

Editor's Introduction: Highlighting Strategies of the Nonprofit Sector

Deborah A. Carroll – University of Illinois–Chicago

In this new issue of *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, we offer a collection of *Research Articles* focused on the nature and implications of nonprofit higher education programs, the communication strategies and evidence-based information used by different types of organizations in the nonprofit sector, and the volunteering behaviors of nonprofit association members. Our *Social Equity Section* article highlights the important issue of re-entry and reintegration programs for ex-offenders to reduce recidivism and provide greater access to opportunity. Finally, we offer two *Book Reviews* related to these topics of important recent work focusing on higher education programs in public administration and advancing social equity.

First, Jeong and Kim (2021) examine higher education programs in public administration among universities in South Korea to determine the extent to which nonprofit- and nongovernmental-focused themes and theories have been incorporated in efforts to better prepare students for these particular public service roles upon graduating with their degrees. The authors differentiate between public administration education categories that focus on the environmental context or 'macro-view' versus participatory governance and contractual partnership or the 'micro-view', as well as between public policy education categories that primarily focus on public policy formation versus policy implementation. From a macro-level perspective, the authors find that civil society and its related challenges appear primarily in the context of economic development, democratization, and globalization curricula in South Korea, thereby reflecting an interconnectedness between the government, private, and nonprofit sectors. In terms of the micro-level perspective, nonprofit and nongovernmental education in South Korea tends to focus on participatory governance, including citizen participation, public and global leadership, and social capital. In terms of public policy, the authors note that education in South Korea has expanded to include coverage of topics such as contracting, privatization, and coproduction. The authors conclude by discussing the implications of their findings for enhancing NASPAA's core competencies to further expand their accreditation system globally.

Kuenzi et al. (2021) examine the public service motivation of millennials and how the financial burden accrued from graduate school influences their willingness to work in the nonprofit sector for comparatively lower wages than perhaps could be earned through private sector employment. On the basis of the donative labor hypothesis, the authors find important differences in nonprofit sector commitment and sector choice while also noting the relationship between the two. Specifically, the authors advocate for more longitudinal research on the topic since their findings reveal that nonprofit sector commitment might not remain stable over time. Moreover, while the authors find a connection between perceived financial burden and perceptions of graduate degree worthiness, they do not find a negative

impact of financial burden on sector commitment, suggesting more nuance in the employment motivations of nonprofit education alumni.

Kanol and Nat (2021) examine the differential strategies used by nonprofit public interest and sectional organizations from Britain that are active at the European Union level to connect with the public in efforts to attract and retain members via the social media platform Facebook. By comparing the different group types and messaging strategies, the authors find that public interest groups use action-type messages intended for networked mobilization more frequently than sectional groups and are able to use such messaging to their advantage in terms of attracting public attention and therefore overcoming their disadvantage (compared to sectional groups) in recruiting, mobilizing, and maintaining their membership base. These findings support existing research indicating group type is an important factor determining the ways in which interest groups engage with the public on social media to accomplish advocacy goals. With increasing importance of social media platforms for nonprofit advocacy, the findings from this study pose important implications for political organizations in terms of collective action problems and democratic influence.

Suh et al. (2021) also examine the external communications strategies of nonprofit organizations, including their use of social media platforms, to determine how U.S. nonprofit museums institutionalize such strategies and use their communication outlets. Through the lens of institutional theory, the authors find important differences between social media and non-social media communication channels in terms of their uses, particularly that social media channels are generally used for maintaining public relations as opposed to general management functions. However, while the use of social media has certainly proliferated among nonprofit museums, the authors find that social media platforms have not replaced more traditional communication channels, including mail, email, phone, and newsletters as outlets for reaching donors, visitors, and the general public. Yet, the authors conclude that movement toward a hybrid communication strategy that includes both social media and non-social media outlets is crucial for organizational sustainability, particularly for those nonprofits targeting different age groups, as the use of social media platforms for market-oriented activities allows nonprofits to attract and maintain donors and generate more earned income while also expanding their social impact.

Horne et al. (2021) examine U.S. social service funding programs for which nonprofit organizations are eligible recipients to determine the extent to which such programs promote the use of evidence by nonprofits to improve their youth development programming in terms of needs assessment, program design, program implementation, program evaluation, and knowledge dissemination. By recognizing the competing goals that federal funding agencies face of promoting the use of evidence to accomplish more effective and efficient programming and fostering innovation and community-specific adaptation in service provision, the authors find that federal funding of nonprofit social services appears to be rather successfully balancing these important goals through the promotion of broad types of evidence use, low levels of coerced use of evidence, and encouraging the prescriptive use of evidence for program design while also fostering innovation.

Finally, AbouAssi (2021) examines the extent which gender similarity between members of membership associations and the senior managers or leaders of such associations has any influence on the volunteering behaviors of association members. The author finds that while gender congruence does not impact the likelihood of volunteering or the depth of volunteering, both the number of volunteering activities and satisfaction with volunteering activities among female members are higher when membership association leadership is also female. The findings from this research pose important implications for leadership and engagement with membership associations, highlighting the importance of effective and charismatic leaders in the nonprofit sector.

In this issue's *Social Equity Section*, Moorer (2021) offers an important discussion of re-entry programs and reintegration services for Black female parolees in Alabama, which consists of communities that are historically under-resourced in terms of community-based criminal justice administration. Noting the high rate of recidivism among ex-offenders released from prison, the author uses social equity theory conceptualized by the National Academy of Public Administration and the analytical tool of intersectionality to examine re-entry program design and implementation and finds a general lack of investment in such programs in the 'Black Belt.' Attributing the trend to a public policy decision, the author acknowledges that systemic discrimination inhibits access to opportunity and cautions against inaction as a policy response to reducing societal barriers associated with the carceral state.

In his review of the book by McDonald III and Hatcher (2020), Overton (2021) describes the edited volume authored by directors, deans, and chairs and that which provides an overview for public administration faculty of designing, leading, and managing public affairs programs of higher education as 'essential knowledge' offering important administrative tools, as well as highlighting the connections between public affairs programs and the stakeholders they serve. With a nod toward NASPAA accreditation, the book covers important information regarding the processes and requirements for successful pursuit, as well as for ensuring the best student learning outcomes and fostering greater cultural competency and social equity in public administration curricula.

Finally, in his review of the book by Guy and McCandless (2020), McDonald III (2021) describes the edited volume as one that moves beyond discussion of social equity we regularly encounter within public organizations to advancing our knowledge on the topic by highlighting the connection between academic research on social equity with the real-world experience of public administrators. By offering a simple and relatable definition of social equity and explaining the demographic factors that commonly give rise to social inequities, the book's chapters are then able to focus on challenges for the field of public administration in terms of incorporating greater social equity into the innerworkings of our governing institutions and policy solutions.

References

- AbouAssi, K. (2021). Does gender congruence make a difference in female members' volunteer behaviors? *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 264–282. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.264-282>
- Guy, M. E., & McCandless, S. A. (2020). *Achieving social equity: From problems to solutions*. Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh, Publishers.
- Horne, C. S., Brock, J. K., Freeman, J. K., & Odell, H. S. (2021). Conceptualizing and measuring the promotion of nonprofit organizations' evidence use by U.S. social service funding programs. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 240–263. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.240-263>
- Jeong, B. G., & Kim, S. J. (2021). NPO/NGO education in public administration in South Korea. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 173–191. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.173-191>
- Kanol, D., & Nat, M. (2021). Group type and social media engagement strategies in the EU: The case of British interest groups on Facebook. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 205–219. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.205-219>

- Kuenzi, K., Walk, M., & Stewart, A. J. (2021). The role of financial burden in nonprofit sector commitment. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 192–204. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.192-204>
- McDonald III, B. D. (2021). Achieving social equity: From problems to solutions by Mary E. Guy and Sean A. McCandless. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 297–299. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.297-299>
- McDonald III, B. D., & Hatcher, W. S. (2020). *The public affairs faculty manual: A guide to the effective management of public affairs programs*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Moorer, R. (2021). Advancing social equity: Examining the impact of gender, place, and race on criminal justice administration in Alabama. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 283–292. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.283-292>
- Overton, M. (2021). The public affairs faculty manual: A guide to the effective management of public affairs programs edited by Bruce McDonald III and William Hatcher. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 293–296. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.293-296>
- Suh, J., Hoang, T., & Hijal–Moghrabi, I. (2021). Nonprofit external communications: General management, public relations, or fundraising tool? *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 7(2), 220–239. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.7.2.220-239>

Author Biography

Deborah A. Carroll is Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, Associate Professor in the Department of Public Administration, and Director of the Government Finance Research Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago.