in one's group membership, one can leave the group—known as “exit” or social mobility (Reicher et al., 2010). The women in this study have no option to leave their

Blackness behind—nor do they seek to do so. Instead, many seem to embrace their racial identity as a source of strength and solidarity with the community. Kacee, for example, described herself as “unapologetically Black.” Other identities—particularly those rooted in past experiences of, for example, homelessness, incarceration, or abuse—were similarly incorporated into the women’s stories as key to their own sense of self and their organization’s mission and vision.

When boundaries are impermeable, as in the case of race, it is posited that one can accept, adapt (assimilate), or challenge the greater society’s view. Strategies of accepting and adapting include creatively redefining the meaning of being a Black woman, for example, by making advantageous comparisons between oneself and more disadvantaged groups, or by evaluating on complimentary dimensions (Reicher et al., 2010).

Resources. When acquiring the necessary resources for their organizations, the women often developed socially creative strategies. Consider, for example, Sandra’s comedy shows, which revolve around her personal experiences of being a poor Black woman with several children with different fathers, and residing in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage. By sharing her experiences through comedy, Sandra has found a way to connect with audience members in a manner that facilitates resource acquisition. Indeed, at the shows themselves, audience members are asked to sign up to be part of an emergency fund that matches donors with clients. Shirley also provides many examples of these tactics in her published interviews and documented interactions with the political elite. She uses both kinds of opportunities to reformulate the meaning of being Black and from Sherwood. Similarly, Linda accepts her identities, though her statement that being a Black woman did not affect her organization is possibly a coping mechanism she uses to deal with disenfranchised grief. The tactics associated with the socially creative approach, when one is accepting and adapting one’s identities,

typically occur when there are limited prospects to change one's material condition. Stated differently, one's reality of multiple disadvantages is not changed.

The alternative to accepting and adapting is to challenge high-status outgroups. This can happen through strategies of social competition, whether intergroup conflict, ingroup bias, or collective action (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These founders used strategies of collective action whereby, through their work in their HSO, they challenged the societal devaluation of their identities. It is theorized that collective action takes place when the other (high status) groups' positions are deemed unstable and potentially changeable (Reicher et al., 2010). A disruption of the status quo occurs when there is counterfactual thinking (e.g., formerly incarcerated women can be good mothers, women on welfare can be productive members of society). These "cognitive alternatives to the status quo" are foundational to social change; one must be able to imagine alternatives before one can mobilize to effect them. Among the founders in this study, this phenomenon occurred most evidently for Michelle (case 2). Arguably, the HSOs in this study that take on advocacy as part of their mission (e.g., Shirley organizes voters, Michelle works to change substance-abuse and addiction policies, Kacee introduced policy for teen-dating violence prevention, and Linda has worked towards ending gun violence) serve as tools through which their founders are able to challenge their own devalued identities and create space for others with similar identities to do likewise.

Legitimacy. Acquiring legitimacy is a key issue for founders, both within the neighborhood of Sherwood vis-à-vis its residents and local stakeholders, and beyond Sherwood with potential funders, locally elected politicians, and other stakeholders working on the same issues as the HSOs in question. Benefits of legitimacy within the neighborhood include greater access to potential clients, as well as a type of "in-group bias" that facilitates the circulation of

information among local leaders at community meetings (e.g., “closed” social capital). Four of the founders—Shirley, Michelle, Sandra, and Linda—called Sherwood home at the time of founding their organization. Living in the neighborhood helped the founders to demonstrate their long-standing commitment to the community—a form of legitimacy that outsiders would be hard-pressed to match. Founders particularly valued this hard-won legitimacy when it came to their clientele, a form of in-group bias. Kacee was the only founder who did not live in Sherwood and her experience therefore made the importance of place of residence even more evident. She described having to work very hard to cultivate relationships with community insiders, local politicians, and residents—something the others, notably, did not comment on.

In terms of acquiring legitimacy outside of the neighborhood—in the hope of attracting resources needed for organizational establishment and growth—two of the founders, Sandra and Kacee, mentioned obtaining various credentials, such as becoming a domestic violence certified advocate or gaining ministerial credentials. Three of the founders made unprovoked comments on how letters after their names (i.e., higher education degrees) would not matter, as their life experiences carried weight. However, Sandra and Shirley did go back to earn their GEDs and complete their college educations. Nevertheless, all five founders clarified that legitimacy was never a given; it had to be earned. In other words, for these women, there were no concessions, no benefit of the doubt.

Summary of Discussion

In sum, the founders relied on a continuum of strategies for organizational establishment and growth. Founders’ personal biographies were directly affected by their place of residence, and for four of the women, this meant a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage. Dealing in a

very direct and personal way with the effects of certain macro policies was a pivotal experience for the women, something that ultimately led to their decision to found an organization.

Although the women and their respective organizations varied in organizational age, funding sources, and populations served, none of the women created a team to found their organization (Lecy et al., 2016). Sandra and Linda, both of whom must retain other forms of employment in order to pay their bills, cited the desire for self-employment through their organization, reinforcing previous literature on the founder experience (Andersson, 2016; Carman & Nesbit, 2013; Handy et al., 2002). Previous literature notes founder traits such as being inspirational, charismatic, and personable, which these women display, along with the qualities of high levels of personal resilience and grit. Without degrees in nonprofit management or organizational studies, or even prior understanding of nonprofit organizational structure, these women drew on their personal histories and firsthand knowledge of issues facing people in neighborhoods like Sherwood to found their organizations. Similarly, none of the founders were ideologically motivated, as the literature suggests; instead, they exhibit a pragmatic motivation. Overall, each of the founders contributes to a positive wave of social change in the Sherwood community.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is subject to some key limitations. Focusing on Black women founders from one geographic location may present inherent biases associated with the uniqueness of the women and the community. This choice of this neighborhood—an urban community in a large city that consists primarily of two racial-ethnic groups—could also be a limitation. Notably, because these women have been successful in creating and maintaining HSOs, their experiences inform the experiences of women in similar situations whose organizations do not succeed. The

extent to which interviewees originally provided socially desirable responses remains unknown. My racial-ethnic background and my affiliation with a university may also have elicited various unknown responses from the founders. Furthermore, numerous assumptions may have affected the data analysis. For example, while I have my research objectives, I acknowledge that the lens through which I coded the data cannot be assumed to be unbiased. In short, the analysis was unavoidably filtered through my personal lens. However, I hope that my openness about that lens and my efforts to balance it with outside perspectives and specific methodological safeguards has resulted in a study that is honest about its inevitable biases, and that it is neither methodologically nor ethically flawed.

Based on this study's findings, future research could examine a systematic semi-controlled comparative study that explicitly examines non-minority and minority founders who operate their organizations in the same context. Additionally, research from the perspective of the service-recipients of these organizations would be helpful. Beyond the deficit view of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, an assets perspective of this context, such as examining the benefits to founders who reside in this type of neighborhood is needed. Finally, as there is no title for a founder of an organization, yet all of these women are founders-turned-executive-directors and for four of them are the main service provider, examination of the founder syndrome of organizations in this context would be useful.

Implications

The findings from this study have several implications for broadening the understanding of HSO founders, particularly in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Consistent with SIT, the founders' social identities functioned as a foundation for a sense of belonging and for collective social action, as evidenced by each woman's choice to form an HSO. Their

intersectional identities were of primary importance in this endeavor. Importantly, none of the founders adhered to just one strategy or tactic. Rather, their actions were situationally dependent, demonstrating an impressive fluidity and fluency in terms of matching strategy to situation. Examining how one's intersectional social identity shapes organizational establishment and growth adds to SIT and intersectionality, as this theoretical perspective has not been the focus of much nonprofit research. The study also makes an empirical contribution by demonstrating how individuals navigate structural and systemic barriers, and importantly, how they negotiate their identities while doing so. Additionally, this research sheds light on not only how, but why Black women founders and leaders within the nonprofit sector established organizations in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage. More importantly, this research examines the combined issue of context and founder identity, which is rarely researched in this particular population.

Several policy implications were garnered from this study. First, government and foundation funding that have significant restrictions can create a cycle where privilege repeats itself, leaving out small organizations. When restrictions limit funds to projects instead of core operations, small organizations suffer. As Shirley, Sandra, Kacee, and Linda can attest, without money for core operations, one must rely on personal savings or other "financial bootstrapping" methods to keep one's organizations running. One implication could be creating a threshold for organizations that have operating budgets under \$250,000 (as four of the five in this study have) that removes many of the restrictions typically attached to such funds. Small, grassroots organizations are at a disadvantage when the applications and the reporting requirements are time consuming and complex, or those that require multifaceted evaluation reports because they most likely do not have a designated grant writer on their staff. While accountability is

necessary, maintaining strict funding rubrics and other structural prohibitions on the funds creates situations whereby small organizations lose the ability to win such contracts and grants, even though they are often the ones called upon by larger organizations to do the work. Additionally, as Michelle (case 2) demonstrates, government funds that place restrictions that are antithetical to one's mission statement highlight the difficulties one encounters when serving clientele often deemed as 'undeserving.' One implication shown from Michelle's work is that certain guidelines for grant money could be lifted when there is a clear mismatch between what policy is written (e.g., compliance checks) versus how policy is implemented (e.g., guns drawn during home raids).

This study's findings also have numerous implications for social work practice. First, social workers could benefit from a greater understanding and awareness of organizational development in this setting. Notably, the numbers of certificate programs in and specializations of nonprofit human-services management continues to increase (see CSWE Fact Sheet: 2015, 2016, 2017), a significant number of the overall percentage of MSW students either have field placements at HSOs or find employment in one. For these students, having exposure to and learning about HSOs that are minority-founded and -led—something not typically emphasized in graduate programs (Gooden, Evans, Pang, 2018)—provides a different perspective that values experience and promotes cultural awareness. Furthermore, as an educational resource, this research provides students with an “insider” view of organizational creation and growth among founders who initially lacked capacity but were able to garner resources and legitimacy to run their organizations nonetheless. This research also deepens our knowledge of service delivery in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. If the goal is to develop a pipeline of founders and

leaders of color for HSOs, then understanding some of the experiences of those who are already engaged in this process is a step in that direction.

Appendix A

General Protocol for Interviews

Community

1. What's the neighborhood like in terms of who lives there, changes in demographics?
2. What are pressing social needs in the area? Issues of safety?
 - a. Issues of safety, gangs, violence and how they affect the organization (other HSOs)
3. Are there community organization activities?
4. What are the more important community institutions?
5. What are the barriers/opportunities starting and running a nonprofit in Sherwood?
6. Undocumented: are you connected to them? Issues of serving them?

Founding

1. What is your background? What did you do before starting the organization? How well are you connected to important stakeholders?
2. What motivated you to start the organization
 - a. Why did you select the particular location?
3. What has been your vision about what you wanted the organization to achieve? How did you define the target populations, the problems, the desired outcomes and the "interventions" to attain them?
4. How did you mobilize resources and legitimacy in the early days of the organization? Who gave you support? From where did you get your funding?
5. What hurdles did you have to overcome?
6. What strategies did you use to connect to residents in the neighborhood? How did you recruit clients?
7. When did you become incorporated as a 501(c)3?
 - a. What was that process like?

Clients & Services

1. Who is the target population of your HSO?
2. Why are you trying to reach those people?
3. What kind of problems about them are you attempting to address?
 - a. Why is your agency focusing on that set of problems?
 - b. What do you think are the causes of those problems?
 - c. What would you like to see as the desired outcome(s)?
 - d. How do you set the services to try to meet those outcomes?
 - e. What are the challenges in organizing these services?
4. What are the challenges of reaching them?

5. How do the clients connect to your agency?

Board of directors

1. Get a list of the founding board members and a description of each by ethnicity and social ties. What was their professional background? Why were they selected to be on the board? Where they affiliated with corporations, political or government offices, other organizations? Were they major donors?

Sponsorship

1. Role of religious congregations
2. Corporate sponsorship
3. Foundations sponsorship
4. Other

Founder turned Executive Director

1. Vision
 - a. What is the vision for the agency?
2. Budget
 - a. What are the major sources of revenues? How stable are they?
 - b. Why does the organization choose certain funding sources over others?
 - c. Have there been major changes in your revenue portfolio in the last few years?
 - d. How successful are you at getting desired revenue sources? How do you explain success/failure?
 - i. How successful are they in getting grants from government? Foundations?
 1. If not why not?
3. Relating to the Community
 - a. How does the agency relate to the local community? How do you reach out?
 - b. Do residents play an important role in the decision making of the organization?
 - c. How do the residents connect to your agency?
4. Advocacy
 - a. How much advocacy do you do?
 - b. Do you have connections to local politicians? To national politicians?
 - c. If you do advocacy, what is the content of it?
 - i. E.g., advocacy for more funding for the organization? Advocacy for social rights (more generous social policies for the groups served)?
 - ii. What type of advocacy frame is used (e.g., what is the problem, diagnosis, solution, and desired outcome of the advocacy)?

- d. If you do advocacy, what are the strategies used (e.g., disruptive, lobbying, public education)?
- 5. Inter-organizational relations
 - a. What other organizations do you relate to? How?
 - b. Have they developed joint programs? Applied for funding together?
 - c. Are they members of a coalition?

Any other organizations that I should interview/speak to? If so, may I use your name as an initial contact?

Prompts...

Tell me about a time when

Give me an example of

Tell me more about that

What was it like for you when

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. How do you identify racially? Ethnically?
 - Can you tell me about a time when this identity affected your role as a founder?
 - Can you give me an example of this?
2. How do you identify socio-economically? (give examples if needed)
 - Can you tell me about a time when this identity affected your role as a founder?
 - Can you give me an example of this?
3. What was it like for you when you had your first client? Received your first outside funding?
 - Do you identify with the clients that you serve? If so, in what ways?
4. How would you describe Sherwood to someone who has never been here before?
5. Who or what groups hold power in the community? In what ways is their power visible?
 - Do you hold power in the community? If so, in what ways? Can you share an example of this? If no, why not?
6. What is it like for you, as a ____ (Black/African-American, ...) woman, here in Sherwood, founding an HSO? Can you tell me about a time when you felt empowered? Ignored or overlooked?
 - What do you consider your strengths and assets?
 - What do you consider your greatest challenges?
7. Can you give me an example of the social networks that exist that might be important for your organization?
 - What other organizations or institutions are important to civic life?
8. How would you describe your relationship with the community board? The local politicians

Interview Protocol for Community Stakeholders

Community

1. What's the neighborhood like in terms of who lives there, changes in demographics?
2. What are pressing social needs in the area? Issues of safety?
3. Issues of safety, gangs, violence and how they affect the organization (other NPOs)
4. Are there community organization activities?
5. What are the more important community institutions?
6. What are the barriers/opportunities starting and running a nonprofit?
7. Undocumented: are you connected to them? Issues of serving them?
8. Sherwood Social Profile
 - a. How would you characterize Sherwood as compared to the other neighborhoods in the 10th district?
 - b. What do you think are the distinct or unique social issues in Sherwood?
 - c. Given the history of Sherwood such as the civil unrest, what are the barriers in trying to address its needs?
 - d. What about race and ethnic relations in Sherwood?
9. Sherwood Political Profile
 - a. What are the mechanisms by which residents in Sherwood tend to express their needs? How effective are they?
 - b. What groups or organizations in Sherwood communicate regularly with the council member?
 - c. Are there leaders or stakeholders in Sherwood that have the ear of the _____ elected official(s)? Who are they?
 - d. Are there grassroots organizations in Sherwood that are politically active? Who are they and in what ways?
 - e. As compared to the other neighborhoods in the district, how well is Sherwood organized as a community? What factors lead to greater or lesser community efficacy (i.e. social ties, caring for each other, mobilizing for action)?
10. Do you know anything about the allocation of City and County funds to Sherwood: If YES, then:
 - a. Can you tell me about the various city funds that are allocated to Sherwood?
 - b. How much influence do the elected officials have on the allocation formula?
 - c. Are there discretionary funds that can be allocated to Sherwood? What are they?
 - d. What about county funding sources? How much does Sherwood get from these funding sources? Any ideas?
 - e. What are the major organizations, institutions in Sherwood that benefit the most from city and county funds?
 - f. Do you feel that Sherwood gets its fair share as compared to other neighborhoods?
 - g. What is your take as to why Sherwood often loses out to other neighborhoods in competition for grants such as "grant A" or "grant B"?

11. The nonprofit sector in Sherwood as the _____ representative for _____:
- a. When you think of nonprofit human services in Sherwood, which organizations come to mind? What is the relationship between these organizations and city, LAUSD, and county officials?
 - b. When the city/county have grants and contracts for human services, what are the processes by which different organizations can apply? What would make them competitive?
 - c. Which nonprofit organizations in Sherwood are most successful in competing for city/county grants and contracts? What about them makes them successful?
 - d. From your perspective what can strengthen the role of the nonprofits in Sherwood? What needs to happen?

Appendix B

Format for taking notes:

Date, time

Summary memo (~2 to 3 paragraphs)

All together field notes for each meeting ranged from 5 – 15 pages single spaced not including pictures and handwritten notes plus documents collected (e.g., fliers for events).

- I. Call to order: notes on who attended that day, who led the opening prayer, new people in attendance, board members in attendance
- II. Welcome – chair of committee – what they felt was important to say
- III. Introduction to the meeting:
 - a. Typically, board members have the floor at this point and bring up their issues/concerns.
 - b. Law enforcement is usually implicated and will have their Captain respond
- IV. Council & Public Officials Report:
 - a. Whatever field reps or elected officials are in attendance, this is their time to speak, also Reverends/Pastors get to speak at this time too.
 - i. Usually disseminate information that the politicians want the community members to know about (e.g., CA Legislation Black Caucus has a scholarship for high schoolers, National Health Awareness Fair coming up, Senior Briefing with over 1,000 senior-citizens in attendance with free lunch, Congressperson in D.C., etc.).
- V. Community Issues/Incidents
 - a. Time for people in attendance to have the floor. Typically there is a 2-minute limit set off by a timer. At this point, discussions can get quite heated. Rumors, gossip, issues/concerns, gang related activity, community funding opportunities, etc. This is when founders/executive directors usually get up and give their pitch (e.g., new org, recruiting clients...)
 - b. Law enforcement gives an update on the latest number of shootings, homicides, gang related incidents, robberies, and other assaults that have occurred in the last week.
 - c. Representatives from the housing developments get a time to speak and give updates.

Wrap up – Goodbyes / networking

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