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"The Conflict is in The Values": Understanding The Emergence and Operationalization of Managerialism in Social Justice Nonprofit Organizations

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Social Welfare

by

Lauren Willner

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"The Conflict is in The Values": An Examination of The Emergence and Operationalization of Managerialism in Social Justice Nonprofit Organizations

by

Lauren Willner

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Lené Faye Levy-Storms, Co-Chair

Professor Todd M. Franke, Co-Chair

Research on nonprofit organizations becoming more business-like in their structure and function has garnered considerable academic interest in recent years. This trend, also referred to as managerialism, has traditionally been explored from organizational or management perspectives, and much of the research on the topic has focused on examining the motivation behind for nonprofits embracing approaches and practices more commonly found in the for-profit sector. The purpose of this dissertation research was to expand the study of managerialism, specifically within social justice nonprofit organizations, by examining the environmental context within which these organizations exist to better understand how the organizational

environment contributes to the emergence and operationalization of managerialist approaches and practices.

With this goal in mind, a case study of three social justice nonprofits in a large, metropolitan city in the United States was conducted. Interviews took place with 43 staff members whose positions ranged from frontline employees to CEOs. The data was analyzed using Constructivist Grounded Theory Analytic Techniques.

From the data emerged a conceptual model illuminating how organizations are affected by their internal and external environments, and the mechanisms that staff employ to manage these impacts. Specifically, the model shows how organizations exist in a relationship of dependency with external stakeholders, and that staff members engage in several response processes in order to manage this relationship. Furthermore, the data indicate that not only does managerialism emerge as a result of this relationship, it is also used as a way to respond to the challenges organizations face as a result of being dependent on external stakeholders. Implications of these findings on both research and practice are explored.

The dissertation of Lauren Willner is approved.

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Todd M. Franke, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

To my parents.

From the principal's office at Syosset High School to an auditorium at UCLA, your support has been at times relentless, always unwavering. This dissertation exists because you believed I was better than I thought I was. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii
Committee Page iv
Dedication v
Table of Contents vi
List of Tables and Figures x
Acknowledgements xi
Vita xvi

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Social Justice Nonprofits 2
Study Purpose and Overview 4
Significance and Implications 6

Chapter 2: Literature Review 9
Background and History 9
Development and Institutionalization of For Profit Practices Within Non Profit Organizations 9
Neoliberal Economic Theory and Practice 9
Theoretical Framework 12
The New Public Management Model (NPM) 12
Nonprofits Being Business-Like 16
Examinations of Nonprofits Looking and Behaving Like For-Profits 16
Conceptualizations of Being Business-Like in the Literature 21
Defining and Delineating the Concepts 23
Marketization and Commercialization 23
Corporatization and Professionalization 27
Managerialism: A More Effective Model for Understanding "Being Business-Like" 31
Theoretical Approaches to Understanding the Shift Towards Managerialism 33
A Neoinstitutionalist Explanation 34
Coercive and Mimetic Isomorphic Processes 35
A Resource Dependence Theory Explanation 36

Chapter 3: Research Paradigm 39
Critical Research Methods 39
Rationale for Using a Critical Research Paradigm 41
Research Questions 42

Chapter 4: Methodology 44
Study Design 44
Figure 1 45
Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology and Analysis 46

Constructivist Grounded Theory Data Collection and Analysis 48
Suitability of Constructivist Grounded Theory for This Study 49
Study Procedures 51
Study Sample 51
Determining Organizations to Recruit for Participation.....52
Social Justice Classification 53
Organization Query.....54
Income Justification.....55
Organization Identification and Participant Recruitment 56
Data Collection 58
In-Depth Interviews 58
Researcher Bias in Data Collection 59
Protection of Participants.....60
Data Analysis Procedures 61
Coding 61
Memo Writing.....61
Validation and Reliability 63
Researcher Bias in Data Analysis Procedures 63
Dependability/Reliability 64
Study Limitations.....64

Chapter 5: Description of Study Participants.....65
Participating Organizations.....65
Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition (HOAC) 65
Mission and Goals 66
Organizational Staff Structure 66
Senior Management Team.....67
Director Level Staff 68
Middle Management.....68
Program/Front-line Staff.....68
Funding 69
Poverty Action and Relief Center (PARC) 69
Mission and Goals 70
Organizational Staff Structure 70
Funding 71
Aging Well 72
Mission and Goals.....72
Organizational Staff Structure 72
Funding 73
Participating Staff Members 73
Executive Staff.....74
Leadership Staff.....74
Middle Management Staff 75
Program Staff.....75
Frontline Staff.....75
Table 1: Staff Member Categories 76

Table 2: Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition 77
Table 3: Poverty Action and Relief Center 78
Table 4: Aging Well 79

Chapter 6: Results 80
Understanding the Environmental Contexts of Social Justice Nonprofits 80
The Internal Environment 82
Positive Attributes of the Internal Environment 82
Supporting Client Wellbeing 82
Supporting Agentic Processes Among Clients 84
Challenging Attributes of the Internal Environment 86
Experiencing Disconnect 86
Feeling Disenfranchised in Role 91
Lacking Control 92
Lacking Clarity 95
The External Environment 97
Being Dependent on External Stakeholders 96
Being Controlled by Funders and Funding 97
Responding to the Changing Landscape of the Field 103
Responding to Relationship of Dependency with External Environment 107
Macro Level Response Processes 108
Adapting to Changing Organizational Needs 109
Embracing Managerialism 111
Embracing a Corporatized Approach 111
Engaging with Organizational Growth 113
Focusing on Outputs 114
Maintaining Image 117
Micro Level Response Processes 119
Accepting Mediocrity 119
Bearing the Burden 122
Balancing Competing Demands 125
Existing in a State of Discordance 128
A Conceptual Model of Discordance 129
Stage 1 131
Being Dependent on External Stakeholders 131
Existing In a State of Macro Level Discord 133
Stage 2 137
Responding to State of Macro Level Discord 137
Existing In a State of Micro Level Discord 139
Figure 6.2: Micro Level Discord 140
Responding to State of Micro Level Discord 140
Stage 3 141
Experiencing Job Related Challenges 141
Experiencing Difficulties in Working Towards Mission 142
Chapter Summary 145
Pre and Post Analysis Impressions 146

Chapter 7: Discussion and Implications 147
The Environmental Contexts of Social Justice Nonprofits 149
Existing In a State of Discordance 149
Managerialism As a Response to Discord 150
Meeting Missions and Goals.....152
Persisting In Spite of Challenges 154
Implications For Future Research 155
Implications for Organizational Practice 156
APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol 159
APPENDIX B: Consent Form 160
References 163

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

5.1 Staff Member Categories 76

5.2 HOAC Participants 77

5.3 PARC Participants 78

5.4 Aging Well Participants 79

Figures

4.1 Single Case Study Model 45

6.1 Existing In a State of Discordance 129

6.2 Micro Level State of Discord 140

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The pursuit of knowledge can be a lonely journey filled with endless days in an office surrounded by no one and nothing but shelves of books, piles of paper, a computer, and only the internet to connect you to the outside world. The irony of this is that it is entirely impossible to move your thoughts from an idea to a reality in the way academia requires without the assistance of others. So while I spent many, many days by myself thinking about how to turn my lived experiences into a research question that was interesting enough to warrant answering through a dissertation project, there were countless people supporting me, cheering me on in their own small ways, and making sure that I succeeded even when it seemed utterly impossible. It's not often that you get to thank people publically, so I am grateful to have this opportunity to acknowledge those who have been instrumental helping me bring this dissertation to fruition, and in my success overall throughout the years.

This journey began at a community college on Long Island, New York, somewhat against my will. Little did I know as I began my freshman year that the courses I took and the professors who taught them would set me on the path of lifetime learning, igniting in me an inquisitiveness and passion for knowledge that I didn't know I possessed. I am forever grateful to my parents, who informed me during my senior year in high school that Nassau Community College was my only option until I could prove that I was "college material". I don't take such challenges lightly; I hope I have made you proud!

I am so fortunate to have the support of such a wonderful dissertation committee, without whom this project would never have been possible. Thank you, Dr. Ian Holloway, for your willingness to serve on my committee, and for recognizing the importance of supporting doctoral students in developing the skills critical to our success. Although I didn't know very much about your research, you invited me to help you finish a manuscript and I learned so much from the process. Thank you for allowing me to contribute, however small it was, to your work.

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work. Your commitment to helping others and working to achieve social change reminds me why I became a social worker. I am proud to have your voices included in this study and I hope I did justice to your experiences and the hard work you do every single day.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The nonprofit sector has been heavily influenced over the last 35 years by the New Public Management (NPM) model, which presumes that market-based strategies and practices are the most efficient and effective way to manage and structure nonprofit organizations, (Alexander, Brudney, & Yang, 2010; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; James, 1998; Salamon, 1993; Smith and Lipsky, 1995; Tuckman, 1998; Weisbrod, 1997; Young, 1998). These strategies and practices, typically associated with for-profit entities, are commonly employed by nonprofits and their adoption has become widely accepted as beneficial to organizational functioning and success. The belief that management practices derived in the for-profit sector—also referred to as managerialism—are the most effective means through which organizations can meet their missions and goals prevails, particularly in an increasingly difficult financial climate characterized by steep competition for resources and increased pressure from external constituents to demonstrate operational efficiency. As such, nonprofits of all sizes, with varying missions and goals, have adopted strategies and behaviors dictated by the principles of the NPM with the hope of ensuring financial stability and ultimately, survival (Bush, 1992, Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000, Landsberg, 2004).

However, given the inherent differences in the purpose and function of nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Anheier, 2005) a critical exploration of managerialism as it relates to nonprofits and its impact on these types of organizations is necessary. This is particularly important in the context of Social Justice Nonprofit Organizations (SJNO), whose missions and activities are explicitly focused on responding to and alleviating the impact of social inequity and disparity on marginalized and oppressed populations (NASW, 2000), and are less concerned with profitability and efficiency.

Social Justice Nonprofits

Social Justice nonprofit organizations exist in a variety of forms, including but not limited to, advocacy/social movement organizations, social service agencies that provide direct services to disadvantaged populations, grassroots community-based organizations focused on advocating for the interests of a particular community, or organizations that create and implement direct service programs designed specifically to respond to the needs of individuals whose lives are directly affected by systemic social problems. Many SJNOs are also "hybrid" organizations, which combine multiple organizational forms such as advocacy and social service provision in order to better meet their goals (Minkoff, 2002; Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005; Hyde, 1992; Hyde, 2000).

Although the meaning of social justice is highly contested, with definitions differing depending on context (Bonnycastle, 2011), the concept is commonly conceived as an outcome that can be achieved (often in the form of redistribution of tangible and intangible resources or systemic social change), or a normative ideal of justice to which society should strive (Bonnycastle, 2011; Rawls, 1971, 1999; Reisch, 2002; Van Soest, 1993). Many professional fields, notably social work and education, have embraced the concept of social justice as a

guiding principle (Cochran-Smith, 2004; McDonald, 2005; NASW, 2000; Reisch, 2002;). However, even within fields where the importance of employing a social justice practice framework is somewhat agreed upon, debate over both the definition of the concept and how to best achieve it remains rife (Reisch, 2002).

Building upon the more commonly employed definition of social justice that embraces achieving systemic social change (Bonnycastle, 2011; Reisch, 2002), this study utilizes a definition that attempts to reflect the wide range of activities undertaken by social justice nonprofit organizations. By expanding the definition from one that focuses primarily on systemic social change efforts to one that includes any organizational activities or efforts focused (directly or indirectly) on responding to and alleviating the impact of social inequity and disparity on marginalized and oppressed individuals, groups, or communities, a more inclusive understanding of social justice oriented organizational practice is enabled. Furthermore, this more expansive definition allows for organizations whose work might normally be dismissed as not contributing to social justice (community mental health centers, for example) to be considered within a broader paradigm; one that actually views any work with disenfranchised populations as part of a greater social justice effort. Moreover, it establishes the concept as not simply a process aimed solely at achieving systemic change at the societal level, or a lens through which inequality can be analyzed and understood, but also as a dynamic and varied process focused on achieving greater equality for historically oppressed populations. Finally, it enables an enhanced, more nuanced understanding of nonprofit organizations that work with, or on behalf of, disenfranchised populations, whether at the individual, group, or community based level. This last point is particularly relevant to the fields of social work and social welfare, especially since

the nonprofit organization is often the mechanism through which social workers conduct their work.

Despite the variance in structure and function between different types of SJNOs, all are guided by missions and goals that recognize and attempt, in some way, to address the disproportionate impact of social inequality on disadvantaged and oppressed populations. This is quite different from the goals of the for-profit entity, whose emphasis is on profit generating activity. It can therefore be argued that the purpose of SJNOs and for-profits are inherently incongruent, and that the trend of nonprofits adopting managerialist models rooted in the NPM, has the potential to result in unintended consequences for organizations. Such outcomes may include, but are not limited to, a diversion from organizational mission and goals (Alexander, 1999; Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999; Bush, 1992 Guo 2006; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Salamon, 2002; Weisbrod, 1998; Young, 2005).

Several studies have explored the ways in which nonprofits embrace for-profit practices and behaviors. However, few have systematically examined the operationalization of the specific for-profit management practices and behaviors that nonprofit organizations have increasingly adopted over the last thirty years. Furthermore, research has failed to amply investigate the relationship between organizational structure and these behaviors, and the impact of this trend on nonprofit organizations also remains relatively unknown. This is especially important to explore given the responsibility that lies with SJNOs to provide critical social services to those in need, to adequately and effectively respond to the impact of social problems on disadvantaged and oppressed populations, and to advocate for systemic social change (Bush, 1992).

Study Purpose and Overview

The notion of nonprofit organizations becoming more business-like in structure and function has gained considerable attention in recent years, with research on this topic proliferating in the fields of management and organizational leadership. However, despite the ever-increasing interdisciplinary interest in this topic, complexity of the issue means that understanding the nature of nonprofits adopting for-profit approaches and practices remains a challenging area of inquiry (Maier, Meyer, and Steinbereithner, 2016). Many scholars in a range of fields have contributed to the growing understanding of this phenomenon (see, for example, Alexander, 1999; Bush, 1992; Dart, 2004) Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Yet, as Maier, Meyer, and Steinbereithner (2016) explain, "scholars struggle to position their work in a larger context, it is not easy to build on previous findings and methodological developments, and research gaps are easy to identify".

Despite an increased understanding of the issue, considerable gaps in research centered on the ways in which nonprofits begin to resemble their for-profit counterparts in structure and function remain. In reviewing the relevant literature on the subject Meyer, Maier, and Steinbereithner (2016) conclude that the research on managerialism and nonprofit organizations would benefit from moving beyond framing the concept in terms of assets or challenges to this model, and that research emphasizing a greater understanding of the organizational structures and processes related to being "business-like" is necessary. Furthermore, more robust empirical investigation into the environmental and organizational factors that contribute to this phenomenon is critical. With these gaps in mind, this dissertation focuses on understanding how nonprofits become more business-like by examining the environmental contexts within which organizations operate.

The study specifically focuses on social justice nonprofit organizations. Although research has determined that managerialism is a widely occurring phenomenon within nonprofits of all types, research has yet to explore the concept exclusively in relation to this specific type of nonprofit. The emphasis on SJNOs expands the inquiry from one that has typically existed within the fields of organizational and management studies into the field of social welfare. Unlike the fields of organizational and management, social welfare emphasizes social justice approaches to lessening the adverse affects of inequity on disenfranchised individuals, groups, and communities. These efforts often take place through the structures and mechanisms of organizations, many of which are nonprofit organizations. While extant research provides some insight into how managerialism might affect organizations focused explicitly on social justice aims, the unique nature of these nonprofits and the critical role they play in within the broader field of social welfare lends itself to an exploration emphasizing these types of organizations.

The purpose of this dissertation is therefore to better understand the environmental contexts within social justice nonprofits operate in order to a) ascertain the ways in which managerialism emerges, and b) examine the greater milieu within which it functions. To answer these questions a qualitative case study approach focusing on the perspectives and experiences of staff members at three social justice nonprofit organizations located in a large, metropolitan city of the United States was employed[1]. Forty-five intensive, semi-structured interviews were conducted and data were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory analytical techniques.

Significance and Implications

By focusing on the environments within which social justice nonprofits are situated, this dissertation contributes to the literature on managerialism and nonprofit organizations in several

[1] To protect the identities of the organizations and the participants the name of the city has been omitted.

ways. As the first study to explicitly investigate managerialism in social justice nonprofits from a social welfare perspective, the research provides both a theoretical and empirical conceptualization of the relationship of managerialism to social justice nonprofits. Using constructivist grounded theory analytical techniques allowed for an inductive rather than deductive approach to data analysis. Consequently, managerialism was treated as a sensitizing concept (Charmaz, 2014) throughout the analysis, rather than a construct exerted upon data. This technique of letting concepts inductively emerge (Charmaz, 2014) allowed for an organic exploration of the concept of managerialism. In other words, by focusing on the environmental context within which the organizations in the study existed, the realities of managerialism were allowed to emerge from the data in ways that confirmed its existence without making predetermined assumptions regarding if, and how, the approach was being employed. As such, this research is well positioned to provide insight into how environmental and organizational factors contribute to the emergence of managerialism in ways that are currently underdeveloped in the literature.

By focusing on organizations whose primary missions and visions are geared toward advancing social justice purposes and goals, this study brings a social justice approach to bear upon the scholarly inquiry of managerialism and nonprofits. This is an innovative approach to the study of managerialism within nonprofits as it is the first study of its kind to use this framework to try to answer the larger questions about the role of nonprofit organizations in mitigating the effects of persistent systemic social inequality. An approach of this kind also lends itself to thinking about how the adoption of managerialism by social justice organizations might be impacting larger efforts at social change, which social justice is ultimately concerned with at varying levels.

The following chapter explores how managerialism and being “business-like” within nonprofit organizations is conceptualized in the existing research literature. The onset of this trend is explored, and a theoretical explanation using neoliberalism and institutional theory is provided to explain how and why this transition occurred. An in-depth examination of the current literature on this topic is also provided, the range of conceptualizations regarding the ways in which non-profits embracing for-profit tendencies and orientations is delineated. Furthermore, a theoretical framework for how to examine this trend from a social justice perspective is presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background and History

The Development and Institutionalization of For Profit Practices Within Non Profit Organizations

Neoliberal Economic Theory and Practice

Scholars in a range of fields have explored, in depth, the tendencies of nonprofit organizations to embrace models and practices typically found in the for-profit sector (Dart, 2004; Hwang & Powell, 2009; Maier & Meyer, 2009; Sanders, 2012; Salamon, 1993; Sanders & McClellan, 2012; Weisbrod, 1998). The literature often attributes this inclination to a rise in neoliberalism; a set of political, economic, and social practices that emerged in the 1980s and has maintained a stronghold within the US and globally for the past 35 years (Eikenberry, 2009; Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2012). At its core, neoliberalism is characterized by principles of the free market, which suggest that human welfare is best secured and maintained by "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills" (Harvey, 2005, pp. 2), and by embracing the concepts of individual responsibility and work ethic (Hasenfeld & Garrow, 2012).

The preponderance of neoliberal policies and practices has resulted in widespread embracing of deregulation, privatization, and an overall retraction of the state from the provision of services and the social safety net for vulnerable populations (Harvey, 2005; McEwen, 2005). Although these trends have, in part, contributed greatly to the exponential growth of nonprofit organizations during the latter part of 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, they have also had a significant impact on the structure and function of nonprofits. This is particularly evident in both the increase of nonprofits providing services historically provided by the state, as well as

the types of organizational models nonprofits are likely to embrace, which increasingly resemble those typically found in the for-profit sector.

Neoliberalism is, fundamentally, a set of economic principles that emerged after the Second World War as a reorganization of capitalism, which was experiencing a structural crisis. In response to this crisis, which was characterized by a decrease in the policies, practices, and institutions that had supported capitalism's ultimate goal of capital accumulation, a neoliberal approach arose with the hope that the shift would restore the promise of capital growth (Campbell, 2005). Although greater detail regarding the ways in which capitalism adopted neoliberalism is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to note that the primary goal of the shift was, and remains, rooted in " the systematic use of state power to impose (financial) market imperatives" (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005, p. 3). (This is not to be confused with 'state interference', which is differs from the mandates of neoliberalism, which states that "optimal outcomes will be achieved if the demand and supply for goods and services are allowed to adjust to each other through the price mechanism, without interference by government…(Crouch, 2011, p. 17).

As an economic model, neoliberalism emphasizes market domination of the organization of society, which calls for "a minimal role for the state and maximal role for markets in organizing economic life [and by extension, social life] ", and is most notably observed in the in the form of privatization of public services and state deregulation (McEwen, 2005). However—and perhaps more importantly for a discussion of its impact on the nonprofit sector—neoliberalism cannot be understood as simply an economic model, as its reach has extended far beyond economic systems. Rather, it is better understood as a set of economic, political, cultural, and social values, an ideology that has seeped deeply into all aspects of economic, political and

social life both nationally and globally (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005). The consequences have been widespread, resulting in what McChesney (1999) refers to as "a depoliticized citizenry marked by apathy and cynicism" (p. 10) as well as increased and persistent economic and social inequality due to increased concentration of power and wealth among elite groups and entities both nationally and globally (McCheseney, 1999; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005).

With respect to the nonprofit sector in the United States specifically, Neoliberalism as both an economic model and an ideology is viewed as having has had a precise and lasting impact on the role nonprofits play in our society, as well as how these organizations are able to conduct themselves (Eikenberry, 2009). This is most notably observed in the devolution of state provided services to vulnerable populations that began in the 1980s under the Reagan Administration, the privatization of state enterprises, and of particular importance, the institutionalization of the logic of the New Public Management (NPM) model (Alexander, 1999, MacEwan, 2005).

The New Public Management, which will be explored in depth in a subsequent section, is a reform movement characterized by three primary ideas: the efficiency of the market, the expediency of for-profit sector practices, technologies, and ideologies above all else, and the notion that management is a generic practice that can be universally applied regardless of setting (Crouch, 2011; Kaboolian, 1998). While the devolution of state provided services is significant to understanding the nonprofit sector as it currently exists, the onset of the New Public Management model is equally relevant in trying to better understand how nonprofits have become more "business-like" in structure and function. Given the focus of this research on this specific line of inquiry, the emphasis of this dissertation is on exploring how the New Public

Management has affected organizations, with particular attention paid to the impact of this trend on organizations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The New Public Management Model (NPM)

The institutionalization of for-profit, market-oriented management strategies and practices by SJNOs is symptomatic of the larger trend of nonprofits of all types and sizes beginning to resemble for-profit entities in both structure and behavior. As Sanders and McClellan (2012) note, "being business-like within the nonprofit sector is heralded as a much-needed development that will lead to more efficient use of resources, increased accountability and more sustainable solutions to social problems" (p.70). This general trend of nonprofits adopting the ways of for-profit entities has been well-documented, with the literature focusing predominantly on the institutional changes nonprofits, particularly human service organizations, have undergone since the devolution of government funded social welfare programs that began in the 1980s and the implementation of the NPM model (Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; James, 1998; Salamon, 1993; Smith and Lipsky, 1995; Tuckman, 1998; Weisbrod, 1997; Young, 1998). Such changes are characterized by the assumption that the use of for-profit strategies to achieve organizational goals yields optimal results (Alexander, 1999), and a primary focus of this literature has been on how nonprofit organizations have become more competitive in nature due to the increased reliance on revenue generation from government contracts or profit-generating activities.

Strategies such as an increased focus on revenue generation and profitability, an emphasis on increasing efficiency through the maximization of resources, the implementation of concrete measurement systems designed to increase accountability, and the institutionalization of

for-profit rhetoric and language, are rooted in the New Public Management that emerged in the public sphere during the 1980s. The movement to adopt the strategies of the NPM was the result of a new political and institutional environment that placed greater emphasis on personal responsibility rather than social protection (Hasenfeld, 2010) and, as Alexander (1999) observes, presumes that market-based strategies and practices are the most efficient and effective way to manage and structure nonprofit organizations. The NPM model is characterized by a number of central tenets derived from a market-based orientation to organizational structure and management. Most notably, and perhaps most important in a discussion of the use of this model by SJNOs, is its focus on creating more efficient and accountable organizations whose work can be both measured and quantified.

The main tenets of the NPM are operationalized by nonprofits in a number of ways that are distinctive of the for-profit sector. Greater control over and more disciplined use of resources, increased focus on accountability to funders (which emphasizes outputs rather than outcomes), a focus on efficiency rather than effectiveness, more formalized measurement and assessment procedures, and an increased use of and reliance on contracting with the goal of creating a more competitive environment are all characteristics of the NPM, and are seen as effective ways to ensure a more disciplined work environment that is aimed primarily at improving the organization's financial bottom line (Anheier, 2005; Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999; Landsberg, 2004; Hasenfeld, 2010). To achieve these goals, heavy emphasis is placed on streamlining organizational processes and procedures with the goal of "doing more with less" (Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999), and greater importance is placed on implementing strategies that focus on financial and performance management, strategic planning processes, freedom and flexibility to manage, and improved regulation (Gruening, 1998). Additionally, many

organizations will often turn to for-profit sector professionals to implement these strategies, which leads to the appointment of individuals to the organization's board of directors and the hiring of executive staff who posses expertise in business but lack what Landsberg (2004) calls, "mission-related acumen".

Furthermore, the NPM assumes the logic of the market (Hasenfeld, 2010), which posits that larger organizations have greater capacity to serve more people than smaller organizations, and that increased organizational capacity translates into greater impact. In accordance with this perspective, growth becomes the outcome, or "profit" for which organizations often begin to strive, and emphasis is shifted away from the organization's true outcome, as defined by their mission statement. The NPM also suggests that like for-profit companies and businesses, all nonprofits should desire and plan for growth. Moreover, as Drucker (1974) notes, our society has become made up of large organizations upon which the responsibility of all kinds of social tasks lies.

When considered in the context of organizational survival, which some believe is the primary reason organizations turn to for-profit strategies (Young, 2005), it becomes difficult to argue that the processes through which the abovementioned goals are achieved are negative in consequence. As the authors of many nonprofit management handbooks contend, these processes are designed to ensure organizational survival, which is undoubtedly necessary for an organization to meet its goals (Connors, 1980; Drucker, 1992; Eadie,1997; Epsy, 1996; Fristenberg, 1996; Grayson, & Tomkins, 1984; Hardy, 1972; Herman & Heimovics, 1991; Pappas, 1995; Pynes, & Schrader, 1997; Unterman, & Davis, 1984; White, 1981; Young, 1984). Without question, nonprofits must remain in existence in order to meet their missions, and finding the means to do so given the financial constraints many organizations face needs to be a

top priority (Young, 2005). However, others believe that survival is different and arguably more complex for the nonprofit than it is for the for-profit whose primary objective is profitability and financial health (Landsberg, 2004). According to this view, the nonprofit's desire and potential to remain in existence should not be driven by the accumulation of financial wealth, but should be determined instead by the goal of meeting a particular social mission. Stated differently, though undeniably instrumental to an organization meeting its objectives, unlike the for-profit company, the accumulation of financial resources is ultimately not the nonprofit's end goal (Anheier, 2005). Rather, it is one of the many means through which an organization gains the capacity to continue to work towards meeting the mission for which it exists in the first place (Landsberg, 2004; Young, 2005).

Consequently, nonprofits face a paradox (Landsberg, 2004). Faced with the growing challenges of ensuring survival in a tumultuous and competitive financial environment plagued by decreased support from both government and private funders, organizations are forced to adopt the ways of the for-profit sector to increase their financial security in an attempt to guarantee the organization has the means to continue meet its mission. However, as Landsberg (2004) and others have noted, doing so may ultimately threaten the organization's abilities to effectively meet its social mission and goals in the most effective and appropriate ways possible (Bush, 1992; Alexander, 1999; Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999; Eikenberry 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Salamon, 2002; Young, 2005). This is particularly important when considered in the context of SJNOs, since these types of nonprofits hold great responsibility in helping to mitigate social problems and respond to the needs of vulnerable and disenfranchised populations. Furthermore, in the case of SJNOs specifically, the NPM presumes that organizational growth equally rivals the importance of securing greater social equity for disenfranchised populations.

Moreover, it assumes that SJNOs are able to grow and expand, often with little to no increase in resources and expenditure, while simultaneously maintaining focus on their social justice missions. However, despite the widespread adoption of for-profit management practices and behaviors by all types of nonprofits, SJNOs included, it remains unclear if such models are, in fact, the most effective organizational approach.

Nonprofits Being Business-Like

Examinations of Nonprofits Looking and Behaving Like For Profits

Several scholars have explored the ways in which nonprofits of all types embrace these traditionally for-profit tendencies and perspectives[2], and studies have yielded mixed results regarding the impact of these trends on the structure and functioning of the organizations (see, for example, Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Guo, 2006; James, 1998; Sloan, 1998; Suárez & Hwang, 2012; Shoham, Ruvio, Vigoda-Gadot, & Schwabsky, 2006; Young, 1998). In an attempt to provide an overview of several developments influencing the ways nonprofits become more "business-like" in their orientations, Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) focus on what has come to be termed the "marketization of the nonprofit sector". This overarching movement includes four primary tendencies—the generation of commercial revenue by nonprofits, contract competition, the influence of new and emerging donors, and social entrepreneurship. Examining how nonprofits start to look and act more like for-profits from this perspective provides one of many entry points into this inquiry, and situates this inclination within a principal framework of marketization.

Other scholars, including Salamon (1993) have focused on this concept of marketization to explain the business-like shift that has occurred for nonprofits. Although undoubtedly useful

[2] Scholars have typically explored this trend through four primary frameworks: commercialization, corporatization, marketization, and professionalization. Each of these frameworks will be explored, in depth, in a subsequent section.

in helping to promote our understanding of some of ways in which the transition has and continues to occur, the framework of marketization is somewhat limiting when trying to understand the ways that "being business-like" is operationalized within organizations. The limitations of this conceptualization will be explored in greater detail in a subsequent section.

The commercialization of the nonprofit sector is another framework commonly utilized by researchers (see, for example, Weisbrod, 1998) to explore the transition that nonprofits appear to undergo when they become more "business-like". The prevailing definition of commercialization within the nonprofit sector is understood as an increase of typically commercial activities to generate revenue. Young (1998) utilizes this definition to explore the impact of this tendency on national nonprofit social service associations, while Tuckman (1998) uses commercialization to analyze how increased competition in markets that are now inhabited by both for-profit and nonprofit firms (for example, health care) potentially leads to greater commercialization among nonprofits, which he posits ultimately serves to alter the organizational form of the nonprofit organization.

Dart's (2004) research examining a medium-sized social service agency, an organization characterized as typically nonprofit due to its strong focus on mission and its pro-social values, has been seminal in helping to conceptualize and identify what business-like structure, form, and to some degree, behavior within nonprofit organizations actually looks like within a specific organizational context. Observations and interviews with staff members yielded the identification of four main areas in which nonprofits have seemingly embraced for-profit behaviors and market-oriented strategies—goals, service delivery, management, and rhetoric. Within each of these areas the organization was seen as adopting strategies or engaging in behaviors that were identified as explicitly rooted in a for-profit orientation to success.

According to staff members who were interviewed, organizational goals became economically driven, with an increased focus on revenue generation and profitability rather than effectively meeting the needs of the clients served by the organization. The focus of service delivery shifted from providing appropriate, client focused services to providing services that were both efficient and concretely measurable. Management also reportedly began to take a heavily results-oriented approach aimed at the maximization of available resources, and rhetoric typically associated with the for-profit sector such as referring to the organization as an entrepreneurial enterprise, or considering the people who utilize the services of the organization to be consumers rather than clients, dominated the language used by staff (Dart, 2004).

Though somewhat limited due to the lack of comparative data, Dart's (2004) research nonetheless provides a useful and concrete understanding of some of the ways that staff members of nonprofits perceive their organization as engaging in behaviors that aid in the organization becoming more "business-like" in orientation, structure, and function. The typology derived from this study provides a framework that helps to more clearly elucidate the specific behaviors that nonprofit organizations engage in as they begin to adopt a for-profit orientation to meet their mission and goals, and it offers a clearer picture of how the trend of adopting for-profit models plays out within the context of an organization.

Critiques

Scholars have noted the inherent challenges of non-profits adopting market-based orientations, and critiques, albeit limited in quantity, have focused predominantly on how for-profit perspectives and tendencies may lead organizations away from their missions and goals and from their philanthropic spirit and orientation (Bush, 2004; Alexander, 1999; Alexander, et. al, 1999; Dart, 2004; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Landsberg, 2004; Lohmann, 2007; Maier &

Meyer, 2009; Weisbrod, 1998). Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) understand this challenge as occurring at the macro level of civil society. As the authors note, the nonprofit sector plays a significant role in contributing to and maintaining a strong and active civil society—an idea that has been long considered a distinguishing aspect of the United States when compared with other developed countries, and serves as a marker of a vibrant and functioning democracy (Anheier, 2005; de Toqueville, 2003). This is accomplished through the sector's role as "value guardians, service providers and advocates, and supporters of social capital" (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004, p.135). However, according to Eikenberry and Kluver (2004), when nonprofits either choose or are forced to embrace marketization, as the authors define it, these specific roles become threatened, ultimately compromising the role of civil society.

Salamon (1993) explores this development of marketization specifically in relation to the American social welfare system, describing it as the "penetration of essentially market-type relationships into the social welfare arena" (pg. 17). These relationships, according to Salamon (1993) are manifest in the ways that nonprofits embrace commercial activity (also known as commercialization), which ultimately serves to distort the long held distinction between for-profit and nonprofit service providers, and raises questions about who is responsible for providing services to those in need.

Based on surveys and focus groups conducted with staff members of nonprofits serving children and youth, Alexander (1999) observed that the shift in social services from government agencies to private nonprofits coupled with the implementation of NPM strategies appeared to have a profoundly negative impact on the abilities of organizations to serve their clients in ways consistent with their missions. Regardless of size, specific mission, budget, or clientele, the majority of the staff members involved in the study reported a shift in their organizational and

management structures. This alteration was characterized by many of the NPM principles, including an increased focus on demonstrating both effectiveness and efficiency through systematic and measurable outcomes, greater pressure to focus organizational priorities on the financial bottom line rather than effective service provision, and the implementation of complex administrative systems designed to track and report fiscal and programmatic accountability measures (Alexander, 1999).

Despite the acknowledgment of the staff members involved in the study that such adaptation was necessary given the constraints of the funding climate in which the agencies found themselves, the larger, more established organizations were better equipped to embrace such changes while maintaining operations, and to navigate the challenges associated with such a shift. However, for the smaller community based organizations with limited budgets and staff capacity, adaptation was much more difficult and often resulted in the implementation of fee-for-services or the cutting of programs entirely, as well as the need to devote more resources to the development administrative and management capacity and less towards service delivery. The data indicated that the capacities of smaller organizations to adapt were much more limited and consequently, many of the surveyed agencies were faced with the serious challenge of not being able to provide core services to the neediest of clients. As such, much of the staff expressed concern regarding what was seen as a compromise of mission (Alexander, 1999).

Furthermore, staff members believed that the capacity of organizations to continue serving the most disadvantaged through the provision of supportive services, advocacy, education, and research—core practices through which many nonprofits attempt to meet their missions—was compromised by the onset of business-like activities. Rather than continuing to concentrate on the enhancement of these core practices and meeting needs of the clients served

by the organization, many agencies shifted their focus to measuring and documenting outcomes to demonstrate programmatic and fiscal efficiency to funders. As such, staff members of both small and large organizations alike felt that the adoption of more market-based, for-profit oriented strategies and practices greatly compromised the public service character with which nonprofits are often associated. However, due to resources, larger organizations were more easily able to adapt to the changing atmosphere (Alexander, 1999).

This study (Alexander, 1999; Alexander, et. al, 1999) provides valuable preliminary evidence that the use of management practices and strategies derived in the for-profit sector may, in fact, negatively impact an organization's abilities to maintain focus on its mission. However, these findings are somewhat limited due the study's focus on staff member perceptions. While the experiences of the staff may provide insight into what occurred within the organization, conclusions cannot be drawn about what actually resulted when the organization shifted to more for-profit oriented practices. Additionally, when considered in the context of SJNOs, whose missions and goals are explicitly focused on responding to social inequity, the Alexander, et. al (1999) investigation is further limited by the lack of consideration of how this trend affects the people who are served by these organizations. Nevertheless, this study provides some initial insight into the potential impact of this trend, and contributes to the establishment of a framework for future systematic and empirically grounded explorations of this question.

Conceptualizations of Being Business-Like in the Literature

The term "business-like" in relation to nonprofits is a colloquial term used to describe how an organization resembles traditional for-profit entities, as well as a concept that has made its way into the research literature on nonprofit organizations in recent years (see, for example, Bush, 1992; Dart, 2004; Sanders & McClellan, 2014). The concept itself is of relevance because

it suggests that nonprofits, at some point, were something other than "business-like" and that a change in orientation has occurred. However, there is little consensus in the literature on what the term means in actuality, or how it is operationalized. Instead, researchers employ the concept as an umbrella term to denote the myriad ways that nonprofit organizations have started to resemble for-profits in form, structure, and behavior.

Analyses of nonprofits looking (form and structure) and acting (behavior) more like that of for-profits have almost exclusively focused on four main concepts: marketization, commercialization, corporatization, and professionalization. These concepts are used to describe the ways that nonprofit organizational forms, structures, and/or behaviors have changed to more closely resemble for-profit entities, and despite differences in meaning and consequence, the terms are often conflated and used interchangeably to examine this trend. Nevertheless, research in these four distinct areas has contributed greatly to our understanding of the ways in which nonprofits have seemingly become more like for-profits in various aspects, and has provided rationale for explaining some of the major changes and transitions that nonprofits have undergone in this area over the last thirty years. However, it is also important to explore the distinctions between these terms—particularly in the context of this study—because with the exception of professionalization to some degree, all of them fail to fully explain how nonprofits that have become more "business-like" in orientation actually function internally. Furthermore, minimal insight can be gained from research in these areas on the true impact of this trend on organizations. Moreover, with the exception of professionalization again, it can be argued that these concepts place heavy emphasis on understanding the changes in organizational structure and form that have taken place, rather than actual the actual of *practices and behaviors* of nonprofits. Consequently, such analyses are seemingly limited in their utility when trying to

explore the actual "business-like" practices that nonprofits have adopted, the ways in which these practices are operationalized within organizations, and the impact of this trend on organizational form and structure overall.

Defining and Delineating the Concepts

Marketization and Commercialization.

"Marketization" and "Commercialization" are two of the most commonly employed terms used to describe the changing orientation of nonprofit organizations from one based on a system of democratic values and moral underpinnings (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004), to one grounded in the principles of the market. Marketization refers specifically to the ways in which nonprofits adopt market-driven methods and values to guide organizational activity and behavior (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). While this term differs somewhat in its definition from commercialization, the two are often conflated in literature, with marketization frequently used to describe what others have come to define as commercialization (see, for example, Guo, 2006).

Commercialization, specifically in relation to nonprofit organizations, generally signifies the act of engaging in the production of goods and services with the explicit intent of generating income/profit (Tuckman, 1998; Weisbrod, 1998). The terminology of commercialization emerged in the 1990s when several scholars began to explore the increased commercial activity of nonprofit organizations and the impact of this activity on various subsectors as well as the nonprofit sector as a whole. This trend was being observed initially among large nonprofit entities such as hospitals and universities (Weisbrod, 1998), yet the increase in commercial revenue generating activity has since spread to other subsectors of nonprofit organizations, including to large charity organizations and human service organizations (Guo, 2006; Young, 1998).

Research indicates that nonprofits have turned to profit generating activities primarily due to a changing funding environment characterized by a decrease in government and private, philanthropic funding sources (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Salamon, 1993). According to research conducted by Salamon (1999) on the commercialization of the nonprofit human services sector, the revenue generated from commercial activities such as fees and other profit generating activities increased 600% between the years of 1977 and 1966 (Salamon, 1999, cited by Guo, 2006). This increase was accompanied by a decrease in funding from government and private sources.

Today, commercial activity with the intent of generating revenue is commonplace among many types of nonprofits, regardless of organizational focus or size. These activities take many forms, including: generating commercial revenue through "fee for service" or "user fee" activities; sale of merchandise; development of alliances or collaboration with for-profit entities, particularly for cause-related marketing campaigns; and the formation of for-profit subsidiaries (Weisbrod, 1998).

Several authors include the principal definition of commercialization—the production of goods and services with a goal of generating profit/revenue—in their overall definition of marketization, suggesting that commercialization is simply one aspect of a larger, overarching trend of nonprofit organizations embracing the principles of the market (see, for example, Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Salamon, 1993). Others embrace a broader characterization of marketization that encompasses commercialization, but also includes trends such as contract competition, the influence of new and emerging donors, and social entrepreneurship (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Grønbjerg & Salamon, 2012).

In addition to having to diversify revenue sources through commercial activity such as those described above, organizations also find themselves in a more competitive environment due to the retrenchment in government funding that began in the 1980s (Alexander, 1999; Grønbjerg & Salamon, 2012)—a trend that continues to impact the sector today (Grønbjerg & Salamon, 2012). This stressed funding environment, termed devolution, is characterized by a decrease in governmental support to nonprofits in the form of grants to an increase in contract and voucher funding based predominantly on performance measurement, among other variables (Alexander, 1999), as well as the "collective efforts [of government] to shift responsibility for federal programs down to the state and local levels (Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999)". As a result, organizations find themselves competing with other nonprofit organizations, as well as with for-profit entities that have entered into the business of providing services once seen as the primary responsibility of government or nonprofit organizations (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). This trend is particularly evident among social/human service nonprofit sector (see, for example, Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Salamon, 1993).

As Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) note, organizations are now rewarded monies based primarily on performance management. This tends to favor for-profits with capital that, as result, can both outbid and outperform non-profits. Government is also more likely, in the name of efficiency, to award funding or to outsource services to any organization that can "prove" their abilities to deliver on the investment. Furthermore, as Ryan (1999) observes, nonprofit organizations were once awarded government funding because of their long histories in providing services based on their expertise in a particular area. They were granted monies to do a particular job or serve a specific function because they were seen as "reputable, committed, like-minded community institutions" (Ryan, 1999, pp. 129). However, due a greater desire for

efficiency and increased outsourcing of what were typically seen as government provided services, these organizations are no longer viewed as the only option, or even the most viable or desirable choice for governments looking to address a particular problem (Ryan, 1999).

In addition to commercial revenue generation and increased competition, marketization also includes the influence of a new and emerging philanthropic donor base, as well as the development of social entrepreneurship as a new organizational form (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Individual donors who view charitable causes as business investments lead what Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) refer to as the "new philanthropy". Donors that engage in this type of giving characterize their contributions according to several business principles, including the perceived return on investment (ROI) and how closely aligned their giving is with their own desire for results-oriented values (Pozorski, 2000, cited by Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004).

Social entrepreneurship has also become a prominent idea in nonprofit research in recent years—one that Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) directly associate with the shift to a more "marketized" nonprofit sector. A proliferation of research exploring this idea has emerged in the nonprofit literature, however little consensus exists regarding an exact definition of social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin & Matear, 2010). Drawing upon a definition put forth by Dees, Emerson, and Economy (2001), the authors define social entrepreneurship as efforts led by "nonprofit executives who pay attention to market forces without losing sight of their organizations' missions and seek to use the language and skills of the business world to advance the material well-being of their members or clients" (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004, pp. 135). This new organizational form, one that seeks to actively combine market based principles and practices with social goals and missions, represents what Dart (2004) refers to as a shift "from the traditional understanding of the nonprofit organization in terms of strategy, structure, norms,

and values"; a shift that "represents a radical innovation in the nonprofit sector" (pp. 411). As research suggests, social entrepreneurship and the social enterprises formed as a result of this perspective can take on a multitude of forms and embrace varying strategies (see, for example, Dacin, Dacin & Matear, 2010). However, the driving force behind all social all entrepreneurial activity remains the desire to infuse the principles and practices of the market into organizations whose primary purpose and goals are, in some way, socially driven.

Corporatization and Professionalization.

The concepts of corporatization and professionalization, although employed less in the literature than commercialization and marketization, are also used to describe the shift that nonprofits have made to more market-based orientations. While commercialization and marketization tend to connote changes in organizational structure and form, the terms corporatization and professionalization are used more to describe organizational behavior, particularly in relation to management practices.

Academic research on the corporatization of nonprofits has focused predominantly on specific subsectors of the nonprofit sector, most notably healthcare and education (with an emphasis on hospitals and universities) (see, for example, Alexander & Weiner, 1998; Castree & Sparke, 2000). Although sometimes conflated with some of the other concepts described, corporatization in relation to nonprofits is used primarily to describe a shift in management, specifically as it relates to governance of organizations (governance in this sense refers explicitly to an organization's board of directors).

As Hodgkin (1993) points out, the eighties and nineties saw an increased push for nonprofit organizations to adopt a model of governance typically utilized within for-profit companies. However, it must be noted that significant differences exist between for-profit and

nonprofit governance models. Some of these divergences are legally dictated, while others result from the different value systems and organizing models that inform for-profits and nonprofits. As Alexander and Wiener (1998) aptly note, "The philanthropic [governance] model stresses the values of community participation, due process, and stewardship. The corporate model stresses the values of strategy development" (p.225). However, despite these differences, the corporate model of governance is still seen a beneficial antidote to issues such board inefficiency (Hodgkin, 1993); an argument that is aligned with many of the other rationales for nonprofits adopting for-profit models and practices.

Similarly to corporatization, professionalization is a term that has been used to discuss the onset and implementation of management ideas and practices derived in the for-profit sector. Unlike corporatization however, which has tended to focus almost exclusively on organizational governance at the board of directors level, professionalization refers to a wider conceptualization of management within organizations. The literature on the professionalization of the nonprofit sector delineates two specific trends that have greatly affected nonprofit organizations and the sector as a whole: the expansion of a *culture* of professionalism into the sector—defined as the incorporation of full-time, paid personnel (particularly at the management level) with a precise set of credentials—and the integration *values and practices* that are commonly associated with professionalism as it relates to the for-profit sector (Hwang & Powell, 2009; Landsberg, 2004; Suarez, 2010). The first involves a transformation that occurred over the course of the twentieth century that shifted the nonprofit sector from an informal web of less rationalized (less formalized) organizations to that of a highly rationalized, or more formalized third sector (Hwang & Powell, 2009). This change signified a substantial transformation that is characterized by the evolution of the sector from one that consisted primarily of "informal activities and

charitable do-gooders to [one based on] highly formalized endeavors by enterprising individuals (Hwang & Powell, 2009, pp. 270). Organizations that once relied almost exclusively on volunteers to implement activities and achieve organizational goals became much more likely to employ paid staff members at all levels of the organization, and the demand for managerial staff with a specific set of expertise became both normalized and pervasive (Hwang & Powell, 2009). This shift was accelerated during the period of the eighties and nineties as a result of devolution and the introduction of the New Public Management model, among other external factors and institutional pressures initiated by both the for-profit and government sectors.

The second trend examined in the literature on professionalization within nonprofits is that of organizations adopting the specific practices and strategies often seen within for-profit, market-driven organizations; a trend that is mostly observed in relation to organizational management and behavior (Hwang & Powell, 2009; Landsberg, 2004; Suarez, 2010). As several authors have noted, this trend often consists of an increased focus on quality of products and services, efficiency (defined by cost management), improved and more systematic methods to ensure accountability to organizational stakeholders, particularly funders, flexibility and willingness to adapt to changing environments, an emphasis on product and service innovation, and a heightened focus on profitability, market forces, and the financial bottom line (Hwang & Powell, 2009; Landsberg, 2004; Suarez, 2010). Of all of concepts employed to explain the ways that nonprofits have become more "business-like" in structure and orientation, professionalization in this sense comes the closest to clarifying how being "business-like" is actually operationalized in the every day experiences of nonprofit organizations, particularly in relation to organizational management and the adoption of business-models derived from the for-profit sector (Hwang & Powell, 2009).

The notion of professionalization undoubtedly contributes to the development of a more concrete conceptualization and understanding of the ways that nonprofits exhibit for-profit tendencies, perhaps more so than any of the other concepts (commercialization, marketization, and corporatization). However, several challenges with the idea of professionalization as it relates to nonprofits are worth noting. First, the literature in this area remains somewhat scarce, with only two empirical studies systematically examining (through quantitative and qualitative research methods) the role and impact of professionalization on nonprofits (see, Hwang & Powell, 2009 & Suarez, 2010).

Secondly, while the literature on professionalization delves more deeply into exploring the specific practices and behaviors of nonprofits than that of the research on marketization, commercialization, and corporatization, it still falls short in creating a exhaustive and nuanced picture of what the tendencies of "being business-like" looks like within organizations. Hwang and Powell's (2009) study on the professionalization of nonprofits in the San Francisco Bay area brings us closer to a clearer understanding of this trend, but given the heterogeneity of the study sample in terms of organizational focus and size, it can be argued that generalizations regarding the role and impact of behaviors and practices ushered in as a result of increased professionalization are difficult to make. Finally, using a term like "professionalization" to describe the shift that nonprofits have undergone in recent decades implies that nonprofits are something other than "professional". Professionalization is a concept adopted directly from the for-profit lexicon, and while it is being used simply to denote a shift to a more for-profit orientation, for organizations that might be considered less "professional" by definitions put forth above, it undermines the ways that nonprofit leaders, staff members, and volunteers engage in their work. Furthermore, it delegitimizes the prior practices of organizations that made the

shift towards a more professionalized orientation by indicating that a change was necessary to be successful.

Managerialism: A More Effective Model for Understanding "Being Business-Like"

Much knowledge has been garnered from the research on marketization, commercialization, corporatization and professionalization regarding the multitude of ways that nonprofits of all types have been influenced and transformed by models and practices derived in the for-profit sector. Furthermore, as the literature demonstrates, nonprofit organizations have had to contend with various external influences, most notably the onset of New Public Management model, that have had a significant impact on organizational behavior. What remains less clear are the specific ways in which this has occurred, the impact this has had on the organizations themselves, and how this affects those who work within the organizations. Despite the wealth of both theoretical and empirical research exploring the transformation of nonprofits to more for-profit orientations, there remains a lack of understanding regarding the how nonprofits actually operationalize specific behaviors and practices that are heavily characteristic of and often associated with for-profit entities.

Given its explicit focus on market-driven management behaviors and practices, managerialism—a concept derived from public management and critical management studies that is heavily utilized within the European organizational literature—provides a more effective framework through which the behaviors that seemingly resemble for profits can be examined and understood (Maier and Meyer, 2009). Yet, despite its conceptual potential for analyzing and understanding the operationalization of the for-profit behavior of nonprofits, it has yet to take hold within the United States among nonprofit organizational scholars.

Maier and Meyer (2009) define managerialism as "the dominance of management practices and ideas" (p.8). Advancing this definition further, Pollitt (1990) offers a characterization of the concept that is particularly effective in considering the influences of this tendency on nonprofit organizations. He describes managerialism as, " a set of beliefs and practices, at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumption that better management will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills" (Pollitt, 1990, p.1). This definition is effective in understanding for-profit tendencies within the context of nonprofits for two reasons. First, it understands managerialism as an ideology (set of beliefs), one of the primary approaches that have been employed to understand this concept within the public management and critical management literature (Maier and Meyer, 2009). This allows us to conceptualize how a particular set of beliefs, in this case the conviction that for-profit principles and practices are the most effective, has permeated our understanding regarding how the nonprofit sector should function. As an ideology, managerialism consists of a set of "values, ideas, and beliefs about the state of the world" (Pollitt, 1990, p. 7). This includes the idea that social progress is achieved through continued increases in economically defined productivity, that management itself is not only important, but is also fundamentally positive for organizations, that better management is the key to better institutional performance, and, as Pollitt (1990) notes, "suggests that world should be a place where objectives are clear, where staff are highly motivated to achieve them, where close attention is given to monetary costs, [and] where bureaucracy and red tape are eliminated" (p.7). [3]According to a managerialist

[3] It should be noted that management, as it is being described by Pollitt (1990), is not referring to personnel represented by positions of power in a hierarchical organizational structure. Rather, it is being used to describe the structure that exists within organizations to ensure organizational functioning based upon a managerialist perspective.

perspective, these values are achieved through good management practices, as they are defined by the for-profit sector (Pollitt, 1990).

Secondly, it defines the concept as a process that leads to actual practices. This, perhaps more so than any of the other dominant paradigms explored in the literature, enables us to better understand how the aforementioned ideological underpinnings of managerialism are used to create a set of practices and behaviors, and how these practices and behaviors are operationalized within nonprofit organizations. The research conducted by Dart (2004) on nonprofits being business-like, and the theoretical analysis of Maier and Meyer (2009), are the only explicit and systematic explorations of these processes. The above-mentioned "manifestations of managerialism" put forth by Maier and Meyer (2009) are utilized within this study to better conceptualize how managerialism is understood and employed within social justice nonprofits, and to begin to comprehend the impacts of these trends on organizational staff.

Theoretical Approaches to Understanding the Shift Towards Managerialism

Processes of organizational change like managerialism have typically been explored through the lens of organizational theory (see, for example, Alexander, 2000; Hwang & Powell, 2009), an interdisciplinary field that emerged in the 1940s (Scott & Davis, 2005). Organizational theory has proven effective in examining the actual changes that organizations undergo, and the theoretical frameworks of neo-institutionalism and resource dependency theory (two specific organizational theories arising out of institutionalism) are particularly useful in exploring the why organizations experience change. Both frameworks have relevance to this study since each aid in increasing our understanding of the reasons behind the adoption of managerialist paradigms by nonprofit organizations.

Managerialism, a change that has occurred at both the sector-wide level as well as the level of individual organizations, can ultimately be characterized as a radical institutional change. Greenwood and Hinnings (1996) define this type of change as the process of organizations shifting from one model to another, a change that represents a dramatic alteration to the very template, or as Petteigrew (1987) desrcibes it, the dominant beliefs or ideologies, from which an organization typically operates. Managerialism, as it is defined and utilized in this study, falls under this framework of radical change because, as research has indicated, it has caused a significant shift in both the structure and function of nonprofit organizations. The reason for this change can be best understood through the lens of two theoretical perspectives: Neoinstitutionalism and resource dependency theory.

A Neoinstitutionalist explanation

Neoinstitutionalism tends to focus more on organizational fields or sectors rather than individual organizations themselves. These fields are viewed as being able to influence organizations through the creation of "categories of structure, action, and thought" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 13; Greenwood & Hinnings, 1996). Organizational fields make up the external environments that individual organizations are situated within, which influence organizations to adopt processes and procedures that are "defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society (Meyer & Rowan, 1991, p.41). The adoption of these processes, according to Meyer and Rowan (1991) serve to increase an organization's legitimacy and its chances of survival, "independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures" (p.41).

External organizational environments are comprised of several key stakeholders, or constituents, that define the norms by which organizations are expected to function (DiMaggio &

Powell, 1991). In the case of nonprofit organizations, these stakeholders include funders (government as well as private), other organizations, and the communities the organization serves. However, the influence of stakeholders on an organization is far from uniform. Since the survival of nonprofits is often predicated upon its ability to secure and maintain funding (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), the degree of influence funders have on organizations is arguably elevated, potentially beyond that of other stakeholders. Given the prominence that funders play in the existences of nonprofits, a neoinstitutionalist perspective would posit that funders, as primary actors in the external organizational environment, have a significant impact on determining the trajectory organizations can and do take and the processes and procedures that they can employ.

This helps to further explain the adoption of managerialism by nonprofits, which has been shown not to be an organic process derived internally within organizations, but a directive handed down from sources present within the external environment of nonprofits. Neoinstitutionalism would consider this shift in practice to be the result of institutional isomorphic processes, which DiMaggio and Powell (1991) describe as occurring through three primary mechanisms: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism. Although a detailed description of each of these mechanisms are beyond the scope of this project, a brief explanation of two of the processes—coercive and mimetic isomorphism—will be provided to help further drive the Neoinstitutional explanation of the adoption of managerialism by nonprofits.

Coercive and Mimetic Isomorphic Processes

Coercive isomorphism refers to the "formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.67). In the

context of managerialism, it can be argued that nonprofits have experienced a certain level of coercive pressure, particularly from the funding sources on which they are dependent, to adapt to managerialist mandates. A neoinstituionalist perspective would argue that in addition to attempting to ensure organizational survival this process has occurred in an attempt to increase organizational legitimacy, which is defined by external environmental sources (Scott, 2008). This pressure is ultimately based on prevailing notions of acceptable organizational behavior embraced by external environmental actors. In this case, these pressures are directly connected to the directives that have been derived from the New Public Management model that has come to dominate the pubic sector as well as the private, for-profit sphere.

The second mechanism through which organizational change may occur, mimetic isomorphism, is viewed as a process of adaptation resulting from a state of organizational uncertainty. Where mimetic isomorphic processes are at play, uncertainty leads organizations look for "models" upon which they can build. This is again, often with the intention of increasing organizational legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Organizations look to others within their organizational fields to determine what constitutes legitimate practices and procedures, which in the case of nonprofits, have come to be dominated by the widespread adoption of managerialism.

According to neoinstitutionalsim, the prevalence of managerialist practices, particularly among larger organizations with adequate and stable funding sources (Willner, 2013), may therefore cause less stable organizations to look toward managerialist organizations as the ideal. The result would be organizations changing their models to mimic other nonprofits that exhibit higher levels of stability and legitimacy, with the goal of increasing their own sense of stability and legitimacy within the greater organizational field in which they are situated.

A Resource Dependence Theory explanation

An alternative explanation Neoinstitutionalism to explain the reasons for organizational change is Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), a theory first introduced by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978. Put simply, RDT posits that survival is directly connected to an organization's abilities to secure and maintain resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This creates a dependency on external actors that ultimately limits the autonomy of an organization to pursue its desired ends. Thus, organizations are constrained by their resource needs, and bound to external actors that serve to determine the organization's ability to survive (Froelich, 1999). Furthermore, as Froelich (1999) observes, nonprofits exist in an environment that is simultaneously dictated by the need for resources to survive and notoriously characterized by the conditions of scarcity and insecurity, where resources are neither stable nor guaranteed. A Resource Dependency Theory explanation of the widespread adoption of managerialism by nonprofits effectively explains this shift because it directly relates to the idea that the resource imperative "results in the adaptation of organizations to requirements of important resource providers" (Froelich, 1999, p.247), as well as the management of dependencies through methods of compliance (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Both Neoinstitutionalism and Resource Dependency Theory offer frameworks that provide viable explanations as to why nonprofits might adopt managerialist practices and behaviors, even when such shifts in models and perspectives may not seem like the most appropriate for an organization to meet its desired ends. However, both theories, as well as organizational theory more generally, prove inadequate in explicating the specific challenges of adopting managerialism as it relates to nonprofits broadly, and to social justice nonprofit organizations more specifically. Neither theory facilitates an exploration of the effects of managerialism on these organizations. Furthermore, they do not reveal how managerialism might

result in the maintenance of systems of power and systemic social inequality, a primary question with which this research is concerned. Therefore, the use of a different theoretical approach is needed; one recognizes the change processes organizations undergo as a result of managerialist imperatives, but focuses more explicitly on understanding the impact of these changes on the organizations, the individuals that work in them, and the missions for which the organizations exist.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PARADIGM

One of the premises upon which this research rests is that traditional theoretical approaches using organizational theory, which are often employed to better understand organizational behavior, are ineffective as a framework for studying managerialism and its effects on social justice nonprofits. While organizational theory, particularly Neoinstitutionalism and Resources Dependency Theory, provide insight into why the managerialist shift has and continues to occur, neither framework adequately allows for a critical exploration of the experiences of staff members within organizations and how managerialism impacts their abilities to work within the confines of this emergent organizational structure. Furthermore, analyses of organizational behavior rooted in organizational theory has historically relied on more positivistic, quantitative approaches, which, as Alvesson and Deetz (2000) note, have a tendency to lead to superficial and far removed analyses of the realities of organizational practices and the every day experiences of the individuals of which organizations are comprised.

As such, a different, more critical approach was deemed necessary. Such an approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of managerialism, and supports the various aspects of the overall inquiry, which, in addition to the primary research questions, includes an attempt to understand the larger social change implications of social justice organizations embracing managerialist tendencies. To meet these goals this dissertation employed a critical research paradigm, rooted specifically in a Constructivist Grounded Theory.

Critical Research Methods

The term critical research denotes a broad research paradigm consisting of various theoretical perspectives as well as a range of research methodologies that are concerned with

interrogating assumptions that inform beliefs and actions (Eikenberry, 2009) and "questioning established social orders, dominating practices, ideologies, discourses, and institutions" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 1). Typically, critical research embraces and encourages the use of qualitative, or "interpretive" methodologies aimed at the inductive examination of how realities are socially constructed. This includes actively exploring how research participants make meaning out of experiences, ideas, and practices, and situating the participant's perspective as the central focus of analysis. Although these are often the goals of qualitative research broadly, qualitative methods that embrace a critical orientation, particularly those within the social science tradition, are focused on thinking critically about one's research inquiries through the lens of critical theory (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Citing Brookfield (1987), Alvesson and Deetz (2007) explain that engaging in critical research in this way requires employing a form of critical thinking that includes:

> "Identifying and challenging assumptions behind ordinary ways of perceiving, conceiving, and acting; recognizing the influence of history, culture, and social positioning on beliefs and actions; imaging and exploring extraordinary alternatives, ones that may disrupt routines and established orders; and being appropriately skeptical about any knowledge or solution that claims to be the only truth or alternative"

This supports a critical social science research that engages in critique rather than criticism, a critique that fosters "an examination of social institutions, ideologies, discourses (ways of constructing and reasoning about the world through the use of a particular language), and forms of consciousness in terms of representation and domination…[and allows for the exploration of] if and how these constrain human imagination, autonomy, and decision making" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p.8).

Furthermore, it contributes to a research process that serves to "make the world visible" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p.5) through a set of interpretive practices that value

emancipatory and empowering values (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Qualitative research methods in the critical vain explicitly serve a political purpose aimed at liberation (Lather, 2007), and such methods allow for the development of what Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2007) refer to as a space based on "critical, collaborative, and dialogical work" (p.5). Such a space encourages the break down of the researcher/participant dichotomy as well as the power dynamics that accompany this hierarchical relationship, and allow for the processes of critique, resistance, and empowerment to begin to occur (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

Rationale for Using a Critical Research Paradigm

The primary objective of this research is to resituate how the phenomenon of managerialism as it relates to social justice nonprofits is understood by exploring the unique experiences of staff members throughout the organizational hierarchy. The study is specifically concerned with how staff members understand and ascribe meaning to the specific approaches and practices employed by their organizations, and the function of these practices in the work lives of these individuals. Through an exploration of the perspectives of staff members from three unique social just nonprofit organizations, it is also hoped that a better understanding of managerialist practices specifically will emerge, and that greater understanding of the systemic impact of this trend on social justice nonprofit organizations will made apparent. Given the nature of these objectives, a critical research approach, as described above, is deemed an effective alternative paradigm from which these questions can begin to be explored.

By including employees from all levels of organizational staff structure, this research enables a more holistic understanding of the environment within which the participating organizations function. Furthermore, research that has explored the role and/or impact of managerialism on nonprofit organizations has tended to focus on executive level staff members

(Executive Directors, CEOs, etc.) or members of the governance structure (Board of Directors, Advisory Board Members). This study aimed to make visible the experiences of a range of staff members, including staff in middle management and frontline positions. The decentralization of the voices of staff members outside of executive and leadership roles, despite the critical role they play in operationalizing the activities of an organization, contributes to the marginalization of the experiences of these individuals' experiences in research. As such, a critical research perspective, with its focus on re-centering lesser-heard perspectives (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008) was considered particularly appropriate for this particular study.

A secondary goal of this study was to begin to understand the implications of social justice organizations embracing managerialist tendencies. As Deetz and Alvesson, 2008 observe, a primary purpose of critical social research consists of "challenging rather than confirming that which is already established…disrupting rather than reproducing cultural traditions and conventions [and]…encouraging productive dissention rather than taking surface consensus as a point of departure" (p.9). This perspective aligns with the goal of trying to depart from the established way of conducting research in this area by providing a new perspective that challenges the conventions about the managerialist tendencies of nonprofits that have been established through research that embraces a more positivist approach. To meet these goals a qualitative case study informed by the theoretical insights of constructivist grounded theory was employed.

Research Questions

Research on managerialism and nonprofits typically falls into one of three primary categories: research on the causes of the phenomenon, the structures and processes by which organizations become more managerial, and the effects of this trend (Maier, et.al, 2016).

This dissertation is driven by the goal of better understanding managerialism within the context of social justice nonprofit organizations, specifically as it relates to the latter two categories. By examining the broader context within which social justice operates from a range of staff member perspectives, the study focused on a) ascertaining how managerialism emerges within the organizational context; b) the relationship of managerialist processes to other types of organizational processes and: c) understanding the impact of managerialism on staff, clients, the organizations more generally. With these aims in mind, this research answers the following questions:

1) What are the environmental contexts within with social justice organizations operate within?

a) How does the environmental context of these organizations impact the kinds of approaches and practices these organizations embrace?

b) In what ways does the environmental context contribute to the emergence and adoption of managerialism by SJNOS?

2) How do the practices of social justice nonprofits align with stated organizational missions and goals?

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

To answer the identified research questions, a qualitative Case Study approach informed by Constructivist Grounded Theory data collection and analytical techniques will be employed. Constructivist Grounded Theory is, in and of itself, a qualitative methodology. However, it will be utilized in this research not as the primary, singular method of collecting and analyzing data, but rather as a theoretical and methodological perspective to inform both data collection and analysis. This will be done within the greater context of a Case Study approach, which is often used when a research inquiry is aimed at investigating a contemporary social phenomenon in depth (Yin, 2014).

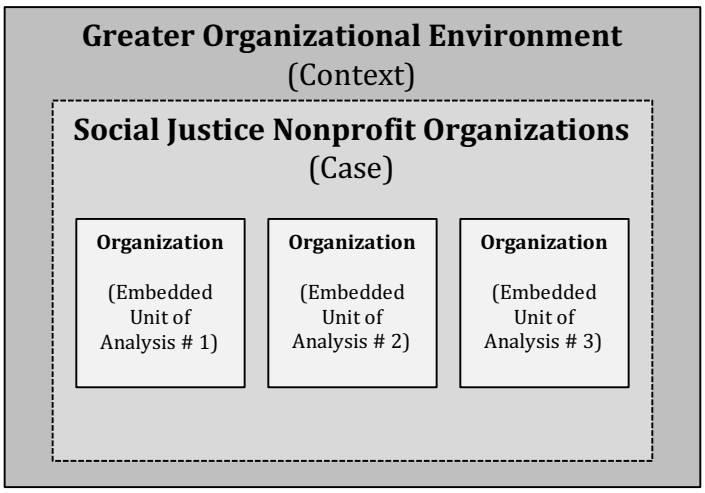
In addition to other empirical approaches, case study research allows for the close observation of a particular occurrence in its "real world" context. The method is particularly well suited to both exploratory research and to investigations of organizational processes (Yin, 2014), of which this study is both. The study will utilize a "single-embedded" case study design, which grounds several units of analysis within the confines of a bounded case that is further situated within a greater context (Yin, 2014) (see figure 1)

Yin (2014) identifies several distinct circumstances under which a "single case study" design is an appropriate choice. This study meets two of these criteria—a "critical" case and "common" case (Yin, 2014). A critical case requires the case to be selected based on a set of theoretical propositions of interest. According to Yin (2014), "the theory should have specified a clear set of circumstances within which its propositions are believed to be true. The single case then can be used to determine whether the propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant" (p.51). The research questions of interest in this study are based on the theoretical supposition that managerialism inhibits social justice nonprofit organizations from conducting themselves in ways that enable the organizations to remain true to their missions and goals, and that unintended consequences result from having to exist and operate within ever increasing managerialist environments. By selecting a single

embedded case study design, as described above, the study has the potential to "contribute to knowledge and theory building by conforming, challenging, or extending the theory" (Yin, 2014, p.51) of managerialism that has been put forth.

Secondly, the research at hand seeks to better understand the occurrences and conditions within an everyday context, or what Yin (2014) refers to as a "common" rationale. This study's focus on the practices and processes of social justice organizations, and how they are impacted by the broader organizational environment within which the organizations are situated, lends itself to this type of design. The "case" is thus defined as the set of organizational approaches and processes undertaken by social justice organizations. Embedded within the case are several units of analysis, which in this instance are three distinct social justice nonprofit organizations. The issue of interest, the organizational environment that social justice organizations are situated within, serves as the greater context within which the overall case is situated (see figure 1).

Figure 1 [4]



A single case study with multiple embedded units of analysis allows for several levels of rich analysis, which also makes the design particularly suitable for this study. Data can be analyzed within each subunit individually, between each of the subunits, and across the subunits as a whole (Baxter &

[4] Derived from Yin's (2014) "types of designs for Case Studies" matrix

Jack, 2008). This will prove especially useful as it will enable the researcher to examine the impact of managerialism from multiple levels, leading to a better understanding the intricacies and nuances of this trend both within and across organizations, as well as the trend overall.

Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology and Analysis

This study utilized a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach to collecting and analyzing data, within the context of a Case Study. Constructivist Grounded Theory is a derivative of Grounded Theory—a methodology developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1976) in the field of sociology to provide an alternative to the use of sociological theories they believed to be ill fitted for the research questions and populations upon which their research focused (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A Grounded Theory approach is premised on the idea that theories should ultimately be "grounded" in the data collected, particularly in the actions, interactions, and social processes of people rather than the a priori approach typically utilized by researchers in the social sciences. (Creswell, 2007). Grounded Theory is, therefore, not about rigorously testing preconceived theories. Instead, it focuses on "discovering" theory from data that has been systematically gathered and analyzed, and is rooted in gaining understanding how people interpret and understand their realities. The goal is not necessarily to test hypotheses. Rather, it is to generate hypotheses from theory that has emerged directly from data, hypotheses that can then be used to conduct future research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is accomplished through both data collection as well as analysis, making Grounded Theory both a research methodology as well as a product of inquiry (Charmaz, 2005).

Despite its focus on qualitative methods and theory generation from data, Grounded Theory, as Glaser and Strauss conceived of it, has often been criticized for being too prescriptive and systematic, and relying too heavily on positivistic approaches (Charmaz, 2005, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Consequently, several variations of Grounded Theory have emerged since the inception of the methodology (see, for example, Corbin and Strauss, 1990) to counter these criticisms, perhaps the most notable being Charmaz's development Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT).

Constructivist Grounded Theory emerged as a popular method in the fields of nursing, education, and psychology, and is often utilized by researchers who embrace Constructivism—a paradigm that rejects the notion of an objective social reality (Charmaz, 2005; Mills, et. al, 2006a). Constructivism implies a relativist ontological perspective along with subjectivist epistemological viewpoint (Mills, et. al, 2006b, p.9). Ontologically, Constructivism considers reality to be a socially constructed idea that is both varied and numerous, and directly connected to the interpretations, experiences, and social positions of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers who embrace this ontological perspective believe that meaning is historically and socially derived. Consequently, social interactions and the role they play in the lives of research participants are centralized throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2007).

Epistemologically, the researcher is repositioned "as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning" (Mills, et. al, 2006a, p.26). He or she recognizes the explicit and implicit roles he or she plays in the research process, and understands and takes into account the a researcher's personal, cultural, social, and historical experiences shape this process from start to finish (Creswell, 2007; Mills, et. al, 2006a). Furthermore, there is a conscious consideration of the reciprocal relationship that exists between the researcher and participants, who together, are participating in the "co-construction of meaning" (Mills, et. al, 2006b, p.9).

There are two primary distinctions between Constructivist Grounded Theory and earlier the earlier iterations of the methodology put forth by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later, Strauss and Corbin (1990), that are worth noting. Unlike the previous versions upon which it is built, CGT uses Constructivism (as described above) to inform all aspects of the data collection, analysis, and writing processes. This is characterized by an emphasis on the subjective rather than objective nature of reality, and the co-construction of knowledge that is undertaken by the researcher and his or her participants.

Secondly, CGT diverges from traditional Grounded Theory in that doesn't adhere to the notion that data and theories can actually be "discovered" in the ways that Glaser and Strauss' (1967) methodology presumes. Rather, as Charmaz (2006) notes, the tenet of subjectivity inherent in

Constructivism dictates that researchers are "part of the world that we study and the data we collect. We *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices" (p. 10). In other words, the researcher is not at all disconnected from the research subject (as is presumed in more objectively based methodologies), the reality (or realities) in which the research processes is situated, or his or her own subjective reality that informs the way he/she approaches the research process. Unlike other forms of Grounded Theory, it is the fundamental ideas that inform and guide the data collection and analyses processes.

Constructivist Grounded Theory Data Collection and Analysis

Like Grounded Theory, CGT relies on the idea of collecting "rich data", which can be collected through a variety of methods, including ethnography, observations, intensive interviewing, textual analysis, or any combination of these. However, regardless of the methods used, Charmaz (2006) cautions against thinking about one's choice of methods as having the ability to provide automatic insight into the phenomenon being observed. Rather, the method of choice simply provides a tool for the researcher to begin observing and understanding the phenomenon informing the research inquiry.

Unlike other forms of qualitative methods, research questions and conceptual ideas of interest are viewed as simply a way to commence the research process. From the standpoint of CGT, these pre-conceived ideas serve simply as points of departure. Accordingly, the goal is to use research questions to help develop ideas rather than limit them, and as such, concepts of interest and importance are developed from studying the data and engaging in various levels of analysis from the beginning of the research process (Charmaz, 2006).

Consequently, in a study informed by CGT, the process of data collection can shift or change at any time based upon the ideas that are developing from the data. This does not suggest that research questions are discarded based upon nascent ideas, or that prior data collection methods are abandoned mid study. Instead, it calls for a flexible data collection plan guided by emergent concepts, one that holds the potential of advancing, not stifling evolving ideas and concepts (Charmaz, 2006). For example, this could take the form of subsequent interviews with participants that utilize interview protocols based on the data

that emerged from the first set of interviews, employing another method entirely such as observations, or adding an additional data analysis technique such as Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005).

In a Constructivist Grounded Theory study data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. The primary method of data analysis coding, or the process of categorizing and applying analytical meaning to data with the goal of raising data to conceptual level (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Unlike other types of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, codes are not preconceived. Rather, they are formed through studying the data closely, a process that allows for the link between data collection and emergent theories to take begin to take shape (Charmaz, 2006). Coding is typically divided into two main phases: initial coding and focused coding. Initial coding adheres closely to the data and attempts to aid the researcher in viewing each piece of data in terms of actions (Charmaz, 2006). Data is coded line-by-line and expressed as actions, which, according to Charmaz (2006), "curbs our tendencies to make conceptual leaps and to adopt extant theories *before* we have done the necessary analytical work" (p.48)

Focused coding is the second phase in Constructivist Grounded Theory data analysis. This stage is defined as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57) with the goal of determining the adequacy of the codes that were developed during the initial coding phase. In both stages, coding is guided by analytic strategies that consist of asking questions and making comparisons. Asking questions of the data helps the researcher probe more deeply into the data, to begin to develop preliminary answers about what participants have said, and to think critically about and become familiarized with the data that has been collected (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Other data analysis techniques include memo writing and Situational Analysis. Both methods will be utilized in this study and explored in greater depth in a subsequent section.

Suitability of Constructivist Grounded Theory for This Study

Although a range of qualitative methodologies can be employed to explore the research questions with which this study is concerned, it is believed that a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach was especially well suited for this particular research. As Creswell (2008) observes, Grounded Theory is an effective approach under the following conditions:

- When a suitable theory does not exist to explain a particular process
- When theories may be outlined in the existing literature, but the samples and populations upon which these theories were tested are different from the population of interest to the researcher
- When existing theories do not address the variables of interest in a particular study
- When a theory is "needed to explain how people are experiencing a phenomenon" (p.66)

As was stated earlier, the suitability of the organizational theories typically used to understand the concept of managerialism and how it relates to social justice nonprofits is questionable. Although these theories have been effectively used to explain the organizational change that nonprofits have undergone in relation to managerialism, the theories do not assist in shedding light on the impact of such changes on the organizations themselves or the individuals who comprise the organizations. Thus, they are limited in helping us to understand how program level staff experience managerialism (the primary inquiry with which this study is concerned), and as such, constitute an acceptable reason for employing a Grounded Theory approach (Creswell, 2008).

Moreover, Constructivist Grounded Theory is considered an applicable methodology for studies exploring issues of social justice, the meta-framework within which this study is ultimately situated. Research concerned with social justice pays close attention to issues of power, equity, equality, hierarchical structures, democratic processes, and individual and collective rights. An emphasis is also placed on understanding the centrality of the interplay of these concepts (Charmaz, 2005). Charmaz (2005) contends that social justice research is ultimately about "exploring tensions between complicity and consciousness, choice and constrain, indifference and compassion, inclusion and exclusion, poverty and privilege, and barriers and opportunities…[and] taking a critical stance towards actions, organizations, and social institutions" (p.510). Using this conceptualization of social justice research, she believes that Constructivist Grounded Theory, with its focus on defining latent processes as well as explicit actions, is particularly well suited for studies formulated in this vein. Furthermore, it allows for the conjoining of critical inquiry and Grounded Theory processes, which Charmaz (2005) believes

"demands going deeper into he phenomenon itself and its sustained location in the world" in unique and productive ways that serve to enhance both social justice research inquiries as well as Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology.

Study Procedures

The principal goal of this study is to better understand the role that managerialism plays in assisting or hindering social justice nonprofit organizations in meeting their missions and goals. By exploring this question from the standpoint of a range of staff members at each organizational level at multiple organizations, it is hoped that the study will begin to provide an empirical appraisal of how managerialism impacts the work social justice nonprofits overall. To begin to answer these questions, Case Study informed by Constructivist Grounded Theory data collection and analysis techniques will be conducted.

The primary method of data collection was the "intensive interview"; a commonly employed data collection method used in qualitative research generally, and Case Study research specifically (Yin, 2014). Interviews were conducted with staff members at each organizational level at three distinct social justices nonprofit organizations located within a large, metropolitan city in the United States. The data collection process and specific interview protocol will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Study Sample

This study employed a purposive sampling approach in order to ensure the selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomena of interest (Patton, 2005). Specifically, criterion sampling and convenient sampling methods were used. Criterion sampling consists of choosing cases according to a specific set of established criteria (Palinkas, Horowitz, Green, Wisdom, & Hoagwood, 2015). This approach was used to determine which organizations would participate in the study. Convenience sampling, which refers to a method of sampling based on the availability of participants to the researcher (Palinkas, et.al, 2015), was used recruit staff members from each of the three participating organizations.

Three social justice nonprofit organizations whose annual revenues are between $5,000,000 and $15,000,000 (details explaining the choice of these criteria will be provided in the subsequent section) were selected for participation in the study. Interviews were conducted with approximately 12-15 staff members at each organization for a total 46 study participants. The exact number of participants varied depending on the total number of staff members at each organization and the dispersion of staff across organizational departments. In an attempt to ensure parity across the participants in each of the three participating organizations, an organizational assessment of each organization was conducted to determine all of the positions occupied, as well as the individual departments each position fell within. Although staff structure differed across the organizations, to ensure a degree of uniformity in analysis the researcher gauged for similarities among staff positions across the three organizations and grouped these positions according to role and responsibility, as well as staff position within the organizational hierarchy. Every attempt was made to ensure the types of positions were equally distributed across the organizations. However, interest in participating in the study was not shared equally by people across positions, and some organizations wound up with more of one type of staff member than others.[5]

Determining Organizations to Recruit for Participation

The National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), administered through the Urban Institute, maintains an active database of current, registered nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Data is collected on organizations using the IRS 990 form, the official form nonprofits are required to complete to officially register with the IRS and to provide current financial information. Using the advanced query tool (DataWeb) from this database, the names of all of the social justice organizations in the city where the research was taking place were generated in order to produce a list of eligible organizations. To develop this list, the following criteria was inputted into the query tool:

1) Organizations that fit the determination of a social justice nonprofit organization (outlined in the next section)

[5] The following chapter provides descriptive information on each of the types of positions represented in the study as well as the breakdown of participants by role

2) Organizations with annual revenue of at least $5,000,000 to $15,000,000.

Social Justice Classification

The IRS uses the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) to classify nonprofits into 26 major categories, with subcategories being used to further classify organizations based on organizational purpose, activity, or population served. Social justice nonprofit organizations are not a designated category under the NTEE, but instead fall under many categories, including but not limited to, Human Services, Health, Mental Health/Crisis Intervention, and Education.

Research on nonprofits, particularly research on the for-profit tendencies of organizations typically analyzes specific NTEE categories, for example the study of Human Services, Health Care, or Educational organizations (see, for example, Young, 1998; Sloan, 1998). However, the heterogeneity of the nonprofit sector, both within and across categories, subsequently makes generalization of organizational trends difficult. Therefore, research that aspires to examine organizations whose goals are rooted, however narrowly or broadly, in working to achieve social justice might be better served by an inter-categorical approach rather than the intra-categorical approach that is currently used by nonprofit organizational scholars. Such an approach broadens the lens through which we understand the work of social justice nonprofits by creating a social justice category in and of itself, and thus, a more inclusive, less homogenous unit of analysis.

In 2013, the researcher conducted a pilot study to examine the relationship between managerialism and organizational size among social justice nonprofits in the city where the research was taking place. Using Content Analysis, a social justice categorization, as described above, was created to conduct this prior research. To develop this new, less heterogeneous category of organization (the primary unit of analysis in the study), each of the 26 major NTEE categories, as well as the subcategories, was assessed to determine how well each individual category fit within the definition of social justice employed in the research. Primary categories under the NTEE are focused on broad areas of emphasis, such as Education, Health Care, and Mental Health & Crisis Intervention. The focus area of each primary

category was assessed and evaluated for its potential to include organizations that focus specifically on serving historically underserved or disenfranchised populations. It was determined that 17 of the 26 primary categories met the criteria to be included in a broader social justice category.

The NTEE breaks down primary categories further into subcategories that focus more explicitly on organizational function/purpose. Although some subcategories such as "Alliances and Advocacy" are included in each of the 26 major categories, most are specific to the primary category's area of focus. Specific subcategories include "Substance Abuse Prevention" (broader category: Mental Health & Crisis Intervention), "Youth Violence Prevention" (broader category: Crime & Legal Related), and "Reproductive Health Care" (broader category: Health Care). The definitions/descriptions of each of the subcategories within the 17 primary categories chosen for inclusion were also carefully evaluated as well for their potential to include organizations whose goals/purposes/functions were to respond to social issues/problems or serve individuals from typically disadvantaged populations. The content analysis conducted on the primary categories and the subcategories resulted in a singular Social Justice category, which included 17 major NTEE categories and 145 subcategories.

Organization Query

As was done with the pilot study (Willner, 2013) the 17 major NTEE categories and 145 subcategories were inputted into the query tool provided by the NCCS. Additionally, an annual income classification of $5,000,000 to $15,000,000 was included. Once a list of organizations was produced, each was assessed for a working website. The purpose of this was twofold. First, organizational websites often provide a great deal of information about the organization and its activities, including details regarding an organization's missions, visions, and goals, and procedures. (Tuckman, Chatterjee, & Muha, 2004). As such, working websites were important in identifying each organization's mission and vision statement—a necessary component to determining if each organization returned by the query is, in fact, a social justice nonprofit (according to the definition of SJNO employed in this study). Secondly, websites often provide information on organizational structure. This typically includes information about departments

and staff members, which is important in assessing the overall structure of the organization and for identifying staff members to participate in the study

Akin to the process utilized in the 2013 pilot study (Willner, 2013) the mission and vision statements of each organization with a working website were carefully evaluated to ensure a social justice emphasis, based upon the definition of SJNOs described earlier. Organizational structure was also determined during this assessment. Inclusion as an SJNO required the explicit identification of the organization's target population as one or more historically oppressed or disenfranchised groups based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability status, and/or age. Organizations that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the final list of organizations. Furthermore, the following organizational structures, due to their unique funding streams and structures, were excluded: membership organizations, national organizations that are based in the LA area, subsidiaries of larger organizations, international organizations that are based in the LA area, and foundations whose primary purpose is to provide funds other nonprofit organizations.

Income Justification

The income parameters ($5,000,000 to $15,000,000) used to run the query are based upon findings from the pilot research conducted in 2013, which indicated the presence of an income threshold when determining the degree of managerialism exhibited by social justice nonprofits. According to the findings, which examined organizations in five stratified income groups, changes in practices and behaviors related to managerialism appeared to begin to occur within social justice nonprofits when monies in excess of $5,000,000 we accumulated (Willner, 2013). As was done in the pilot study, the income parameter will again be capped at $15,000,000. It is believed that a difference of $10,000,000 among potential organizations will wield enough variation among organizations to enable comparative analysis among participants to occur during the data analysis procedures, but will not result in so much variation between organizations that a comparison becomes impossible[6].

[6] A note on determining organizational size: Although it remains unclear in the literature on nonprofits what determines a "large" organization, income is often used, both formally and informally, as a predictor of

Organization Identification and Participant Recruitment

Using the query process described, a list of viable organizations has already been generated. The query produced a total of 125 possible organizations. Of these, 62 were eligible for participation (see eligibility criteria above). A basic histogram was used to determine the variability in income distribution among the eligible organizations, which led to the identification of three separate income categories within the broader range of $5,000,000 and $15,000,000—category 1: $5,000,000-$8,000,000, category 2: $8,000,000-$11,000,000, and category 3: $11,000,000-$15,000.000. Participation will be limited to one organization from each of the three income categories for a total of three organizations.

The researcher drew upon existing relationships between herself and staff members at several of the eligible organizations to invite study participation. This was done through email, with follow up phone calls made as necessary. The study was described initially via email (see Appendix A for email transcript), and each initial contact was explicitly informed of what participation entailed and how involvement might benefit the organization.

For two of the three organizations the initial contact was a program level staff member with whom the researcher had a personal relationship. After explaining the study in detail to these staff members, each agreed to speak with a higher-level staff member regarding the organization's participation. In one case, a staff member in the organization's communication department who also sat on the organization's leadership team granted approval. In the second instance the initial contact consulted with the Chief Financial Officer of the organization about participation. It was this individual that eventually approved the request.

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organizational size. There is an assumption that organizations with sizable budgets (which includes revenues and assets) have a greater capacity to devote resources to programs (Sanders & McClellan, 2012), which includes staff members to maintain and implement these programs. Furthermore, it is assumed that greater financial resources allows for increased organizational capacity, which can often include more robust programs, or the existence of multiple programs. It is likely that smaller organizations that administer programs of some kind have at least one program level staff member. However, organizations with higher revenues, with their abilities to devote greater resources to program development and maintenance, may be more likely to have more developed organizational structures, which includes an increased number of staff members at varying levels of the organizational hierarchy.

Contact with the third organization was made through a relationship the researcher had with a board member at the organization. This individual connected the researcher with the Senior Program Administrator, who agreed to pitch the study to the CEO. A conversation between the researcher and the CEO was arranged, during which the researcher's intentions in conducting research of this kind and the details of study were discussed. The CEO agreed to include the organization in the study.

Similar approaches to recruit staff members to participate were employed at each of the organizations. This approach consisted of designating a "point person" who would be responsible for reaching out to staff members to gauge their interest in sitting for an interview. At two of the organizations the initial contact became the point person. In one of these cases, the researcher consulted with this person to determine whom she would reach out to at various levels of the organizational structure. Given the large size of the staff (approximately 350 employees), it was determined that this approach would likely yield the best results as it was not possible to reach out to every person to request their involvement. Potential participants were determined based on whom the point person had some kind of relationship with. The role of the point person as a program level staff member in the development and communications department meant that initial requests were made mostly of lower level and middle management staff. Access to the leadership and upper level staff members came only with the completion of a successful interview with the Development Director, who also was a member of the organization's leadership team. This conversation led to introductions to other leadership team members, which eventually led to access to members of the executive leadership team (CEO, COO, etc.). In the majority of the cases the point person made an "email introduction" between the researcher and the potential participant. After the introduction was made interviews were scheduled with interested participants. The same process took place to secure interviews with leadership and executive level staff. However, in this case staff members who had already sat for interviews made the introductions, as they were willing to connect the researcher to other members of the leadership and executive teams.

A similar approach was taken at the second organization where the point person was the initial contact. In this case recruitment took a slightly different form because the size of the staff was

dramatically smaller (approximately 40 employees). Upon receiving approval from the CFO, the point person used an all-staff meeting to describe the study. Staff members were given the opportunity to "sign up" to participate. Those who indicated being interested included contact information, which was eventually passed on to the researcher. Email contact was then made with each of the interested staff members and interviews were arranged.

The point person at the third organization was the Senior Program Director. Upon receiving approval from the CEO, he agreed to email all of the members of the leadership team regarding the study. The researcher was included on these emails and a follow up email from the researcher to each of the staff members was sent after the initial email was sent out. The majority of the participants at this organization came from this initial process. In cases where the participant had staff members who reported to him or her, the researcher asked to be connected to these employees in order to secure more interviews. The remaining interviews were secured through these connections.

Data Collection

In-Depth Interviews

The primary method of data collection for this study was intensive, semi-structured interviews with staff members at three social justice nonprofit organizations located in a large, metropolitan city in the United States. Intensive interviews are commonly employed data collection method in Case Study research that allows the researcher to delve deeply into a subject or an experience with an individual to explore actions and processes (Yin, 2014). The method is highly appropriate for an interpretive inquiry, as this study is (Charmaz, 2006). Although intensive interviews are not the only form of data collection utilized in Case Study research (Yin, 2014), when Constructivist Grounded Theory approach is utilized in conjunction with this methodology, interviews are often the primary source of gathering information from participants because of their interpretive potential (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008).

To conduct the interviews, an interview protocol (see Appendix B) made up of several pre-determined, open-ended questions was utilized to prompt participants to begin thinking about their experiences regarding working within the organization (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Interviews

took the form of what Yin (2014) refers to as "guided conversations rather than [highly] structured inquiries" (p110), a common protocol format in both Case Study research as well as studies employing a Constructivist Grounded Theory perspective. Although participants were asked to discuss specific topics, the questions were broad enough to elicit open-ended conversation and discussion (Charmaz, 2006) about what each participant considers important or relevant to the overall topics of discussion, allowing for a more interpretive inquiry and, subsequently, analysis (Charmaz, 2006). In many cases, the interviews began with the researcher asking the participant to describe their role at the organization, which often led to an open ended conversation touching on a range of topics related to their jobs and their experiences.

While a primary goal of the study was to examine managerialism, participants were not asked about this concept specifically. Rather, questions focused on individual experiences within ant the environmental and organizational contexts, and were geared towards stimulating conversation about how participants understand the goals of their organization, how they believe their organization go about trying to meet these goals (organizational processes), their unique experiences as a staff member at their organization, and their perspectives regarding the organizational culture overall. The tenets of managerialism discussed in the literature review will were used loosely as sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2014) during data analysis.

Researcher Bias in Data Collection

In traditional Grounded Theory methodology, researchers are warned of the dangers of placing preconceived ideas upon their participants through overly structured data collection methods that may potentially bias findings and impede the process of emergent theoretical constructs (Creswell, 2007; Glaser, 1978). Alternatively, a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach *acknowledges* that bias is inherent in the research process, and that it is virtually impossible to enter a research situation without a degree of theoretical sensitivity and preconceived hypotheses regarding the phenomenon in question. Thus, unlike traditional Grounded Theory approaches, attention is paid to biases that researchers bring to research project, and the Constructivist Grounded Theorist is encouraged to understand how these predispositions potentially influence the both data collection and analysis. As Charmaz (2006) observes:

Neither observer nor observed come to a scene untouched by the world. Researchers and research participants make assumptions about what is real, possess stocks of knowledge, occupy social statuses, and pursue purposes that influence their respective views and actions in the presence of each other.

In the case of this study, which is about how the environmental contexts within which nonprofits are situated impact the experiences of staff members, the researcher holds implicit and explicit biases that needed to be considered. First, she brings with her a disciplinary perspective derived in the social sciences and honed through two specific lenses: social work and critical social science research methodology. Secondly, having worked as a program level staff member in numerous managerialist social justice nonprofit organizations, the researcher has experiential knowledge that is intrinsic to her understanding of the phenomenon in question. These perspectives inherently influence the all aspects of the study, and was incumbent upon the researcher to consider (before and during data collection and analysis) how these perspectives may have caused her to look for certain processes and possibilities in the data (Charmaz, 2006).

The open-ended, semi-structured nature of the interview protocol helped in combatting some of this bias. Questions were broad and open-ended enough to elicit unanticipated and unencumbered discussion (Charmaz, 2006), but focus specifically on staff members' experiences with the goal of exploring the participants' experiences with their organizations. Furthermore, consistent memo writing (detailed in a subsequent section) was used to encourage a constant process of reflection in relation to these biases and how they impacted data collection and analysis.

Protection of Participants

Staff members were informed that involvement in the study is voluntary, even if the organization as a whole had decided to participate. Participant's decisions to sit for an interview were not made publically available, nor was any individual's involvement, or decision to not participate, be discussed with any other staff within the organization. This is to ensure that no staff member experienced adverse or undesirable consequences as a result of their decision (Yin, 2014). Individuals who agreed to participate were required to complete an informed consent form before participation commenced. This occurred at

the time of the interview, before questioning began. Participants, once again, were briefed on the purpose of the study. They were informed of their rights as participants, which were detailed in the consent form (see Appendix C for copy of form). They were also provided with the researcher's contact information as well as the contact information for the Office of Protection of Research Subjects at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted using Constructivist Grounded Theory analytic techniques, which included data coding and memo writing (Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2006).

Coding

As was previously mentioned, the primary data analysis methods employed in Constructivist Grounded Theory studies involves the coding of data and is divided into two stages: initial coding and focused coding. Each interview was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Upon the completion of each transcription, the data will be entered into Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software package used to organize and sort data. Using this software, analysis began with an open, line-by-line coding procedure. This consisted naming portions of the data using gerunds, or action words. The purpose of open line-by-line coding is to "stay close" to the words of the participant to ensure the researcher is not labeling data with any preconceived ideas or concepts that may skew the analysis further in the process (Charmaz, 2014). Fifteen transcripts were open coded, at which point conceptual saturation was beginning to occur.

Upon completion of the open coding process, a process of focused coding commenced. As was previously mentioned, the goal of focused coding is to determine the adequacy of the codes that were developed during the initial coding stage. During this process, open codes were grouped according to conceptual and analytical similarities. This processes yielded approximately 20 focused codes that were applied to the entirety of the interviews.

Memo Writing

In addition to coding data, the researcher engaged consistent memo writing, a signature Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis technique. Memos are records written by the researcher to help make sense of the data analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Charmaz, 2007). The process occurs at all stages of analysis, and is designed to help further analysis and stimulate thinking about the data. They tend to be informal pieces of writing that help the researcher to engage further in "open data exploration, identifying/developing the properties and dimensions of concepts/categories, making comparisons and asking questions, elaborating the paradigm, and developing an [emerging] storyline" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 118). Furthermore, they serve as a way to help the researcher to be come more fully engaged in the data, to further develop ideas, and hone any subsequent data collection that might occur (Charmaz, 2008). Additionally, memos can be written about the actual data collection processes (interviews, observations, etc.) as well as the analysis procedures the researcher is employing. Both serve as way to help the researcher refine and think analytically about conceptual ideas of importance to the data and the study overall (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 118). The researcher engaged in memo writing after each interview, and throughout the analysis process. After each transcript was coded thoughts regarding the data were recorded, conceptual ideas were explicated, and comparisons across the interviews were made when relevant. Memos were used assist the researcher make sense of the processes were undertaken throughout the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Charmaz, 2006), to assess for potential biases in data collection and analysis, and to encourage analytical thinking about the data at all stages.

Theoretical Considerations for Data Analysis

Managerialism, the theoretical framework that informs this study, was applied during the data analysis procedures. Although it was incumbent upon the researcher to ensure that her personal bias (which results partly from her critical theoretical orientation) did not influence the how data analyzed, ideas derived managerialism was used as an analytic concept to guide the data mining process. Furthermore, the tenets of managerialism were used to construct a framework for understanding the experiences and perspectives of the participants in relation to this concept. Since managerialism partly

informs the research questions, it is appropriate to employ these ideas as a conceptual framework through which the data was analyzed. However, great care will be taken to ensure that utilizing this concept in the analysis process does not divert the researcher away from seeing other emergent ideas and frameworks that are being used by participants to describe their experiences.

Validation and Reliability

The concept of validity in qualitative research is defined as "a commonsense way to refer to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106). Creswell (2007) and others observe that many perspectives regarding how to determine validity in qualitative research exist (Maxwell, 1992). These approaches range from the application of positivist quantitative conceptions of validity and reliability to discounting the notion of validity in qualitative research entirely (Creswell, 2007).

In examining the research on validity and reliability within qualitative research paradigms, Creswell and Miller (2000) outline several techniques (derived from other researchers) for determining what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the "trustworthiness" of a study. The authors suggest that researchers utilize at least two of these techniques to control for bias throughout the research process. To ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher will take the explicit steps of clarifying her personal bias from the outset, and ensuring dependability/reliability through the constant documentation of all research procedures undertaken.

Researcher Bias in Data Analysis Procedures

Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss bias as the possibility that researchers are honing in on specific data that fits with his or her particular theoretical orientation or preconceived ideas about the participants and the phenomenon in question. As was previously stated, the researcher holds several biases that need to be considered and consistently addressed throughout the research process. These include in-depth extensive experiential knowledge of social justice nonprofit organizations as well as theoretical and disciplinary orientations (Critical Theory and Social Work). To ensure these biases are not becoming overly present in the analysis procedures, memo writing (as detailed above) will be employed.

Through this reflective process, the researcher will continuously assess the role that her preconceived ideas, if any, are playing in identifying themes and domains in the data. Furthermore, staying "close" to the data in both the initial and focused coding phases of analysis will help to ensure that the researcher is staying true to the experience of the participants has they were described.

Dependability/Reliability

Dependability and reliability are used in qualitative studies to determine the extent to which study findings can be replicated in further research. In qualitative studies, the concern is not about reliability as it is defined in quantitative research. Rather, the goal is to determine if the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is accomplished through constant documentation of the processes undertaken by the researcher, including all data collection and analysis procedures, as well as the observations that occur throughout these processes. To ensure dependability and reliability in this study, the researcher developed what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to as an audit trail. All of the processes undertaken during each stage of the study were explicitly documented. These records help to ensure the record of all processes undertaken, as well as the rationale for any decisions made during both data collection and analysis.

Study Limitations

There primary limitation inherent in this research is the bias of the researcher, who has significant experience working in social justice nonprofit organizations, and has developed a specific theoretical orientation towards examining these organizations from an empirical perspective. As such, there is a risk that this perspective could be too heavily relied upon in both data collection as well as data analysis procedures, causing a potential threat to the validity of the study. As was previously mentioned, the researcher took great care in addressing this limitation by consistently engaging in the reflective process, specifically in the form of memo writing.

CHAPTER 5

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Before addressing the primary research question with which this study is concerned, descriptive data regarding the organizations and the staff members that participated in the study will be provided. A total of 43 staff members at three different urban social justice nonprofit organizations agreed to participate in this case study. Organizations were selected based on the criteria for participation outlined in chapter 4.

The following section will provide detailed information on each of the three the organizations and the staff members from each organization who agreed to participate in the study. The history, the missions, organizational goals related to missions, descriptions of the target population, staff structure, and information regarding funding structures will be highlighted.[7] Additionally, staff profiles will be provided. However, information that can possibly lead to participant identification will be omitted to ensure confidentiality.[8] Descriptions of the four distinct organizational levels of staff that were represented in the study—frontline staff, middle management, low-level executive leadership and high level executive leadership—will also be provided.

Participating Organizations

Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition (HOAC)

Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition (HOAC) is large homeless services agency providing transitional and permanent housing, and supportive services to homeless individuals and families in the urban area where the study took place. The organization was started more

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[7] Exact mission statements and other identifying information are not provided as the organizations were guaranteed anonymity as a condition of participation.
[8] Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the organizations and the staff members who participated

than 30 years ago by community members concerned by the city's growing homeless population. Since then, HOAC has grown into a large, multi-site homeless services provider serving thousands of people annually. They have become a household name within city and pride themselves on being known as a leader in the homeless services field.

Until recently, HOAC had only existed in the immediate region where the study was conducted. However, increased need coupled with opportunities to expand has led the organization to enter into other cities wanting to provide comprehensive homeless services. As such, the organization has experienced rapid growth over the last five years, which is accompanied by more sites serving more people as well as an exponential increase in staff.

Mission and Goals

The mission and goals of the organization can best be understood as working to alleviate the challenges associated with homelessness, providing homeless individuals with pathways out of housing instability, and working to permanently end homelessness. HOAC attempts to accomplish this by employing a multifaceted approach that not only provides housing to homeless individuals and families, but also connects these individuals with supportive services to ensure they are successful as they transition from a life of homelessness. These services include, but are not limited to, case management, assistance in finding a job, access to physical and mental health support, assistance with accessing public benefits, and population specific services such as services to homeless veterans. The organization strives to tailor supportive services to the needs of each of the individuals they serve making their approach both individualistic and holistic in nature.

Organizational Staff Structure

HOAC has upwards of 350 staff members. The organizational structure consists of five distinct hierarchical levels and is rather complex in its organization. At the top of the organizational chart are the Senior Management Team members, or executive leadership. Directly below this team is a staff of directors. These individuals are situated between the senior staff and middle management. For the purposes of this research these staff members are referred to as "high level" staff. Middle managers make up the third level and are responsible for transferring information between program administration staff and the directors, and are generally tasked with running programs at the administrative level. The fourth level consists of program administration staff such as program directors. Together with middle management, these staff members are responsible for the maintaining the every day functioning, and ensuring the effective administration of the organization's program sites and services. The fifth and final level is made up of front-line workers such as case managers, shelter workers, street outreach workers, etc. These staff members are the "boots on the ground" employees and are responsible for directly providing services to clients on a daily basis.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management team consists of seven senior level managers, which include a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Chief Operating Officer (COO), a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and several other positions. This team is responsible for the majority of decision-making in the organization, and sets the agenda by which the organization operates as well as the pace at which they attempt to achieve their goals. The executive team is broken down into two smaller teams, each of which have different responsibilities in helping the organization work towards meeting its missions and goals. "The People Team" consists of the staff members responsible for maintaining the services and support aspects of the organization. "The Business Team" is

comprised of staff that is responsible for building and maintaining external relationships, and managing the finance and compliance aspects of the organization.

Director Level Staff

A team of directors is in place to provide leadership to each of the organization's programmatic and priority areas. This team consists of 15 directors managing various departments including overall site management, development, communications, operations, and population specific programs, (veterans, for example). Staff at this level report directly to one or more Senior Management staff members.

Middle Management

Middle management at HOAC consists mostly of Associate Directors who are responsible for site management and higher-level program management. These positions report directly to a director level staff member, and often have a team of people for which they are responsible, including program directors where applicable. In some cases, depending on the department, middle managers are directly responsible for managing frontline staff. Middle managers represent a critical component of HOAC's overall staff, as they are the conduits between the upper and lower levels of the organizational hierarchy. Information is passed bi-directionally through these individuals and as such, the task of maintaining organizational communication often falls onto these individuals.

Program/Front-line staff

Program and front-line staff make up the two lowest levels of the organizational structure. These individuals make up the bulk of the staff responsible for implementing programs and services on a daily basis. Interaction with clients happens almost exclusively through these

staff members and they are often the first and primary point of contact for clients seeking assistance.

Funding

HOAC's primary source of revenue is derived from local, state, and sometimes federal government grants and contracts. The rest of their income comes from private giving in the form of grants, gifts, and other fundraising efforts. They also seek donations for in-kind goods such as furniture to help furnish apartments for clients. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the organization received $15,000,000 (approximate) in government grants and contracts and $7,000,000 (approximate) from other sources, making their total revenue approximately $22,000,000. This represents a significant growth from the previous fiscal year when the total revenue was approximately $15,000,000[9]

Poverty Action and Relief Center (PARC)

Poverty Action and Relief Center is a multi-service agency focused on providing services to individuals and families living in poverty. They are located in a predominantly low-income, majority Latino community in the urban area where the study was conducted and have been serving this geographic region for almost 40 years. Started as a small volunteer effort by concerned citizens, PARC now serves upwards of 35,000 people per month through a range of programs and services. The organization is driven by volunteer power and they pride themselves on their abilities to keep overhead costs low through their comprehensive volunteer program.

PARC provides a range of services through a variety of programs such as emergency food assistance, a clothing thrift store, medical services, and employment training, and

[9] HOAC was selected to participate in the study based on their income in the fiscal year 2014-2015, during the time when this research began. At that time, they fell into highest income category used for study inclusion identified in chapter 4. In the two years following, HOAC experienced significant growth in revenue. As such, their revenue is currently greater than that stipulated by the study's inclusion criteria.

educational services focused on both children and adults. All services are provided free of cost, although small donations are solicited from clients for those who have the ability to contribute. PARC is almost entirely funded through private sources such as foundation grants, individual gifts, and fundraising efforts. The organization does not solicit or accept any forms of government funding.

Mission and Goals

PARC's mission is focused on relieving the effects of poverty on individuals and families. The organization accomplishes this by providing clients with immediate relief such as clothing and food, and by offering opportunities for people to gain skills and assistance that focus on achieving self-sufficiency. Services include, but are not limited to, assistance with understanding how to access public benefits, educational opportunities such as English Language and computer literacy classes, tutoring for children, employment training, and physical health services that include health prevention and education. In attempting to help people lift themselves from the bonds of poverty, PARC's goal is to holistically provide services in ways that support and respect the individuals seeking assistance.

Organizational Staff Structure

With just under 30 full-time staff members, PARC's organizational structure has less administrative layers, and hierarchical levels are less distinguishable than in an organization like HOAC. The organization has a small executive team consisting of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and a Chief Operations Officer (CFO). Several director level positions report to the executive team members, including the Director of Development, the Director of Volunteer Programs, Director of Communications, and Director of Programming. These positions are not considered to be executive level positions, but they are, nevertheless,

highly administrative in nature and these staff are ultimately responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of a range of organizational efforts and activities. These two organizational levels make up the "top half" of the organizational structure.

The "bottom half" of the organizational structure consists of program level staff. This includes middle management positions, which, at PARC, are referred to as Associate Directors. These individuals are directly responsible for ensuring the effective administration of programs and services on a daily basis. Reporting directly to staff members at the Associate Director level are program level staff such as coordinators for such programs as the food bank and the education center. Client interaction takes place this level and at the front-line staff level, which is made up of case managers, health services workers, and education providers. In conjunction with staff at the program coordination level, the majority of client interfacing occurs at these two levels. Volunteers are utilized throughout the entire organizational structure to provide everything from assistance with fundraising and communication, help with the distribution of emergency food, or to teach sewing classes. Approximately 5000 volunteers contribute time to the organization annually with many of these individuals making long-term commitments to volunteering PARC.

Funding

The organization does not accept any government funding in the form of grants or contracts. As such, all of their funding comes from individual gifts, foundation funding, and fundraising efforts such as the annual gala event. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year the organization brought in approximately $14,000,000 in private funds, include any donations provided by clients who utilize PARC's services (these donations usually range from about one to five dollars).

Aging Well

The Aging Well has been serving older adults in the city where the research was conducted for over 100 years. The organization operated out of one primary site until a recent expansion led to the opening of two additional senior services sites. Aging Well serves primarily low-income, non-English speaking older adults who have little support in the way of family or other forms of community. At each of their three sites they provide supportive and enrichment services in the form of daily meals, case management services, and opportunities to engage with other seniors through a range of activities.

Mission and Goals

Aging Well's primary purpose is help seniors in age well and with dignity. To meet this goal the organization provides a range of services both in house and at other off-site locations. In each of the organization's three on-site locations daily meals are served, case management is provided for those in need of this type of assistance, and activities such as a range of wellness and enrichment classes are offered. Additionally, the organization offers transportation services to help seniors get to and from any of the service or sites, or to appointments such as doctor's visits. Through each of these services, and at all of their sites, Aging Well is striving to build community among seniors to promote an innovative and positive aging experience that helps clients to thrive in their later years.

Organizational Staff Structure

Aging Well has a Senior Management Team as well as a Leadership Team. The Senior Management Team consists of the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Vice President of Administration, and the Vice President of Programs and Services. The Leadership Team is made up of various directors and service administrators, which include positions such as

the Senior Director for Social Services, Site Directors, the Development Director, and the Director for Government Relations and Advocacy. Each staff member at the Leadership level is responsible for the effective administration of one or more primary areas of the organization's services, and Leadership Team members report directly a member of the Senior Management Team. Decision-making power is mostly held within the Senior Management Team level, with certain members of the Leadership Team being more privy to these processes than others.

Reporting to the Leadership team are various program level and/or frontline staff members, and the reporting structure is department/site specific. For example, certain programs have several layers of case management staff in place, while others have case managers reporting directly to a member of the Leadership Team (The Senior Director of Social Services, for example). Staff structures at the direct service levels are determined based on the unique needs and goals of each department and/or service site.

Funding

Aging Well total revenue in the 2014-2015 fiscal year reached almost $5,000,000. The organization receives a considerable amount of government funding, the majority of which is in the form of contracts with California Department of Aging. Other sources of income include private funding from fundraising and donation efforts and grants from foundations. The organization is currently exploring ways to diversify funding by adding a fee-for-service model to their existing funding portfolio.

Participating Staff Members

In total, 43 staff members between the three organizations agreed to be interviewed. Six staff members expressed interest in participating in a follow up a conversation after the initial interview, which brought the total number of interviews to 49. Table 1 provides a breakdown of

the participants by staff category. Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide general information on each of the participants including their title/position, their level in the organizational structure, the number of years they have been at the organization, and any other positions previously held within the organization.[10]. Staff members are grouped according to five distinct staff level categories: Executive Staff, Leadership Staff, Middle Management, Program Level Staff, and Frontline Staff.[11] When necessary, position titles have been changed or generalized to ensure confidentiality.

Executive Staff

The executive staff category includes commonly held executive level positions such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, and/or Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Program Officer, Vice Presidents, and Deputy positions. These positions usually work closely with the Board of Directors to set organizational priorities, with the top official (CEO/President/Executive Director) reporting directly to the board.

Leadership Staff

Leadership staff consists of staff members who hold significant leadership roles and responsibility within the organization. These individuals typically report directly to one or more members of the Executive team. They have a responsibility to help filter the organization's agenda to the lower levels of the organization, and to provide guidance in helping organizational

[10] Some titles/Positions with have been slightly modified to ensure confidentiality of the participant.
[11] These categories are general representations of organizational staff levels, are not fully representative of all Social Justice Nonprofits. They were devised based on the organizations in the case study, and denote the general structure of the three SJNOs that participated that participated in this research. It should be noted that organizational structure tends to be fluid and is often adapted to individual organizational needs and priorities.

priorities reach fruition. Each organization in the study has a unique leadership team structure, but this level of the organization is typically made up of Director level positions.

Middle Management Staff

Middle managers inhabit a unique position with the organization, as they are typically beholden to staff both above them and below them. They often answer to leadership team members, but will likely have a number of staff reporting to them as well, depending on the size and structure of the organization. Like leadership level staff, they bear responsibility for ensuring organizational priorities are realized. However, middle managers often have more control over the execution of these priorities on a day-to-day basis. The positions are administrative in nature, but these individuals tend to have more access to and visibility of daily operations and, as such, exist in closer proximity to clients than leadership or executive staff members. While titles and responsibilities differ depending on the organization, middle management level often includes positions such as Associate Directors, Senior Program Coordinators, etc.

Program Staff

Similarly to middle management, program staff is typically responsible for the administration of programs, but responsibilities of these staff members may be less administrative and more focused on coordination of direct services. In some cases they are the direct line to clients, in others, they may have other front-line staff reporting to them. These staff members typically have a strong understanding of the organization's programmatic activities and are they are responsible for the implementation of programmatic priorities.

Frontline Staff

Front line staff consist of direct service workers such as case managers, shelter workers, homeless outreach workers, employment specialists, and community organizers, to name a few.

These individuals have the closest, most direct connection with clients, and are responsible for the daily administration of services. They are often the means through which clients communicate to other staff members, as client contact is often limited to these staff members.

Table 1: Staff Member Categories

Staff Category	**HOAC**	**PARC**	**AGING WELL**
Executive	3	2	3
Leadership	4	3	7
Middle Management	4	2	2
Program	1	5	0
Frontline	4	2	1
Total	**16**	**14**	**13**

Table 2: Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition (HOAC)

POSITION	ORGNAZATIONAL LEVEL	YEARS AT ORGANIZATION	HELD A PREVIOUS POSITION (S) AT ORGANIZATION
Outreach Worker	Frontline	5 Years	Yes
Case Manager	Frontline	1 Year	Yes
Program Coordinator	Program	1 Year 1 Month	Yes
Case Manager	Frontline	1 Year 6 Months	No
Case Manager	Frontline	3 Years	No
Associate Director	Middle Management	2 years 6 Months	Yes
Associate Director	Middle Management	9 Months	No
Senior Director I	Leadership	5 Years	Yes
Associate Director	Middle Management	5 Years	Yes
Site Director	Leadership	2 Years 6 Months	Yes
Senior Director II	Leadership	3 Years	Yes
Leadership Staff	Leadership	5+ Years[12]	No
Associate Program Director	Middle Management	3 Years	Yes
Executive Leadership Staff	Executive	2 Years 6 Months	Yes
Executive Leadership Staff	Executive	5+ Years	Yes
Executive Leadership Staff	Executive	5+ Years	No

[12] Several staff members have worked at HOAC for an extended period, making them more easily identifiable. To ensure the confidentiality of these participants, their tenure is signified by "5+ Years".

Table 3: Poverty Action and Relief Center (PARC)

POSITION	ORGNAZATIONAL LEVEL	YEARS AT ORGANIZATION	HELD A PREVIOUS POSITION (S) AT ORGANIZATION
Program Coordinator	Program	5+ Years	Yes
Team Manager	Leadership	2 Years 6 Months	No
Program Staff	Frontline	1 Year	No
Program Coordinator	Program	1 Year 6 Months	No
Program Director	Leadership	5+ years	Yes
Team Manager	Leadership	5 Years	No
Clinic Manager	Program	5+ Years	No
Program Director	Middle Management	5+ Years	No
Executive Leadership Staff	Executive	5+ Years	Yes
Program Staff	Frontline	1 Years 6 months	Yes
Executive Leadership Staff	Executive	5+ Years	Yes
Clinic Coordinator	Program	1 Year	No
Program Coordinator	Program	4 Years 6 Months	No
Associate Program Director	Middle Management	2 Years	No

Table 4: Aging Well

POSITION	ORGNAZATIONAL LEVEL	YEARS AT ORGANIZATION	HELD A PREVIOUS POSITION (S) AT ORGANIZATION
Executive Level Staff	Executive	5+ Years	No
Executive Level Staff	Executive	3 Years	No
Center Director	Middle Management	4 Years 6 Months	Yes
Senior Director	Leadership	5+ Years	No
Center Director	Middle Management	6 Months	No
Case Manger	Frontline	1 Year 6 months	Yes
Director	Leadership	5+ years	Yes
Director	Leadership	1 Year 2 Months	No
Director	Leadership	3 Years 6 Months	No
Finance Staff	Leadership	4 Years	No
Director	Leadership	4 Years	Yes
Executive Level Staff	Executive	5+ Years	No
Administrative Staff	Leadership	2 Years	No

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

The following chapter presents findings pertaining to the first research question and the related two sub questions. Context for understanding the environments within which the participating organizations were functioning is presented (RQ1) and the role the environmental context plays in determining organizational approaches and practices is described (RQ1a). Furthermore, the ways in which managerialism emerges and operates within the participating organizations is examined (RQ1b). The experiences of staff members recounted in this chapter are drawn from first hand accounts of the interviewees as well as observations made by the researcher during the course of data collection (recorded in memos).

Understanding the Environmental Context of Social Justice Nonprofits

The organizational environment is defined as the internal and external elements effecting organizational functioning and operations, including the abilities of organizations to be successful (Griffin, 2017). As chapter two illustrates, the internal and external environments of nonprofit organizations, social justice nonprofits included, has been profoundly altered by a set of economic, political, and social values associated with Neoliberalism. The institutionalization of these values has led nonprofits to increase their focus on achieving greater efficiency and cost effectiveness that can be assessed through measurable and quantifiable outcomes. The role that Neoliberalism has played in the configuring of nonprofit activities was a sensitizing concept throughout the data collection, with particular attention paid to when and how informants described their organization engaging in managerialist tendencies.

However, in adhering to the primary goal of the study of better understanding the environmental contexts within which organizations operate, participants were never explicitly

asked about how they experience or understand these specific sensitizing concepts. Rather, the majority of the interviews began with the researcher asking the participant to “tell me what you do here”.

In beginning with this open-ended prompt, the participants were given the freedom to engage with the researcher in whatever ways felt comfortable. Some informants centered their descriptions closely on their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. For instance, when asked to talk about her role, one case manager stated “My job is to identify the needs of the people that come into the shelter and try and connect them to the right resources to help them be successful in housing”. Another staff member responsible for transportation coordination described her job by saying,

> I do phone calls. When clients call, first thing I do if it's a new client, I check their eligibility. [To be] eligible for the services they must be 65 and older or any individual who's not 65 but disabled. The people who get chemotherapy, they're on wheelchair, they get dialysis. I check their eligibility and I do intake form and send them an application to fill it out (staff member – middle management level).

Others answered this question by speaking more explicitly about how their specific job fit into the broader goals and missions of the organization they worked for. For example, a middle level manager overseeing a large program focused on food distribution explained,

> [My job is to] oversee the general chaos and create a little bit of order out of it. It's my job to make sure we have enough food to distribute. I started in between the economic downturn and the Great Recession. We found a great need for more food and we started getting more food in, but also found it easier to get a lot of fresh produce in because of course, that's stuff that might have otherwise been thrown away. Not only because it was easier, but because it's better food, we started transitioning into as much fresh produce as we can possibly offer (staff member - middle management level).

When asked about his role, this participant described his job not just in terms of daily tasks, but also as it related to the broader goals of the program he was running.

Regardless of how the participants chose to explain their role, in most cases this first open-ended question led participants to talk not just about their individual function at the organization, but about their experiences in attempting to meet their goals as someone tasked with a specific and defined set of responsibilities. In recalling their experiences, the existence of two distinct organizational environments emerged—the internal environment and the external environment. The data indicate that these two contexts are intricately connected. However, this next section will focus on distinguishing between the internal and external environment to better understand the unique function of each and the role they play in shaping the approaches and practices of the organizations. The relationship between the internal and external environmental contexts will be further explored a subsequent section of this chapter.

The internal environment.

The internal environment is understood best as the immediate context within which the daily organizational activities take place. Staff often described this as the "culture" of the organization. Participants at each of the organizations alluded to their organizational cultures as consisting of both positive attributes that supported their success as well as challenging aspects that contributed to difficulties in fully achieving goals related to their specific jobs. On the positive end of the spectrum, participants believed that their organizations valued creating a space where clients were served with dignity and respect and that doing so was considered integral to the success of staff and the organizations overall. This was described this as taking place in two primary ways: supporting client well-being and supporting agentic processes among clients.

Positive attributes of the internal environment

Supporting client wellbeing

All of the staff believed that their primary role was to make a positive difference in the lives of clients. Regardless of position, their primary goal was always seen as supporting client wellbeing. This occurred in a variety of ways, and was dependent upon the individual's role within the organization. For one staff member, the language the organization used to talk about clients and their experiences was really important in providing services that supported the upholding of dignity and respect for the people the organization served. This individual's previous workplace supported what she described as a "rich recovery-oriented psycho-social kind of environment" and in her role as a middle manager she worked very hard to instill this at her current organization. She explained,

> We talk about the use of language and how important it is. I don't like to say we housed people, which is so common. I like to say we helped people find a home. As much as we can limit the use of [the term] clients or us versus them…I want [staff] to do that.

She goes on to say,

> We serve people. We don't manage people. I hate [the term] case management, even though we have to use it…I don't allow there to be a staff bathroom in the shelter and a client bathroom. If it's not clean enough for you then it's not clean enough for them (staff member – middle management level).

For this staff member, creating an environment focused on helping people through challenges, rather than seeing the population as challenging, was vital to continuing to be able to support the wellbeing of the people served. In describing her efforts to instill this type of approach among her staff she explained, "…staff aren't aloud to say, "Oh, that person can't be helped". It's like, "no, you just haven't figured out a way yet." For her, making sure she reinforced an environment where staff felt empowered to creatively figure out ways to support clients was paramount.

For another participant, a member of leadership, viewing the work of his organization as social justice work was an important part of the type of environment he wanted to foster. He

believed social justice needed to be an inherent part of the agency and that serving people from this perspective was critical to supporting an environment focused on helping older adults in ways that promoted dignity. He explained that although the organization does not engage in activities that are typically viewed as social justice, community organizing for example, social justice is at the "core" of the organization.

> Our mission is to help older adults survive, stay healthy, [and] stay independent. And so we believe that…as a way of improving their lives and improving the community…that is social justice, and that's what we're all about. We may not speak of it that way, but the core of it really is, these older adults should be treated better and, by God, we're going to do it (senior staff member-executive staff level).

Supporting agentic processes among clients

Participants also described the ways that they were committed to creating an environment where clients were supported in developing personal agency. For many of the staff members, particularly those who worked in program or frontline positions, constructing a space where clients were not just provided with services, but were supported as individuals with unique needs, was very important. Additionally, many talked about how this was not just part of their individual approach to the work, but that it was important for the organization to encourage the maintenance of an organizational environment where supporting agentic processes among clients was considered critical to success.

In most cases, and despite any challenges that they may have faced in their work, participants believed their organizations were successful at building an environment that encouraged this type of interaction between staff and clients. For example, in describing her experience working with a client, one staff member recalled,

> …a homeless client came in and volunteered with me. And he was saying it took him a long time to come in because he was so ashamed to come in and say he needed help. But once he came in, and he realized that there was no shame to asking for help, that everyone that he met made him feel so welcome, and which thank God we did. But part of that, is

> not treating clients like they're less than. That just because they're in need, that somehow they're less…In asking them to contribute, whether it's through volunteer service, or 50 cents, or whatever they can give, it's recognizing that they're still an equal. Equal to each other, equal to us whether we're on one side or the other of the service table (staff member - leadership staff level).

In addition to ensuring that clients are treated with high levels of dignity, this particular example illustrates how staff members work to support clients in developing and exerting their agency, despite experiencing challenges such as homelessness. By encouraging the individual to participate in the programs in any way he could, a process of self-determination was able to occur for this client. For this staff member, it felt particularly important to encourage this, and to create an environment where despite the range of challenges people faced, clients had the opportunity, and felt comfortable, contributing to the overall work of the organization.

In another instance, a middle management staff member explained that he believed the role of the organization was to create an environment where clients not only felt comfortable seeking services, but one where they could learn to care for and serve themselves in ways that were empowering. He explained,

> …one of the things that we try to do is not just teach them... Not just give them fish, but teach them. So to empower them, too…we have classes that really teach them how to manage their chronic diseases, or memory issues that they might be having…they learn [that] you have to play a role in the care of yourself. Whether it's taking your medication, whether it's having conversations with your doctor, or whether it's when you're going through case management…the idea is they push them to be part of the solution. Not just, "We're gonna do this for you, all you have to do is sit down, and we're gonna do everything for you." No. Part of it is, "We want you to also be a part of this. It's a care plan," that "We're partners in this, it's not just we're gonna do everything for you. We have a role, but you also have a role. So together, we're going to get to where we need to get for you"…the idea is to empower the client (staff member – middle management).

This person in particular believed that in his middle management role that he had a responsibility to helping to advance an environment where staff valued their role in helping clients to develop a sense of personal agency, and where they felt capable to do so.

Challenging attributes of the internal environment

Although staff members believed there were many positive aspects to their organizational environments, they also described the internal environment as one where barriers to success were common. Many explained that despite serving clients in ways that promote well-being and personal agency, they perceived several barriers within the organizational environment that sometimes hindered them from providing services in the ways they believed were in the best interest of the clients. Although these barriers were felt at the individual staff level, they were seen as contributing to an environment in which difficulty often became the norm rather than the exception.

The data revealed four primary challenges that staff experienced as encumbering their success. These challenges included: 1) Experiencing disconnect; 2) Feeling disenfranchised in role; 3) Lacking control; 4) Lacking clarity. In many cases, the challenges were often related to one another, meaning that the experience of one type of difficulty often preceded the onset of another type, or there was an interdependent relationship existing between the challenges that were described.

Experiencing disconnect

One of the primary challenges faced by participants centered on the experience of disconnect. This was experienced in two primary forms: disconnect from other staff and members of leadership, from organizational processes and decision-making, or both. Furthermore, it was often acknowledged, particularly by leadership or executive level staff

members, that this was a pervasive problem throughout the organizations and, in some cases, proved to be consequential to the organization's abilities to meet fully meet their goals.

The first way in which staff felt disconnected was from other staff members. This most notably occurred between frontline and program level staff and leadership and/or executive level staff. A case manager at HOAC described her organization as existing in "silos", which she believed was an intentional action on the part of leadership. She did not feel that leadership valued the interdepartmental transmission of information or that it was seen as an important process for the organization to engage in. While she understood these silos as somewhat necessary for helping to keep order in her rapidly expanding organization, she believed that the leadership of the organization actively intended to create a certain type of "corporate culture" based on separation and status. She described this as a mandate coming from the CEO, who she had never met but who she understood to be well-revered, particularly by the board of directors. She had had minimal interaction with him, and when she did have the opportunity to meet him, she described the encounter by saying, "he wouldn't shake my hand…I could just tell that we weren't going to engage like that".

This participant continued by saying that the CEO and other members of the leadership team do not really have an interest in what goes on in the organization on a day-to-day basis, nor do they appear to be concerned when program level operations are not going as well as they could or should be. She went on to say:

> I think as long as the building isn't on fire and we're not on the nine o'clock news, the people at the top don't care what's happening.. If they don't have to hear about it, as long as all they hear is positive…[that] the goals are met…they don't want to hear about the day to day…the nitty gritty…the challenges you face...But I would actually like you to know what's happening (staff member-frontline staff level).

For her, this feeling of disconnect went beyond being something that was bothersome for her. She felt that existing in silos and limiting communication between the different levels of the organization posed a significant challenge, as it was not the type of environment that she believed supported people in being able to provide high quality services for the clients. She followed this up by saying, "I know [we] need more communication…[we] can't [continue to] operate like this…it will ultimately lead to ruin…[they] can't keep treating people like this, [they] can't just keep putting people down…something bad will happen". For her, this lack of communication stemming from disconnect between the highest staff levels and the rest of the staff was actively contributing to discontent that affected the quality of the work people were able to do.

A program coordinator provided another example of the disconnect that prevailed between staff levels when she recounted her experiences with the board of directors at PARC. Although the board members are technically not staff, they hold a considerable amount of decision-making power within the organization and, thus, wield a great deal of power overall. For this participant, not only did she feel physically disconnected from the board, she believed them to be fundamentally disengaged from the work of her program. She believed the long-term investment required to help the children in PARC's education programs to be successful was seen as by the board as deterrent to their involvement. In other words, since education programs do not necessarily yield immediate results in the ways that providing food through a food bank does, she felt that board members were not necessarily interested in learning about her program or being involved in a volunteer capacity (she discussed how board members contributed their time through volunteering with PARC's food assistance program, for example). She continued to describe this disengagement by saying:

> I don't know the board members. I see them once every two years. But I wish that they would…take more of an interest in Youth Services…just to see what we do day-to-day. 'Cause they see it once a year on a tour, they get a blurb at a meeting or something, but I fell like seeing is believing, and I just wish that more of them were invested in it (staff member-program staff level).

When considering what she attributed their lack of investment to, she explained:

> People wanna see immediate results. They wanna see a three year strategic plan or your yearly goals. But when you're talking about kids, you're talking about kids that are deep in poverty, deep in immigration issues, deep in the worst schools in [the] school district, and we're expecting them to climb out of this somehow, and that's the long haul. That's not gonna get fixed by one school supply drive…one canned food drive…I am not trying to downplay these things, but I feel like people [on the board] feel like "I participated in a food drive! Yay for me!" But it's like, "come fucking tutor once a week, for two months. And be in this with us for the long haul. Be in it with us, be in it with them." It sucks to feel like the board isn't down for that…. Because I could give a shit about the gala, about the fucking networking opportunities. Come and mentor these kids, because you guys are the professionals" (staff member - program staff level).

For this participant, the physical disconnect from board members was only part of the problem. She felt their engagement with her program, which necessitated some level of commitment either through volunteering or through just understanding it better, was marginal at best. As such, she experienced a lack of engagement that affected her ability to navigate her role at PARC in ways that felt productive. She was highly committed to the children she served and the program she ran. However, the lack of commitment from the people who held so much decision-making power, who she did not feel "lead by example", posed a significant challenge for her.

In other instances, disconnect resulting from lack of communication placed staff in what they perceived as precarious situations. Many participants talked about being cut out of decision-making processes that directly affected them or their programs and departments. However, this was not seen as simply a lack of communication, but an active effort on the part of leadership or executive staff members to, as one case manager referred to it, "silo" the staff, thereby stymieing

communication processes across departments and between upper and lower staff members. When asked about how she understood this, she explained that communication was simply not considered important, and that from where she sat, it seemed more important that a clear lines of delineation exist.

In explaining the processes surrounding decisions for one of the sites at Aging Well, a participant in a middle management position spoke of how the process took place at the leadership level without including those staff members primarily responsible for implementing the decisions. As a middle manager in charge of running a site, being excluded from decisions that affected the day-to-day operations of his programs represented a challenging disconnect that had critical implications. He concluded that the senior level staff at Aging Well did not include middle managers in their decision-making processes because they simply did not deem it important to do so. However, this participant felt differently. For him, "If [decisions] are impacting my department or my center, I think I should be part of that conversation, [it should not be] you guys deciding, "here's what we came up with" or "we think this is best for your department".

He goes on to explain how the senior staff and other members of leadership had become increasingly more physically disconnected from the work that was taking place on a daily basis as well as the experiences of the employees. As such, they were not fully aware of the challenges faced by middle managers like him, who were constantly faced with mitigating lower-level difficulties encountered by frontline and program level staff. It was the "unrealistic expectations" of the daily occurrences that made him believe even more fervently that communication about decisions needed to be improved and that the processes needed to be more inclusive of staff outside of the leadership level. In describing the challenge this dynamic posed, he stated:

> I think [it] hurts the organization because it affects morale…If you would've had that conversation with me, I could've told you, "lets do it differently", or "lets really think about this. Can we make a cut here, or do we make it in another department? What makes more sense? (staff member - middle management level).

Feeling disenfranchised in role

Another challenge articulated by staff, one that was often connected to the experience of disconnection, was that of feeling disenfranchised in their individual roles. In these instances participants recounted the ways in which the discordance experienced by the organization at varying levels led to individuals feeling deprived of agency, autonomy or the ability to be effectual in one's job. This was often related to a specific process or procedure undertaken by the organization, or a perspective embraced by the organization more generally. Akin to the feelings of disconnect, the experiences of disenfranchisement described were also seen as contributing to significant challenges for staff in meeting the goals specific to their roles and helping the organization in meeting its mission.

In some cases, the disenfranchisement referenced by participants took the shape of feeling dispensable. Despite the hard work and constant effort to meet outputs and outcomes, it was understood that there would always be another person willing to do the work. Therefore, staff felt that members of leadership did not invest in them in the ways they wanted or needed to be in order to do their jobs successfully, even though this individualized investment was seen as particularly critical given the emotionally charged and often difficult nature of the work. When talking about the difficulties, a program coordinator at PARC described what she believed to be the dispensable nature of employees in the following way:

> I feel like there's this endless supply of people that are willing to work for no money, just to be part of something amazing. And so I burn out, who gives a shit. There's like five other people that want [my] job (staff member-program staff level).

That she could easily be replaced by someone equally as passionate as her made her believe that she was viewed as not worth investing in on a deeper level. Another participant, a middle manager who also believed that there was a lack of investment in staff, specifically described the lack of investment in staff as a devaluation that had significant impacts on the abilities of the organization to meet its goals.

> I think it affects employee morale, which I think then affects the product that we put out. Employees need to feel wanted, valued. And so, the question is then, "When an employee doesn't feel valued, do they really put forward their best effort? Can we be doing more?" I think the answer is yes. But again, an employee isn't gonna do more if he doesn't feel valued. So I think, in that sense, it affects our ability to really have a deeper impact…when 20 percent of your staff do 80 percent of the work…it might lead to burnout…we've had five positions leave…three of those were really key (staff member – middle management level).

In this example the participant describes a devaluing process that is occurring, which, in addition to staff not feeling invested in, is also seen as happening because certain staff are bearing the burden of having to do a majority of the work. For this participant, burnout was a key factor, but like one of the program coordinators at PARC explained, this was not seen as a problem because of how easily replaceable the staff were. Furthermore, the participating middle manager whose experience was described above saw the devaluation of staff as having a direct impact on the caliber of services they were able to provide, and the organization's "deeper impact". Another front line staff member summed these challenges up by saying, "I think ultimately you can't reach your goal if you don't treat your employees as people too" (staff member-frontline staff level).

Lacking control

Experiencing a lack of control was challenge frequently described by participants, and it was often discussed in relation to having little power over organizational processes that affected

them and their clients, or having to rely on others to meet their goals. As a consequence of this lack of control, staff often felt that they had to engage in negotiation processes of sorts in order to manage less than desirable outcomes resulting from the decisions or processes undertaken by others. Furthermore, the inability to control processes was seen as a considerable barrier to being successful in one's role, or in being able to help the organization work towards meeting its goals.

For many staff members, frontline members in particular, the need to rely on others was seen as impeding the provision of the high quality services. In one example, a case manager at HOAC described the ways in which departments needed to work together in order to secure housing for a specific individual, but because of the competing demands bearing down upon people, working together was becoming very difficult. In this instance one case manager described the process of securing housing for a one client in particular as becoming increasingly problematic. She viewed this occurrence as resulting from staff in other departments being unclear about their roles, a confusion that resulted partly from an increase in responsibilities and the blurring of lines between departments. This blurring had occurred because the organization had been awarded a very large contract to serve veterans, which, at the time, was a new clientele focus for HOAC. The department responsible for locating housing for clients was inundated with having to meet the contract's high outputs very quickly and, as such, their abilities to help other non-contract clients became increasingly limited.

Consequently, this participant was left without many resources to find a client with a time sensitive situation the housing she needed, nor did she possess the required knowledge to secure the housing on her own. She described the department that was supposed to support her in this process as not just inundated, but unwilling to even acknowledge her requests for assistance. When asked how she understood this incident, she explained, "…that's part of the culture [here]

people can elect to just ignore you and nobody calls them on it, and nobody above you is gonna correct you, 'cause everybody has too much to do". She continued by saying that she didn't believe anyone to be intentionally acting "nefariously", but that the nature of the work and the constant balancing of competing demands made it "hard to keep anybody accountable…I have so much to do, and other people have so much to do. And I don't want to fault them, because I know we're all working hard, and we all wear too many hats" (staff member-frontline staff level). The lack of control that she felt from having to rely on others whose capabilities were strained made her feel that she was not able to sufficiently meet her client's needs. Although she vowed that she was going to do everything she could to ensure housing was acquired, she was not able to do so without experiencing considerable stress for both her and the client she was working with.

In another occurrence a member of the leadership team at HOAC described how the locus of control sat with the individuals at the very top of the organization. Even though she was in a relatively high leadership role herself, because decisions about processes were micromanaged, she was not able to help streamline processes that she believed her level of responsibility should be responsible for. Small decisions that would move processes along more quickly, or could be streamlined for lower level staff, were required to pass through executive leadership. This participant was not entirely clear why she was prohibited from making smaller, more inconsequential decisions without engaging in consultation, but she felt it was partly result of the executive team members constantly being on the defensive about how they spend money or the manner by which they make decisions. She said:

> I think that decisions could be made at a lower level, meaning, I think some of our directors could make decisions[13]. We're ordering backpacks for $25 dollars for our new

[13] The directors she was referring were one organizational level below the leadership team member, who was in a leadership position.

> staff, it's like, "I really don't care"…It's not a huge purchase, to order a few backpacks…but it needs so many layers of approval (staff member – leadership staff level).

When asked why she believed it required so many "layers of approval", she remarked:

> There's the control…and I think it's a lot of like a cover your tush kind of thing. So when the directors buy something…I have to sign off on everything. So then a lot of times I'm asking for approval when I don't think I should have to ask for approval (staff member – leadership staff level).

Lacking clarity

The final way in which participants described facing a challenge to their success was in the lack of clarity experienced regarding decisions, processes, or practices employed by the organization. In several instances, regardless of having clearly stated organizational missions and visions, participants described being unsure of what the goals and values of their organizations were in practice. Staff at multiple levels, including leadership, confronted this lack of clarity surrounding values. A development staff member at HOAC said, "I think [there's] a lack of clarity…around…the organizational values…[even though] we've had a lot of discussions around that and what those look like". Another staff member, a program coordinator at PARC, stated that she was so involved in maintaining her own program that was unclear about what the other goals of the organization were. In both cases, the participants saw the lack of understanding surrounding goals and values to be problematic to meeting the overall missions and continuing to move the organizations forward.

For frontline and programmatic level staff, this lack of clarity was particularly disconcerting as it meant staff lacked tangible understanding about decisions that impacted them directly them on a daily basis. In describing the imminent closure of the site she worked at, one case manager described the sharing of information regarding the closure as a cryptic and

secretive process that no one at the site seemed privy too. She explained the closure, and the subsequent layoffs, as something staff only postulated about, as they were not provided any concrete information. However, the behavior of higher-level staff indicated to her that something was transpiring regarding the center. “I figured it out a month ago, that we were all getting laid off” she said. When she inquired about it, “no one was gonna confirm or deny that…but I was like, “Okay, I’m not stupid”. When asked about how this information was eventually handed down to center staff, she said a meeting was held but little information was provided. All they were told was that center operations don’t “break even”, that HOAC didn’t have the “focus or money to put to it” so they were going “close it and sell the land”. She concluded her explanation of this experience by saying, “I don’t even know what happened with the maintenance man…no one told him [about the closure], no one even invited him to the meeting (staff member-frontline staff level)”

A middle management staff member at Aging Well also described a general lack of clarity regarding decisions and processes. When asked to describe what be believed to be reasons for the persistent lack of transparency, he postulated:

> I don’t know if it’s a “we know best” mentality [about] “what you need, and what’s good for you”, or whether it’s, “we’re too busy” or maybe, “we don’t value your opinion.” I don’t know, I can’t pinpoint the reason why it’s done this way. I know that all the leadership books tell you…the best way to get the best out of your employees is to be inclusive, so they understand why you decided this. So they’re part of decision making, so it’s just not an order, but it’s like, “I had a part in this, so…if we fail, well, I’m responsible for it, because I held to decide this” (staff member – middle management level)

In this instance this participant described the how he understood the lack of clarity, and the ways in which he saw it affecting the staff and the organization overall. He linked this lack of transparency about how decisions are made to the ways in which people felt a lack of control

over their jobs and how they are often disenfranchised in their roles. In doing so, his explanation of the lack of understanding surrounding organizational processes explicates the ways in which many of the challenges faced by staff are intrinsically linked to one another.

The external environment

In addition to describing the internal environments of the organization, staff also indicated there was an external environmental context within which their organizations were functioning. This environment, which was often discussed in terms of the relationship the organization had with external stakeholders, clearly impacted the organizations overall functioning. According to staff members' experiences, this relationship was predominantly based on the ideas of dependency and control.

Being Dependent on External Stakeholders.

The concept of "being dependent on external stakeholders" is a primary theme that emerged from interview data and analytic memos. In many cases, participants described the ways in which they understood the relationship the organization had with external stakeholders, most notably funders and policy makers, as exerting significant control over organizational processes and procedures. While this is often viewed as an inherent part of the structure of non-profits given the role the external environment plays in organizational functioning (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), this relationship of dependency was frequently described by participants as more than just a benign consequence organizational life. Instead, this relationship was regarded as having a significant impact on organizational functioning, and although not explicitly described as the "environment" by participants, when the experiences of the staff members were collectively analyzed, it became clear that the organizations were operating within an environmental context shaped by this dependency.

Two distinct dimensions related to the theme of "being dependent on external stakeholders" were evident in the data: 1) being controlled by funding and funders and 2) responding to the changing landscape of the field. Together, these two dimensions of dependency help illumine the criticalness and complexity of the relationship between the organizations and external stakeholders, and construct an understanding of the type of environment social justice nonprofits organizations are existing within.

Staff members at each of the organizations in the study described the importance of securing and maintaining adequate funding in order to maintain operations and organizational success. Although one's position in the staff hierarchy determined the degree knowledge held regarding funding procedures and protocols, almost every participant understood that the ability of the organization to do continue to do their work was predicated on securing and maintaining sufficient funding. However, staff also recognized that doing so was a continual challenge and that organizational practices were guided by navigating this difficulty.

Being controlled by funders and funding.

While it is widely understood that securing funding is necessary to ensuring an organization's survival, the ways in which the participants explained the role that funding plays was unique in that it was often described through a lens indicating an experience of dependency and control. Many of the participants, particularly those who worked in development departments or were in leadership roles, explained that the funding structures of nonprofit organizations are highly complex and, in some cases, are made up of many different sources. These include government funding sources as well as private funding sources from individual donors, foundations, and other smaller fundraising efforts. Although some organizations engage

in income generating activities, for example, fee-for-service based programming, many organizations are primarily reliant upon grants, contracts, or gifts to support their activities.

As such, these organizations are not only engaged in a relationship of dependency, but one ultimately characterized by control. This control is intensified by the one directional nature of the relationship, meaning that the organizations are dependent upon funders, not the other way around.

In discussing the challenges his organization faces, one executive staff member whose primary role revolved around maintaining and supporting programming and services remarked:

> ...Nonprofits [are] the recipients of the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations, and government…If you have a ripple in the economic system, or a tidal wave in the economic system that upsets the entire market base and reduces investment, that ripples out through foundations. It ripples out through corporations and it can also of course impact the Federal budget where there's less money to go around. If there's less money to go around, nonprofits get cut. They don't have the money. And when nonprofits get cut they either go out of existence, or they reduce staff, or they reduce services. So that becomes a very challenging environment (staff member - leadership staff level).

This excerpt exemplifies the difficult reality of being controlled by funding and funders. The availability of funding, and the ways in which it is distributed, have a direct impact on the structure and functioning of organizations. For this participant, whose success as a senior program executive was intricately tied to understanding organizational funding needs, the question was not simply about providing the best possible services for the older adults served by his organization. It was as much about survival, which he described as challenging because "social service agencies are always [subject] to the vagary of funding sources".

Like this participant, participants at all staff levels were acutely aware of how organizational processes were connected to the relationship the organization has to both funders and the funding bodies providing the money, and this awareness appeared to permeate all aspects

of people's experiences. At the program and frontline staff levels, this was often described as having to deal with what one participant referred to as "financial realities". In her recount of the difficulties she regularly faced as a program coordinator organizing activities and events for the children participating in her education programs, one program coordinator explained that she was often told:

> There are financial realities that we just need to deal with…and we're told that a lot...It's why we can't get busses for the kids. It's why we can't get a cost of living [salary] increase for three years…it's disheartening (staff member - program staff level).

In this instance, a shortage of financial resources is cited for the motives behind certain decisions. While this is not an uncommon occurrence in nonprofits where needs almost always exceed available resources, this provides an example how the relationship that exists between the organization and funding can potentially have an adverse on organizational processes. For this participant, being told that there wasn't any funding for transportation for her program's event, which required bussing students to the organization to participate, meant that the program was ultimately falling short of its meeting its goals. Not only did this threaten the success of the event, it also placed a significant burden on her as program coordinator. She describes the circumstances surrounding the event in the following way:

> …Every August we bus 240 third graders [to PARC] to get free shoes, free backpack, dental and vision screenings…We have this partnership with [the elementary school], and their principal is amazing. She makes sure that her 3rd graders and their teachers are free that day so they can come…[but] we don't get funding for the buses. It's like "here's no money, here's no fucking funding, get those kids over here. Do it, lets see you work" (staff member-program staff level).

For other staff members, their understanding of organizational decision making processes was centered on how organizational decisions are ultimately connected to the goal securing and maintaining funding. When HOAC decided to add a focus on homeless veterans to their

programming priorities, this decision was understood by one case manager as being based on the availability of funding concentrated on serving veterans, not the capacity of the organization to serve the unique needs of this population. Although the organization was positioned to provide services to homeless veterans, this had not traditionally been a singular focus of HOAC's work in the way the funding was going to require it to become. In describing the onset of the veteran focused programming, she said:

> HOAC wanted the money, and we jumped. Because the VA (Veteran's Administration) said we'll give you…X amount of dollars…do this for X amount of dollars. Of course, [HOAC would] love X amount of dollars, please give us X amount of dollars and we'll do whatever it is that you ask (staff member-frontline staff level).

She goes on to say, " I feel like that's just how HOAC operates. Give us X number of dollars and we'll do whatever you say. Just like a prostitute…[but] do we have our own vision?"

One of the executive level staff members focused on programming described a similar process when she talked about the placement of an HOAC employed case manager in the emergency room at a hospital to help with the triaging of homeless individuals. While she agreed with the need for a staff member focused on hospital-based intervention, she revealed that organization went about creating this position at the request of a healthcare company. There was little consideration for the capacity of the organization to staff the position appropriately and, as a result, program outcomes were extremely poor. She describes her understanding of this example in the following way:

> I think a lot of it was these pots of money, that didn't really make sense, that ended up costing the organization in the long haul…One example was, we got $50,000 from Sanai Heath Corporation[14] to put an individual in the emergency room. $50,000 is not enough for a full-time person. It's not enough for the staff, [and] it's not a realistic model because one person in the emergency room triaging individuals who are homeless, the outcomes were abysmal. [The] outcomes were set up too high by Sanai [and] the money was too

[14] This is a pseudonym

> low but we went for it anyway…I don't disagree [with the effort], except for the fact that it has to be fully funded…I don't just want money because there's money (executive staff member – leadership staff level).

The participant went on to say that certain executive staff members had a personal interest in "getting more into health and hospital work" as it related to homelessness, which partially drove the organization's decision to partner with Sanai in this way. According to her, this desire, combined with the availability of funds and opportunity to obtain them, was ultimately what drove the decision—not a well-thought out plan based in a strategic assessment of organizational capacity or current priorities.

Other ways that that participants indicated the organization being controlled by funding and funders was through the practices of appeasing funders that often took place. One participant expressed concern about the organization's inclination to homogenize clients based on race/ethnicity, and the impact this might have had on the way staff understood the unique experiences of the predominantly Latino population they served. She explained:

> …the reality is, we serve so many people from so many varied backgrounds. Like, Mexicans are not the same as Central Americans, are not the same as South Americans…Mexicans are not the same as Chicanos, are not the same as Puerto Ricans. We are not the same and yet under that [Hispanic] umbrella we all get grouped into…Hispanic. We serve people that are from various indigenous groups, from various parts of the continent. And I felt like that should be recognized (staff member-program staff level).

When asked why she believed the organization grouped all of these individual groups together, she said she understood the process to be about making funding reporting procedures as simple as possible for the funders. The participant remarked:

> We had a couple of talks about it in staff meetings and it was decided that simpler was just better. Lump everyone together…those are the only terms that are accepted [by funders]. You're either Hispanic, White, Black, like, check a box (staff member - program staff level).

This process did ultimately simplify reporting procedures, but at what this participant considered to be the expense of the clients. She believed that for an organization serving a predominantly Latino clientele whose experiences were shaped by chronic poverty, issues related to immigration status, and other difficulties, it was important for staff to know how their background impacted their experiences, and that services should be developed and implemented with this diversity in mind. Yet, while other staff acknowledged the loss of information through the homogenization process described, it was determined that decisions about how clients should be identified in the organization's systems should ultimately be made less complicated in order to appease the needs of the funders and their reporting systems, which required simplified processes.

In another example a development staff member described how the decision of PARC to not apply for or accept any government funding was not based solely on the difficult reporting procedures that accompanied these types of funding streams but also on the desire to not alienate more socially conservative donors. This type of donor was common at PARC and was described as coming "through their church, so they're about service, they're about charity, and they like it that we're lean and mean and so efficient". These donors were viewed as less likely to want to support the organization if government funds were used to support clients, as they were understood by the CEO to be:

> …conservative mindsets who won't wanna fund us because they think we're catering to…the welfare mom or something…she doesn't want to show [that we serve] a lot of Latinos…especially Latinos with a lot of family members, cause it'll piss off the conservative white people on our board and amongst the donors (staff member-leadership staff level).

To further explain the relationship between not accepting government funding and appeasing conservative donors, this participant recounted the following experience with putting together mailings and other materials highlighting the work of the organization:

> She doesn't want to show a lot of Latinos, she definitely doesn't want to show a lot of Latinos with a lot of family members, 'cause it'll piss off the conservative white people on our Board and amongst our donors. She's literally said that to me 'cause it comes off looking badly. So she wants black people, white people. But 75% of our clients are Latinos.

She went on to say:

> I've gotten hate mail during the holidays, especially when Obama was…running for office. I got hate mail [in response to] my direct [mailing] saying… "How dare you spend money on…my taxes are going to pay for these people who are lazy and don't deserve it"…they're usually anonymous, but the few [aren't], I usually take the opportunity to write them a letter saying, "I appreciate your perspective, but I want you to know that PARC doesn't take government funding" (staff member-leadership staff level).

In both of these examples, the organizations were seen by the participants as making the choice to appease donors rather than do what was best or the organization or aligned with their priorities, goals, or values.

Responding to the changing landscape of the field.

The relationship of dependency that organizations have with external stakeholders was also characterized by what many participants described as "responding to the changing landscape of the field". This consisted of the organization making significant changes or engaging in different processes and procedures based on policy changes or initiatives and/or perceived developments in industry standards. This often took the shape of responding to an increased public awareness or outcry surrounding a particular social issue, (increased homelessness in city where the research was undertaken, for example), adapting to trends within the policy arena aimed reducing long term care costs, (for the aging population, for example), attempts at

attracting more funding, or simply responding to the growth of a field resulting from increasing need.

In several instances, participants described the way an increase in the general public's awareness about a particular social issue impacted how the organization made decisions regarding the type of funding to seek or the programs that should be implemented. For example, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began to draw to a close, the public's awareness of veteran issues increased, and providing services to the veteran population became a both a policy and funding priority. As a result, an influx of both public and private funding was made available to support veteran focused services, and organizations like HOAC were presented with opportunities to add veteran services to their existing repertoire of services.

In the case of HOAC specifically, the Veteran's Administration (VA) awarded a large contract to the organization to help upwards of 300 homeless veterans find housing in a rather short period of time. This contract was in direct response to the amplified public focus on the veteran community, whose homelessness rates were spiking at the time. As result of the contract, which totaled $5,000,000 dollars a year, the organization rapidly developed and implemented veteran specific programming, an area that had not previously been a primary organizational priority. The opportunity to apply for this specific source of funding from the VA effectively altered the boundaries of the organization's service provision, and added a focus to the existing range of programmatic priorities. As one frontline level participant described it:

> We're just not an agency that's gonna necessarily turn things down that could potentially fill a gap in services that we don't already have. The way I think of it is, I don't want anyone to come into our sites and be turned away because we don't have a program to serve them (staff member – frontline staff level).

Another participant, an executive staff member at HOAC whose role focused on programming, described the intensified concern of the public regarding issue homelessness more generally as contributing to an escalation in funding opportunities at the local level, which created more opportunities for HOAC to secure resources. She said:

> I think there's been a greater emphasis on homeless services. A few years ago, a point-in-time count came out and I think the world finally looked at it and said, "Oh my gosh. LA is the capital of homelessness". And it gave [an] opportunity to us to be able to apply for funding that hadn't been there before…There's more county money coming in, there's more city money coming in. So I think it's had to be that place where there was an agency that had to take on that…and HOAC was poised to be able to do that in a way that a lot of the other agencies hadn't been ready to (executive staff member – leadership staff level).

In both of these instances, an increased public emphasis on funding homeless services contributed to a direct and calculated response on the part of the organization. These responses were viewed by participants as having a significant impact on how the organization went about securing resources, and the types of services that were being provided.

In another example, the onset of a collaboration between the Aging Well and the healthcare industry was described by a member of the leadership staff as partly a response to the need and desire to reduce overall healthcare costs for the greater aging population. She explained development of this new relationship by saying:

> This population is starting to cost the [healthcare] system a heck of a lot of money just by the sheer aggregate number of how many people there are. Aging is a new phenomenon in our communities…women are living to 86 and men to 82, and that's continuing to rise…the squeaky wheel gets the grease…Now this population is becoming significant enough…that they're starting to [say], "Okay, we need to…figure this out"…Now that a quarter of our population's gonna be over the age of 65 and we have less people coming into the workforce which means we have less taxes going into our system to support a growing population, they're forced to start looking at these things that they have never had to before (staff member-leadership staff level).

This collaboration was focused on bringing together what this participant and others referred to as the "medical model" and the "social model", the former of which is highly concerned about the increasing cost of serving a rapidly growing population of aging adults. The two models coming together to think about how to better serve the older adult population was described as resulting, in part, from the healthcare industry realizing:

> We have to address how people access our services, what their home life is like, what their social determinants of health are, so their access to food and resources and transportation, where they actually live. All of those things play into whether they're going to be compliant with their medical issues. And the medical model is finally realizing that the…social [service] providers hold that piece, that's what we do, we hold the relationships. The medical model doesn't necessarily hold trusted relationships with the people that they're trying to influence, but we do. So there's been a push to bring these two models together because you have to address somebody's living environment and their access to services if you want them to comply (staff member-leadership staff level).

In increasing the focus on the factors that impact an individual's ability to comply with medical treatment, not only are health services becoming more holistic, but money is being saved in the long run.

Furthermore, the onset of the "medical model's" concern with the "social model's" approach to serving older adults represented what Aging Well viewed as an opportunity to secure greater funding for their services and to diversify the organization's funding sources long term. One leadership staff member recounted, "…it's the desire to have a better spread of funding, to diversify our funding sources. It's also a national trend now. I was at a Meals on Wheels conference about a month ago, and big strands of the conference were about how to do business with the healthcare industry". Further, the collaboration represented a prospect to increase the social model's financial sustainability. Another leadership team member said:

> The realization that the two have to come together and that we just gotta figure it out along the way is clear because there's so much funding that goes into the medical model,

> that it could help the social model become sustainable if we could tap into that funding. Because what happens, if we can help them save money, now there's more money available in the pot, and we can get some of that money, some of that money…paid to the medical model could be saved (staff member-leadership staff level).

She goes on to explain that the precariousness of nonprofit funding represents a challenge for the security of the services they provide, despite the ever-increasing need for social services focused on older adults. As such, the organization understands their collaboration with the healthcare model as a strategic decision focused on:

> Sustainability and aligning ourselves with a funding source that is a steady funding source that is not going to go away over the next 50 years…where some of the programs that we operate here, funding comes and goes out of those program. They aren't guaranteed that they're gonna be around, but by aligning ourselves with the medical model, that funding's going to be around, and they're putting money into it…the idea is that we need to diversify our revenue, so one of those ways is to align ourselves with healthcare, and the realization that [the] healthcare [industry] is having is that "wow, these social [service] providers can really impact and affect the health of our seniors (staff member-leadership staff level).

Finally, the constant increase in the need for services in all three of the fields the organizations in the study represent was a driving force behind each one needing to respond to the changing landscape of the field. One leadership team member best explained this when he remarked:

> As more and more baby-boomers come into their older adult time, 10,000 people a day come into Social Security and Medicare. It's a big group and depending what they grew up with, what their expectations were, what their professional jobs were, they have very different expectations of what they might want out of life. So, it may be that the role of senior centers might change…the inclusion of more technology…we might see more of that, but certainly, I think we're gonna see different issues and wants and needs from slightly changing, more tech-savvy, older adult population that starts coming though. And I think that's gonna be fascinating. So, the world's gonna be shifting and we're hoping that by looking forward…we'll continue to be well-positioned to serve them (staff member-leadership staff level)

Responding to Relationship of Dependency with External Environment

The following section highlights the relationship between environmental context and the kinds of approaches and practices embraced in by the participating organizations, answering the two secondary research questions. As evidenced by the data, organizations are affected in a variety of ways by their internal and external environments. However, it is the latter that appears to most directly impact the types of approaches and practices undertaken by the organization.

The data indicates that a set of response processes to the challenges imparted by the external environment took place at both the macro (organizational) and the micro (staff) levels within each of the organizations. At the macro level, staff understood their organizations as taking specific and calculated actions to respond the range of challenges faced by the relationship of dependency between the organizations and external stakeholders. These response processes were described as occurring in two primary ways: 1) adapting to changing organizational needs and 2) employing managerialism. Although participants did not refer explicitly use the term managerialism, they described several manifestations of the trend (illustrated in chapter 2). These included 1) embracing a corporatized approach; 2) engaging in organizational growth; 3) focusing on outputs; and 4) striving to maintain image.

At the micro level, staff engaged in their own personal response processes, many of which were described as resulting from the macro response practices the organizations were engaging in. These processes were less collective in nature, and more about the ways each individual staff member felt they needed to engage in their work in order to navigate some of the challenges that they believed resulted from the macro level processes. The following section will detail both sets of processes described in the data.

Macro level response processes.

Adapting to changing organizational needs.

Participants explained the needs of the organizations changing as a result of the dependent relationship they had with external stakeholders. As such, staff members at all levels were engaged in an adaptation process in order to successfully navigate the evolving needs. For example, the fee-for-service model that Aging Well was planning to implement in order to diversify funding sources and to evolve with the changing nature of the aging field represented a dramatic shift for an organization that, in all it's time serving older adults, had never charged for services. This paradigm shift, although not entirely misaligned with organizational goals and missions (it was occurring in order to maintain programming into the future) ultimately created a shift in the needs of the organization.

This shift was characterized by a change in perspective regarding the types of partnerships the organization needed to enter into, particularly with the health care industry. It also signified a need for greater operational efficiency, as this was something that was demanded by those with the organization would be partnering. While the shift was understood as an important modification given the changing nature of the aging field, it was unclear how it would ultimately affect the organization.

Of particular concern was the effect this would have on the individual staff and the culture, which was underpinned by a strong commitment to serving older adults rather than a concentrated focus on the organization's bottom line. Consequently, the shift to fee-for-service required several forms of adaptation which one member of the organization's leadership team saw as affecting multiple aspects of the organization. First, she believed that frontline and other program level staff was going to endure a significant adjustment as the change was going to

require several procedural adaptations. For instance, frontline workers were going to have to start to

> …"understand some high level thinking that they might not normally think [about]. Like implementation and delivery, they need to understand that these are two different payer sources and that our Older Americans Act funded employees have to provide what they're expected to provide…but there's going to need to documentation…to demonstrate that we're keeping these two [payer sources] separate, because the Feds certainly don't wanna pay for our business development" (staff member-leadership staff level).

She goes on to explain that the she believed Aging Well was going to undergo a significant cultural adaptation as well, which she described in the following way:

> …the biggest way I see it impacting our organization is going to be in the culture. That's what I see. In the nonprofit world we have always…been expected to provide services for free. No one cares how we get our funding and no one realizes that this is a business also. So many of our contracts that we hold, they don't pay for overhead costs, and so that's a challenge…Well, not only does the external world look at us and expect us to provide services for free, but the culture inside the organization at the low-level staff is also that we take care of everyone and provide whatever is needed (staff member-leadership staff level).

When pressed further to discuss this cultural conflict she believed was ensuing, she responded:

> The conflict is in the values. Are you valuing the dollar or the person? And can you value both at the same time? That's a challenge. I don't know that I have an answer to that. I think it's what we're all trying to figure out. But I am a very black and white person, I see things for how they are. I don't beat around the bush. We love Betty, and we wanna provide services to Betty, but Betty can't sink the whole ship. The ship needs to stay afloat (staff member-leadership staff level).

This excerpt exemplifies much of the conflict experienced at the organizations in regards to the relationship of dependency on external stakeholders. In this case, there was a shift in organizational needs that resulted from the relationship of dependency with external sources (funders and evolving nature of the field). This shift produced a state of disconnect that was characterized by wanting to meet the needs of clients but also needing to maintain the financial

vitality of the organization (the onset of fee-for-service). However, as this participant observed, doing so was seen as having significant repercussions for the staff and the organization overall, and a negotiation process of sorts would be required in order to help staff transition to this new model. Regardless, the changes had to ensue, and the focus needed to be on how to help people adapt.

Embracing managerialism.

In addition to adapting to changing organizational needs, the organizations' responses to the external environment included several manifestations of managerialism described in Chapter 2. It was evident from the data that adopting a managerialist approaches were seen as an appropriate and, in some cases, necessary response to the challenges ensuing from the relationship of dependency with external stakeholders. The managerialist response process took place in four distinct ways: 1) corporatizing the organization; 2) engaging with and perceiving organizational growth; 3) focusing on outputs; and 4) striving to maintain image.

Embracing a corporatized approach.

As the organizations attempted to manage some of the discord at the macro level, engaging in more corporate oriented philosophies and/or practices were seen as appropriate responses. For instance, in making sure that the organization presented well externally, one participant described HOAC's CEO as making sure that the organization focused on strategic brand development (a common practice of for-profit entities). Although a strong brand was seen as an important representation of the work of the organization, one member of the leadership team remarked, "I think the way we face externally is very important", meaning that the perception of the organization to external stakeholders was something that was highly emphasized by leadership, specifically the CEO. In talking about the Aging Well's attempts at

implementing fee-for-service supported services, a leadership team member described the importance of understanding the organization in more traditionally for-profit terms. She explained, "…we have to start looking at ourselves as a business rather than a free service. Because we're not a free service, it costs money to keep the lights on, it cost money to have employees and insurance and things like that" (leadership staff member-leadership team staff level). She continued to explain this more corporate oriented perspective by saying:

> As we make this transition [to fee-for-service], I think there will be more internal regulation and that will affect the culture. And that we at the top-level staff need be very intensely and acutely aware of how bottom-level staff is going to be affected by the implementation of these changes because…in any business or organization that I've ever been in, there's a total disconnect between upper-level management and frontline staff. There always has been, always will be the way I see it, because you have different value systems, you're approaching things in different ways (staff member-leadership staff level).

As a member of the leadership staff this participant was acutely aware of the potential disconnect that could ensue as a result of taking a more traditionally for-profit, or corporatized, vantage point to the work. However, this was also seen as necessary in order to successfully navigate the terrain of discord that resulted from dependency on external stakeholders, and so a more corporatized approach was willingly being embraced by the leadership team overall. When asked what she believed the overall impact on the organization might be, one participant responded:

> If we're going to start operating like a business and functioning that way, I could see us needing to start regulate things, to make sure that our dollar is going the longest. But we also need to keep in mind that we can never become the medical model because we can't forget our end user. We have to make sure that we're here to provide [services] but how can we organization ourselves internally to where we can provide exceptional service in the least amount of time with the lowest cost in order to be sustainable (staff member-leadership staff level).

This excerpt highlights the potential conflict that emerges from embracing a more corporate philosophy. The participant emphasizes that the focus needs to remains on the client, however,

she buttresses this statement with concept of cost efficiency and financial sustainability, two of the principal effects of the macro level discord resulting from the relationship the organization has with external stakeholders.

Engaging with organizational growth.

Organizational growth was a critical goal described by staff at each organization in the study. However, this goal was rarely achieved without significant challenges. For HOAC and LAOFA in particular, growth was seen as necessary to keep up with mounting need, as well as a direct consequence of the relationship with funders and need to respond to the changing landscapes of their respective fields. PARC was engaging in some growth, but the experience was described differently since their funding was secured entirely from private sources. In other words, the relationship with government funding and policy makers appeared to have an impact on how HOAC and LAOFA understood and engaged with growth strategies.

In most cases, the desire to grow was mission driven in the sense that it stemmed from wanting to help more people a development staff member asserted:

> I think an important part of [the growth] is mission driven for us…it's the ability to help more people. So, if you're like, "hey we're housing one hundred people this year." That's awesome, but if we can feel like we could house two hundred, then we're going to do that because we feel like we owe that to the community, to the clients that we're working with, um, to our funders, to our partners, to continue to figure out more ways to help people given the growth [and] complexity, and the problematic nature of [homelessness] (staff member – leadership staff level).

However, despite the mission-driven nature of the growth that this participant described, engaging in expansion while continuing to meet the mission in ways that do not conflict with the values of the organization sometimes proved challenging. For instance, he describes an example where growth is not aligned with organizational capacity, which was common. In describing an example of misalignment he said:

> …we have [an opportunity for a] new program and there's funds for that program, but there aren't any funds to hire someone to be able to…run it. And then we sit at this table and we decide, like, "OK that's a big program, it needs someone to run it…full-time." But we don't have that money…so what are we going to do?" So even though you're already working fifty or sixty hours a week, we're going to ask you to do it. Which means that [we're] not effective. Or as effective as you could be. Which then has a result…not only on the staff member or members, but also on the clients…it's not really taking into account what the implications of that growth look like for the rest of the organization (staff member – leadership staff level).

Another participant, a leadership staff member at LAOFA, described this growth-related challenge when he contemplated the following:

> How do you maintain the quality of what you've been doing? How do you maintain your mission and vision, and don't get mission creep in some other place? How do you manage [growth] effectively and efficiently, and how do you meet the public need for these services? So growth [is] a double-edged sword. It brings the opportunity to serve more people, but it also brings the challenges of, how do you underpin that? How do you have the structural framework, the staffing, the capacity to serve more people? (staff member – leadership staff level)

In both instances, growth is mission-driven and results from the organization wanting to serve more people. Furthermore, the funding to do so is available and the evolving nature of the field is all but requiring the organizations to engage in expansion. However, these examples make evident that the capacity to engage in growth does not always accompany opportunity and, as such, a conflict arises.

Focusing on outputs.

Focusing on outputs refers to the emphasis placed on "needing meet the numbers". As several participants understood it, the goals of the organizations were often seen as being in conflict with the goal of funders, particularly government contractors. While the need to meet numerical goals dictated by external sources is not a new phenomenon for nonprofits, the intensity of needing to adhere to these mandates contributed to the macro state of discord.

Specifically, the conflict was felt between wanting and needing meeting outcomes (substantive changes/impact for clients) connected to organizational mission and goals, and having to meet outputs (number of clients served, etc.) dictated by external sources. In most cases, the outputs represented a greater number than the organization believed they could meet while also maintaining quality and integrity of services.

This conflict is particularly salient for frontline and program level staff members, many of which are tasked with actualizing the focus on outputs on a daily basis. In discussing the pressure that staff experience when faced with having to meet outputs a case manager at HOAC said, " If I have twelve months to meet the targets sometimes I end up having to enroll a very large amount in one month to catch up for the number I was missing in the previous month…and I want to enroll many more [than the minimum allowed] so I can be sure to make the target". As this participant noted, meeting the target set forth by the particular contract she was working under became a primary focus, which she felt took her away from being able to center her attention on the needs of the individuals she was trying to house. She did her best to maintain the integrity of the services she was providing but acknowledged that it was difficult to do so at all times given the pressure she felt to meet the numbers.

In another occurrence a program coordinator at PARC discussed the challenges associated with what she and others believed were arbitrary number goals assigned based on the desire to appease funders. Since PARC doesn't have any government contracts, their focus on outputs takes a bit of a different form than the other two organizations in the study. Nevertheless, the intense focus on numbers existed, and the emphasis on outputs was seen as a way for the organization to prove their worth to a funding community that often relied on outputs rather than outcomes to determine the service effectiveness. This participant referred to these numbers as the

“sexy numbers that people want to know”, which was in reference to the job readiness program she was charged with coordinating.

The program was created with an initial goal of preparing 1000 clients to obtain jobs. However, it was not clear to this participant, or other staff members, how the goal of 1000 clients was arrived at nor were the avenues to attain this goal clearly defined among the staff responsible for meeting this goal. As one participant described it, the goal was “arbitrary”. Furthermore, the program was viewed as a way of addressing a current trend in the field of reducing poverty, which was focused on helping people obtain jobs after the economic crisis of 2008, which meant that it was in direct response to the evolving landscape of the field. However, the program was never designed with job attainment in mind, it was designed to prepare people to “put their resume out there and get a job…[to develop] marketable…skills” (development staff member – leadership staff member level). However, the readiness of the clients was not the concern for funders. Instead they were concerned with how many people actually obtained employment. One participant describes this discrepancy by saying, “the funders don't care. They want to see how many people actually got jobs…[but] we're not set up to be a job placement program, we only have a job readiness program”. Another staff member confirms this sentiment when she stated:

> There was no groundwork on how it’s going to be done…so I feel like…while we’re trying to make people job ready, trying to strengthen the program…and [proving that]…we’re actually doing a good job with training these folks…but I feel like that’s not what people wanna hear. They wanna know how many people got jobs. They ask questions, “oh, you’re making people job ready, so that means they’re getting a job?” It’s like, “no, not necessarily” (staff member - middle management level).

These examples show the ways in which focusing on outputs become a response to the external pressures exerted upon the organization by funders and the evolving landscape of the field within which they operate. In each instance, the organization prioritized numbers over other measures, and while program quality was not necessarily being advertently sacrificed, the staff questioned

their abilities to maintain the integrity of the services they were providing while having to focus on outputs.

Maintaining image.

The final way that managerialism is operationalized as a response process to the organizations existing in a state of macro level discord is through efforts to maintain organizational image. The image that organizations project is a seen as critical. This is particularly so for higher-level staff members who are concerned with maintaining a strong relationship with funders and policy makers that, through the relationship of dependency, exert control over the organizations. This control, which often takes the shape of organizations attempting to secure funding or other opportunities simply because they are available, is seen by staff members as partly driving the focus on maintaining image. One director level staff member at HOAC communicated this focus on maintaining image as being connected to the focus on outputs, which she believed bolstered the external facing image of the organization. She said:

> To [the leadership], "we're a state-wide agency! Look at our numbers!" Blah, blah, blah. They never talk about our retention rate, but, "Look at our numbers!" And even yesterday I was at a meeting with [other industry people] and they were like, "You guys are the best in the industry", and I'm [thinking]… "no we're not…" (staff member – leadership staff level)

When pressed to explain how she understood the organization wanting to be viewed as the "best in the industry", she went on to say that she believed it was the goal of HOAC's leadership to be revered by funders, policy makers, and other organizations in this way. She specifically described the CEO as wanting HOAC to be seen as "really packaged and nice and pretty…and he wants to be known as…the best in the industry". When asked how she comprehended what it meant to seen in this light, she recalled, " it means we don't apologize that we are the best and

that we're going to take all these contracts and go in and help [solve] homelessness. Bold is another one, that we're bold, we're out there…we're go-getters".

Another leadership level staff member also understood the relationship her organization had with funders as creating conflict that was connected to the need for externally-facing success, and consequently a push to maintain image. She explained:

> We just got $5 million for a brand new program but…it's one of those things, though, it's not exactly a model that we [already] had…The city and county have really put a lot more money into homeless services. And so again, it was one of those things where…a lot of the communities we were in, wanted to apply for rapid re-housing for individuals. And so it was like, well, if we don't apply, we might not be seen as a leader in this, which we're not, because we don't do rapid re-housing for individual, we do it for families and veterans (staff member – leadership staff level).

When asked why she believed the organization decided to apply funding for this even though it wasn't something they had expertise in, she replied, "I think we want to be seen as a leader in the city and county funding opportunities" (leadership team member – leadership staff level). For this participant, applying for and getting the $5 million dollar contract was less about providing services and more about making sure the organization continued to establish themselves as a critical player in the homeless services field. Although HOAC was not completely inexperienced in the rapid rehousing model, providing these services to individuals was not an area they had developed expertise in. The contract they had been awarded was going to rapidly thrust the organization into providing these types of services without the infrastructure needed to successfully implement the program.

These illustrations provide insight into the ways that the organizations focus on maintaining image as a response to the relationship of dependency the organizations are in with external stakeholders. As the participants described, this relationship is understood as leading to the a focus on maintaining an externally-facing image focused on success, which is seen as the

way by which external stakeholders determine an organization's abilities to serve and their legitimacy within the larger service field.

Micro level response processes.

In addition to the macro level processes the organizations engaged in, participants also alluded to the ways that they as individuals responded to the challenges resulting from the relationship with the external environment. This took place through a personal, individual response process that consisted of three distinct actions of negotiation on the part of staff a) accepting mediocrity, b) balancing competing demands, and c) bearing the burden. Each of these responses signifies a modification of both thought process and behavior related to individual job roles and responsibilities.

Study participants described feeling like they were unable to do their very best work because of some process or procedure that was resulting from the response of the organization to the challenging relationship they were in with external stakeholders. They also reported feeling like they were forced to contend with feelings of conflict created by demands that contrasted with organizational goals or individuals' roles in helping to meet these goals. Overall, they felt negatively challenged to meet organizational outcomes, and in each of these processes staff negotiated with themselves and others in order to continue to provide services and to work towards organizational goals and missions. While not always ideal, the negotiation that staff engaged in allowed them to continue to do their jobs in ways that felt acceptable and enabled them attempt to work towards organizational goals from a place of strength rather than deficit.

Accepting mediocrity.

In many cases participants described how they felt they were not able to do their very best work because of some process, person, or organizational belief obstructing their abilities to

do so. As such, many staff explained having to come to terms with not achieving everything they would like to in their role or not being able to work from a place entirely informed by their personal or professional belief system. While this was frustrating for many, they also used this realization as a kind of negotiation process with themselves that served, in some ways, as a form of self-preservation in a difficult environment. This acceptance was participants' way of responding to the micro level discord they were forced to exist within.

One participant, a development staff member at HOAC, talked about having to accept "doing less" as the nature of working in a resource scarce environment where organizational needs are always changing and adaptation to these changes are a part of organizational life. In providing an example of how accepting mediocrity materializes for staff, he said:

> Lets just say a contract says that we can have a 1 to 35 caseload, but the program [staff] is telling us it really needs to be 1 to 20. At times, we'll make that decision, that even though we know it's not perfect, we're going to keep that 1 to 35 caseload. For monetary reasons, for budgetary reasons, maybe we don't have the staff, or whatever. Well, those extra fifteen clients on that caseload, are they getting everything they deserve, that we as an organization…kind of…like a social contract, should be giving them? I don't know. Maybe? Maybe not, I doubt it….[But]…if you have a social worker that's telling you that they're maxed out and they don't have the time to invest in the individual clients, that's a problem. Go hire someone. Even if it means it's going to have a negative impact on…the organization's bottom line (staff member – leadership staff level).

He continued, talking specifically about how accepting mediocrity is a response to the turmoil often created for staff and the organization more generally from engaging in an organization growth effort. He explained this conflict in the following terms:

> You have all this growth and…[say] you have a million dollar budget, but you have about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of extra capital expense you need to make, and you only have a hundred thousand dollars to do this. So you're making tough decisions about how you're going to spend that money. You're prioritizing things, you're putting others in the cue. Like, this year we're going to do IT, next year we're going to do phones, the year after that we're going to patch the ceiling. All of which are necessities, all of which have an impact on the organization, on morale, on your outcomes (staff member – leadership staff level).

In both of the examples provided by this participant, staff has to accept working at a level that is perhaps less than ideal or does not meet their personal or professional standards. The examples indicate how the decisions that organizations are making in response to the macro level state of conflict trickle down in ways that directly impact staff on an individual level. As such, accepting mediocrity becomes a method of defense. A leadership team member, best describes this as "perfection [being] the enemy of good". He goes on to say:

> Good is okay. Good is good enough. [But] it's a tough position…to be in. Sometimes philosophically, particularly when you're talking about human lives, or you take a step back and you're talking about…whole programs…If you're spread too thin, you don't have the resources to get any given program done, and…let's just stay the contract says you have to help a hundred people, but we know if we were really kind of focused and doing it right, we could help two hundred people. But we're not, and we can't, so we're just going to have to accept the level of…I'll use a word I am not comfortable using, mediocrity. And just because we have too many things going on, we can't focus on that one thing…and that's challenging and I think that has a trickle down effect on staff, and on clients…and it's something that has permeated the organization (staff member – leadership staff level).

A third staff member, a person in a middle management role summed up having to accept mediocrity by stating:

> …it's important for [the organization] to say we're the best in the industry…but in my directors group because we meet every week, all of us feel terrible…we don't feel like we're the best in the industry. We feel like we do shitty [work], we're forced to do shitty work, and we wish we could do more (staff member - middle management level).

In each of the instances participants recalled the ways that having to accept doing less than they would like to do or know they can or should do, was an organizational reality faced regularly by staff members at all levels of the organization. As one participant explained, there was a "trickle down" factor, that he believed made it even more difficult for program and frontline staff members, who were tasked with the serving clients directly. Furthermore, he was certain that

having to embrace mediocrity did not just affect staff but ultimately affected clients in the long run. Regardless, they continued to work to the best of their abilities and with the organizational missions and its clients in mind.

Bearing the burden

In addition to having to accept working to a standard that was less than desirable, participants also talked about responding to the micro state of discord through a process of "bearing the burden". This was portrayed as instances where participants felt responsible for outcomes that were not entirely aligned with the missions or goals of the organizations or when participants felt negatively challenged to meet organizational outcomes. Moreover, this response was described as bearing an emotional burden inflicted by the challenges staff experienced in their role.

When describing her experience as a shelter case manager, one participant talked about the challenges she faced in providing a certain level of service to her clients in the face of the forthcoming closure of the shelter. Although it was closing, the shelter was still housing clients and she did not feel that the organization was maintaining the space to the best of its ability, which she felt the clients picked up on. When asked to elaborate on this she explained:

> People won't stay [in the shelter] if it's a bad environment, and you won't ever [be able to] help them if they leave…and if it's not being kept clean, if things aren't fixed, if the guests can't get along, if the staff are so afraid for their jobs, they're so afraid of what's happening because no one is communicating with them…the [clients] eat it up…they operate from a survival place, so those kinds of emotions…they're much quicker to jump on that stuff, much quicker to react than people who feel stable (staff member – frontline staff level).

She felt that in her role as a case manager her job was not only to provide resources. She also felt it was her responsibility to keep clients, who were already vulnerable, from this engaging in the emotionality resulting from the sense of instability that she described. This instability, induced

by a sense of turbulence taking place at the shelter, was something she believed she needed to personally take on in order to protect her clients. She continued to describe the burden she experienced by saying:

> What I feel like I do a lot of is damage control and peace keeping, and [telling clients] "no, it's cool guys, there's gonna be housing," or "we're gonna do this and don't give up." And it's just holding that hope and making sure that we stay, and we continue to engage in what we're doing, even when I'm just lying through my teeth, or I don't have anything to offer them, really. Or I know that HOAC isn't gonna do anything in my heart, but I have to make them feel like, "oh yeah, HOAC knows that that's broken but they'll fix t, don't worry."…I have to tell them that, and it gets exhausting to lie to people all day (staff member – frontline staff level).

This participant believed that the impending closing of the shelter, which was linked to the changing organizational needs of HOAC, led the organization to make certain decisions in regards to service provision at that location. These decisions placed front level staff in tough positions of not being able to provide services in the ways they needed to or wanted to for clients that were still living in the shelter. Consequently, she did what she could to make to ensure the emotional stability of the clients even though, as she indicated, they picked up on the unrest that was occurring. For her, the most important thing was maintaining a positive experience for clients living in the shelter, which meant bearing the emotional burden that ensued from the state of instability.

A program coordinator's experience at PARC was also characterized by not wanting the clients to experience any of the "behind the scenes" turmoil the organization was experiencing due to having to respond to ongoing "financial realities". She prided herself on the programs she helped to build and maintain and was very concerned with making sure her clients continued to have a positive and enriching experience at the organization, even if it meant emotionally exerting herself to shield them. She explained:

> I hear really good, really wonderful feedback from clients that say that they really appreciate the services, that they enjoy the services…I don't think they are aware of what goes on behind the scene…I don't ever want to make them aware of how hard this is. I feel like I am keeping up the façade and it seems to be working. The clients are happy…they're getting served. Kids are in music class…kids are in art class, that's a great thing…they're learning something. I mean, that's what it's all about….[and] I hope [the difficulties] are not impacting them (staff member – program staff level).

Another example of how staff is burdened by the challenges that result from having to respond to micro level discord is in the pace of work they have to endure. The organizations in the study, particularly HOAC, were very focused on growth and expansion. These efforts were outcomes of the pressures exerted on the organization at various levels, starting with dependent relationship they have with external stakeholders. As such, growth often led to what one development staff member at PARC described existing in a frenetic environment resulting from taking on too much and not knowing what to let go of. This frequently meant working at an unsustainable pace. Although the organizations were always looking to take on new things in order to serve clients better, she explained, "since I started it's just gotten busier and busier and busier…there's just no downtime and you can see it in the staff and in me. It's just always crazy because we haven't identified what not to do". When asked to further explain what it meant to be working in a "crazy" environment such as the one she was alluding to, she continued, "…it's having five projects going, not even able to finish two of them properly, even though they're closing out, and already having to worry about…starting three more along the ways".

Another staff member at PARC described the environment similarly, but her understanding of the frenetic nature of the organization was experienced differently. Nevertheless, there was a burden being borne. This participant explained the nature of the organization constantly needing and wanting to do more led her to being "guilty of caring way too much". She continued by saying, "I invest way too much emotional energy into this

place…maybe at unhealthy levels…and I think it contributes to burnout, I [don't think I] should be so emotionally invested…I give so much here" (staff member - program staff level).

Balancing competing demands.

The last way that participants described responding to existing in a state of micro discord was through the process of having to balance competing demands, which was characterized by staff feeling like they had to balance or navigate demands that were believed to be in conflict with individual roles or the missions and goals of the organization. This was most often experienced in relation to the mandates placed on staff from a member of the leadership team (including board members), funders, or both. These mandates, though not imparted directly to staff, were often communicated through all levels of the organization and, as such, staff felt that there was a balancing act that required significant managing on a daily basis.

In talking about the implementation of the job-training program at PARC one participant, a middle manager, remarked on how she constantly had to provide "evidence" that outputs were being met or that her program was effective. These effectiveness standards were not driven by the guidelines by which the program was created. Rather such standards were designated by external sources (funders, board of directors, etc.) as the criteria by which the program should be deemed successful. The most specific example of this is illuminated by the focus of external stakeholders on job attainment, rather than job preparation. The latter, however, was the core objective of the program. Nevertheless, since this was not something that was ever fully explained to funders or board members nor were people corrected regarding their misunderstanding of the program, this misconception persisted and was something this participant was forced to maneuver on a regular basis.

In describing how she balanced this, she talked about another organization whose entire focus was to provide employment for people. She explained, "we're not Bridging Futures[15], where [they] help people get jobs, we're PARC, [where] we help people get work experience so they can put something on their resume…so there's [an inconsistency between] what I was hired to do and what [I'm] expected to do". This inconsistency again was a result of leadership and other external stakeholder's misunderstanding about the goals of the program. The refusal on the part of the leadership to correct this error led this participant into a balancing act that she described as taking her away from the work she was expected to do in regards to job readiness. She further explained these competing demands of placating external funders while continuing to meet the tasks at hand in the following way:

> If I give a presentation, the questions are usually from board members or from visitors…they wanna know about [employment]. But…I just told you that our focus is on the groundwork of [preparing people for jobs]…but…they always ask me how many people got employed, or what are you doing for people to get employed, or what are you doing as an incentive to congratulate the people who got employed so that they will report back to you that they got [a job]…I'm like, "let me think about that one, what are some incentives…", and when they stop asking me, that's when I'm like OK, let me concentrate on what I really need to do in this process (staff member - middle management level).

In another illustration of having to balance competing demands a member of development and the leadership team at HOAC discussed how these more macro level demands create an imbalance for staff members. He recalled the how an expectation of funders that monies are used appropriately created a sense of pressure that was always at the forefront of his and other leadership team members' minds. In this case, the competing demands took the shape of funders versus organizational needs. He described this imbalance by providing the following example:

[15] This is a pseudonym

> If we have a million dollar budget, and I am spending ten percent of it on [administrative costs], I have nine hundred thousand for programs. If I am spending twenty percent on [administrative costs], I only have eight hundred thousand to spend on programs…it's like that hundred degree pie…there's only so much, if you take from here, or you add here, it's taking from here. So how do we maximize, [especially] when there's an expectation on the part of funders and public that we're going to manage their dollars in more…effective, respectful way? (staff member – leadership staff level)

Another staff member in leadership at HOAC remarked on how the critical need to financially support administrative services and general overhead conflicted with the lack of support to do so. As a staff member whose job was dominated by budget responsibilities, she was constantly engaged in a balancing act between the organization and its staff and the funders. Like many other participants she highlighted that the need for administrative and infrastructure support was absolutely critical, yet consistently underfunded due to what she believed was a lack of trust on the part of funders, both public and private, regarding how monies are spent. When describing the relationship with government funding bodies, she talked about it being a process of "proving [that] every dollar you've spent" is going to exactly what the contract stipulates, which is rarely overhead or administrative support. Consequently, it was believed that the programs and other aspects of the organization suffered, and staff members were left managing these competing demands in order to not dissuade funding sources from contributing in the future. When asked what she believed to be the overall impact of having to balance this particular set of competing demands, she stated:

> …we're caught in the cycle of just being able to barely do what has to be done, and in many cases, not being able to do anything outside of that. We're often, and especially at the staff level, there's no opportunity to think outside-of-the-box or to try something different or to have the flexible funds, to say, "You know what, I think that for this person, paying to have the car fixed is gonna be the key to them being successful in the long run." And it's so restrictive that that's not even an option…We would love to be able to push that [funding] down to the case management level…[but we] can't because if we were to do that, then come an audit time, that expense would 100% become unallowed,

> which means we would never get paid for it, or we have to pay it back (staff member – leadership staff level).

Existing In a State of Discordance

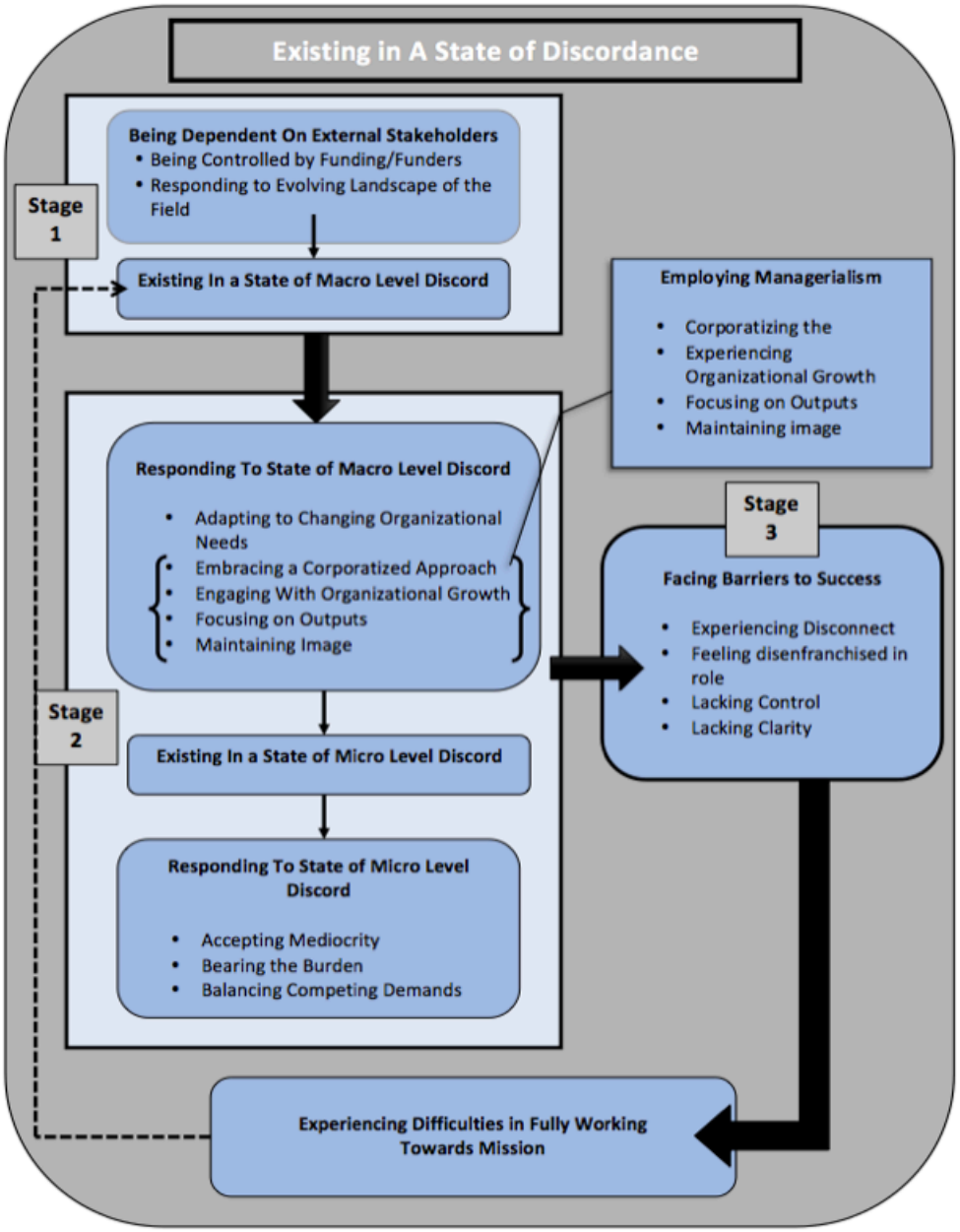
Each of the organizations in the study has a clear mission upon which their work is based, and meeting this mission is the principal focus of the work. The data confirms that the organizations work very hard at and are extremely committed to serving their mission and meeting related goals. However, the findings also suggest that despite the commitment that individual staff members and the organizations overall have to meeting their missions in the most client centered ways possible, this does not occur without considerable challenge. In many cases these challenges were not seen as simply job-related difficulties. For some staff members, they were viewed as significant impediments to being successful. In analyzing the challenges described by participants, a theme of discordance within the organizations became evident. Though talked about differently depending on an individual's role and responsibilities, this idea was present throughout the data and when analyzed, a process by which this discord develops was discerned.

The term discord means a "lack of agreement or harmony". Despite experiencing success in meeting their mission-related goals, this lack of agreement or harmony was something that emerged at all levels of the organization (although it was experienced differently depending on one's position within the staff hierarchy and the responsibilities accompanying their position). Utilizing the findings presented in this chapter, the conceptual model in figure 6.1provides a framework for understanding the discord that emerges at different levels of the organization, and it suggests that as a result of this dissonance, organizations face difficulties in fully realizing their missions and goals. This does not imply that organizations are not meeting their missions, or that

mission drift (a shifting from original mission to a new purpose) is occurring. Rather, it implies that the challenges staff members described as an central aspect of their experiences are impacting the organization in ways that potentially hinder the full achievement of mission related goals.

A Conceptual model of discordance

Figure 6.1: Conceptual Model of Discordance



The model in figure 6.1 consists of three distinct stages. The first stage includes the relationship of dependency on external stakeholders and the macro level state of discord that emerges from this relationship. This discord takes place at highest level of organizational processes and decision-making, meaning that organizational decisions are associated with the dependence on funding bodies as well as the trends taking place in the field (e.g., services to the aging adult population), sometimes at the expense of what is best for the organization and its clients. It also represents a disharmony between the types of approaches needed for the organization to meet its identified goals and mission, and the approaches external sources deem as best or most effective.

Stage 2 encompasses a response to the macro level state of discord, the subsequent emergence of a micro level state of discord, and the ensuing response. The first set of responses is rooted in organizational processes that, again, occur most often at the higher, or more macro levels of the organization. This is not to be confused with the organizational staff hierarchy, as the data indicates that staff at any level may partake in these responsive processes. Rather, the processes are more aligned with higher, more macro level actions that often become lines of reasoning by which the organization engages in certain actions or specific procedures. Based on these macro level actions, a more micro level state of discord develops and, like the state of discord taking place at the macro level, emerges as a disharmony. However, at this level, the tension lies more at level of daily practices and procedures that staff of all levels engage in and, in part, to the response to the macro level state of discord taking place during the first stage of the model. Staff again responds to this discord, but the mechanisms by which they do so are more concentrated at the individual decision-making and action level.

Stage 3 consists of experiencing barriers to success that staff experience. These barriers, which also characterize the internal environment of the organizations, can be understood as resulting from staff having to engage in responses to both the macro and micro levels of discord. When understood as a process, the model helps to illuminate some of the challenges organizations face in fully working towards their mission, despite their intended commitment and efforts.

The following section will utilize the results of the study to explain how the process of discord indicated by the model emerges within social justice nonprofit organizations. In doing so, the ways in which the approaches and practices employed by the organizations contribute to the organizations facing difficulties in fully actualizing their missions and mission related goals becomes clear.

Stage 1

Being dependent on external stakeholders.

The legal structure of nonprofit organizations makes them inherently dependent upon external stakeholders for survival. In the case of social justice nonprofits this dependency, more often than not, this takes the shape of receiving funding from government grants and contracts, foundation funding, and funding from individuals. Each of the organizations in the study receive funding from any or all of these sources, with two of the three organizations relying primarily upon government funding in the form of contracts and, to a lesser extent, grants. One of the organizations does not accept any government funding, a decision in response to the difficulties resulting from extensive reporting requirements attached to government contracting and grant processes, and, according to one participant, to appease conservative donors who "like that we

don't take government funding, so none of their tax dollars go to us" (development staff member – leadership staff member level).

The dependency on external stakeholders took place in two primary ways: being controlled by funding/funders and responding to the evolving landscape of the field. Staff members at all levels of each of the organizations believed that their organization was heavily reliant on the relationship the organization had with various external sources, and it was often acknowledged as somewhat of a necessary evil. The organization cannot accomplish their goals or work towards meeting their missions without funding, but as the data indicates staff experienced the relationship between the organizations and the funders/funding sources (sometimes differentiated by staff) as at best, challenging and at worst, oppressive.

Additionally, policies or public understanding surrounding the issues with which the organizations were concerned also emerged as creating a relationship with external stakeholders based on dependence. Despite a long history in serving their target populations with a deep and intrinsic understanding of the issues faced, they perceived the larger landscape of the field as dictating decision-making processes at macro levels. For instance, several staff members at Aging Well, the older adult services organization in the study, talked about the organization's efforts to partner with the health care industry to provide services. This was a new model for this organization which, historically, had always made decisions regarding the types of services to be provided and had always kept service provision "in house". However, according one participant,

> "…the hot trend and the movement today in aging is…how are we going to lower Medicare costs, how we're gonna provide better serve at a lower cost, keep people healthier longer? And there's more people accessing this system so we've got to figure out how to minimize costs…(staff member – leadership staff level).

A rapidly growing aging population and the ensuing drain on resources have created a need for the healthcare industry to begin thinking about how to provide services differently. The financial influence held by this industry ultimately provides a space for them to enter into the service provision conversation that has historically not included in the industry in this way and allows it to play a part in shaping the direction of the field of older adult service. However, this new relationship did not come without significant challenges. Yet, the industry's level of influence, as well as the potential for funding that accompanies partnerships such as this, represents an example of the dependency on external stakeholders that was frequently referred by participants at this particular organization.

Existing in state of macro level discord.

The highly dependent relationship organizations have with external stakeholders produces a *state of macro level discord*, which can best be understood as a disharmony between the types of approaches the organizations believe are necessary to embrace in order to meet its identified goals and mission, and those that are dictated by external sources in the manner of funding or policy decisions. Study participants characterized this conflict as a disconnect between what they believed the approach should be to doing the work and what was actually occurring based on funding mandates or trends in the field. While there was not always a complete lack of agreement regarding approach, a discontent was present on the part of several staff members who felt negatively challenged by the amount of control funders appeared to exert over the decision making processes of the organization and the everyday administration of the work. Although this process occurs at the macro organizational level, lower level staff members are not precluded from experiencing the discord as organizational level decisions affect staff throughout the organizational hierarchy.

Several participants recalled the way that the "financial realities" of the organization impacted the types of decisions that were made at the higher levels of the organization. For instance, in describing PARC's decisions regarding temporary staffing of the education program when the program coordinator went on leave, she recalled that an ever-increasing concern over having sufficient resources led leadership to inadequately staff her program during her absence. She believed her program was not provided with the staffing needed to amply support the day-to-day activities. She talked specifically about the leadership's decision to temporarily operate the program with volunteers rather than a full-time staff person, which she believed was detrimental to the overall program's functioning. While she acknowledged the quality of the volunteers that give their time to the organization, she believed that to charge volunteers with running a program that is normally run by a full-time staff member ultimately did a disservice to the program as well as its participants. She described the experience in the following way:

> …I had been here for three years. I had built the program up. It was really a lot more work than before, and I hoped, and I talked about hiring somebody [for when I was on leave]. I talked about even hiring a part-time person. I knew college students that would love a part-time job for three months and they were just like, "No". They were just like, "No, you need to find a volunteer to do that." And when I spoke with [my supervisor] she's like, "oh, good. Then they're gonna save some money. This is great! While you're off for three months they're gonna save some money…I'm like, "Is this all I am? A line in your budget?" (Staff member-program staff level).

The decision to save money rather than adequately support the program during this participant's absence was viewed as one that was made without the well being of the program or the clients it served in mind. Rather, the primary consideration was that of "saving money", made this participant question the organization's commitment to the people her program served and the education program overall. This decision, which she described as being based on "financial realities", conflicted with what she understood the goals of the values of organization to be.

In another example a case manager at HOAC discussed her understanding of staff shortages as being related to both the "financial realities" of the organization as well as the ways that higher-level decisions are made based on funding opportunities, not organizational priorities. She believed these decisions, while perhaps necessary given certain constraints, nevertheless created significant strain on program operation. While she admittedly felt like she did not fully know the whole picture given her limited access as a case manager to leadership and management level decision making processes, she believed that decisions were ultimately made without full consideration for program capacity. For instance, in describing HOAC's expansion into different markets, she felt that the attainment of funding did not always come with enough planning to implement programs sufficiently or appropriately. She said,

> …they don't appropriate enough, or something gets misappropriated and all of a sudden I don't know why [but] you can't the staff or…you can't hire people. I don't know why, but that seems to be HOAC's issue, hiring. I don't understand. But yeah, like in Fresno…they opened Fresno. They make one woman…the executive director, and the financial officer, and the hiring manager, and this and that and that. And she said, "fuck you" and quit one day. And walked out. There was way too much for one person to do (staff member - frontline staff level).

In this case, a new service site was created through the acquisition of an existing organization in the city of Fresno[16]. The opportunity to expand into this geographic location was in line with the organization's expansion strategy and goals, which was focused on developing services in new markets to meet unmet needs, often at the request of city and community leaders. An executive team member at HOAC described the agency's expansion as being driven partly by the organization "wanting to try to fill a need and ultimately, our mission's really broad, it's to end homelessness…so if we're doing that, then we want to be able to do that for as many people and as many communities as possible". She goes on to explain:

[16] Not the actual city where this expansion took place

> When you've been in one community for so long, again, many people within the LA community still think of HOAC as a shelter operator, and that's just such a small piece of what we do now. We're trying to shift that perception, but at the same time, in other communities, for example in Fresno, we have this expertise in terms of these field-based services, the mental health services and the other aspects that we're really trying to shift more and more towards…we can pursue Medi-Cal certification in those areas where it would be harder to do [in LA], and then we can come back and do it here once we've got the experience elsewhere. So there's those kinds of things, you just have opportunities that you wouldn't have in a larger market by going into other areas (staff member- executive staff level).

The combination of the need for services, the desire for HOAC's expertise on the part of policy makers and city leaders, and the availability of funding and other opportunities made available to HOAC to engage in regional expansion led the organization to incorporate rapid and expansive growth into their organizational strategy. However, as one case manager noted, this effort was not always met with the same enthusiasm from staff given the degree of stress this placed on existing services and employees. In other words, the organization's enthusiasm and desire to expand was not always aligned with their capacity to do so. Nevertheless, as many participants noted, HOAC continued the expansion because not doing so was viewed as posing a risk to the organization's abilities to secure future funding. An executive staff member described this reality in the following way:

> I would say one of our challenges too is that we actually, probably a year and a half to two years ago, we decided we don't really want to grow much anymore, we need [the infrastructure] to catch up to [the growth], but the environment hasn't really allowed for that because if you don't apply for something, for example, homeless services has gotten so much attention and funding over the past few years, if you stay out of it right now because you're like, "We've gotta get ourselves together," then you miss the boat and you can't get back in (staff member- executive staff level).

This example points to the control that ensues from the dependent relationship organizations have with external stakeholders. As this participant revealed, to cease applying for funding that was being made increasingly available due to the evolving landscape of homeless services—even

though a focus on infrastructure was necessary at that time—would have posed serious risk to the financial health, and perhaps the legitimacy, of the organization. As such, applying for funding and the acquisition of service sites through organizational mergers continued relatively unabated for approximately five years, regardless of the lack of organizational infrastructure to support the growth.

This does not imply that organizational leadership did not recognize existence or significance of this conflict. As was observed by one executive staff member, the organization did acknowledge the need to focus on infrastructure. However, they were forced to contend with making certain decisions, which ultimately propelled HOAC into a state of macro level discord fueled by the organization's dependent relationship with external stakeholders. Furthermore, this instance indicates the ways in which the evolving landscape of the field and the control that funders have over organizations work in concert with one another to further reinforce the relationship of dependency. In this case, the dissonance takes the shape of making decision to not focus on developing critical infrastructure to support the programmatic work of the organization developed during a growth period. As one case manager alluded to, this had severe repercussions for staff and programming more generally.

Stage 2.

Responding to state of macro level discord.

The discord that resulted from the dependent relationship between the organizations and external stakeholders produced several mechanisms of response on the part of staff which, for each of the organizations in the study, became a primary lens through which they made decisions and implemented daily practices and procedures. As was previously described, the responses emerged in two primary ways following ways: a) adapting to changing organizational needs, b)

employing managerialism. Again, staff often discussed their understanding of these responses as conflicting with what they believed to the best or most appropriate ways to meet missions and goals. Because of these processes, which staff described as having a more direct impact on the everyday practices and procedures implemented at various organizational levels, another state of discord emerged, this time at the more micro level.

During the course of the research, Homeless Outreach and Assistance Coalition (HOAC), the homeless services agency in the study, was engaged in the closing of long held service site, which, according to leadership, had become financially burdensome to the organization. This site, a temporary homeless shelter serving approximately 60 chronically homeless individuals, was to close rather quickly, and the staff would be laid off. Staff knew little information regarding the closure, but they understood the termination as a direct response to the city's push toward a rapid rehousing model—a model that focused on quickly rehousing homeless individuals and that discouraged transitional housing models such as the traditional homeless shelter. As a result of this shift in perspective, organizations were redirecting transitional housing funds into contracts designed to fund the rapid rehousing model.

Despite the organization's long history of the providing some sort of transitional housing as part of their service model, the shift in funding priorities meant that the needs of the organization were changing, and, thus, an adaptation process had to occur. Although she was not entirely sure of the reasons a case manager at the site being closed speculated that shifts in perspectives regarding how to serve the homeless on the part of policy makers, and subsequently, funding changes to services were to blame. She said,

> It's not cost effective to run anymore…it just isn't…it just doesn't work. I don't know why…but I think that [the organization has] a whole other vision that I'm not even privy to, and I could speculate all day about…I think they want to go completely to permanent housing, I think that's what they want to do…[because] Housing First is the way of the

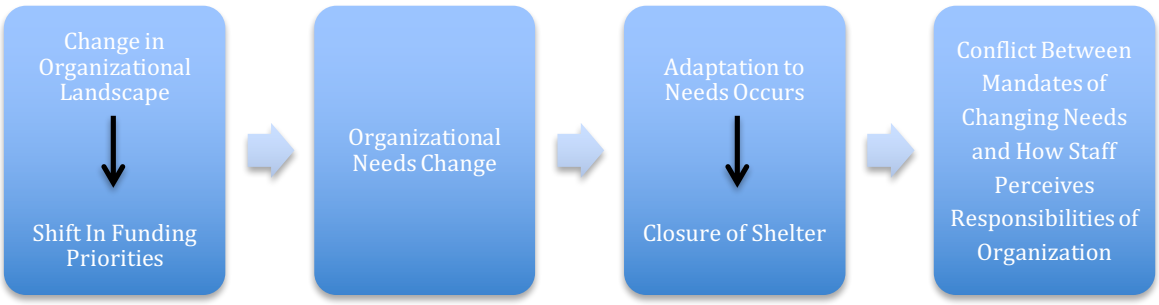
> future, and that shelters and 90 day stuff doesn't get as much funding anymore because everyone wants to be Housing First, so nobody wants to fund the shelters (staff member – frontline staff level).

For this participant, the closure of the shelter and the move toward focusing on more permanent housing presented a conflict. She understood this shift as beneficial in the goal of helping to decrease homelessness, but she felt that the organization closed the shelter because 1) it just "didn't have the focus or the money to put to [the site]" and 2) they wanted to sell the land. For her, the organization was compromising its commitment to clients by not thinking about the repercussions of closing transitional housing and moving to a predominantly rapid rehousing/housing first model. In discussing the move toward the rapid rehousing model and the subsequent closure of the shelter, she remarked, "Do you just want people to sit on the street until they can go to housing? Why don't you want a place for them to go in-between?"

Existing in a state of micro level discord

This case manager's experience illustrates an example of how micro level discord emerged as a result of the organization's response to the more macro level discord. The closure of the shelter contributed to the feelings of conflict at the individual level, meaning that it shaped her every day experiences as a case manager directly serving clients, and it created a personal dissatisfaction with the decisions the organization made and the practices to carry out these decisions. Figure 6.2 indicates the process by which this took place.

Figure 6.2: Micro Level Discord



Responding to state of micro level discord.

Similar to the responses to the macro level stage of discord, a response to the more micro level state of discord emerged. These responses consist of the ways that staff described having to: a) accept mediocrity, b) balance competing demands, and c) bear the burden. Each of these responses signifies a modification of both thought process and behavior related to individual job roles and responsibilities. Study participants described feeling like they were unable to do their very best work because of some process or procedure that was resulting from the response to macro level discord. They also reported feeling like they were forced to contend with feelings of conflict created by demands that contrasted with organizational goals or individuals' roles in helping to meet these goals. Overall, they felt negatively challenged to meet organizational outcomes.

For instance, Poverty Action and Relief Center (PARC) developed and implemented a job-training program based on the increased focus of funders and policy on job preparation and creation after the 2008 economic recession. The leadership at PARC believed that, as a poverty relief organization, they were well positioned to respond to this broader call to help people re-enter the workforce, which also had the widespread backing of both government and private

sources. Consequently, the organization established a goal of making 1000 individuals "job ready" and implemented a job-training program to meet this objective. However, for the staff responsible for securing funding and/or executing the program, the program often felt more focused on meeting numbers rather than providing quality job training which, for one staff member, made her feel like her job was simply to "push numbers as well" (development staff member – leadership staff member level). She went on to describe the program as "wrong on so many levels…a top-down failure in leadership. We should have never set this arbitrary goal with the strange number without having worked on it [as a staff]. It's the tail wagging the dog."

Stage 3**.**

Experiencing job related challenges.

For many participants, the modification process that occurred as a result of the micro level discord experienced contributed to what staff experienced as significant barriers to success. These challenges included experiencing disconnect, feeling disenfranchised in role, lacking control, lacking clarity, and facing barriers to success, and the challenges were often described in relation to the internal organizational culture. For the participants, most of whom did not occupy the highest of executive levels, (CEOs, for example), they experienced feeling both disconnected from decision-making processes and procedures, and discontented with the ways in which hierarchical staff structures contributed to the creation of what was described as impenetrable silos.

Staff also described lacking both control and clarity regarding decisions making processes and the everyday practices and procedures that governed their jobs. This lack of clarity and control often forced staff members to engage in negotiation processes that were aimed at managing the ramifications of decisions or processes by which they were unable to directly

engage in. Finally, a sense that the staffs' modification of thought processes and behaviors towards the micro level discord often resulted in significant barriers to success in their role. Though different depending on the position and role, almost all of the study participants identified barriers they believed kept them from being as successful as they would like to be or knew they could be.

Experiencing Difficulties in Working Towards Mission

The conceptual model of discordance expounded upon in this chapter illuminates how organizations enter into a state of discordance at varying levels because of the relationship of dependency and control they are in with external stakeholders. The ways in which this discordance materializes, the varying responses that emerge to counter this dissonance, and the challenges to success that staff face as result of this process were explained. In doing so, the model demonstrates how a range of difficulties emerge throughout organizations that inhibit them from being able to always work in ways that wholly support the mission and goals to the fullest extent.

It is clear from the data that staff at all levels work very hard to ensure quality services for clients and, regardless of the range of challenges experienced, passion and commitment to helping the organization meet its missions and goals remains a driving factor in continuing to do the work. Many staff described their commitment to the clients and the social issue the organization responded more broadly, as the reason for enduring the challenges that were believed to be inherent to the nature of nonprofit and social justice work. However, despite their incessant drive to continue to support the well-being of clients in best, most empowering ways possible, the data also revealed that the discordance experienced by the organizations sometimes keeps the organization from fully realizing their missions and goals. This does not imply that the

organizations are not successful in their efforts or that they are drifting from their intended objectives. Rather, it indicates that because of the dependent relationship that the organizations have with external stakeholders, which often dictates much of what they can and cannot do, meeting their missions to the fullest of their abilities, or in the ways they want to, becomes an enduring challenge characterized by disconnect.

In the case of HOAC, the organization was engaged in a rapid and continued growth process that expanded the organization from a regional nonprofit to a statewide player in the field of homeless services. Staff size increased from approximately 50 employees to upwards of 350 staff members in a period of three or so years. This growth, which was one of the responses to the dissonance that the organization faced from existing in a relationship of dependency with external stakeholders, had a dramatic impact on all levels of the organization. In many cases programs were extended beyond capacity in order to handle the growth. New emphases were added to the roster of existing services, particularly in the realm of veteran homelessness and, as many staff noted, other organizational priorities suffered.

The mission on the agency was focused on ending homelessness, and everything they did was in service to this mission. However, given the constant state of transition and development the organization was engaged in, staff questioned whether or not HOAC was, in fact, fully working towards it mission and goals in the ways they intended. For one staff member, the idea of "things looking good on paper" was the driving force behind all decisions. In other words, decisions might seem appropriate or advantageous in theory, but in practice the implementation often proved far more complicated. She stated, "I just feel like…you could talk about the people we serve all you want but go work with them and that's a whole other ball game (executive staff member – executive staff member level)".

While this type of approach was never seen as one that was used to be intentionally injurious to the organization, the implications were, nevertheless, often felt to be just that. One executive team member explained this by providing the following example related to the rapid adoption of veterans services:

> " The agency is like "woo hoo!" But then you just start seeing the ramifications…We have a lot of veterans falling out of housing. The staff turnover rate was phenomenal…we have a huge turnover…and so what happens is the veteran is like "whatever." You know? Because relationships are important in this work…so if [a client] has five case managers within two months, they're going to be like, "what is this stupid case management?"…They're not going to have that person that they feel comfortable going to all of the time (staff member – executive staff level).

This illustration provides insight into how the organization exists within a state of discordance, and illuminates the challenges in fully realizing mission and goals that ensue. The relationship of dependency on external stakeholders led HOAC to engage in unremitting growth that resulted in a dramatic organizational expansion.

The availability of funding and the changing landscape of the field forced the organization into a state of macro level discord where responding to these factors was considered obligatory. As the process of expansion began, a response on the part of staff members took place, which included, but was not limited to, an intense focus on outputs. This, in turn, created a micro level state of disharmony where staff felt forced to accept mediocrity in their work, to balance many competing demands, and to bear a substantial burden since outcomes for clients could rarely be fully met. As a result of all of these processes, staff faced substantial barriers to being successful in their roles. In the example provided by the executive staff member, this led to high staff turnover and clients not being provided with the high quality services the organization intended to deliver. She described the clients as being negatively impacted by this whole process. Since the primary purpose of the organization is to provide services to homeless individuals,

when breakdowns in the minutiae of the programs and services occur in the ways that this participant described, working to realize the mission in the most comprehensive way possible becomes difficult.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the types of internal and environmental contexts social justice nonprofits exist within and the effects of these environments on the approaches and practices of the organizations. The findings indicate that the external environment plays a significant role in dictating the kinds of approaches the organization takes to meet its missions and goals, and the practices they employ on a daily basis are intricately connected to these approaches. These approaches and practices take place, albeit differently, at both the macro and micro levels of the organizations.

In describing their experiences with the approaches and practices embrace by their organizations, staff alluded to the emergence of a state of discordance that permeates the organization. This discord was described as occurring at both the macro and micro level, and participants described having experienced several barriers to success as a result. Furthermore, in discussing the ways that they felt challenged by the organizations' approaches and practices, it became evident the existence of macro and micro discord potentially limits the organizations' abilities to meet their missions and goals to the fullest extent desired.

Pre and Post Analysis Impressions

The researcher held certain impressions of the organizational processes taking place prior to beginning the study. These impressions informed the research questions and the study procedures. The primary concept of interest was managerialism, and the researcher was sensitive to how managerialist processes and practices were taking place in each of the organizations in

the study. Table 6.1 contains pre and post study impressions of the researcher. The a priori column indicates the impressions the researcher had of managerialism, as well as how it was might be manifested within an organizational context. The post analysis column indicates the reality of managerialism within organization compared to the researcher's initial impressions.

Table 6.1-Pre and Post Analysis Impressions

A Priori	Post Analysis
Managerialism is intentionally and willingly embraced by organizations	Managerialism is less of an intentional action and more of a response process to difficulties experienced by organizations due to the relationship they have with external stakeholders
Managerialism results, in part, due to resource scarcity/dependency	Managerialism results, not just from resource scarcity/dependency, but also from individual belief systems regarding what determines effectiveness
Frontline staff are most affected by processes of managerialism	Staff at all levels is impacted, not just frontline staff
Managerialism contributes to challenges in meeting missions and goals	Managerialism contributes to challenges in meeting missions and goals, but it is part of a larger process occurring for organizations resulting from the relationship of dependency with external stakeholders

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation study is guided by the assumption that there are inherent differences in the purpose and function of nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Anheier, 2005). As such, it is questionable whether the adoption of approaches and practices rooted in the for-profit sector are the most appropriate means for organizations focused on social justice and social change to meet their intended missions and goals. Nevertheless, nonprofit organizations of all kinds and sizes are compelled, for a variety of reasons, to embrace the principles and practices of managerialism (Maier, et.al, 2016) and doing so has become conventional.

Research on nonprofits becoming more "business-like" in their structures and functions has garnered considerable interest from the academic community in recent years, particularly among scholars in the fields of organizational and management studies. Nevertheless, despite the proliferation of research on varying aspects of this topic, an understanding of how managerialism is operationalized by organizations and the implications of this trend, remains an underdeveloped area of inquiry (Maier, et.al, 2016). With this in mind, this research sought examine the processes by which nonprofit embrace and operationalize managerialist approaches and practices, and the effects of this trend on the staff, clients, and organizations more generally. Doing so within the context of social justice nonprofit organizations expressly moves the research beyond the realm of organizational and management studies into the field of social welfare.

Furthermore, the emphasis on social justice organizations extends the examination of the effects of managerialism beyond a focus on internal organization structures and processes to one that assesses how managerialism impacts the relationships organizations have with larger social

change efforts. Since one of the goals of social justice organizations is to mitigate the effects of systemic inequality on disenfranchised populations, analysis of the consequences of managerialism within this specific context provides a framework for beginning to examine how the adoption of managerialist practices and approaches may inadvertently contribute to the maintenance of inequality.

Rather than focusing explicitly on managerialism during interviews with participants, a more exploratory approach to data collection was taken. In other words, participants were never explicitly asked about the how they understood managerialism, or whether they believed their organizations were operating in ways akin to for-profits. Instead, a range of questions were developed (see appendix B) to encourage participants to talk openly and honestly about their roles and responsibilities, their experiences working for their organization, and their understandings of organization's missions and goals. This was an intentional approach informed by the perspectives of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Although the researcher was sensitive to the concept of managerialism throughout data collection, avoiding the concept directly created allowed space for it to emerge organically in the conversations. In other words, participants were free to describe their experiences in whatever way felt appropriate, which meant that if managerialism was important or relevant it would likely emerge from the conversation. This did, in fact, prove to be the case as most of the participants referenced some element of managerialism during the interviews.

Approaching the research from an environmental perspective meant that the study was not limited to simply exploring managerialism. Rather, the participants at each organization were able to reflect upon and construct their experiences working at their organizations in ways that were complex, highly personal, and unique to the individual. As such, a holistic picture of each

organization emerged, one that not only reflected how managerialism is operationalized, but also enabled the distinctive nature of each organization and their shared experiences and challenges to become visible.

The Environmental Contexts of Social Justice Nonprofits

Existing In a State of Discordance

In accordance with the theory of Neoinstitutionalism, which states that organizations are influenced by their external environments to adopt certain processes or procedures, this research revealed that the organizations in this study were engaged in complex processes of adaptation focused on ensuring both survival and vitality. This is not unique to these organizations, as most nonprofits find themselves beholden to external stakeholders secure funds and to establish legitimacy to ensure their survival. However, what emerged from the data was a more complex and multifarious picture than is typically depicted in the research examining the relationship of nonprofits organizations to their external environments.

The study revealed that nonprofit organizations are not only highly influenced by their environments (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), but that this relationship is characterized by a dependency that has a significant impact on all aspects of the organization. In other words, participants at all levels of the organizations described their organizations as being exceedingly reliant upon the whims of funders and policy makers. This dependency was explained in ways that illuminated a sense of uncertainty and doubt that permeated the organization from the top to the bottom. Furthermore, it contributed to the organizations existing in a perpetual state of discordance, which ultimately came to characterize the environment within which these organizations existed. Subsequently, a conceptual model of discordance was developed to better understand this unique environmental context. The model not only illustrates the states of

discordance these organizations exist within, but also illuminates the approaches and practices the organizations embrace as a result of this unique environment. Furthermore, it establishes the specific ways that managerialism emerges and is adopted as a result of the organization's environment.

The model suggests that as a result of the highly dependent relationship organizations have with external stakeholders, discordance at varying organizational levels occurs. As chapter 7 explains this is most commonly understood as a sense of tension between what the organization and its staff have to do in order for the relationship to remain in good standing, and what is believed to be best for the organization. This tension results in decisions that are made at the macro and micro levels based on what the organization believes it needs to do to continue working towards meeting its mission and goals, and what individual staff need to do to continue their work in ways that feel professionally and personally acceptable (this is described in varied ways among the participants). These decisions result in a range of response processes designed manage the tension that arises. However, as the model suggests, these response processes often lead to more experiences of discord rather than harmony, ultimately resulting in staff at varying levels facing multiple barriers to doing their jobs in ways that they deem to be successful.

At the macro level, these response processes consist of adapting to the changing needs of the organization, embracing a corporatized approach, engaging with organizational growth processes, focusing on outputs, and striving to maintain organizational image. At the micro level, the processes take the shape of accepting mediocrity in one's work, balancing competing demands, and bearing an emotional burden.

Managerialism As a Response to Discord

Although participants were not asked explicitly about it, the data confirmed that managerialism was occurring in four primary ways within the organizations: 1) embracing a corporatized approach; 2) engaging in and perceiving organizational growth; 3) focusing on outputs and; 4) maintaining image (Maier & Meyer, 2009). These findings are aligned with other studies showing evidence of nonprofits for adopting a corporatized approach and increasing focus on outputs (Alexander, 2009; Dart, 2004), and confirm the Neoinstitutional thesis that organizations will adopt practices and procedures that are defined by external stakeholders as the norm.

Staff members did not use the term managerialism to describe these indicators, nor did they refer to any of these processes as the organization becoming more "business-like" in its function or orientation. Rather, they described these tactics as higher-level organizational approaches that are taken in order to respond to and manage the macro level discord that ensues from the relationship of dependency the organizations have with external stakeholders. These approaches emerged as a result of the discord the organizations were experiencing, and were viewed as the means by which the state of dissonance could be successfully navigated and managed. In other words, embracing managerialist approaches was done with the best of intentions and in direct response to the organizational environment of discord. Regardless, in many cases participants described the opposite effect occurring. These efforts to respond to the macro state of discord resulted not in successful management of the conflict, but in the emergence of additional discord at the micro level.

To navigate discord at the micro levels, much of which was described by participants as occurring because of the onset of managerialism, another set of responses were employed. However, in this case, the responses were concentrated more heavily on the individual actions

that staff members needed to engage in order to navigate the discordance while continuing to their jobs. Many participants, particularly those at lower levels of the staff structure, described instances where they believed the response processes they had to engage in, accepting mediocrity in their work, for example, negatively affected service quality and clients' experiences. Although they did not describe these challenges in terms of managerialism specifically, since the response processes resulted from the practices of managerialism employed by the organization, it can be reasonably concluded that managerialism has an adverse effect at the micro level as well. These findings are similar to those reported in other studies, such as the research conducted by Alexander (1999) and Alexander, et.al (1999).

Meeting Missions and Goals

The final stage of the conceptual model of discordance indicates the barriers to success faced by staff, which were seen as resulting from the organization having to function in an environment characterized by discord. These barriers were experienced by staff at all levels (although not every staff member experienced each of the barriers identified), and were described as experiencing disconnect, feeling disenfranchised, and lacking control and clarity about organizational decisions and processes. For participants that described experiencing these barriers to success, the challenges were often discussed in relation to the organization's overall mission and goals. Staff members felt that the barriers they experienced to meeting success, as they defined it, ultimately contributed to the organization not being able to fully realize their missions and goals in the ways intended.

This is not to say that the organizations were failing to meet their missions. Rather, it infers that the challenges staff experienced, many of which led to participants feeling like they were unable to meet their full potential related to their specific roles and responsibilities,

contributed to the organization not being to realize their missions to the fullest extent possible. That is to say, staff viewed their success as inherently connected to the success of the organization. When one failed to achieve in the ways desired, so did the other. These findings point to the ways in which the experiences of staff are inherently connected to the abilities of the organizations to maximize their potential related to meeting goals and achieving missions. This was an unanticipated finding that presents opportunities for future research examining the relationship between staff experience and organizational success.

The conceptual model describing how these organizations exist in a state of discordance also suggests that while the approaches and practices of social justice nonprofits are intrinsically rooted in the effort to maintain a focus on mission and goals in service to this purpose, many of these processes ultimately serve to encumber their efforts. As such, the findings indicated that the organizations might be inadvertently working against these aims. Although the organizations were never intentionally working to destabilize their mission related efforts, in many ways the critical relationship of dependency that the organizations had with external stakeholders served to do so. This occurred differently within each of the organizations in the study depending on organizational size, structure, and staff make up. Nevertheless, this destabilization was evident, to some degree, in each of the organizations. However, as the data reveals, they are often left with little in the way of other options, as the relationship of dependency significantly restricts the organizations from working in ways that they believe to be more aligned with achieving mission related outcomes.

This study was explicitly concerned with advancing greater understanding of the environmental contexts within which social justice nonprofits operate, and how managerialism emerges and is operationalized within these specific contexts. In exploring these questions the

ways in which the practices of SJNOs support or hinder the organization's missions and goals became evident. Processes such as engaging in funding diversification due to the precariousness of existing funding sources, for example, were seen as effective means by which to continue to support the organization's mission. However, as many staff noted, there were additional processes or practices that emerged from these types of efforts that were seen as resulting in significant unintended consequences for staff and the organization overall.

These unintended consequences can be understood best as a conflict of values. This conflict is characterized by a disharmonious relationship between meeting the needs of clients and communities with dignity and support informed by a set of professional values (the social work code of ethics, for example), and a set of values imposed by external stakeholders that is based on expediency and efficiency informed by a for-profit perspective. As the data indicates, the latter not only directly contradicts the former in certain ways, but not adhering this particular set of values is seen as threatening to the organization's very survival. As such, the organizations are left with little alternative, and the cycle of discord identified in the conceptual model continues.

Persisting In Spite of Challenges

As this study suggests, existing in a state of discordance contributes to an environment where social justice nonprofits are forced to contend with a range of macro and micro level challenges. While these difficulties do not prohibit the organizations from meeting their goals, the data indicates that they experience several challenges that impede them from meeting their goals to the fullest extent. However, the data also suggests that these challenges do not define these organizations, they are simply a part of the reality of doing the very difficult work of trying to improve the lives of individuals and communities affected by systemic inequality.

Although participants frequently recounted the difficult experiences they had due to their organization's reliance on external stakeholders and the relationship of dependency that ensued, they also discussed the ways they continued to positively impact clients, regardless of the challenges they encountered. While they often believed they could do more and wanted to think about ways to do so, they were also confident that the organizations were effectively contributing to lessening the impact of the overall social problem they addressed (homelessness, poverty, and aging for low-income older adults). Furthermore, while the challenges identified were described as difficult to navigate at times, they were not seen as deterrents. Rather, they were understood as a part of the reality of doing the difficult work of caring for others. Regardless of the difficulties faced, staff acknowledged that it was still possible to maintain high standards and to keep the well being of clients at the forefront of their work. Although this was not always easy for the organization as a whole given the range of challenges they faced resulting from the relationship of dependency with external stakeholders, staff felt capable of doing so as individuals. Their commitment to the work was evident and was seen as a driving factor in working through the challenges they experienced, irrespective of how insurmountable some of the difficulties seemed at times. This is a testament to the individuals as well as the organizations overall who, despite existing in a paradoxical state shaped by needing to persevere in the face of persistent discordance, continue to successfully work towards meeting their missions.

Implications For Future Research

This study increases our understanding of how the environments within which nonprofit organizations operate contribute to the organizations' abilities to fully meet their missions and goals in ways that they deem appropriate for the clients they are responsible to. The findings were complex and multidimensional, and led to the creation of a conceptual model that can

inform further research aimed at understanding how managerialism emerges and is operationalized, as well as the potential impact of this trend on organizations and larger efforts at mitigating social problems.

While staff often talked about how they believed the approaches and practices of their organizations impacted clients, the interviews tended to remain focused on the organizational processes and the impact they had on participants. For some, particularly frontline staff members who worked regularly with clients, their experiences could not be divorced from that of the clients, and so the conversation naturally included their perspectives on client impact. However, other staff members did not speak as explicitly on the subject, either because it did not come up as part of the conversation or because their role as a higher-level staff member disconnected them from the day-to-day interaction with clients.

As such, this research provides a somewhat limited understanding of how the environment within which social justice nonprofit organizations or managerialism operates impacts client outcomes. This presents an opportunity for future research to expand upon some of the insights garnered in this study in an effort to more fully understand how clients are affected by environmentally induced organizational processes. Furthermore, since frontline staff were the participants most likely to make the connections to client experiences, research focusing explicitly on the experiences of these of employees at social justice nonprofits would be appropriate. This also represents an opportunity to continue to bridge the study of organizations with the field of social welfare, as client outcomes are a primary concern social of social welfare research.

Implications For Organizational Practice

This research has considerable implications for practice in the fields of social welfare, nonprofit management, and other professions where social justice is a primary concern. The data indicated that much of the concern regarding challenges the organizations faced as a result of existing in a state of discordance was related to a conflict of values. Although they did not always use this language explicitly, many staff described their experiences with the organization's approaches or practices in ways that indicated a compromise of their professional values.

Research in this area may compel external stakeholders to treat their relationship with organizations differently, or to take the social imperative these organizations have and the values that accompany it into greater account. However, it is not likely that this needle will be quickly moved, so it remains up to the organizations, particularly leadership, to pay active attention to how the value systems between the organizations and their external environments may be competing, and the unintended consequences that may arise from this process.

All of the organizations in the study had, or were about to engage, in a formal strategic planning process, indicating that planning and reflection was a valued part of the organizational culture. However, understanding the conflicting nature of the competing sets of values might need to go beyond engaging formal strategic planning or other processes where staff is able to provide input. Instead, it necessitates a paradigm shift on the part of the organization to include a process of continual reflection and feedback focused explicitly on understanding and navigating the competing set of values, and approaching this shift from the range of staff perspectives represented, not just those at the top of the hierarchy. It is through this type of process that organizations focused on increasing equity for disenfranchised individuals and communities will

be able to achieve this goal internally as well, conceivably leading to greater success in meeting their missions and goals.

APPENDIX_A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What you believe the primary role(s) of the organization to be?

2. What do you believe are the specific goals of the organization?

3. In what ways do you believe the organization is going about trying to meet these goals?

4. In what ways do you believe the organization is successful at meeting the goals you identified?

5. What do you believe are the challenges the organization faces in meeting the goals you identified?

6. How do these challenges affect the organization's abilities to fulfill it's overall purpose?

7. What processes do you believe the organization employs to navigate these challenges?

8. If you could change anything about the how the organization goes about trying to meet its goals, what would it be and why?

9. How would you describe the overall organizational culture/climate?

10. How would you describe as **your** primary role(s) as a/the (insert staff title here).

11. What has your experience working as the/a [title] at this organization been like?

12. How do you see your role as (insert staff title here) contributing to the overall goals of the organization?

13. In your ideal world, how would you go about addressing the issue of (insert social issue organization responds to)

APPENDIX B

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Managerialism in Social Justice Nonprofit Organizations: A Critical Exploration of the Experiences of Program Level Staff Members

Lauren Willner, MSW, from the Department of Social Welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is conducting a research study to fulfill the requirements of the Doctoral Degree in Social Welfare.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you work at a nonprofit organization in the large metropolitan area where the study is taking place. Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The goal of this study is to better understand the experiences of program level staff that work at nonprofit organizations in the metropolitan area where the study is being conducted

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Complete a short questionnaire about your role in your organization via an online survey tool and to sit for an interview that will last approximately 1 hour.
- Complete a follow up questionnaire at the end of the study
- Interview Questions: As a participants you will be asked to reflect upon your experineces serving as a staff member at your organization, your experiences in your specific role, and your opinions about your organization in general.
- Interviews will take place at a location determined by the reseacher and the participant

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 1-2 hours. This includes the initial questionnaire, the interview, and the follow up questionnaire.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
There are no anticipated risks or discomforts from participating in this study

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study.

Will information about my participation and me be kept confidential?
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you or your organization will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

- Using of pseudonyms for individuals and organizations in any written material.
- Securing recorded interview data on a password protected hard drive that cannot be accessed by anyone other than the researcher.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Principal Investigator:
  Lauren Willner, MSW lwillner@g.ucla.edu
  Faculty Sponsors:
  Dr. Todd Franke tfranke@ucla.edu
  Dr. Lené Levy-Storms lstorms@ucla.edu

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records

Name of Participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Name of Person Seeking Consent _____ Date _____

Signature of Person Seeking Consent _____ Date _____

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