

Trends of Philanthropic Foundation Funding and its Influences on Women

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Abstract: This study examines the trends of foundation funding for women, and whether and what characteristics of foundations are associated with their funding activities for women by employing data on the U.S. foundation grants for women over the period of 2005-2014. As a pilot study, this paper particularly focuses on two states: Arizona and California. The results show that foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward service delivery in Arizona, but focuses on advocacy in California. In addition, foundations which are new, have a higher total giving size, and have a broader geographic focus, are more likely to give grants for women's rights or women's studies. Meanwhile, foundations with a membership in any affinity group or association are more likely to give grants for women's services. In addition, public charities are more likely to give grants for women's rights or women's studies than independent foundations and corporate foundations.

Key Words: Foundation roles, Foundation funding, Women

Women's empowerment and gender equality have been critical strategic issues with potential influences on the growth of a nation. In order to address the global challenges that we are facing today and create new opportunities, the global community needs to give women the equal rights and opportunities to use their skills, ideas, and perspectives in society (World Economic Forum, 2006; 2017). A lot of research and data have shown that the advancement of women's economic and political engagement is the most effective strategy to accelerate the growth of a nation. In other words, women's empowerment is "smart economics" (Klasen & Lamanna, 2009; Stotsky, 2006; Verveer, 2012).

According to the Global Gender Gap Reports published annually by the World Economic Forum (WEF) since 2006, the improvement to reduce the global gender gap stands at 68% in 2017, which means that a gender gap of 32% still needs to be reduced in order to accomplish gender parity globally across the four index categories: health, education, economy, and politics (WEF, 2017). The Global Gender Gap Report also reveals that the U.S. ranks 49th out of 144 countries in 2017, compared to 23rd out of 115 countries in 2006 (WEF, 2006; 2017), indicating that more efforts are needed to improve the status of women in this country despite positive social changes for closing the gender gap.

Philanthropic interests in women's issues have increased in recent years in the U.S. According to the research conducted by the Foundation Center and the Women's Funding Network, more than 72,000 foundations used about \$2.1 billion to support activities targeting women and girls in 2006, which is more than a fivefold increase from \$412.1 million in 1990 (Atienza et al., 2009). This indicates that funders are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that investing in women will accelerate social changes with great potential (Atienza et al., 2009). For instance, the Women's Funding Network, a global movement of women's funds, emphasizes

the logic model that, “when you invest in a woman, you invest in a family, and that these cumulative investments reap returns for communities, and ultimately, for whole nations” (Atienza et al., 2009, p. 21).

Despite the overall growth of foundation funding for women, little is known about the trends (Irvine & Halterman, 2018) and how foundations’ characteristics influence their funding decisions in the U.S. This study aims to fill the gap in the previous research and examines two major research questions: (1) How has foundation funding for women changed? (2) Whether and what characteristics of foundations are associated with their funding activities for women?

In order to address these research questions, this study employs data on the U.S. foundation grants for women from the Foundation Center in the period of 2005-2014. As a pilot study, we focus on two states, Arizona and California, in this paper. In terms of foundation funding trends, this study examines whether foundation funding for women tends to direct activities toward service delivery or advocacy by using the government failure theory and elite power theory. For the second research question, based on the institutional theory, we predict that foundations’ characteristics, such as size, age, and type, will influence their funding activities for women.

The rest of the paper is organized into the following sections: The literature review and theoretical approaches, a detailed description of methods, the results of the analysis, and the discussion and conclusion of the study.

Literature Review and Theoretical Approaches

The Roles of Foundations in Society

Even though foundations’ roles and contributions in society vary, two narratives are dominant in explaining their roles in relation to government (Anheier & Hammack, 2010;

Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015). Historically, foundations have played a charitable role by distributing their resources to populations who are not well supported by governments (Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015). The government failure theory perspective provides support for the idea of foundations' charitable role. The starting point for the theory is that the government cannot supply sufficient quantities of public goods. The theory offers an economic rationale for the formation of foundations to provide public goods (Anheier, 2014). Many historical examples reveal that foundations have played a charitable role in the U.S. in various fields, such as education, health care, and social welfare (Frumkin & Kaplan, 2010; Knickman & Isaacs, 2010; Bielefeld & Chu, 2010).

The other major function that foundations have played in association to government is an advocacy role (Fleishman, 2007; Sandfort, 2008). Current foundation studies in the U.S. show that many foundations focus on their advocacy role as their primary goal (Fleishman, 2007; Sandfort, 2008; Suarez, 2012). Foundations invest their resources in new ideas and support various studies and movements for social innovations, intending to influence public policies and contribute to social change (Goss, 2007; Sandfort, 2008). The elite power theory perspective would provide an explanation of foundations' advocacy role (Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015). Historically, many foundations have worked to influence decisions within social and political systems and create social changes as a tool of the elite. In other words, foundations are a significant tool used by the elite in order to influence social change (Dye, 2000; Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015).

Both the charitable role and the advocacy role are applicable to foundations' roles in addressing women's issues as well. The dichotomous view can also provide an explanation for how the trends in foundation funding for women have changed in the U.S. For instance, if

foundations have mainly funded activities for women's services, it would show that foundations have primarily played a charitable role for women. If foundations have mainly funded activities for women's rights and studies, it would reveal that foundations have primarily played an advocacy role for women.

A few studies have examined foundations' roles and contributions in addressing women's issues (Goss, 2007; Irvine & Halterman, 2018; Atienza et al., 2009). Based on data of 6,500 foundation funding for women's groups or women's causes, Goss (2007) explored foundations' advocacy role, particularly in shaping the women's movement of the 1960s-1980s in the U.S. The author found that foundations played a significant role in addressing women's issues by funding the social construction of subgroup identities and allowing the fragmentation of women's interests. According to Atienza et al. (2009), foundation funding for women and girls had increased from 1990 to 2006, whereas the share of foundation funding for women and girls peaked in 2000 and 2003. This report provided descriptive analysis results about foundation giving for women and girls, such as top funders and recipients, and the geographic focus of funding (Atienza et al., 2009).

Although these studies show clear evidence that foundations have played important roles in addressing women's issues, the existing literature focuses primarily on descriptive cases studies. The trends of foundation funding and its roles for women still remain an understudied subject. Particularly, in Irvine and Halterman's study (2018), the authors point out that some researchers and activists have criticized foundations' funding activities for women because they usually direct programs toward service delivery and away from the social and political fields. The study findings also indicate that the proportion of foundation funding for organizations engaged in political activities has declined in recent decades (Irvine & Halterman, 2018). Based

on the literature of foundations' roles for women, we posit the following:

Hypothesis 1: Foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward service delivery and away from advocacy.

Foundations' Characteristics and their Funding Activities

Foundations have been considered as important institutions in the U.S. society in that they help donors to distribute their charitable funds and to shift funds to various grantees to create social change over time (Anheier & Hammack, 2010). In order to understand foundations' funding activities, we need to comprehend the associations between foundations' characteristics and their funding decisions from the institutional perspective. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutional processes affect organizations through three ways: (1) coercive processes such as state legitimation, licensing, or accreditation; (2) normative processes such as relationships of peer organizations; (3) mimetic processes such as activities of other organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Organizations are influenced or controlled by their institutional contexts (Meyer, 2008) and assessed on legitimacy by their constituents (Baum & Oliver, 1991).

Several studies show that foundations' performances and roles are affected by their institutional characteristics. In Suarez's study (2012), the author found that smaller, younger, and public foundations are more likely to deal with social change or social justice in their program descriptions. Mosley and Galaskiewicz (2015) found that independent foundations and larger foundations are more likely to focus on their social innovation role by supporting research and workforce development. Klopott (2015) found that foundations' characteristics such as a membership in any affinity group, foundation size, and foundation region affect tendency to

make policy grants. Based on the literature review, we predict that foundations' characteristics are influential on their funding activities for women. Six specific hypotheses apply:

Hypothesis 2a: Foundations with a higher total giving size are more likely to make grants for women's rights/studies.

Hypothesis 2b: Foundations with a broader geographic focus are more likely to make grants for women's rights/studies.

Hypothesis 2c: Foundations in California are more likely to make grants for women's rights/studies than those in Arizona.

Hypothesis 2d: Old foundations are less likely to make grants for women's rights/studies than new foundations.

Hypothesis 2e: Independent foundations are more likely to make grants for women's rights/studies than other foundations.

Hypothesis 2f: Foundations with a membership in any affinity group or association are more likely to make grants for women's rights/studies than those without the membership.

Methods

Data

A primary data source for foundation funding details and foundations' characteristics is the Foundation Center's Foundation Directory Online. As a pilot study, we collect the following grant data in two regions, Arizona and California, from 2005 to 2014: grantmaker's name and state, grant recipient's name and state, the year in which the grant was authorized, and the amount of the grant. We also collect the following data of the foundation's characteristics: type of foundation, foundation total asset size, foundation total giving size, established year of the

foundation, geographic focus of the foundation, whether or not the foundation has a membership in any regional association of grantmakers, whether or not the foundation has a membership in any association and other philanthropic organization, and whether or not the foundation has a membership in any affinity group. Additional secondary sources such as GuideStar and each foundation's website are used in the study to find missing information in the Foundation Center data.

We use the search term "women" in the fields of interest on the Foundation Center's Foundation Directory Online and find four categories of grants: women's services, women's studies, women's funds, and women's rights. Because grants for women's funds were too small or do not exist in each year, we decide to exclude them and include only three categories (women's services, women's studies, and women's rights) to select grants from larger grants files. In addition, we exclude foundation grants made to organizations that support institutions in other countries. The total number of foundation grants for women over the period of 2005-2014 is 153 in Arizona and 4,292 in California. The total number of foundations included in the study is 43 in Arizona and 490 in California.

Variables

Dependent Variable:

Foundation funding activity. The foundation funding activity variable is dichotomous which shows a specific activity that a foundation funded. If a foundation funded programs for women's rights or studies, we coded it as 1. If a foundation funded programs for women's services, we coded it as 0. If a foundation funded programs for both women's rights/studies and women's services, we compared the total amount of grants used for each activity and decided whether the foundation mainly funded women's rights/studies or women's services.

Independent variables:

Total giving size. ¹Total giving size is a continuous variable which is the sum of all giving of a foundation in each year. We measure the variable in the unit of million dollars in the logistic regression analysis.

Geographic focus. The geographic focus indicates the number of states or locations where a foundation prioritizes its grants, which is identified in its Foundation Center profile. We recoded the geographic focus into a categorical variable with three possible values (1=1 state focus; 2=2 or more state focus; 3=national or international focus). To employ the variable in the logistic regression analysis, we created three dummy variables, each equals to 1 if it is included in the defined geographic focus (i.e. single state, multiple states, or national and international focus) and 0 otherwise. Foundations with 1 state focus were used as the baseline comparison group.

Foundation region. The foundation region variable indicates the region where a foundation is located. It is a binary variable (0=Arizona; 1=California).

Foundation age. The foundation age is a continuous variable which shows how old a foundation is in 2012. It ranges from 0 to 123.

Foundation type. Foundation type is a categorical variable which shows the type of a foundation identified in its Foundation Center profile. We code the foundation type into a categorical variable with five possible values (1=1 independent; 2=2 corporate; 3=community; 4=operating; 5=public charity). In the logistic regression analysis, we turned each category into a dummy variable in which the variable equals to 1 when it is the foundation type defined and 0

¹ Originally, we also collected data on foundation asset size, but total asset size and total giving size were strongly correlated ($r = 0.83$). Therefore, we decided to include only total giving size in the logistic regression analysis after comparing the correlations with the dependent variable.

for any other types. Independent foundations are used as the baseline comparison group.

Membership in any affinity group or association.²Membership in any affinity group or association, which is identified in Foundation Center profiles, is a binary variable (0=no membership; 1=membership in any affinity group or association).

Dummy variables for year. We included dummy variables for years as control variables.

Methods of Analysis

For the first research question, we examine foundation funding trends for women over the period of 2005-2014 in Arizona and California, respectively. Particularly, we explore whether foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward service delivery and away from advocacy as one of the critiques on foundation funding practices (Irvine & Halterman, 2018).

For the second research question, we employ a binary logistic regression analysis to examine whether and what characteristics of foundations are associated with their funding activities for women. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous (0=women's services, 1=women's rights/studies), a binary logistic regression method is appropriate in the analysis. The statistical analyses are done with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS), version 24. The following section presents the results of the analyses.

Results

Trends of Foundation Funding for Women

In order to address the first research question of how foundation funding for women have changed, we look at the changes in foundation funding for women from 2005 to 2014 in Arizona

² There is a possibility that some foundations just skipped to report their membership status in their Foundation Center Profiles. However, in order to reduce missing values, we decided to code the membership status as 0 when a foundation does not report its membership status in its Foundation Center profile. Overall, large size foundations tend to report their membership status, while small size foundations tend not to report it.

and California, respectively. Figure 1 shows the total amount of funding for women, the amount of funding for women’s rights/studies, and the amount of funding for women’s services in each year in Arizona. The trend lines indicate that although the total amount of funding for women have been increasing, the changes are marginal except in 2012 and 2013 when several foundations, such as Arizona Community Foundation, Bruce T. Halle Assistance fund, and Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, committed large grants for women. However, these grants were discontinued in 2014.

Due to the relatively small amounts of foundation funding for women in each year in Arizona, comparing the proportion of foundation funding for women’s services vs. women’s rights/studies within the total amount of grants is not meaningful. However, the trend lines indicate that the amount of funding for women’s services was always higher than those for women’s rights/studies over the period of 2005-2014, which supports Hypothesis 1. In other words, foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward service delivery instead of advocacy in Arizona.

Figure 1: Foundation Funding in Arizona

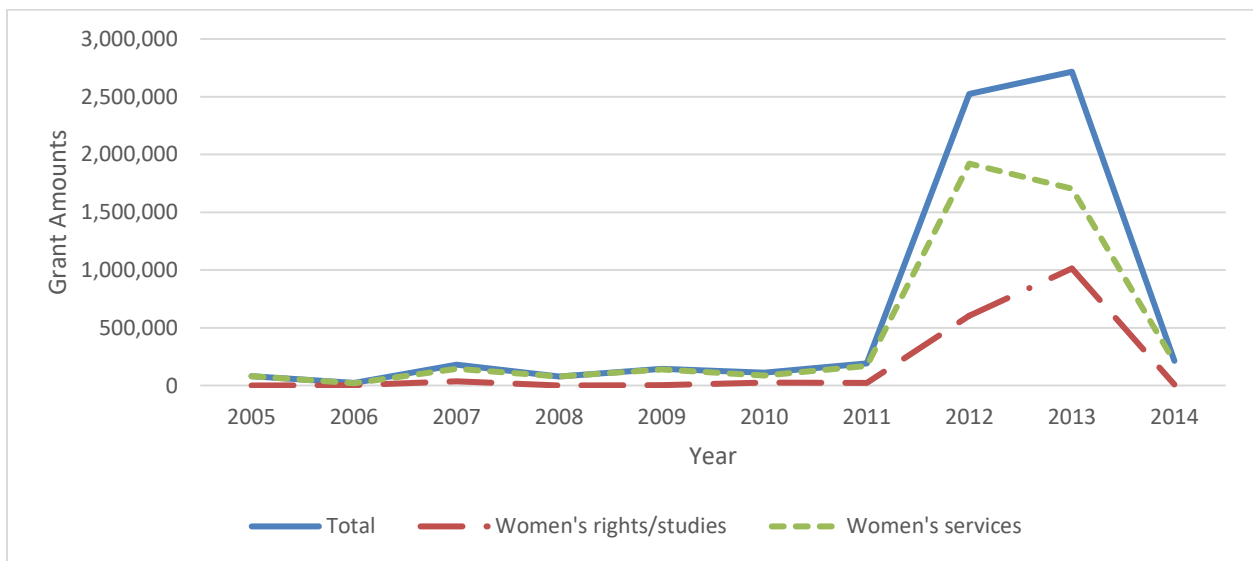


Figure 2 presents the total amount of funding for women, the amount of funding for women's rights/studies, and the amount of funding for women's services over the period of 2005-2014 in California. The results show that even though the changes are not stable, the total amount of funding for women has been increasing from \$16.4 million in 2005 to \$23.0 million in 2014. However, there were salient differences between the changes of foundation funding for women's rights/studies and for women's services in California. The amount of funding for women's rights/studies has been increasing from \$8.5 million in 2005 to \$18.2 million in 2014, while the amount of funding for women's services has been decreasing from \$7.9 million in 2005 to \$4.8 million in 2014. In addition, the percentage of foundation funding for women's services within the total amount of grants dropped off between 2005 (48%) and 2014 (21%). Therefore, we find that foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward advocacy instead of service delivery in California, which does not support Hypothesis 1.

Figure 2: Foundation Funding in California



Relationships among Foundations' Characteristics and their Funding Activities for Women

For the second research question of whether and what characteristics of foundations are associated with their funding activities for women, we focus on the relationships between the characteristics of the foundations, such as the foundation size, age, regional focus, and type, and their funding activities for women in the two states overall. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables included in the study. About 69% of the foundations in the two regions mainly funded programs for women's rights/studies and 31% of them mainly funded programs for women's services. However, there were salient differences between the two states in terms of foundation funding activity during the period of 2005-2014. About 85% of the foundations in Arizona primarily funded activities for women's services whereas about 74% of the foundations in California primarily funded activities for women's rights/studies. The average total giving size of the foundations in the two regions was \$19.8 million, ranging from \$5.6 million in Arizona to \$21.0 million in California. In terms of geographic focus, 57% of the foundations in the two regions indicated a 1-state focus for their grants, 25% of them indicated 2 or more state focus,

and 10% of them showed national or international focus for their funding activities. About 92% of the foundations included in the study were in California, and the average foundation age in the two states was about 27, ranging from 23 in Arizona to 28 in California. In terms of foundation type, about 79% of the foundations in the two states were independent foundations, 9% were corporate foundations, 6% were community foundations, 2% were operating foundations, and about 4% were public charities. Close to 53% of the foundations in the two states had a membership in any affinity group or association, but differences between the two states existed in terms of the membership. Only about 30% of the foundations in Arizona had a membership in any affinity group or association, while more than half (55%) of the foundations in California had a membership in any affinity group or association.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variables [Range]	All (N=1,259)	Arizona (N=96)	California (N=1,163)
	Mean (S.D.)/ Percentage	Mean (S.D.)/ Percentage	Mean (S.D.)/ Percentage
Foundation funding activity [0: service; 1-women’s rights/studies]	0.6926	0.1458	0.7377
Total giving size, in \$1,000,000 [0.0005 – 881.1]	19.7835 (62.5153)	5.6080 (8.8935)	20.9536 (64.8583)
Geographic focus [0-1]			
1 State focus	0.5711	0.6250	0.5666
2 or more State focus	0.2518	0.3542	0.2433
National or International focus	0.1033	0.0000	0.1118
Foundation region [0: Arizona; 1: California]	.92		
Foundation age [0-123]	27.2796 (21.1975)	23.4479 (17.7372)	27.5959 (21.4341)
Foundation type [0-1]			
Independent foundation	0.7927	0.7292	0.7979
Corporate foundation	0.0882	0.1667	0.0817

Community foundation	0.0604	0.0625	0.0602
Operating foundation	0.0159	0.0208	0.0155
Public charity	0.0429	0.0208	0.0447
Membership in any affinity group or association [0-1]	0.5274	0.3021	0.5460
Time dummy variables [0-1]			
Year_2005	0.0969	0.0833	0.0980
Year_2006	0.0850	0.0625	0.0868
Year_2007	0.0874	0.1563	0.0817
Year_2008	0.0810	0.0729	0.0817
Year_2009	0.0842	0.1146	0.0817
Year_2010	0.0898	0.1042	0.0886
Year_2011	0.0763	0.0938	0.0748
Year_2012	0.1009	0.0729	0.1032
Year_2013	0.1183	0.1250	0.1178
Year_2014	0.1803	0.1146	0.1857

Table 2 shows the results of the logistic regression model on the relationships among characteristics of foundations and their funding activities in the two states overall. The chi-square goodness-of-fit statistics show a good fit of the model for the data.

All of the variables of foundations' characteristics are statistically significant in predicting foundation funding activities in the two regions. Controlling for other variables in the model, foundations with a higher total giving size are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies (odds ratio=1.005, $p < .01$), which supports Hypothesis 2a. Regarding geographic focus, foundations with a broader geographic focus are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies holding all other variables constant, which supports Hypothesis 2b. Specifically, compared to foundations with a 1-state focus, foundations with 2 or more state focus are **114%** more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies (odds ratio=2.141, $p < .001$), and foundations with a national or international focus are **291%** more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies (odds ratio=3.910, $p < .001$). In terms of foundation region, foundations in California are significantly more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies than those in

Arizona controlling for other variables in the model ($\beta = -0.073$, $p < .001$). Regarding foundation age, as Hypothesis 2d expected, old foundations are less likely to give grants for women's rights/studies than new foundations holding other variables constant ($\beta = -0.010$, $p < .01$). In terms of foundation type, compared to independent foundations, corporate foundations are 74% less likely to give grants for women's rights/studies (odds ratio=0.256, $p < .001$), which supports Hypothesis 2e. However, it is interesting that public charities are 306% more likely than independent foundations to give grants for women's rights/studies (odds ratio=4.064, $p < .05$). It is also interesting that foundations with a membership in any affinity group or association are significantly less likely to give grants for women's rights/studies than those without the membership ($\beta = -0.764$, $p < .001$), which does not support Hypothesis 2f.

In sum, foundations that are new, have a higher total giving size, and have a broader geographic focus, are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies. Meanwhile, foundations with a membership in any affinity group or association are more likely than those without the membership to give grants for women's services. Additionally, foundations in California are more likely than those in Arizona to give grants for women's rights/studies, and public charities are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies than independent or corporate foundations.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Analysis of Independent Variables on the Foundation Funding Activity (N=1,259)

Independent Variables	Foundation funding activity (N=1,259)		
	β	Std. Err.	Odds Ratio

Total giving size	0.005**	0.002	1.005
Geographic focus			
(Base: 1 State focus)			
2 or more State focus	0.762***	0.178	2.142
National or International focus	1.363***	0.307	3.910
Foundation region (1: California)	3.073***	0.317	21.601
Foundation age	-0.010**	0.003	0.990
Foundation type (Base: Independent foundation)			
Corporate foundation	-1.361***	0.230	0.256
Community foundation	-0.046	0.282	0.955
Operating foundation	-0.252	0.523	0.778
Public charity	1.402*	0.590	4.064
Membership in any affinity group or association	-0.764***	0.158	0.466
Time dummy variables			
Year_2006	0.267	0.314	1.306
Year_2007	0.427	0.322	1.533
Year_2008	0.090	0.317	1.095
Year_2009	-0.028	0.315	0.973
Year_2010	-0.019	0.308	0.981
Year_2011	0.063	0.323	1.066
Year_2012	0.439	0.314	1.551
Year_2013	-0.031	0.290	0.969
Year_2014	0.046	0.266	1.047
Constant	-1.617***	0.383	0.198
Percent concordant			75.5
-2 Log Likelihood			1293.195
Prob > chi2			0.000
Pseudo R ²			0.264

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Discussion and Conclusion

Although several studies show that foundations have played significant roles in addressing women's issues (Goss, 2007; Irvine & Halterman, 2018; Atienza et al., 2009), the existing literature primarily focuses on descriptive cases studies. The trends of foundation funding and its influences on women still remain an understudied subject. By employing data on the U.S. foundation grants for women over the period of 2005-2014, this study examines how foundation funding for women have changed, and whether and what characteristics of foundations are associated with their funding activities for women.

In Irvine and Halterman's study (2018), they point out that some researchers and activists have criticized foundations' funding practices for women because they usually direct programs toward service delivery and away from advocacy. This could result in diverting women's organizations and activists into service delivery rather than advocacy, and thus weakening their capacity to engage in the political arena (Irvine & Halterman, 2018). The findings of this study are inconsistent with the literature. We find that foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward service delivery in Arizona, whereas foundation funding for women tends to direct programs toward advocacy in California. This suggests that foundation funding trends for women would be different by state. We would need to further examine the trends of foundation funding for women by state as well as in the U.S. overall, and the correlations between foundation funding trends and characteristics of states.

In terms of foundations' characteristics to predict foundation funding activities for women, this study finds that foundations which are new, have a higher total giving size, and have a broader geographic focus, are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies. This finding is consistent with the literature. However, foundations with a membership in any affinity

group or association are more to make grants for women's services. Although we predicted that due to the normative isomorphic pressures, memberships in any affinity group or association may cause similarity among foundations, the direction was opposite. In addition, the findings of this study indicate that independent foundations are more likely than corporate foundations to give grants for women's rights/studies, which is consistent with the literature. However, public charities are more likely to give grants for women's rights/studies than independent foundations.

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