Women's Voluntary Organizations in Canada: Bridgers, Bonders, or Both?

Mary K. Foster[1] **and Agnes G. Meinhard**[1,2]

Using a sample of 645 voluntary organizations in Canada, this study explores the differences between women's voluntary organizations and gender-neutral organizations in their propensity to form a bridging or a bonding interorganizational relationship. The results suggest that not only do women's organizations in Canada collaborate more than gender-neutral organizations, but also the tendency to have bridging or bonding relationships is significantly different. The factors predisposing women's organizations to have collaborators inside or outside their network seems to be affected by how much the environmental changes in Canada impact their survival and whether the nature of the causes they support makes them an attractive partner. For gender-neutral organizations the tendency to bridge or bond seems to relate more to traditional organizational characteristics, such as size and staffing efficiency.

KEY WORDS: women's voluntary organizations; bridging; bonding; social capital; Canada.

INTRODUCTION

The nonprofit literature has many studies documenting the use of cooperation and alliances as a strategy for organizations to deal with environmental changes (Connor *et al*., 1999; Mulroy and Shay, 1997; Provan and Milward, 1995; Rapp and Whitfield, 1999). Much of this work has focused on defining the nature of collaborations and distinguishing between levels or degrees of intensity of cooperation (Austin, 2000; Coston, 1998; Gray, 1989; Murray, 1998; Phillips and Graham, 2000; Wood and Gray, 1991). Another perspective on collaborations between

[1]Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Faculty of Business, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
[2]Correspondence should be directed to Mary K. Foster, Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Faculty of Business, Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3; e-mail: mfoster@ryerson.ca

voluntary organizations is in the context of their contribution to the development of social capital. Social capital is "a broad term encompassing the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit" (Woolcock, 1998, p. 155). In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) outlines the key role of voluntary organizations in promoting civic engagement and collaboration. These tight knit relationships between those sharing the same goals and vision, he suggests, are significant components in civil society. On the other hand, Florida (2002) points out that when homogeneous organizations develop a bonding relationship, they become inwardly focused. Given the current challenges in society, he suggests, we may be better served by organizations that bridge, that focus on networking and linking across diverse groups. The purpose of this paper is to explore the differences in Canada between women's voluntary organizations and gender-neutral organizations in their propensity to form a bridging or a bonding interorganizational relationship.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bridging and Bonding

A number of scholars have investigated the role of links and ties and their impact on society. For example, Burt (1992) emphasizes the importance of open rather than closed networks and argues that the area between dense regions of networks, areas he calls "structural holes," present opportunities for the greatest economic return. Granovetter (1973) discusses the notion of strong ties versus weak ties in getting a job. He suggests that it is easier to find a job through a weak tie because this type of "bridging" tie links two networks together that would otherwise not be connected. A strong tie, on the other hand, is more restrictive because the links are more interconnected and more overlapping. While these strong ties reinforce cohesion, they also include a more rigid set of norms and are more impervious to new information (Coleman, 1988).

The consensus seems to be that bonding is based on dense networks and multiplex relationships (Leonard and Onyx, 2003), and occurs more easily among groups whose membership is homogeneous and who associate with each other over time. Thus, the focus of the group is on the needs and interests of its members (Wuthnow, 2002), and group loyalty is valued. Bridging, on the other hand, spans different groups and includes less dense networks (Wuthnow, 2002). Because bridging links heterogeneous groups, reciprocity may be more important. Thus, working together is more instrumentally based and the extent may depend on perceived benefits (Leonard and Onyx, 2003).

Onyx and Bullen (2000) investigated how the dimensions of social capital are distributed in five communities in Australia. They found that rural communities ranked significantly higher than urban communities on participation in local

community, feelings of trust and safety, and neighborhood connections. They concluded that the social capital in rural communities is more bonding in that the networks are dense and multiplex; and exhibit long-term reciprocity, thick trust, shared norms, and less instrumentality. On the other hand, urban communities have a significantly higher sense of collective or personal efficacy and a higher tolerance for diversity. This bridging social capital is based on large loose networks with relatively strict reciprocity, thinner or a different kind of trust, a greater risk of norm violation, and more instrumentality.

Wuthnow (2002) further explores the features of social capital by identifying two types of bridging social capital. Identity-bridging social capital spans groups differentiated culturally, for example, by race or ethnicity. On the other hand, status-bridging social capital is vertical in that it links groups differentiated by levels of power, influence, wealth, and prestige. His research suggests that membership in a religious congregation is associated with status-bridging social capital because of the broad socioeconomic composition of most congregations. Interestingly, the data from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Study (March, 2001) are not so supportive of the bridging nature of religious groups. Its data show that those high in religiosity are generous in giving and volunteering, but low on measures of social action and tolerance. It concludes that the social capital in religious communities is more likely to be bonding than bridging.

Clearly, the nature of bridging and bonding is complex and depends on a number of factors including the mandate of the organization, its geographic location, and the composition of its membership. Research done to date suggests that different dimensions of social capital are more prominent in particular community types or organizational settings.

The Role of Women's Voluntary Organizations in Bridging and Bonding

Research has shown that, in different societies, voluntary organizations fulfill different functions ranging from adversarial and advocacy to supplementing what other sectors do not provide to full partnership (Salamon, 1995; Young, 2000). Others have pointed out that voluntary organizations reflect the prevailing ideologies of the state (Van Til, 1988). In this paper, we propose that in Canada women's voluntary organizations and other (gender-neutral) voluntary organizations differ in their propensity for bonding and bridging.

In a nationwide study of the attitudes and responses of Canadian voluntary organizations to the current social, political, and economic environment, we found that while the responses of the 351 women's organizations are similar in direction to the 294 other organizations, they are different in degree (Meinhard and Foster, 2003). Compared to other organizations, women's organizations are more critical of current policies, and more pessimistic about the future. Although they are more inclined to collaborate, they are less likely to embrace a business orientation,

develop new revenue strategies, or see competition as positive. We concluded that despite strong-shared sectoral trends, women's organizations are a distinct subset of the nonprofit sector in Canada. Given this conclusion, the question to be investigated is whether the social "glue" produced and maintained by women's voluntary organizations is the same as for gender-neutral organizations. Is there evidence that women and women's organizations are any more or less skilled than gender-neutral organizations at making bridging connections?

There is an abundant literature documenting the differences between the behavior of males and females, including the socialization of males to be competitive, hierarchical, and independent (Harragan, 1977; Henning and Jardim, 1976; Lever, 1978; Tannen, 1990), and the encouragement of females to be nurturing and relationship-oriented (Grant, 1988; Rosener, 1990; Tannen, 1990). Fondas (1997) found that these differences in socialized behaviors are also evident in the workplace. For example, women are more likely than men to display the characteristics of transformational leadership in that they value process, behave democratically, and are more likely to collaborate (Bass *et al*., 1996; Helegsen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; 1995). More specifically, in terms of working relationships, Dawson (1997) found that women are more inclined to deal fairly with their clients, and to consider the common good and the needs of others (Halpern and Parks, 1996). Recently, Walters *et al*. (1998), in a meta-analysis of the role of gender in negotiations, found consistent results to indicate that women are more cooperative in negotiations. There is also empirical evidence to suggest that women in the workplace organize differently than men do (Bradshaw *et al*., 1996; Foster and Orser, 1994; Odendahl, 1994; Odendahl and Youmans, 1994; Perlmutter, 1994). Women have been the early adopters of less formal and more inclusive organizational structures (Bordt, 1997; Lott, 1994), which served to differentiate their organizations from the more traditional male hierarchical structures (Clemens, 1999). Because women are more likely to operate in open, inclusive, and decentralized structures where information is shared, this experience may predispose them to favor external collaborations as well.

Indeed, in our nationwide study of 645 Canadian voluntary organizations, we found that 69% of women's voluntary organizations engaged in more than five types of interorganizational activities, a proportion significantly higher than the 58% of gender-neutral organizations that reported the same level of collaboration (Meinhard and Foster, 2003). We also found that the predispositions for collaboration were quite different in Canada for women's organizations than for others (Foster and Meinhard, 2003). While gender-neutral organizations are motivated to make linkages with other voluntary organizations in order to reduce costs, and if they do not believe competition is good, women's organizations are motivated by a different set of factors. They are more likely to collaborate if they perceive an impact from environmental changes, believe there are few obstacles to collaboration, believe in the future of partnerships, do not believe that management solutions are

part of the future for the voluntary sector, and if they have already implemented strategic staffing measures in response to changes in the environment. This raises the issue of whether bridging and collaborating are the same thing, subsets of each other, or completely different networking phenomena.

Is there other evidence of differences between how men and women connect to different networks? Burt (1998) in his study of 3,000 employees below the rank of vice-president in a large US electronics firm found that women have to build social capital differently in an organization than men do in order to get promoted. Men can build their own social capital by establishing strong ties to disconnected groups. These ties allow men to broker information between these groups and the more nonredundant contacts a person has, the more he is accessing additive information. Women, on the other hand, have to borrow the social capital of someone else to make connections with other groups. Burt suggests this strategy is necessary because women are not seen as legitimate in the firm and are therefore outsiders, not afforded the same level of trust as insiders.

Burt (1998) goes on to outline three different forms of networks. The first is an entrepreneurial network that provides access to information and control. The groups in these types of networks are very different and thus the ties create information and control benefits. Burt calls the second type of network a clique in that its main benefit is security. The groups in these networks are highly redundant, and while this creates social support there are minimal information and control benefits. The final type of network is hierarchical and this provides sponsored access to information and control. Structural holes are borrowed from the sponsor and thus any information and control benefits are second-hand. There is some evidence that women's organizations are more likely to be engaged in clique networks rather than entrepreneurial networks. For example, in our study of Canadian voluntary organizations, we found that women's organizations were significantly more likely to agree that it is easier to collaborate with an organization mostly run by women, that organizations with collective structures make for better partners than organizations with hierarchical structures, and that partnerships are a way for larger organizations to build empires (Meinhard and Foster, 2003).

There also appears to be evidence that women's voluntary organizations suffer from a credibility gap which may make it difficult for them to be mechanisms for bridging. This is illustrated in the challenge women's organizations encounter when they have tried to diversify their revenue sources. They are much less successful in this activity than gender-neutral organizations. For a variety of reasons, women's organizations are not perceived to be prestigious targets for donors (Bradshaw *et al*., 1996), including the perception that women's needs rank low in the "establishment's" evaluation of what is important (Useem, 1987). Major donors tend to concentrate their efforts on the more prominent health, educational, and cultural organizations (Useem, 1987). In contrast, women's groups have traditionally made benevolence and social issues (Myyry and Helkama, 2001; Riordan,

2000; Smith and Schwartz, 1997; Women's Communication Centre, 1996) and the marginalized and excluded members of society (Stewart and Taylor, 1997; Yasmin, 1997) their priorities.

Capek (as reported in *Nonprofit World*, 1999) points out three factors that make it more difficult for women's organizations to be effective in diversifying their funding sources. First, women's organizations themselves may seem "risky" to donors because they are not set up in traditional hierarchical structures. Second, they have not been able to differentiate themselves from each other because women's organizations tend to concentrate on the same causes. Finally, their fundraising programs and strategies are less developed because chronically low budgets mean little discretionary money remains after meeting service commitments. Furthermore, female board members having fewer overlapping board memberships (Moore and Whitt, 2000) may disadvantage their organizations in the quest for resources. The literature seems to suggest that, for a variety of social, structural and psychological reasons, women and women's organizations may have a tendency to engage in more bonding than bridging.

RESEARCH METHOD

Design

In 1999 telephone interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted with 645 presidents or executive directors of nonprofit organizations located across Canada with representation from every province. We used a 120-item questionnaire containing both closed- and open-ended questions that was constructed on the basis of the results of a pilot study with 35 female executive directors of nonprofit organizations (Meinhard and Foster, 1997).

Sample

Definition of Qualified Respondent

To qualify for inclusion in the sample, organizations had to fit the definition of a voluntary organization (Johnson, 1981, p. 14): (a) the organization does not owe its existence to statutory authority, but consists of a group of people who have come together voluntarily; (b) the organization is self-governing and decides its own constitution and policy; and (c) the organization is not profit-making. To be classified as a women's voluntary organization for the purposes of this study, the Executive Director of the organization had to be a woman and two thirds of the positions on the board had to be filled by women, in other words the governance structure had to be dominated by women.

Population

Since no comprehensive list of nonprofit organizations exists in Canada, National Action Committee on the Status of Women membership lists, Revenue Canada's list of charitable organizations, Community Blue Book listings, and Internet listings were used to create a master list from which a sample was randomly chosen. The sample was drawn from three separate population pools: (1) women's organizations affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), a feminist umbrella organization (the final sample was 167 organizations); (2) women's organizations not affiliated with NAC and that do not espouse a feminist ideology or do not wish to affiliate (the final sample was 184 organizations); and (3) organizations that did not fall into the defined category of a women's organization (the final sample was 294 organizations).

Sampling Framework

We sampled to ensure that the characteristics of the subsample of "other" organizations matched the characteristics of the subsample of women's voluntary organizations with respect to geographic location, size, and mandate. The sampling framework was based on a proportional representation of nonprofit organizations from the more densely populated provinces—Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia—and a minimum of 25 organizations from the provinces with smaller populations in the Maritimes and the Prairies.

Size can be measured in several different ways. Kimberly (1976) identified four conceptually independent aspects of organizational size: (a) physical capacity; (b) personnel available; (c) inputs/outputs; and (d) discretionary resources available. The choice of measurement depends on the objectives of the research. Since this study focuses on organization/environment transactions, resource availability—as measured by reported annual revenue—was chosen as the criterion for size. The sample was stratified on the basis of what we learned about size distribution in the pilot study, by selecting 30% small (less than $100,000) 50% medium ($100,000–$799,999) and 20% large ($800,000 or more) organizations from each of the population pools.

The stratification scheme for organizational mandate was also based on the findings from the pilot study. We found that voluntary organizations fall into one of three basic categories: social services (e.g., Elizabeth Fry Society), health services (e.g., Women's Health Clinic), and a cluster that we label education/advocacy/lobbying (e.g., National Anti-Poverty Organization). Although these often overlap, each organization has a primary mandate in one of these areas. The majority of our sample (60%) was selected from social service organizations, 20% came from health service organizations, and 20% were

education/advocacy/lobbying organizations. This reflects the distribution of these organizations in the population.

Because of the absence of a comprehensive list of organizations, this is not a true random sample. Nevertheless, we believe we achieved a representative sample of nonprofit organizations in Canada because we stratified the sample on key demographic characteristics: size, location, mandate, and type (dominated by women or not).

Creation of Bridging and Bonding Measure

Respondents were asked to identify up to three organizations with whom they had collaborated. These organizations were subsequently coded into the following categories based on questionnaire data about the respondent organization and web information about the collaborating organization:

- Gender focus of the collaborating organization—male, female, or mixed.
- Gender comparison with respondent organization—same or different.
- Similarity of primary mandate (e.g., health, advocacy, crisis intervention) of the collaborating organization compared to the respondent organization—4-point scale.
- Similarity of client focus (e.g., families, immigrants, unemployed) of collaborating organization compared to the respondent organization—4-point scale.
- Breadth of focus of the collaborating organization—national, regional/provincial, local, or umbrella.
- Focus comparison with respondent organization—same or different.

A bonding score was constructed for each collaborator by adding the responses to the following questions:

- Gender comparison (*same* = 1, *different* = 0).
- Primary mandate (*very or somewhat similar* = 1, *slightly or not similar* = 0).
- Client group (*very or somewhat similar* = 1, *slightly or not similar* = 0).
- Focus comparison (*same* = 1, *different* = 0).

The range of possible scores was 0–4 and the higher the number, the more similar was the collaborating organization to the respondent organization. A total bonding index was calculated by adding the bonding score for the three individual collaborators reported by respondents. The possible scores ranged from 0 to 12.

A bridging score was constructed for each collaborator by adding the responses to the following questions:

- Gender comparison (*same* = 0, *different* = 1).

- Primary mandate (*very or somewhat similar = 0, slightly or not similar = 1*).
- Client group (*very or somewhat similar = 0, slightly or not similar= 1*).
- Focus comparison (*same = 0, different = 1*).

The range of possible scores was 0 to 4 and the higher the number, the more different was the collaborating organization from the respondent organization. A total bridging index was calculated by adding the bridging score for the three individual collaborators. The possible scores ranged from 0 to 12.

Statistical Method

Women's voluntary organizations and gender-neutral organizations were the categories of the independent variable. The dependent variables were the total bonding index and the total bridging index.

SPSS Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis using forward selection with a $p = 0.05$ criterion for entry was used to determine the likelihood of having a bridging or a bonding type of collaboration by nineteen independent variables representing the factors used in the initial development of the model on factors predisposing organizations to collaborate (Foster and Meinhard, 2002). The independent variables included: (a) eight measures of organizational characteristics such as size, structure, mandate, and age; (b) three measures of perceptions regarding the environmental changes; and (c) eight measures of attitudes of the organization, such as optimism, pessimism, competitive outlook, and perceived obstacles to collaboration.[3]

The total sample was divided into two subgroups: (a) women's organizations comprising 351 organizations that met our definition of a women's organization; and (b) gender-neutral (other) organizations comprising 294 organizations that did not meet our definition of a women's organization. Stepwise multiple regression was run for each of these subgroups independently and a definition of the significant variables follows:

- *Medium-sized organization.* Organizational size was measured by the size of the annual organizational budget and was grouped into categories of small (under $100,000), medium ($100,000 to $799,999) and large ($800,000 and more). For the purposes of the regression analysis, dummy variables for small, medium, and large organizations were created.
- *Social service organization.* Mandate was categorized as health, social services, or education/advocacy based on reported primary mandate and client focus. Dummy variables were created for each mandate category.

---

[3]Detailed information on the factor analysis used to derive many of these measures is contained in the Appendix of Meinhard and Foster (2003).

- *Pessimistic outlook*. The items comprising this index were uncovered through a factor analysis of eleven statements related to the future of the voluntary sector. The four items related to this variable include the belief that in the future there will be fewer small organizations, the situation for marginalized groups will become worse, more organizations will be merging, and governments will try to exert more control over the actions and priorities of the voluntary sector. The higher the score on this index, the stronger the pessimistic view of the future.
- *Strategic staffing*. The items comprising this index were uncovered through a factor analysis of fourteen statements describing current organizational responses to changes in the external environment. The four items related to this variable include reassessing hiring, more emphasis on volunteer recruitment, more emphasis on performance evaluations, and reducing staff by working closely with other organizations. The higher the score on this index, the higher the likelihood of focusing on staffing factors to address environmental threats.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As Table I shows, overall organizations in Canada are more likely to have bonding type collaborations (mean score = 8.1937 out of a possible 12) rather than bridging type relationships (mean score = 3.8653 out of a possible 12). However, women's organizations in Canada are significantly more likely than gender-neutral organizations to have bridging collaborations ($p = 0.000$) and significantly less likely to have bonding collaborations ($p = 0.000$).

The regression analysis revealed different predisposing factors affecting whether an organization in Canada has a bridging or a bonding type of collaboration, see Table II. For gender-neutral organizations, those that are medium-sized are significantly less likely to bond ($\beta = -0.204$, $p = 0.011$) and significantly more likely to bridge ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.017$) than are other sized organizations. Likewise, gender-neutral organizations that have already implemented strategic

Table I. Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance on Women's ($n = 351$) and Gender-Neutral Organizations ($n = 294$) on Likelihood of Choosing Bridging or Bonding Type of Collaborations

Indexes	Mean	df	F	Significance
Bridging Index	3.8653	1	23.427	0.000
Women's organizations	4.3781			
Gender-neutral organizations	3.3050			
Bonding Index	8.1937	1	23.498	0.000
Women's organizations	7.6961			
Gender-neutral organizations	8.7375			

Table II. Results of Stepwise Regression for Factors Predisposing Bridging-or Bonding-Type Collaborations Among Women's ($n = 351$) and Gender-Neutral Organizations ($n = 294$)

Variable	Beta coefficient	Significance
Women's organizations		
Predisposition to bridge		
Pessimistic outlook for future	0.248	0.001
Social service organization	−0.174	0.023
Predisposition to bond		
Pessimistic outlook for future	−0.260	0.001
Social service organization	0.175	0.022
Gender-neutral organizations		
Predisposition to bridge		
Medium size	0.190	0.017
Implemented strategic staffing	0.168	0.035
Predisposition to bond		
Medium size	−0.204	0.011
Implemented strategic staffing	−0.158	0.047

staffing measures in response to changes in the environment are significantly less likely to bond ($\beta = -0.158$, $p = 0.047$) and significantly more likely to bridge ($\beta = 0.168$, $p = 0.035$).

Similarly, women's organizations in Canada that are pessimistic about the future are significantly less likely to bond ($\beta = -0.260$, $p = 0.001$) and significantly more likely to bridge ($\beta = 0.248$, $p = 0.001$). In contrast, women's organizations with a social services mandate are significantly more likely to bond ($\beta = 0.175$, $p = 0.022$) and significantly less likely to bridge ($\beta = -0.174$, $p = 0.023$).

DISCUSSION

Our results show that Canadian voluntary organizations in general are more likely to have bonding type collaborations. This preference for collaborating with like-minded organizations is consistent with Wuthrow's (2002) research that interpersonal solidarity occurs more easily among homogenous groups that share a collective orientation. More organizations have bonding type collaborations because there are fewer obstacles to overcome than in collaborations with organizations that may have different primary mandates, client focus, or geographic breadth. Despite fewer Canadian organizations overall having these bridging type collaborations, women's voluntary organizations are significantly more likely than gender-neutral organizations to have an interorganizational relationship with a group that is different. This can be explained, in part, by the situation of women's voluntary organizations in the sector in Canada.

As we found in earlier studies (Foster and Meinhard, 2003; Meinhard and Foster, 2003), women's organizations in Canada are more predisposed to engage

in formal interorganizational activities, in part because of the perceived impact of environmental changes. Because of their preference for collectivist structures, their lack of differentiation from other organizations (*Nonprofit World*, 1999), and the causes that women's organizations champion (Myyry and Helkama, 2001; Riordan, 2000; Smith and Schwartz, 1997), they have been less successful in attracting corporate donors (Useem, 1987). With fewer sources of revenue, women's organizations are particularly at risk with the recent government funding cutbacks in Canada. The more they feel threatened by these changes, the more likely are they to choose collaboration as a solution. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) argue that environmental pressures can intensify motivation to collaborate because organizations seek to reduce uncertainty. More reasons to collaborate, in turn, increase the probability of actually engaging in more formal interorganizational activity. Women's organizations are more likely to have bridging relationships because they seek collaborators who do not share the same disadvantages of structure, mandate, and focus that have made them unattractive to corporate donors. In addition, they may be bridging because of the population they serve (the marginalized and disadvantaged) and can only attain the resources they need by partnering with diverse organizations.

Our finding that women's organizations in Canada bridge more than gender-neutral organizations is not consistent with the literature reviewed. Some insight into this inconsistency can be gained through an investigation of predisposing factors. According to our results for gender-neutral organizations, having a bridging type relationship is associated with size and strategic actions already taken. Medium-sized gender-neutral organizations are more likely to have bridging relationships and less likely to have bonding relationships. Resource dependency offers some perspective on this finding.

Smaller organizations are generally seen as more organic in nature, and thus more responsive to environmental fluctuations (Daft, 1999). They are also more likely to cater to specialized niches where resources, including funding resources, are more liable to be stable (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Large, generalist organizations are also less affected by environmental turbulence, but for different reasons. As a result of their size, they have gained control of their environments and have slack resources to tide them over rough periods (Hannan and Freeman, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Greening and Gray (1994) suggest that large organizations are more likely to have formal internal structures to manage and respond to external threats; and, as a result, are in a better position to handle these challenges effectively. Slack resources also provide organizations with the flexibility to experiment with new strategies and lower the risk of such experimentation (Kaluzny *et al*., 1993). On the other hand, external challenges are more likely to have a negative impact on mid-sized organizations that are too big to cater to niches, but not large enough to have sufficient resources to withstand significant changes in the external environment. Given this differentiation in resources and

focus by size of organization, we would expect mid-sized organizations to be more eager than smaller or larger organizations to seek diverse collaboration partners.

We also found that gender-neutral organizations in Canada that had engaged in strategic staffing as a response to environmental pressures were also significantly more likely to have bridging type collaborations. One of the underlying precepts for government policies toward nonprofit organizations is the belief that they may be able to attain the levels of efficiency and effectiveness demanded by both government funders and other donors by adopting a business model (Alexander, 2000). Previously, developing marketing and entrepreneurship skills was not a priority for nonprofit organizations because these skills were not essential for survival. However, given the dramatic shift in Canada in the relationship between voluntary organizations and their traditional funder (the Government), everything has changed. As Phillips and Graham (2000) point out, voluntary organizations have had to become more business-like in their attitudes and behavior. There is more emphasis on recruiting board members who are more business-oriented and entrepreneurial rather than selecting those more socially focused (Adams and Perlmutter, 1991). This is accompanied by an increased focus on adopting new governance and management structures and practices (Froelich, 1999; Peterson, 1986). Our findings suggest that in Canada the more an organization has become internally efficient in its use and deployment of staff resources, the more likely it is to be strategic with its collaborations and seek relationships with diverse organizations.

The factors predisposing a women's voluntary organization in Canada to collaborate with a diverse partner are quite different than those associated with gender-neutral organizations. Women's organizations with a pessimistic outlook about the future are more likely to have bridging relationships and less likely to have bonding relationships. At one level, partnering with a diverse organization seems to be an act of optimism, not an act of pessimism. However, this pessimistic view may be a very realistic assessment of the organization's future potential, and thus partnering with a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous organization may be a shrewd strategic move to ensure survival.

The other factor that affected predisposition to bridge or to bond for women's voluntary organizations was mandate. Those organizations having a social services focus were significantly more likely to bond and significantly less likely to bridge. These organizations give voice and aid to the marginalized and excluded members of society (Stewart and Taylor, 1997; Yasmin, 1997). These groups are not high in the consciousness of major donors who typically concentrate their efforts on the more prominent health, educational, and cultural organizations (Useem, 1987). Organizations with broad mandates, like health, that appeal to a variety of stake-holders and serve a range of client groups are more likely to compete successfully for charitable dollars (Hall and Banting, 2000), whereas organizations serving specialized causes will have a limited appeal. Thus, social service agencies may

be more likely to have bonding relationships because they have more difficulty finding partners outside their homogeneous network due to the special challenges and disadvantages that they face.

CONCLUSION

Social capital is a very complex concept that "plays out differently in different settings, depending on both informal and formal elements of social organization" (Foley *et al.*, 2001, p. 279). Certainly, this is the case with respect to voluntary organizations in Canada. Not only do women's organizations collaborate more than gender-neutral organizations (Foster and Meinhard, 2002; Meinhard and Foster, 2003), but also the tendency to have bridging or bonding relationships is significantly different. The factors predisposing women's organizations to have collaborators inside or outside their network seem to be affected by how much the environmental changes occurring in Canada impact their survival and whether the nature of the causes they support makes them an attractive partner. For gender-neutral organizations the tendency to bridge or bond seems to relate more to traditional organizational characteristics, such as size and staffing efficiency. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge about women's voluntary organizations and provides further support for our contention that women's organizations in Canada are different from gender-neutral organizations (Meinhard and Foster, 2003). Future research on organizational differences in other jurisdictions would provide additional insights.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Adams, C., and Perlmutter, F. (1991). Commercial venturing and the transformation of America's voluntary social welfare agencies. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **20**(1), 25–38.

Alexander, J. (2000). Adaptive strategies of nonprofit human service organizations in an era of devolution and new public management. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* **10**(3), 287–303.

Austin, J. E. (2000). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and business. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **29**(1), 69–97.

Bass, B., Avolio, B., and Atwater, L. (1996). The transformational and transactional leadership of men and women: An extension of some old comparisons. *Applied Psychology: An International Review* **45**, 5–34.

Bordt, R. L. (1997). *The Structure of Women's Nonprofit Organizations*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Bradshaw, P., Murray, V., and Wolpin, J. (1996). Women on boards of nonprofits: What differences do they make? *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* **6**, 241–254.

Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Burt, R. S. (1998). The gender of social capital. *Rationality and Society* **10**(1), 5–46.

Clemens, E. S. (1999). Securing political returns to social capital: Women's associations in the United States, 1880s–1920s. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* **29**(4), 613–639.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology* **94**, S95–120.

Connor, J. A., Taras-Kadel, S., and Vinokur-Kaplan, D. (1999). The role of nonprofit management support organizations in sustaining community collaborations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* **10**(2), 127–136.

Coston, J. M. (1998). A model and typology of government–NGO relationships. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **27**(3), 358–382.

Daft, R. L. (1999). *Organizational Theory and Design*, 6th edn., West Publishing, St. Paul, MN.

Dawson, L. M. (1997). Ethical differences between men and women in the sales profession. *Journal of Business Ethics* **16**(11), 1143–1152.

Florida, R. (2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York.

Foley, M. W., Edwards, B., and Diani, M. (2001). Social capital reconsidered. In: B. Edwards, M. W. Foley, and M. Diani (eds.), *Beyond Tocqueville: Civil Society and the Social Capital Debate in Comparative Perspective*, Tufts University, Hanover, pp. 266–291.

Fondas, N. (1997). Feminization unveiled: Management qualities in contemporary writings. *Academy of Management Review* **22**(1), 257–282.

Foster, M. K., and Meinhard, A. G. (2002). A regression model explaining predisposition to collaborate. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **31**(4), 549–564.

Foster, M. K., and Meinhard, A. G. (2003). How women's voluntary organizations differ in the factors defining predisposition to collaborate. In *Proceedings of the Annual ASAC Conference*, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Foster, M. K., and Orser, B. J. (1994). A marketing perspective on women in management: An exploratory study. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* **11**(4), 339–345.

Froelich, K. A. (1999). Diversification of revenue strategies: Evolving resource dependence in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **28**, 246–268.

Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* **78**, 1360–1380.

Grant, J. (1988). Women as managers: What they can offer organizations. *Organizational Dynamics* **16**(3), 56–63.

Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Greening, D. W., and Gray, B. (1994). Testing a model of organizational response to social and political issues. *Academy of Management Journal* **37**(3), 467–498.

Hall, M., and Banting, K. G. (2000). The nonprofit sector in Canada. In: K. G. Banting (ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector in Canada: Roles and Relationships*, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, pp. 1–28.

Halpern, J. J., and Parks, J. M. (1996). Vive la difference: Differences between males and females in process and outcomes in low-conflict negotiation. *International Journal of Conflict Management* **7**(1), 45–60.

Hannan, M. T., and Freeman, J. H. (1977). The population ecology of organizations. *American Sociological Review* **83**, 929–984.

Harragan, B. L. (1977). *Games Mother Never Taught You*, Warner Books, New York.

Helegsen, S. (1990). *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership*, Doubleday, New York.

Henning, M., and Jardim, A. (1976). *The Managerial Woman*, Pocket Books, New York.

Johnson, N. (1981). *Voluntary Social Services*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Kaluzny, A. D., McLaughlin, C. P., and Jaeger, B. J. (1993). TQM and a managerial innovation: Research issues and implications. *Health Services Management Review* **6**(2), 78–88.

Kimberly, J. (1976). Organizational size and structural perspective: A review, critique and proposal. *Administrative Science Quarterly* **21**, 571–597.

Leonard, R., and Onyx, J. (2003). Networking through loose and strong ties: An Australian qualitative study. *Voluntas* **14**(2), 189–203.

Lever, J. (1978). Sex differences in the complexity of children's play and games. *American Sociological Review* **43**, 471–483.

Lott, J. T. (1994). Women, changing demographics and the redefinition of power. In: T. Odendahl and M. O'Neill (eds.), *Women and Power in the Nonprofit Sector*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 155–183.

Meinhard, A. G., and Foster, M. K. (1997). *Responses of Women's Voluntary Organizations to the Changing Social, Political and Economic Environment*, Working Paper No. 8, Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto.

Meinhard, A. G., and Foster, M. K. (2003). Differences in response of women's voluntary organizations to shifts in Canadian public policy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **32**(3), 366–396.

Moore, G., and Whitt, J. A. (2000). Gender and networks in a local voluntary sector elite. *Voluntas* **11**(4), 309–328.

Mulroy, E. A., and Shay, S. (1997). Nonprofit organizations and innovation: A model of neighbourhood-based collaboration to prevent child mistreatment. *Social Work* **42**(5), 515–525.

Murray, V. V. (1998). Interorganizational collaborations in the nonprofit sector. In: J. M. Shafritz (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. 2, Westview, Boulder, CO, pp. 1192–1196.

Myyry, L., and Helkama, K. (2001). University students: Value priorities and emotional empathy. *Educational Psychology* **21**(1), 25–41.

Nonprofit World (1999). Why is fundraising difficult for women's organizations? *Nonprofit World* **17**(5), 55.

Odendahl, T. (1994). Women's power, nonprofits and the future. In: T. Odendahl and M. O'Neill (eds.), *Women and Power in the Nonprofit Sector*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 295–312.

Odendahl, T., and Youmans, S. (1994). Women on nonprofit boards. In: T. Odendahl and M. O'Neill (eds.), *Women and Power in the Nonprofit Sector*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 183–222.

Onyx, J., and Bullen, P. (2000). Measuring social capital in five communities. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* **36**(1), 23–42.

Perlmutter, F. D. (1994). *Women and Social Change: Nonprofits and Social Policy*, National Association of Social Workers, Washington, DC.

Peterson, P. A. (1986). From impresario to arts administrator. In: P. DiMaggio (ed.), *Nonprofit Enterprise in the Arts, Oxford University Press*, New York, pp. 161–183.

Pfeffer, J., and Salancik, G. (1978). *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, Harper & Row, New York.

Phillips, S. D., and Graham, K. A. (2000). Hand-in-hand: When accountability meets collaboration in the voluntary sector. In: K. Banting (ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector in Canada: Roles and Relationships*, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, pp. 149–190.

Provan, K. G., and Milward, H. B. (1995). A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness: A comparative study of four community mental health systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly* **40**(1), 1–33.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Shuster, New York.

Rapp, C. A., and Whitfield, C. M. (1999). Neighborhood-based services: Organizational change and integration prospects. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* **9**(3), 261–276.

Riordan, S. (2000). Put your money where your mouth is! The need for public investment in women's organizations. *Gender and Development* **8**(1), 63–69.

Rosener, J. B. (1990). Ways women lead. *Harvard Business Review* **68**(6), 109–125.

Rosener, J. B. (1995). *American's Competitive Secret: Utilizing Women as a Management Strategy,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Salamon, L. M. (1995). *Partners in Public Service: Government and Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.

Smith, P., and Schwartz, S. (1997). Values. In: J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, and C. Kagitcibase (eds.), *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 2nd edn., Vol. 3, Allyn & Bacon, Boston, pp. 75–118.

Social Capital Community Benchmark Study (March 2001). The Saguaro Seminar, Civic Engagement in America, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Available www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/.

Stewart, S., and Taylor, J. (1997). Women's organizing women: Doing it backwards and in high heels. In: A. M. Goetz (ed.), *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, Zed Books, London, pp. 212–222.

Tannen, D. (1990). *You Just Don't Understand*, Ballantine Books, New York.

Useem, M. (1987). Corporate philanthropy. In: W. E. Powell (ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, pp. 340–359.

Van Til, J. (1988). *Mapping the Third Sector: Voluntarism in a Changing Social Economy*, Foundation Centre, New York.

Walters, A. E., Stuhlmacher, A. F., and Meyer, L. L. (1998). Gender and negotiator competitiveness: A meta-analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decisions Processes* **76**(1), 1–29.

Women's Communication Centre (1996). *Values and Visions: The Report from the What Women Want Social Survey*, WCC, London.

Wood, D. J., and Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* **27**(2), 139–162.

Woolcock, M. (1998). Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and Society* **27**, 151–208.

Wuthnow, R. (2002). Religious involvement and status bridging social capital. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* **41**(4), 669–684.

Yasmin, T. (1997). What is different in women's organizations? In: A. M. Goetz (ed.), *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, Zed Books, London, pp. 199–211.

Young, D. (2000). Alternative models of government-nonprofit sector relations: Theoretical and international perspectives. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **29**(1), 149–172.