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Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations : A Qualitative Study

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WOMEN LEADERS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

Lisa M. Pohlmann, B.A., M.I.A., M.A.

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the

Ph.D. in Public Policy

Muskie School of Public Service

University of Southern Maine

December, 2013

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Following the dissertation defense, the committee shall vote on approval of the dissertation. The committee may decide by majority vote: To approve the dissertation as is; to approve subject to minor editorial revisions; to require additional substantive revisions and a subsequent additional defense; or to disapprove the dissertation. This form is filled out if the dissertation is approved as is or approved subject to minor editorial revisions.

Dissertation Title: "Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations: A Qualitative Study"

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Dissertation is approved as is.

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By Lisa M. Pohlmann

Dissertation Advisor: Barbara Fraumeni, Ph.D.
Chair of the Ph.D. Program in Public Policy

An Abstract of the Dissertation Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Ph.D. in Public Policy
December, 2013

This study takes a phenomenological and grounded theory approach to the exploration of women's leadership in environmental advocacy organizations, a relatively new but growing phenomenon in the U.S. environmental movement. The findings are drawn from interviews with 12 women who led state-level, nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations across the United States in 2010-2011. The study analyzes these leaders' perspectives on what it means to be effective in their roles as organizational and policy leaders and what challenges they face as women leaders in their work. The study is relevant to public policy because of the insights it provides on how women's experiences and priorities are shaping the direction of environmental policymaking through their roles as advocacy leaders.

Leadership research shows that dichotomous frameworks such as transformational versus transactional leadership styles often have gender associations. The study reveals

that these women incorporate a blend of transformational and transactional leadership approaches, which they believe has made their organizations and their coalitions effective. The study concludes that androgynous leadership approaches are most effective for women and men who lead environmental advocacy organizations. The study also finds that female leaders are setting a collaborative tone for their advocacy organizations, moving away from more antagonistic and polarizing approaches. This has implications for how policymakers work with their organizations, and how effective these organizations are in achieving their policy goals. The study does not directly investigate the integration of race, class, gender, and other identity characteristics into policy agenda setting and leadership approaches, but concludes that the environmental movement still lacks a prominent feminist analysis of its approaches and objectives. The growing number of women leaders and their tendencies toward self-reflection, inclusion, attentiveness to individual and diverse needs, and collaboration might help the environmental movement better integrate those feminist concerns, but likely not without clear goals to that effect and strong organizational buy-in and support.

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CHAPTER 1: STUDY OVERVIEW

The development of environmental organizations in the United States began in the late 19th century and grew significantly in the last 40 years of the 20th century. With an estimated 6,500 national and 200,000 local environmental organizations that represent 20 to 30 million members, the environmental sector now represents one of the largest and longest running social movements (Brulle, 2008). Environmental challenges have multiplied as well. The negative impacts of population growth have resulted in the loss of open space and wilderness habitat for wildlife, as well as in more toxic pollution. The prolonged and increasing burning of fossil fuels has resulted in global warming with a growing array of negative impacts and potentially irreversible changes to the biosphere and the climate. Emerging areas of concern in the environmental movement in the last twenty years include the urban environment, transportation, food production and distribution, biodiversity, continued population growth, open space, globalization, and immigration (Mazmanian & Kraft, 2009; Gottlieb, 2005, p. 2).

Research on environmental leadership is limited. Becher and Richey (2008) provide hundreds of examples of the kinds of men and women that have shaped the environmental movement and environmental policy decisions in the United States since the colonial period, but they do not provide an analysis of those leaders' characteristics. Research specifically on leadership in environmental organizations in the United States is limited, as is any gendered analysis of this leadership. Gottlieb (2005) notes that leadership positions in the early years of environmental organizations were

predominantly held by men. More recent studies by associations of environmental groups show that more women have stepped into these positions in recent years, although they frequently head smaller organizations (Vesneski & Adess, 2002). Gordon and Berry (2006) found that there are gender-based differences among the leadership styles of environmental organization leaders. A 2012 survey of 60 environmental advocacy organizations of various sizes across the United States revealed that women leaders' salaries were increasing relative to their male counterparts, and progress has been made in closing the income gap between some male and female executive directors over previous years, but overall, the salary gap still existed (State Environmental Leadership Program, 2012).

The research on women's leadership in general continues to grow (e.g. Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007; Chin et al., 2007; Coughlin, Wingard, & Hollihan, 2005; Rhode, 2003). There have been numerous in-depth qualitative studies of women's leadership in a variety of fields, including, for example, corporations (Bell, 2010); Native American social welfare (Barkdull, 2009); higher education (Madsen, 2008), state lawmakers (Osborn, 2004; Spence, 2002); federal government executives (Lewis, 2006); and women on corporate boards (Burgess, 2003). These qualitative assessments allow theory to be built about women's leadership starting from women's perspectives, rather than as comparative studies with men's leadership. Such research also acknowledges that women are not all the same, but have a multiplicity of experiences.

There is an increasing body of literature on leadership in nonprofit organizations, but there is relatively little research specifically on nonprofit environmental organizations. Egri and Herman (2000) compared leadership styles in nonprofit environmental organizations versus for-profit environmental organizations and concluded that nonprofit leaders tended toward more transformational leadership styles than their for-profit colleagues, but offered no gender analysis.

Public interest advocacy organizations are also being looked at in new ways. Prakash and Gugerty (2010) suggest a “collective action” perspective as an approach to the study of advocacy organizations because they increasingly operate like private firms. Their leaders must establish a market niche and select policy objectives and tactics that not only achieve their organizations’ mission but also help to sustain their organizations’ revenues and reputations for effectiveness.

In summary, many visionary leaders have been part of the creation of the environmental movement, including those who manage nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations. These organizations continue to play a pivotal role in protecting the nation’s environment through policy action. The leadership of these advocacy organizations has traditionally been male-dominated, but more women have been taking leadership positions in recent years. This is an exploratory study of how these women view leadership effectiveness through their experiences in their organizations and in the policymaking arena.

Purpose and Significance

The significance of this study for the field of public policy is to fill a gap in the literature regarding the growing phenomenon of women leaders in the environmental advocacy movement and their potential influence on the policymaking process. It provides insight into how women view effective organizational and policy advocacy leadership in the environmental field. This builds upon leadership and public interest group theory and provides direction for further areas of research.

Those insights will be valuable for at least three groups of people: (a) women leaders in general as they strive to become effective in their respective fields; (b) environmental advocacy leaders and others who work on environmental problems in the policymaking arena; and (c) the study participants, their female colleagues, and young women who aspire to lead advocacy organizations. Through the analysis of their experiences, advocacy leaders may come to better understand and act upon their organizational and policy challenges. Advocacy organizations' boards, coalition partners, and supporters may also learn from this study how to better appreciate and support women's leadership priorities, styles, and perspectives as a critical part of where the environmental movement is headed to address environmental issues.

Methodology

This study analyzes the perspectives of 12 women environmental advocacy leaders on what it means to be effective in their roles as organizational and policy leaders in their states, what their challenges as women have been in their work, and where they are taking their organizations as they work on environmental policy at the state level. This is both an inductive and deductive study that begins with women environmental leaders describing their own experiences, finding themes, and comparing those themes with those found in related research and theory. The initial findings were reviewed by the participants to achieve validity.

The study is qualitative in design, combining phenomenological and grounded theory approaches. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it gives credence to experience as legitimate and necessary content for understanding human psychology. It requires “a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 52). This is particularly useful for learning about women’s experiences as leaders, since the understanding of leadership in the general population is still predominantly male-centered. It is appropriate to allow for “thick description” so that the meaning and nuance of women’s stories are better revealed. A qualitative study is also appropriate because the population of women leaders in environmental advocacy organizations is still small so a broader quantitative survey would not provide much greater validity and reliability, and it would take away from the in-depth exploration of the women’s experiences.

Assumptions

This study was approached with several assumptions. One assumption is that the goals of environmental protection are enhanced by the effective leadership of nonprofit policy advocacy organizations. Another is that it is most appropriate and applicable to the experiences of this study's participants to focus the literature review on studies in a U.S. context. It was assumed that the 12 participants met the criteria of the study and, thus, were comparable on those basic grounds. Other assumptions are related to the process of inquiry. It is assumed that the participants took part in the study freely; they were honestly sharing their personal experiences during the interviews; and they made choices about what to share based on their comfort level with the interviewer, the content of the questions, and the logistics of the interview setting.

Study Organization

After this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a literature review covering five relevant areas: organizational leadership, women's leadership, public interest and advocacy organizations, environmental leadership in the United States, and women and environmentalism. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach of the study, including a brief overview of phenomenological and grounded theory. Chapter 4 shows the basic demographics and background of the participants. Chapter 5 provides a brief narrative summary of the findings. Chapters 6 and 7 provide an in-depth analysis of the findings, delineated by the participants' experiences as organizational leaders and as

advocacy leaders. Chapter 8 provides a discussion of two major findings from the study, followed by further reflections raised by the study and suggestions for movement practice and further research. References and appendices follow Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Several areas of research are relevant to this study. The basic assumption that has focused the review is that effective environmental policy is enhanced by the effective leadership of nonprofit policy advocacy organizations. This study is not intended to establish direct impact or causality in terms of the effectiveness of these organizations and environmental policy outcomes. It is meant to compare the perspectives of women nonprofit leaders with other research and theory in relevant areas.

First, organizational leadership theories are reviewed from the last 40 years, along with studies of leadership in nonprofits and environmental organizations in particular. Then research on women's leadership is reviewed. Next is a review of studies on advocacy and public interest organizations, with some attention to studies of environmental advocacy. Next, studies of leadership in the U.S. environmental movement are reviewed. Finally, studies of women's relationship to the environment and to environmental advocacy are provided. Coverage of this literature is brief, as each of these areas could entail extensive reviews. The review is intended to provide a context for analyzing the perspectives of the interview participants.

Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership theories differ significantly on what makes leaders effective, as well as on discerning effective leadership. Some assert that leadership arises

innately and is based on specific characteristics held by special individuals. Others assert that effective leadership is situational and contingent on the atmosphere in which it is executed. Some assert that leadership effectiveness depends upon the ability of a leader to inspire and motivate subordinates while also working continually on self-knowing and self-improvement. Others emphasize a leader's ability to embrace and adapt to changes that are needed and well-suited to the current needs of their organization as it evolves.

Dym and Hutson (2005) review some of the main leadership theories of the last 40 years. It is now widely held that leadership effectiveness can be developed and is contextually based rather than purely inherent, as evidenced by the evolution of those theories, and others studies that have followed. For example, Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, and Krueger (2007) found in a study of female twins that 30 percent of the variance in leadership role occupancy could be attributed to genetics, another 10 to 15 percent could be attributed to work and broader life events, and the remaining 50 percent was unexplained. They concluded that leadership is not primarily an inherent trait, and that the persistent belief that leadership traits are inherent can inhibit leadership development among those who are not perceived—or do not perceive themselves—as having those traits, even though they could actually learn leadership behaviors.

Dym and Houston (2005) advance an “alignment” theory, which they believe encompasses the best aspects of all the leadership theories. They assert that to be effective, a leader must fit an organization and its objectives, values, culture, staff expectations, market constituency, and stage of development. An effective leader seeks to

align his or her skills and perspectives with all available resources and mobilizes them to achieve the organizational mission. Alignment theory is not based so much on the characteristics of a leader but rather on his or her ability to engage the diverse strengths of everyone involved in the organization so that they are working to their capacity and complementing each other's skills. Alignment is not a static state, since organizations and their leaders will need to continually realign to cope with change. In fact, too much alignment can create rigidity and complacency among staff members, thereby inhibiting necessary change and creativity.

Stephenson (2007) suggests that nonprofits need their leaders to not just be in alignment with organizational culture and context, but to also have "moral imagination" as originally conceived of by Edmund Burke (1727-1797) in his essay *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. They must be self-reflective and incorporate rationality, as well as intuition and imagination, so that they can look beyond the self and gain deep insight into the world from others' perspectives. They must be able to take into account the prevailing beliefs and imperatives of a larger community and also be able to act upon the alterity, or "otherness," represented by a diverse citizenry in order to chart new courses, change assumptions about the perception of the common good, and effectively execute their missions.

Taliento and Silverman (2005) interviewed leaders who had worked in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. They found that those working in nonprofits must adapt their for-profit strategies due to a smaller scope of authority, more stakeholders

who expect to participate in consensus decision making, the need for innovative metrics to monitor performance, the need for the leader to pay more attention to communications, and the challenge of limited resources and training in terms of building an effective organization.

Raelin (2005) proposes four elements of “leaderful practice.” Those elements are that leadership is concurrent, meaning that there is more than one leader at a time; collective, meaning that leadership builds among the participants; collaborative, meaning that group members share beliefs and ideas; and compassionate, meaning that group members treat each other with respect.

Dann (2008) advances the construct of “generative” leadership as a means of achieving Raelin’s four elements of leadership effectiveness. He defines generative leadership as the process of one person engendering leadership behavior on the part of another person. That model is intended to highlight the actions and behavior that create effective leadership throughout the organization, rather than highlighting the individual attributes and characteristics of one main leader. In his study of organizational work groups in a nonprofit organization, Dann found six elements that promoted leadership: high expectations among all group members; individual leadership attributes; a high degree of communication and feedback centering on the shared values, beliefs and trust among and between team members and the leader; a willingness to take risks; and the presence of leadership opportunities.

Dann (2008) further notes that nonprofit organizations, in particular, are operating in an environment of increasing complexity and competitiveness that requires greater attention to consumer needs, funding mechanisms, technological changes, networking, and alliances. Those demands require more collaborative leadership models. He argues that the focus should no longer be on the individual characteristics of a leader but rather, the behavior of the leader that effectively generates leadership behavior throughout the organization. Culture changes have shifted organizations away from solely hierarchical leadership models and towards participatory models that are built on collaboration. New leadership models stress that utilization of the strengths and expertise of all organizational members in group actions and interactions will achieve the most effective outcomes, rather than keeping leadership control solely with the top executive.

Nigel, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2003) discuss three elements of a distributed leadership model. The first and unique element relative to other leadership models is that there is an emergent property of a group of interacting individuals whereby the pooling of the group's talents and energy creates a product that is larger than the sum of their individual actions. Second, the boundaries of leadership are open, allowing others to emerge and contribute as leaders. Third, expertise is distributed across the organization and not concentrated among a few.

Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, and Dickens (2011) review studies of authentic leadership theory, which grew extensively around 2005. The definitions of authentic leadership include descriptors such as self-awareness, unbiased processing, acting on

one's values rather than merely pursuing rewards, and achieving truthfulness in relationships, with authenticity being a function of a leader's ability to "reduce ambivalence about their leadership role" (p. 1121).

Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004) define authentic leaders as people who, "know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others" (p. 802). These leaders understand the perspectives, values, and strengths of others and are able to enhance followers' engagement, motivation, commitment, and satisfaction through "the creation of personal identification with the follower and social identification with the organization" (p. 804). Hope, trust and positive emotions play a central role in the ability of leaders and followers to build a long-term relationship (p. 808). At best, followers in an organization have attitudes of commitment, job satisfaction, and engagement that in turn lead to high job performance. Furthermore, it is not a leader's behavioral style that defines his or her authenticity, but rather his or her ability to know and act upon convictions, encourage diverse viewpoints, and build networks of collaborative relationships with followers. Ultimately, the leader's authentic behavior can lead to an organizational culture that is based on authenticity (p. 806). Authentic leaders are committed to accountability for their behavior and to rewarding the honesty and integrity of others (pp. 807-808). Authentic leaders also build "benevolence and integrity" with their followers by modeling very open communication, sharing critical information, and sharing their perceptions and feelings about the people with whom they work (p. 810). The authors also acknowledge that authentic leadership is influenced by context, such as

an organization's power, politics, structure, culture and external climate. It is also influenced by the gender of its leaders, staff, and board members (p. 815).

Berry and Gordon (1993) interviewed several environmental leaders and presented these interviews as case studies of environmental leadership in government, private, and nonprofit organizations. The one nonprofit executive director they featured, who led a conservation organization in Maine, suggested that effective nonprofit leaders must be knowledgeable of and actively participate in the business of their organizations; be entrepreneurial and take calculated risks; work towards consensus among staff and board members; and be articulate about the organization's mission and public benefits to a broad public. Leaders can execute vision by fostering working relationships with many people throughout the community by synthesizing information and identifying trends, and then by articulating a plan that is adjusted with input from staff and board members (p. 205).

Several themes from this review inform the current study: Leadership traits are not necessarily inherent; they may be learned. Leaders must be open to change and the need for organizational realignment as the context of their work changes. Nonprofit organizations, in particular, need to engage their staffs and boards fully by providing opportunities for shared leadership and an atmosphere of trust, respect, and open communication. Leaders must be entrepreneurial and take calculated risks with input from others. "Authentic" leaders know themselves and take into account the diversity of people with whom they work. They believe in accountability and engender trust. They

inspire a shared vision by listening to people both inside and external to the organization, recognizing context, synthesizing information, and articulating a plan of action that others can embrace.

Women in Leadership

Numerous studies have compared the behavior differences between men and women leaders and their relative effectiveness in organizational leadership positions. Applebaum, Audet, and Miller (2003) reviewed theories on the perceived effectiveness of differing leadership styles of men and women based on biology, gender roles, causal factors, and attitudinal drivers. They found that there are differences in style, but that the lingering perception that men's styles are more effective than women's styles is based in socialized stereotypes, rather than in fact. Characteristics associated with male leaders, such as being structured, transactional, and autocratic, are still more commonly associated with leadership potential than characteristics associated with women leaders, such as being sensitive, participative, and people-oriented. They found that both men and women can learn to incorporate both kinds of characteristics effectively. Women's leadership styles that include the characteristics of empathy, communication, and relationship building are also often viewed as more effective in team-based, consensually driven organizational structures that are growing in prevalence. Most surveys do not reveal significant gender differences in the effectiveness of leaders and, if anything, larger-scale research shows women outperforming men on most measures (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007, p. 17).

Kirchmeyer (1998) asserts that a fair evaluation of leadership effectiveness, especially for women, must take into account the leader's environment. The study suggests that if the work environment is still dominated by male leadership and a preponderance of attitudes that women are not as capable or committed as men to lead, the determinants of women's success will likely differ from men's determinants. Kellerman and Rhode (2007) also describe this "in-group favoritism" and gender bias as a limitation for women's leadership opportunities, since male superiors rate women as less competent than their male colleagues. Women internalize those messages, particularly if there are too few counterexamples to challenge those assumptions. In-group favoritism also restricts women's access to networks and contacts that are critical for advancement, and excludes them from professional development opportunities (pp. 9-10).

Women often feel less prepared for leadership than their male counterparts. Bell (2010) studied for-profit women business leaders in the United States to discern the impact of leadership development and succession planning programs on their subsequent effectiveness as leaders. The results suggested that more than half the leaders felt that they were not adequately prepared for their leadership positions, particularly citing that mentoring, on-the-job training, and job rotation would be helpful additions to their training.

Women who are leaders, or who aspire to leadership, frequently do not clearly see the extent of their own leadership abilities and effectiveness, which is relevant when

interpreting women's descriptions of their own effectiveness. Studies have shown that they often face internal barriers, such as fear of failure, lack of confidence in their skills and risk-taking abilities, and a self-concept linked to internalized traditional female stereotypes (Madsen, 2008, p. 149). Women display more modesty about their achievements than men and, even when their credentials are equivalent or superior to men's, are still less apt to see themselves as qualified for top positions (Academic Medicine, 1996, p. 805).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) reviewed literature on women's leadership to frame the findings from their study of female top executives in private companies (Halpern & Cheung, 2008). They found that women leaders describe their leadership style and purpose as being serious about their work, maintaining high personal standards, promoting communication, being considerate and respectful of their staffs, making a social contribution, being of service to others, and promoting gender equality in the workplace (Cheung & Halpern, 2010, p. 188; Stern, 2008). Cheung and Halpern characterize those as transformational leadership qualities that are more equitable, inspiring, optimistic, and focused on empowering others through information and power sharing than transactional leadership qualities. By comparison, transactional leadership styles tend to be more hierarchical, aggressive, and self-serving, while transformational styles have been shown to be more effective than transactional styles (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

Women who have risen to the top of their professions usually did not start out in life with that goal (Madsen, 2008). They achieved success by recognizing the importance of education and pursuing it, by having others recognize their leadership potential and drawing them into leadership positions, through a sense of confidence that was fostered by someone close in their lives, and through ongoing self-reflection. Those ideas about effective leadership among women have also been shown in studies of women from other cultures (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Gomez et al., 2001; Pohlmann, 1995).

Korabik and Ayman (2007) found leadership to be a function of three gender-related processes: intrapsychic, social structural, and interpersonal. The traits and behaviors that are manifest in each process are influenced by an individual's gender and culture, as well as by the gender-role orientation of all parties with which they interact. In all interactions, beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women trigger gender-based stereotyping. That interaction, rather than the leader's gender, creates the perceived effectiveness of leadership. They found that transactional competencies have a higher association with leadership success, and person-oriented qualities have a lower association with success. They conclude that women leaders "need to be particularly attentive to their interpersonal relationships when they are operating in male-dominated settings, when they are performing masculine stereotyped behaviors, and when they are interacting with men" (p. 121). They suggest that an androgynous approach to leadership, balancing task- and person-oriented skills, decreases the likelihood that they will be judged according to stereotypes and will be perceived as more effective leaders.

Dym and Hutson (2005) note that social scientists tend not to find women's leadership styles distinctive from men's styles, while more feminists, journalists, and popular writers see women's leadership styles to be different than men's. They also note that the authors in these latter groups are almost exclusively women. They conclude that women can display both traditionally male styles (transactional and hierarchical), as well as transformational styles (consensual and collaborative), depending on their organizations' culture and needs. Women who are working in large organizations with prescribed modes of behavior—both corporate and nonprofit—tended to adopt more traditional, hierarchical leadership styles, whereas women who built their own organizations tended to be less hierarchical, nurtured younger employees, and showed more collaborative behavior. They further noted that there was a strong tendency in the literature to compare women only to men, thereby missing out on the diversity among women leaders (p. 6). Arneil (1999) notes that the “third wave” of feminist thought focuses on how women are different not only from men but from each other, and that we must learn from women's perspectives in order to get beyond the typical boundaries of western political thought that have confined women to the private sphere, and have considered gender prior to all other notions of identity.

Work and family conflicts arise as issues for women leaders more so than for men. Male nonprofit executives report burnout at half the rate of their female counterparts, and are significantly more likely to report having the right work-life balance (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell 2011). Kellerman and Rhode (2007) note that having childrearing responsibilities is a major reason that women remain underrepresented as

leaders around the world. Women choose to spend a portion of their time on raising children to a greater extent than men do, which often reduces their labor force participation. There are often double standards at home that require women to spend more time than men on childrearing, leaving little extra time for career-related advancement and networking activities. Organizational and public policies often do not honor parental leave and punish parents who take time off for childrearing when they try to re-enter the workforce. It is noteworthy that 49 percent of American women between the ages of 41 and 55 with annual salaries greater than \$100,000 have no children, while 19 percent of men in that category are childless (Hewlett, 2002).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) found that successful female executives are finding ways to incorporate their family roles. With growing confidence in their own identities, they do not need to conform to the roles and behaviors of men in order to become leaders. Unlike many men, they do not segregate their work roles and family roles into distinct domains that could result in conflict. Instead, they integrate their work and family roles in ways that enable them to harmonize both (p. 190). The authors suggest that the effort of making family and work roles compatible contributes to women's tendency toward a transformational style of leadership (p. 192). They propose a model of leadership development that incorporates work and family roles in a way that strengthens both. To achieve that model, it is particularly important along the career pathway to have supportive family members and paid caregivers, to develop life management strategies that allow for time and good attention with family and with work, and to establish personal boundaries that reduce conflict when family and work interface (p. 191).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) also found that women often manage to extend their traditional roles as mothers to the care of their employees through office policies and daily interactions (p. 189). They suggest that a “culture of gender” supersedes cultural boundaries due to women’s universal roles as caregivers, and due to the similar types of sexist prejudice women endure in organizations and in the media (p. 191).

Themes from this brief review that are relevant for this study are: It is important to look at the diversity among women’s leadership styles, not just to compare women to men. Women often do not reveal aspirations for leadership and face internalized barriers to being able to affirm their own skills and effectiveness. There may be a lack of adequate developmental training and networking opportunities to inspire such aspirations. Women have been shown to be very effective leaders and often operate with transformational leadership styles. Transformational leadership behaviors can be learned and portrayed by both women and men. Finally, women leaders put significant effort into finding room in their work life for their roles as family caregivers and support that role for others in their organizations.

Public Interest and Advocacy Organizations

The focus of this study is on environmental advocacy organizations; thus, it is relevant to review some of the unique aspects of that kind of work. This section reviews literature on advocacy organizations, in general, and environmental advocacy organizations, in particular.

Andrews and Edwards (2004) summarized literature on the role of advocacy organizations in the U.S. political process, focusing on social movements, interest groups, and nonprofit organizations. The number of advocacy groups increased during and following the 1960s and 1970s. They can be characterized as “groups or organizations whose primary focus is making public claims and pursuing related social changes” (p. 486). Theoretical explanations for the growth of advocacy organizations in this period include social instability and the resulting institutionalization of social movements; greater affluence in the general population and resulting opportunities for resource mobilization among leaders who can market issues and agendas at the macro and micro levels; and cultural shifts that have resulted in “postmaterial” values and organizations that support those values (p. 487).

Prakash and Gugerty (2010) suggest “collective action” as a unifying analytic approach to the study of nonprofit advocacy organizations. They point out that the majority of advocacy activities are now conducted by organized actors, salaried or nonsalaried, who are operating in and constantly scanning an institutional context that affects the demand and supply of their advocacy efforts, much like private firms. The targets of advocacy can be governments, businesses, or other advocacy organizations (p. 2). They compete with other actors who oppose their claims, who make different claims, and who make the same claims as they compete for the attention of policymakers, constituents, funding, and public attention (p. 8). Whereas previous research may have suggested that these organizations are harmonious across value goals, Prakash and Gugerty suggest that they are also contenders, acting in a policy marketplace, and making

strategic choices about tactics, collaborations, and organizational structure in order to sustain a market niche, funding, and, therefore, institutional survival (p. 4).

Funding sources for these organizations are limited to the government, foundations, and private individuals, each presenting problems in terms of long-term sustainability. Taking funding from governments may corrupt an organization's advocacy goals, foundations change their priorities frequently, and private dollars are limited (Risse, 2010, p. 287).

As Young (2010) notes, advocacy is “not simply a consequence of voluntary association, but rather a product developed and produced by the organization and then marketed and sold to members” (p. 34). Lobbying and political representation are the services being offered to supporters and the product is marketed as a collective good (p. 35).

There are different approaches to membership in these organizations, including no members, individual members, organizational members, or a mix of individuals and organizations. There are different requirements for participation and mission adherence for those members (Andrews & Edwards, 2004, p. 488). Constituents are drawn to organizational membership for “expressive” benefits—the ability to be more effective advocating through affiliation with an organization than they can be on their own—and “solidary” benefits—the social status and identification experienced by being affiliated with an organization that expresses their world view (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010, p. 6).

The members are generally working in their own interest as well as in the interest of the collective good, such as in the case of women's or labor advocacy groups, and thus, these organizations can be differentiated from strict "charities" (Risse, 2010, p. 285).

Advocacy organizations may avoid direct competition for members by seeking to establish their own niche, allowing multiple groups to survive and work toward similar collective goods (Haider-Markel, 1997). Most modern advocacy organizations rely on professional staff, while members tend to be primarily a source of revenue (Skocpol, 2003).

Employees are drawn to work in public interest organizations, often for lower wages than the private sector offers, because of their commitment to the organizations' values. However, such organizations cannot survive without funding and effective organizational structures. Nonprofit organizations must also be responsive to the views and desires of their boards and constituents, which may be based on some shared ideologies, but are generally not homogenous (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010, p. 13).

Advocacy organizations seek an identity brand that usually results in a consistent choice of tactics over time that will differentiate them from other actors (Barakso, 2010). They also frequently work in coalition with other like-minded groups, despite the resulting risk to identity branding. Barakso (2010) notes that, "environmental organizations that participate in coalitions are particularly likely to report engaging in higher than average numbers of both insider and outsider tactics" (p. 171). It may be that

the diversity of tactics afforded through coalition work helps to inoculate the individual groups from the threat of losing their individual identity brand.

Effective leadership is an important aspect of advocacy organizations' success, reducing transaction costs when entrepreneurial leaders can build a shared vision and consensus among staff, board, and constituents (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010, p. 10).

Effective, entrepreneurial advocacy leaders also enjoy "greater access to policymakers, greater influence over policy decisions, and greater peer recognition as key political players" (Young, 2010, p. 36).

Advocacy groups are in the business of strategic construction and communication. As Risse (2010) notes:

Norms are social constructions, of course, but promoting them necessitates the use of strategic framing. New norms, for example, need to resonate with given collective understandings, as a result of which advocacy groups tend to consciously make them compatible with existing norms of appropriate behavior... [S]trategic framing is part and parcel of the action repertoire of advocacy groups. It involves the deliberate use and active engagement of particular discourse in order to persuade a target audience to support policy changes. (p. 288)

Stone (2002) discusses the kinds of framing tools used in the policy market. Those include, for example, numbers and symbols, as well as the particular ways that

problems and their causes are defined. Strategic choices are also made about how to connect basic democratic values, such as liberty, security, equity, and efficiency, to policy issues of concern. Understanding how framing is taking place by both the proponents and opponents can make advocacy organizations more effective negotiators and increase the likelihood of overcoming seemingly intractable conflicts (Shmueli, Elliott & Kaufman, 2006). The ongoing interaction of advocacy coalitions focused on a particular set of issues, including those with similar and opposing views, often leads to reframing issues so that a common solution and agreement can be reached (Smith, 2009).

Pralle (2006) suggests that environmental advocacy organizations also proactively “venue shop,” as actors seek out the most effective arena in which to move their policy agendas, or stop the agendas of their opponents. The choice of legal, legislative or governmental arenas will be based, in part, on the nature of the principles underlying the policy issue, which may also be framed by the organization. For example, “rights” issues may be best suited to the judicial system, while cost-benefit principles may be more fitting for bureaucratic agencies.

Advocacy organizations, particularly those appealing to the general public, also “problem-surf” by understanding the current salience and prominence of the problems they are trying to address with citizens and policymakers, and by strategically looking for opportunities to connect salient issues to their solutions (Boscarino, 2009). Member-driven organizations, however, may be more effective if they stick to a consistent set of issues. When seeking a significant policy change, policy advocacy organizations may

need to wait for and help create policy “windows,” where the right combination of public mood, availability of resources, key political leadership, and a policy entrepreneur create the opportunity for such a shift (Kingdon, 1995).

A nonprofit’s power and influence will also be based on its claim to moral authority and legitimacy—the notion that it represents the public interest in ways that private interests do not—as well as on its authoritative knowledge. Mismanagement or impropriety can quickly undermine a nonprofit’s reputation and authority (Risse, 2010, p. 290).

The political and tactical orientation of an environmental advocacy group and its power and influence will likely be driven by its level of resources and its age (Dalton, Recchia, & Rohrschneider, 2003, p. 756). Groups focused on the paradigmatic changes needed to address the environmental issues of modern society are more likely to use citizen mobilization and protest than strictly conservation and preservation groups; however, both also use conventional methods like lobbying (p. 759). The most common activities in the environmental movement are engaging the media to direct public attention and citizen mobilization to the issues at hand, and networking with other environmental and public interest groups (p. 767).

Changes in bureaucratic mandates over time, such as the enactment and implementation of federal and state level administrative procedure acts, have allowed legitimate entry points for advocacy groups as stakeholders in policymaking processes.

Quasi-legislative processes, such as e-democracy, public conversations, participatory budgeting, and study circles, as well as quasi-judicial processes, such as mediation and arbitration, have invited stakeholders and citizens to actively participate in the deliberation and negotiation of policy decisions (Bingham, Nabatchi & O'Leary, 2005).

Environmental advocacy groups have often prevailed in their agendas in spite of being outspent by opposing, well-organized private groups that they seek to regulate. This may suggest that over the last 50 years of the active environmental movement, the American public has been embracing a fundamental ethos of protection for the natural world, based on a broader understanding of environmental threats to human health, sensitivity to environmental damage, and a desire to protect natural places (Dell, 2009). If that is the case, then environmental advocacy organizations have likely helped to create the trend.

Some of the key elements of this review are as follows: Advocacy organizations gather constituencies on the premise that they are offering a public good by being more effective at addressing societal problems than individual efforts can be. They differentiate themselves in terms of brand and niche in order to compete for resources, and engage in a variety of tactics to achieve their policy and institutional goals, including conventional lobbying, citizen mobilization, and protest. They actively seek salient problems to match their goals, frame issues, and choose policy venues and tactics where they can be most successful. They operate both from a moral and institutional imperative, are driven by board members who may have differing views about how to fulfill their mission, and

must be constantly sensitive to their external context to find openings for their agendas. Effective leadership entrepreneurs are needed to build a shared vision and recognize those opportunities for successful policy change.

Environmental Movement Leadership in the United States

The environmental movement in the United States began most visibly in the late 19th and early 20th century. The vast majority of current environmental organizations are concentrated in preservation (addressing the disappearance of wildlands), conservation (addressing over-exploitation of natural resources), and, more recently, reform environmentalism (protecting the earth's ecosystem and its connection to human health) (Brulle, 2009).

Several national nonprofit organizations, still in existence today, led the conservation and preservation movement. The Sierra Club was founded in 1892, and focused on preserving large wilderness areas in the western United States because of their existence value, rather than for their utility as a resource. The National Wildlife Federation was founded in 1935 with a focus on protecting wildlife and habitat, and has retained a constituency of sportsmen and hunters, among others. The Wilderness Society was also formed in 1935 with a mission to preserve wilderness areas that remain unaltered by human intervention (Gottlieb, 2005). Those and other environmental organizations of that time were created in reaction to the decline in wilderness and the change in work patterns for men, who increasingly found themselves in cities and in

factories instead of working the land and hunting to survive. The organizations and their missions were based on the notion that masculinity required a connection to the natural world so that men could practice and retain the strength and fortitude of their pioneer ancestors (pp. 281-283). That focus on wilderness preservation was thus seen as a concern of primarily men, not women. The formation of environmental organizations increased in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, followed by tremendous growth in the late 1960s and again in the late 1980s. For the most part, men led these organizations as founders, directors, and board members through the 1980s, with the gradual inclusion of women since then (p. 287).

Shaiko (1996) found that the board of directors was the most significant variable in whether or not there was equitable hiring and compensation of women. As environmental organizations have been more proactive in bringing women onto their boards, it may have led to an increase in the number of women being hired as their organizational leaders. Pynes (2000) showed that organizations with female CEOs were more likely to have female board members.

The women's movement in the 1970s had little influence on the mainstream environmental movement, including on the professional organizations that developed, such as the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council. "These groups had few women in leadership positions, ignored the gender implications of their form of organization, and failed to acknowledge 'women's issues' as an arena for action" (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 298). Interviews with some of the small number of women in

leadership roles at some of the national environmental organizations during the 1970s and 1980s indicated that working in the nation's capital then was like working in an "all-boys club." Most of the women in the movement were leading local independent groups or chapters of the national groups (p. 300). These early women leaders in the national environmental arena were often excluded from important political meetings by their male colleagues; they had to assume male leadership and management styles; and they had to contend with the fact that gender considerations were seen as irrelevant in the approach to organizational culture or in the framework and definition of the movement (pp. 300-301).

Women's leadership in the environmental movement has been prominent in urban areas where women have organized to protect their families, workplaces, and communities from dangerous toxins as far back as the late 1880s. Their activities increased as more and more women began working in factories with hazardous chemicals, as urban environments became cluttered with waste, and as issues of safe water and sanitation became more paramount (Gottlieb, 2005). Much later, the women's occupational health movement arose from the women's health movement of the 1970s, and brought a focus to the health dangers of working around certain chemicals (pp. 294-295). As the urban toxics issue became more prominent in the 1980s and 1990s, the community organizations working on it began to more actively focus on the gender, race, and class of those who were participating in the movement agenda setting and laying claim to its ideas (p. 281).

Gender considerations also came into play in the antinuclear movement of the mid-to- late 1970s. This was part of a growing effort to link “peace, feminist, and environmental themes” under an ecological framework that recognized that the regenerative capacities of the earth and of mothers were threatened by the power and activities of the Pentagon (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 303). However, a strong feminist environmentalism has not been developed or maintained on the toxics, antinuclear, or any other front of the environmental movement. Likewise, the environmental movement has not adequately addressed the creation of an agenda and organizing style that equally incorporates women’s and men’s experiences. The movement maintains an “absence of approaches to gender and place capable of reshaping the movement’s view of itself and its possibilities” (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 306).

Moving from women’s roles in the environmental movement to environmental leadership generally, several authors have studied the specific challenges faced by all leaders in environmental organizations. Brulle (2009) outlines several characteristics that make environmental movement work different from other policy fields: It spans many different discursive frames that take place in distinct fields of interaction. There are differing opinions about the driving forces of environmental degradation that lead to different actions being advanced or taken by different communities as they seek to forward their own interest. A large foundation presence funds those organizations. Members of the business community and its supporters who oppose environmental regulation can mobilize well-funded and effective campaigns. The use of science is a critical component in defining environmental issues. Finally, movement on the policy

front can be shifted by dramatic environmental disasters. Berry and Gordon (1993) suggest that environmental leadership must be different than traditional leadership because of the characteristics of environmental problems, including their tendency to be complex, long-term, emotionally charged, and multidisciplinary.

Egri and Herman (2000) define environmental leadership as follows:

“[Environmental leadership is] the ability to influence individuals and mobilize organizations to realize a vision of long-term ecological sustainability. Guided by ecocentric values and assumptions, environmental leaders seek to change economic and social systems that they perceive to be threatening the health of the biophysical environment, now and in the future. (p. 572)

In the mid-1990s, they conducted a study of 73 environmental leaders in for-profit and nonprofit environmental organizations in Canada and the United States. Half of the leaders were from the nonprofit sector, and about one-quarter of those were women executive directors. Environmental leaders in general exhibited stronger ecocentric values than leaders in other types of organizations. Nonprofit environmental leaders in particular were inclined toward transformational leadership behavior, although the ability to function in that mode was more possible in smaller, younger organizations than in larger, mature organizations that appeared to require a more traditional managerial style of leadership. They concluded that the criteria for selecting environmental leaders should include ecocentric, self-transcendent, and openness-to-change values, and a diversity of

leadership skills that a leader can adapt to both transactional and transformational roles (p. 599).

Several themes emerge from that look at leadership in environmental organizations: The large, mainstream environmental organizations in the United States maintained male leadership well into the 1990s and men's concerns also dominated their agenda setting and organizational styles. Women's leadership first emerged in areas that directly affected their families and communities, such as toxics reduction. It appears that, at present, the environmental movement has still not adequately integrated both women's and men's experiences and a feminist analysis in its approach and organizational style. There are unique aspects of working on environmental policy issues that will continue to challenge all environmental leaders and that require a diversity of leadership skills, including both transformational and transactional roles. Current nonprofit environmental leaders tend to employ more transformational leadership styles, although larger organizations tend toward more traditional managerial leadership styles. Environmental leaders need to display ecocentric values and be self-transcendent and open to change.

Women and Environmentalism

The role of feminism in the environmental movement warrants specific review because of the lingering observation that an effective feminist environmentalism has not yet been built and sustained. In addition to women's leadership in the urban movement against toxins noted above, women in the late-19th and early-20th century contributed

significantly to environmental protection through the “municipal housekeeping” movement that sought to address the water, air, and land pollution that was resulting from industrialized urban life, and also through early preservationist and conservationist movements that sought to address wildlife and land preservation in the disappearing wilderness (Mann, 2011).

An early attempt at an integrated feminist approach to environmentalism became known as “ecofeminism,” which arose in the 1970s from both the green and the feminist movements. Perhaps most fundamentally, ecofeminists first asserted that the domination of the earth by humans and the domination of women by men were connected (Mellor, 1997).

Banerjee and Bell (2007) review the divergent positions of ecofeminist scholars, categorizing them as historical, spiritualist/religious, and social scientific. Historical positions have stressed that nature-gender relations are rooted in enlightenment science, where scientific progress was seen to require the control of nature, which, in turn, led to a fundamental alienation from nature. That alienation was led by men, and was antithetical to the traditional relationship women held with nature in agrarian and other societies (p. 8). This alienation further extended to the control and separation of women’s reproductive labor. Spiritualist-religious positions focus on our roots in the cultures of ancient peoples who lived in greater harmony with nature and recognized there was “an underlying mystical communion between women and nature that connects women’s bodies with the cosmic world” (p. 9). However, this perspective has been controversial

and heavily critiqued by social scientists that tend to dismiss spiritual language and concepts. Social scientific positions emphasize the various kinds of oppression based on race, class, and gender, and seek to unravel the systems of inequality. Within these positions resides feminist political ecology, which “treats women as both participants and partners in environmental preservation” in an effort to achieve a more sustainable world (p. 11).

Banerjee and Bell (2007) point out that gender analysis rarely shows up in the field of environmental social science. Ecofeminism is not taken seriously there, again largely because of the distaste for spiritualist positions in social sciences. The authors put forward a new theoretical framework of “ecogender studies” in an attempt to bring gender into focus in this field. Ecogender studies would be based on the tenets that humans have never been “one” with nature, but rather are in an evolving relationship with nature. This framework also acknowledges that women are not closer to nature than men are, but that understanding the destruction humans have wrought upon the environment helps with an understanding of the gendered character of oppression in society (p. 14).

Ecofeminism as a theoretical framework was not embraced by the women who were leading the antitoxics movement in the 1980s and 1990s (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 305). There remained a significant gap in language and organizing style that separated the women who led the community-based movements—many with no formal organizing

experience—and the more prominent ecofeminist activists that were working on antinuclear and peace politics at the same time.

Despite the fact that ecofeminism as a movement did not become a sustained force, the underlying concepts are still considered in discussions of gender in environmental politics. For example, in a study of British Columbian workers in the environmental movement, the concepts of ecomaternalism, the dual subjugation of women and nature, and the notion of hegemonic masculinity were incorporated into their analysis of gender politics in a significant forestry debate in that region in the 1990s (Stoddart & Tindall, 2010).

As feminist thought has advanced, the central assertion of dual subjugation in ecofeminism has been challenged. Third-wave feminists believe that early ecofeminism kept women locked in powerlessness along with nature, without agency to make change. They believe women and nature should be political allies and that “environmental feminism” should emphasize women as political activists and nature as having agency. This would help keep environmentalism in the political arena, break down the nature versus culture divide, and undermine the overall system of white patriarchal domination (Arneil, 1999).

Gaard (2011) reviewed the history of ecofeminism, noting two major critiques that undermined its acceptance. First, there was criticism of ecofeminism’s “essentialism,” meaning that it homogenized the experience of all women, ignoring

differences in culture, race, and class. The second criticism was focused on ecofeminism's inclusion of species and nature as critical categories for feminist analysis. Gaard asserts that the first critique was widely accepted and corrected, but the second was unfounded, along with other accusations about ecofeminists being "anti-intellectual goddess-worshippers" calling for "worldwide veganism" (p. 32). Recognizing the feminist backlash inherent in the attacks on ecofeminism, Gaard observes that feminists responded to the challenge about essentialism, but also changed their focus to humans and moved away from discussing the interconnections between humans and other species. In the shift to an anthropocentric view, Gaard believes that ecofeminism lost some of its relevance. The term "ecofeminism" has been so discredited that it has all but disappeared from academic literature and has been replaced by terms such as "feminist environmentalism." Gaard (2011) believes that the history of ecofeminist study must be retained and resurfaced, claiming as follows:

The global crises of climate justice, food security, energy justice, vanishing wildlife, maldevelopment, habitat loss, industrial animal food production, and more have simultaneously social and ecological dimensions that require both ecological and feminist analyses. Ecofeminists have listened to their feminist, social ecologist, deep ecological and environmental critics, but have their critics listened to ecofeminists?" (Gaard, 2011, p. 32)

Women's relationship to the environment and to environmental advocacy has also been studied in terms of personal actions in homes and communities. Tindall, Davies and

Mauboules (2003) found that men and women participate in environmental activism at relatively equal rates, but that women engage in more “environmentally friendly behaviors,” meaning that they are more apt to take personal actions, such as recycling and taking public transit. Their level of environmental concern and activism might actually be higher than men’s were it not for the limitations on their time and availability imposed by their greater domestic obligations.

Additionally, women express differing viewpoints than men on the larger debates that surround environmental policy. They are less supportive of environmental spending cuts, less sympathetic to businesses when it comes to environmental regulation, less willing to accept a “jobs versus the environment” dichotomy, less trusting that environmental protection institutions are doing their jobs adequately, and more apt to be receptive to environmentalism if they also support feminist, peace, and other “progressive” causes (Caiazza, 2003).

Steel, Warner, and Lach (2010) found that women tend to have a more negative view of the positivistic model of science as an approach to environmental policy than men do, although those differences narrow among people with more similar education and occupational responsibilities. Women also tend to believe more strongly than men do that scientists should play an active role in advocating for policies, although similarities in social context narrowed those differences and there was little difference in attitudes among scientists and managers. Their research generally showed a higher overall level of concern about environmental issues among women than men.

Some analysis of environmental activism has also taken race, class, and imperialism into account. The environmental justice movement, led by people of color and people in low-income communities, focuses on the class- and race-based inequities inherent in workplace and community environmental hazards and has effectively linked environmental, labor, and social justice issues (Taylor, 2000). Bretherton (2003) notes that globally, women are primarily acting on environmental issues at a local level. Elite women's advocacy networks have endeavored to affect environmental and other policies by engaging in the existing structures of global governance, such as the World Bank. Those two efforts have been estranged from each other. Bretherton asserts that the potential of a more effective transnational women's movement focused on environmental protection relies upon efforts to reduce the overall inequality between women's movements that remain divided by race and class, and by more effectively articulating environmental issues to grassroots social movements located in different social and cultural contexts (pp. 116-117).

The mainstream environmental movement still struggles to incorporate the concerns of nonwhite and low-income communities into their agendas and their leaders into their staffs and boards. Thus it is not surprising that the structure of environmental policy has also not adequately addressed "the equity and social justice dimensions of environmental problems and the laws and regulations established to manage those problems" (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 337).

The early feminist notions that women have a relationship with nature because they are jointly oppressed by the overall patriarchal system of domination have come under scrutiny, but remain a part of environmental discourse. By moving away from that idea, women can be seen as more active and powerful participants in environmental advocacy. Women's and men's relationship to the environment as both dominator and protector may be more similar than different. Women more actively display personal actions in their homes and communities to protect the environment, but are limited in the amount of time they have to participate in movement activities outside the home by their domestic responsibilities. Women express different attitudes than men about what is important in dealing with environmental problems. A more integrated and effective women's environmental movement across the United States and across the world must recognize the inequalities in leadership and in policy outcomes that result from societal oppression based upon race, class, and other identity characteristics as well as upon gender.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter discusses the methodological approach to the study. The study employed two approaches commonly used in qualitative analysis: phenomenology and grounded theory. These forms of qualitative data gathering and analysis helped to focus on the perspectives of the women leaders who are the study's centerpiece.

This methodological approach allows for finding commonalities among the study participants as well as for identifying diverse perspectives held by individuals within their unique circumstances and experiences. The approach is an iterative process that involves a study participant analyzing her own experience through interviews. The researcher analyzes those findings, and also her own perspectives in the process. The approach acknowledges that the researcher attempts to suspend her own experience during the interpretive process but that the analysis cannot be totally free from the researcher's bias. The approach permits the researcher's perspectives to be accessible and transparent in the analysis.

The researcher reads and rereads the data, identifying themes, and uses those themes to compare to and build upon established theories as well as to develop new theories. An initial literature review helped to frame the study, and more review was done once themes started to emerge in the data.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a research method and a philosophical approach to the study of experience that is rooted in psychology and was first advanced by Edmund Husserl in the early 20th century. It is based on the examination of conscious experience “from the inside” in the way that it occurs and not on abstract theory building (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 30). The approach breaks from traditional scientific, positivist approaches, giving credence to experience as legitimate and necessary content for understanding human psychology. It requires “a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 52).

In phenomenology, the description of experience is the primary step, followed by interpretation. The intent is to acknowledge that there is an experience of the world before it becomes an “object” that a person is reflecting upon (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 32). Husserl used the term “bracketing” for the idea of suspending beliefs as the “primordial experience” is examined in order to be free from the assumptions normally use in meaning-making (p. 33). He used the term “life world” to describe this primordial, immediate experience.

Phenomenology has only one legitimate source of data: the views and experiences of the participants. Participants are selected who have lived the experience under study. That requires purposive sampling that is prescribed from the start, with interviews as the main instrument of data collection (Goulding, 2002, p. 23).

Phenomenology is also based in hermeneutics, the theory of meaning-making and interpretation. Hermeneutics originated with the purpose of interpreting ancient texts, and through the work of many philosophers, many tenets now inform the practice of interpretation. Several are noted here from Lock and Strong (2010). The researchers must:

- Seek to identify with the subject of study in order to interpret the meaning of their experience.
- Take into account the context in which the subject operates and its influence on her experiences.
- Acknowledge the importance of language and language differences.
- Step away from his or her own prejudices and cultural realities in order to make room for the prejudice and culture of the subject.
- Be conscious of what is being made evident within the data and what is being precluded.
- Recognize and accept that different interpreters will see the data differently and that there are many meanings possible in the data.
- Embrace the notion that their understanding will expand as more is learned from the text and that they should appropriate its meaning, which in turn, further expands understanding of the data.

Interpretation involves both cognitive and noncognitive reflections. Van Manen (1997) suggests that noncognitive meaning can be derived from phenomenological

inquiry, including “the evocative, the expressive, the transcendent, and the poetic elements” that allow for “an epiphany” or “intuitive grasp” of what is written (Flood, 2010, p. 8).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) suggest that the perspectives of the phenomenologist are legitimate in the analysis because of the “double hermeneutic” aspect of this iterative process, where the subject reflects on her experience, the researcher reflects on the subject reflecting on her experience, while also reflecting on her own experience at the same time. Rather than seeking to establish distance between the observer and the observed, this approach recognizes and affirms the experience of both. To the phenomenologist, “understanding qualifies exquisitely as a criterion for research knowledge; specifically, an understanding that does not set out explicitly and exclusively to master, control, or dominate it” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 56).

In summary, the distinct aspects of phenomenology are its origins with existential philosophers, its focus on subjective and lived experience, and its attempt to find meaning units that can be synthesized into a more general description of the whole (Goulding, 2002, p. 25).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was originally developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser to help in their study of dying patients (Strauss & Glaser, 1967). It is rooted in symbolic interactionism, which is an approach to inquiry and a theory of human behavior that includes the importance of symbols as the basis of our socialization process (Goulding, 2002, p. 39). The researcher engaged in symbolic interaction is expected to develop a theory that incorporates concepts of “self, language, social setting, and social object” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 124).

Grounded theory focuses more intently on theory building than phenomenology does, with an emphasis on developing a theory with “conceptual density and meaningful variation” that goes beyond thick description and beyond individual subjects to make connections between the patterns of action and interaction among the various types of subjects (Goulding, 2002, p. 45). Theories are intended to stay more at the “substantive” level—in the immediate field of study—rather than the “formal” level, which would have explanatory power across a range of settings (p. 46).

Theory is assumed to be continually developing rather than static and complete. Interpretation can become outdated or need further qualification and can be enhanced by scrutiny from a community of inquirers, or by the subjects themselves (Goulding, 2002, p. 43). Grounded theory differs from other

qualitative methodologies because it allows for the inclusion in analysis of data beyond the words and actions of the subjects, such as secondary data and statistics that are deemed relevant to the study (p. 44).

Other elements of grounded theory include theoretical sampling rather than purposive sampling, meaning that subjects are selected to compare to other cases already studied; collecting data in the environments where the actions of the subjects take place; and the need to reach saturation, or to stay in the field until there appears to be no new evidence (Goulding, 2002).

Baker, Wuest, and Stern (1992) outline the key differences between phenomenology and grounded theory using these categories: the role of previous knowledge, sources of data, sampling method and size, and validity. They suggest that researchers should apply greater rigor in distinguishing between the two. These differences are highlighted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Phenomenology and Grounded Theory Compared

	Previous Knowledge	Data Sources	Sampling Method	Sample Size	Data Collection and Analysis	Validity
Phenomenology	Suspend (bracket) what is already known.	Informant is the only legitimate source of data, usually derived from interviews.	Purposive sampling to find informants with the particular experience sought.	Small	Interview questions are broad, open-ended to avoid influencing respondent. Meaning units identified and described.	Should be worthy of attention and truly reflect the phenomenon.
Grounded Theory	Use previous experiences to understand.	Everything is data, including other research, participant observation and self-reflection.	Participant observation, select interviews and ongoing hypothesis development lead to further selecting sampling until each concept is saturated and a framework is developed.	May be small or large and will grow until theoretical framework is complete.	Data collection and analysis occur concurrently based on constant comparison, and categories develop from codes and are linked to form a framework.	Theory should fit the data, be relevant, and be able to explain, predict and interpret the phenomenon.
Baker, Wuest, and Stern (1992)						

Combined Approach

A combination of those two methodological approaches was used for this study. Subjects were chosen purposively but prior research was used as a basis of comparison to the findings. Due to time and resource limitations, saturation was not sought; only twelve subjects were chosen. Thick description is used to highlight both the connections between and individuality of the subjects.

Population, Research Setting, Recruitment Procedures

The initial selection criteria for the study were: (a) women who were executive directors of nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations in the United States, defined as an organization that works to develop and directly influence environmental policy at the state level; (b) organizations that have at least two staff in addition to the executive director, and (c) women with at least two years in a leadership position either in their current or former positions. As the study proceeded, one participant was added. She was the executive director, and sole staff person, at a volunteer-driven organization, whose particular characteristics enhanced the study.

The participants were identified through their membership in national associations. The researcher contacted the first eight participants either by email just prior to a national conference of one association or in-person at the conference in November, 2010. Individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted during the conference in a

private location. In August and September of 2011 four additional participants who were members of the same association were interviewed by phone while they were in their home states. Each participant worked in a different state.

The participants received and signed informed consent forms (Appendix A) and a list of framing questions (Appendix B). At the beginning of the interview, the researcher asked them to put the questions aside for the interview, in order to have a free-flowing conversation. In all cases, seven primary questions were asked, but the order changed at times depending on the flow of the conversation.

The interviews were taped and transcribed by the interviewer and by paid transcribers. Each taped interview was carefully reviewed again by the researcher after all the transcription was completed to make final corrections. In that process, words and phrases were deleted, such as “you know,” “sort of,” and “um,” that characterize informal speech because in each case, these words did not add emotional or literal meaning and generally interrupted the flow for the reader. Every effort has been made to remain true to the language and cadence of the speakers.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data by reading and rereading the transcripts to achieve a sense of the whole. Titled themes that revealed aspects of the phenomena were created and participants' statements were grouped using those themes and subthemes. Some of the findings were summarized, but many quotes were left largely intact. Some narrative is used to tie the statements and themes together. The data were also analyzed using references from the literature review. A summary of findings is provided as well as a summary of major themes. Recommendations for practice in the field of environmental policy advocacy and suggestions for further research are provided at the end the study. The validity of the analysis was checked by including the interview subjects in an audit of the first draft of the study to gain their perspectives on the themes and recommendations.

Participant and Data Confidentiality

All participants signed and submitted an informed consent form (Appendix B). To maintain their anonymity as much as possible, their names were changed in the written report as well as identifiers of place, organization name, specific projects, and dates of activities. When the first draft was sent to the participants, they were asked to change anything in their quotes that was incorrect or revealed too much about their identities. The data were securely managed by keeping only two copies on personal digital devices

(laptop and thumb drive back-up). Paid transcribers signed and submitted a confidentiality form (Appendix C) and were told to delete the transcriptions after they were submitted.

Potential Research Risks to Participants

There is some risk that the identities of the participants may be shared by the participants with others. It is the researcher's intention that the final study report not have any information that can be identified with any individual participant; however, the small overall population for these specific criteria, the participants' connection with national associations, and the small number of participants increases the risk that others will know who participated. Readers of the study in the environmental advocacy field may speculate on who participated and what their views might be, even if they are meant to be anonymous. If their perspectives are viewed as controversial by any reader who knows the population of potential interviewees, a final publicly available dissertation could create hardship for the participants. This risk has been minimized by having the researcher and participants remove identifying information.

Study Limitations

The qualitative design of this study and small sample size limits the reliability of any generalizations. Findings can be generalized to some extent to the larger group of women environmental advocacy leaders throughout the United States, because the

sample includes leaders of organizations from different regions and sizes. The findings are limited in their generalizability to women environmental leaders at the national level because the national groups are usually much larger than state groups, they access policymakers differently, and because Congressional delegations work in a much different environment than state legislators. The results are also primarily applicable to Caucasian women and may have limited relevance for women of color or low-income women who often lead organizations in the environmental justice sector, for example. Where participants' claims are supported by significant academic work, the findings may be more broadly generalizable.

The criteria for choosing the participants limit the range of this study. Because the overall population of women that are the focus of the study is small, and they each work in different contexts, there will inevitably be wide variations in their experiences. Variations in regional context, organizational size, age, tenure, and environmental issue areas and tactics that the organizations' employ make it difficult to find reliable themes among the participants. The methodological approach, however, allows that the described experience of just a few participants or even a single participant is valid. There are women leaders in other kinds of nonprofit or environmental organizations that might have been more comparable to the participants in this study, particularly those that work in their states.

Interview participants did not know the researcher personally, for the most part, and that distance may have impacted their level of comfort in revealing their experiences.

Participants may have tailored their responses based on the flow of questions and by what they assumed the researcher wanted to hear. Participants may have believed that the researcher was looking for specific responses and attempted to shape the study by their answers.

The women work in highly politicized contexts and revealing the inside workings of their organizations, their strategies, and their own struggles could put them at personal and organizational risk. That was made clear from the beginning, and all participants agreed to the terms, but they may have limited their descriptions in order to protect themselves and their organizations. The interviews were also limited by having them in a relatively public venue, in the cases where they were conducted at a national conference, which may have affected participants' comfort level and willingness to reveal their perspectives fully.

Bias is assumed in this study, in that participants are asked for their subjective views about their work. The perspectives that participants share in qualitative research have been shown to be affected by the order and wording of the questions, the desire to look good for the interviewer, and the tendency to compensate for any cognitive dissonance between their actual behavior and their attitudes about that behavior (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2001). Interviews were not conducted with their coworkers to test whether the participants' views were held by others. It cannot be assumed that just because these women described their behavior as effective that others who work with them view it similarly.

In addition, as the literature review has shown, women may evaluate themselves and others differently than men do. The purpose of the questioning in this study was to

reveal the meaning of effectiveness by asking the participants' to describe situations when they believed they were effective. Thus, a limitation of the study is that if their descriptions overstate or understate their performance, then the analysis of effectiveness may be skewed. Additionally, the interviewees were not asked to give examples of their ineffectiveness as a contrast.

Since the researcher did not know the participants, for the most part, there was no attempt to seek out participants based on their reputation of success or lack of success as leaders. Women's descriptions of their own effectiveness can also be skewed by internalized concepts of traditional female stereotypes, and therefore they may understate the extent of their successes and abilities. The descriptions were compared to relevant research and theory in order to help identify biases. This limitation is inherent in qualitative research, though it is not seen as a limitation in phenomenology, where the participants' perspectives are the only source of knowledge being sought.

The researcher's subjectivity and biases play a role in the analysis; however, objectivism within qualitative research suggests that the researcher can also accurately comprehend the phenomenon, and it is not inevitable that the researcher's subjectivity will preclude the objective understanding of a subject's reality (Ratner, 2002). The researcher in this study is a female environmental leader and that experience brings bias, but also an in-depth experience of the phenomenon of study and potentially greater insight into the findings. The researcher has also studied women's leadership in another

context (Pohlmann, 1995). The dissertation committee members were also women, which created a similar possibility of gender bias but also the potential of deeper analysis.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

This chapter provides some of the broad characteristics of the group of 12 women that were interviewed, including their approximate ages, years in the environmental movement, years as executive director, and the staff size in their current organization. Some of the participants' comments are provided to show their unique histories and what brought them to the environmental movement.

Demographics

There were 12 women in the study, each currently serving as the executive director of a private, nonprofit environmental advocacy organization working at the state level. Each participant worked in a different state. Their ages ranged from early 40s to early 60s, based on comments made during the interviews, though they were not asked their age directly. The staff size of their organizations ranged from one to 26, with a median of 10 staff members. They had been in their executive director positions between two and 15 years, with a median of eight years. Six participants had replaced previous executive directors that were male, one was the first director of her organization, and five replaced executive directors or contracted directors who were women. To protect their anonymity, the particular states in which they worked are not revealed; however, to provide some sense of their regional representation, seven women were from states that were west of the Mississippi River and five were from states east of the Mississippi. Four were from southern states and eight were from northern states generally speaking.

Table 2: Study Participant Data in 2010-2011

	Age	Years in environmental movement	Years as Executive Director	Staff Size (including self)
Carol*	50s	10	14	10
Deb	46	12	8	3
Dora	60s	23	2	26
Emma	40	22	4	18
Grace	60	30	11	3
Jean	40s	20	3	3
Karen*	50s	23	11	17
Linda*	40s	30	8	1
Mary	40s	20	15	14
Paula	50s	10	3.5	8
Rita	41	8	3	14
Susan*	40s	21	13	4
Median (Mean)			8 (8)	9 (10)
*Interviewed in summer 2011 by phone; all others interviewed face-to-face in late 2010				

How Participants Came into the Environmental Movement

The participants talked generally about how they came into their current positions, but not all volunteered their specific educational background or details of their work history. All of the women had some college education; all but one had a college degree; and most had graduate degrees. Only one had a degree directly in environmental issues. Three had science backgrounds, including chemistry, biology and toxicology. Other degrees included international development, finance, and public administration.

They came into the environmental movement in various ways. Four got jobs right out of college in some kind of environmental organization or program. One did

environmental organizing work on her college campus. Two came into the movement as volunteers and another got a part-time clerical job at an environmental organization when her children were still in high school. Several had worked for state governmental agencies or had worked on environmental or other issues in Washington, DC. Their reported years of active involvement in the environmental movement ranged from eight to 30 years, with a median of about 10 years.

A few examples of the ways that they ended up pursuing environmental advocacy work are highlighted next. Mary went to college in the late 1980s, which she described as “Wall Street time,” when young people were not necessarily drawn to environmental work. She got to know fellow undergrad students who “thought about environmental issues the way I did.” With an undergraduate degree in science, she pondered whether to continue to pursue a higher degree in science, but decided to go to graduate school in public administration, recognizing that what interested her most were “the fights around the issues.”

Mary: Thought I might be in government. Didn’t really think, “I’m going to run a nonprofit.” It was probably the farthest thing from my mind [laugh], because my family is not at all political, not at all socially active.

Jean started doing environmental work internationally straight out of undergraduate college, and then chose to get a master’s degree in international development with an emphasis in environmental issues.

Jean: I didn't like what I saw [overseas] in terms of pure: "We have to change people's behaviors so that they will positively affect the environment." I really felt there was more to it. There were deeper relationships and we had to better understand that... [My graduate studies] really broadened that perspective.

Dora, Rita and Carol described their childhood connection to the outdoors as sowing the seeds of their environmental interests.

Dora: I grew up as a kid who played outdoors...and I had some exposure to environmental issues and themes and philosophies in college, and that resonated with me because of the sort of grounding I had in the outdoors.

Rita: Originally I was interested because of a land ethic that my grandfather taught me from his perspective as a farmer. And just deeply enjoying my grandparents' farm, and hearing about soil conservation from my grandfather, made me look at the broader topic. I was in high school when I learned that one could be a professional environmentalist, and I thought that I may have that career ahead of me.

Carol: I would walk to church through the field behind our house and through the woods. [I] didn't consciously realize until later, but that was my religious experience, going to church. And then once I got there, it was just incredibly boring, and I hated it. [chuckle] And then a couple of years down the line, I

learned at school... that there was such a thing as a “pantheist,” who by definition was someone who worshiped nature. And so I came home from school and at dinner announced that I was so excited that I now knew that I wasn’t a Presbyterian, I was a pantheist. [chuckle]

Dora and Deb both referenced the difference between environmental policy advocates and the work of partner organizations that focus on land conservation and restoration. Land conservation work is often viewed as more popular and less threatening, partly because it is not as rooted in the political process. These women firmly believe that policy advocacy is critical to making “real progress” and also underpins environmental conservation by setting up the regulations that protect all land, air, and water.

Dora: It’s not that I didn’t think [restoration work] was a good thing to do. I wasn’t interested in it. I’m interested in policy. When I saw how that worked... that’s to me where you make progress. You need this restoration stuff, but to make real progress you’ve got to do policy. And it’s just in my nature, I think, really good communication skills. There’s this part of me... there’s a little bit of a warrior, and so that’s where I come from.

Deb: [I]n [my state], most of the big land trusts are run by women. And they put on the great parties and everybody wants to be a part of it, and isn’t it fun? Don’t you want to save the last great places on earth? Who wouldn’t want to do that? Meanwhile the polluter upstream just got a permit to dump all kinds of stuff and

it's going to wash through their property that they just paid \$20 million for, and it's ruined.

Next, a summary of findings is presented in Chapter 5, followed by a detailed analysis of the findings in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 covers women as organizational leaders, and Chapter 7 covers women as advocacy leaders. This sets up the final discussion in Chapter 8 that synthesizes the findings, recaps the relevance of this study for public policymaking, and provides suggestions for environmental movement practice and further research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

This chapter provides a brief summary of the participant interviews. It is intended to give an overview of the full findings before the major themes drawn from those findings are analyzed in Chapters 6 and 7 that follow.

The 12 participants in this study have at least one thing in common: they serve as executive directors of environmental advocacy organizations that work on state-level policy. At the core of their passion for their work was a deep love of nature, often developed at a young age. Some became involved in the environmental movement during college or sought out environmental studies, while others found their way to the movement as volunteers. They described themselves as being persistent, tough, and stubborn—“more of a marathoner than a sprinter,” “a little bit of a warrior,” and as liking the “fights over the issues.”

Two women were actively seeking a leadership position and recognized their desire to lead; however, most did not start out with the intention to become an executive director. Most had not had formal management or leadership training prior to getting their positions. Some were encouraged to apply for the executive director position by people within their organizations who recognized their organizational and communication skills. In several instances their management skills were particularly sought after because their organizations were in financial trouble. Most expressed some ambivalence about being leaders and were more apt to describe themselves as “worker bees” and problem solvers.

They described many different variables that prepared them for being effective leaders. Among their preparatory life experiences were learning from their family businesses, youth leadership roles, parental support, leaders who were role models in their work and personal lives, higher education, and gaining a broader view of the world and cultures through travel in other countries.

They described effective leadership as deriving first and foremost from the ability to communicate well with people and “bring them along” on the mission of the organization. This takes observing, listening, and understanding what makes other people “tick,” valuing their differing styles, and providing the tools and direction for each of them to develop to their full potential. They believed an effective leader works hard on building a staff team by modeling team behavior. This includes sharing in the menial tasks of the organization, sharing the limelight with other staff members, and trusting other staff members with autonomy and authority, while also holding them accountable. Some said that leaders must act as if the organization is bigger than and separate from them. In advocacy organizations, the leader must also get staff members to work synergistically across issue areas, which helps the organization keep a holistic view of the natural environment. Most believe in a team approach to decision making, while still recognizing that sometimes they have to assert their authority and make a bottom line decision. They believed effective leaders are passionate about environmental protection and lead from their hearts.

Several participants noted that holding staff members accountable was difficult for them. They had to work themselves up to confronting or firing staff, and two sought outside assistance through a consultant or board member to do so in certain instances. They had to learn hard lessons about keeping boundaries between themselves and their staff, and also about the isolation of the leadership role. They recognized that staff accountability was more difficult for them because of their tendency as women to nurture others and their tendency to “feel badly” about the impact of a firing. On the other hand, most described the importance of staff accountability and clarity about staff roles as a critical component of good management.

Several of the women talked about the importance of bringing along their board members as an important function in their leadership role. They worked to establish trusting relationship with board members, encouraging their engagement and shared leadership. Several said it was important to articulate a vision for the organization and bring others in the organization along on it, although some said they did not believe that being a visionary was a strong skill of theirs. They all described ways that they had strategically changed their organizations over time.

As effective advocacy leaders, they strived to ensure that their organizations are regarded as powerful, respected, players and “influencers” in the policymaking arena. They must deploy their staff accordingly and also figure out their role as executive directors in the advocacy process. Being “genuine” and having good communication skills helps maintain workable relationships with stakeholders. Occasionally they have to

play “the heavy,” even when it means straining relationships. They need to understand the overt and covert political negotiations going on and understand their role as “outsiders” who may have some limited “insider” status.

The participants had a range of roles in the advocacy strategy process within their organizations and coalitions. Most were directly involved. Most did not profess detailed knowledge of any one policy area, particularly those in the larger organizations, but they were called upon within their organizations when it was important to look at the bigger context, take a different stance than a coalition partner, or take a calculated risk. They also set the boundaries around how much the organization could reasonably take on at a time.

Each woman described coalition experiences as part of her work. They felt they were assets to their coalitions, often serving as facilitators and conveners. Their ability to listen, include others, be decisive, and share credit made them effective in these groups and helped to make these groups more effective in their advocacy activities. They noted that their strengths in building personal, trusting relationships, as well as managing relationships, were particularly effective. Some noted that women tended to be better at this than many men with whom they have worked. Recognizing the long-term nature of environmental advocacy, it was also noted that the effectiveness of an organization and its leadership must be measured over time to see how “it adds up.” This is aided by self-reflection and analysis of lessons learned along the way.

All of the participants described ways that they have to deal with gender dynamics in their work. Women leaders must figure out how to fit in the local culture in terms of their level of assertiveness as women, as well as through their language, tone, and attire. In some regions and cultures, women are ostracized for being too aggressive, which becomes a particular problem for advocates who need to be assertive to achieve their policy agendas. Some described experiences of sexual harassment both internal and external to the environmental movement.

The participants generally believed that women are more consensus-oriented, work more collaboratively, invest in personal relationships, and show more compassion to others than men do. The culture in their political and coalition arenas is often dominated by male behaviors and male bonding, which can make it difficult for women to join, be recognized for their opinions, and gain access to power brokering. They believed that men are more competitive and tend toward a “pecking order” when working in groups, while women are more egalitarian. Women are more willing to do the work behind the scenes that keeps organizations functioning, while men seek the spotlight and public credit. They did point out that not all men act in those ways. Sometimes these women push their way in to conversations and meetings where men dominate. Sometimes, women gravitate to their female colleagues because “it’s easier and just as gratifying.”

The participants have made proactive changes in their organizations in the areas of management and communications. They believed that due to their leadership, their

staff groups are more organized and professional—with systems and plans in place—and more inclusive—allowing for group process and recognizing staff contributions. They have made organizational policy and culture changes that recognize the need for balance between work and family life. They have worked to broaden the focus and constituencies of their organizations and change the tone from the more “polarizing” and confrontational approaches of their male predecessors to more collaborative approaches. This does not mean that they “give in,” but this approach has helped to put them “at the table” when policy issues are being debated. Some have moved their organizations away from their more radical grassroots origins toward the “middle,” which may include getting more board members who are powerful opinion leaders but more politically moderate.

Participants were asked to offer advice to young women leaders coming behind them. They said be true to yourself; speak up more often than feels natural; learn from but move on from mistakes; don’t compete with men; stay focused on your own abilities; pursue your values; ask for help; and keep learning. The participants also believed that effective leaders must find ways to include young people and more diverse populations if the environmental movement is to survive. They believed that women’s perspectives, communication skills, and tendency to empower others will continue to make the movement stronger and more effective.

CHAPTER 6: WOMEN AS ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

This chapter deals with the study findings related to organizational management. It is based on the premise that stable, efficient organizations will be best able to expend their energy and passion on executing their missions. Stable, efficient organizations need leaders that foster hard work, critical thinking, shared leadership, collegial support, and regular evaluation of their context and progress. This enables their staffs and boards to effectively strategize, research, lobby, educate, and organize in order to achieve environmental policy goals. Based on these premises, two broad themes arise from the literature review and findings related to organizational management:

Theme 1: In order to be effective at their missions, nonprofit organizational leaders must be able to engage their staffs and boards fully by providing opportunities for shared leadership and an atmosphere of trust, respect, and open communication.

Theme 2: Nonprofit organizational leaders must proactively realign their organizations internally and externally as the context of their work continues to change.

The leadership skills indicated by these themes readily fall under transformational, realignment, and the authentic leadership theory found in the literature review of organizational leadership. Women leaders tend toward transformational

leadership styles, as shown in the literature on women and leadership (Cheung & Halpern, 2010, p. 188; Stern, 2008). Egri and Herman (2000) found that nonprofit environmental leaders were more inclined to employ transformational styles of leadership, especially in smaller, younger organizations, such as those represented in this study. The study participants' views on effective leadership in environmental advocacy organizations support those theories and views.

Bass and Avolio (1994) outline four characteristics of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. That framework will be used as a means to show that the study participants believe these transformational leadership characteristics are effective and to identify ways they believe they demonstrate them. Next, the participants' examples of using some transactional behaviors effectively are presented. Finally, three other characteristics from the literature—self-knowledge, realignment, and moral imagination—are used to frame additional examples of leadership behaviors discussed by the participants. Theme 1 relates most to the four characteristics of transformational leadership and also to the particular ways the participants described the importance of their transactional skills and self-knowledge. Theme 2 relates most to realignment and moral imagination.

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence means that a leader is “admired, valued, and trusted,” considers “the needs of others over his or her own personal needs” and can be “counted on to do the right thing” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 3). The importance of establishing trust and putting others’ needs before one’s own came up several times with the participants. Six of the women said that their organizations had not been well managed and were in debt or had some other difficulties when they were hired. Those women were hired, sometimes from within and sometimes externally, because of their perceived trustworthiness, as well as for their experience in organizational management.

Karen’s board discovered that the organization had a major financial deficit right before she was hired. She recognized that there was a “climate of distrust and uncertainty and disconnection” and she immediately implemented a “deliberate strategy to overcompensate” and be very transparent until trust had been reestablished. She said that laying this groundwork has allowed her to have a problem-free relationship with her board ever since.

Karen: [M]y first few months... were focused on changing that dynamic.... I deliberately went about over-communicating with the board, so that they felt very well-communicated with, and that everything was super transparent. I... started doing monthly updates to the board on all of the programs and what we were accomplishing... and started expanding the dialogue at the board meetings to

include more conversations and detail, and kept them very up-to-date with where we were with fundraising. [I] deliberately had one-on-one conversations with everybody on the board to develop my relationship with them and was successful in immediately changing the dynamic back to give the board comfort that, “Everything’s okay. We can trust Karen. She’s keeping us informed. We feel like the hand’s firmly on the helm.”

In Paula’s case, the previous director had put inadequate emphasis on internal financial and human resources systems. He had also chosen to expend scarce organizational resources on expensive leadership training for himself, thus better positioning him to get his next job. She said, “He ran the budget into the ground, but he got the training that he needed and he moved on.” Paula admitted she would like to have some leadership training but has not made it a priority because she has put the financial health of the organization and the needs of her staff before her own.

Paula: I could be much more effective in my job though if I had that training... but I want to be able to give my staff a 2 percent raise or I want to be sure that there’s enough in the budget that they get some development training.

Trust was engendered by being seen as committed, responsible, and morally driven. Emma talked about how important it is to believe she is doing “the right thing” in order to engender the trust of her co-workers.

Emma: I just need to really know that what I'm doing is the right thing, right strategy for the environment and [that we are] using our influence and ability to try to get the most possible in the situation. As long as I feel comfortable in that, and can defend it, I'm fine. If I'm in a situation where I can't defend it, then I won't go there. Being able to be genuine about it is really, really important to me. To sell what I am doing, I have to believe it and know it's true.

Mary noted that, after more than a decade in her job, her strategic planning process goes smoothly and quickly because "there's a lot of trust in me, because nobody feels like they have to map out all the details. They have trust that they'll be done well."

These are just a few of the ways that the participants described how they put the organization first, manage resources honestly and competently, display committed and trustworthy behavior, and are rewarded with trust by their followers. Prakash and Gugerty (2010) note that entrepreneurial leaders who can build a shared vision and consensus among their staff, board, and constituents reduce transaction costs, leaving more time and energy for policy work. With greater financial stability, staff buy-in, and organizational systems in place, these advocacy organizations are better able to do their work.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation means that leaders are behaving “in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers’ work” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 3). The participants recognize that “passion for the cause” as Linda said, is at the root of what makes them good leaders. They know the importance of engaging the passion in their teammates, providing a vision, and enabling and trusting their staff members to fully engage in their work. Bell (2010) noted that many women leaders often feel inadequately prepared to take on leadership. Several participants said they had that experience and they supported staff training and adequate preparation for participating in shared leadership.

Paula said, “They know that I am committed, and it makes them feel more committed and willing to do what needs to be done no matter how long it takes.” Mary said that she works to create a shared vision with staff and board members so that everyone is “pulling in the same direction... because if it’s just me out there, it ain’t gonna happen.” Jean said communication is key and “being able to effectively make others understand what you want and where you’re going,” but she has struggled to get her staff and board members to actively participate in the visioning.

Jean: I still predominately am the person that carries that vision. And it is very frightening most of the time, because I don’t like being the only person [laugh].

What if I'm wrong? What if I've just got it all wrong? I could really screw things up here.

Jean says her staff, at least, has begun to participate in the visioning process since she became executive director three years prior. She described this kind of process as being able to “think about things in a very broad way, and understand the complexities.” She has been able to get them to become involved by understanding how to communicate with each of them as an individual.

Jean: And if my... experience has taught me anything it's that the only way to effectively get somebody to shift to be with you or move forward with you is to understand where they're coming from and what they want out of it. And if you can understand that, you're a whole lot more likely to be able to message it in a way that brings them with you.

It is not always easy for leaders to share leadership, particularly when others are not holding the same level of responsibility for the organization as the leader is. Linda struggles to delegate work and responsibility, particularly to volunteers since she is the only staff member. Yet, when she reflected upon the leaders she most admired, she respected those who effectively developed and trusted their coworkers.

Linda: I think an effective leader trusts whoever it is—volunteer, board, staff—and trains them well...I look to past bosses as an example, and...the good ones

really did delegate and trust, but they were stern and they were strict and they were perfectionists and they liked things done a certain way. But they trained you and then they trusted you to do it, and so you felt like you wanted to do a good job, you wanted to produce the best you could.

Dora stressed that an effective leader understands that “you are only as good as your staff is good. You cannot do it all by yourself.” She mentioned the importance of being clear about expectations with staff members and then trusting them to do their job and holding them accountable. Susan also discussed this point, and suggested testing how strong the staff is by leaving them from time to time.

Susan: [Y]ou need to design an organization that you can leave. You can take off for three weeks. You can go on parental leave. You can go out sick, and your staff has the tools, has the experience, and has the confidence to back you up and continue the work. That should be one of your big tasks.... Because the organization is not you... it needs to be an organization which is by definition a multifaceted, complex, interrelated organism, [and] the more diverse and strong it is the better. It will survive any number of hits that naturally come the way of organizations, from people being hit by a bus to sudden job offers somewhere else... You gotta, truly let go, and it's hard. But truly that is the only way you can identify holes and that is the only way that people can actually be strong.

Emma also believes that women, as a rule, are better managers than men because of their ability to motivate and communicate with their staff.

Emma: I get a lot of applicants from organizations that are headed up by men.

[chuckle] I can hear in those interview processes what they're going through.... I have very high expectations of my staff and my staff work hard, but they do that because they believe in it and they do that because they know that I'm doing it. I'm not asking them to do any more than what I am doing. I'm actually asking them to do less than I'm doing, because I don't want them working as hard as I do... [T]his is a gross overgeneralization—I don't think it's true for every male executive director—but I do think generally, male EDs don't communicate as well and provide enough clarity of expectations and feedback.

Karen compares her experiences as team captain in sports to her experiences as an advocacy organization leader.

Karen: You have to learn how to win and you have to learn how to lose, and as a team captain, I have been responsible for helping bring together and create a cohesive whole that believes in itself, and help bring the best out of people, and do that in the context of also trying to perform myself.

These are just a few of the ways that the participants described how they bring their staff and board members along on their vision, and motivate them through adequate training, accountability, feedback, and mutual trust.

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation means that “new ideas and creative problem solutions are solicited from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 3). Taliento and Silverman (2005) also showed that nonprofit leaders, more so than for-profit leaders, usually have a smaller scope of authority and their stakeholders expect to have input into a consensus approach to running the organization. Dann (2008) also suggested that generative leadership in a nonprofit requires a high degree of communication and feedback centering on the shared values, beliefs, and trust among and between team members, and the leader and the presence of leadership opportunities.

The participants all described the importance of engaging their staffs and boards in organizational problem solving in order to find the best solutions. They also stressed building a strong sense of teamwork. At the same time, they have had to figure out what their own leadership role is as the bottom-line decision maker.

Carol described herself as “a very nurturing leader” who trusts the staff members’ knowledge and ability and supports them in the directions they think are right.

Carol: Not that I am completely passive on that end. I think I'm fairly challenging. But in the end, I think my staff feels that I respect and support them. [T]here's autonomy and egalitarianism amongst the staff, between the staff and me. And ultimately I'm the decider. [chuckle] But I don't use that power lightly, and I think the staff really appreciates that.

Karen looks to her staff for ideas and creativity, which creates more buy-in for those who will implement the decisions.

Karen: My style of leadership is sort of team-based.... I think 90 percent of the time folks appreciate that, because there is an opportunity for conversation and input from the people that are going to be affected by the decision and have to implement it. And you have an opportunity to mine any creativity and innovation that comes from those folks, and also create buy-in. And my preference is to lead a decision-making process so that the consensus bubbles up from the bottom, and at the end, everybody knows the right decision, and everybody agrees with it.

Rita also collects input from a lot of people but she has had to learn that sometimes she needs to make a decision rather than always wait for a consensus to arise.

Rita: [Being effective] means being quite democratic in decision making, and yet also decisive. I tend to gather a whole bunch of information and input, ask my staff and, if appropriate, my board, or individuals from those two subsets, what

they think. And then I take that information and I go away and I make a decision. I had to learn the last half of that. My natural inclination was to gather the information and try to sit there with all of the people who had given me the input and try to come up with a consensus. And I have a really great associate director who took me aside at one point and said, "I think it's really great that you ask everyone for input. Then you need to make a decision." And just having that spelled out for me very simply was very helpful, and I've felt like a pretty effective leader since.

Dora also describes working with her female deputy as a team. Their relationship is more egalitarian than the relationship she had as deputy with her previous male director.

Dora: [We] have more of a team approach. [My previous director] and I were a team, but he clearly... I mean, "I set the tone. I make the decisions." There was just a different male dynamic there.

Carol also stressed how important it was to find staff members who can take advantage of the "synergy" between their program areas as part of working together as a team. She has worked to build a "holistic perspective" on the environment at her organization and has achieved it through good hiring, restructuring, and management.

Carol: [W]hat happens in the water program can be... augmented and improved on through conversations and think tanks with the forest program and the sustainable communities program. And the energy program benefits from the synergy amongst the other programs, and so on. And in order to get that synergy working, you have to have staff that's willing to... operate as a team as opposed to simply being a silo. And what I had was a bunch of silos, and what I have now is a great dynamic team. So in the hiring process you have to... take a leap of faith [chuckle] that the chemistry is going to work. And I've been very fortunate to make the right choices about hiring people into various positions.

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration is when a leader "pays special attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach and mentor" and helps coworkers develop "successively higher levels of potential," while demonstrating "acceptance of individual differences" (Bass & Avolio, 1994, pp. 3-4). The participants repeatedly stressed the importance of building relationships with their staff and board members in order to "bring them along." They considered this kind of attention to individuals a natural trait of women and one of the strengths of women's leadership.

Grace notes that a "really effective leader in the environmental movement has to be cultivating people's potential and helping them to see that they can do more than they think they can do." She also stressed the importance of getting to know a little about

people's personal lives, especially when motivating her volunteers, something the previous male leader was not as good at.

Grace: [He] didn't quite have that capacity of gathering people up. [O]ne time I was telling him something about somebody's kids or family and he said, "How do you know this stuff?" I said, "Well...I talk to them. [big laugh]." And I do. Part of my approach is I get to know the people in a personal way and I know how many kids they have and I try to remember the kids' birthdays or whatever. And so, it's a social club to some extent, but it brings them closer to us.

Susan says effective leadership comes down to assessing whether each staff member is effective, and "helping them work to their strengths, minimize the weaknesses, and allowing them to succeed." She notes that there are "many different ways of moving forward and doing things" and it is the leader's responsibility to recognize and "allow those different styles." Rita also thinks that a leader must "listen really carefully and address or interact with each staff person on an individual level" in order to customize how she will help them according to his or her needs. Mary also talked about the importance of individualized attention to each board member.

Mary: I have gotten pretty good at figuring out how to get the board pointed in the same direction and engaging them and having them be excited about the organization, too. And much of that is an individualized approach to board members. They're all different people...[T]hey all are there for different reasons.

And that's actually something I had to learn as I went along. I thought of them as the "entity," and I had to feed them information and they will give me direction... And the more I learned to think about, "Okay, what motivates [Julie]," the more I've been able to get [Julie] to do more. I have not seen my male counterparts be as good at doing that. And I don't know if that's a female trait or a male trait or something that is more valued by women. I don't know. But I actually think that that's something I'm good at..., [which is] leading but bringing, pulling, and pushing people along.

Women often face the issue of finding balance between work and family in their lives as working women (Madsen, 2008). The participants in this study were proud of their success in changing their internal policies to make it easier on staff members that work long hours and also have to take care of families. Mary thought it was especially important in the nonprofit world "to make the workplace as flexible as possible" and she has always looked for ways to "to try to raise the bar in terms of options for people with kids in a way that supports families." Paula also thinks that flexibility is one of the benefits of working at a nonprofit, where staff is "underpaid and overworked." Susan and Mary had to change the attitudes in their organizations to recognize that "women have babies" by developing basic maternity coverage and parental leave. Jean talked about setting limits with her organization and having to fight "for time off and hours that probably a male would not necessarily have encountered so much friction around." She is adamant that a woman leader "can't do it all" and will burn out and drive herself crazy if she tries. Jean thinks this issue is a defining battle of her generation, and she believes that

a healthy balance between work and family life helps everyone feel focused and is a particular form of meeting individual needs.

Jean: [Y]ou can be focused on work when you're at work because that's your work. And when you leave your work, you'll be focused on the other things you want to be focused on.

Finally, several participants described being the leaders of networks and coalitions in their states; thus, the ability to engender trust and build collaborative relationships extended beyond their organizations to their coalition partners. Jean says she often serves as the facilitator in coalitions, acknowledging that her biggest strength is "bringing everybody to the table, ensuring that everybody—if not comfortable at the table, is willing to be there and willing to speak up and put in their input." Deb described facilitating coalition phone calls and being "really good about letting people have ideas and run with what they want." Karen notes that she and her organization are looked to when it is important to unite the conservation community behind shared policy initiatives so "that we're not running around like a herd of cats."

Mary noted that one of her biggest accomplishments has been to be the convener of the state's environmental coalition, which "wouldn't exist" without her. She was effective at getting "people with different motivations, different self-interests, different organizational interests to figure out how to work together better so we could start making some progress." She said that working together on various legislative campaigns

has meant that people need to “learn to respect each other at different levels,” but the fact that she is a “known quantity” has kept the coalition together.

In summary, the participants shared numerous ways in which they—and women leaders in general—value and focus on the individuals they work with at the staff, board and coalition levels, and how those efforts enhance people’s ability to work more effectively together.

Transactional Behaviors

Most of the examples of effective organizational leadership the participants provided fit most readily within descriptions of transformational leadership. However, they also discussed the importance of creating organizational structure, boundaries, and accountability in relation to their supervisees, board members, and coalition partners. Those behaviors can be described as characteristics of transactional leadership. Since there is still a strongly held societal expectation that men are the best leaders, and men are most often associated with transactional leadership behaviors (Eagly, 2007), it is important to note the ways in which these women leaders exercised transactional behaviors, showing their authority, assertiveness, and autonomy with their staffs, boards, and coalitions.

Several participants noted that there was little in the way of organizational systems, such as personnel policies, strategic plans, or employee work plans, when they

came into their organizations, and they recognized the importance those played in healthy organizational functioning. Susan noted that many problems can be averted “because you have effective systems and processes,” but she also said it is important that those systems do not take over the whole organization. Deb described needing to discipline employees “when things don’t go right.” Jean described terminating someone’s employment because the job wasn’t being done, although it was difficult for her to do. Carol and Deb both described the need to occasionally be the bottom line decision maker for various organizational and policy directions, exercising their authority, usually after input from others was obtained. Deb described setting limits with her coalition partners, making it clear, for example, that deadlines for joint grant applications are firm, and she was not willing to pick up the slack for others’ tardy submissions.

Often these examples from the participants came with provisos about getting used to “not being liked” by everyone, being willing to be perceived as “harsh,” or recognizing their own internal dissonance with needing to “take charge.” Yet, they did take charge, and knew that those tasks were an important part of their jobs and of their leadership. In addition, despite societal expectations about men being better leaders than women because of their transactional skills, several participants noted that their male predecessors did not tend to some of the basic transactional tasks like financial, human resource, and staff accountability systems, which had the effect of eroding mutual trust and overall effectiveness in those organizations.

Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is a central aspect of authentic leadership and participants demonstrated it in a variety of ways. Avolio et al. (2004) defined authentic leaders as people who “know who they are, what they believe and value” and “act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others” (p. 802). Studies of women leaders in other fields have shown that women believe the most effective and successful leaders are those who can understand themselves and see themselves accurately in the eyes of those around them (Madsen, 2008, p. 272).

The participants in this study showed self-knowledge by recognizing their strengths, their personal style, and also their limitations, biases and mistakes. Implicit in most of their comments was their belief that self-knowledge helped them work on being better leaders.

Grace said that it was scary when she first became the executive director: “Suddenly everybody was expecting me to be a big picture person, and that’s not what I’m good at. I’m good at details. I’m good at people.” Grace’s emphasis on relationships, while relying on others for details, has brought more people in and increased their loyalty to the organization.

Mary said she is not particularly good at articulating a vision, but she knows how to identify problems that need fixing, and that approach has served her well for 15 years in her organization.

Mary: I'm not always the best at, "This is the grand plan. This is the vision." [T]o this day, I am not really good at mapping out or saying what we need to do, and that... doesn't always work so well with funders, right? They want the grand fancy vision with all the nice names on it, right? [chuckle]. That's not me... I like fixing things. I'm like, "Well that's stupid. We gotta [fix that]" [laugh]... I came into an organization that [was viewed by] the foundation world as a mess, so I just started fixing things.

Several participants noted that they have learned they do not have to know all the answers or the technical details and that it is okay to ask for advice.

Dora: I am not detail-oriented, so I have to rely on other folks to help me with those details. It's just not in my nature. Never was. Never will be... I lead on some of the issues, but things that I am not the lead on... those details have to be with other people... I am not at all scared of asking for advice. I'm not going to pretend I know something in an area where I am at sea, because that's just disaster. And the... wonderful part about that is, it's an opportunity for me to learn things I never knew before... That's been really, really interesting. I think that I was a little bit worried about interacting with some of these utility

executives and that kind of thing. But now I've learned that just being myself and not pretending I'm [my male predecessor], not even for a second, opens doors and ways of engaging with them that is my own style.

Carol reflects on growing up with a learning disability, and how it has affected her staff management in both positive and negative ways.

Carol: I had a challenging time with self-esteem basically from second grade or third grade on. I learned to compensate for what I thought then was a real shortcoming... I don't have enough objectivity on my own self, but I am sure that that life experience has affected who I am very deeply. And one of the results is that I am more compassionate and patient with others than some people would be. One of the criticisms I would give myself is that I was more lenient and accepting, might not have pushed my staff as far as I could have, and that I was too supporting and nurturing and not challenging enough.

Another form of self-knowledge is to recognize how instinctual behaviors must be adapted in order to be an effective leader. Mary observed over the years that her male counterparts are often the ones who speak up first in meetings, and by doing so, they or their organization get credit for an idea. She learned that she had to speak up more in meetings, depending on "who's in the room and what the dynamic is." She does not think she has fundamentally changed but rather learned to adapt and push herself to, for example, interrupt in a way that she normally would not do.

Emma has also learned that being in the leadership role and making leadership decisions can result in people not liking her. She's had to deal with her feelings of disappointment about this and change her perspective in order to keep going.

Emma: I think one of the challenges...is not to internalize and expect that people are always going to like me... This was a big issue for me ten years ago, when I was at [another organization]. It was awful because I was hired to clean house and reorganize and restructure and so, by the end of that, few people liked me. [laugh]. So I think that that has been one of the challenges, to develop a little bit of a thicker skin, and realize there are lots of different people. People have different perspectives. It's okay. I don't have to be best friends with everybody.

Another example of self-knowledge is to know one's heart and one's passion. Grace chooses the issues the organization will pursue based on what grabs her emotionally and what she can move "full steam ahead on." She said, "You gotta go after what you go after with your whole heart," or let some other organization work on it.

Finally, there is the ability to learn from mistakes. Karen said it is important to reflect on lessons learned and to "be honest enough with yourself and be willing to hear feedback enough for yourself that you can actually evolve." She stresses the importance of not taking oneself so seriously that you cannot look back and recognize "a disaster" that you will try to avoid in the future. These examples of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and transparency helped the participants create an atmosphere where others

can exhibit the same characteristics and build more effective communication internal and external to the organization.

This study now turns to the characteristics of realignment and moral imagination, which relate to Theme 2: Nonprofit organizational leaders must proactively realign their organizations internally and externally as the context of their work continues to change.

Realignment

Dym and Houston (2005) described alignment theory and a leader's "fit" with the organization and its objectives, values, culture, staff expectations, market constituency, and stage of development. They also describe how a leader must remain open to continual realignment as internal and external change occurs for their organization and avoid becoming too comfortable and rigid with their structures and approaches. The challenge of realignment can be clearly shown through participants' comments about how their organizations have changed under their leadership.

Mary moved her organization from being volunteer driven and "at the whim of whichever particular board member had a project," to being an organization with an overriding plan and a professional staff that has clear work plans and responsibilities. Before her staff and board were "erratic" in their performance, but now they are "consistently strong."

Mary: I'm really proud to work with [the staff members] because they are whip-smart. They really are [laugh]. [And now I have] a board that developed the plan with me and is in sync, moving the strategic plan forward....I guess all of that adds up to a reputation as the organization that you really need to talk to....[Now] the timber lobby, the association of businesses... they know they need to deal with us. They may not like dealing with us. We may end up fighting with each other, but we are a strong and powerful force and we weren't necessarily...I built that. And it wasn't one thing...but really over time.

Dora noted that when their founding director left, it opened up the organization "to everybody really being able to step up," which has been empowering for her and for everyone else. She noted that the previous director had "no patience for process."

Dora: We are putting into place work plans and processes that will make it very clear who's accountable. Plus the work has picked up. I think that's true for everybody. We've got so much to manage, that if we don't have these processes in place, we're not going to be successful. I've got a little more tolerance for that process kind of stuff. I think everybody in the organization needs that structure to understand what they're supposed to be doing and how they're going to be measured against it.

Emma has added communications capacity on staff that helps with public engagement and their name recognition.

Emma: We've done a lot more around public engagement and marketing. The organization didn't have communication, marketing staff before I started, and just wasn't really out there engaging people in what it is we are doing, and how people can get involved, and really selling ourselves. So that's been a big change. As a result our name recognition has increased. I think that's partly why our reputation has improved because people are hearing about us, know about us. We are doing a better job at just sharing our results and really crediting supporters for their help. I think we've come from a much more insular organization to [one that is] externally-oriented.

Paula was one of several participants who noted how they have made a much greater effort to recognize staff members for their good work and share the public spotlight with them.

Paula: Morale is good. They like working there, even though we're underpaid, we have no benefits, and they work their tails off. I think they get recognized more than they're probably used to within the organization....I try to make a point to recognize people for doing good work, or for going above and beyond the call of duty. If they've stayed late or had to do a weekend thing, I try to recognize them amongst the group. I try to recognize them in front of the board. I don't know that they got that [under the previous director.]

Jean said she worked from the beginning of her tenure to broaden her organization's outreach to new constituencies, despite resistance from various board members who felt that their interests would not be as well-served if that happened.

Jean: [I]t actually got to the point where I had to lay the financial analysis on the table and say, "I understand that this is where your passion is, that these are the things that drive you. But for the financial growth and success of this organization, this is not the best allocation of our resources." That was a really big organizational shift...to move away from advocating on individual little topics—all be they important topics—to advocating on...things that will make a substantial difference in the state level...Not surprising to me, but surprisingly to them, we haven't lost [our previous] constituencies. They really didn't drop away. They're die-hard...They're not going anywhere.

Rita pushed for board term limits and the board has shifted from being more "grassroots" to being made up of people who've had decision-making roles in the state in the field of natural resources. They have looked for "people who are passionate and who know how to work within the system," which has meant a shift "to the middle" in terms of the board members' political and policy values.

The participants, for the most part, gave the impression that they remain proactively open to needed adaptations in their organizations, even while recognizing the successes they have had in the past. Karen noted:

One of the things that does makes you more effective over time, is time itself.

Because if you're successful for multiple years, it's hard for people not to believe in you and for you not to believe in yourself.

Karen's comment could indicate a very positive and dynamic synergy between a leader and followers, but without honest accountability and ongoing organizational self-reflection, it could indicate the organizational rigidity that Dym and Huston warn against. These are the perspectives of the leaders and are considered valid for this study; however, others in their organizations may have different perspectives on how healthy their organizations currently are or what realignments are needed that have not been undertaken.

One way to combat inertia is for a leader to consciously seek out different viewpoints. One of Mary's leadership lessons was to recognize and be comfortable with perspectives that are different than hers. Different environmental organizations with different missions can sometimes clash over advocacy issues and strategies. Mary says she has come to see that partners like the local Sierra Club chapter or The Nature Conservancy have "different roles in the community," and she has come to be "a little more tolerant of them." She's learned, "Okay, I think I'm right, but they could be partially right, too." She has likewise learned that it is important to bring on staff members who are really different from her.

Mary: Initially I was inclined to bring on [staff members that were] kind of like me, because I understood them. I understood how their brain worked because it worked like my brain...I realized that wasn't the best mix overall. I need some of that. I need the kind of people who get it like I get it so we can collaborate. But I also need people who think totally from a different angle so we can collaborate and figure out how to get the job done.

These leaders have worked to realign their organizations in many ways, including broadening their policy issue base, adding new staff members with different roles, and recognizing the accomplishments of individual staff members. Longevity and openness to differing views have helped them gain a broader perspective on their work.

Moral Imagination

Stephenson (2007) noted that nonprofits need their leaders to not just strive for alignment within their own organizational culture and context, but to also have "moral imagination" as that relates to the broader context in which these organizations work.

Stephenson notes:

The moral imagination demands both an ethical orientation to a commons beyond a single organization or individual's set of interests and it requires that actions be taken against the backdrop of those broader communal imperatives. (p. 275)

The concept of moral imagination builds upon the previous discussion of incorporating differing perspectives as a way to avoid organizational stasis and remain open to needed adaptations. The focus here is on the importance of taking gender, race, class, cultural norms, and other issues into account when executing an organization's mission and being open to realignment on these grounds. Feminist leadership discourse talks about this as a basic necessity for effective leadership (Chin et al., 2007).

Environmental organizations work in a localized context that must be taken into account to fully understand the impacts of their policy actions on various people and to discern where their supporters and opponents may be. Sometimes that begins with just trying to fit in. Rita talked about her efforts to adapt to local cultural norms, since she is not from the state where she works. She works at this so that she can be effective in her leadership role.

Rita: I end up calling on my agricultural heritage more than I would have if I were in other places...I'm usually quick to bring into the conversation that both sets of grandparents farmed [and that I grew up in a nearby state]...and all of these things seem to put people in [my state] at ease. I'm not from the coasts and I'm not from the Ivy League, and I went to the [local university]. All of these seem to be really important cultural signals. And when I'm interacting with certain colleagues, I will even find myself shifting into a more colloquial way of speaking. I think that I am doing a little bit of a chameleon act and trying to make myself look and sound like the person I am talking to.

Deb talked about her experience working in a region that is generally hostile to environmentalists and to her assertive behaviors. She noted that, “they just really don’t like the fact that that a woman is aggressive and smart and doesn’t let people get away with bad behavior.” This creates some “road blocks” for her with legislators and even with colleagues in the environmental movement who are not used to her style. Women from the region she works with shy away from her when she is assertive because, “We don’t do that here,” and will tell her that others “don’t like you very much.” Men will joke about wanting to “sic” her on others. These are dynamics she has to navigate in order to remain effective.

Those experiences indicate that a level of cultural awareness helps leaders to integrate themselves as much as possible and keeps them from feeling defensive, ostracized, and judgmental, which could interfere with their effectiveness. This is one application of moral imagination.

Environmental organizations also need to be aware of the diversity of racial and ethnic populations in their states who will be impacted by their policy actions. Linda works in a region with a large native population and she actively reaches out to them to listen to their views and understand their politics. She recognizes that some native people have an antiregulatory sentiment because they view some environmental laws as “white people” infringing on their tribal rights. She notes that some corporate and government interests try to “stir up” those sentiments among the tribes so they will join forces with them to undermine regulations. Linda believes it is essential to educate and involve native

people in environmental issues so that they will be knowledgeable and help actively protect the resources they rely upon. That is another example of moral imagination.

Although one other participant mentioned working in coalition with native populations in their states, there were no other stories specifically mentioned of working with diverse populations. The environmental movement as a whole has been criticized for not being more sensitive to economic, racial, cultural, ethnic and gender diversity when analyzing issues and forming policy agendas (Gottlieb, 2005). By comparison, the environmental justice movement provides an arena where the connections of class, race, and environmental degradation are actively explored. These two movements remain largely on separate tracks in the United States.

In summary, women's ability to be self-reflective and analyze their experiences as individuals and as women in differing contexts indicates the tendency for moral imagination. Yet much more will be needed from leaders to realign the environmental movement so that its organizations actively incorporate the perspectives of the wide diversity of individuals and communities that rely upon the earth and share in both its bounty and the risks from its degradation. This is an area that deserves ongoing study.

CHAPTER 7: WOMEN AS ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY LEADERS

This chapter provides a look at the experiences the participants have as women leaders doing environmental advocacy at the state level. Chapter 6 used a framework from the transformative leadership literature to ground the participants' organizational and management experience; however, there was no analogous framework found for advocacy leadership. The collective action theory (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010) that is referred to throughout this chapter is helpful for considering how these nonprofit advocacy leaders operate their advocacy organizations like firms, but it does not provide an adequate framework to encompass all the perspectives these women had on effectiveness. Frameworks from other arenas of nonprofit work might have been applied, but the unique combination of these women's leadership experience, advocacy, and environmentalism made other frameworks inapt.

Thus, this chapter is organized using the themes that arose from the intersection of the literature review and findings, and is based on three premises. First, women have unique perspectives and experiences in their leadership roles that arise from their socialization as women, and from the gender expectations of those with whom they work. Those experiences, expectations, and perspectives provide benefits and challenges in their leadership efforts. Second, the century-old environmental movement in the United States was largely led by men until the last few decades, and that history, as well as the current political context in which these women work, impacts upon their leadership experiences in both positive and negative ways. Third, women bring their unique

perspectives and experiences to bear on policy advocacy, which will continue to influence how powerful their advocacy efforts are and how policy is being made in the environmental policy arena, particularly as more women move into environmental leadership. Based on those premises, three broad themes arise from the literature review and findings related to environmental advocacy leadership:

Theme 1: Women advocacy leaders tend to underemphasize their leadership and their accomplishments, which may stem from gender socialization, and that tendency affects their views of effectiveness.

Theme 2: Women advocacy leaders are drawn to collaborative and transparent modes of interaction, which can be at odds with the male-dominated policy arenas in which they work.

Theme 3: Women advocacy leaders view their effectiveness in achieving policy objectives as stemming from their attention to relationships and communication; their ability to analyze the complexities of a political process and chart a practical course of action; their willingness to directly take on difficult issues and interactions; and their persistence to succeed.

The themes are illuminated as follows. Theme 1 relates to findings about the participants' attitudes toward "Taking on the Role of Leader." Theme 2 relates to findings about the participants' experiences in "The Male-dominated Context of Policy

Leadership,” including further delineation of the challenges of dealing with male bonding and exclusionary behavior, male hubris and competitiveness, women’s efforts to adapt to those challenges, the ways in which the policy world is changing slowly, and the overall challenge of working as an environmentalist. Theme 3 relates to the participants’ perspectives on “Being an Environmental Advocate,” including what it means to be a player in the field, coalition building efforts, strategizing tactics, and their efforts to change the overall communication tone of their organizations.

I. Taking on the Role of Leader

As previously noted in the literature on women and leadership, women leaders often do not start out in life with the goal of being leaders and, even after becoming leaders, often do not clearly see the extent of their own leadership abilities and effectiveness (Academic Medicine, 1996; Madsen, 2008). That is relevant when interpreting the participants’ descriptions of their leadership effectiveness.

Several participants described ambivalence about stepping into leadership. They came into their organizations and did what they thought needed to be done, learned a lot along the way, and eventually could reflect back upon their accomplishments and effective leadership skills.

Grace started doing clerical work as a volunteer in her organization, but was soon placed in public advocacy situations. She described this transition and increased

involvement as finding “a niche” for her energy. She described herself in her early years as a “worker bee” and a “doer,” not a leader. She held that view of herself until leadership was “thrust upon her” as she was asked to take on new responsibilities. She eventually joined the board of directors and then served as chairman, before she became executive director. As chairman, she began to have a leadership role in the organization.

Grace: [I]t was a tremendous learning experience because I found that people wanted me to act like a dignitary. I mean they wanted to carry my books home from school as it were, and take me to lunch and help me in all those things because I was the chairman...And I had to actually observe other people and mimic them and act like a chairman...for the good of the organization. And in the course of doing that, of course, I gradually became more comfortable with the role.

Mary was not seeking to be the executive director either when she joined the staff of her organization, but grew to love “the board and the volunteers and the people who were passionate about the issues.”

Mary: And I was also good at it...I was not trained to be an executive director, but I’m organized. I can look out and keep things going close in at the same time... [A]s I’ve thought about it over time, I actually had a lot of really good skills for the job...and the passion came from the issues and the people.

Rita became the director in her late 30s, but had never dreamed she would have a leadership position at such a young age and, “the idea of meeting with the governor or the idea of having a hard discussion with a coworker—those things just made me shake.” But over time and experience she “accepted the idea that I might be able to do those things.”

Several of the academic leaders Madsen (2008) interviewed expressed similar concerns about having enough personal fortitude to be a leader while facing interpersonal conflicts and challenging decisions. For example, one of those leaders said:

I wondered sometimes if I had the strength or whether I could handle it. You have to make tough decisions and you end up having people not happy. You make enemies of people no matter what you do. It is so political, and you need to be okay with that. (p. 150)

Women often rise to leadership because others see their skills, even more so than they do, and encourage them to advance in their positions (Madsen, 2008). Interviews with some of these participants support this claim. Linda and Deb both said they still doubt their effectiveness until others tell them they have done well. Linda discussed this in the context of receiving a prestigious award for outstanding leadership.

Linda: I had mixed feelings. I was really honored to get the award, but I felt like, oh boy...Is there nobody else out there you can give this to? I guess I always look at my shortcomings. I don't look at my strengths. But to the outside, to other

environmental groups, and certain elected officials, and people around town, I'm seen as an effective, strong leader. And so it feels kind of strange, because I don't feel like I'm fooling people. It's not fraud or anything, but sometimes I feel that it's not deserved.

Madsen (2008) notes that while many women are acknowledged for their skills, "only a small fraction of them hear and believe what they are told. Many women have the habit of dismissing comments as not accurate or significant" (p. 158).

Deb reflected on her self-doubt and tendency to need external reinforcement to believe she is effective.

Deb: I just don't feel like a leader. And I wonder if a lot of women feel that way. I just kind of do the daily grind and I try to give everybody the tools to do their job....[A]nd it's funny because I never think I'm effective, but people will tell me, "Hey, when you did that, that was great." And then I feel effective. And I think that's probably a very female characteristic...Most of the time, I'm besieged with self-doubt.

Despite the fact that about half the women said they were not initially drawn to leadership, all participants described experiences in their lives that helped them in their leadership roles. These included being an athlete, being a wilderness guide, growing up in

a family with a business, living in many different places, observing other leaders, and having strong female role models.

Karen and Jean were clear about their intention to be leaders. Jean's mother was a nonprofit organizational leader and "a pretty staunch feminist." Jean rose through the ranks of various organizations and was actively looking for a leadership position. She described her current position as "the next logical progression of climbing the tree of positions."

Karen also sought leadership positions. She had been the leader of another organization and described her current executive director position as her "dream job." Karen's four sisters (and no brothers) provided "strong, powerful, effective women to use as role models."

Karen: I tend to gravitate towards leadership positions in most arenas in my life, particularly where leadership is needed. If there are a lot of other good leaders available, I don't have to be the leader. I sort of fill the void whenever there is leadership needed...I have done that frequently throughout my life.

In summary, the study findings support theories suggesting that many women are socialized not to view themselves as leaders, and often rely on others to reflect back to them their effectiveness as leaders. Women with strong female role models can counteract these broad societal expectations. Spence (2002) found that having female role

models in political office was the strongest determinant for women deciding to run for political office. The impact of having female leadership role models on a woman's perception of her own leadership potential and effectiveness in the advocacy realm deserves further exploration.

II. The Male-dominated Context of Advocacy Leadership

More women have come into leadership positions in the environmental advocacy movement in the last 20 years than previously, but the movement as a whole still has many more male than female leaders (Gottlieb, 2005). In addition, the work of advocacy takes place in a male-dominated political arena at the state and national levels in the United States.

The participants in this study discussed various ways that they experience gender differences, gender bias, and gender dynamics, most of which make their jobs more difficult, although they learn to work around these difficulties and sometimes use gender to their advantage.

As noted in the literature review, a leader's environment must be taken into account when considering how others view the leader's effectiveness and how the leader views herself (Kirchmeyer 1998). It can be assumed that the participants in this study filter their perceptions of effective leadership through a lens that is colored by the environment in which they work. Even if the women work with predominantly female

staff coworkers in their organizations, as was often the case, or with many female coalition partners, the male-dominated political world around them is full of what Kellerman and Rhode (2007) describe as “in-group favoritism” towards men and stereotypically male ways of operating. That is relevant for this study of advocacy leaders in terms of how they view effectiveness and how they may be perceived as powerful players in the policy arena.

A. The challenge of male bonding and exclusionary behavior

Many of the participants described working within a male leadership culture, which they perceive to be driven by dominating and exclusive behaviors that make it difficult for women to participate and to be recognized. That is particularly true in the legislative arena, where an inner circle of lobbyists and legislators is interacting daily and sometimes into the night. It also occurs among the leaders of state and national environmental groups when they are working together.

Study participants in their 50s and 60s who had been doing environmental advocacy for decades had a different experience when they began than they currently do. Men dominated the environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s even more than they currently do, both in terms of leadership positions and in setting the environmental agenda. The dominance of “aggressive” male attorneys in the early years of the movement created a widely recognized caricature of environmentalist behavior that was “in your face,” “antagonistic,” and polarizing.

Mary: [In the late 80's when I started] primarily men were in the leadership positions. There were a lot of smart but know-it-all male environmental attorneys in our world, and they kind of ran the show. That's a very different style, very different from me. So that was kind of a culture challenge. [T]hey thought I wasn't necessarily bold enough, wasn't necessarily in-your-face enough...I always think the proof's in the pudding. [chuckle]

Grace and Paula talked about their experiences coming to national environmental conferences, where the "hook and bullet" males were often bonding around personal hunting and fishing stories or were just hanging around together, and how difficult it was to connect with them as a woman, particularly one who does not hunt and fish. Grace notes that even though she'll never be able to share the hunting stories, over time, she has gained her male colleagues' attention and respect because of her effectiveness in her work and the clarity of her opinions at meetings. Paula continues to find it challenging because she'd like to learn from all of the leaders, but "how do you break into the guys-playing-cards and drinking-the-whiskey kind of a thing?" She notes that it is much easier to seek out other women. She also views her discomfort with breaking into those male circles as partly due to her lack of self-esteem, rather than just due to their exclusionary behavior.

Paula: [At a conference] I know as I walk up to have dinner by myself, I am going to pick a table with three women to sit with before I'll pick a table with three men...It's not that I try to avoid the men, but it's a comfort level thing. [I]t's

probably partially just my own self-image, and I hate to use self-esteem, but I'm sure that's probably where it gets to.

Kellerman and Rhode (2007) discuss some of the negative ramifications of this male exclusionary behavior:

In-group favoritism is also apparent in the informal networks, of mentoring, contacts, and support that are critical for advancement. People generally feel most comfortable with those who are like them in important respects, including gender. Women in traditionally male-dominated settings often remain out of the loop of advice and professional development opportunities. (pp. 10-11)

Linda notes that the "leadership, elected officials, even the state agency high-ups" are predominantly male and "behave and react in a certain way because they are male and because most of their colleagues are male." There is also an "insider" culture in the policymaking arena that is often dominated by men, or made up exclusively of men. Mary and Grace both noted that they are not drawn to the "clubby," "male-bonding," "good old boy" culture that exists in the policy arena. Mary described a typical meeting setting where "the conversation is officially over," but a smaller group of men goes off and quietly continues talking and working together. Grace noted that the "real decisions" happen when the men are "out hunting and 'guying' together." Both recognize that they are not part of or comfortable with this exclusionary culture.

Rita said that the male bonding that occurs during state house lobbying is particularly difficult for her because it tends to take place at the local bar late after the legislative session of the day is over. She leaves that kind of activity to her male lobbyist.

Rita: I'm so relieved that I have a lobbyist who is 59 years old and a guy because I can't work a ten hour day and then spend three hours in the bar drinking, which seems to be what it requires. Certainly, I will show up for the more formal lobbying that happens in the capitol, and from time to time I will succumb to the peer pressure of going to the bar. But I could not do that day in and day out for the full session like my lobbyist does.

Paula suspects that her male lobbyist may be purposely keeping her out of the legislative arena, either to protect her from that culture or because he perceives she will not be effective there.

Paula: The lobbyist that I hired is a sexist. And frankly most of the legislators are sexist so maybe he insulates me a little bit more than he might a male because of my gender from dealing directly with the legislators. In fact, I had a conversation with him after the last legislative session, which was, "You didn't ask me to come over [to the legislature] as often as you had the year before. Why? Do I embarrass you? Do I not represent the [organization] appropriately? Is there an issue?" I mean, I'm willing to ask straight out, "Tell me the bad news if there is bad news...." I think he was shocked that I even asked the question. He's like, "No.

No. I just didn't really think I needed you as much" or whatever. But I think it has to do with being a woman if the truth be told.

Dora said she does not experience those male barriers within her organization, but she does in external settings where she finds she has to push her way in.

Dora: It's still a man's world, and that's always there at some level....I'll break into the conversation. But you have to break in; you've got to assert yourself.... They're not going to bring you in kind of naturally. You gotta push your way in and get your say.

Emma described a male leader of a partner environmental organization, who was recently hired, as effective but "really political, and "very male." She can tell the difference in her relationship with him due to her gender because he has quickly bonded more strongly with another male organizational leader. She also finds his way of doing business and communicating to be different than her own.

Emma: He comes from the political world where you call everybody by their last name. Everything is an analogy to sports. We get along. We really like one another, but we have different styles....He doesn't play it straight up all the time. I am pretty straight up. And so he can be a lot more political and conniving. So that's been a bit challenging because normally, we're in sync and forward together. But there's been two instances now...where something has not

happened right. Our communication has broken down. And boy, I have just been stunned by his quick, brute-force response. So, that's been a bit of a challenge. And I think if I were a man, we would have a different working relationship. Yeah. There's no question in my mind about that. There is another [male] executive director who just started...so the three of us meet regularly, and I can just see that [I don't have the] same level of relationship.

Carol recognizes the good old boy network in the legislative arena, but also sees that it depends upon the person how she is treated and whether being female is an asset or not. Most of the women pointed out that some male colleagues are not at all problematic to work with. Several of the participants talked about how much easier it is to get together and work with women. Recognizing that she is not welcomed into male networking circles, Paula is reaching out to women leaders of her member organizations.

Paula: [A]s I've gotten to know the executive directors of our member organizations, there are a couple I've picked out and we've said, "Let's get together for lunch every other month and let's make sure we've got a topic that we want to talk about and then share our thoughts on this." So we do that, and that's been a good way for me to learn from [them] and bounce ideas off in a very nonthreatening kind of situation.

However, it appears to still be a challenge for women leaders to be included and to be heard during policy strategy sessions, both formal and informal, which means that women's influence on policy outcomes may still be less powerful than it could be.

B. The challenge of male hubris and competitiveness

Even when women leaders are included in policy-related meetings, they may face a male-dominated, hierarchical, competitive atmosphere where they are uncomfortable and unrecognized for their contributions. Dora described this as a "pecking order," where men compete for attention and recognition. She feels that women, by comparison, tend to be more egalitarian in their exchanges.

Dora: [M]en are really competitive with each other...[Now I know] I am in competition with my peers in other organizations. I understand that. We've got to stand out and that sort of thing. But even when [men] are cooperating, there's a competitiveness that I think I share a bit of, but is more overt. And when you see them in a room, you see this hierarchy...almost fall out right away. There's a pecking order...It's really interesting. I don't feel that I'm in that game at all. So there's a liberation in that in many ways. And I don't feel like that same thing's going on with other women leaders at my level. [T]here's more of an egalitarian exchange of information. And there's also the dynamic that men have where you see them make decisions based on how they perceive it will enhance their power, which may not be in the best interest of whatever you're trying to do. And you

think, "Oh God. There they go." [laugh] And maybe you can intervene in a nice way, understanding what that dynamic is, to bring them around, bring them back from that ledge. But you can see them going there.

Linda noted several ways in which women are not recognized for their work or for their opinions. She noted that women often are working behind-the-scenes, doing the "heavy lifting" of fundraising and organizing work that makes organizations and agencies operate effectively, but these tasks are not valued or recognized. Meanwhile men get more credit for their performance in the public arena. She also described how women's voices and opinions can be dismissed in a meeting where both men and women are participating.

Linda: Sometimes I will say something, and later on in the very same meeting, in front of the very same people, which is a mixed group of men and women, a male will say the same thing that I just said. And all of a sudden it will be like, "Yeah!" Like... if a guy says it, it is not challenged or thought about as much as if a woman said it. It's like it... carries more weight if a man says it... And it's really irritating. I want to say, "Am I [expletive] invisible here?" But I don't say that. I don't dare say that. But I feel like saying that. "Can we rewind the tape here? I just said this an hour ago and then you have this long discussion and you come to the same conclusion." But sometimes you just have to let people get there and maybe it's just a coincidence that the person that said something more recently

than I, like an hour later, happens to be a guy. But I think some of it just has to do with it being a guy.

Emma and Deb described a tendency for men to show the world that they are more skilled and confident than they perhaps actually are or feel. Emma called it “blowing air and smoke,” and Deb described it as, “Everything is perfect and I am on top of it. I am the king of the heap.” Emma feels that women are more genuine and clear about what they can and cannot do.

Susan described the struggle to get her male counterparts to really invest in collaborating in coalitions because of their tendency to “solo.”

Susan: [The difference between male and female leadership] really shows in coalitions. I think that as women, we collaborate....[W]e discuss...share ideas... [I]t's just something we do a whole lot easier. Getting feedback. “What do you think?” It's just more of a team approach. The men in our coalitions are the ones that make their case. They may listen and change, but they then operate solo, and they don't bring feedback....You have to go to them and say, “So. What happened? What did we learn?” You have to pull it out of them....And in just about every single case, the lone wolf, the people that we have the hardest time holding together in a coalition and keeping on message and being really helpful, are always guys. And as things rotate, and you have men leaders come in where a women leader was, that organization then flips. And then when a woman replaces

a man, that organization flips back into being a better coalition partner... We've put it on the table... "Okay, you guys may not want as much conversation about this and coordination, but how can we get input back from you in a timely way so we know what happened and so that we can move forward and not step on each other's toes?" And it just doesn't really go anywhere. It's really interesting....

[W]hen I look at the men-run coalitions and the women-run coalitions, we have a hell of a lot more fun [and] I think we are much more successful.

Deb and Rita both talked about their experience as women working not only in the environmental movement but in regions of the country where, as Deb said, "they just really don't like the fact that that a woman is aggressive and smart and doesn't let people get away with bad behavior." Rita described incidents of sexual harassment from male associates, especially older men, with whom she has to "draw the line." Women who try to confront this kind of behavior are "talked about behind their backs as being too aggressive or too demanding." Rita commented, "It's really sad... I don't hear anybody saying, 'Wow. She is really effective in this arena.' I only hear criticisms about women."

One critical difference in the way women and men are recognized for their work is in their compensation. Salaries for women executive directors overall still tend to lag behind male executive directors in the environmental advocacy field (State Environmental Leadership Program, 2012). Paula and Deb were the only two participants to mention salary and both noted that women leaders make personal sacrifices in terms of

compensation for the good of the whole organization that some of their male counterparts are not willing to do.

Deb: There was a guy that runs the botanical gardens in [a nearby city]...He makes \$95,000. I make \$55,000. I haven't had a raise in years...my board always wants to give me a raise, and I'm like, "Unless you're going to raise the money, I don't want to hear about it. Because it's another \$5,000 I have to raise, and I can hardly raise what I'm raising now." And if I don't give my staff a raise [and I] get a raise, that [is not okay]....I think men are in it a lot more for themselves than women are.

Paula notes that she was brought in at a salary one-third lower than her male predecessor. As noted above, she said he used organizational funds to pay for expensive leadership training for himself that added to the financial straits of the organization before he left. Paula remarked that she would really benefit from that salary and training, but can't justify it on their current budget with other priorities. She sees this as a gender difference in leadership.

C. Efforts to adapt

The participants talked about a variety of ways that they try to adapt their behavior to the male-dominated arena in which they work. Some of these include making sure they have the "facts" so they are not dismissed as unknowledgeable, participating in

some social and cultural behaviors to fit in with local gender-based expectations, and occasionally using gender-based expectations to their advantage.

Jean: I'm really careful about how I present myself and the validity of the statements I make. I'm probably cautious to a fault. If I don't know it's absolutely true, I'm not going to put myself out on a limb. I'm very guarded and perhaps some of that comes out of being female and not wanting to give anybody a chink in the armor to latch onto...Don't let 'em say that you're the dumb broad in the room that doesn't know what she's talking about. [laugh]

Rita described trying to adapt some of her behaviors to fit in with male peers in social situations.

Rita: My peers in the region and in the state are by in large men...I want to say its 90 percent men. And certainly that's a lot better [than it used to be], but there's still a real macho element that I face constantly. I mean I've never actually started hunting, but I constantly feel like I should. [chuckle] And I eat red meat all the time because I feel like I have to prove something...at dinner with my colleagues. [chuckle]

Jean and Grace note that sometimes they consciously use gender to their advantage.

Jean: I'm also not afraid to play the female card. That's part of the battery of what we have at our disposal...[S]o I will walk in and...say, "Oh, yes, I can shoot a gun." I will not hesitate to use that to my advantage, too. Because I think if it's going to be presented as a disadvantage, then you've got the right to turn it around and use it against people as well. I wouldn't normally walk into a situation and do that, or flaunt that out there or make an issue of it in any way...But I'm not intimidated by that sort of approach. I'm willing to turn it right back around... And it very quickly crumbles if...the perception is that it doesn't bother you.

Grace said that her gender is an advantage when interacting with some men because it does not arouse the competitive instinct in men.

Grace: [In my area] there is that red neck character, but they are very polite to women. So whereas they might want to threaten to kill [my male predecessor]... they would be polite to me. It lets me talk to people that sometimes other people can't talk to. Now sometimes that means they don't take me as seriously as they would a man, but they also don't get their ego up...That kind of guy reaction isn't there. I can get in under their defenses a little bit. [I am working with a colleague whose] got a little bit of an ego problem. Every time my chairman calls him, he reports back that he doesn't want to do what he's suggested. But if I call him, it's just like we're having a conversation about what he's going to do and exchanging ideas, and he's okay with it. So there's some ways in which it works very much to my advantage.

D. The policy world is changing slowly

Eagly, Wood and Dickman (2000) identified confident, controlling, competitive, and assertive tendencies as “agentic” behaviors as compared to “communal” tendencies, such as speaking tentatively, supporting others, and helping to solve interpersonal problems. Those are usually attributed to men and women respectively.

Since beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women trigger gender-based stereotyping, Korabik and Ayman (2007) conclude that women leaders who are working in a traditionally male-led arena should be cognizant of their interpersonal relationships and how they are acting as leaders, especially when they are interacting with men. As women assess their effectiveness in the policy arena, they have to consider the context of male standards of operating and many men’s resistance to the cooperative, egalitarian approaches that women prefer. Korabik and Ayman suggest that women should take an androgynous approach to leadership, balancing task-and person-oriented skills, which will decrease the likelihood that they will be judged according to stereotypes and will increase the perception that they are effective leaders. It appears from this study that the women leaders recognize that necessity, and that the contentious advocacy realm requires it.

Jamieson (1995) notes that until women reach a critical mass in management positions—somewhere above 15 to 25 percent—they are at a higher risk of stereotypical appraisal. After enough women move into managerial positions, they start to be seen

simply as managers, not “women” managers. That may also be when women’s preferred approaches to leadership and decision making become accepted and even promoted. That may eventually lead to the acceptance of androgynous behaviors as the norm for both women and men.

Jean reflected on how things have changed since she was a child when her mother was working as a nonprofit leader. She discussed the importance of being able to choose your career path. She thinks that the environmental field provides “a lot more choice” than other fields do in terms of women reaching “that level of equality.” She thinks that may be why “there’s a good chunk of women in this field.”

Jean: [A]s the daughter of a pretty staunch feminist, I think about [that] a lot... I am in a place that my mother and her peers would never have thought I would be in at my age, in my field. [T]hat’s remarkable from their perspective; not remarkable from mine... I think a lot about what changes have come about to let us be here. I do absolutely think that when every female has the choice... to live her life the way she’d like to—in leadership, not in leadership—in leadership whatever industry or field that means—then we’ve hit total equality. For me it’s not about pay. It’s not about benefits or packages. It’s about the ability to choose what we can and can’t do...I do think that my generation has had a very different experience. We’ve grown up in...a much more accepting world of women in leadership. I’m on the top edge of that. People five to ten years older than me don’t have that experience.... I feel very lucky.

Karen notes that the visible “dichotomy” of the woodsy man who works in the environmental field has now changed because there are plenty of “outdoorsy” women in the movement now who even “like to go out and drink beer.” That change has broken down some of the gender barriers.

Emma said that as more women and young people have been elected into the legislature, there has been a positive change in attitudes toward women environmentalists.

Emma: The state house is going through some real changes: a lot more women. Not necessarily the majority by any stretch of the imagination, but a lot more women, and a lot younger people. So I would say it really differs by age of our legislator. The older gentlemen are a little more [apt to make] offhand remarks. But I think that’s...changing, quite a bit. Generally I feel like I have respect amongst those that would have any respect for an environmental organization.

The participants in this study with the most longevity in their leadership roles, who are usually also over 50 years of age, do not seem as daunted by the challenge of dealing with their male counterparts. The importance of longevity as a factor of effectiveness and perceived effectiveness was mentioned several times. Carol noted that the longstanding relationships in her arena help both men and women “go beyond the assumptions of who somebody is based on what kind of body they walk around in.” That

may be more likely when coupled with the fact that women are approaching a critical mass of leadership in the environmental movement.

E. The challenge of being an environmentalist

It was noteworthy that several of the participants thought that dealing with stereotypes about environmentalists was more difficult than dealing with stereotypes about women. As Carol said, “I didn’t really come to call myself or think of myself as an environmentalist until I was accused of it.” She notes that it is sometimes difficult to tell if she is being “diminished in importance or overlooked” because she is an environmentalist or a woman, and that it depends upon the “politics and orientation of the person who’s making that judgment.” Karen felt that, even though she has experienced “outright sexism and borderline sexual harassment,” the real limiting factor is being an environmentalist and being “put in that box of being the strident liberal who just doesn’t understand the economy, or the political realities, and we’re never satisfied.” Susan also said she does not feel affected as a woman leader very often, but knows that people still see environmental leaders as “erratic, not trusted... just sort of the old Birkenstocks, backpack, dirty, pie-eyed kind of people.” She has to “spend a lot of time showing that we respond. We are smart. We want to work with people [and are] reliable, trustworthy, strategic..” She told a relevant story:

Susan: One of the big editorial cartoonists that came from the Washington Post did this editorial about stuff happening in [my state] when our former Governor

[chuckle] just was awful, and he was kicking the environmentalists out of everything. He portrayed the environmentalist in the cartoon [as a male] wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase. This was a pivotal moment for the environmental community...[T]hat was the first time that the environmental community wasn't portrayed as wearing a backpack or with binoculars or in shorts and sandals. [He] was actually portrayed as a person of power. And somebody asked [the cartoonist] about that, and he said, "Yeah, they are powerful. They are effective." [chuckle]

Being a female environmentalist is particularly challenging. Susan has learned to work through her male allies at a business stakeholder group she attends in order to get her ideas through by asking them ahead of time to back her up after she speaks, "because the combination of being a woman and being an environmental leader, means that the chair can't see me, can't hear me, and shows no respect for me."

Rita was verbally accosted on the podium at an annual roundtable of extractive industries, by a legislature who got up and started yelling at her: "I'm tired of [expletive] environmentalists and their ripped jeans and their tie-dye t-shirts. And I'm tired of...your wilderness areas and your national monuments, and it's all [expletive]." Rita felt very proud that she managed to make "that group of eighty men laugh" and take back control of the atmosphere in the room by simply saying, "You know what? I paid really good money for this suit."

Stereotyping is a way to create heroes and villains, in this case, making environmentalists look stupid, out-of-touch, and untrustworthy. Stone (2008) notes that creating heroes and villains is a form of storytelling used to take control of a policy debate and influence the outcome. It usually reflects a fundamental disagreement about the story behind the policy problem (p. 138). The participants did not name all of the sources of these stereotypes, but many are likely regular opponents, such as representatives of polluting corporations, that seek to discredit environmentalists' claims for regulations on their practices. The fact that the participants found it more challenging than dealing with gender stereotyping may be one indication of their effectiveness as advocates, since they are clearly effective enough to warrant efforts to discredit them.

III. Being an Effective Advocate

Theme 3: Women advocacy leaders view their effectiveness in achieving policy objectives as stemming from their attention to relationships and communication, their ability to analyze the complexities of a political process and chart a practical course of action, their willingness to directly take on difficult issues and interactions, and their persistence to succeed.

Nonprofit advocacy organizations and their leaders must be concerned with the strategies and tactics they employ to achieve their mission, including gathering up like-minded people to join the cause, and competing for market niche and funding (Prakash &

Gugerty, 2010). In this next section, participants' comments about being effective in their roles as policy advocates and policy leaders are analyzed.

A. Being a “player”

The primary test that the participants held themselves to was whether their organizations were seen as “powerful players” in the policy arena. Being knowledgeable about the issues and state politics, and maintaining relationships with the other players, were considered measures of effectiveness. Such players include the governor, legislators, agency personnel, other environmental groups, and other stakeholders.

Emma, for example, had recently been invited to serve as a top advisor on environmental issues for the governor's transition team. Rita notes that they are now seen as the “go-to group for science-based information on natural resources.” Emma said that since she began as executive director, her organization has grown to be seen as not just credible, but as “one of the power influencers in the state.”

The participants noted the importance of their substantive knowledge of policy issues and their ability to maintain key relationships as critical to their ability achieve a legislative agenda, but they noted how important it is to monitor other external variables as well. These include concurrent legislative debates on other issues, the history of related legislative battles, partisan politics, and the ambitions of individual policymakers.

Advocacy organizations need to be players but also retain independence so that they can take controversial stands. Allies on one issue may be opponents on another. From the researcher's experience, the state capitol arena during a legislative session is very intense, with a host of lobbyists meeting with legislators every day to influence and negotiate. Monitoring the state of play in a policy negotiation among many players, including the tone of hearings, the vocabulary around key issues, and the impact of particular spokespeople are all critical components of the role of environmental groups who work as state house "watchdogs."

Dora noted that the only way you can know about all of these variables is by spending a great deal of time at the state capitol, attending hearings and assembly votes, and talking to the players each day.

Dora: Obviously, we're a political player. People rely on us for some of our policy ideas. They know we've got the capacity to move issues, using all the tools that we have. We are brought into strategy meetings with legislators when we are working on legislation we have in common with them...[T]hey know that we are able to help them out, give them praise for the work that they're doing. They know we completely understand the political process, the players, what motivates the players, what's the back story.

Dora also notes that executive directors occasionally need to play a different role than their lobbyists, such as when it's time to "strain relationships."

Dora: [D]ay-to-day it's [our policy director who] is our guy on the Hill. And in that respect, it's a very different dynamic for him and for me over there, because he is more interested in maintaining the relationships. And every now and then, I've gotta make the decision that we're gonna piss somebody off. He is uncomfortable with that. He's gonna have to sometimes suck it up. [I have to say,] "I'm sorry... We gotta do this thing. We've got to move this issue."

Finding the right balance in all of those relationships between trust—so that people will listen to you and rely upon you—and independence—in order to hold policymakers publicly accountable for their decisions—is critical. Grace believes that being perceived as “genuine” helps a great deal. Women advocacy leaders may have some distinct advantages in the policy arena because of their relationship-building skills, their belief in transparency, and their determination to do and say the “hard things.”

B. Coalition building

Working in coalitions is a regular occurrence in the nonprofit advocacy realm. From the researcher's experience, funders often expect it, and the proliferation of advocacy groups makes it essential to coordinate among them. From an organizational branding perspective, working in coalitions can be challenging because credit must be shared by all participants, making it more difficult to feature any one organization's work. But the benefits appear to outweigh the risks, and coalition may allow diverse participants to engage more freely in both insider and outsider tactics (Prakash &

Gugerty, 2010, p. 171). Smith (2009) notes that one purpose of advocacy coalitions is that they can reframe issues and help groups that have opposing ideas settle on a solution and a common course of action. Getting people to work productively and efficiently in coalitions can be a challenge.

The study participants talked about coalitions that primarily comprise their local environmental groups working together on shared priorities, rather than a mix of government, business, and nonprofit personnel as is sometimes the case in advocacy coalitions. However, there were some cases where they talked about working with business partners. Even within like-minded groups, such as coalitions of environmental groups, there are different opinions to be negotiated. Strong facilitation and relationship-building skills are important leadership assets for building political power through coalitions.

Several participants talked about serving as the leaders of their coalitions and cited their ability to move meetings along to action by listening, including others, being decisive, and sharing credit. Several of the participants noted that they believe women generally have better skills for this purpose than men.

Mary said that she was instrumental in bringing together their environmental coalition over a decade ago because she was well-known and seen as “pretty modest,” which helps in coalition work.

Mary: I think one of the biggest things I've done in our community has been to help us focus around our environmental priorities coalition and to build that. I know that it wouldn't exist without me. I bet half the groups around the table probably wouldn't say that, but I know it wouldn't exist without me. And that's okay, because it was about getting people with different motivations, different self-interests, different organizational interests to figure out how to work together better so we could start making some progress. And we did. We really started making some progress. And there are half dozen significant pieces of legislation that we passed and probably half dozen more that are still steps forward but are probably less significant that wouldn't happen if we hadn't figured out how to work together... You go through some battles together on different things and you learn how to work with each other. You learn to respect each other at different levels... I was kind of a known quantity. [T]o a fault I have been told I am pretty modest... to a fault because some of my board members think we should get credit for that. But that helps greatly in building coalitions and bringing people along.

Jean talked about the importance of bringing all the key players to the table and making the meetings productive with her group process skills.

Jean: I think that that is probably where my biggest strength is: bringing everybody to the table, ensuring that everybody—if not comfortable at the table, is willing to be there and willing to speak up and put in their input... [I]t's an

active facilitator type of leadership...I'm not wishy-washy in those situations.

[laugh] I tend to be fairly decisive and move things forward and I can't stand to sit around and talk about it forever. When we're really needing to get something done and produce a product, I'd say that's probably when I strive and succeed the most.

Karen notes that she and her organization are looked to when it is important to unite the conservation community behind shared policy initiatives so "folks work together" and "build consensus so that we're not running around like a herd of cats." To do this, Karen must negotiate between advocates for two major regions of her state that do not always see eye-to-eye. She described a situation involving their efforts to close down a coal-fired power plant, where the environmentalists teamed up with the natural gas industry against coal. However, unbeknownst to Karen and many others, a deal was brokered behind closed doors with the governor, a few conservation groups, and the natural gas industry, which resulted in a bill that was "jammed through the legislature" in a couple of weeks with little consultation with anyone. Karen played a leadership role in bringing the coalition members back together to work through that breach of trust. In particular, she got the partners who had made the backroom deal to agree that they would let the other environmental groups know if they were invited to participate in such deals in the future and not shut them out.

Karen: So my role was in trying to manage those relationships, create the opportunities, convene conference calls and meetings where people could work

through this and to reach agreement about how we were going to work together going forward so that we wouldn't split on this bill... [A]nd it was based on...the trust that folks had in me and also my credibility and reputation for fairness that allowed me to help make that okay.

Women leaders may be more successful at holding coalitions together and well-run coalitions are more successful at achieving policy goals. The question remains: Can men (or women) act "solo" and accomplish the same policy goals more effectively and, perhaps, efficiently? Coalition work takes time and resources and the opportunity costs for that investment have not been fully examined. Backroom deals continue to occur, with or without environmental players. It is worth exploring whether perhaps, in specific policy situations, it is more efficient and effective for solo operators to work with the inner circle at the state house without the obligations to represent the group and the downsides to that approach. For example, the opportunity for opponents to "divide and conquer" may be greater when the environmental community is not working together. On the other hand, coalition politics may hamper what can be achieved on the policy front. Prakash and Gugerty (2010) note that more can be learned about how and when nonprofit advocacy groups make choices between "insider" versus "outsider" strategies (p. 18).

C. Strategizing tactics

"Moving the agenda forward" is a term often used among advocates and to do so, advocates must strategize about which issues to choose, when to push, who to push, how

to push, and when to stop pushing and shift course. As noted above, those strategies can be driven both by the desire to fulfill an organization's mission as well as to sustain one's organization by choosing issues that are ripe for broad appeal, organizing, and success (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010). The participants described examples of their own advocacy effectiveness in numerous ways.

Mary discussed a situation where they needed to "push the envelope" even though it meant suing the state and risking their relationship with a policymaker who was a regular ally.

Mary: [W]hen the bad guys are defined as very black, and got their black hats on, the fighting is much easier. But when [you have to go up against an ally]...it's a little bit more tricky...But it was an important decision and turning point where we needed to change tactics and I was fully engaged in getting to that decision. I was the messenger, and that was a difficult day.

Susan talked about a legislator taking the lead on an issue that was not quite "ripe" from an organizing and communications standpoint. While the policy proposal was on target, her coalition assessed that it would be voted down. Susan facilitated the coalition's process of working out their differences and agreeing on a more effective strategy, which they then collectively presented to the governor.

Susan: [W]e went to the governor and demanded in a very quiet meeting that he...allow us to have a hearing on the bill, [but then] have the sponsor pull the bill back, so there wouldn't be a vote. [T]hen right after the legislative session, [he would] issue an executive order that would form a task force to study this issue and come up with the legislation by the fall of this year. [W]e had to fight him to stop advocating for a really awesome issue. [laugh]...[This] to me was a moment that was really cool because it shows that we were grown-ups....It took some sophistication. Took someone to say, "We just can't do a full run at this." It wasn't a brilliant strategy; it was kind of the obvious strategy. But [it was good] that people would listen to me enough...and respected my many years in [the state capitol] to say, "Okay. Let's back off and get on the right message."

Susan said she is called upon when it's important to look at the bigger context and get "out of the silos" and "out of the minutia," and not necessarily because of her detailed knowledge of any one area. She said she is also good "at counting votes," which means being able to figure out how to get enough policymakers to get a bill passed.

Emma told a story about her organization taking a different approach than one of her coalition partners in regards to the closing down of a coal fired power plant in her state. They both agreed on the outcome, which was to close the plant and lower emissions, but she recognized that if the plant closed soon, it would be replaced with a natural gas plant, and, therefore, greenhouse gas emissions would expand with that demand. In this case, she was also working in coalition with renewable energy advocates

to negotiate with the company to close the plant within a ten year period, giving the company time to put a renewable energy project in place instead of natural gas. Since the plant was supposed to operate for 30 more years, her assessment was that, “We have gotten 20 years of the life of the plant shaved off.” Emma kept an open and regular dialogue with her other coalition partner that had been working for a much nearer-term closure of the plant. Though that leader was not “overly pleased by the differing positions,” he was sophisticated in his understanding of the issue and her communication with him helped prevent a major public rift between their organizations.

Linda worked with coalition partners who did not want to risk the unpopularity of showing support for a targeted tax increase to fund state wildlife refuges, and eventually brought them along.

Linda: [I said] “You gotta raise the tax. You can’t just add programs to the pot and not increase the pot.” So that was unpopular. And at first actually I had people kind of laugh to my face, like, “You’re crazy.” And I said, “Well, whatever, but we’re going to keep asking.” And five years later...we got that thing passed.

Linda attributes her success to her persistence in staying involved in the legislative process and knowing when to, for example, “slip a note” to a particular legislator and remind him to include their priorities in the bill. She had the strategic

foresight to use the opportunity of a potential tax increase to bring together a bigger coalition whose members could also get a portion of the new tax revenues.

Some who participate in the public policy process can be, as Emma described a colleague, “conniving.” Deb had to deal with a particular legislator on a bill that would have allowed developers to bury small streams without a permit. The bill sponsor initially told her it wasn’t going anywhere, but when it actually did move, she felt he had lied to her and she faulted herself for being “naïve.” She engaged in a public battle with the legislator, first taking out a negative media ad about him and his bill. He followed by making sure other legislation she was working on stalled. Eventually, he purposefully tried to humiliate her in a public forum. Since the session was taped, she put the tape of his belittling remarks toward her on her website and it garnered a great deal of anger against him among her followers, which resulted in a lot of support for her organization.

Carol described a battle over the mapping of water resources in her state. A law had been passed that required it but it had never been done. She realized something needed to be done to better prepare the state for water extraction interests coming in. They organized in communities that would be directly affected by water extraction and were ultimately successful in getting a “great groundwater protection law in place.”

Emma said that since she has settled and plans to raise her family in her state, the “business case for environmental change” has more personal meaning to her and she takes that into her work as one of her strategies.

Emma: It's also helped me recognize that these issues are not black and white. It's not always as simple as saying, "Stop this or do that." We've got to be much more realistic about what we want to achieve and how to actually achieve it...I really care about creating jobs and having long-term, smart, sustainable economic development for the state. I'm invested in how we make that happen in a way that makes sense for our natural environment and for our communities.

Mary summed up the policy success of her organization when she reflected on what it means to stay the course.

Mary: You think of all the battles and how many times we took on the timber industry in our state, and we fought at different levels, and you always feel like you never win. You get beat back. You never get what you want. But then when you step back and you look over time, those fights in the legislature, those lawsuits, [laugh]...those battles over regulations...where we're organizing people—they add up...It's not one fight. It's...years of work. And we're not done. It's not good enough. But it is really important to step back and say, how is it adding up?

In summary, the participants' advocacy successes were based on their strategic insights on the policy process; their use of a range of tools, including organizing, public accountability, and negotiation; the trust they have established with others as honest brokers; and their persistence and determination.

D. Changing the organizational tone

Several women talked about how they have changed the “tone” of their organizations since taking over from their male predecessors. In these cases, they wanted their organizations to be perceived as less aggressive and antagonistic. They did this both because it fit their own personalities better and also because they felt it made their organizations more effective.

Grace called it a “real tough, pushy, cutting edge, go-for-it reputation” that was not her style. Instead she has given the organization a tone that is “much more positive... and makes people feel good.” Emma notes that her male predecessor came across as “abrasive and not really willing to engage” and “polarizing.” She has tried to position the organization as “solution-oriented” and “willing to work with partners to engage,” while not being overly compromising. She has come to recognize that “there are lots of different ways to get to that point.”

Carol also had a male predecessor who had a reputation for being “controversial, aggressive, confrontational” and “kind of an angry guy.” She has been trying to move the organization from a polarizing stance to a collaborative stance, which has helped to reestablish them as environmental leaders in the state that can partner with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and AARP.

Jean has tried to move away from being viewed as “antagonistic” to being viewed as a group that is willing to walk “the middle ground” and talk to “the other side.” Rita described the shift in her organization also as being more “middle of the road, more sort of in line with the culture of [our state], more populist, more working within the system.”

Since environmental and other advocacy organizations are often portrayed as strident and antagonistic, that is an interesting shift. The participants’ assessment is that those changes in tone have made them more effective. That could be seen as the right direction to go, given the observations of Berry and Gordon (1993) that environmental leadership requires facility with the complex characteristics of environmental problems, and their tendency to be long term, emotionally charged, and multidisciplinary. Maintaining positive, working relationships with stakeholders and coalition partners over decades-long battles requires keeping the door open for ongoing communication and negotiation, and not permanently alienating any relevant parties. It is a challenge to portray organizational strength and influence, but also willingness to negotiate and be trustworthy. It would be difficult to separate impacts of better management, longevity, and the changing nature of environmental policy debates in order to discern whether this shift away from an overtly aggressive tone is truly effective, but further study could explore the idea.

In summary, the participants described numerous ways in which they felt they had been effective in their advocacy work. These principles of effectiveness could be described as follows:

- Shape a realistic agenda.
- Be firm but not antagonistic and polarizing.
- Be courageous about taking on hard issues, including having honest, direct confrontations.
- Create a trusting atmosphere with coalition partners, including working transparently and avoiding backroom deals that leave out partners.
- Apply the right vehicle (e.g. legislation or the courts) for the policy issue.
- Think both short- and long-term to devise a winning strategy.

This study does not attempt to analyze the actual track records of the organizations as a measure of their effectiveness. Such a study would be difficult to do. Carol quoted the prominent global environmentalist, Lester Brown, in saying: “The victories are temporary. The defeats are permanent.” Mary described herself as a “marathoner, not a sprinter” and said of her work, “It’s not one fight. It’s years of work.” Organizations also attempt to frame their work to their membership, funders, and the public in successful terms to show strength and effectiveness.

Environmental protection efforts have often prevailed in the United States despite well-funded and well-organized opposition over the last 50 years, suggesting that the public may have embraced a fundamental environmental ethos that is helping to drive progressive environmental policy (Dell, 2009). The study participants are attempting to foster that ethos, and may collectively have helped to influence a shift in public perception as evidenced by the examples of their effectiveness.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter provides a culminating discussion of the study and narrows the findings to two major themes and their implications for public policymaking. The researcher also explores issues raised by the study regarding a feminist analysis of the environmental advocacy movement and the importance of analyzing other identity characteristics beyond gender. Suggestions are then offered for advocacy movement practice and for further research.

The significance of this study for the field of public policy is to provide insight into how advocates can be effective in the realm of environmental policymaking, and particularly, how female advocacy leaders may be changing ideas about what it means to be effective in that arena. The insights are offered by women leaders in nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations who were interviewed for this study. Their description of effective approaches to organizational and policy leadership builds upon leadership and public-interest group theory and provides direction for further areas of exploration.

The study participants were asked to reflect upon what it means to be an effective leader from their perspectives as women. The study reveals how women approach leadership within their organizations, coalitions, and in the external policymaking arena. Thus, the one lens for their reflections is gender and the other lens is their organizational and environmental advocacy leadership. From their perspectives, their approaches

influence how efficient and inclusive their organizations are, and how effectively they operate in the policy process.

These women leaders believe that nonprofit advocacy organizations that are well-run demonstrate both internally and externally the principles of shared leadership, trustworthiness, collaboration, and accountability. They believe that such organizations are seen as powerful and, therefore, are more effective in achieving their policy goals. A few participants also indicated the importance of broadening the movement to a greater diversity of people in order to be effective.

The participants believe they are seen by their peers as knowledgeable, strategic, persistent, and influential in the policy arena. They recognize that sometimes they have to work around the exclusionary behavior of their male peers in order to be powerful players. Women's growing presence as advocacy leaders in the policymaking arena could be shifting the historic perception of the environmental movement from being male-led and often polarizing, to being led by both women and men who are willing to work more collaboratively with allies and opponents, while still standing firm on their policy objectives. Organizations that find such balance effectively may be seen as more credible and, thus, are more apt to be sought for their advice. They may be more likely to be invited to the venues where decisions are being made, while still being seen as powerful players with whom it is important to negotiate. Next, two major study themes are discussed: the appropriateness of androgynous leadership skills for advocacy work and the importance and power of collaboration.

I. Androgynous Leadership Skills are Appropriate for Advocacy

The leadership literature showed several dichotomous sets of leadership traits that tend to have male and female associations respectively. The two that are noted in this study are agentic and communal behaviors (Eagly et al., 2000) and transformational and transactional behaviors (Dym & Houston, 2005). Korabik and Ayman (2007) suggest that due to the socialized gender-based expectations of leaders, women are better off with an “androgynous” approach to leadership if they want to be taken seriously and be respected. The study findings and the researcher’s experience as an advocacy leader support this claim.

For the purpose of this study, an androgynous approach to leadership incorporates a blend of both stereotypically male and female characteristics of leadership that should be applied both internally in an organization and externally when representing the organization’s mission. The approach addresses, for example, the expectation among staffs and boards in nonprofits that the leader attends to relationships and provides opportunities for shared leadership, while also creating and enforcing a firm structure of financial, organizational, and staff accountability. It also allows for the assertive posture necessary for both female and male advocacy leaders externally, where they can promote collaboration and transparency while still fighting firmly for their policy objectives.

Women’s style of cooperative, dispersed leadership exemplifies what many leadership theorists assert is the most effective approach for modern organizations in

general, and nonprofit organizations in particular (e.g. Dym & Houston, 2005). The study participants described many ways in which their transformational leadership styles serve their organizations. They attend to individual staff and board members' needs for development and engagement, share the limelight, and set a high standard of ethical behavior through transparency and self-reflection. But they also demonstrate transactional behaviors, such as assuring strict financial oversight, setting in place adequate internal policies and controls, focusing on tasks and follow-through, serving as the bottom-line decision makers, and holding staff members accountable for their responsibilities. Several participants admitted that it was difficult to deal with their own feelings around holding staff members accountable, especially if it involved setting limits or firing someone, but they all saw it as necessary and tried to do these tasks as gracefully as possible.

According to some of the study participants, many of the previous male leaders of the movement were environmental lawyers with limited managerial skill. While these "solo operators" may have been effective in bringing attention to environmental issues through, for example, high profile lawsuits in the early days of the movement, the lack of management capacity took its toll on their organizations. Half of the study participants were brought into organizations that were in turmoil from mismanagement. The energy it takes to address inter- and intra-organizational chaos takes away from mission-related work.

Prakash and Gugerty (2010) note that entrepreneurial leaders who can build a shared vision and consensus among their staff, board and constituents reduce transaction costs, and free up more time and energy for policy work. Additionally, a well-managed advocacy organization that is financially stable and has organizational systems in place is better able to fulfill its mission. As Susan said, advocacy work is very challenging and, “God only knows, there are enough day-to-day crises in these organizations.” Staff and board members work more efficiently when they have effective decision-making processes and accountability in place and feel supported and empowered to do their jobs.

The policy arena generally requires advocates to display agentic behaviors to be successful—confidence, competition, and assertiveness. Advocacy leaders must compete with other stakeholders for public attention and for legislators’ votes. They must compete with their partner organizations for funding and constituents. Advocacy is no place for stereotypical “shrinking violets” or female acquiescence. It is a contest, and one needs to participate fully with allies and adversaries alike in order to succeed. As Dora said, it takes being “a little bit of a warrior.”

Yet the participants’ responses indicated that it is also important to display communal behaviors in the advocacy realm. In general, the participants are seeking to convey a more cooperative tone for their organizations than their male predecessors did. Being a warrior for the cause does not necessarily require being antagonistic and “in-your-face.” The participants were clear that they do not back down on their objectives, but they can be effective without creating unnecessary polarization. They believe in the

importance of forging relationships with players on all fronts in order to make progress on their policy agendas. They believe they do so while still being tough about their policy agendas. Having employed a more cooperative and less antagonistic stance for a decade and a half, Mary believes her approach has been effective and that her organization's success demonstrates that. She stated simply, "The proof is in the pudding."

The study participants gave numerous examples of when they felt most effective as advocates: (a) choosing appropriate issues and building support for them over time; (b) bringing coalition partners with disparate views together and facilitating consensus through transparency, firmness, and fairness; (c) knowing when to stand their ground or change strategies, and (d) dealing with legislators, staff, and administrators in a sincere and straightforward manner. And while women are often more reserved about "tooting their own horns," they believe they can effectively compete for resources and attention without falling into the hierarchical "pecking order," as Dora called it, which takes place among their male colleagues. These participants also believe it is important to be trustworthy and to not play games and make backroom deals that leave coalition partners out. They are not drawn to "clubby" or "insider" behavior that they ascribed to some of their male colleagues.

This study finds that women believe many of their male peers would be better off employing androgynous behaviors as well, and faulted those that do not do so for their lack of attention to the needs of other staff and coalition partners; their lack of transparency; and their tendency to dominate coalition discussions, public venues, and

interactions with policymakers. And even though transactional leadership behaviors are traditionally associated with men, the participants pointed out that many of their male peers did not demonstrate those basic management behaviors in their organizations, such as financial oversight, staff accountability, and human resource policy development.

Male bonding, where men informally meet and network separately from women, is a particularly challenging dynamic that these women face. Since there are still, for the most part, more men than women in state legislatures, more men than women in environmental policy leadership, and men tend to mingle first and foremost with each other, those situations can keep women out of important power-building and decision-making communications and relationships. This behavioral dynamic was a drain on the participants' energy, even though those with the most longevity felt that they have been able to work around it and are now respected by males with whom they work for their history of policy successes. As more women come into policy leadership both as advocates and as policymakers, their communal tendencies and desire for transparency may encourage greater inclusionary behavior among men in policy venues and in organizations.

II. Collaboration is Important and Powerful

Every study participant pointed out that women tend to be more collaborative than men, and they most frequently described this in the context of their shared leadership styles within their organizations and in their coalition work. The importance of

employing communal behaviors, like collaboration, in organizational and advocacy work was discussed above, but the participants' emphasis on collaboration as a defining female characteristic deserves further discussion as a second major theme.

The women leaders talked about the importance of a team approach within their staffs and boards. As Karen said, they actively seek input from, "the people who are going to be affected by the decision and have to implement it." They encouraged their staff members to develop their skills and to participate in a shared leadership approach. They engaged their boards by tending to their individual personalities and interests and by communicating very openly with them about the status of the organization so that they could make good decisions. Karen could tell when applicants were coming from some of the male-led organizations without those kinds of principles in play, and felt sorry for them. And, as has been noted, people coming to work in nonprofit organizations are often looking for collaborative approaches.

The participants talked at great length about using their collaborative styles in coalitions, since working in coalition is standard practice in advocacy work today. Most of the study participants led coalitions as part of their work, and it is one area where they believe their collaborative skills really shine. They manage to "gather people up" and "keep them at the table." They are able to do this because they are trusted, "sincere," and recognize the need to share credit. These leaders facilitate the process of working things out when coalition partners splinter over specific issues and tactics. Susan pointed out

that when men become coalition leaders, the coalitions tend to shift away from such cohesion and inclusion.

It is possible that without the presence of a growing number of women leaders in these coalitions today, either at the helm or in the ranks, the environmental movement would be more internally competitive, combative, and splintered, to the detriment of environmental policy goals. In short, women may have become the glue that holds the environmental movement together.

Coalitions are not a panacea. The study participants' describe long contentious phone calls and meetings and the struggle to "herd the cats." From the researcher's experience, coalitions can be cumbersome and have significant transaction costs. Yet they operate everywhere on the landscape today at the national, state, and local levels. Organizational membership in coalitions is fluid depending upon the issue and the interest of specific organizations and donors. The mandate for working together in a coordinated fashion is brought about by the growing number of groups, the threat of being divided and conquered by opponents, and the experience of greater effectiveness when working together (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010).

One study participant noted that her male colleagues sometimes scoff at all the "processing" that coalitions require. One alternative that is apparently attractive to many men is to work solo, allowing them to feel unencumbered by the demands of keeping all coalition partners in the communication loop and on the same page. The women study

participants do not want to work that way. The presence of more women in the policy arena may start to shift the process away from that solo mode of operation. Advocacy organizations must find the balance between being able to be nimble, entrepreneurial, and independent, while also being good coalition partners. How to do that effectively is a challenge. The findings in this study suggest that women may be well-suited for this challenge.

The shift in the environmental movement from extreme antagonism to a more collaborative approach may reflect the growing presence of women leaders and their preference, but it may also suggest that the movement is at a different stage of development, particularly among the longer-standing organizations. As public interest groups become more professional and established, they often shift tactics from more external grassroots agitation to more insider involvement and negotiation (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010). If sustaining workable relationships is critical to successful policy advocacy, then it stands to reason that the longer an organization and its prominent staff members have been working in the policy arena, the stronger their relationships will be and, therefore, the stronger and more effective their organizations will be. Young (2010) notes that effective advocacy leaders enjoy “greater access to policymakers, greater influence over policy decisions, and greater peer recognition as key political players” (p. 36). Karen noted that with greater longevity, she is more confident and courageous in her efforts and her effectiveness because she has learned from reflecting on both her successes and failures.

The perceived need for a more collaborative tone may also reflect the state-level nature of these organizations' work where a relatively small number of people are involved in the policy arena and everyone knows everyone, at least in most states. It may be that, in general, the staffs and boards of environmental advocacy groups working at the state level do not feel free to use extremely antagonistic actions to confront their opponents because they must turn around and work year-after-year with many of the same players as they continue to try to move their policy agendas. An opponent on one issue may be an ally on another, and memories can be long. It is better not to burn bridges because the same issues and the same players arise again and again.

Antagonistic advocacy and in-your-face types of organizations may retain an important place in the environmental advocacy movement, and the measures of their effectiveness may be different than for the organizations in this study. However, it seems apparent from the study, that women leaders are headed in a more collaborative direction.

Thoughts on a Feminist Analysis of Environmentalism

The participants in this study were not asked to reflect on the influence of class, race, or other identity characteristics besides gender on their perspectives of leadership, effectiveness, advocacy, or the environmental movement in general. Thus, this study provides a first step, with many steps yet to go, in analyzing the status of leadership effectiveness from the perspective of women in the environmental advocacy movement.

The study participants have the shared experience of being women, growing up and working in various places in the United States. All but one participant was Caucasian. All were educated and likely came from middle-class backgrounds, though this was not explored directly. Age is somewhat of a factor in the analysis as it relates to differing levels of work experience and confidence. One participant mentioned that she had a learning disability that influenced her approach to her staff, but no other disabilities were mentioned.

Race, class, physical and mental ability, age, and many other characteristics create social constructs that impact women's perspectives on their experiences, including how they approach leadership and the environment. How such characteristics influence the level of self-confidence these women describe about their work was not explored. For example, they may be overstating the effectiveness of their approaches, or they may be overly self-complimentary due to their social and economic privilege. They were able to identify areas where they have struggled to overcome internalized sexism, and learned to feel confident and empowered in their roles as leaders and around their male peers, but no further connections to other kinds of discriminatory behavior or social constructs were noted. Suyemoto and Ballou (2007) suggest that white females can focus more easily on gender discrimination from their white male counterparts than the impacts of other identity characteristics. The participants might have reflected upon these issues more, but they were not directly asked to do so, and this is a factor in the acknowledged bias of the study.

A feminist analysis of leadership takes into account the interplay of identity characteristics among people and within organizations, such as the interplay of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and physical abilities. Suyemoto and Ballou (2007) suggest that feminist leadership requires leadership “coaction” that is “formed by feminist values of social justice, egalitarianism, and recognition of the personal-political intersection” (p. 51). Yet a feminist analysis of environmentalism has never been fully incorporated in the environmental movement, as distinguished from the environmental justice movement where the discriminatory impacts of environmental degradation and its health impacts, for example, are apparent based on race and class (Gottlieb, 1995).

Ecofeminism was incorporated into this study’s literature review as an example of early attempts to incorporate feminist thought in environmentalism beginning in the 1970s. But those ideas came under scrutiny because they did not take the full range of identity characteristics into account. Gaard (2011) asserts that the turning point away from the acceptance of ecofeminism was criticism of its “essentialism,” meaning that it homogenized the experience of all women, ignoring differences in culture, race, and class.

Ecofeminist analysis remains a part of academic environmental discourse, but it does not surface in day-to-day environmental advocacy, and it is noteworthy that the study participants did not mention it. That could be due to the fact that ecofeminism was never embraced by environmental social sciences (Banerjee & Bell, 2007). It could be an indication that a feminist analysis of environmentalism is not prominent in the general

discourse of the environmental movement. It could mean that although the participants had opinions about it, they did not raise them because the topic was not raised in an interview question.

Early ecofeminists suggested that women viewed environmental issues differently as women, because of their experiences as mothers and their physical and spiritual connection to the earth. Most of the participants, when asked, did not think that women had views about the environment that were different than men's views. Some noted that women tend to view environmental issues through the lens of parenthood and have concerns for their children's health from the impact of toxics and pollution, which is consistent with the history of women's involvement in environment and public health issues (Gottlieb, 2005). Mary noted that both mothers and fathers more often tend to think about health impacts related to the environment. Recent ecofeminist researchers note that even in the early years of such analysis, it was recognized that men and women with similar identity characteristics, such as race and class, are more likely to view issues similarly than do women of very different backgrounds and identity characteristics (Banerjee & Bell, 2007).

The environmental movement has long been accused of being elitist. Early on the movement focused on protecting the interests of wealthy landowners, often at the expense of others' interests and livelihoods (Gottlieb, 2005). The study participants do not appear to fit that mold, and yet the environmental movement's lack of racial and class diversity hinders a change in the ongoing perception that its members are not concerned

enough with the social equity aspects of environmental policy. The study participants' identity characteristics may be influencing their organizational goals for environmental protection. From the researcher's experience, traditional environmental movement organizations tend to make their case on economic efficiency grounds. They recognize the political necessity of negotiating their proposals with other stakeholders who are focused on people's incomes and jobs, but these impacts are not their primary concern. Dobson (2003) notes that social justice and environmental sustainability goals must be better integrated to make real progress on environmental policy.

The study indicates that women leaders value self-reflection, inclusion, attentiveness to diverse needs and complex relationships. These were highlighted in the discussion of moral imagination, showing how the participants strive to see the world from others' perspectives and gain insight into "otherness." Thus, it is possible that women leaders with transformational and communal leadership characteristics will be catalysts for broadening the inclusiveness and diversity of the environmental movement.

Leaders and their organizations must proactively reach out to new partners to form broader coalitions with groups representing diverse populations, and incorporate their priorities and needs. The findings in this study touch on some ways in which this is happening.

The proactive pursuit of diverse participation in the environmental advocacy movement has implications for organizational decision making in strategic plans and in

policy issue selection and strategizing. It remains to be seen whether the leaders of today's environmental movement—female or male—take this on in new ways and whether it will result in more effective advocacy and positive environmental policy results.

Recommendations for Movement Practice

Based on these study findings and reflections noted above, the following suggestions are offered to improve practice among environmental advocacy organizations. These suggestions center on providing facilitation and diversity training, creating supportive venues for reflection, and instituting ongoing assessment of collaborative efforts.

I. Build Leadership Skills

More women are becoming leaders in the environmental advocacy movement and they need venues to discuss leadership experiences and to promote their leadership styles and successes. Newcomers and younger women particularly need supportive venues, such as informal leadership lunches or leadership training that focus on finding an androgynous blend of leadership practice. Organizational boards of directors should support women leaders seeking such venues, including women's leadership groups and leadership training. There are women's caucuses within legislative arenas that serve

similar functions, providing a more productive space for women to share their perspectives and concerns.

Mixed groups of men and women should also be constructed to allow them to share their experiences equally in a supportive environment in order to strengthen their relationships and their reflection on effective leadership and advocacy practices. These groups may need external facilitation by someone skilled in monitoring group dynamics around gender socialization.

II. Explore Collaboration

Collaboration among organizations in coalitions is a challenge in a competitive political arena, both between environmental partners and between adversarial stakeholders. Environmental advocacy organizations should regularly take stock of their collaborative efforts—their effectiveness, their stumbling blocks, and their transactional costs—to determine the best practices that should be employed to be effective in reaching their goals. This should be the case for collaborative efforts with diverse stakeholders outside the environmental movement as well as for environmental partners working in coalition on shared objectives. Setting down the principles of engagement—how participants will share information, resolve conflicts, hold each other accountable, and make decisions—is one way to open the dialogue and clarify expectations. Good facilitation skills are needed for such discussions. The participants in this study frequently served that role and believed they did it well. It is likely that more

organizational leaders—both women and men—could benefit from ongoing facilitation training.

III. Create a More Diverse Environmental Movement

The environmental movement as a whole should place more emphasis on diversity education for staffs and boards, so that issues of race, class, gender, and other identity characteristics are explored and barriers to inclusion and unity in the movement are proactively addressed. That would promote greater buy-in for the importance of a feminist analysis of the environmental movement and help organizations better analyze their policy agendas and their organizational strategic plans accordingly. Ultimately, those efforts should be aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of organizational efforts to achieve environmental policy goals through the incorporation of broader constituencies and their views and approaches.

Recommendations for Future Research

This final section offers suggestions for future research, based on the study findings and the reflections on a feminist analysis of the environmental movement. The suggestions are organized into four themes: leadership variables, collaborative approaches, defining effective advocacy, and diversity aspects of the movement.

I. Explore Variables in Effective Environmental Advocacy Leadership

Further study is needed on what it means to employ androgynous leadership characteristics for organizational and advocacy leaders. When leaders employ a blend of agentic and communal characteristics, do colleagues and external stakeholders still evaluate effectiveness differently by gender, particularly in the realm of policy advocacy? How is it different for men to employ androgynous leadership styles than for women?

Longevity is an important variable in most organizations and the study participants indicated its importance to their success. A study of the impact of leader or organizational longevity on policy advocacy effectiveness would be useful.

Further study should be done on the impact of having female role models on a woman's perception of her own leadership potential and effectiveness in the advocacy realm. The work could be particularly focused on how female role models help encourage more young women to enter the field and imagine themselves as leaders.

II. Explore How Collaborative Approaches are Effective

The study participants claim that behaving collaboratively is the most effective approach for achieving policy goals. A study of the impact of cooperative approaches on policy outcomes would be useful. The study participants were actively trying to change the tone of their organizations and communications, making them less antagonistic and

polarizing. Studies of the continuum of communication styles—from antagonistic to collaborative—and their impacts in various kinds of policy debates would be helpful.

Other aspects of collaboration identified in the study are the need for transparency and for sharing credit. Further study could be done on whether and how these approaches facilitate the advocacy process among competing groups.

Finally, further study is needed on how advocacy organizations effectively find the balance between being nimble, entrepreneurial, and independent in their approaches on policy negotiation and advocacy, while also being collaborative coalition partners. Further study could delineate how and when nonprofit advocacy organizations and coalitions make choices between “insider” and “outsider” strategies and the variables that make them effective in either case.

III. Explore and Evaluate Effective Policy Advocacy

The participants were asked to talk about their views on their organizational and advocacy effectiveness, but there is no uniform definition of advocacy effectiveness. Benchmarks for effectiveness could be measured by square miles of land conserved, waterways restored (and to what level), toxics reduced in consumption, level of carbon emissions, and other metrics. Despite significant wins on conservation and renewable energy, for example, some believe the environmental movement is dismally failing to effectively confront the most critical issues for the planet, such as climate change (e.g.

Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004). But metrics do not tell the story of the political environment in which such decisions are negotiated. Many issues in the environmental policy realm are revisited over and over again among advocates and policymakers. Legislative wins and losses can be interpreted in differing ways as advocacy efforts are evaluated (Stone, 2002).

The changing nature of environmental policy debates makes the evaluation of effectiveness a difficult exercise, but further research could at least identify the relevant variables of policy advocacy effectiveness in order to help create a common understanding of what it means. Based on this study, some of these variables could include strong advocacy organizational management, organizational and leader longevity, and various strategic advocacy tactics.

IV. Explore How Diverse Communities Activate Environmental Goals

Leaders with differing identity characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, physical and mental ability and others, would provide contrasting viewpoints to the participants in this study about leadership, effectiveness, and the history and direction of the environmental movement. That could help bridge gaps in understanding and aid collaborative efforts between the environmental movement, the environmental justice movement, and other movements. Further study among environmental leaders could reveal new ideas about a broader feminist analysis of the diversity aspects of the advocacy movement today.

Further study could explore the different weight that various environmental issues carry based on different identity characteristics. The interplay of social equity and environmental goals in political negotiations should be further explored to determine how and when environmental objectives are achieved or fail. It would be helpful for leaders to know how both women and men across the United States are bridging the divides between race, class, and gender in the environmental and other movements, which efforts are most effective in connecting diverse communities, and what barriers exist to stop those connections.

Going Forward

The steady presence over 40 years of environmental advocacy at the state level has created an infrastructure of organizations actively involved in policymaking. Women are playing an increasingly more prominent role as leaders of these advocacy organizations. This study provides insights into women's world of advocacy leadership. Their leadership styles tend toward well-managed organizations, collaboration, and transparency. That may be changing how external stakeholders and policymakers view their organizations and whether and how they are becoming more powerful players.

Dora and Karen believe that the environmental movement has and will continue to change in positive directions because of the presence of more women leaders. They believe that women's perspectives, communication skills, and empowerment will make the movement more effective.

Dora: I don't think it's changed enough yet. I'm hoping as more and more women take these leadership positions, it actually will start to change in ways, so that our strategies become more effective by virtue of having more females lending their perspective about how we've got to go about this and what really needs to be done. I think we bring a set of communications skills to the arena that will be important for us to be able to move our agenda.

Karen: I'm a little bit biased being female...I do think the world is a better place the more we have parity in leadership. Female leaders really bring something important to the table...[I]t's really important...for all the women in the world to see female leaders succeeding and being trusted. A lot of things that aren't right in this world will be made better by women having choices and being affirmed and empowered to make those choices...[T]he environment is such a key frontier of the things that we really have to be seriously addressing for the sake of our planet and society. I am heartened by the fact that it feels like we are growing in numbers in the leadership of the environmental community. I think that it's all to the good and the world will be a better place for it.

The greater presence of women in the policymaking arena in general, and the environmental movement in particular, may change notions of effectiveness and the process of policymaking. Time will tell.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service

Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in a Research Study

A Phenomenological Study of Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations

Introduction:

- You are being asked to be in a PhD dissertation research study of women's leadership in the environmental advocacy movement.
- You were selected as a participant because you are the executive director or president of a state-level or federal-level nonprofit environmental advocacy organization, defined as an organization that works to develop and/or directly influence environmental policy at the state level.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have about this study.

Your participation is voluntary and you can ask questions at any time.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the characteristics women bring to organizational leadership and how they are impacting state environmental policy.

- Participants in this study are from states across the United States.
- The total number of subjects will be between eight and ten.
- Currently the researcher has no financial interest in this study.

Description of Study Procedures:

- If you agree to be part of this study, you must participate in a 60-90 minute one-on-one interview with the researcher.
- Because the field of women leaders in state environmental advocacy organizations is not extensive and because some of these interviews will take place at group settings, such as national conferences, it is possible you will discover the identities of other participants. In such a case, as a study participant, you agree to keep the identities of other study participants confidential.
- You agree to be available for 2-3 additional phone calls after the initial interview to answer further questions from the researcher for the purpose of gaining additional information or clarification on previous answers.
- You will be offered the opportunity to read a draft report and offer further insights or make deletions of sensitive data before a final report is completed.
- The data collection for this study is expected to conclude in 2011.

Risks to Being in Study:

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study.

Benefits of Being in Study:

The direct benefit of participation in this study is the opportunity to strengthen your leadership through analysis of your experience and that of other women leaders. The indirect benefit of participation is the contribution these reflections provide to women leaders in general and the field of environmental policymaking.

Payments and Costs:

- You will not receive any compensation/reimbursement for your participation in this study.
- There is no cost to you to participate in this research study except for your contribution of time.

Confidentiality and Privacy of Data:

- The records of this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.
- One copy and one back-up copy of the digital recording will be kept by the researcher and both will be destroyed one year after the submission of the final report.
- Transcripts will be kept electronically and in paper copy on the personal computer and at the home of the researcher but then destroyed one year after the submission of the final report.
- Transfer of electronic or paper copies of data may occur with individuals in these categories only:
 - The faculty advising committee
 - Paid transcribers who must also sign confidentiality forms.
 - Persons paid to serve the function of determining inter-rater reliability.
 - Staff of the University of Southern Maine Institutional Review Board.
- Any published report will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary. You will be provided with any significant new findings that develop during the course of the research that may make you decide that you want to stop participating. You are free to withdraw from this study, for whatever reason, within 60 days after the initial interview.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Lisa Pohlmann. For questions or more Information concerning this research you may contact her at 207-462-2404 or lpohlmann@nrcm.org.

If you believe you may have suffered a research related injury, contact Barb Fraumeni, faculty advisor, at 207-228-8245 or bfraumeni@usm.maine.edu, who will give you further instructions.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, the study itself, or any research-related injuries, you may contact: Director, Office of Research Compliance, USM at (207)780-4268, or usmirb@usm.maine.edu, or TTY (207)780-5646.

Copy of Consent Form:

You will be given a copy of this consent form and one will be kept in our records file for future reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

Signatures/Dates:

Study Participant (Print Name): _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations Guiding Interview Questions

1. Background of individual
 - a. How long have you been in the environmental movement? In your leadership role in your organization or in other environmental organizations?
 - b. Why did you want to be the organizational leader?
2. How would you define “effective” leadership?
 - a. What in your life has prepared you to be an effective leader?
3. Give me some examples of situations when you believe you have been effective in your role as a leader?
 - a. Why did you pick this story? What did you do that constitutes effective leadership in these instances?
 - b. Describe a situation where you took a public stand on a difficult environmental issue. How did you bring your skills to bear in this situation?
 - c. How have your colleagues described your leadership?
4. What are some of the main challenges you face as a woman in your leadership role in this arena?
 - a. What barriers do you face in your organization? In the policymaking arena? With other environmental organizations/leaders?
 - b. In what ways have you adjusted or compromised your leadership approach to be effective?
 - c. What has made you a more effective leader over time?
5. How do you think your experience as a leader is different from the experience of your male counterparts in similar positions?
 - a. In what ways do you approach environmental policy issues differently than men?
 - b. In what ways do you approach your work in the state/federal policymaking arena differently than men?
 - c. In what ways do you approach organizational leadership differently than men?
 - d. How do others approach you differently in these areas because you are a woman?
6. What has changed in your organization that you think you can attribute in any way to your leadership? (assuming there was a leader before)
 - a. Who was the leader before you and how did they work?
 - b. How have the cultural norms in the organization changed?
 - c. How have the objectives of the organization changed?
 - d. How has the approach to policy advocacy changed?
7. What are the key lessons you have learned about being an effective leader that you would like to pass on to other potential women leaders?

APPENDIX C

University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service
Confidentiality Statement for Data Assistants in the Research Study:
Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations

I, _____, will serve as a transcriber for a research project on Women Leaders of Environmental Advocacy Organizations, and for that purpose only am being given access to study data. I agree to keep these data strictly confidential in accordance with the approval to conduct the study granted by the University of Southern Maine Institutional Review Board to the principal researcher, Lisa Pohlmann. I will not discuss with anyone the nature of the study nor the specific content or participant identities within the data, except in written transcription provided to the researcher. This agreement is permanently binding.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Lisa Pohlmann was born in Davenport, Iowa where she graduated from Assumption High School in 1973. She received her Bachelor's degree in social work and psychology from the University of Iowa in Iowa City in 1976. She received a Master's degree in international administration from the School for International Training/World Learning in Brattleboro, Vermont in 2005 and a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine in 2002.

Pohlmann began her career in Maine serving 10 years as the executive director of New Hope for Women, a domestic violence organization. She did international development work in Dhaka, Bangladesh for two years. She served for nearly 13 years as associate director for the Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP), working on sustainable economic development, social welfare, and health care policy. She joined the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) in 2000, first as a member of the board of directors, later serving as board president. In 2008 she joined the NRCM staff as deputy director and in 2011 became executive director, her current employment.

Throughout her 34 year career in nonprofit advocacy organizations in Maine, Pohlmann has served on numerous boards and commissions, including Engage Maine, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, Maine Commission on Postsecondary Strategies for

Low-Income Adults, Women's Employment Issues Committee/Maine Jobs Council, Maine Greenhouse Gas Initiative Stakeholder Advisory Group, Community Advisory Committee of the Maine Health Access Foundation, Maine Women's Lobby, Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Maine Commission on Domestic Abuse. She has also facilitated numerous coalitions, including the Maine Federal Climate Coalition, Maine Direct Care Worker Coalition and the Maine Sustainable Development Working Group.

Pohlmann has authored numerous public policy papers, primarily published through her affiliated organizations, but also in peer-reviewed journals:

- A Clean Energy and Jobs Plan for Maine's Future. (w/Nicole Witherbee). MECEP. 2009.
- Building on MaineCare's Success. (w/Chris Hastedt). *Maine Policy Review*. MECEP. 2007.
- Health Care & Tourism: A Lead Sector Strategy for Rural Maine. (ed. w/D. Vail) MECEP. 2007.
- Getting By: Maine Livable Wages. (w/MECEP staff). 1999. 2003. 2005. 2007. MECEP.
- Study of Maine's Direct Care Workforce: Wages, Health Coverage, and a Worker Registry. Report to the 123rd Maine Legislature, Maine Department of Health and Human Services.
- Meeting Maine's Need for Frontline Workers in Long-term Care and Service Options, Prepared for Blaine House Conference on Aging, September 2006.
- Spreading Prosperity to the "Other Maines." (ed. w/ David Vail). MECEP. 2005.

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- Information Guide for Abused Women in Maine, (w/others) Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services. 1987 followed by numerous reprints.

Pohlmann is a candidate for the doctoral degree in public policy from the Muskie School of Public Services at the University of Southern Maine in December, 2013.