



"The Black Rocks at Trouville"
Gustave Courbet, 1865/1866

JPNA

JOURNAL OF PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT AFFAIRS

Summer 2020

Volume 6 Issue 2

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Laura C. Hand
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Book Review

- City on the Line: How Baltimore Transformed its Budget to Beat the Great Recession and Deliver Outcomes by Andrew Kleine
Vincent Reitano

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a journal of the Midwest Public Affairs Conference

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The *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs (JPNA)* focuses on providing a connection between the practice and research of public affairs. This is accomplished with scholarly research, practical applications of the research, and no fees for publishing or journal access. *JPNA* publishes research from diverse theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary backgrounds that addresses topics related to the affairs and management of public and nonprofit organizations.

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Introduction to the Issue

Lindsey M. McDougle – Rutgers University - Newark

In this new issue of the journal, we have six insightful *Research Articles*, a useful *Community Issues in Practice* piece, and a *Book Review*—all of which focus on various aspects of public and nonprofit affairs.

In the first *Research Article*, Lucio, Bruening, and Hand (2020) investigate the strategies and activities public housing residents engage in to produce consistent access to sufficient nutritious food needed to support a healthy life. That is, they investigate residents' food security. Their findings reveal barriers and opportunities for leveraging communities to attenuate place-based disadvantages associated with low food security. These findings demonstrate a potential missed opportunity to engage in place-based solutions that use principles of coproduction to produce and maintain residents' food security.

In the second *Research Article*, Header (2020) explores access to cardiac surgeons for coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and heart valve surgery in California and New York. Results of the study show that for large metropolitan areas, access is rather similar for traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Limitations, however, exist for the latter. This is one of the first studies to analyze Medicare Advantage networks and interactions between provider networks and provider quality.

In the third *Research Article*, Wathen (2020) investigates how the institutional logics of leaders of grassroots social service nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia changed over time and how these changes related to changes in organizational mission, people served, professionalization, and interactions with the government. The findings show that, on the one hand, social welfare NGOs continued to provide services, increased their advocacy efforts, and professionalized their staff. Volunteer organizations, on the other hand, discontinued provision of social services turning instead to the recruitment and development of volunteers. The findings from this study illustrate how an interplay of factors at multiple levels can affect the expression of logics at the organizational level.

In the fourth *Research Article*, Minkowitz, Twumasi, Berrett, Chen, and Stewart (2020) provide a timely review of all contemporary nonprofit scholarship ($n=972$ articles) from three prominent nonprofit journals. The review documents the development of nonprofit research as presented in these journals over the last five years and offers recommendations for future research consideration.

In the fifth *Research Article*, Keegan (2020) uses data gathered from 60 first-person, open-ended interviews with refugees and nonprofit service providers to answer the questions: How do refugees being served by nonprofits express their perceptions of the services they receive to nonprofit service providers? To what extent do refugees feel that nonprofit service providers

are responsive to their needs? And, how do nonprofit staff and volunteers report responding to the needs of their refugee clients?

Finally, in the last *Research Article*, Andersson (2020) examines the influence previous experience plays as it relates to nonprofit organizational start-up success. The results from this analysis show no significant impact with regard to education or prior nonprofit management experience; however, prior start-up experience significantly enhances the likelihood of start-up success.

Our *Community Issues in Practice* piece, by Ito and Slatten (2020), focuses on a timely subject and synthesizes research on a specific set of guidelines developed by Independent Sector. Overall, the study provides a substantive review of key concepts and developments related to nonprofit ethics and accountability. The issue is completed with a book review by Reitano (2020), who provides a review of Andrew Kleine's book *City on the Line: How Baltimore Transformed its Budget to Beat the Great Recession and Deliver Outcomes*.

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Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs

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The Potential for Coproducing Food Security in Public Housing Communities

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The coproduction literature has long acknowledged that citizens are active consumers and producers of public goods. Coproduction tends to be successful when citizens are already engaging in activities that can be enhanced through collaboration with activities of public managers, programs, and agencies. In this article, we investigate the strategies and activities public housing residents engage in to produce consistent access to sufficient nutritious food needed to support a healthy life. That is, we investigate residents' food security. Focus group responses from adults and adolescents in six public housing communities in the Phoenix metropolitan area reveal barriers and opportunities for leveraging communities to attenuate place-based disadvantages associated with low food security. These responses also demonstrate a potential missed opportunity to engage in place-based solutions that use principles of coproduction to produce and maintain residents' food security.

Keywords: Food Security, Public Housing, Coproduction

Introduction

Decades of research on neighborhoods has concluded that low income neighborhoods are detrimental to residents' lives when considering a number of quality of life dimensions (Dreir, Mollenkopf, & Swanstrom, 2004; Ellen & Turner, 1997). At the same time, social capital and a general sense of community in low income communities is thought to mediate some of the negative outcomes associated with living in these neighborhoods (Greenbaum, Hathaway, Rodriguez, Spalding, & Ward, 2008). This suggests, then, that low income communities contain both barriers and opportunities for residents; and, this leads to a situation ripe for coproduction—that is, a situation where both citizens and government contribute to producing a public good or service (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Pestoff, 2012).

The central premise of coproduction is that citizens are not simply consumers of public services, but often they provide resources and time in the development and delivery of services (Alford, 1998). In this article we investigate the barriers residents in public housing communities face in producing their own food security; and, we also examine opportunities for coproduction that reduce or remove some of these impediments.

Relatively little is known about how residents living in public housing contribute to their own food security each month. Nor is much known about the strategies that these individuals use in order to get by every day. Although use of informal networks, where residents help one another, has been explored in general (e.g., Greenbaum et al., 2008), little research has focused on the extent to which these types of networks supplement or replace formal public social services.

In recent years, in the United States (US), there have been extensive cuts to federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As a result, local governments have struggled to provide public services to their residents. Coproduction, however, may help to enfranchise residents who rely on federal assistance (see Jakobsen, 2012); and, public housing communities likely provide an ideal context for studying this issue.

Public housing developments are a public service that lend themselves to community level coproduction. These developments are communities of shared space that often provide case managers, classes, and other resources for residents. In turn, residents are expected to play an active role in their communities. In theory, these developments have many of the necessary conditions needed for coproductive activities. Whether these activities actually occur, however, is an issue that has been underexplored.

It is important to note that public housing has been consistently dismantled around the country. This has led some scholars to question the benefits of this type of housing (see Goetz, 2003). Still, one potential benefit that has not been explored is the potential for the facilitation of food security in public housing through coproduction.

The purpose of this study, then, is to explore the extent to which residents living in public housing developments produce, and potentially coproduce, food security. Specifically, we focus on families with adolescents in Phoenix, Arizona. We examine the resources and time that these families invest in protecting themselves, their children, and their community against the detrimental effects of living in areas with low food security. The research questions are: 1) What strategies do residents use to produce their own food security? 2) To what extent does place-based coproduction play a role in the strategies that families with adolescents utilize (or suggest utilizing) to increase their food security? And, 3) What are the barriers and possibilities for producing and coproducing food security in the public housing context.

The study of coproduction within a confined community of disadvantaged residents provides a more in-depth look at mechanisms of coproduction that might be more difficult to capture at aggregate scales. It should be noted that this study was inductive. That is, the first general question focused on the production of food security among public housing residents living in housing developments. The results led to the incorporation of coproduction and we explored how coproduction might enhance food production for public housing residents in this setting. The results indicate that residents tend to engage in behaviors that research suggests improves the success of coproduction and outcomes related to food security. These findings have the potential to shed light on the day-to-day contributions that residents make within their own communities and the extent to which they make up for a dearth of formal services. By understanding how coproduction is (or could be) involved in these processes, other communities may be able to use this information to support families in need.

Food Security in Impoverished Neighborhoods

Disparities exist across cities with regard to access to nutritious and healthy food. These disparities are in part to blame for the disproportionate poor health outcomes in low income neighborhoods. Some studies, however, indicate a more complicated relationship between

place and socioeconomic factors. These complications, of course, warrant further research (Larson, Story, & Nelson, 2009).

Most scholars agree that finding a way to increase access to healthy foods should be a top priority (Rose & Richards, 2004). According to a recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report, in 2016, 12.3% of Americans were food insecure and 4.9% had very low food security. It should perhaps be no surprise, then, that food insecurity has increasingly gained focus and attention in recent decades as a measure associated with neighborhood health. Food security or insecurity has replaced the more politically charged notion of “hunger” and incorporates more than merely alleviating hunger.

According to the Committee on World Food Security (2012), “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (p. 5). Campbell (1991) has suggested that,

It is clear from this definition that the concept of food security is not about mere survival. Rather, it is attuned to health needs, takes individual preferences into account, and incorporates multiple elements of access, including “the assured ability to acquire personally acceptable foods in a socially acceptable way. (408)

Food insecurity has been linked to detrimental health and social outcomes (Olson, 1999), such as type II diabetes (Seligman, Bindman, Vittinghoff, Kanaya, & Kushel, 2007; Seligman, Davis, Schillinger, & Wolf, 2010) and higher stress levels (Fiese, Koester, & Waxman, 2014). Research has also shown that female-headed households, racial minorities, and low income residents are all at greatest risk of food insecurity and associated diseases (Franklin et al., 2012). Although there is some evidence indicating that these populations are more likely to live in public and/or subsidized housing, the extent to which public housing communities can help, or hinder, food security is not well known.

Public Housing Communities

For over 70 years the US government has provided housing assistance in the form of developments. This public housing stock serves as a subsidy that can help reduce food security by freeing up resources that can go toward other needs such as nutrition (Gubits et al., 2016; Waxman, 2017). Over the past several decades public housing has been dismantled across the US in part due to high maintenance costs, poor management, poor outcomes for residents, lack of neighborhood resources (e.g., supermarkets), and an association that these housing developments have with high crime and disadvantage (Cisneros, 2009; Vale, 2002).

Despite these negative aspects associated with public housing, there are also positives aspects. Indeed, some developments engender rich social networks and ties that make up a community of support needed to get through the everyday hardships associated with poverty (Clampet-Lundquist, 2010). These social networks, described as the web of social relations connecting individuals (Smith & Christakis, 2008), may have an important impact on health outcomes (Briggs, 1998; Greenbaum et al., 2008; Keene & Ruel, 2013; Venkatesh, 2000).

Neighborhood studies indicate that social capital can serve as a mediator in impoverished neighborhoods (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014; Putnam, 2000). Derosé and Varda (2009) posit that social capital and the way it contributes to health outcomes are vital to research. For instance, in the US, Hispanic individuals are overrepresented in terms of certain health conditions. However, their strong social and cultural ties might help buffer some of the risks associated

with negative health outcomes, such as isolation and lack of support. This strong social support could help explain part of the “Hispanic Paradox,” which asserts that at times Hispanics have lower mortality rates than non-Hispanics, after controlling for low socioeconomic status (SES) (Finch & Vega, 2003; Franzini, Ribble, & Keddie, 2001; Markides & Coreil, 1986).

Hispanic households, however, are over-represented among the food insecure, with approximately 26% of Hispanic households labeled as food insecure compared to only 11% of white, non-Hispanic households (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, Andrews, & Carlson, 2012). Mexican immigrants, in particular, tend to have higher levels of food insecurity (Sharkey, Dean, & Johnson, 2011). In Phoenix, Arizona where many Hispanic residents have recently emigrated from other countries, this relationship is especially concerning. Thus, although public housing developments might appear to, in theory, provide a buffer against food insecurity, their location and the ability that residents have to access food in these developments could be difficult barriers to overcome.

Food Access: Barriers to Food Security

Research on food access has typically been neighborhood based, focusing on multiple dimensions of access to capture its complicated nature. These dimensions include proximity to stores, types of stores, variety of food available within stores, and the affordability of food. These dimensions are linked to specific health outcomes such as obesity and dietary intake (Rose, Bodor, Hutchinson, & Swalm, 2010). Rose and colleagues (2010) point out that there is often a lack of price consideration with regard to food access. That is, residents who are able physically get to a store that has fresh fruits and vegetables might be discouraged or unable to purchase these items due to their high cost (Cohen & Garrett, 2010). Indeed, research has shown that low income individuals from under-represented racial backgrounds tend to consume fewer fruits and vegetables than recommended. This is problematic due to the association of this type of diet with increased risk for diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer (Hendrickson, Smith, & Eikenberry, 2006).

Even when access to fruits and vegetables is not be a problem, if these foods are viewed as unaffordable compared to less healthy and more filling food options families may choose not to purchase them (Bruening, MacLehose, Loth, Story, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2012; Koh & Caples, 1979). Many families make food purchasing decisions based on what can last longest and some may even choose to purchase food that lasts well beyond date of quality. Fresh foods are also, at times, more expensive and of lower quality in some low income neighborhoods (Hendrickson et al., 2006).

Coproduction: The Constructive Role of Citizens in Service Delivery

The concept of coproduction, most often credited to Elinor Ostrom (1978), considers the public’s role in public service provision. Coproduction has a particular focus on how recipients of public services contribute to the production of those services through individual and collaborative efforts. This view of service delivery recognizes that many public services cannot be oversimplified as commodities, which tend to end at the point of delivery. Rather, public services either require or benefit from contributions by the recipients of the service (Osborne, Radnor, & Nasi, 2013; Whitaker, 1980).

Although coproduction has been a concept of scholarly interest for nearly three decades, it does not have a universally agreed upon definition. Therefore, much of the recent work on the topic has focused on definition refinement and establishing conceptual boundaries (see, for instance, Brandsen & Honingh, 2016; Nabatchi, Sancino, & Sicilia, 2017). However, the

foundation of coproduction is the idea that recipients of public services are not simply consuming public goods, but often they actively contribute and collaborate “to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency” (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1121).

This concern with the micro level processes of service delivery makes three primary assumptions: 1) recipients of public services are often not passive participants in the delivery of public services but actively participate in behaviors that enhance the production of the services in terms of quality, quantity, or desired outcomes (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Needham, 2007), 2) many public services are difficult to produce or outcomes are impossible to achieve without contributions from the recipients of those services (Alford, 1998; Alford, 2009; Whitaker, 1980), and 3) incorporating relevant members of the public into service delivery will potentially lead to more efficient delivery of public services (Bovaird, Van Ryzin, Loeffler, & Parrado, 2015; Ostrom, Parks, Whitaker, & Percy, 1978; Parks et al., 1981).

For the purposes of this research, we focus on two concepts of coproduction found in the literature, individual and collective coproduction. Individual coproduction refers to behaviors and activities by individuals to help produce public services that tend to benefit only the individual involved in the activity (although there could be societal benefits in the aggregate). In these situations, the relevant public services “have as their primary objective the transformation of the consumer” (Whitaker 1980, p. 240). In other words, these types of services cannot achieve their objectives without some effort. Often this requires a change in behavior by the recipient. Thus, contributing to the production of that public service by producing desired outcomes (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012). An example of individual coproduction is skills training for the unemployed. The desired outcome of employment cannot be achieved without actions taken by the individual to actively search for and keep a job using the skills learned in training (Alford, 1998).

Collective coproduction refers to efforts that incorporate some form of coordination of activities between individuals or groups and provides benefits to people beyond those that are actively participating in coproductive activities. A common example of collective coproduction is a neighborhood watch program. Activities by watchful neighbors enhance the safety of the entire neighborhood. Thus, these activities extend the reach and effectiveness of the traditional public service provision by police (Brudney & England, 1983). Collective coproduction harnesses the power of the group and “has potential to amplify the value added by the contributions of individuals” (Bovaird et al., 2015, p. 51). In addition, participating in collective coproduction is expected to promote and develop social capital for participants (Pestoff, 2012). Both forms of coproduction demonstrate the interdependent aspect of many public services, especially those intended to increase the welfare of vulnerable populations (Needham, 2007).

When it comes to actions related to food security, the connection to coproduction might appear tenuous, especially because the pursuit of survival is not considered optional. People must find enough food for their families regardless of their participation in related public services. Although recent work by Nabatchi et al. (2017) as well as by Brandsen and Honingh (2016) asserts that coerced or obligatory behaviors do not count as coproduction, Alford (2009) makes the assumption that “coproduction is essentially voluntary, but that it can form part of compliance, even where some compulsion is present” (p. 23). Survival, then, can be considered compulsory but achieving food security is not quite the same.

Food security is not simply a consistent rate of subsistence. It goes further by meeting nutritional and health needs for “an active and healthy life,” not just survival (Committee on World Food Security, 2012, p. 5). Thus, although activities necessary for survival would not be considered coproduction, the activities related to producing food security have the potential for individual and collective coproduction especially for those participating in public services such as SNAP and public housing.

In this study, then, we explore multiple views of coproduction as it relates to food security. First, we explore the role that residents play in producing food security beyond the implementation of a service (e.g., purchasing food with SNAP or following nutrition-related guidelines and advice provided by frontline service providers). We do so to better understand the barriers that may exist. Since all of the households in this study utilized SNAP, which provides supplemental nutrition benefits, they did not completely achieve food security by design. SNAP participants must engage in extra activities, whether by using other funds or finding alternate sources of food in order to complete their food security.

Second, we investigate the role of residents as individual coproducers of food security. To do so, we consider whether public agencies are able to develop formal community arrangements for food provision—i.e., what we refer to as collective coproduction.

Methods

This research was part of a larger project that examined the risk and protective factors around food insecurity among public housing families with adolescents. This study draws on data from focus groups with parents and their adolescent children. Participants were primarily from low income, racial minority families. They joined the study in pairs. That is, there was one adolescent (aged between 11–18 years) and a primary parent/caregiver.

In the spring and summer of 2014, residents of six public housing complexes received informational flyers in the mail about the study. Investigators also went door-to-door to recruit. Participation in this part of the project included separate focus groups with adults and adolescents. To participate, eligible participants were required to come to one of six community centers located at each housing facility. Participants provided consent (made available in Spanish).

There was a total of 11 focus groups conducted. This included five adult and six adolescent groups. On average, four participants attended the adult focus groups and six participants attended the adolescent focus groups.

Participants received community service hours and a \$10 gift card for their participation. The investigators facilitated the focus groups with the support of research assistants who took notes and managed the audio recordings. Focus group sessions lasted between 90 and 120 minutes.

The focus group questions for the parents and adolescents differed to some extent. We began the adult focus groups with an ice breaker. Specifically, we asked them about their favorite traditions involving food. We then asked a series of guiding questions pertaining to:

- where they received information and messages about food,
- what pressures they felt,
- how attainable certain foods were,
- what foods they wished they had access to,
- how problematic they perceived hunger in their community,
- where they went for help if they needed assistance,
- what ideas they had for their community with regard to reducing hunger,
- their thoughts about their community and their housing development in general,
- their experiences with community gardens and farmers markets,
- their hopes for their children, and
- the policies or programs that they would develop, if allowed, to make sure all families had enough food.

For the adolescent focus groups, although we began with an icebreaker (about their favorite foods) and we asked about the messages and pressures that they experienced concerning food, what foods they wished they had access to, and what programs and policies they would develop to fight hunger (similar to in the adult focus groups), we also asked adolescents about their level of involvement in food shopping and preparation, where they saw people go for assistance, and how lack of food affected kids that they knew.

The six locations for the focus groups were all in public housing developments near downtown Phoenix, Arizona. At all of the sites, residents had case managers and there was a community center that offered nutrition classes and opportunities and events for recreation. In terms of the surrounding community characteristics, all of the sites were located in relatively low income neighborhoods; and, while nuances across sites are certainly important, we grouped responses across sites since the number of participants at each site was relatively small. Still, any differences that emerged across sites were kept in mind during the interpretation of the data.

The focus groups were recorded, and research assistants transcribed the conversations verbatim. Following the focus groups, members of the research team compared field notes and debriefed on observations regarding the setting of each site, interactions with staff members, and the processes required to assess data quality and triangulate field notes and memos. The analysis of transcripts began with line-by-line coding. This coding was conducted by two members of the research team. After discussion of the data, we agreed on an initial code bank and began clustering codes around themes. We used Atlas.ti. software to organize and analyze the data.

It is important to point out that this study has several limitations that should be kept in mind. Although the housing sites were all located in low income Phoenix, Arizona neighborhoods, there were differences between these communities. However, the relatively small sample sizes of each focus group do not allow us to adequately parse out these differences.

Also, although residents had access to public transportation, the extent to which this auto-centric setting is able to be compared with sites in other cities that may have stronger public infrastructure is likely limited. Nonetheless, while these findings may not be generalizable to other sites, there is theoretical generalizability in the application of coproduction to other contexts in the study food production. Finally, it is important to note that although participants were diverse across ethnicities, the focus groups were conducted in English. As such, Spanish-only speaking residents are not represented.

Results

There were three overarching themes that emerged from residents' discussions about hunger and nutrition in their communities. These themes were: barriers to food security, strategies for producing food security, and individual and community solutions.

Barriers to Food Security

There are stereotypes and assumptions about low income residents' preference for unhealthy food. Primarily, these assumptions and stereotypes focus on a belief that residents are not aware of what they should be eating; and, therefore they are unable to contribute to food security. This is particularly important with regard to coproduction assumptions about any behavior transformations that might take place after receiving a message from a doctor or taking a class. The data revealed that parents and adolescents demonstrated understanding of nutrition-related messages about food from family and friends, the internet, school, and doctors. The following example illustrates how one participant understood her doctor's

healthy eating recommendations, but other factors came into play in her decision to engage in healthy eating behaviors.

I was talking to my doctor and he told me to stop eating pasta and rice and it's like but that is really the only thing...It's kind of like a staple food, because you know you get your grains, and you know it's starchy...

Some residents felt that advice to stop eating certain foods was not doable without access to a substitute. Even when they were making comparably better decisions, some participants highlighted that certain foods were not the best choice for their family.

I cook every meal by myself; we don't eat fast food at all. And not only that but it makes a difference, your kids are happier, they are healthier. I am sure that the pasta and rice is probably not the best for them, but it is almost like you get more sense of family.

The adults in the focus groups did not discuss messages from the media. However, the adolescents in the focus groups did. For example, one teen said, “Well, like on TV you usually see more commercials about fast food restaurants than you would, like a farmers market or somewhere more organic where you can get organic food from.”

Another teen mentioned the marketing that appeared to be directed toward them, “All these food and advertising, kids don't even think about that they just all want to eat fast food. They got LeBron James going in a McDonald's commercial.”

According to the adolescents, these messages went beyond the food choices they made. The messages contributed to a culture where youth made choices to eat out rather than cook and where being overweight was more acceptable. One adolescent described his perception saying, “Well kids nowadays take it the easy way out. Like, oh let's eat out instead of cooking something healthy. Let's be fat.”

More evidence that residents received information about what they should be eating emerged when residents discussed the foods they wished they had access to. In general, both, parents and adolescents said that they wished they had greater access to fruits, vegetables, and fresher meats. As one parent said,

But yeah, I wish there was more fruit or snap peas and things like that, I wish that were more accessible. Not just for myself but also for your family so you can show them that this is how you make things, and this is how you, you know, kind of teach them in a way.

Parents indicated that they felt bad when their children asked for food that was not easy to obtain. “That's probably the one thing that I don't buy enough of, and with my daughter um, she is the one that always complains. ‘Oh, mom we don't have any bananas. Mom we don't have any oranges.’”

The adolescents also mentioned wanting consistent access to fruits and vegetables. In sum, residents were well aware of the foods they *should* be eating; and, some had even heard messages from their healthcare providers. Yet, many of the residents were unable to transform this knowledge into coproducing behaviors due to other barriers.

The public housing developments in this study were located in low income neighborhoods with poor access to grocery stores that had fresh foods. There were also physical barriers related to actually getting to stores and markets. Much more accessible were fast food and gas station markets.

There was not a single reason for this lack of access. Indeed, although both parents and adolescents felt that the cost of fruits and vegetables limited their access to these foods, physical barriers were not always a problem. Some residents, for instance, indicated that they had no difficulty getting to grocery stores and farmers markets. Once there, however, the price of these foods made them unattainable.

And, you know, we all try to eat healthy, but it is kind of hard to do that when you go to the store and two dollars for a bell pepper. You have to pay so much money to get a pound of tomatoes or something. They are always telling us to eat healthy, this is where you can go. Then you go there, and it is like 'what's the point'? We are all supposed to eat healthy and want to eat healthy, but sometimes it is too expensive.

Adolescents had similar perceptions about their access to certain foods. “Fruits are very expensive, and they don’t last long so when you do buy them it’s a luxury to have. Vegetables are cheap in comparison, same with meats but they’re just hard to get a hold of.”

Another dimension of access was the quality of the food that was available. Residents noted that the quality of food at the stores that they had access to sometimes deterred them from buying fresh produce.

Sometimes when I go to certain stores, it’s like the fruits and vegetables they don’t look right. They just don’t look right, and you have to pick through them to find the fresh ones...they sometimes have flies on them, you know they are not fresh. Sometimes it gets to the point to where I do not buy fruit unless it is in a can. I know that it is in a can and it has syrup, but I don’t have to worry about ‘Oh I have to eat this within five minutes’ before it spoils.

Stores were not the only places that contributed to the poor access problem. Emergency food assistance programs, such as food banks, also did not have the options that residents needed or wanted. Interestingly, while residents did not mention physical distance when it came to accessing grocery stores, this did come up when it came to accessing food banks. One parent explained,

That’s the reason why I don’t use the food bank is because I walk...You can’t take it on a bus because the bus is packed...If you’re going to get on with a bunch of boxes, it’s just really cumbersome.

Food quality was also an issue associated with food banks. Residents spoke of a decline in quality and quantity over the years. For instance, one resident provided the following response,

See, back in the day they gave you a food box...They gave you two boxes of actual cereal, oatmeal, cream of wheat, block of cheese, the canned pork, canned beef, canned

chicken, I mean they gave you food. Then all of a sudden they cut it short.

Several residents spoke of similar changes with food pantries. All of the sites had access to some of these charitable organizations; and, across the different housing developments residents used different options. Part of the barrier, however, was a lack of awareness of the available food pantries. Thus, some residents communicated that they would like to have a better understanding of what was available and when.

Getting through the “In-Between Times”: Ad Hoc Support

Overwhelmingly, residents relied on food banks and other charitable organizations to make ends meet each month. Residents heard from their case workers and/or their neighbors who knew where they could go for assistance. In other cases, charitable organizations provided outreach to help residents learn about their services.

For the most part, residents’ strategies for producing food security involved piecing together assistance from different places (whether from food banks, family, church, or other assistance programs). For example, one parent said,

Yeah I go, I can’t remember the name of it, but there’s a church I go to. But you can only get a food box every 3 months. It’s big, but it’s not enough to last you 3 months. And I’ll go there and there’s another place that will give you a little food box once per week and I have been going there more than I’ve ever had to go before.

In addition to seeking out ad hoc support, residents spent considerable amounts of time making ends meet in other ways. One way was standing in line to price match. *“Especially Wal-Mart they have the price match for coupons. If their price is lower than theirs then they will price match. Even though it is a headache when we stand in line and people do that.”*

Some residents also spent additional effort looking for ways to get discounted goods. As one respondent stated, *“Also, like if you see places where you can buy cans and the cans may be a little dented or something and you can buy them all cheap.”* This is a strategy, however, that may be time intensive and unstable.

Stretching Staples

Another strategy that residents had for extending the assistance they received was food preservation. Residents at most of the focus groups discussed their techniques for making food last longer. One resident said, *“Well like when we make boiled chicken or something like that we save the broth so that we can make gravy or something like that with it.”* Similarly, another resident said,

Like you said, my mother taught me when you cook a meal (if you are working or not) you will come to those days where you do not feel like cooking. So, you might as well cook a big meal, serve half to your family and then freeze the rest of it.

Another resident noted *“...how nice it is to get pancakes out of the freezer and stick them in the toaster and ‘voila’ they are just like egos to go. It saves a lot of money.”* Within each focus group residents shared these strategies; and, they seemed to agree that this was an essential part of being able to get through each month.

As an additional strategy, the residents mentioned buying certain foods that were more versatile or that could last a long time. One resident said *“I do it by managing what I buy, you know? I’ll buy a bag of potatoes; you can do thousands of things with those. You can buy beans; my God, you can do millions of things with beans.”* Others mentioned that pasta and noodles helped to make meals heartier.

In some cases, adolescents saw themselves as instrumental in making food last longer and eating healthier. One adolescent described the process at her house.

Well, let’s say my mom she’ll buy a lot of meat, so I’ll buy a lot of vegetables to even it out. So, then I’ll cook my meals for the week because I know if she cooks or her boyfriend cooks or my boyfriend cooks there won’t be no more food by the end of the week. So, I’ll cut the meat into portions, I cook the vegetables into portions, and I make sure this goes with this meal and that goes with that meal.

It was clear that adolescents viewed themselves as an important contributor to food security in their family. They discussed how their friends would get part-time jobs in order to help their families make ends meet. They also discussed how some friends would steal from local stores to help feed themselves. One adolescent mentioned that kids would sometimes collect and sell cans to help their families get food.

Getting through the “In-Between Times”: Social Network Support

Relying on community was another theme that came up with regard to getting by each month. Residents were mixed on whether they felt there was a sense of community at their housing development. One resident described how this dynamic had changed.

People used to see people struggling for food and would invite them over. But nowadays, people are so wishy-washy. People are so hard to judge. That is part of the reason why I stay in my home. You are afraid to go out. Afraid of other people—mostly here.

Most of the participants mentioned assistance from family, friends, or neighbors. One resident said,

Yeah like within my family, a lot of times I’ll eat at my sister’s house you know I’ll bring something like maybe beans or something like that. My brother too, we’ll all three of us will eat. We will do it at my house, then we will do it at his house, and that’s how we make it go around for all three of our families.

Only a few adults mentioned that they received support from other residents in their housing development. Interestingly, it was the adolescents who spoke more about relying on friends and their community for support. They discussed how they helped friends who needed food, how their parents brought extra food to neighbors, and the practice of selling and/or sharing food stamps in the community. One teen described the stress teens felt when helping their families saying,

I mean I’ve had a couple of friends that have come up to me and asked can you help me and just very emotional and stressed out and it was all on them. All the weight was on

their shoulders and they were responsible for bringing food for the whole household.

Resident-Driven and Community Based Solutions: Changes to Existing Policies

It was difficult for the adult participants to articulate new policy changes that they would have liked to see. Instead, they often discussed expanding current programs, such as SNAP, or mentioned providing better access to food banks. Given the importance of food box and pantry programs, residents spent much of their time discussing ways to improve them. Overwhelmingly, residents felt that their communities needed better access to these services, and they had ideas for co-designing them. As one adult mentioned,

It would be nice if there were a pantry here started. I'm sure they can get donations from different places and they should start one here. For the people who don't have a car, they could get food when they need it.

Adolescents talked about having community food drives and getting people to donate more by educating them about their community's needs. Some residents also discussed changing the distribution process of food boxes. As stated,

They need to do it off of quantity in the family so a family with four or five people gets a bigger box. The place that I was going to it didn't matter how many were in your family. Sometimes it is unfair because it is first come first serve basically. Unfortunately, they run out.

As mentioned in the second theme, residents were divided over the extent to which they felt connected to their community. Yet, many of the solutions they discussed were communal in nature. Indeed, they relied on residents who worked with housing staff to organize solutions and make them available to everyone. For instance, a couple of residents suggested a coupon sharing program on-site and they discussed having a process for exchanging coupons at the community centers.

Another idea that excited participants was putting together a resource guide of food banks that contained different items so that residents could have an easier time navigating the assistance programs that were available to them. One group of adolescents also discussed having a social network site for their community to help communicate community needs and bring the residents together.

Other suggestions involved leveraging the structure of the public housing sites and bringing solutions to them. For instance, residents suggested that there should be classes geared toward food preservation. They felt that by participating in the focus groups they had learned strategies from one another, and that these lessons should continue. Some of the residents even had ideas for the content of these courses and wanted to have an active role in their creation and implementation. Several of the residents felt they could discuss the techniques that they had mentioned, such as food preservation strategies.

The participants also discussed how some people did not know how to make their food stamps last throughout the month. Some even mentioned that residents did not know how to cook, or they spent too much money on fast food. Indeed, one resident mentioned that,

Some of these young girls, I'm sorry but they can't even cook noodles. They just throw something in the microwave or go to the Jack in the Box and that's it. I see some girls

have two or three kids and they have a happy meal. That's only going to last a kid, what, like 15 minutes. So, it would be good to have cooking classes for young mothers and fathers.

Other participants had suggestions about what they would like to see in these courses. For instance, one resident said,

I would like to have nutrition classes. That would be awesome. How to put healthy meals together and what ways we can make things healthy...A lot of us probably heard it, but it doesn't stay with us, such as how many servings of fruits and vegetables we should have per day. We aren't aware of it or maybe we just forget."

Adolescents were also interested in community-based solutions to healthy eating. As one said, "I think doing it with other kids would help not only for the health, but you would be able to meet new people." The adolescents also had specific ideas for the class content. Specifically,

When it says amount per serving it means that's for one serving and a lot people don't know that. So, people should learn about calorie counting...Some of the things you think are healthy are not very healthy at all. Like, remember Nutella? Mom said it was so healthy. It turns out it had a lot of sugar. They should, people should be more aware of that because the more calories you eat the more weight you gain and the more unhealthy you get.

Five of the six sites had community gardens, but very few residents were aware of them. In fact, several residents suggested community gardens as a solution without realizing that they already had one. Adolescents were divided over whether community gardens would bring older adolescents together due to other problems in the community, such as drug use.

Discussion

This research explored ways in which families living in public housing produce their food security through coping mechanisms, help within their community, and help from external organizations. In many ways, the story that was revealed was not unique or surprising. Residents put considerable time, thought, and effort into producing their food security each month. Indeed, they often made meals with whatever food they found in their cabinets, froze food to make it last longer, use SNAP benefits, and visited food banks.

The participants in this study described some communal production of food security, such as sharing meals with family, friends, and neighbors. They also demonstrated their nutrition knowledge and expressed that health was a consideration in their buying decisions. They were, however, faced with a number of barriers to meeting their stated preferences for healthy food. This finding contradicts much of the rhetoric surrounding food security that attributes poor diet to a lack of knowledge or desire to eat healthy. Barriers that residents in this study perceived included time, awareness, cost, and access. Adolescents pointed out that messages and social pressures also contributed to poor nutritional choices. Moreover, similar to findings by Christaldi and Castellanos (2014), residents in this study discussed solutions related to increases in public assistance and food banks. However, they were also interested in community-based solutions for producing food security.

Findings from the study also suggest that there is potential for both individual and collective coproduction of food security for residents in public housing. It is important to note that up to this point in the study, we have referred to residents' efforts to provide for their food security as "production" rather than "coproduction" because there is little evidence of collaboration with providers of the relevant public services beyond necessary activities related to receiving and using SNAP. This, however, may be a missed opportunity since coproduction research finds that collaborative efforts with public service providers may enhance individual and community outcomes. In this case, resident food security (Alford, 2002; Jakobsen, 2013; Thomsen, 2017).

Many of the activities described by the residents demonstrate individual attributes that coproduction studies have found have a positive relationship with participation in coproductive activities. For instance, knowledge, salience, and relevant skills are commonly considered as necessary factors for both individual and collective coproduction (Alford, 2002; Jakobsen, 2013; Thomsen, 2017; Van Eijk & Steen, 2016). These factors are also related to self-efficacy, which is an attitude that the individual is capable of performing the task at hand. It is clear from the focus groups that many residents are knowledgeable about how to eat healthy and they have a desire to feed their families healthy meals. Indeed, several residents described the skills needed for healthy meal preparation.

In a study of individual coproduction, Thomsen (2017) found that perceived self-efficacy was more important for predicting sustained coproduction than knowledge related to coproduction activities. This suggests that increasing relevant knowledge and enhancing self-efficacy is necessary for meeting objectives. Thus, the finding that residents are knowledgeable, have relevant skills, and have feelings of self-efficacy related to producing their own food security suggests that introducing an element of coproduction through interactions and related activities with service providers may enhance individual food security.

Although research has not provided much guidance as to whether individual and collective coproduction requires different factors, collective coproduction is theorized to require the factors mentioned above along with two additional factors, community-based motivation and the existence of a feedback loop. This feedback loop allows individuals to see the results of their coproductive efforts toward their community (Van Eijk & Steen 2016).

By and large, it is clear that residents played an active role in producing their food security. It is also clear that the addition of coproduction has the potential to reshape these piecemeal and variable efforts into reliable coproductive activities that can have individual and collective benefits. Still, a crucial piece is missing—that is, active interactions and coordination with public service providers.

Normann (1984) discussed the enabling nature of service providers where they allow clients to expand their ability to provide services for themselves. This can create a community of residents able to assist governments to meet efficiency, effectiveness, and resident satisfaction objectives. However, in order for community coproduction to occur residents need to have social cohesion and a system in place for social capital exchanges. Although the social and community support in the housing developments provided residents with some support for producing food security, the extent to these factors impact their current strategies for coproducing food security is unknown. The potential is there, and residents recognize it, but the lack of institutional support seems to make exchanges limited and ad hoc.

Recent research has illustrated how management can implement institutional support in order to leverage the actions of elderly residents living in public housing (Lucio & McFadden 2015). In this same vein, results of the current study can be used to guide policy or program suggestions that leverage both the actions and the community structure of public housing developments.

First and foremost, the type and extent of possible coproduction must be considered carefully and should include discussions with residents. In this study, the focus groups provided residents with a forum where they could share ideas with one another and come up with solutions. These types of forums can be institutionalized as regular meetings facilitated by case managers. Some of the suggestions that residents made were even amenable to community coproduction, including having residents lead the development of nutrition classes in their communities or organize coupon sharing initiatives.

Residents also suggested developing resource guides for other residents and consolidating information that they received from various sources. Housing managers, they felt, could work with residents to develop a resource center on-site that also served as a way for residents to sign up for meal-sharing and ride-sharing. Residents also discussed concrete ways to improve the implementation of food banks and they had ideas that involved working with service providers to make the process better for residents.

In particular, residents were interested in community gardens, but they were not connected to existing gardens. Residents had not received information about the gardens already in their community; and, some felt that they lacked the time and energy to care for a garden. Coproducing gardens to provide healthy food for residents requires a significant investment of city staff and/or volunteers. These staff and/or volunteers could work to train residents on proper garden management and they could also disseminate information regarding harvests.

It was clear that residents felt a shift in the amount of support that they received from formal institutions, including the reduction of SNAP and the lower quality in food bank options. With cuts in these programs combined with increases in demand, alternative approaches might help to meet some of the residents' needs. However, it is important that these strategies not place a burden on residents who are already struggling in the face of numerous other barriers.

Inherently, all health-related work is related to coproduction. Since residents need to play an active role in community solutions, it may prove beneficial to bring them into the formal process in ways they are already contributing. Results from a study conducted in Indiana indicate that SNAP-Ed, an educational program, helped to increase food security in households with children. This additional educational component might be an important addition for the coproduction of food security (Rivera, Eicher-Miller, Maulding, Abbott, & Wang, 2016). Indeed, the findings from that study indicate that additional work with recipients in a coproduction mechanism might provide even more benefits.

As the trend toward dismantling public housing continues across the US (Goetz, 2003), development-based interventions might get lost in the shuffle. However, given the potential for coproduction to be more sustainable and cost-effective for low-income residents, more research is certainly needed in this area to help support policy decisions.

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Quality Advantage? Provider Quality and Networks in Medicare Advantage

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Medicare Advantage plans have grown significantly over the past decade and the potential for their future growth seems unabated. Astonishingly, however, we know little about how Medicare beneficiaries access services, particularly whether those services are of high quality. This study explores access to cardiac surgeons for coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and heart valve surgery in California and New York. It is one of the first studies to analyze Medicare Advantage networks and interactions between provider networks and provider quality. Results of the study show that for large metropolitan areas, access is rather similar for traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Limitations, however, exist for the latter. Important concerns emerge for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries outside of metropolitan areas where healthcare market challenges appear to be exacerbated by carrier restrictions. Results indicate no evidence that carriers selectively contract to improve quality. There is, however, significant diversity with regard to network breadth; and, this breadth does not stay static across distances. These results hold important implications for the future of the Medicare program, network adequacy regulations, and how consumers make choices about their insurance coverage.

Keywords: Medicare, Provider Networks, Healthcare Access, Provider Quality

Introduction

In recent years, Medicare Advantage plans have grown rapidly. Today, they enroll about 22 million Americans, or about one third of all Medicare beneficiaries nationwide (Jacobson, Freed, Damico, & Neuman, 2019). Yet, enrollment growth has only come with a limited assessment of its consequences. Indeed, although we have some information about plan choices for beneficiaries in Medicare Advantage, we know virtually nothing about provider networks beyond the fact that the Center for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) has established certain time-and-distance standards for plans.

The few studies addressing the issue of provider networks are limited in their extent and only look at 20 of the nation's more than 3,000 counties. One of these studies found that the average Medicare Advantage plan includes about half of a county's hospitals (Jacobson, Trilling, Neuman, Damico, & Gold, 2016). In another study, researchers found that about 35% of enrollees were in plans with narrow networks. They also found that, on average, plans included just under 50% of physicians in a given county (Jacobson, Rae, Neuman, Orgera, & Boccuti, 2017).

The actual quality of providers in Medicare Advantage networks has been understudied (Haeder, 2019a, 2019b); and, CMS does not include quality measures in its regulations of Medicare Advantage plans (Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, 2019b). Thus, this study aims to answer two important questions about the potential role provider networks play in restricting access for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. First, how significant are network restrictions that are imposed by Medicare Advantage plans when it comes to access to higher-quality surgeons? And second, do Medicare Advantage plans emphasize access to higher quality care by selectively contracting with surgeons of higher quality?

This study focuses specifically on access to coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) and heart valve surgery in California and New York. These two states were selected for several reasons. In both states, their CABG quality reporting programs are well-established, they use sophisticated techniques to risk-adjust the data, and they have been operational for years. To answer the questions in this study, geographic access for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries of local coordinated care plans is compared to an “unrestricted” provider network that would be available to traditional Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare and Medicare Advantage

While the federal role in the nation’s healthcare system has consistently increased since the New Deal (Haeder & Weimer, 2015), the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 marks the most significant expansion of this commitment (Oberlander, 2003). Since its creation, Medicare (the federal program covering the vast majority of America’s aged population) has served a crucial role in providing access to medical care while protecting the financial security of America’s seniors (Oberlander, 2003). Yet, in the more than five decades since the program was first signed into law by President Johnson, it has seen significant statutory changes (Berenson & Dowd, 2008; Oberlander, 1997). One of the most obvious transformations has been the growing role of Medicare Advantage, the private sector complement to the traditional Medicare program (Neuman & Jacobson, 2018).

The involvement of private entities in Medicare, however, is nothing new. Indeed, early on the federal government heavily relied on private third parties, mostly Blue Shield and Blue Cross, to administer much of the program (Oberlander, 2003). The original Medicare legislation also allowed a limited role for so-called staff-model HMOs like Kaiser Permanente, then referred to as group practice prepayment plans (Jacobson, 2015; Zarabozo, 2000). Over time, this role increased, with the Social Security Amendments in 1972 serving as the first major expansion (Jacobson, 2015; Zarabozo, 2000). However, enrollment in HMO plans remained limited, and, because of unfavorable payment mechanisms, only a few dozen plans were offered across the entire country (Zarabozo, 2000).

The next major change occurred in the early 1980s, when Congress passed the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) of 1982 (Jacobson, 2015). While reductions in reimbursements led to a lower number of plan offerings, enrollment increased steadily due to the additional benefits offered to beneficiaries. The Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997 expanded the types of plans insurers could offer while further adjusting payments to plans (Jacobson, 2015). A few years later, the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003 expanded plan types even more while significantly altering plan payments in favor of insurers (Oberlander, 2007). The most recent adjustment came as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA led to significant payment reductions for carriers (Haeder, 2012; McGuire, Newhouse, & Sinaiko, 2011). However, some of these reductions have since been reversed (Kelly, 2015).

Proponents of Medicare Advantage have argued that it offers beneficiaries more choices while harnessing the power of the market to contain costs (McGuire et al., 2011). Other program

goals include the provision of additional benefits to Medicare beneficiaries (without establishing an explicit legal entitlement), improving the quality of care for all Medicare beneficiaries, and expanding access to care (Berenson & Dowd, 2008; Thorpe & Atherly, 2002). There is currently consensus that no cost savings have been realized for the overall Medicare program. However, beneficiaries have unquestionably gained access to additional benefits (e.g., dental coverage and gym memberships).

Evidence with regard to quality is decidedly mixed (e.g., Brennan & Shepard, 2010; DeParle, 2002; Neuman & Jacobson, 2018). Moreover, the program has been subject to allegations of cream skimming, i.e., disproportionately signing up the healthiest Medicare beneficiaries, which some have claimed has significantly increased profits for participating insurance carriers (McGuire et al., 2011; Oberlander, 1997).

More recently, claims of selection effects seem to have somewhat abated (McWilliams, Hsu, & Newhouse, 2012), though plans may still benefit financially from seeking out healthier beneficiaries (Neuman & Jacobson, 2018). There is some evidence, for instance, that high cost beneficiaries are particularly likely to switch to traditional Medicare over time (see, for instance, Frakt, 2016; Morrissey, Kilgore, Becker, Smith, & Delzell, 2013; Neuman & Jacobson, 2018; Oberlander, 1997; Rahman, Keohane, Trivedi, & Mor, 2015). As a result of these limitations, some have characterized the program as a policy failure (Newhouse & McGuire, 2014).

Overall, since its inception the program has not only undergone a number of name changes (e.g., 1876 plans, Medicare Part C, Medicare+Choice, and Medicare Advantage), but it has also repeatedly been curtailed and expanded (McGuire et al., 2011). Indeed, the success of the program, i.e., the percentage of Medicare beneficiaries enrolling, appears to be a direct consequence of the federal government's generosity with regard to payment to insurers (DeParle, 2002; McGuire et al., 2011; Oberlander, 2007). Notably, these changes in payments to insurance carriers have had major implications for beneficiaries in terms of the availability of plans and the benefits offered by those plans (DeParle, 2002).

Still, Medicare Advantage has been popular with seniors for a variety of reasons including limited out-of-pocket costs, the convenience to be able to one-stop shop for insurance coverage, and the aforementioned access to additional benefits like dental coverage and gym memberships (Neuman & Jacobson, 2018; Oberlander, 2007). Today, enrollment amounts to roughly 22 million, compared to 10.5 million in 2009 and 6.9 million in 1999 (Jacobson et al., 2019); and, with newly eligible beneficiaries particularly likely to enroll in Medicare Advantage, the program is slated for further growth (Jacobson, Neuman, & Damico, 2015).

Medicare Advantage plans are open to the vast majority of beneficiaries across the nation, except in the most rural regions (Jacobson, Damico, & Neuman, 2017). However, Medicare Advantage plan penetration rates continue to show diversity across states. As previously mentioned, while roughly one-third of Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in the program nationwide, enrollment rates range from lows of 1% in Alaska and 3% in Wyoming to a high of 71% in Puerto Rico. Several states, including the two states that are the focus of this study (California and New York), enroll more than 40% of their Medicare recipients (Jacobson et al., 2019).

Even within states, Medicare Advantage enrollment differs. For example, in New York and California enrollment rates range from below 1% to well above 50% (Jacobson et al., 2019). While many of the lower penetration counties tend to be rural, this is not always the case (Jacobson et al., 2019). Medicare Advantage plans appear equally diverse in terms of benefits provided by specific plans (DeParle, 2002; McBride, 1998).

Cardiac Surgery in the United States

In the United States, heart disease is a prevalent and costly disease. In 2015, the 17 million Americans suffering from heart disease were responsible for \$89 billion in medical costs (American Heart Association, 2017). These costs are expected to balloon to \$215 billion annually by 2035 (American Heart Association, 2017). While percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI) have increased in significance (Haeder, 2019b), two common procedures conducted for patients with heart disease are coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery and heart valve surgery.

On average, CABG costs per procedure exceed \$75,000 (Papanicolas, Woskie, & Jha, 2018), while those for heart valve surgery exceed \$60,000 per procedure (Robinson, 2011). In the vast majority of cases, these cardiac surgeries are scheduled in advance and are not conducted in an emergency setting. This allows patients to compare providers in terms of quality if they choose to do so (American College of Emergency Physicians, 2013; Schumer et al., 2016). Extensive pre- and post-operative testing and consultation is usually required for both procedures.

The mean age for patients who undergo CABG surgery is around 65 years of age (Epstein, Polsky, Yang, Yang, & Groeneveld, 2011; Zheng et al., 2017). However, a quarter of surgeries involve patients above the age of 75 (Epstein et al., 2011). The number of seniors in this age group, or even older, is expected to increase significantly over the next decade (Aziz & Grover, 1999). Given the prevalence of coronary artery disease in America's seniors, CABG surgeries are relatively common among Medicare beneficiaries (Clark et al., 2012; Culler, Kugelmass, Brown, Reynolds, & Simon, 2015). Notably, costs associated with CABG are the largest expenditure for any medical or surgery procedure in the Medicare program (Epstein et al., 2011).

As a response to the high cost and frequent occurrence of these procedures, beginning in the 1990s, a number of states began implementing provider report cards. Research has shown that these report cards, based on risk-adjusted mortality rates, have led to improvements in quality over time (Fung, Lim, Mattke, Damberg, & Shekelle, 2008; Mukamel, Haeder, & Weimer, 2014). Further, studies have found that published risk-adjusted mortality rates seem to have positively affected insurance carriers and patients in their choice of providers (Mukamel, Weimer, Zwanziger, & Mushlin, 2002; Mukamel, Weimer, Zwanziger, Gorthy, & Mushlin, 2004). However, with exception of the effects of the Affordable Care Act (Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, 2015a; Yasaitis, Bekelman, & Polsky, 2017), we lack a detailed understanding of how provider networks interact with provider quality, particularly as it relates to Medicare Advantage.

Data

Quality reporting has shown to be beneficial to consumers. However, not all states provide quality information regarding individual providers to consumers about CABG and heart valve surgery outcomes (or most other medical procedures). Importantly, risk-adjusted mortality rates for CABG are generally considered the gold standard for quality measures because of the unidimensional nature of the outcome of interest (i.e., survival), appropriate and validated methodologies for risk-adjustment, and utilization over several decades (Mukamel et al., 2014; Mukamel, Murthy, & Weimer, 2000).

California and New York are the two states with the most sophisticated data collection efforts regarding CABG or CABG and heart valve surgeries. These states make those data widely available. Importantly, the programs in these states are well vetted and have been operational for years.

In California, the California Office of Statewide Planning and Development (OSHPD), a state agency which provides a large amount of data on the state's healthcare infrastructure, collects risk-adjusted mortality scores for CABG or CABG and valve surgery provides. These annual measures are based on operative mortality, which is defined as death within 30 days of surgery outside the hospital or death within 90 days inside of the hospital. The mortality rates use a sophisticated methodology that allows for appropriate comparisons across providers (Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, 2017, 2019).

Similarly, in New York, the New York State Department of Health works with the New York State Cardiac Advisory Committee to collect and publish bi-annual cardiac care quality measures. In line with California's approach, New York also relies on advanced and validated methods to make mortality rates comparable across patients and providers (New York State Department of Health, 2018).

Data about Medicare Advantage plans was obtained from the website medicarehelp.org, which lists information on all Medicare Advantage plans available in a given county. As necessary, these data were supplemented with data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Surgeon quality measures and provider, plan, and network data were linked using data obtained from *Vericred*. *Vericred*, under contract with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, obtains these data from insurers or machine-readable provider directories. Although not perfect, *Vericred* provides the most complete provider network data available and it is commonly used by researchers to assess provider networks (e.g., Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, forthcoming; Polsky, Weiner, & Zhang, 2017; Zhu, Zhang, & Polsky, 2017).

Methods, Measures, and Analytic Approach

Do Medicare Advantage plans in California and New York significantly restrict beneficiaries' access to high quality cardiac surgeons for CABG and heart valve replacements as compared to access for traditional Medicare beneficiaries? And, do they selectively contract with higher quality providers? To answer these questions, I undertook the following approach. First, I assessed to what degree Medicare Advantage plans imposed restrictions on beneficiaries by failing to include appropriate providers in their networks. I did so by analyzing whether beneficiaries had access to at least one higher quality provider within their respective Medicare Advantage network. Next, I assessed the choices offered to beneficiaries in terms of the number of higher quality surgeons available within their Medicare Advantage network.

I further illustrated this second measure by utilizing the approach pioneered by Polsky and Weiner (Polsky & Weiner, 2015), which relied on t-shirt size (from extra-small to extra-large) to illustrate network breadth. Sizes ranged from extra-small (less than 10% of available providers), small (10% to 25% of available providers), medium (25% to 40% of available providers), large (40% to 60% of available providers), and extra-large (more than 60% of available providers). In this analysis, I restricted the denominator to only surgeons of higher quality (opposed to all available surgeons). I also adapted Polsky and Weiner's (2015) approach further by accounting for the distance between the beneficiary and the provider since the effective size of networks could differ with distance from the beneficiary.

It should be noted that distance between beneficiary and cardiac surgeon could play an important role in determining patient access (Haeder et al., 2015a). From a consumer perspective, choice and access may be most important closer to home. However, as most CABG and valve surgeries are scheduled in advance, consumers may be willing to travel long distances in order to gain access to higher quality surgeons. Therefore, I compared access at 15 miles, 30 miles, 60 miles, 120 miles, and 240 miles for all assessments. In all cases, I compared the Medicare Advantage plans to access in traditional Medicare.

Finally, I analyzed the composition of provider networks in Medicare Advantage. Specifically, I assessed the percentage of higher quality providers in Medicare Advantage plans compared to their availability in traditional Medicare. By definition, Medicare Advantage plans restrict access by selectively contracting with a subset of available providers. Although restricting the number of providers, i.e., the adequacy of networks, is a relevant and important concern, some have argued that consumers could benefit from these restrictions if carriers disproportionately limited networks to higher quality providers (Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, 2015b).

Measures and Analytic Approach

In order to assess access to quality providers, I calculated two measures. First, utilizing the quality measures available for both states, I determined whether a cardiac surgeon's quality measure was better than the state average (i.e., "above average quality"). This measure was available for both California and New York. Second, again utilizing the available quality measures, I repeated the process for providers that were at least one standard deviation above the state average (i.e., "high quality"). It is important to point out that in California not a single provider was at least one standard deviation above average. As such, no high quality measure could be constructed.

To compare access to higher quality surgeons, I made use of dyads comparing access to surgeons based on the network offered by Medicare Advantage plans sold in both states to traditional Medicare. Unfortunately, the data provided by *Vericred* does not include all Medicare Advantage networks. It does, however, provide data for the vast majority of enrollees. In California, the plans provided coverage to about 1.13 million beneficiaries. Data for 170,000 beneficiaries (22%) were not available. Data were available for 230 of the state's 263 distinct Medicare Advantage CCP plans. In New York, about 500,000 enrollees (or 75%) were included in this study. This amounts to about 83%, or 989, of the state's 1,195 distinct Medicare Advantage CCP plans.

To create the dyads, I first established which Medicare Advantage plan was sold in each census block group in the two states. Second, I established a plan's provider network using the network and provider data collected by *Vericred*. Third, I determined the distance between the centroid of each respective census block group where the plan was sold and each cardiac surgeon's location. Fourth, I established a count for each census block group and Medicare Advantage plan combination for the number higher quality of surgeons within 15 miles, 30 miles, 60 miles, 120 miles, and 240 miles based on the network for the specific Medicare Advantage plan. This also allowed me to establish whether there was at least one surgeon available at the various levels of distance. For the second part of the dyad, I repeated this process for all appropriate providers in the state, the "network" available to beneficiaries in traditional Medicare.

The final step utilized the aforementioned dyads to compare the proportion of census block group/Medicare Advantage plan combinations that had at least one higher quality cardiac surgeon (see Table 1), the number of higher quality surgeons available (see Table 2), and the percentage of networks made up of higher quality surgeons (see Table 3) within the various distance levels to traditional Medicare in the two states. This approach offered the advantage of controlling directly for confounding factors, such as characteristics of the population and local healthcare environment. It also allowed for simple statistical tests (e.g., *t*-tests or tests of proportion) of differences within dyads (Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, 2020).

It should be noted that two important factors could significantly affect beneficiary access. First, Medicare Advantage plans sold as Preferred Preference Providers (PPOs) allow beneficiaries, by definition, to go outside their network (albeit generally at higher out-of-pocket costs). Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) customers do not have this choice. Network composition can also vary between these two types of coverage. Therefore, I provide separate analyses for each insurance type.

Table 1. Results for Tests of Proportion of Access to At Least One Surgeon

			Large Metro (Distance in Miles)					Metro (Distance in Miles)					Micro and Rural (Distance in Miles)				
			15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240
California	Above Average	HMO MA	0.78	0.91	0.99	0.99	0.10	0.52	0.71	0.87	0.95	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.50	1.00
		HMO TM	0.96	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.76	0.93	0.98	0.10	1.00	0.06	0.58	0.95	1.00	1.00
		PPO MA	0.78	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.42	0.72	0.92	0.99	1.00	--	--	--	--	--
		PPO TM	0.96	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.79	0.95	0.99	0.10	1.00	--	--	--	--	--
New York	Above Average	HMO MA	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.41	0.57	0.68	0.86	0.93	0.02	0.17	0.61	0.88	0.99
		HMO TM	0.98	0.10	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.66	0.87	0.95	1.00	1.00	0.03	0.26	0.79	0.96	1.00
		PPO MA	0.85	0.91	0.95	0.95	1.00	0.35	0.52	0.59	0.75	0.88	0.04	0.16	0.55	0.85	0.99
		PPO TM	0.97	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.61	0.82	0.90	1.00	1.00	0.04	0.22	0.66	0.95	1.00
	High Quality	HMO MA	0.72	0.80	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.09	0.15	0.29	0.56	0.79	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.44	0.82
		HMO TM	0.90	0.10	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.15	0.24	0.41	0.10	1.00	0.00	0.03	0.31	0.86	1.00
		PPO MA	0.70	0.85	0.94	0.95	0.95	0.03	0.06	0.18	0.55	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.48	0.87
		PPO TM	0.88	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.13	0.21	0.34	0.10	1.00	0.00	0.02	0.23	0.81	1.00

Note: Bold highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between Traditional Medicare (TM) and Medicare Advantage (MA) at $p < 0.001$. “HMO” indicates Health Maintenance Organization; “PPO” indicates Preferred Provider Organization.

Table 2. T-Test Results for the Number of Available Surgeons

			Large Metro (Distance in Miles)					Metro (Distance in Miles)					Micro and Rural (Distance in Miles)				
			15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240
California	Above Average	HMO MA	3.5	9.1	17.1	21.3	23.8	1.6	3.6	8.5	19.2	24.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.5	7.4
		HMO TM	13.2	31.2	55.0	78.2	97.7	5.0	10.1	24.9	65.8	92.4	0.3	2.0	6.6	30.3	80.2
		HMO Pr	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Above Average	PPO MA	1.2	3.5	8.6	10.8	13.9	0.7	1.8	4.0	9.5	12.3	--	--	--	--	--
		PPO TM	13.8	32.7	57.3	80.1	100.1	6.5	12.8	27.7	70.2	94.4	--	--	--	--	--
		PPO Pr	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	--	--	--	--	--
New York	Above Average	HMO MA	18.3	26.3	30.7	31.7	34.3	1.0	2.1	4.5	8.6	18.5	0.0	0.3	2.2	9.1	22.7
		HMO TM	35.5	52.9	63.1	67.1	77.0	1.8	3.8	9.5	18.7	49.9	0.1	0.5	3.7	21.3	63.0
		HMO Pr	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.4
	Above Average	PPO MA	5.7	8.5	10.0	11.0	11.6	1.0	1.7	3.3	6.4	10.5	0.1	0.4	2.2	7.0	11.1
		PPO TM	33.3	51.5	63.2	67.3	77.1	1.9	3.5	9.6	20.2	64.4	0.1	0.5	3.5	19.3	65.6
		PPO Pr	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.2
	High Quality	HMO MA	3.9	5.6	6.7	6.7	6.7	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.2	4.0
		HMO TM	7.5	10.9	13.9	15.0	15.0	0.3	0.7	2.0	3.9	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	4.0	13.0
		HMO Pr	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3			0.2	0.3	0.3
	High Quality	PPO MA	1.4	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.8
		PPO TM	7.0	10.7	14.0	15.0	15.1	0.2	0.5	1.7	4.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	3.4	13.5
		PPO Pr	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1			0.3	0.2	0.1

Note: “Pr” indicates proportion. Bold highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between Traditional Medicare (TM) and Medicare Advantage (MA) at $p < 0.001$. “HMO” indicates Health Maintenance Organization; “PPO” indicates Preferred Provider Organization.

Table 3. Percentage of Networks Made Up of Higher Quality Surgeons

			Large Metro <i>(Distance in Miles)</i>					Metro <i>(Distance in Miles)</i>					Micro and Rural <i>(Distance in Miles)</i>				
			15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240	15	30	60	120	240
California	Above Average	HMO MA	53.0	54.0	56.8	56.7	57.3	67.8	66.6	63.5	62.1	61.1	--	--	100.0	96.1	86.2
		HMO TM	59.0	59.2	60.6	61.7	63.6	69.4	68.2	65.8	64.4	63.8	--	--	77.6	73.9	72.2
		PPO MA	87.3	83.2	68.4	59.8	58.3	42.8	49.6	56.1	60.7	57.5	--	--	--	--	--
		PPO TM	56.6	57.0	59.3	60.4	62.4	71.9	71.2	67.3	63.0	61.7	--	--	--	--	--
New York	Above Average	HMO MA	74.0	74.2	74.3	74.5	71.4	32.4	36.0	36.0	41.8	49.5	25.9	32.0	39.7	50.5	57.6
		HMO TM	70.2	70.1	68.5	69.0	64.7	40.5	42.3	42.8	47.7	54.3	17.8	31.8	42.7	50.9	58.7
		PPO MA	78.4	78.0	78.9	79.1	72.3	41.1	45.0	42.4	40.4	49.2	32.4	30.5	41.5	47.5	49.7
		PPO TM	71.4	70.5	68.6	68.9	64.7	43.4	46.0	46.6	50.0	58.3	24.3	26.0	42.1	52.1	59.6
	High Quality	HMO MA	14.7	14.6	15.0	14.7	13.1	3.2	3.4	5.4	7.4	10.7	0.0	0.1	1.5	6.0	11.5
		HMO TM	14.7	14.6	15.1	15.4	12.6	6.6	7.4	7.8	11.1	10.5	0.0	0.8	5.1	8.8	11.8
		PPO MA	17.3	16.2	16.1	14.7	12.3	0.9	1.5	3.8	4.5	7.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	3.6	6.7
		PPO TM	14.5	14.5	15.1	15.4	12.6	3.3	4.7	5.3	10.1	11.7	0.0	0.4	4.8	7.9	12.1

Note: Bold highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between Traditional Medicare (TM) and Medicare Advantage (MA) at $p < 0.001$. “HMO” indicates Health Maintenance Organization; “PPO” indicates Preferred Provider Organization.

Second, the urbanity of a given area could directly affect healthcare markets. CMS accounts for this factor and designates each of the nation's counties as large metropolitan, metropolitan, micropolitan, rural or Counties with Extreme Access (CEAC) based on population and population density. I follow CMS's designation and provide separate analyses based on county type; however, I combine micropolitan, rural, and CEAC areas because of the limited number of these cases.

Results

Minimum Level of Access to Higher Quality Providers

Minimum access to higher quality providers, if defined as access to at least one higher quality cardiac surgeon, will likely always be superior for traditional Medicare beneficiaries because all surgeons available to Medicare Advantage beneficiaries are also accessible in traditional Medicare. Although it may be possible that Medicare Advantage plans contract with providers of higher quality, they may do so by creating "artificial provider deserts"—that is, by failing to contract with providers in certain areas. The empirical issue, then, becomes assessing whether this is the case; and, if so, examining how substantive the differences are.

In California (Table 1), using tests of proportion, important patterns are evident. Looking at the results for large metropolitan areas, traditional Medicare fares better at the smallest distance level compared to Medicare Advantage. However, the difference is substantively small, except at 15 miles, for both HMOs and PPOs. For HMOs, the limitations reach distances of 30 miles. Access within Medicare Advantage is essentially similar between HMOs and PPOs.

Regarding metropolitan areas, overall access (even for traditional Medicare beneficiaries) is reduced when compared to large metropolitan areas. Access, however, is rather similar between Medicare Advantage PPOs and HMOs at the various distance levels. Notably, HMOs fare slightly better at shorter distances. Carrier network decisions contribute to access restrictions up to a distance of 30 miles; and, at times even up to 60 miles. Finally, access is decidedly worse (even at large distances) in micropolitan and rural areas where only HMO Medicare Advantage plans are sold in California. It is important to point out that carrier imposed restrictions here create areas devoid of providers up to distances of 60 miles. This creates significant access limitations even at distances of 120 miles.

The picture is rather similar in New York's large and standard metropolitan areas. Access appears slightly better in large metropolitan areas. However, access is slightly worse in standard metropolitan areas when compared to California (Table 1). However, access to above average surgeons is somewhat better in the less populated parts of New York state, particularly at distances of 60 and 120 miles. For both PPOs and HMOs, differences from traditional Medicare are relatively small in these areas. This is a stark contrast to California. In New York, then, it appears that carriers play a more limited role in creating artificial access barriers.

Overall, Medicare Advantage fares consistently worse than traditional Medicare. The differences, however, are often substantively small. With regard to high quality surgeons, access mirrors the situation for above average surgeons in large metropolitan areas, albeit at slightly lower levels. A significant difference emerges, however, for metropolitans versus micropolitan and rural areas. Access is relatively limited in micropolitan and rural areas, even for traditional Medicare beneficiaries, due to the limited number of higher quality surgeons. Similarly, Medicare Advantage is worse in these areas, often substantively so, as carriers tend to exclude providers up to 240 miles.

Beneficiary Choice

Providing a minimum level of access is important but providing a level of choice to beneficiaries also matters. Indeed, some providers may not have the capacity to serve additional beneficiaries because they are unable to accept new patients. Moreover, beneficiaries may favor a degree of choice. Therefore, my next step was to compare the overall number of higher quality surgeons available to traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Again, members of traditional Medicare should do at least as well as Medicare Advantage beneficiaries in terms of access because surgeons available to Medicare Advantage members are also available to traditional Medicare.

In California (Table 2), results of *t*-tests show that access for HMO beneficiaries in large metropolitan areas amounts to about one quarter to one third of that compared to their traditional Medicare counterparts. While access is slightly better (percentage wise) in metropolitan areas, it is somewhat worse (particularly at shorter distances) in terms of the overall number of providers. Access levels in rural areas are relatively poor for both traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage. While traditional Medicare members' access improves at 60 miles, Medicare Advantage access appears to lag. Again, a significant role is played by carriers in creating access barriers. Differences are consistently statistically and substantively different across varying degrees of rurality. Notably, Medicare Advantage PPO plans fare significantly worse than their HMO counterparts (reaching about half in terms of numbers as compared to HMOs) and access levels hover around 0.09 to 0.15.

In New York (Table 2), the overall pattern of a reduction in choice with an increase in rurality holds for both above average and high quality surgeons. Moreover, HMOs generally offer a larger degree of choice to their beneficiaries, both in absolute terms and percentage wise. Yet, the results differ significantly from California in several respects. While the best access in New York is also in large and standard metropolitan areas, Medicare Advantage beneficiaries in the former have far more providers to choose from in both PPOs and HMOs than in California. Importantly, access in micropolitan and rural areas, while worse than in metropolitan areas of any kind, is better in absolute and relative terms than in California.

Overall, PPOs again offer more limited access than HMOs; and, the differences are rather large. The one exception to this pattern appears to occur in micropolitan and rural areas at distance levels up to 120 miles, where PPOs appear to outperform HMOs. In relative terms, PPOs fare better in standard metropolitan areas than in large metropolitan areas. The patterns described for above average surgeons are remarkably similar for high quality surgeons. However, it is worth noting that these surgeons appear to be particularly clustered in large metropolitan areas with implications for travel distances in metropolitan and rural areas.

Breadth of Networks

As previously mentioned, another way to think about beneficiary choice is the approach offered by Polsky and Weiner (2015). This approach compares the number of providers in a network with all available providers in percentage terms. Polsky and Weiner (2015) then categorize network breadth based on t-shirt sizes from extra-small to extra-large.

Using the adapted Polsky and Weiner (2015) classification, in California the previous pattern for access based on the rurality of the area is again evident (see Figure 1). Access is best in large metropolitan areas, but standard metropolitan areas show improvements in access at a 30-mile distance for both HMOs and PPOs. Additionally, networks tend to be more limited in breadth for PPO plans when compared to HMO plans across all distance levels. HMOs also offer a larger amount of diversity in terms of network breadth. However, for HMOs, medium to extra-large network sizes make up the majority of networks at distances up to 120 miles. Narrower networks are more prevalent at 240 miles.

The low levels of access in micropolitan and rural areas at smaller distances are again evident. Indeed, it takes up to 60 miles for near-universal access to exist. Notably, a substantial number of beneficiaries in rural areas have access to no providers at distances exceeding 60 miles. Even then, networks are extremely narrow.

In New York (see Figure 2), access to above average surgeons in HMOs is best in large metropolitan areas. It is slightly worse in standard metropolitan areas; and, it is significantly worse at distances of up to 60 and 120 miles in micropolitan and rural areas. Notably, in large metropolitan areas and metropolitan areas at distances in excess of 15 miles, medium to extra-large networks make up the majority of plans (at times close to 80%).

Micropolitan and rural areas exhibit a relatively large percentage of networks without any provider up to 60 miles, compared to 30 miles in California. As in California, PPO plans trend toward smaller networks in large metropolitan areas. However, in standard metropolitan areas, there is also a substantive number of extra-large networks at distances of up to 120 miles. Access in micropolitan and rural areas is similarly restricted as it is in HMO plans.

When it comes to high quality surgeons (see Figure 3), large metropolitan areas fare significantly better than all other areas at distances of up to 60 miles; and, at this distance level, at least 60% of networks do not have access to any providers at all outside of large metropolitan areas. Even in large metropolitan areas, at distances of 15 miles and fewer, 10% of plans do not include any surgeons. However, overall network sizes tend to be diverse and trending larger even at the largest distance levels.

Interestingly, when it comes to high quality surgeons, metropolitan areas in New York tend to be more similar to micropolitan and rural areas than they do to large metropolitan areas. As for PPOs, similar patterns emerge comparing large metropolitan areas to others. As previously described, PPOs also are disproportionately small and extra small.

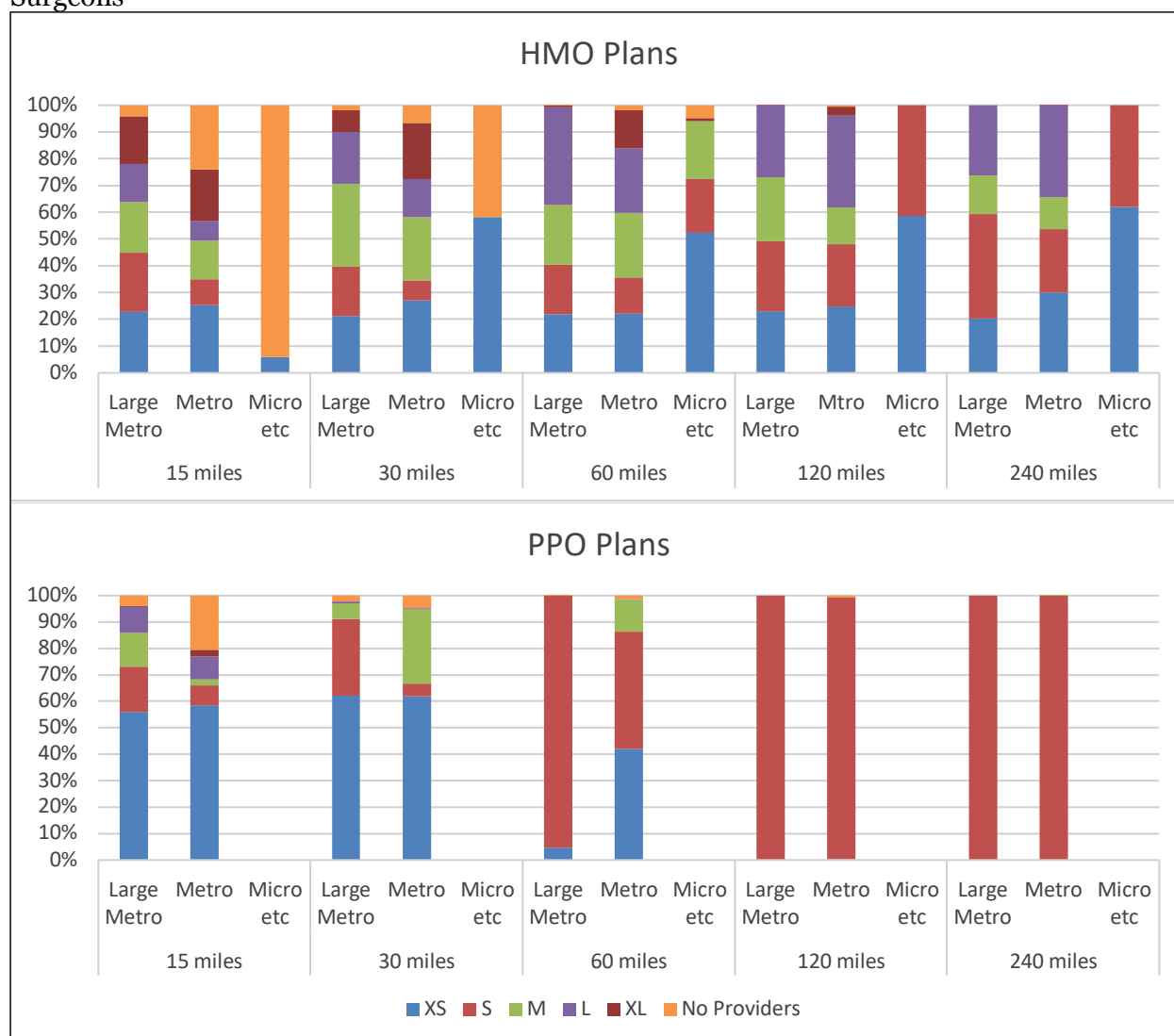
Selectively Contracting for Quality

As mentioned above, selective contracting by Medicare Advantage plans may benefit consumers if carriers deliberately exclude lower quality providers. Table 3 compares (by using *t*-tests) the percentage of provider networks in Medicare Advantage and traditional Medicare made up of higher quality surgeons. It should be noted that these comparisons are biased since they exclude Medicare Advantage plans without any providers. That is, comparisons are limited to cases in which networks for both Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage include at least one provider (the case of empty networks or artificial provider deserts has been previously discussed).

In California's large metropolitan areas, traditional Medicare consistently fares about four to six percentage points better than Medicare Advantage HMOs at all distance levels. Traditional Medicare also fares better in standard metropolitan areas. The differences, however, become even less substantive and make up about two percentage points. Overall percentage levels are similar across areas. However, in micropolitan and rural areas, Medicare Advantage plans consistently outperform traditional Medicare. These results should be taken with caution given the limited number of observations in this category.

The situation differs for PPO plans. In large metropolitan areas, Medicare Advantage PPO plans do better in terms of quality than traditional Medicare up to the 60-mile marker. Moreover, the differences are substantive, ranging from 10 to 30 percentage points. At larger distances, traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage become substantively similar. In standard metropolitan areas, traditional Medicare outperforms Medicare Advantage by between 10 and 30 percentage points. Again, at larger distances the differences become less consequential.

Figure 1. Network Breadth of Medicare Advantage Plans (CA): Above Average Quality Surgeons

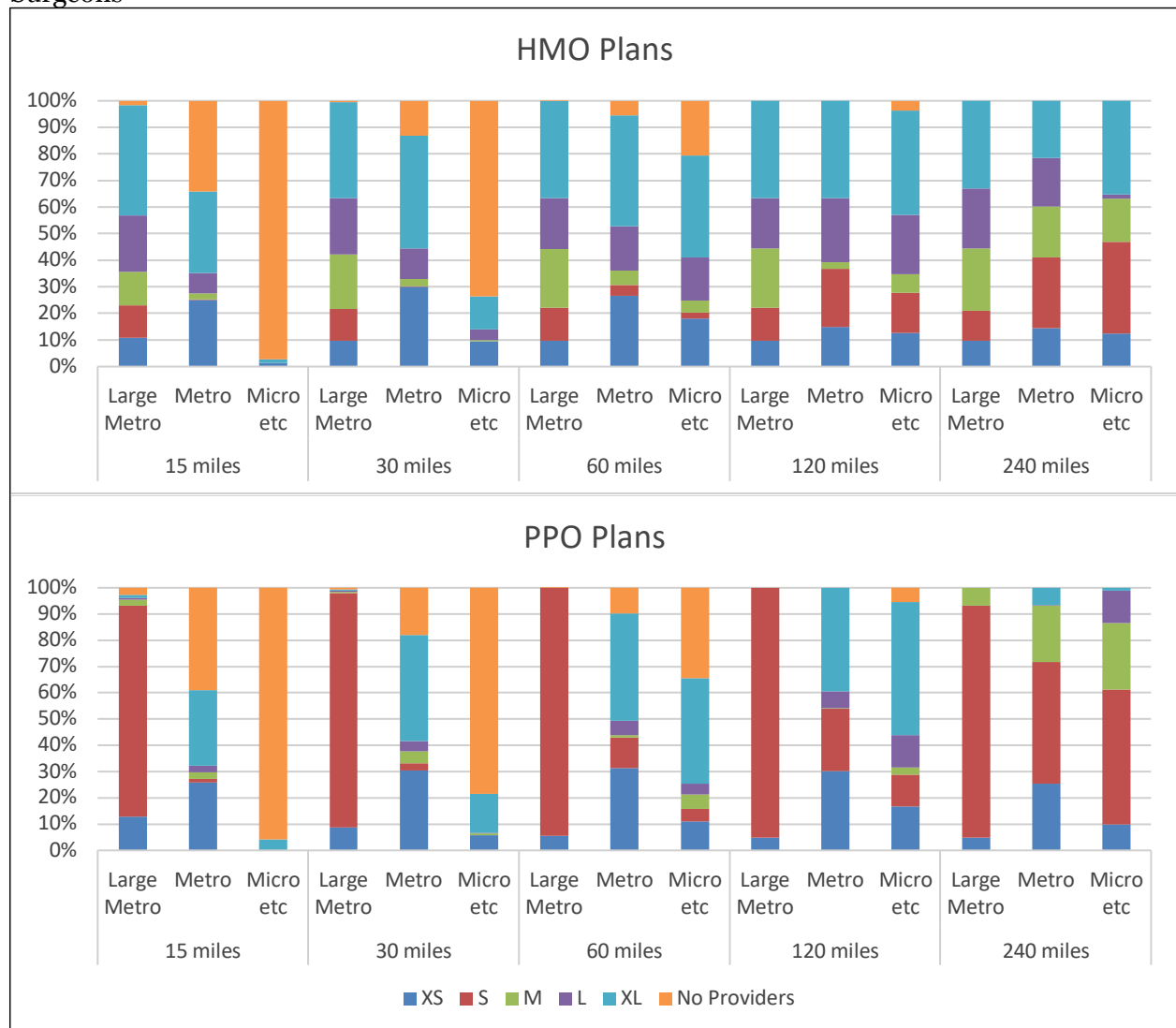


An important Medicare Advantage carrier in California is Kaiser Permanente; and, it is well known for its approach to providing healthcare. In order to assess whether this carrier biases the results, I reanalyzed the California data excluding Kaiser Permanente plans (results omitted, available upon request). The findings were almost identical in every aspect.

In New York, Medicare Advantage consistently does better than traditional Medicare in large metropolitan areas for both PPO and HMO plans in terms of above average surgeons. For HMOs, plan differences amount to about four percentage points, while for PPOs the differences are somewhat larger. In metropolitan areas, this picture is reversed; and, traditional Medicare offers better access to above average surgeons. The difference is about six to eight percentage points for HMOs, and two to nine percentage points for PPOs. The difference for PPOs increases at larger distance levels.

Overall, access is reduced when compared to large metropolitan areas. For micropolitan and rural areas, Medicare Advantage provides better access at shorter distances while the reverse holds true at larger distances. In general, access is worse at shorter distances but improves as distance increases.

Figure 2. Network Breadth of Medicare Advantage Plans (NY): Above Average Quality Surgeons



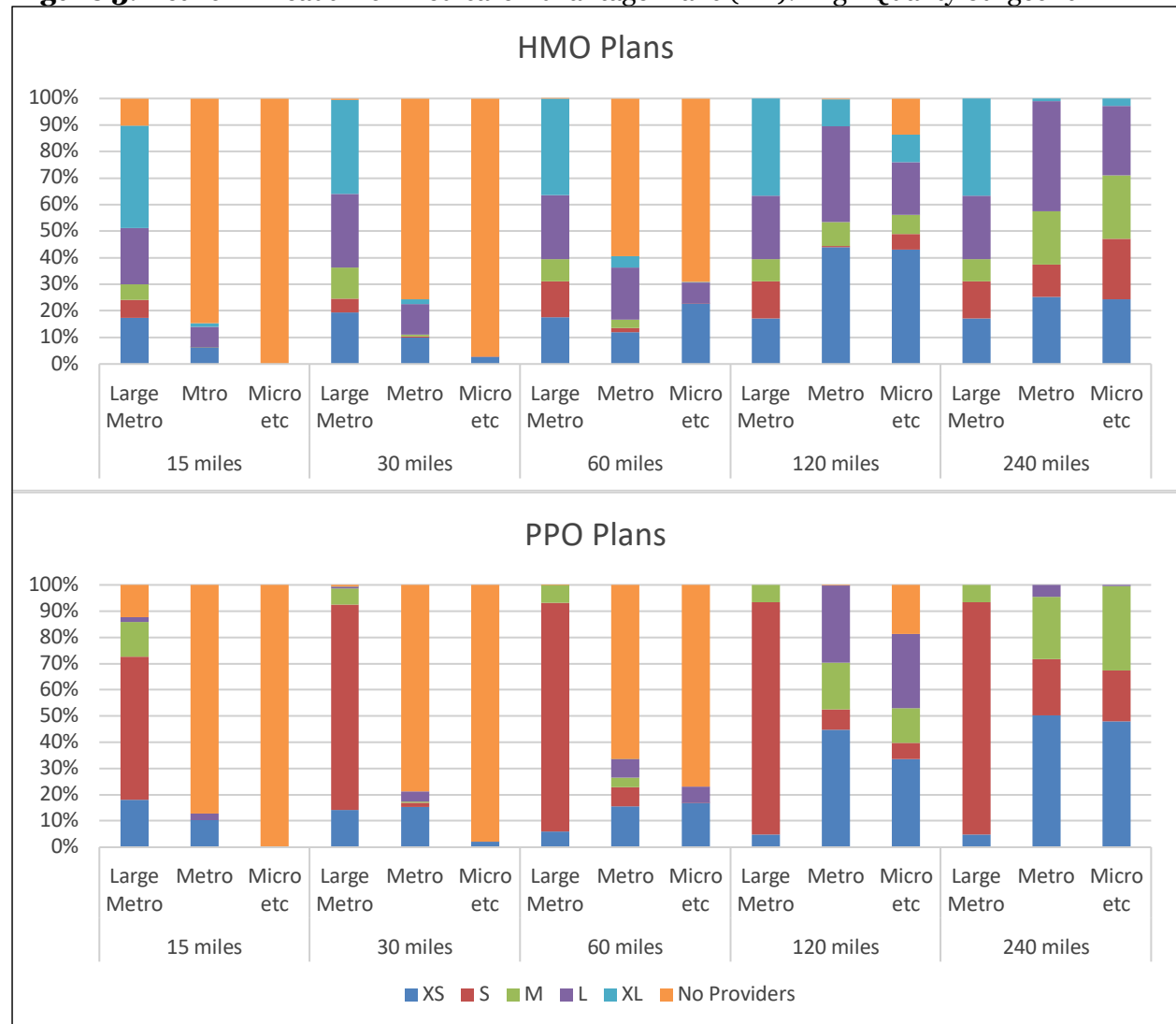
Finally, differences in access to high quality surgeons in New York's large metropolitan areas is rather similar for HMOs and PPOs. However, traditional Medicare appears to perform somewhat better in metropolitan areas, particularly up to 120 miles. Notably, there is a marked difference in terms of absolute numbers between large metropolitan areas and the two other types of areas (i.e., micropolitan and rural areas). Traditional Medicare also generally outperforms Medicare

Advantage plans in micropolitan and rural areas of the state. For HMOs, differences are somewhat meaningful at 60 and 120 miles, while the same holds true for PPOs at 60 miles and above.

Discussion and Limitations

The Medicare Advantage program has seen significant, but relatively unexamined, expansion over the past decade; and, we know little about how Medicare Advantage beneficiaries access services, particularly services of higher quality. We also know little about how access is connected to provider networks. This study is one of the first to address this issue. As such,

Figure 3. Network Breadth for Medicare Advantage Plans (NY): High Quality Surgeons



this study adds to our limited knowledge of both Medicare Advantage and network design with regard to access to higher quality providers.

The findings from this study should be somewhat encouraging for those concerned about network restrictions in Medicare Advantage. Beneficiaries in metropolitan areas of both California and New York, particularly large metropolitan areas, have comparable access to above average and high quality cardiac surgeons as do traditional Medicare beneficiaries. However, as shown in this study, limitations may be present at shorter distances. Moreover, financial and transportation barriers may impose undue restrictions on a subset of low income seniors. It should also be pointed out that Medicare Advantage beneficiaries may be more limited in their choices, as they consistently have fewer surgeons to choose from than traditional Medicare. This may also lead to longer waiting times. Overall, however, in large metropolitan areas, market forces may create sufficient incentives for carriers to provide appropriate levels of access.

Despite these possible encouraging findings, the study also raises significant concerns about the restricted access provided under Medicare Advantage plans outside of large metropolitan areas, at least with regard to CABG and heart valve surgeries. These concerns grow exponentially with increasing degrees of rurality. Importantly, while some of these limitations

are inherent in the market dynamics of healthcare and the maldistribution of providers, particularly at shorter distances, Medicare Advantage carriers exacerbate the situation via their network designs. Indeed, the data analyzed here indicate that relatively good levels of access are achievable at distances of at least 120 miles for traditional Medicare beneficiaries. Often, Medicare Advantage beneficiaries do not reach comparable levels until 240 miles. This is particularly evident in California and for high quality providers in New York.

There are also notable differences between the two states in this study. Unquestionably, some of these differences are a direct result of general healthcare system characteristics of the respective states. This includes the general distribution of population centers and medical providers. Additionally, both states exhibit different Medicare Advantage market characteristics. Specifically, there are a limited number of larger carriers in California and a rather large number of smaller carriers in New York, including many staff-based HMOs. Indeed, local healthcare environments and historical developments have been shown to play a crucial role in the development of Medicare Advantage markets (Brown & Gold, 1999). Although the Medicare Advantage program is mostly regulated by the federal government, state regulatory environments can also account for some of the differences via spillover from state regulated insurance products. This may also account for the fact the HMOs appear to generally outperform PPOs since the former are often more tightly regulated.

The findings presented on insurance plans indicate substantial diversity across and even within states. That is, insurance products differ significantly with regard to their networks and the limitations they impose on beneficiaries. Similarly, network size does not stay static across distances from potential beneficiaries, even within the same insurance product. In both states, it was evident that the extent of networks, as measured by t-shirt sizes, changed significantly across distances in terms of individual networks and the overall proportion of sizes.

Overall, the findings presented in this study raise important questions about the connection between provider networks and beneficiary access to medical services. While the study focuses on Medicare Advantage, other insurance products with limitations on provider access such as the Affordable Care Act marketplace-based or commercial plans may exhibit similar problems. Thus, these also deserve empirical assessment. This may particularly hold for the Affordable Care Act's insurance marketplaces, which are prone to be rather narrow in terms of networks (Haeder et al., 2015a, 2015b; Haeder, Weimer, & Mukamel, 2019a).

Another important avenue for future research connects the findings on access limitations presented here to actual health outcomes for beneficiaries. Given the established literature on the detrimental effects of travel distance and provider access for "transportation-disadvantaged" populations (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2014, p. 4), there may be significant health implications for these populations. Moreover, analyses utilizing surveys and information from claims databases could further illuminate the real world implications of these initial findings. The effect of network design on beneficiaries switching to traditional Medicare also deserves scholarly attention.

This study is not without imitations. For one, the analysis is limited to two states, which means that it is not wholly generalizable. However, as mentioned above, both states exhibit different healthcare characteristics. Moreover, larger patterns are rather consistent across both states by plan type and demographic area, while both states offer significant diversity within their boundaries with regard to the degree of rurality of their counties. This may provide some indication that the underlying drivers of the findings here are applicable to other states and regions.

This study is also focused on only one specialty and procedure. However, the underlying market forces and incentive structures for carriers are quite similar across medical specialties, particularly those with a limited supply of providers. Moreover, the fact that the Medicare

Advantage program is largely regulated and overseen by the federal government further eases concerns about the external validity of findings.

Another limitation is that, given the lack of detailed enrollment data, I was only able to focus on plans and not beneficiaries. This, however, does not diminish the overall patterns established and the concerns that have been raised. Finally, network data were not available for all plans offered in the two states. This is unfortunate, but again, incentives and market forces apply to all carriers. Moreover, a cursory examination of missing plans does not indicate a systematic pattern, and the vast majority of plans and beneficiaries in the two states are covered by this analysis.

Conclusion

This study adds to a growing literature that illustrates the mounting challenges of accessing healthcare services in rural America. While some of these challenges may be inherently related to rural living, the analyses presented here indicate that insurance carriers can further exacerbate the problem. Indeed, given their history of biased selection as well as the generally higher healthcare needs of rural populations, one can speculate that provider network limitations may serve as another tool for discriminating against sicker consumers in order to maximize profitability. Concerns are more limited for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries in large metropolitan areas. One should note that at times it may be prudent to trade longer travel distances for access to higher quality providers. However, many Medicare Advantage beneficiaries are of lower income and limited mobility. Hence, even short distances may pose significant problems for healthcare access.

The findings of this study hold important policy implications. For one, they indicate a potential need for revising CMS network adequacy standards and oversight for Medicare Advantage plans, particularly in rural areas. For now, Medicare Advantage beneficiaries should at the very least be made aware of the potential need to travel long distances when making their coverage decisions during open enrollment.

Second, policymakers and stakeholders should assess whether the unquestionable benefits of Medicare Advantage, i.e., its expanded benefits and out-of-pocket protections, are worth the limitations described here. For many beneficiaries, particularly those in good health and with ample resources, accepting network limitations may not be a problem. Yet, from a policy perspective, we should be mindful of the ongoing segmentation of the Medicare population. Indeed, sicker enrollees may disproportionately end up in traditional Medicare, while insurance carriers and healthier enrollees may be subsidized in an alternate system.

Third, the findings from this study highlight the role of social determinants of health, particularly access to transportation, in healthcare access. That is, concerns about the contributions of travel and barriers to travel point to the inclusion of nonemergency medical transportation as an essential benefit of health insurance. This, of course, is already the case in Medicaid (Adelberg & Simon, 2017). Notably, a small number of Medicare Advantage plans have also moved in this direction (Pope, 2016).

Long term, these findings indicate the need for a better approach toward thinking about provider networks and assessing network size by scholars and regulators that accounts for distance between the beneficiary and the provider. Given that CMS currently assesses provider networks in Medicare Advantage for adequacy, a more nuanced approach may be useful. Until then, given the complexities of network regulation, it may be most beneficial to provide meaningful and understandable information to consumers who are inherently and personally affected by network restrictions when making decisions about their insurance coverage (Haeder et al., 2019b; Mukamel et al., 2014).

Of course, there is ample evidence that consumers are often overwhelmed by making these types of choices (Schwartz, 2004). This may especially apply to the aging beneficiary population in Medicare (Hanoch & Rice, 2006; McWilliams, Afendulis, McGuire, & Landon, 2011). Nonetheless, until we move toward more meaningful approaches to network regulation, Medicare beneficiaries expecting to undergo one of the surgeries described here should be mindful of the choices they make during open enrollment.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Institutional Logics and Diverging Organizational Forms: An Empirical Study in Russia

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Using an institutional logics approach, this study investigates how the institutional logics of leaders of grassroots social service nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia changed over time and how these changes related to changes in organizational mission, people served, professionalization, and interactions with the government. Relying on interviews as well as other data gathered, this analysis of organizational leaders' narratives reveals the identities and experiences that these leaders turn to in their sensemaking of significant events. The findings show that, on the one hand, social welfare NGOs continued to provide services, increased their advocacy efforts, and professionalized their staff. Volunteer organizations, on the other hand, discontinued provision of social services turning instead to the recruitment and development of volunteers. Theoretically, this empirical case illustrates how an interplay of factors at multiple levels can affect the expression of logics at the organizational level.

Keywords: Institutional Logics, Russia, Social Service, NGO, Microfoundations

Using an institutional logics approach, this study focuses on two types of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) emerging from similar beginnings; it highlights how changes in logics of social service NGO leaders interacted with societal level logics and contextual factors to influence organizational development. In doing so, the study provides an empirical case for further theory development in this area.

Institutional logics, as defined by Thornton and Ocasio (2008), are the “socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values, and beliefs by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their daily activity” (p. 101). There has been a great deal of scholarly attention directed at the macro and meso levels of logics and how these levels influence institutional change and organizational decision-making (for summaries, see Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012; Zilber, 2016). These studies have been useful in illustrating the structural constraints of logics.

However, the institutional logics perspective assumes that the exercise of agency by individuals is both limited and facilitated by logics. Moreover, this perspective assumes that individual action can transform organizations and their associated logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Sewell, 1992). Yet, it has only been recently that researchers have begun to explore the

micro dimension of logics and the connection to other levels (Ocasio, Thornton, & Lounsbury, 2017; Zilber, 2016).

The microfoundations of institutional logics, at a granular level, are situated in the sensemaking of individual minds and in the interactions between individuals. Although the current study is not focused at the level of cognition or social interaction, it is focused just one step away. That is, this study is based on narratives of key actors making sense of their organizations' histories and change. The research questions are: *How do the institutional logics of leaders of grassroots social service NGOs change over time? And, how are these changes related to changes in organizational mission, people served, professionalization, and interactions with the government?*

This research focuses on NGOs that have emerged from grassroots social service volunteer groups in the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia. The post-Soviet Russian context was characterized by multiple competing institutional logics at all levels due to the introduction of new governmental (and other) institutional forms and the sudden influx of ideas from abroad. In addition, social and organizational policy changes often occurred, making the Russian NGO setting ideal for examining changes in leaders' logics.

Through an analysis of interviews with leaders in these organizations, this study contributes an empirical case study to the theoretical literature on how the sensemaking of individuals, embedded in a particular context, can affect the expression of logics at the organizational level. The findings from this study should be of interest to practitioners working in cross cultural contexts, both internationally and locally, as they work to understand how competing logics in a single historical context might produce varying organizational forms.

The article is organized as follows: the next section lays the theoretical foundation, defining institutional logics and microfoundations of logics. Following this is a section covering the historical, economic, and policy setting of social service NGOs in Russia (along with attendant societal level logics) to provide context for the individual sensemaking of the interviewed organizational leaders. Next, are sections on data and analysis. Finally, the findings and discussion sections use the microfoundations model to demonstrate how the identities and experiences of leaders in initially similar organizations served to guide their sensemaking in a constantly changing environment. Their developing logics diverged into two different streams, each with specific repercussions on organizational mission, people served, level of professionalization, and types of interactions with the government.

Literature Review

Alford and Friedland (1985) described institutional orders such as capitalism and state bureaucracy and defined the term institutional logics as sets of practices and beliefs in relation to specific institutional orders. The institutional logics perspective focuses on the effect of various institutional logics on individuals and organizations. Although later work has developed these ideas further with varying emphases (e.g., Jackall, 1988; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999), Thornton and Ocasio (2008, pp. 101-102) have argued that,

the various definitions of institutional logics all presuppose a core meta-theory: to understand individual and organizational behavior, it must be located in a social and institutional context, and this institutional context both regularizes behavior and provides opportunity for agency and change.

Logics exist at several levels. There are societal, organizational, and individual logics. At the societal level there exist institutional orders and their associated logics. Theorists and researchers have defined several logics, including family; community, social, and civil society; social welfare; religion; state; market; profession; and, corporation among others (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Jay, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2013; Thornton et al., 2012). Nested within societal level logics, organizational and individual level logics draw from these logics. Embedded agency is the phrase commonly used to describe the structural constraints of institutional logics on social actors while still allowing for agency.

Microfoundations of Institutional Logics

Thornton, et al. (2012) developed a model regarding microfoundations of institutional logics. The aim of the model was to understand not only the structural constraints on individual actors, but also the ways in which actors influence adaptations and creation of logics from the bottom up. Undergirding their model are three concepts they use to explain human behavior.

The first concept is cultural embeddedness, which they define as the embeddedness of individuals in social groups. Cultures provide “individuals with symbolic structures to understand and construct their environments” (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 79). The concept of cultural embeddedness allows for the influence and constraints of meso- and macro-structures and ideas on individual actors.

The second concept is bounded intentionality. This concept blends social identity, goals, and cognitive limitations. The concept also recognizes that actors’ intentions are influenced by their choice of social identities and goals at any time and they are bounded by limitations (such as limitations on what they can attend to).

The third concept is situationism, which acknowledges that individual behavior is influenced by the characteristics of a situation. For example, the resource environment can influence the types of practices that are enacted. Thus, this results in the creation of institutional logics (Jones, Maoret, Massa, & Svejnova, 2012).

Thornton and colleagues (2012) blend these concepts in their model with the theory of dynamic constructivism to describe how “individuals learn multiple contrasting and often contradictory institutional logics through social interactions and socialization” (p. 83). Research has affirmed that most organizations and individuals embody multiple logics simultaneously (e.g., Besharov & Smith, 2014; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011; McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2010; Vickers, Lyon, Sepulveda, & McMullin, 2017).

Constructivist elements such as availability (i.e., knowledge and information in individuals’ memory that can be used for sensemaking), accessibility (i.e., information that actually comes to mind), and activation (i.e., the use of this knowledge in social interaction) are all important in shaping institutional logics. Thornton and colleagues (2012) purport that “given cognitive limitations, only a subset of the categorical elements of an institutional logic affects the cognition of actors at any moment in time and place” (p. 89).

One might question, then, how the attention of actors is focused. However, the institutional logics of the structures in which actors are embedded are there to focus attention, as are their past experiences, identities, and goals. Interactions with other social actors also provide opportunities to focus attention on specific aspects of various logics.

Thornton and colleagues (2012, p. 93) describe attention as either automatic or controlled, with most individual attention being automatic. This leads actors to apply those logics,

identities, and goals that are more readily available and accessible. Controlled attention involves intentional thought by individuals in choosing logics and applying them and is often activated when a situational shift occurs or contradictions between logics and practices are perceived. When actors interact, their foci of attention are expanded and shaped by each other.

Decision-making by actors is also influenced by sensemaking, “an ongoing retrospective process that rationalizes organizational behavior...Institutional logics are both building blocks of sensemaking and sensemaking is a mechanism by which logics are transformed” (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 96). Mobilization occurs when the sensemaking of a group moves people toward collective action. Language is critical to the sensemaking process and to the articulation of frames and narratives. Frames, as defined by Thornton and colleagues (2012), are “general symbolic constructions, applicable across a wide variety of practices and social actors” (p. 155).

Narratives, on the other hand, use language to make sense of and give meaning to specific actors, events, and practices (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 155). Narratives are mechanisms of sensemaking based on the salient stimuli to which actors are paying attention. Narratives shared between actors serve to guide group sensemaking and decision-making in turn leading to the adaptation and/or creation of new practices and institutional logics.

Russian Social Service NGOs and Societal Logics: Historical, Economic, and Policy Context

This section summarizes the social service context and related societal level logics in which NGOs in this study were embedded. The Soviet Union’s social policy structure and attendant logics were still lingering in the institutional environment when the ideas and values of Western NGOs entered the arena.

The Soviet Period

During the Soviet period (1917/22-1991), the government provided universal social welfare benefits through workplaces, schools, and municipalities. In this system, independent organizations or grassroots initiatives were nearly nonexistent. When services were provided on a local level by these organizations, they did not engage in policymaking or advocacy roles (Evans, 2006).

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation began providing targeted and means tested social welfare at the regional level (Balachova, Bonner, & Levy, 2009; Evans, 2006; Ferge, 2001; Standing, 1996; Trygged, 2009; Zimakova, 1994). NGOs, both grassroots and international, then emerged in Russia to provide social services (Petukhov, 2008; Salmenniemi, 2010; Wathen & Allard, 2014). Social service NGOs became a majority share of the Russian civic organization sector (Cook & Vinogradova, 2006; Henderson, 2003; Tarasenko, 2018).

Over time, collaboration between local governments and NGOs increased (Belokurova & Vorob’ev, 2011; Fröhlich, 2012). However, even to this day, NGO social service provision still comprises only a small share of services available (Benevolenski, 2014; Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2017; Cook & Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2018).

Given that many definitions of institutional orders and their corresponding logics presuppose a Western setting, they do not always fit the Soviet and Russian contexts. Looking historically at the Soviet Union, the institutional order of the “state” would include logics of state authority over most aspects of life, hierarchical institutional structures with centralized control, the value of the collective over the individual, an emphasis on national goals, and state responsibility for the wellbeing of citizens (Richter & Hatch, 2013). The idealized institutional

logics of citizenship in the Soviet system included loyalty to the party and the nation, support of a societal mission articulated by the national authorities, commitment to serving the state (and thus fellow citizens) through involvement in state-directed activities, and patriotic defense of the physical and ideological borders of the nation.

The Russian Federation

Once Russia opened itself to the outside world a deluge of foreign organizations and ideas swept into all areas, including social policy and service provision. In 1995, Russia passed its first law establishing NGOs as an institutional form (Skokova, Pape, & Krasnopolskaya, 2018). An influx of foreign funding and training in the 1990s had an impact on all NGOs whether they were funded by international sources or not (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2011). These trainings introduced NGO leaders to leadership styles, methods, values, and organizational structures different from those they were accustomed (Henderson, 2003, p. 8).

Several scholars have argued that international philanthropic donors were the drivers of the diffusion of Western NGO logics into Russia over the past 25 years (Aksartova, 2009; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2011). These logics include a flatter organizational leadership structure, a governance structure that includes a board, fundraising as an ongoing activity, advocacy work, and the values of organizational independence from outside control and a moral high ground focused on a specific mission.

As international organizations poured money into Russia to establish and support human rights and other organizations, the government began to take notice. Events in former Soviet republics raised concern about foreign influence in the political sphere through internationally funded NGOs. Revolutions in Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 were seen by Russian political leaders as social movements funded by the West (Bogdanova, Cook, & Kulmala, 2018; Skokova et al., 2018). As a result, the government increased regulation of all NGOs.

In 2005, Russian President Vladimir Putin created the Public (or “Civic”) Chamber of the Russian Federation to act as a structure of communication between citizen organizations and the government (Stuvøy, 2014). In 2006, the “NGO law” introduced stricter registration and reporting requirements for NGOs (Cavanaugh, 2010; Kamhi, 2006; Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2014). Organizations receiving foreign funding were subject to stricter oversight and foreign funding dramatically declined (Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2011; Johnson & Saarinen, 2011; Sperling, 2006).

In 2012 another set of regulatory laws was passed, including the law requiring NGOs to register as “foreign agents” if they received any funding from foreign sources (Flikke, 2016; Russian State Duma, 2012). In 2015, the “undesirable organization law” passed, allowing prosecutors to designate organizations as “undesirable” and shut them down without court proceedings (Russian State Duma, 2015).

While increasing government oversight has produced more work and stress for Russian NGO leaders (Crotty, Hall, & Ljubownikow, 2014), the government has also allocated greater funding for NGOs it considers to be doing desirable work (e.g., social service organizations) (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017; Bogdanova et al., 2018; Tarasenko, 2018). These NGOs can apply for funding from the national, regional, and local levels of government (Gromova & Mersiyanova, 2016; Wathen & Allard, 2014); and, from 2015 forward, the government created policy conditions for these NGOs to take a greater role in social service provision (Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2017; Mersiyanova & Benevolenski, 2017). It should be noted, however, that since the largest increase in government funding for social service NGOs did not occur until 2016 (Skokova et al., 2018), their influence is not relevant to the logics and organizational adaptations of the period covered in this study (i.e., 2011–2014).

Another contextual element pertinent to these organizations was the development of volunteer opportunities. Although volunteerism existed during the Soviet Union, for the most part volunteerism during this time was highly controlled and organized through official communist party channels at workplaces and youth organizations (Hemment, 2015, p. 24). Near the end of the 1990s and early 2000s grassroots volunteering began in local settings and around local issues.

A response by the government to these developments was to simultaneously encourage civic engagement while at the same time harnessing it in a way that supported the government (Kulmala, 2016; Owen & Bindman, 2017). For instance, as described above, the government provided increased support for social service NGOs. In addition, the state began to intentionally support volunteerism through programs and monetary support (Hemment, 2015, p. 7).

For the 2013 XXVII Summer Universiade in Kazan and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, the government created volunteer opportunities by offering a vast network of organizations funding in order to recruit volunteers. This spurred the development of “volunteer centers” in a number of cities, where social projects that volunteers created were vetted and funded mainly by local administrations. Although these volunteer centers often rely on patriotic rhetoric (reminiscent of Soviet collective values) to promote participation, in a recent study Hemment (2015) found that much of what occurs in these centers focuses on individual self-actualization within a tightly controlled government structure (p. 175).

Data

This study was conducted from September 2013 to May 2014 in the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, a regional capital of Russia with more than one million residents and a per capita income of less than half that of Moscow. Much of the foreign investment in NGOs and civil society development has taken place in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Henderson, 2003, p. 10); and, to date, the majority of NGOs are located there (Agbas et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018). Since this study focuses on grassroots social service NGOs, I chose to undertake the analysis in a city that is somewhat removed from international influence and the political and economic power of the major cities.

I conducted 22 two-hour individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews with NGO leaders, each of whom represents one of thirteen organizations. For four of the organizations, two different leaders were interviewed. Five leaders were interviewed twice, once in 2011 and again in 2014. The leaders were either the director of the organization or the assistant director, if a second interview was conducted.

Interviews focused on leaders rather than other members of the organizations due to cultural expectations of authoritarian leadership, as found by Spencer (2011) and Kets de Vries (2001). In the interviews, leaders were asked to reflect on societal level forces and their perceived effects on their decision-making regarding organizational roles, goals, and practices. As stated by Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012), “the use of qualitative methods is important given that at the core of understanding institutional logics is gaining insight about meaning making” (p. 145).

The NGO leaders in this study oversaw a variety of organizations providing services such as crisis counseling, mentoring of youth in the care of the state, services for families in crisis, domestic violence prevention and therapeutic consultation, services for people with a range of disabilities and their families, support groups, training of community leaders, and mobilization and training of volunteers. In order to recruit these leaders for interviews, I relied on NGO characteristics. Criteria for an NGO’s inclusion in the study were: 1) having existed

for at least five years, 2) having been founded and still being managed by Russian citizens, and 3) having provided direct social services to families and/or children. In addition to these criteria, in order to be included the organization had to be legally registered at the time of the study. However, the organization did not have to have been legally registered for all of the five or more years of its existence. The interviews were conducted, digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in Russian.

To reveal interview subjects' individual logics regarding their roles and organizations in the civil society sphere, I gathered demographic information and asked about how they became involved in NGO work. I also asked about how their work and organization had changed over time. Other questions focused directly on their opinions of social policy and the role of the government and NGOs in social service provision.

I used an indirect questioning strategy, which has been described by Gamson (1992) in his book *Talking Politics* (pp. 194-196), to further reveal respondents' ideas. Specifically, I presented scenarios of social problems and asked the respondents to reflect on the problems and provide possible solutions. Scenario topics included unsupervised children after school, families in poverty, and an imaginative scenario in which the interviewee had to create social policies for a newly inhabited island. Through the use of both direct and indirect prompts, I elicited interview subjects' reflections that exposed their underlying meaning-making as well as their evolving logics.

From 2013–2014, I gathered additional data by engaging in participant observation in three of the study's Russian grassroots volunteer organizations that provided social services to families and/or children. Participant observation took place for five hours a week over a nine month period. This included attending training and leadership team meetings and serving alongside volunteers and paid staff. I also spent at least twelve hours at nine other organizations in the city. After each incidence of participant observation, I wrote field notes, paying specific attention not only to what was said, but also to what I observed. Throughout the nine months, I conferred with trusted cultural informants in order to check my understanding and interpretation of observations. Newspaper articles, government legislative reports, and print and web based NGO public relations materials from 2004–2014 were also collected and then analyzed.

Analysis

To analyze the interviews, I used methods of grounded theory in an iterative process of coding, writing memos, and analysis. Specifically, I first looked at each interview as a case, taking the time for multiple readings of the transcription, thoughtful reflection, and purposeful writing. The outcome of this stage was a list of common concepts, themes, and gaps. A local informant read a sample of the interviews and wrote separate narrative reports. We then compared our reports to verify that our findings were similar.

Using the themes identified, I next focused on conducting line-by-line coding of individual transcripts in Nvivo qualitative data analysis software. Both during and after coding, I made systematic comparisons within and between interviews and I identified patterns and variations (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This led to an overall conceptual framework to further analyze and represent the findings.

Using best practices to reduce bias, I triangulated the interview data with participant observation and documentary data such as NGO brochures and websites along with newspaper articles and legislative reports. In doing so, I was able to verify critical events and information mentioned in the interviews. NGO brochures and websites also provided information about how the organization presented its mission to the public over time,

recruited volunteers, and provided services. These data were put into timelines in order to assess changes over time in content and tone within organizations as well as comparatively. Observations were recorded in a Word document on an ongoing basis over the study period and all materials were saved in digital form.

Quotations selected for inclusion in the findings are those that best characterize narratives and themes emerging from the data. In preparation for sharing my results in English, I translated the quotations myself, and then a bilingual Russian and English speaker back-translated them. This process was repeated until the best translation was agreed upon. To maintain the confidentiality of interview participants, each quotation is noted by interview number.

Findings

As the summary of the historical, economic, and policy context of voluntary and social service NGOs describes, the societal level logics of the past 25 years display a mix of local and imported logics (Heydemann & Hammack, 2009, p. 24). These logics are mirrored in the interviews with organizational leaders in this study. The sensemaking of these leaders shows evidence of initial intermingling logics at the founding of their organizations with the development of two separate streams of logics over time. The solidifying of primary logics for leaders coincides with distinctive instantiations of those logics in their organizations. In other words, similar beginnings in organizational forms and leaders' logics began to diverge over time.

Similar Beginnings

All of the organizations included in this study began as small grassroots volunteer groups that eventually registered as NGOs. Interviews with leaders of these organizations provide information on their meaning-making over time through two avenues, repeated interviews and/or leaders' presence at the organization since its inception.

For five of the seventeen leaders in the study, I have interviews at two time points (2011 and the period 2013–2014). Three of these individuals are leaders of current social welfare organizations (SWNGO); and, two are leaders of what are now volunteer organizations (VO). In total, 12 of the 17 leaders I interviewed were founding members of their organization after having started as volunteers with an informal group. For the most part, these leaders' logics were similar to each other in the early years of their organizations. Moreover, the ways in which their logics were instantiated were also similar.

The early logics of the leaders show a blend of Soviet influence and Western NGO logics. As leaders described their first three to five years, their words alluded to the state-building narrative of citizen involvement during Soviet times.

We thought that if we all helped, we would build a strong country again. That is what we learned from our parents and grandparents. (Interview 10, SWNGO)

Every NGO leader that I interviewed began as an informal volunteer in some type of social service activity before many NGOs in their city existed. Their interviews evidence a framework where they expected the government to set policies and provide services, but with an understanding that the government was unable to do its job during the transition. They expected, however, that the government would eventually recover and take over its role.

Those were hard times and we couldn't expect the government to rebuild everything all at once. So, we decided to do our part until the country was stronger again. (Interview 1, VO)

These leaders also described how their organizations started with a goal to ameliorate specific social needs. They recalled the Soviet values of citizen activity in supporting their country's development. However, every leader (with the exception of one) described how the mindset of the general population had negatively been altered when democracy and capitalism were introduced.

In the 1990s people became selfish. All they thought about was themselves and their family and their career. They didn't understand that we should be helping our country to develop, like in Soviet times. (Interview 7, SWNGO)

While leaders drew on the Soviet past when speaking about values in the early years, they also mentioned the direct and indirect influence of foreign organizations and consultants as expanding their vision of what an NGO could do and how it could be done. In the early years, most of the influence was indirect, with these leaders going to seminars led by other Russian NGO leaders who had participated in trainings by foreign funders.

We were exposed to a lot of new ideas in the trainings. Ideas about how to be involved in society and in promoting positive change. And we learned a lot of skills, such as managing organizations, recruiting volunteers, writing proposals, and fundraising—although not everything applied to our situation. (Interview 11, SWNGO)

To summarize the early logics of these organization leaders, they believed that they were change agents as well as responsible citizens in building their nation. Initially, they felt that their government was responsible for taking care of the social welfare needs of citizens, but when “difficult times” hit they would pitch in. The changes they made occurred in their local city by providing various services to individuals. They perceived that the country had entered an era of “selfishness” due to the influx of what they understood to be capitalism, democracy, and individualism. For these leaders, their initial entry into volunteering and later registration as NGOs served not only to meet specific social needs, but also to promote rejuvenation of collective values of mutual care. Volunteers were “doing good” works similar to how communist youth organizations trained young people to do good in their society. On the other hand, their imagination about the types of services they could provide and their conceptualization of how their organizations fit within larger society were broadened by Western NGO trainings and exposure.

The way in which this blend of logics was instantiated was similar across organizations. In their early years, each of the leaders focused on local social problems and providing services to address these problems. For example, they visited orphanages to socialize with children; they collected clothing, diapers, toys, and candy to bring to orphanages; they volunteered to care for orphans who were in the hospital; they created and manned domestic violence crisis lines; and, they organized meetings for parents of children with special needs or for adults with physical disabilities or mental illness.

Each leader (and their associated group) was devoted to one or two of these specific activities. They all used volunteers almost exclusively to provide services. In the initial stages, funding was minimal, and the grassroots volunteers and their organizations depended on self-funding and donations from friends and family. The volunteers had minimal connection to city or

Table 1. Characteristics of NGO Leaders at Time of Second Interview

	Mean Age	Mean Years Volunteering	% Female	% Religious	% In or Completed Higher Education	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i> Orgs
Social Welfare NGO Leader							
<i>social welfare logic</i>	41.3	11.8	75	75	83.3	12	10
Volunteer Organization Leader							
<i>government-directed community logic</i>	32.6	9	80	20	100	5	3
Total	38.7	10.9	76.5	58.8	88.2	12	13

regional government officials, but rather used personal connections with individuals who ran government agencies to access potential service recipients. For example, the head of a pediatric wing in a hospital would give permission for volunteers to care for orphans. In other instances, the organizations found service participants through informal personal networks and social media. At the outset, these leaders did not consider themselves as advocates for widespread social change but rather as change agents for individuals and families in their communities.

Emergence of Primary Logics

Whereas the recollections of these leaders evidence an interplay of multiple logics in the early years of their organization (as described above), by 2013–2014 the leaders could be sorted into two main groups, both groups with one logic as primary and others as distinctly secondary. This study labels the two primary logics emerging from the data as either social welfare logic or government-directed community logic. Both of these logics contain convictions about the roles of the citizen and the government. Leaders who espoused a social welfare logic were part of Social Welfare NGOs (SWNGOs) and those holding a government-directed community logic were part of Volunteer Organizations (VOs).

VOs did not begin as government organized volunteer centers (like the ones that currently exist in Russia), although they have subsequently joined this network. In the early years of all organizations, as illustrated above, the organizations displayed a blend of SWNGO and VO characteristics and logics. Thus, none of the organizations fit neatly into either category. The categories of SWNGO and VO created for this study illustrate the instantiation of logics by organizational leaders in response to salient events.

The demographic characteristics of interviewed SWNGO and VO leaders are similar in many respects (see Table 1). The leaders are majority female and have completed higher education. SWNGO leaders tend to be slightly older on average and more religious than VO leaders, with slightly more years of volunteer experience. The three organizations categorized as VOs in 2014 had been in existence for five, 12, and 15 years at the time of the interviews. The 10 SWNGOs had been in existence for a minimum of six years and a maximum of 22 years, with an average of 12.5 years of existence. Only three of the 10 SWNGOs had been in existence for less than 11 years at the time of the interviews.

The sections below illustrate how attention to particular experiences and identities helped to shape leaders' individual logics in response to societal level pressures and, in turn, the logics

of their organizations. These themes are also included in Table 2 along with the instantiation of organizational logics.

SWNGO Leaders' Logic. SWNGO leaders' response to salient events relating to increased government regulation was controlled attention to identities as experts and legitimate actors in providing social services. In addition, they chose the available and accessible knowledge of advocacy gleaned from Western influence. They described their foundation for advocacy efforts as their personal connection to the issue and past successes. These key themes blend to create a shared social welfare logic among SWNGO leaders.

For the most part, SWNGO leaders leaned on their identity as experts to explain understanding of their organization's development. Their expert identity was forged from years of experience working with certain populations and issues. Because of this, they espoused a system of public-private partnership. In particular, they held a strong opinion that citizens and NGOs should be included in setting social policy and providing services. The government, they believed, should provide support through legislation and financing. Indeed, one leader declared,

We see the issues up close, and we are flexible and have tried different things. We know what works. It would be the wise thing to invite us to be involved in creating new policy. Bureaucrats don't know what's happening with real people. (Interview 6)

Another SWNGO leader expressed a similar idea.

The government should provide legal and policy foundations for society to be involved, and some institutions to help. Naturally, I think that the problems that the government should solve should be solved with the input of experienced NGOs who already do things and know how to do them. (Interview 13)

Yet another leader emphasized the importance of partnership with the government, alluding to the resource environment in which NGOs are embedded as well.

It should be a government-private partnership. If the government cannot provide full support [to SWNGOs], it should provide office and facility space or pay for the rent for such a place. The organization can find other sponsors to help as well. (Interview 15)

While the NGO leaders were sympathetic to the government's need to protect the country through regulation of organizations and foreign funding, they felt that policies were unnecessarily harsh. Leaning into their identity as experienced experts, SWNGO leaders were not afraid to criticize policy toward NGOs.

The politics in Moscow are now such that on the one side, one hand is supporting the development of NGOs, while the other is trying to drive them into a certain mold. If earlier control was maintained by force, now it's done by economic means, which is just as tough. So now, the party policy is to ensure that on the one hand volunteering and NGOs develop in the direction of government-overseen organizations, by giving funding to those that fit into the

system, and the other hand represses those that do not fit.
(Interview 8)

SWNGO leaders' understanding of advocacy was enriched by exposure to Western influenced NGO trainings. Thus, the logic of advocacy became not only available and accessible but activated when SWNGO leaders exercised controlled attention in response to salient changes in the NGO and volunteering fields. They described their journey toward (and commitment to) advocacy, often mentioning a personal connection to an issue. For some, it was simply firsthand exposure to a glaring need and learning about the system over time.

It was only after going to the orphanages for a while and seeing what was really happening that I began to see the deeper issues. It took a couple of years before we understood how the system worked and that the government was not necessarily going to change anything. We realized that to do something for the kids we had to try to change something in the system, even if it is just something small. (Interview 6)

For others, it was the experience or diagnosis of a loved one that sparked initial involvement in a group of people whose families were experiencing similar challenges. After this experience, they then understood that as a group they could motivate changes in services for the affected patients and the family members. As one parent described,

Through the internet I found other parents of children with disabilities, and we got together and started this organization. Then we were able to start a pilot project with the local Ministry of Education for a kind of inclusive education that has been successful, so we are hoping to expand it. (Interview 16)

These statements reflect a personal commitment to, and experience with, an issue and a logic where citizen initiative is critical to changing policy and/or service provision. This form of advocacy taken by these leaders is strongly influenced by their context. Consistent with findings from other scholars (e.g., Henry, 2006, 2009), leaders reported the use of insider tactics (Mosley, 2011) (e.g., participation in committees and roundtables and building relationships with individual authorities). On the one hand, for instance, they spoke of advocacy as a taken-for-granted part of their work (e.g., raising a problem with government officials or working to pass a new law).

We currently have a bill before the DUMA (Russian parliament). Our organization and colleagues in other such organization around Russia have helped with this, and a lawyer is working with a Duma deputy to help pass this bill. (Interview 9)

On the other hand, however, SWNGO leaders usually qualified their descriptions of advocacy-type work by alluding to issues of power, fear, and hesitancy. They recognized that the power differential between them and those with government authority was immense. Indeed, government authorities could withhold permission for their activities at any time. This power differential was evident in the mixed feelings of leaders regarding government regulation of the NGO sector—where a misstep could lead to serious consequences.

There is a tendency for NGOs to develop into more professional organizations. The qualifications of their staff

are higher, new opportunities arise, and their system of financing develops. But I don't know (pause) For example, the trends in the country, they are contradictory. The government says it supports NGOs. But, for example, the law about "foreign agents." I, for one, am against it. On the grounds that participation in legislative activity is unclear. Can we, for example, communicate our views on the social protection of disabled people, or is this political activity? It's unclear. Therefore, it is a problem. (Interview 14)

As these quotes illustrate, these SWNGO leaders drew on their identities and personal experiences by choosing logics that were triggered by salient events in the institutional context and an understanding of available alternative logics. The notion of social welfare logic comes from Pache and Santos (2013) who described this type of logic as being structured around a predominant goal—that is, making products and services available to address local social needs. For the purposes of this study, this logic is used to understand citizens and NGOs as change agents in the lives of both clients and social policy.

The social welfare logic of these leaders blended the Soviet expectation of government responsibility with the Western value of citizen influence in shaping social service policy and provision. SWNGO leaders held a strong conviction that the government should be responsible for addressing social problems and meeting needs. However, they believed that the government should do so with public–private partnerships and an acknowledgment of the benefits that NGOs provide in recognizing and defining problems, creating solutions, and delivering services.

The SWNGO leaders in this study, then, clearly expressed a commitment to advocacy as a vehicle for social change. Next, I explore the logics of VO leaders. Then, I examine how these logics shaped their organizations.

VO Leaders' Logic. VO leaders' response to increased government regulation and government funded volunteering was to focus on their identities as dedicated citizens. They did not voice deep personal connections to any population or issue and their organizations offered services to more than one population. As such, these leaders found it easy to shift their attention to volunteering in the service of the state rather than focus on providing social services. The narratives of these leaders reveal how their sensemaking focused on state and citizen logics reminiscent of the Soviet era. In particular, they rejected portions of a Western NGO logic. Soviet era logics were readily available and accessible for activation in the context of a changing resource environment and increasing media rhetoric of patriotism.

VO leaders expressed doubt about "Western" logics of citizenship and NGO advocacy. They recounted difficulties in past attempts to promote change and concluded that Western practices did not fit in their culture.

In our country we have a different mentality and system, so the methods that people use in other countries to change things doesn't work here. Here, we need a strong government, and people need to support the government so that life improves for everyone. (Interview 2)

VO leaders also spoke of the Russian government's increased interest in, and funding of, the growing volunteer movement of the 2000s. They also spoke of the steps that the government took to guide this development. Specifically, they described how they, as NGOs, were well positioned to receive government resources to become key players in the volunteering movement.

We have a centralized government, everything is at the center, and the central authorities have paid attention to volunteering... The government is providing money to develop volunteering and volunteer centers. We are a part of building this volunteer movement. We already have ways of connecting to volunteers. (Interview 4)

These quotations allude to how the resource environment influenced the decision-making of these leaders. They also hint at an underlying identity and associated logics that these leaders began to strengthen. In particular, these leaders chose to embrace their identities as patriotic citizens who contributed to their society by following the government's lead. In other words, they put the needs of the collective above their own. Their identities as patriotic citizens infiltrated their thinking about the role of their organizations in the social system. This resulted in an embrace of a government-directed community logic.

The most striking difference between SWNGO leaders' social welfare logic and VO leaders' government-directed community logic is in the centrality of the government. Leaders of VOs were dedicated to the idea of a strong government that articulated a vision for citizens to follow. The role of the citizen, according to these leaders, was to participate in fulfilling this vision. In contrast, SWNGO leaders never once mentioned such ideas. As one VO leader stated,

Some kind of mutual purpose should be propagated by the government, as we live in one country and shouldn't do things separately. It seems to me that it's not right when we don't agree; we should be united toward one goal, and strive towards it, so that we develop together. Certainly, local society and volunteers and NGOs should be involved in the creation of this society and together we can build something good... (Interview 5)

VO leaders placed responsibility for policy and service provision on the government. SWNGOs were considered necessary only insofar as the government was not fulfilling its responsibility. However, VO leaders did not completely exclude SWNGOs from their vision of society, thereby showing that their logic, while drawing from the Soviet era, was different.

The responsibility should be on the government. You could say that NGOs are simply quality executors of government tasks. So naturally, the financing should be different...But we have a strong centralized system, and through this central system you should look to solve things. (Interview 4)

VO leaders never mentioned advocacy-type activities in their narratives. Instead, these leaders focused on promoting civic involvement and individual development. As one VO leader further explained,

The mission of our organization is also to promote the development of the people, mostly young people, through volunteering. We're not a place to help people [not a social service organization], but a place for self-improvement. Helping people is just a side benefit. (Interview 2)

In their interviews, no VO leader mentioned a positive experience with advocacy. These leaders also did not describe a personal connection to any of the social issues they had been addressing in their earlier years. In summary, VO leaders drew on their identities as responsible citizens and on accessible Soviet-type understandings of citizenship. The

Table 2. Logics and Their Instantiation in SWNGOs and VOs

		Social Welfare NGO (SWNGO)	Volunteer Organization (VO)
Logic		<i>Social welfare logic:</i> Government should be responsive to citizens and organizations. Citizens should be initiators in identifying needs, creating solutions, and suggesting policy revision.	<i>Government-directed community logic:</i> A strong government should articulate a social vision, and citizens should help to fulfill it. Through doing so, people can develop themselves.
How instantiated in organization	Mission	To provide a social service to a specific population. To advocate for the organization's target service population.	To develop the potential of volunteers, to serve society in general by channeling people's (especially young people's) energy in a positive direction. No advocacy activity.
	People Served	Groups who need services such as children, those with disabilities, those in precarious economic situations, families in crisis.	Volunteers, various groups of people based on the direction of local government and the interests of volunteers, many one-time projects, sometimes helping social service NGOs with one-time events.
	Professionalization	Have begun to hire professionals to deliver services, scaling back use of volunteers.	Continued use of volunteers.
	Interaction with Government	Insider advocacy at the local level, networking with similar orgs around country to advocate for national legislative initiatives, ongoing personal relationships with local government officials for permission and funding to carry out social service mission of organization.	Close collaboration of organization leaders with local government officials to develop volunteer opportunities.
Leaders' Individual Logics	Personal Connection to Issue or Passion for Specific Group	Present and motivating factor.	Minimal.
	Role of Citizen	Change agent for individual clients and families as well as of local and federal policy – have had some success with advocacy.	Not as an advocate for change but as a follower of government vision.
	Role of Government	Should invite citizen and organizational input in policy and provision, should be responsive to advocacy efforts, should fund services.	Guiding force—should set vision for citizens and provide leadership for societal development.

government led community logic of VO leaders included a belief in a strong government that communicated a social vision. They avoided advocacy aimed at government institutions and policy. Instead, these leaders focused on cooperation with local officials in channeling volunteer activity. VO leaders also hoped that an ethos of collective social responsibility would return to the population and they alluded to the Soviet past when talking about this possibility.

Emergence of Organization Types

Analysis of the data reveal that the logics of organization leaders have been instantiated in distinct ways for each of the two logics, resulting in SWNGOs and VOs. As leaders reacted and interacted with societal level logics and changing policies toward organizations, they were forced to clarify the missions of their organizations and reconsider how these missions were carried out. How would the changing funding, regulatory, and political environment affect what they did and how they did it? Should they focus more on the volunteers in their organization or on a service mission? SWNGOs and VOs became distinguished by their mission focus, the people they served, their level of professionalization, and the type of interactions they had with government. Table 2 organizes these differences, while the discussion section describes how leaders' logics influenced these organizational forms.

The logics of SWNGO leaders blended the Soviet expectation of government responsibility with the Western value of citizen influence in shaping social service policy and provision. SWNGO leaders held a strong conviction that government should address social problems with public-private partnerships. They also believed that government should acknowledge the benefits of NGOs in recognizing and defining problems, creating solutions, and providing services. SWNGOs' missions continued to focus on providing direct services to a specific population and/or providing training to people who provided direct service. In this regard, SWNGOs have moved toward hiring professionals or asking these individuals to volunteer in service provision. They have begun scaling back on the use of volunteers from the general population.

SWNGOs strive to maintain strong relationships with city and regional social welfare administrators. However, they are wary of the power dynamics that these administrators have to arbitrarily shut down their organizations. They have, therefore, become more active in advocacy for disadvantaged populations and/or policy change; and, they conduct insider advocacy at the local level. They also network with similar organizations around the country to promote national level legislative policy change.

In contrast, VOs have shifted away from providing social services and now focus on facilitating volunteer opportunities mainly for young people. An example drawn from websites (2010–2014), printed material, participant observation, and interviews at one VO helps illustrate this change. The organization (referred to here as “OrgQ”) was organized in 1998. This organization was primarily focused on developing services for young people in the care of the state (i.e., institutionalized children).

In 2008, OrgQ continued to develop programs and recruit volunteers to help carry programs out on a long-term basis. Their website and published public relations material described their social mission along with opportunities they had available for the public to make a difference by serving these children. In early 2013, OrgQ discontinued providing direct services. However, as their website described, they refocused on cooperating with local governments to create volunteer centers and promote volunteering in schools and universities. In addition, they became points of volunteer recruitment for national large scale events, such as the 2013 Universiade and the 2014 Olympics.

OrgQ also served as a point of contact for social service NGOs that needed volunteers to pull off one-day or short-term events (e.g., running a craft day for children, organizing outdoor

games for a festival, putting on a holiday party for seniors or children) or fundraising. The stated primary motivation of this (and the other two volunteer organizations in this study) was to promote civic involvement in ways that supported the government and provided opportunities for individual self-development. These VOs, however, did not engage in advocacy activity; rather, they followed the lead of local and national government officials in deciding what types of volunteer opportunities and projects to promote.

Discussion

Grassroots volunteer groups addressing local social problems arose in Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia, within a field of logics inherited from the Soviet Union and those newly introduced through international contact. The groups' origins were similar in that they arose from informal grassroots volunteering, they exhibited mixed Soviet era and imported logics, and they instantiated these logics similarly across organizations.

The rapidly changing Russian NGO regulatory environment and emerging state-sponsored volunteerism comprised the embedded context in which the socially oriented NGOs in this study were located. Over the course of two decades, leaders in these organizations were forced to respond to salient events. Each change in government policy toward NGOs served as a salient event, triggering both the automatic and controlled attention of leaders. Attention made certain logics more accessible than others. The leaders in this study meshed their own identities, experiences, and goals with both their own and contextual logics in making sense of salient events to create new logics for themselves and their organizations.

These leaders also made decisions and guided the missions and attendant activities of their organizations to more closely align with their newly emerging logics. As Thornton et al. (2012) describe, "Given a social actor's embeddedness within institutional logics and prior commitments and experiences, specific identities, goals and schemas will be readily accessible to attend to salient environmental stimuli" (p. 92).

The leaders in this study chose from an array of possible identities, experiences, and goals that guided their sensemaking. For example, VO leaders chose their Soviet influenced identity as patriotic citizens serving the good of the collective. Their unsuccessful experiences with advocacy efforts, however, led them to reject this as a viable option for action. As they had no personal ties to any specific social issue, their identities as volunteer leaders (rather than social problem solvers) was readily accessible. This led them to focus on volunteer activity in their organizations.

In addition, several contextual factors led to VO leaders increasing their focus on recruitment of volunteers. First, the federal government's efforts to reign in and organize the growing volunteer movement led to funding opportunities for organizations that worked in the volunteering sphere. Leaders with an emerging government-directed community logic decided to focus their limited staff time on applying for these funds and developing recruitment programs and organizational systems to support them. These leaders ended programs that provided long-term social services.

Second, increased regulation of NGOs and the attendant administrative burden for social service NGOs discouraged leaders from continuing in the social service arena. Instead, VO leaders met more often with local government administrative leaders to shape short-term volunteer opportunities (e.g., cleaning up a park or putting on a holiday program at a senior home).

Finally, negative coverage of NGOs as well as increasing patriotic rhetoric in the media further influenced the meaning-making that these leaders had. This pushed them to forge closer ties

with local administrators while avoiding any activity that challenged government policy. These contextual factors along with leaders' identities and experiences created a mutually reinforcing cycle toward Soviet influenced meaning-making about NGOs and their role in society. This led to a government-directed community logic and organizational changes that focused on volunteerism over social service provision.

The story, however, is more nuanced than this. When leaders enacted organizational changes, such as a narrower focus on volunteerism and strong connections with local and regional administrations, these organizational changes further strengthened a move to a government-directed community logic. Receiving funding to recruit and train volunteers and help spread volunteer centers as an institutional form immersed these leaders in the rhetoric of the government in this arena. Incremental changes in their programs over time had repercussions on future changes.

For example, once the organizational structure and job descriptions were changed to support intensive volunteer recruitment for national volunteering, these changes influenced the path of future program development. Additionally, the organizational level logics connected to this change had an impact on the meaning-making of these leaders. Thus, societal level logics and the logics of VO leaders were continuously interacting with the organizational level; and, the changes produced by these interactions were instantiated in the organization.

A question arises, then—why did SWNGO leaders' logics and organizations not shift in a similar direction? They were in the same context and they experienced similar pressures. The theoretical insights of microfoundations of institutional logics are helpful here as well. Indeed, one example is when foreign funding decreased. At this time, patriotic rhetoric increased; and, the government instituted tighter regulations on NGOs. As a result, these SWNGO leaders' focused attention was likely guided toward newly introduced NGO logics by their personal experience with a social issue.

In addition, this personal connection fueled the goals that these leaders had in meeting needs and solving social problems. This resulted in their embrace of primary identities as experts on specific social issues and as legitimate service providers rather volunteer organizers. The societal context blended with their identities and experience to create a social welfare logic. This logic guided the decisions they made in regard to their organizations. For instance, they took steps to align their organizations more clearly as social service providing NGOs by applying for social service specific grants. In addition, they shifted to hiring more professionals to provide services and they reduced their reliance on volunteers. They also increased their grant writing efforts and engaged volunteers in fundraising efforts more than service provision.

SWNGO leaders focused their government relationships on those officials in departments involved in social welfare provision. They participated in government sponsored roundtable discussions specifically related to their mission focus. SWNGO leaders could point to fruitful advocacy efforts in the past and this success reinforced the perceived usefulness of the social change strategies that they had heard about in Western influenced NGO trainings. Therefore, they continued to practice insider advocacy at the local level; and, they expanded their cooperative national level advocacy.

Although SWNGO leaders did not expect Russia to function as a Western style democracy, they envisioned themselves as advocates for societal change. In participant observation of leadership team meetings, I was able to witness the main leaders articulate their views that NGO social service provision was higher quality and more clearly focused on (and responsive to) client needs than government provision. Moreover, these leaders voiced that they would not abandon their social service mission under political or monetary pressure. SWNGO leaders also communicated their logics to their staff and volunteers. This shared narrative

guided group sensemaking and subsequent mobilization that became apparent in the instantiated logics of their organization.

Changes in leaders' logics in the embedded context of Nizhnii Novgorod and Russia resulted in organizational differences in mission focus, people served, level of professionalization, and types of interactions with local and national governments. In some ways, these organizations fit the typology of nonprofit agencies and nonprofit membership associations described by Smith (2017). They all began as grassroots, relatively informal, groups run by volunteers, as membership associations often are. However, they soon became formalized with top down structures, as nonprofit agencies often are. In this sense, the SWNGOs in this study fit the typology of nonprofit agencies. However, these VOs were not typical membership associations since the VOs retained their hierarchical structures and paid staff while at the same time trying to balance a newly adopted member focus with government suggested activities.

This study illustrates how an interplay of factors at multiple levels can affect the expression of logics at the organizational level, with a focus on the microfoundations of logics through the narratives of leaders. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that societal level context does not necessarily influence organizational development in a post-communist environment in a singular way. In both types of organizations that emerged (SWNGOs and Vos), NGO leaders considered themselves to be citizens contributing to positive change in their country. Their logics, however, envisioned the role of the citizen and the state in different ways.

A limitation of this study is the reliance on recollections of leaders through retrospective interviews. As much as possible, however, factual information was verified through other ways (as described). In addition, this study is limited in its geographic scope. Thus, the findings should be considered a springboard for continued exploration. Further research on organizational change and development in post-communist contexts should consider logics operating at various levels. This research, however, should leave room for differentiation even among organizations that have similar beginnings.

For practitioners working cross culturally, there are several lessons to be learned. First, the introduction of new models of grassroots action and organizations can create turmoil in historical institutional power structures and logics. This turmoil may lead to societal level reactions by those in power. In Russia, for example, the federal government used legislative means to promote their vision of a state-NGO logic. They also used the media to shape societal level logics of the population toward NGOs.

Second, organizational level logics can be shaped not only from above, but from below; in this case, these logics were shaped by the personal experiences and identities of the organizational leaders. Finally, even when policy, geographic, and historical contexts are similar, all organizations within these contexts may not be influenced in the same way by changes in policy, funding, and/or societal level logics. Working cross culturally, practitioners must be ready to respect, explore, and dialogue with institutional logics at all levels. In doing so, they can more wisely collaborate with local experts around mission and action.

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Checking in on the State of Nonprofit Scholarship: A Review of Recent Research

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The complexity and diversity of the nonprofit sector provide a rich landscape for academic scholarship; and, growing numbers of nonprofit scholars and their associated research publications have established the field of nonprofit research. Yet, it is unclear if this research has been applied appropriately to the evolving landscape of the sector. Although literature reviews have helped us to understand the status of academic scholarship in the field of nonprofit research, these reviews have primarily focused on particular topics without considering the field as a whole. Thus, in this study, we review all contemporary nonprofit scholarship ($n=972$) from three prominent nonprofit journals. The review documents the development of nonprofit research as presented in these journals over the last five years and offers recommendations for future research consideration.

Keywords: Nonprofit Research, Literature Review, Research Trends

Nonprofit research, by its very nature, is interdisciplinary. Indeed, nonprofit research questions emerge from both within and beyond the nonprofit sector. Among this research, related and divergent streams of inquiry have developed; and, although not unique to the nonprofit sector, this research is nuanced by its questions, units of analysis, theory application, and approaches.

For those looking to enter this stream of research, trends and gaps in knowledge can at times be challenging to identify. Even as doctoral students poised to contribute to nonprofit scholarship, we (the authors) were eager to comprehend the depth and breadth of nonprofit research, including the theories applied and the research methods employed. We were also eager to discover our own niches among this research environment.

Prior to entering our doctoral education, each of us had experience with the nonprofit sector as a practitioner and/or student; and, we drew upon this experience to inform our course of study. The work of Allison and colleagues (2007) and Jackson, Guerrero, and Appe (2014) allowed us to understand that our department was one of a few that offered a specific course to enhance doctoral students' knowledge, growth, and development as emerging nonprofit scholars; and, from our course discussions, we identified a gap—that is, that the nonprofit field has, in recent years, not provided a higher level assessment of its research landscape or ways to identify areas for research development. Although there have been some exceptions, e.g., Ma and Konrath (2018) and

Marberg, Korzilius, and van Kranenberg (2019), these studies have largely been broad and general scans of the field; and, for the most part they have not provided an in-depth scan of nonprofit research.

As such, we were curious to identify where nonprofit research was emerging, what topics were being addressed, what nonprofit subsectors were being studied, what sources of data were being utilized, and which methods and theories were being employed. Our guiding research question was: “*What is the current state of nonprofit research?*” We sought to answer this question through a descriptive content analysis of nonprofit research in the three prominent journals of the field. These journals were: *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (NVSQ), *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* (NML), and *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* (Voluntas).

It should be noted that our purpose was to not merely inform our own personal research agendas. On the contrary, we sought to develop a foundational review that helps identify trends and new horizons for future nonprofit scholarship. Such an endeavor should provide nonprofit researchers with greater information about recent trends in the field as well as areas deserving of greater scholarly attention. The article proceeds with a review of the three journals in our sample, an explanation of our data and methods, descriptive analysis of our findings, and discussion of the implications for the nonprofit sector and future nonprofit research.

Sources and Outlets of Nonprofit Research

In order to understand the field of nonprofit research, we first sought to understand the sources where this research emerged, the academic departments where this research emanated, as well as the outlets that published this research.

According to Hammack (2002), the nonprofit sector rapidly grew between 1900–1960 because of the administrative and legal ease of nonprofit incorporation. Post-1960, Hammack (2001) attributes growth of the nonprofit sector to the civil rights movement, the Great Society programs started by Lyndon B. Johnson, and the increasing affluence of the populace. Increasing affluence, in particular, allowed for the purchase of more services from the nonprofit sector (Hammack, 2002). Federal subsidies from the Great Society programs continued through other administrations, which led to sector expansion (Hammack, 2002); and, the civil rights movement encouraged courts to permit the creation of organizations that had been previously denied (Hammack, 2002).

Alongside expansion of the overall nonprofit sector, there was also parallel growth in the nonprofit education industry. According to Hall (2010), education growth reflected an “increased need for professionally trained nonprofit managers and entrepreneurs—people who could master an increasingly complex and turbulent policy and funding environment” (p. 24). Simply put, nonprofit employers needed employees trained and skilled in their mission-related work.

Mirabella (2007) identified 284 nonprofit graduate programs in 1996; and, she identified 426 of these programs in 2007. This equates to a growth of 150%. The programs that Mirabella (2007) identified were in several forms, e.g., standalone certificates, masters programs, or even directed programs of study under the umbrella of public administration or business. Undoubtedly, then, the field of nonprofit education is diverse, reflecting the dynamics governing the field (Young, 1999). This diversity has elicited a “best place” debate in terms of where the appropriate intellectual home for nonprofit education should be (Mirabella & Wish, 2000).

For doctoral students just entering the field, Allison et al. (2007) noted that major conceptual and paradigmatic arenas may seem untouched and the conceptual knowledge may appear incomplete. Allison and colleagues (2007) further noted that although a high demand may exist for nonprofit-

related doctoral education, appropriate courses for future nonprofit scholars are often few. Jackson et al. (2014) provided an update to these findings and found that progress has been made in the nature and state of doctoral education in nonprofit and philanthropic studies, as seen in the seminars and consortiums that have evolved to accommodate doctoral studies in the field. There have also been a number of nonprofit-specific research centers and institutes that have emerged as sources of research production and sector engagement (Hall, 2013). Still, despite these improvements, Jackson and colleagues (2014) concluded that there remains a need for research and curricular development in nonprofit doctoral studies.

Reflecting on the diversity of the nonprofit field, Horton Smith (2013) documented more than 100 academic journals that incorporate elements of altruistic research. These journals include topics related to “civil society, third sector, social economy, philanthropy, social movements nonprofit organizations, participation and engagement” (Horton Smith, 2013, p. 654). More recently, Walk and Andersson (2020) uncovered 75 distinct journals relevant to nonprofit scholarship. It should be noted that many of the journals identified by Horton Smith (2013) and Walk and Andersson (2020) focus on specific nonprofit subfields, such as finance, and not solely on general nonprofit research.

There are three peer-reviewed journals, however, that have emerged with an emphasis specifically on the nonprofit form. These journals are *NVSQ*, *NML*, and *Voluntas*. Brudney and Herman (2004) describe these journals as the “three leading general purpose journals in the field of nonprofit sector studies” (p. 300). These journals were reaffirmed as the leading journals in the field by Walk and Andersson (2020). In their study, Walk and Andersson (2020) administered a survey to determine scholars’ perceptions of high quality publication outlets in the nonprofit field. They found that scholars consistently ranked *NVSQ*, *NML*, and *Voluntas* as top journals, with *NVSQ* receiving nearly unanimous rating as a top tier publication outlet. Walk and Andersson (2020) also noted that these three journals and their subsequent rankings correspond to the Social Science Citation Index, which uses impact factor to rank and compare social science journals.

Marberg et al. (2019, p. 5) also conducted a review of recent nonprofit literature. They found that although several journals published nonprofit literature, nonprofit research “in the non-specialty journals was not consistent with regard to time.” Thus, they focused their study only on research published in *NVSQ*, *NML*, and *Voluntas*.

Horton Smith (2013) explains that the nonprofit sector became more organized in the 1970s, after the founding of the *Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action* (ARNOVA) and its associated research journal the *Journal of Voluntary Action Research* (*JVAR*), later renamed *NVSQ*. The establishment of a scholar community and an outlet for research provided a prototype for other types of associations and journals on the nonprofit and voluntary sector. *NVSQ*, however, was the first of its kind. Thus, prompting us to select it for our review. *NVSQ* is a pioneering academic journal in the field of nonprofit studies; and, it offers an interdisciplinary and research-based haven for the voluntary sector to learn, develop, and contribute to the growing conversation regarding the field.

Approximately 20 years after the development of *NVSQ*, two other journals arose simultaneously. According to editors Young and Billis (1990), *NML* was established as “a journal for the scholar and thoughtful practitioner devoted to advancing the theory and practice of management and leadership of private, nonprofit, and voluntary organizations” (p. 2). The aim of this journal was to bridge the gap between theory and practice on a variety of apropos topics such as the proliferation of the field, skills needed for nonprofit management and leadership, and working with funders and boards (Young and Billis, 1990).

At the same time, *Voluntas*, which is affiliated with the *International Society for Third Sector Research* (ISTR), established its directive for an international scope on nonprofit research.

Anheier and Knapp (1990) described *Voluntas* emerging from a desire for an interdisciplinary journal attentive to the global voluntary sector. Within ARNOVA and other international associations, Horton Smith (2013) estimated that more than 8,000 active researchers are involved in scholastic explorations of the altruistic field.

The diversity of the nonprofit sector and its related field of research has many accompanying challenges. Literature reviews, however, can be used as a methodological tool to sort this research, identify patterns and trends, and point to gaps and directions for future research. Although the nonprofit field has had its fair share of literature reviews, they have primarily been topical in nature. For example, there have been comprehensive literature reviews of nonprofit advocacy activities (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014), value creation (Chen, Ren, Knoke, 2014), volunteer performance (Englert & Helmig, 2018), nonprofit strategies (Laurett & Ferreira, 2018), fundraising (Lindahl & Conley, 2002), revenue structures (Lu, Lin, & Wang, 2019), and commercialization (Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2016).

For the emerging nonprofit scholar, these reviews certainly provide insight into academic niches; however, there have only been two explorations of nonprofit research using samples derived from published work in peer reviewed journals. The first is a study by Ma and Konrath (2018). In this study they focused on bibliographical records and an individual publication's cited references. This study is impressive for the volume of literature that it considered (n =of 12,016 records in their initial dataset and n =311,312 associated references). Their study went as far back as 1925 and incorporated sophisticated data analytics to identify historical themes and patterns in nonprofit research. They examined sources, locations, topical themes, and networks of themes to indicate how streams of research connect (Ma & Konrath, 2018).

A relevant finding from Ma and Konrath (2018) was that several of the most cited references among their sample were in fact topical literature reviews. Despite the breadth of their study and analysis, they were limited in analyzing more in-depth topics, such as the research methods and theories employed. Indeed, since they feasibly could not read each full-text article in their sample, they were left to provide only a cursory review.

The other study by Marberg et al. (2019) relied on topic modeling of nonprofit research from 1990–2010. This study is useful because it highlights common themes and subtopics of nonprofit research over time with a specific focus on professionalization. However, the study did not depict other trends related to these studies, such as the methods employed or the context of the study.

Although it is not a literature review, it should be noted that Shier and Handy (2014) conducted a review of dissertation abstracts published between 1986–2010. They generated a sample of 3,790 dissertations focused on nonprofits. Through their descriptive study, they determined that there has been a 1,500% increase in dissertations with a nonprofit focus between the first year and the last year of their study. The dissertations included in their study were primarily published in the United States (US) and were narrowly defined in terms of topic (similar to the published results described above).

When examining other fields, including public administration where many nonprofit programs are housed (Mirabella & Wish 2000), literature reviews have also been used to make sense of research topics and fields. Houston and Delevan (1990), for example, explored the question of who publishes in the field of public administration. They found that most scholarly articles are single authored and come from current scholars in the field. They also discovered that public administration research is funded at a lower rate than other fields and that a major gap in the field is research that evaluates public policy (Houston & Delevan, 1990).

In the field of business administration, Gorman, Hanlon, and King (1997) conducted a literature review of entrepreneurship research and discovered that the field would benefit from the incorporation of more theories from outside of business in order to move the field's theoretical

Table 1. Summary of Sample across Journal Sources by Year

Journal	Year of Publication						Total
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
<i>NVSQ</i>	54	57	57	75	59	11	313
<i>NML</i>	24	24	29	30	30	8	145
<i>Voluntas</i>	51	73	120	125	114	31	514
Total	129	154	206	230	203	50	972

findings forward. Similarly, in marketing, Luchs, Swan and Creusen (2016) conducted a review of 252 articles on product design over a 14 year period and discovered many existing gaps in research including how differences between people, cultures, and other elements influence product design.

These literature reviews (from both within and beyond the nonprofit sector) have uncovered patterns, trends, and gaps regarding how topics have conceptually and theoretically been used in research. Following these studies, we conducted a descriptive content analysis (i.e., an inventory and analysis) of all articles published within a five year period (2008–2013) in *NVSQ*, *NML* and *Voluntas*. In the section that follows, we explain our research methods and data sources. We then provide our findings and discuss the implications in an effort to identify gaps and bolster future research in the field.

Data and Method

To explore recent nonprofit research, we created a five-stage data collection process. At the first stage, we defined the sample for this study from the population of nonprofit research. Three prominent academic journals for nonprofit research were included based on the aforementioned rationale, *NVSQ*, *NML*, and *Voluntas*. We identified all articles published between 2013 to the first issue of 2018 ($n=927$). This sample included research articles, research notes, and theory pieces only. We excluded issue information, editor's notes, information for contributors, and book reviews. Table 1 provides a summary of the sample by year and journal.

At the second stage, we identified the data points that reflected our research interests. We then developed a data collection protocol for consistency. This protocol included step-by-step instructions and identified 16 data points for collection (summarized in Table 2). To identify these data points, the research team consulted prior studies of literature reviews from other fields (e.g., Hossain & Kauranen, 2016; Laurett & Ferreira, 2018; Suykens, De Rynck, & Vershuere, 2019). Specifically, we collected article title, author(s), publication information, country where the research occurred as well as the country that produced the research, type of research article and study, subsector of interest, keywords, theory used, and sources of data.

Information on article title and publication information was used to situate and identify the research. The location of the research was used to identify “where” the primary author was located (represented by the location of the university affiliation of the first author and the location of the research subject). This data point helps to identify which the countries are being studied in nonprofit research and in which countries more scholarly attention is warranted. Type of study refers to the method used in the study. This information helps identify the research design as well as the methods most prevalent in the field. We categorized type of study based on the four types methodologies identified by Laurett and Ferreira (2018). These were qualitative, theoretical, quantitative, and mixed.

Subsector refers to the nonprofit subsectors that have been studied. This data point is used to identify the subsectors that have been frequently researched by nonprofit scholars as well as those that have received less attention. Recurring themes were identified by the keywords included in the articles to help identify which subject areas have trended in nonprofit research as well as gaps

Table 2. Summary of Data Points and Definitions

Data Points	Definitions	Initial Collection	Spot-check
Article Title	Name given to article in publication.	X	
Author(s)	Person or people mentioned in the research article as being involved in writing the article. (<i>Authors were separated into first and secondary authors.</i>)	X	
Date	Year of journal article publication.	X	
Journal	NVSQ, NML, or <i>Voluntas</i> .	X	
Journal Volume	Volume from that an article was published.	X	
Journal Issue	Issue that an article was published.	X	
Country of Research	Location of the sample for the research study.	X	X
Country of Origin	Location of the university where primary author is from or associated with.	X	
Type of Article	Research study, research note, or non-empirical article.	X	
Type of Study	Quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, or non-empirical (e.g., conceptual, theoretical).	X	X
Subsector	Nonprofit subsector studied in the research, classified according to NTEE categories.	X	X
Keywords	Words identified by authors as “keywords.”	X	
Theory	Theory informing the study (or theoretical contribution).	X	X
Data Source	Primary or secondary data (or both).	X	X
Primary Data Sources	If study relied on primary or both types of data, the primary method(s) were recorded.	X	X

that exist in the nonprofit research field. Theories employed were also identified to provide insight into theory building among nonprofit research. These includes theories unique to the sector and those from outside the sector that have been applied to the nonprofit context. Lastly, we identified source(s) of data (i.e., either primary or secondary). For studies using data secondary sources, we made note of the source and created an inventory of data sources relevant to nonprofit research (see Appendix A).

The third stage in our methodological process was to implement data collection. Each of the authors was assigned journal volumes for data collection to ensure equal responsibilities for data collection. The articles from the three selected academic journals were downloaded from the library of North Carolina State University. The research team then identified data points from the articles by reading the entirety of each assigned article.

The fourth stage involved spot-checking the initial data collection. A preliminary spot-check of coding was necessary in order to ensure intercoder reliability across the full sample. All articles in the sample were confirmed. We developed a protocol for rechecking coding and included the data points identified in Table 2. To recheck the coding, articles were assigned to four members of the research team; and, these assignments were made in a way that ensured that no researcher rechecked (i.e., confirmed) data they had initially collected. If there was disagreement regarding any data point, research team members collectively decided on the outcome. In the final stage, analysis was undertaken. Prior to initiating the analysis, the research team conducted a final coding spot-check in order to ensure data integrity.

Table 3. Location (Country) of an Article's First Author

Total	Frequency	%
Australia	34	3.50
Belgium	30	3.09
Canada	43	4.42
China	16	1.65
Germany	61	6.28
Israel	16	1.65
Italy	27	2.78
Netherlands	31	3.19
Spain	30	3.09
Sweden	17	1.75
Switzerland	19	1.95
UK	80	8.23
USA	411	42.28
Other Countries	157	16.15
Asia	50	
Africa	7	
Oceania	10	
Europe	69	
North America	11	
South America	10	
Total	972	100

Note: Countries that had more than 15 articles (>1.5% of the total sample) authored are specified in this table. For countries that had less than 15 articles authored, these are grouped as "other countries" and sub-labeled according to their continent.

Analysis and Findings

Authors and their Location

The articles in the sample were primarily written by multiple authors with each article having on average approximately two authors. The number of authors ranged from one to eight. Single authored manuscripts accounted for approximately 31% of the articles in the sample ($n=297$). Of the multi-authored manuscripts, approximately 51% ($n=342$) were written by two authors. There were approximately 34% of manuscripts written by three authors ($n=228$); and, approximately 15% of manuscripts had four or more authors ($n=102$).

The United States (US) was the primary location of authors. This was followed by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada. The US dominating as the country of the primary authors is not entirely surprising since *NVSQ* and *NML* are based in the US. Author locations comprising at least 1.5% of the total sample are summarized in Table 3. Authors represented 56 countries and spanned six continents. Not surprising given its mission and focus, *Voluntas* had the greatest international diversity with publications from 57 countries. During the study period, *NVSQ* published articles from 26 countries; and, *NML* published articles from 21 countries.

Research Location

The location of the research represented among the sample spanned 79 countries and six continents. Comparing the location of the researcher and their research, approximately 71% of the research was conducted in the same country as the author ($n=689$). Research locations are summarized according to their continent in Table 4.

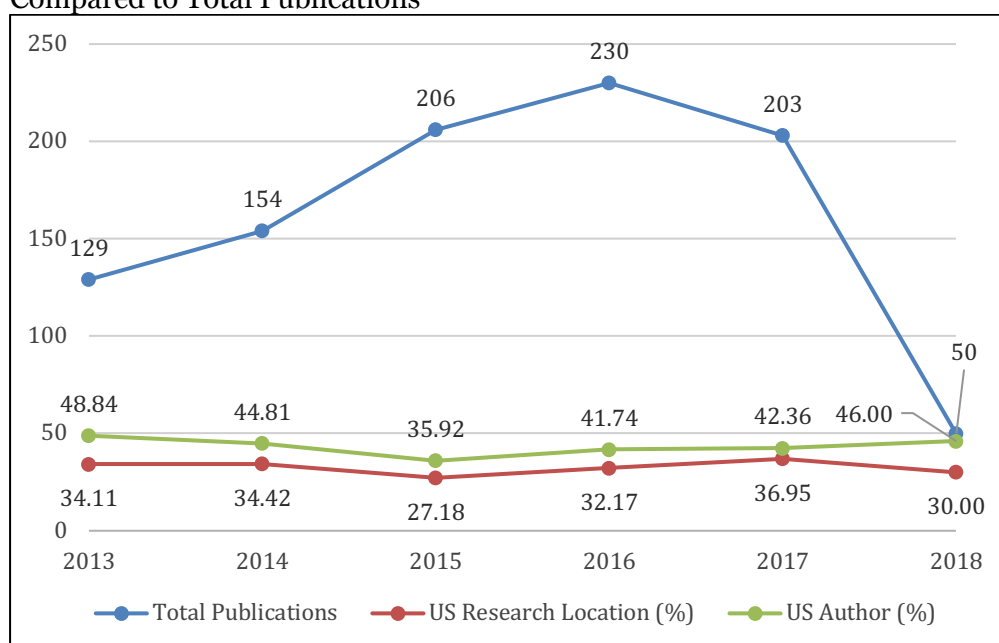
Given various initiatives across the nonprofit academic community to be more inclusive, we also investigated the data to understand emerging diversity among nonprofit scholars. Specifically,

Table 4. Research Locations by Continent

Continents	Frequency	%	Continents	Frequency	%
Africa			North America		
Burkina Faso	1	6.25	Canada	30	8.45
Burundi	1	6.25	Guatemala	1	0.28
Egypt	2	12.5	Haiti	1	0.28
Ghana	2	12.5	Mexico	2	0.56
Liberia	1	6.25	Nicaragua	1	0.28
South Africa	1	6.25	USA	317	89.30
Uganda	1	6.25	Multiple	1	0.28
Multiple	5	31.25	Unspecified	2	0.56
Unspecified	2	12.5	Total	355	100.00
Total	16	100			
Asia			Europe		
Bangladesh	2	1.71	Austria	5	1.73
Cambodia	5	4.27	Belgium	23	7.96
China	30	25.64	Croatia	1	0.35
Hong Kong	3	2.56	Czech Republic	2	0.69
India	7	5.98	Denmark	4	1.38
Indonesia	1	0.85	Estonia	1	0.35
Israel	14	11.97	Finland	2	0.69
Japan	17	14.53	France	6	2.08
Jordan	1	0.85	Germany	45	15.57
Korea	1	0.85	Greece	2	0.69
Kyrgyzstan	2	1.71	Iceland	1	0.35
Lebanon	7	5.98	Ireland	7	2.42
Malaysia	3	2.56	Italy	19	6.57
Pakistan	1	0.85	Kazakhstan	1	0.35
Saudi Arabia	2	1.71	Netherlands	14	4.84
Singapore	1	0.85	Norway	4	1.38
Taiwan	5	4.27	Poland	5	1.73
Turkey	3	2.56	Portugal	2	0.69
Vietnam	1	0.85	Russia	6	2.08
Multiple	3	2.56	Serbia	1	0.35
Unspecified	8	6.84	Spain	21	7.27
Total	117	100.00	Sweden	11	3.81
			Switzerland	11	3.81
South America			Ukraine	4	1.38
Argentina	1	5.56	United Kingdom	58	20.07
Brazil	8	44.44	Multiple	21	7.27
Caribbean	2	11.11	Unspecified	12	4.15
Ecuador	2	11.11	Total	289	100.00
Peru	2	11.11			
South America	1	5.56	Oceania		
Uruguay	2	11.11	Australia	24	72.73
Total	18	100.00	New Zealand	9	27.27
			Total	33	100.00
Other					
Global	24				
Multiple Continents	51				
Unspecified	69				

Note: “Multiple” is research conducted in multiple countries on the same continent. “Unspecified” is research conducted on a specific continent, but no specific country identified. “Global” is research conducted in unspecific global or international contexts. “Multiple Continents” is research conducted on more than one continent. Other “unspecified” is research with no location identified.

total research by year was compared to the number of authors and research locations in the US (see Figure 1). Across the five years in the sample, the dominance of the US for authorship and research location appears to be steady, with a slight decline in 2017.

Figure 1. Number of US-Based Authors and Research Locations Compared to Total Publications

Type of Study

The articles in this study primarily represented quantitative research ($n=495$, approximately 51% of articles). This is followed by qualitative research ($n=265$, approximately 27% of articles). Articles identified as mixed methods accounted for 15% of the sample ($n=146$ articles). Articles that were either historical, theoretical, or otherwise non-empirical (e.g., conceptual) in nature comprised approximately 7% of the sample ($n=66$). Comparing journals, *NML* (at approximately 66%) and *NVSQ* (at 61%) published quantitative research more frequently than *Voluntas* (n = approximately 41% of articles) during the five-year period (see Figure 2).

Data Sources

The research represented among the articles primarily relied upon primary data sources (i.e., data the research team collected for the purpose of the research study) ($n=391$, 40.2%), followed by secondary sources (i.e., pre-existing data the research team used for the study) ($n=343$, 35.3%). Research relying on both primary and secondary sources of data accounted for 18.6% of the sample ($n=181$); and finally, 5.8% of the articles had no identifiable data source ($n=56$). Of the primary data collection methods employed by the studies, the most prevalent was interview research ($n=301$; 31%). This was closely followed by survey research ($n=297$; 30.6%). Figure 3 provides a summary of the various primary data collection methods.

Focusing on the secondary data sources, document reviews were the most common source of secondary data ($n=94$, approximately 10%). Examples of document reviews include nonprofit websites, annual reports, and social media accounts. Secondary survey data of individuals, such as the US Current Population Survey was another common source of data ($n=75$, approximately 8% of studies relied on this data source). The US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990 data, commonly collected by the National Center for Charitable Statistics, was the third most common source of secondary data ($n=68$; 7% of studies relied on this data source).

Of the research conducted in the US that relied on secondary data, approximately 18% ($n=60$) of studies relied on IRS 990 tax forms. Literature reviews ($n=31$; approximately 3% of studies) were

Figure 2. Type of Study by Journal

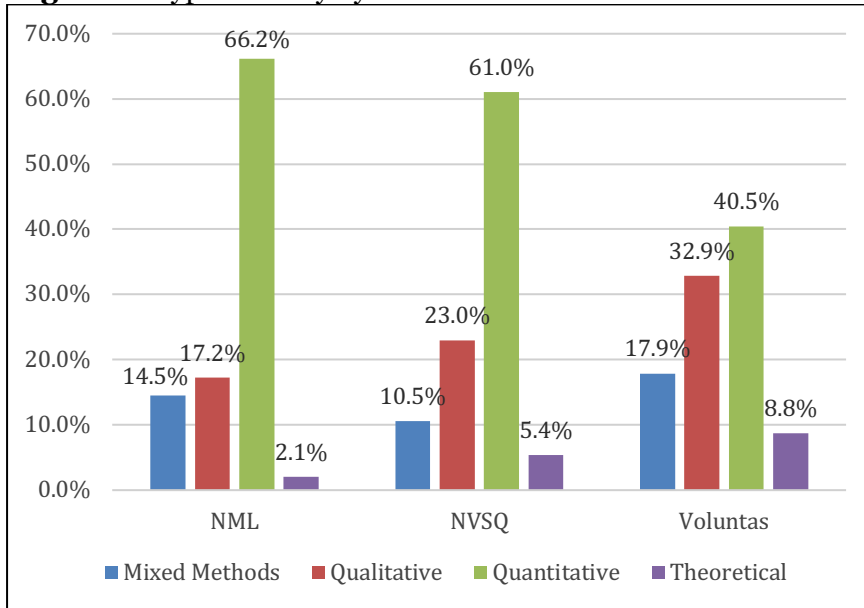
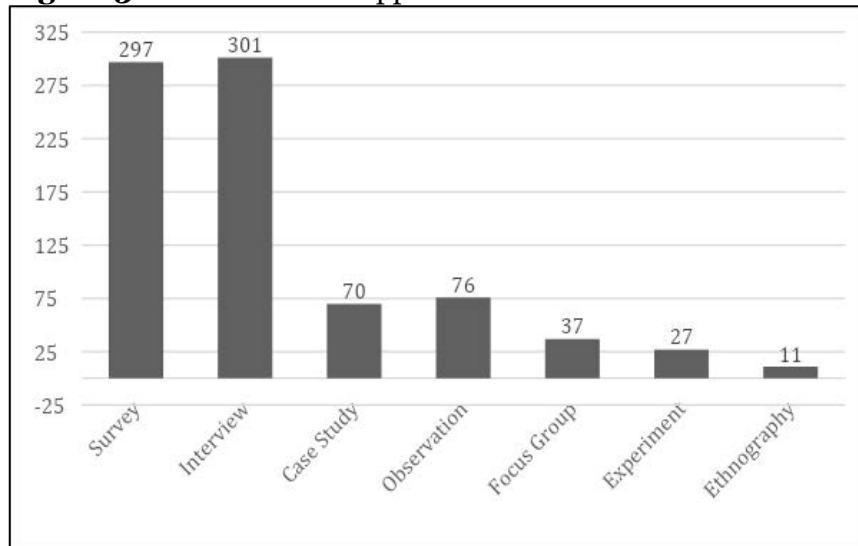


Figure 3. Data Collection Approaches



another source identified as secondary data. Many secondary sources were specific to the research study and singularly used among the studies in this sample. In total, we identified over 100 different secondary sources (see Appendix A).

Subject of Study

To explore the focus of research represented in the sample, we first identified patterns emerging from the author-identified keywords. In an iterative process, we then noted recurring themes. The keyword “volunteers” was the most frequently identified keyword during this period ($n=182$; approximately 19% of studies). This was followed by “fund development” ($n=141$; approximately 15% of articles), and “accountability” ($n=90$; approximately 9% of articles) (see Figure 4).

We also explored the most salient topics in each of the journals based on keyword patterns. “Collaboration” ($n=45$; approximately 64% of articles), “volunteers” ($n=101$; approximately 56%

Figure 4. Summary of Thematic Keywords

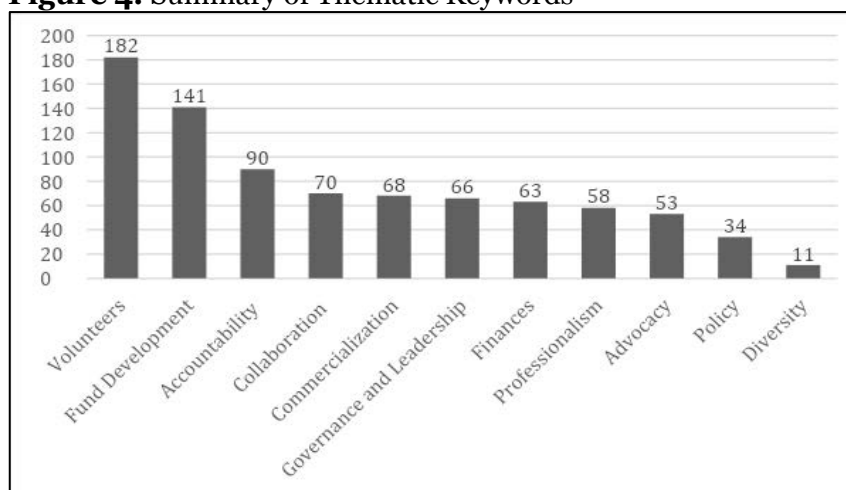
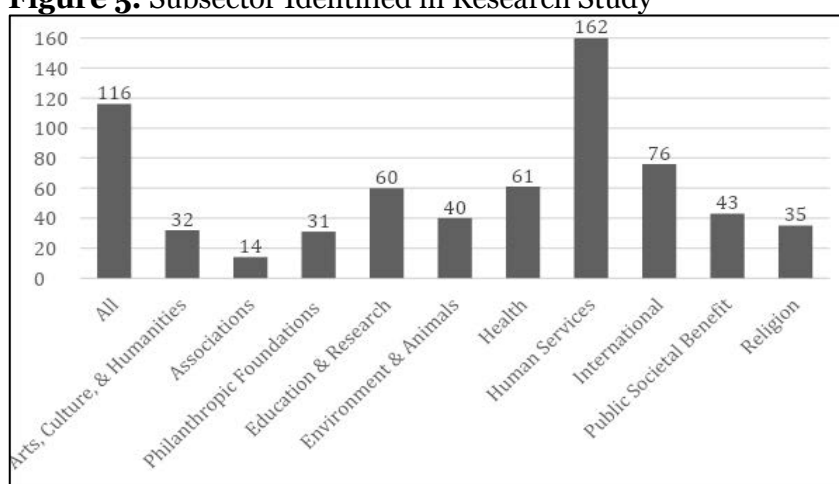


Figure 5. Subsector Identified in Research Study



of articles) and “accountability” ($n=37$; approximately 64% of articles) were most frequently used in *Voluntas*. “Fund development” was most frequently used in *NVSQ* ($n=56$; approximately 44% of articles). Among the four themes, *NML* was fairly balanced, with “accountability” being the most frequently used theme ($n=22$; approximately 24% of articles).

Next, using the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) “Major Groups,” we identified the subsectors that provided the context for the research.¹ Over half of the research studies specified at least one subsector ($n=661$; 68%); and, of those specified “human services,” “international,” “health,” and “education and research” subsectors were the most common (See Figure 5). Nearly 12% ($n=116$; approximately 12%) of all articles considered the nonprofit sector as a whole. There were 2.5% ($n=24$) of articles that referenced more than three subsectors. Some research ($n=173$; approximately 18%) was not focused on a subsector but instead considered an individual perspective (e.g., an individual donor or volunteer regardless of subsector).

Theory Salience in the Sector

To examine the degree of each article’s use of theory, we identified which theories researchers applied in their studies. Over one-third of the studies did not explicitly identify any theory (whether underpinning the study or in terms of a theoretical contribution of the research) Of the theories identified in the articles, resource dependency was the most commonly tested and

Table 5. Frequency of Articles Applying Various Theories in Each Journal

Theory	NVSQ	NML	Voluntas
Resource Dependency Theory	26 (5.33%)	15 (6.91%)	39 (5.10%)
Institutional Theory	21 (4.30%)	8 (3.69%)	34 (4.45%)
Organizational Theory	15 (3.07%)	8 (3.69%)	35 (4.58%)
Agency Theory	8 (1.64%)	9 (4.15%)	20 (2.62%)
Economic Theory	11 (2.25%)	1 (0.46%)	20 (2.62%)
Failures Theory	10 (2.05%)	2 (0.92%)	20 (2.62%)
Stakeholder Theory	6 (1.23%)	4 (1.84%)	20 (2.62%)
Social Capital Theory	8 (1.64%)	5 (2.30%)	14 (1.83%)
Social Exchange Theory	9 (1.84%)	5 (2.30%)	10 (1.31%)
Motivation Theory	6 (1.23%)	7 (3.23%)	10 (1.31%)
Network Theory	6 (1.23%)	7 (3.23%)	10 (1.31%)
Self Determination Theory	6 (1.23%)	--	14 (1.83%)
Stewardship Theory	2 (0.41%)	4 (1.84%)	10 (1.31%)
None (i.e., No Theory)	118 (24.18%)	49 (22.58%)	175 (22.91%)
Other Theory	231 (47.34%)	99 (44.62%)	332 (43.46%)
Total	488 (100%)	217 (100%)	764 (100%)

utilized theory ($n=80$, approximately 8% of studies somehow incorporated this theory). This was followed by institutional theory (approximately 7% of articles somehow incorporated).

We used the “other” category to capture theories that were referenced too few times to constitute a singular category. Figure 6 summarizes theories that were referenced by at least 15 articles or 1.5% of the sample. Table 5 sorts the theories among the three journals.

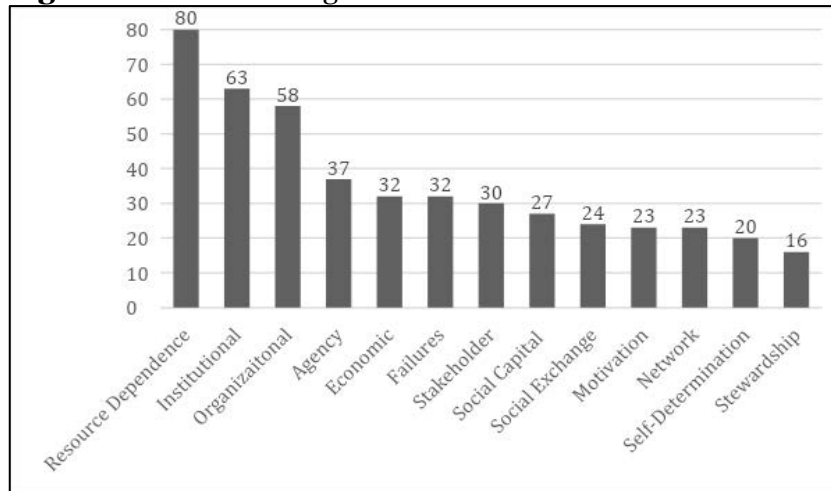
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide a contemporary survey of nonprofit research from the field’s three prominent journals. Our findings should be encouraging for those who study the nonprofit sector, those who prepare future nonprofit researchers and scholars, and those who provide outlets for publication for nonprofit research. This discussion overviews our findings.

US-Centric Research

Given the origins of the nonprofit academic community and associated outlets for academic publication, the dominance of the US as both country of primary author and location of research

Figure 6. Theories Integrated in Research Studies



is not surprising. Yet, the steadiness of this dominance in the midst of special initiatives and emerging scholarly communities across the world may be a bit disappointing for some. This trend may reflect the US-centric orientation of the journals and their associated editorial boards as well as the expectations and norms for nonprofit scholarship considered for publication in these journals. Regardless, there is some need for concern that with limited outlets for publication of peer-reviewed nonprofit scholarship, the interests of promoting diverse scholars and research in diverse contexts may be hampered without more intentional and targeted initiatives.

Dominance of Quantitative Methods

Our findings confirm a commonly held assumption about the preference of nonprofit research toward a quantitative methodological orientation. This finding mirrors Ospina, Esteve, and Lee (2018), who conducted a review of research methods in six leading public administration journals between 2010–2014. In their study, they documented the dominance of quantitative research with qualitative research consisting of less than 8% of the research they reviewed. Ospina and colleagues (2018), therefore, advised that qualitative researchers be transparent in providing connections among the “epistemological and theoretical assumptions and their methodological consequences, on the one hand, and decisions about research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation, on the other” (p. 601).

Although there is certainly training in doctoral programs for quantitative inquiry, which may arise from post-positivist epistemological frames and a broad emphasis on generalizable findings, it should also be understood that the complexity of the nonprofit sector and its operations often necessitates the use of qualitative research designs. We acknowledge, however, that the remedy for balance between quantitative and qualitative research does not lie solely with journal editors and reviewers. The onus also falls upon authors to ensure the necessary rigor and trustworthiness to ensure research quality. Our intent here is not to evaluate qualitative research, but rather highlight that the nonprofit field has (at least in the recent past) disproportionately published quantitatively oriented research. Scholars, however, should be mindful that qualitative methods are often a path to theory advancement (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

A commonly held assumption in nonprofit research is the need for sector specific theory building. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted that qualitative designs often start with a theoretical position in order to adequately contribute to a conversation in the field and enhance theory building. Existing theory is the foundation for theory building but scholars must be “moved out of the laboratory and into natural contexts” in order to understand the phenomena (Lincoln, 1990, p. 78). Authors undertaking qualitatively oriented research should strive to demonstrate the empirical nature of their research, precisely define terms, clearly outline steps in data collection

and analysis, and reference sources that have employed similar approaches or provide insights on the merits of qualitative research (Nowell & Albrecht, 2018).

Variety of Primary Data Collection Methods

The sample includes a diversity of primary data collection methods. This diversity signals a proficiency among nonprofit scholars to design and implement data collection protocols, navigate the requirements of Institutional Review Boards, and oversee complex research projects that span long durations. Academic programs intended to train future nonprofit scholars should, therefore, consider and teach students about the range of methodological tools that effective nonprofit researchers should have in their methodological tool kit. This should help in furthering the larger community's (i.e., practitioner and academic) understanding of the tools that are appropriate and necessary for nonprofit scholarship.

Broad Range of Secondary Data Sources

Given the assumed dominance of IRS 990 tax forms as the primary source of data for nonprofit scholarship in the US, the diversity of data sources represented in this research is interesting to note. Indeed, we identified over 100 secondary data sources, and many of these are publicly available (see Appendix A). We, therefore, see great opportunity for nonprofit scholars to think creatively about data sources that may help them answer their research questions. Given this broad diversity, there is little need to allow data sources to guide research interests.

Diverse Foci

The keywords in the sample also represent diversity of research interests. This diversity makes it challenging to summarize cohesive trends in nonprofit research. Although there is some clustering among topics identified from this analysis, it remains unclear if the commonalities are sufficient enough to represent a cohesive research stream or if it is merely a matter of common keywords and individualized interests of the authors.

One focus in particular, however, is interesting to note—that is, the volume of studies related to volunteers. This volume may be due to the growing professionalization of the nonprofit sector. Questions remain, though, whether this focus is a reflection of the available data and the origins of the sector or a contemporary need to understand the changing dynamics of the sector.

Limited Integration of Theory

With the roots of nonprofit scholarship sourced from many disciplines, the diversity of theories identified in the sample was no surprise. The large portion of the sample that did not integrate or reference a theory (nearly one-quarter of articles across all journals), however, (some while still purporting to be “theory-building”) was surprising.

The role of theory in research is to help systematically predict, describe, and explain phenomena. Thus, with the neglect of theory among some articles in this sample, the question arises whether scholars hold too narrow a lens to contribute or integrate theory more broadly; and, for those who do, it is questionable whether their reference to theory is perfunctory as opposed to genuinely contributing to building theory. We should point out that we refrained from evaluating the authors' use and application of theory; and, a number of authors ($n=15$) described their research as grounded theory, implying they were constructing theory from their inductive research inquiry.

Divergent Research

Each article in the sample was unique, comprised of various authors, foci (i.e., keywords), locations, theory application, methods, and data sources. Although there was some cohesion

among the research themes in this study, it should be noted that isolated inquiries can prove challenging when seeking to understand the intellectual structure of a research field. It is, therefore, important that nonprofit researchers and authors highlight practical considerations of their research (e.g., implications for future research) that often conclude research publications. This should help to foster more research to practice connections. Future research should also consider the use of topic modeling, as demonstrated by Marberg et al. (2019) in their analysis of nonprofit research, to investigate in-depth the convergence and divergence of contemporary nonprofit scholarship.

Research into the Sector's Fringes

The diversity uncovered in this study is, collectively, a strength, a challenge, and an opportunity for nonprofit scholarship. Although the diversity of the nonprofit sector is widely acknowledged, some researchers are challenged to think about their research in terms of generalizability and theoretical importance. In scanning the prevalence of nonprofit scholarship among the sector's many subsectors, we identified clustering in some areas while neglect in others.

Although we relied on the 10 broad categories of the NTEE to categorize articles in the sample, we realize that a broader diversity of subsectors would be represented if we attempted to match each article to the NTEE's 26 major groups (or the 400+ subcategories). Future should consider the full range of nonprofit subfields.

Precision in Terms

As trained scholars in the nonprofit field, we found ourselves in the midst of data coding challenged to interpret what some authors self-identified as characteristics of their research. This challenge could be the result of terminological confusion on the part of authors, an oversight, or missed components of the peer-review process. Beyond the challenge of self-reported theory mentioned previously, we sought (and sometimes did not find) precisely used terms that described the type of study, the methods, or the analytic process. Although beyond our study's scope, this issue may extend to the constructs the research is intent on investigating. Although we understand that this issue is not unique to our nonprofit field, it should be understood that precision in terms helps to foster cohesive bodies of knowledge.

Limitations

Given our unique and large sample, this study is not devoid of limitations. First, the data points are limited by the use of the authors' definitions. We relied on the definitions and information provided by the authors of the sampled articles to create the data points. This information may or may not be accurate in terms of some of the data points. For instance, what an author identified as theory may not necessarily be the appropriate use of theory in the article.

Secondly, the scope of the study is limited. We reviewed only three, out of many other nonprofit-related journals available. The sample was also based on a 5-year period (2013–2018). Greater trends and diversity may be identified by reviewing additional journals and focusing on a broader segment of time.

Conclusion

With the diverse and complex nature of the nonprofit sector, this study advances the field by focusing attention on a broad sample of contemporary nonprofit research and evaluating trends over the last five years. This review improves our understanding of the scope of nonprofit research for existing scholars. It also informs emerging scholars about research trends and gaps that exist.

From the three prominent peer-reviewed nonprofit journals, we explored areas where nonprofit research has emerged, topics that have been prominent, nonprofit subsectors that have been studied, data sources that have been used, and methods and theories that have been employed. Using a sample of 972 articles, our data collection and analysis indicated that most articles were authored by multiple authors. This demonstrates the importance of collaboration within the field of nonprofit research. Authors represented approximately 56 countries across six continents. Conferences, trainings and seminars, where researchers converge and connect, should provide greater opportunities for future research collaborations.

Quantitatively-oriented research dominates recent nonprofit scholarship. This highlights the importance of (and opportunities for) training emerging nonprofit scholars in diverse research methods. Primary data sources dominated the sample, but we also found substantial diversity in the sources of data available to nonprofit-related inquiry (see Appendix A). A recurring theme in nonprofit research is volunteers; and, most research focuses on a single nonprofit subsector. Limited theoretical underpinnings may be an opportunity for future scholars to seek stronger grounding in theory so that the field can draw greater connections across research topics and also so that new theories specific to the sector can develop.

In sum, our analysis heartens us as emerging scholars in the growing field of nonprofit research. However, our analysis also illuminates where we might contribute to strengthening the direction of future nonprofit research.

Note

1. National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) Codes retrieved from <https://nccs.urban.org/project/national-taxonomy-exempt-entities-ntee-codes>

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Appendix A. Secondary Sources Used in Recent Nonprofit Scholarship

Name	Website (as of August 1, 2020)	Date	Individual/ Organization / Countries	Description	Citation	Registration Required	Type(s) of files
Afrobarometer Surveys	http://www.afrobarometer.org/data/merged-data	Ongoing	Individual	Surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in 35+ countries in Africa.	Compion, 2017	N	.sav
American Community Surveys	https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs	Annual	Individual	Premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.	King, & Lewis, 2017	Y	.csv
Americans' Changing Lives Data	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACDA/studies/4690/datadocumentation#	1986, 1989, 1994, 2002, and 2011	Individual	Includes topics regarding American lifestyle choices.	Kim, & Jang, 2017	Y	.csv, .dta, .sas, .sav
British Household Panel Survey	https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=200005#!/access	1991–2009	Individual	Further understanding of social and economic change at the individual and household level in Britain.	Winters, & Rundlett, 2015	Y	Unsure
Canadian Equality, Security, and Community Survey	http://www.isr.yorku.ca/download/ESC/esc.html	1999/2000 & 2003	Individual	Explores the economic, social and political factors that shape public policy, and how these policies determine societal values, attitudes and well-being among individuals/communities.	Wang, & Handy, 2014	N	.pdf, zip
Current Population Survey	https://www.census.gov/programs-	Ongoing	Individual	Provides information on many of the things that define us as individuals and as a	Spera, Ghertner, Nerino, &	N	.csv, DOS/Windows,

	surveys/cps/data-detail.html			society—work, earnings, and education.	Ditommaso, 2015		gnu zips, pdfs, .sas
Eurobarometer 62.2 Survey	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/4668/datadocumentation	11/22/2004–12/19/2004	Individual	Standard Eurobarometer measures as well as agricultural policy, development aid, social capital, and information and communication technology.	Pennerstorfer, & Neumayr, 2017	Y	.csv, .dta, .sas, .sav
Eurobarometer 75.2 Survey	https://www.gesis.org/?id=3421&tx_eurobarometer_pi1%5Bvol%5D=3421&tx_eurobarometer_pi1%5Bpos1%5D=1050	4/11–5/11	Individual	Crisis management. Volunteering. Attitude towards environmental protection. Audio-visual media. Helplines for social services.	Veal, & Nichols, 2017	Y	.dta, .pdf, .por, .sav, .sps
European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions	https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions	Four year periods	Individual	Collects timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions.	Quaranta, & Dotti Sani, 2016	N	zip
European Values Survey	https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/GDESC2.asp?no=0009&DB=E	1999 and 2008	Individual	Provides insights into the ideas, beliefs, preferences, attitudes, values and opinions of citizens all over Europe.	Gil-Lacruz, Marcuello-Servós, & Saz-Gil, 2016	Y	.dta, .por, .sav

Faith and Organizations Project	https://www.sip2.upenn.edu/research/special-projects/faith-organizations-project/	2005–2010	Organization	Concrete information and targeted materials to help clarify specifically religious aspects of the relationship between founding communities and their organizations.	Wittberg, 2013	Y	Unsure
Giving and Volunteering Survey	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NADAC/studies/35584/summary	1988–2001	Individual	Explores how socioeconomic conditions and tax laws affect the charitable behavior of Americans.	Wang, Yoshioka, & Ashcraft, 2013	N	.csv, .dta, .sas, .sav
Giving in the Netherlands Panel Survey	http://www.giving.nl/giving-the-netherlands/	Ongoing	Individual	Macro-economic estimates of philanthropy and volunteering by households, foundations, corporations, and lotteries.	De Wit, & Bekkers, 2016	Written request required	Unsure
ISTAT Multipurpose Survey	https://www.istat.it/en/archive/129934	Annual	Individual	Covers the resident population in private households, by interviewing a sample of 20,000 households and 50,000 people.	Quaranta, 2016	N	.html, .pdf
Japanese General Social Survey	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/209	2000–2006, 2008, 2010, 2012	Individual	Looks at the society and culture in Japan .	Hanada, 2013	Y	.csv, .dta, .sas, .sav
MixMarket	http://www.themix.org/mixmarket	1999–2019	Organization	Collected from financial service providers targeting the unbanked in developing markets	Bezboruah, & Pillai, 2015	Y	.csv, .xlsx Tabbed TXT

National Center for Charitable Statistics	https://nccs-data.urban.org/index.php	1989-2016	Organization	IRS Business Master Files, NCCS Core Files, Digitized Data Files, and IRS Statistics of Income Division Exempt Organizations Sample Files.	Van Puyvelde, & Brown, 2016	N	.csv, Excel
National Congregations Study	http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcongtcon/	1998, 2006, & 2012	Organization	Surveys a representative sample of America's churches, synagogues, mosques and other local places of worship.	Lee, 2018	Y	.csv, .dta, .pdf, .sav, .xlsx
National Credit Union Administration Call Report Quarterly	https://www.nCUA.gov/analysis/Pages/call-report-data/quarterly-data.aspx	Quarterly since 1994	Organization	Quarterly financial and miscellaneous information from credit unions.	Mook, Quarter, & Maiorano, 2015	N	.txt
National Organizations Survey	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/35011	2010	Organization	Quantifies domestic and international sourcing of business functions of US private and public sector organizations.	Chen, Ren, & Knoke, 2014	Y	.csv, .dta, .rda, .sas, .sav
Net Official Development Assistance	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD	1960–2017	Countries	List of countries with government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries.	Pallas, Anderson, & Sidel, 2018	N	.csv, .xlxs, XML
Office of Scottish Charity Regulator	https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-oscr	Ongoing	Organization	Independent regulator and registrar for over 24,000 Scottish charities, including former charities	McDonnell, 2017	N	.csv

Panel Study of Income Dynamics	https://simba.isr.umich.edu/VS/f.aspx	1967–present	Individual	Collects information on health, wealth, expenditures, philanthropy, child development, the transition to adulthood, and much more.	Peck, & Guo, 2015	Y	Unsure
Pew Research Center	http://www.pewresearch.org/	Ongoing	Individual	Nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world.	Reddick, & Ponomariov, 2013	Y	.sav
Portraits of American Life Study	http://www.thearda.com/pals/	2006 & 2012	Individual	Panel study focused on religion in the U.S., with a particular focus in capturing ethnic and racial diversity.	Eagle, Keister, & Ghazal, 2018	Y	.dta, .sav
Statistics of US Businesses	https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/susb/data/tables.html	Annual	Organization	Series that provides national and subnational data on the distribution of economic data by enterprise size and industry.	Teekchandani, 2014	N	.xlsx
Survey of Health, Aging, and Retirement in Europe	http://www.share-project.org/data-access.html	2004–present	Individual	Multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of more than 120,000 individuals aged 50+.	Kehl, & Stahlschmidt, 2016	Y	.dta, .sav
Survey of Texas Adults	https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NAACDA/studies/4297	2004	Individual	Series of several data collection efforts aimed at learning more about the lives of adults who live in Texas.	Yeung, 2017	Y	.dta, .pdf, .sas, .sav

The IRS Statistics of Income Data	https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-irs-data-book	Annual	Individual	Data on collecting the revenue, issuing refunds, enforcing the law, assisting the taxpayer, and the budget and workforce.	Qu, & Osili, 2017	N	.pdf, .xlsx
The Statistic Division of the United Nation (UN)	http://data.un.org/	Ongoing	Countries	Topics include; development, economy, environment, geospatial information, and population/society.	Kim, & Kim, 2016	N	.csv, .xml
World Development Indicator of the World Bank	https://data.worldbank.org/products/wdi	Annual	Countries	The primary World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially-recognized international sources.	Kim, & Kim, 2016	N	.csv, .txt, .xlsx
World Values Survey	http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp	1981–2014	Individual	Global network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life.	Jeong, 2013	Y	.csv, .dta, .rdata, .sas, .sav, .xlsx

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“I Didn’t Want to be a Burden”: Improving Interactions between Refugees and Nonprofit Service Providers

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As newly resettled refugees integrate into their new communities they often receive services from nonprofit organizations to supplement government assistance. However, there has been little research regarding how nonprofit service providers and refugees interact with one another and perceive these interactions. This qualitative study uses data gathered from 60 first-person, open-ended interviews with refugees, and nonprofit service providers to fill this gap. The research questions are: *How do refugees being served by nonprofits express their perceptions of the services they receive to nonprofit service providers? To what extent do refugees feel that nonprofit service providers are responsive to their needs? And, how do nonprofit staff and volunteers report responding to the needs of their refugee clients?* This article is framed using empowerment theory, where refugee needs and perspectives are at the forefront of service provision decisions and where refugee empowerment is a primary goal.

Keywords: Refugees, Refugee Resettlement, Immigrant Integration, Nonprofits

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2018) estimates that there are more than 25.4 million refugees worldwide. Refugee resettlement, defined as the “organized movement of pre-selected refugees to a destination country in which their settlement is expected to be permanent” (van Selm, 2003, p. 512), provides a way for these refugees to begin building a new life in a receiving country. In theory, refugee resettlement allows refugees to integrate and live productively in their new community. During their integration process, refugees adapt to the mainstream legal, economic, and socio-cultural customs of the receiving community while still maintaining their previously established identity. Ideally, receiving communities are welcoming of refugees and embrace the diversity they bring (UNHCR, 2013).

In the United States, refugees receive resettlement assistance from both government agencies and nonprofit organizations. This assistance focuses on helping refugees become self-sufficient as quickly as possible (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2014). Although there is literature available regarding the promotion of refugee integration, there is less literature on the role that refugees can play in their own integration process.

Indeed, limited studies have examined refugees’ perspectives about what they feel will help them to integrate successfully and become self-sufficient. Several studies, however, have

demonstrated the value of examining nonprofit service provision in a way that focuses on the impacts and perspectives of clients, rather than on the perspectives of the organizations providing services (e.g., Adler & Clark, 2008; Balser & McClusky, 2005; Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Zammuto, 1984). Thus, this study aims to address this gap.

Using data gathered from 60 first-person interviews (30 with refugees and 30 with nonprofit service providers), this study seeks to better understand how refugees being served by nonprofits perceive the services that they receive, to what extent refugees feel that nonprofit service providers are responsive to their needs, and how nonprofit staff and volunteers report responding to the needs of their refugee clients.

This study is grounded in empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000), which places a primary focus on empowering refugees to collaborate with service providers during their integration process and make decisions related to the services they receive. The findings from the study provide recommendations about how nonprofits serving refugees can better adapt their services to meet the needs of their refugee clients. Ultimately, this study allows those most impacted by nonprofit actions—i.e., the refugees—to guide future service delivery efforts.

Refugee Resettlement in the United States

Although many nations have established programs aimed at providing assistance to resettled refugees, the United States' resettlement program has traditionally been the largest (UNHCR, 2016). The first refugee resettlement policy in the United States was created in 1948 in the aftermath of World War II (Brown & Scribner, 2014; Westermeyer, 2011). This policy allowed 205,000 refugees fleeing persecution to enter the United States between 1948 and 1950 (Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), 2016). At this time there were two primary approaches to resettlement: the widespread distribution of refugees to ensure that no one community would be overwhelmingly burdened with providing services, and the use of private sponsors and organizations that would assist in the refugee resettlement process (Westermeyer, 2011).

In 1968, the United States chose to ratify the United Nations' Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. The United States, therefore, became bound by the United Nations' Convention Relating to this Protocol. Being bound by this Convention, the United States acknowledged that they could not expel a refugee to a territory where that person's life or freedom would be threatened due to race, religion, or beliefs. Later, the United States' Refugee Act of 1980 focused more on the humanitarian aspects of refugee resettlement, providing an update to Cold War era resettlement policies that focused primarily on the political benefits of refugee resettlement (Newland, 1995). After this Act passed, the United States set a goal of accepting 50,000 refugees into the country per year (Martin, 2004).

In 2015 the United States resettled 69,993 refugees. An additional 85,000 were expected to arrive by 2016 (Zong & Batalova, 2019). The actual number of refugees that arrived in 2016 (84,994) was close to this target (Refugee Processing Center, 2019).

Under the Trump administration, refugee admissions declined. In 2017, there were 53,716 refugees admitted into the United States. In 2018, there were 22,491 admitted; and as of August 31, 2019, there had been 28,052 refugees admitted. Although the total number of refugees admitted in 2019 is higher than in 2018, the ceiling for admission was lower (30,000 in 2019 versus 45,000 in 2018) (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). At the time of this article, debates continue regarding what 2020 refugee admission numbers will look like.

Promoting Refugee Integration

Self-sufficiency, or the ability to live independently, is a primary focus of refugee resettlement programs in the United States (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2014). In order to achieve refugee resettlement, some have suggested that refugees must be able to successfully integrate into their new communities.

In general, integration is the process by which refugees experience economic mobility and social inclusion for themselves and their children (Migration Policy Institute, 2019). There are multiple types of integration including language, political, residential, socioeconomic, and social (Jimenez, 2011). The literature typically views socioeconomic integration as the most important form of integration since it determines refugees' ability to integrate in other ways (Jimenez, 2011; Nawyn, Gjakaj, Agbenyiga, & Grace, 2012).

Existing literature describes a multitude of factors leading to a successful socioeconomic integration process, including personal characteristics (e.g., a willingness to take initiative and/or risks) (Djajic, 2003; Gjelten, 2015), the refugee or immigrant's legal status (Durand, Massey, & Pren, 2016; Gentsch & Massey, 2011; Liang & Zhou, 2016), the nature of welfare systems in the receiving country (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Pontusson, 2005), and attitudes toward multiculturalism or assimilation in the receiving country (Brubaker, 1992; Favell, 1998). Other important factors include educational attainment, income, occupational status, and home ownership (Jimenez, 2011; Park and Myers, 2010).

There are a number of other factors that affect refugees' ability to integrate. These factors are important considerations. Traumatic experiences, for one, can pose substantial challenges for refugees during their integration process (Bhui et. al., 2003; Jamil, Ventimiglia, Makki, & Arnetz, 2010). Studies have shown that trauma, especially when coupled with other mental health and physical health concerns, must first be addressed before a refugee is able to reach self-sufficiency (van Selm, 2003).

Once resettled in the United States, government integration services for refugees are provided for a limited time (typically 30 to 90 days). Because of this, nonprofit organizations are often called upon to fulfill service delivery gaps during the integration process. However, some governments of receiving countries (as well as members of the public) have been opposed to efforts made by nonprofits to promote refugee integration. Rather, they would prefer that refugees return to their home country when whatever crisis they were fleeing has ended (Karas & Alfred, 2019).

Receiving country governments and those native to receiving countries may fear that self-reliance efforts will make refugees more competitive in the workforce. This competition, some believe, extends to the job market where native-born job seekers are thought to then be at a disadvantage. Some native citizens also view refugees as "outsiders" intruding in their communities; and, some even believe that refugees will become dependent on welfare systems paid for with the tax dollars of native citizens (Jacobsen, 2014).

In recent years, public opinion regarding refugee resettlement in the United States has become less positive. In 2017, for example, one study found that 56% of Americans believed that the United States had a responsibility to accept refugees into the country. This is compared to 51% with the same belief in 2018 (Hartig, 2018). Common refugee admission objections include fiscal burdens on the communities where refugees resettle (Nezer, 2013) and perceived cultural threats, e.g., if the refugee is of a different religion (Singer & Wilson, 2006). As political support for refugee resettlement decreases at the federal level, many refugee serving nonprofits have lost funding and some have been forced to close (McCambridge, 2018).

Soliciting Refugee Perspectives of Nonprofit Services

The concept of street level bureaucracy can help us to examine how actions taken by nonprofit service providers impact the refugees they serve. It also helps to provide insight as to whether those working with refugees actually understand refugee needs and communicate those needs with individuals in positions of power within their organizations (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). Lipsky's (1980, 2010) work considers those working in government agencies, rather than in nonprofit organizations, however, some basic concepts equally apply. In both cases there are service providers working with clients; and, in both cases service providers may (or may not) be able (or willing) to adapt their work to better meet client needs. This adaptation, or lack thereof, can in turn impact client outcomes.

Considering the case of nonprofits, specifically, employees and volunteers have daily contact with those receiving services. They also have an understanding of problems and hardships that these individuals face (van Selm, 2003). Therefore, nonprofits are often in a unique position to identify and recommend services that can be most helpful during the resettlement and integration process. Nonprofits can also help to identify ways that existing services might need to be adapted.

Benefits associated with the solicitation of client perspectives have been noted in several studies. For example, Guo and Saxton (2010) found that a nonprofit's impact increased as communication with constituents increased. Therefore, rather than make assumptions regarding what could help refugees integrate, it may be more impactful and empowering to allow refugees themselves to guide service delivery (to the extent that they are able) by asking them about their needs and implementing recommendations that they have. By making decisions related to service provision based on refugee perspectives, nonprofits can guard against the long history of Western "experts" and organizations merely assuming what is best for refugees (Sigona, 2014). Indeed, refugees (in many instances) are able to speak for themselves.

Research Questions

There were three specific research questions that guided this analysis. These questions are as follows:

1. How do refugees who are being served by nonprofits express their perceptions of these services to the nonprofits providing services?
2. To what extent do refugees feel that nonprofit service providers are responsive to their needs?
3. How do nonprofit staff and volunteers respond to the needs of their refugee clients?

Conceptual Framework

Empowerment theory guides this analysis. Empowerment is a participatory and active process (Mechanic, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). It gives individuals a sense of control over their lives (Peterson, 2014).

Empowerment theory provides a way to better understand this process by providing insight into how individuals gain a sense of self-determination. It also provides an understanding of the extent to which people can make decisions that impact their individual and community lives (Zimmerman, 2000). In the nonprofit sector, there are some indicators that this occurs between service providers and those they serve. These indicators include:

- Critically reflecting upon issues (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000),
- Fostering a sense of mutual respect (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000),
- Making mutual decisions (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000), and
- Using a collaborative approach to service provision in which the service providers act as a guide or facilitator to help those receiving services determine what is needed (Zimmerman, 2000).

When considering empowerment theory through the lens of refugee resettlement, we gain a better understanding of how refugees become empowered and gain a greater sense of control over their integration and resettlement process. This is similar to the idea of refugee self-sufficiency where refugees are able to live independently. This notion has frequently been discussed in practitioner and academic literature (e.g., Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2014; van Selm, 2003).

Indicators of empowerment as it relates to nonprofit service provision for resettled refugees could include, but are not limited to:

- Fostering open lines of communication between refugees and service providers (Guo & Saxton, 2010) to allow for the critical discussion of and reflection upon issues that are being faced,
- Demonstrating that refugee needs are heard, understood, and respected by adapting practices, programs, and services to better meet their needs (Lipsky, 1980, 2010; Kettner, Moroney, and Martin, 2017), and
- Reconsidering power dynamics and identifying ways to empower refugees who have previously experienced disempowerment (Woelders and Abma, 2015) by seeing them as collaborators in service provision and making decisions together.

Ultimately, interactions between refugees and nonprofit service providers are evaluated in a way that aims to empower refugees, amplify their voices, and provide them with a sense of agency over their resettlement and integration process. This study considers the extent to which refugees receiving services from nonprofit organizations are able to participate in the service provision process. The study also explores the extent to which nonprofits act upon the service provision recommendations of refugees.

Data and Methodology

Identifying and Recruiting Participants

This qualitative study uses open-ended, first-person interviews to compare and analyze how nonprofits and their refugee clients in a city in the Southeastern United States (that includes urban and suburban areas) interact with one another. Qualitative research allows us to understand “the practices and experiences of individuals, groups, and institutions, as well as on the processes involved therein, for example, perception and...interaction” (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2008, 242). The primary goals of this study were to better understand interactions between refugees and nonprofit service providers as well as refugee perceptions of services. Thus, a qualitative approach seemed appropriate.

Typical case sampling, in which average and/or normal cases are examined (Patton, 2001), and snowball sampling were used to identify and recruit participants. An e-mail invitation was sent to leaders of various refugee communities and to nonprofit service providers with information about the study, the researcher, and how to participate if interested. Once

participants were identified, snowball sampling was used until the desired number of participants was located and data saturation was achieved.

There are many ways to measure and evaluate data saturation. Research has indicated that theoretical data saturation for qualitative interviews is generally reached at about 14 interviews (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017) and/or when no new themes emerge after three interviews (Francis et al., 2010). Both of these levels were reached (and surpassed) for this study.

Data Collection

A total of 60 individuals participated in this study. Interviews were conducted between November 2017 and August 2018. Primary data was gathered through in-depth, one-on-one, interviews at a public location that each participant chose. All interviews were conducted in English. Participants were given written and verbal information regarding the purpose of the study. They were then asked to provide verbal consent. Participants received no compensation.

In general, one-on-one interviews allow participants to give feedback without the influence of other participants (as may occur in a focus group). As such, I was able to obtain more information from each participant because only one participant was the focus at any one time. In addition, some participants may feel more comfortable sharing information that they know will not be heard by others in their personal networks (Palmerino, 2006). Interviews, therefore, also allow participants to share more detailed information; and, they allow interviewers to ask more follow-up questions if needed (Turner, 2010).

Three sets of standardized questions were created: one for refugees, one for service providers working directly with clients (or “street level” service providers), and one for supervisory service providers who oversaw those at the street level (but did not work directly with clients). The questions asked of refugees examined:

- Their goals, needs, and challenges,
- Their perceptions of services provided by nonprofits,
- If/how they shared their perceptions and needs with nonprofit service providers, and
- If they felt that nonprofit service providers were responsive to their needs.

The questions asked of service providers examined:

- How their actions seemed to impact their refugee clients (Lipsky, 1980, 2010),
- How they interacted and conversed with refugee clients and fellow service providers, and
- The extent to which they were able to adapt services to meet refugee needs (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017).

Participants were also asked for demographic information, which is described in the following section. Detailed participant information is provided in Appendix A.

Participant Demographics

Thirty participants were refugees. These participants came from countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Some arrived in the United States as children under 10 years old and others arrived later in life (e.g., when they were in their early- to mid-50s). Their years of arrival varied—ranging from the early 1990s to as recently as 2016. Fourteen of the participants were male and 16 were female.

Participants reported varying interaction with nonprofits. Some only reported one nonprofit interaction and others reported between five and 10 interactions. Three participants reported that they had too many interactions with nonprofits to count; and, six participants simply did not know, or they were unsure of, how many interactions they had.

The other 30 participants were individuals working for a nonprofit service provider. Of these individuals, 15 were currently in a supervisory role and the other 15 currently worked directly with clients. Thirteen of these individuals were volunteers. Seventeen were paid by the nonprofit. They worked at their organizations ranging from one year to over 20 years. They represented seven nonprofit organizations total. Five of these nonprofits were local. The two others were nationwide organizations with a local branch.

Service provider participants held various roles including interns, staff members, volunteers, and executive directors. Four service provider participants came to the United States as refugees and, at the time of their interview, were working in service provision to assist other refugees.

Data Analysis

All participants were asked for permission to record their interviews. Twenty-nine of the 30 service provider participants agreed to be recorded and 18 of the 30 refugee participants agreed to be recorded. In addition to the recordings, notes were taken during interviews to serve as a backup for the recorded information. Recorded interviews were later transcribed. In instances where permission was not granted to record, detailed notes were taken during and after the interview.

The transcribed interviews and interview notes were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Data was coded using both a priori codes and in vivo codes. These codes were used to develop emergent themes. This information was then used to draw conclusions regarding the impact of existing nonprofit services on refugee integration and service delivery gaps. The information was also used to make recommendations about how nonprofit programs could provide better services to refugees.

Data analysis was an iterative process. Specifically, the data were constantly revisited and reanalyzed to discover new themes. This iterative process eventually resulted in more meaningful findings.

Nonprofit Financial Information

According to a review of IRS 990 forms, the nonprofits represented in this study received their funding from several sources. The majority of small organizations without a national presence were primarily funded through individual donations and small grants. These organizations spent the majority of their funds on program services and administration and they generally had assets of less than \$100,000 and an annual income of less than \$50,000.

Some of the larger organizations received ongoing funding from the government. At times this was dependent on the number of clients they served. In other instances, funding was for a specific project. These organizations also received donations from individuals, and their assets and annual incomes were in the millions.

Larger organizations spent the majority of their funds on program services and administration. These organizations, however, also dedicated financial resources to fundraising expenses. One organization, in particular, received all of its funding (over \$1 million) from program services. This organization received no funding from donations or grants. In general, the smaller more local organizations had larger volunteer bases. This is

potentially because they did not have the necessary financial resources to hire a large paid staff.

Ethical Considerations

Power and perceptions of coercion must be considered when working with human subjects. This is especially true when working with vulnerable and/or marginalized populations and in instances where the researcher may have more power than those being studied (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2008; Vandenberg & Hall, 2011). Refugees, new arrivals specifically, may be vulnerable; and, it was therefore important to ensure that these individuals understood the purpose of the research (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2008).

Participants were informed that participation in this study was voluntary. They were also informed that they could stop the interview at any point and that all responses were confidential. Finally, the participants were informed that their decision to participate (or not to participate) would have no impact on the services that they received.

Study Limitations and Trade-Offs

Refugees participating had to have received at least one service from a nonprofit organization in order to participate. Although efforts made by nonprofits to serve refugees may (or, in some cases, may not) have aided in their integration process, refugees first had to be aware of these services in order to have taken advantage of them. While some nonprofits engage in outreach efforts to promote their services to refugee populations, such efforts may not always be effective or reach all who are intended to be reached.

In other cases, no outreach efforts may have occurred (even if there are nonprofits providing services) or there may be a lack of nonprofits providing services (e.g., in rural areas or in areas with limited resources). As such, it is possible that those who were already better integrated (e.g., those who understood English and were therefore able to understand what services a nonprofit could provide to them) may be the ones primarily receiving service assistance. If this assumption is correct, the perspectives of those who were less well integrated and who were arguably the most in need of assistance may not be as represented.

Because this was a qualitative study, concerns regarding a lack of generalizability of the findings also arises. In order to account for this and to make the findings more broadly applicable, I relied on data source triangulation. This type of triangulation involves collecting data from a variety of sources, including different individuals and different organizations in order to gain multiple perspectives. This process can assist in validating data (Maxwell, 2013).

Findings and Discussion

This section explores how, and the extent to which, nonprofits empower and promote self-sufficiency among refugees they serve through communication and program adaptation. Findings of interviews from refugees and nonprofit service providers are discussed and contextualized with a discussion of the broader literature. These findings are arranged thematically, as follows:

- Refugees reported varying degrees to which nonprofit service providers were responsive to their needs
- Refugees reported hesitation in sharing their perceptions of services with nonprofit service providers,
- Refugees expressed feelings of gratitude for any services received,

- Nonprofits using informal data collection methods were better able to understand the needs of their refugee clients, and
- Those at the “street level” were well-positioned to solicit and share refugee needs.

Each of these is unpacked upon in the following sections.

Varying Degrees of Nonprofit Responsiveness

As much as possible, client needs and perspectives should drive service provision (Adler & Clark, 2008). According to empowerment theory, this approach can help ensure that service provision is collaborative (Zimmerman, 2000) and mutually agreed upon (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000). This approach can also ensure that refugee voices are considered, and that programs and services are truly reflective of refugee needs (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Lipsky, 1980, 2010).

Despite the benefits of this approach, this did not always manifest in participant responses. Although the refugees in this study had all been assisted in some way by a nonprofit, 17 of the 30 interviewed stated that they did not always feel supported by these service providers. To illustrate, one participant who came to the United States as a child described the detrimental impact of feeling like no one was available to help her mother.

My mom cried for like a month straight...She would just look out the window. We didn’t know where, what, how. We didn’t know where the grocery store or anything was, and no one was there.

Another refugee shared her personal experience of feeling that no one was there to provide support. In this case, the refugee had been living in the United States for a while and felt that refugees today receive more support than refugees did when she and her husband arrived.

Now I see a lot of people who are getting help, but not when I came. Like Medicaid, I had no idea how to do that. My husband worked two jobs, we had no insurance, nobody told me about Medicaid. Or food stamps. I did not know this before, but now too many people come in and they get food stamps. Nobody helped me.

In the cases of the refugees quoted above (and others who expressed similar points of view), it was not clear if there was actually help available or if the refugees simply perceived a lack of service availability. The important consideration here, however, is the refugees’ perceptions. If they perceived that service assistance was unavailable, they may not have sought additional assistance. As such, they may not have received the kind of support that could have been helpful during their integration process. For these individuals, there was no communication; and, therefore there was no opportunity to share their perspectives or act as a collaborator in making decisions related to service provision. Ultimately, this decreased their empowerment. Indeed, they felt that support was unavailable; and, as such, they did not feel empowered to seek it out.

Not all refugees ($n=13$), however, felt this way. In the quote below, a refugee who arrived in the United States as a child described how two local nonprofits made him and his family feel welcome. Staff at the organization took the time to greet them and provided them with assistance upon arrival. They also sought ways to learn about their family and culture.

[W]hen we first arrived...I remember seeing little teddy bears, flowers, things of that nature. It was like I had just come back from the Olympics after I won a gold medal. When I first stepped foot in [this city] at [the airport], I felt like ‘wow, I really belong.’ I heard some stories. There were people who told me that their churches literally forgot about them and had to call security and the church was like ‘oh my God I dropped the ball.’ We were very lucky. From the beginning they took us in. I was part of the child groups, hanging out with the kids and getting introduced. I remember seeing my room and there were toys. They were all just really nice—some of them even read about Bosnia and the culture.

In this instance, staff at the nonprofit did not only focus on the physical needs of this refugee family. They also made the family feel welcome by learning about their home country culture and inviting them to join in social groups.

In another instance, the feeling of being alone stopped after the refugee reached out to the nonprofit.

My wife and I did not know where we could buy groceries. One day when we went to [the church that had been working with us and providing services to us], I spoke with the pastor. I said, ‘we do not know where to go to buy food’ and after the service he drove us to the store. He then gave us some papers and maps with information about places for us to go, and the next week he asked us how things were going and what else we needed.

To identify areas of improvement, we can look to Guo and Saxton’s (2010) work that demonstrates the importance of having clear and open lines of communication between nonprofit service providers and their clients. Increased communication can ensure that refugees not only know who (and how) to ask for help, but also that they feel comfortable doing so. It empowers them to seek support when needed, while providing a safety net for those who may not feel comfortable asking.

The quote above seems to be a good example of this. The refugee recognized that he needed help, he knew where to go for help and felt comfortable doing so. He received needed help after asking. This also demonstrates how the service provider was able to quickly tailor efforts to meet the unique needs of clients. The service provider followed up with clients to see if any new needs arose during the week.

Asking for additional assistance, however, may not be possible for all refugees. Indeed, due to cultural differences, trauma, and a variety of other factors, refugees may not always feel comfortable asking for help even if and when it is needed. This is discussed further in the next section.

Hesitation in Sharing Perceptions of Services

During the interviews, refugees were asked if they had needs that were not fulfilled by the nonprofits that were providing them support. If they responded yes, they were then asked if they let the service providers know about these unfulfilled needs.

They were also asked why they let the service providers know that they needed additional support (or, why they did not let the service providers know). Finally, they were asked if there was anything nonprofits could have done that would have encouraged them to share their needs and perspectives. Specifically, the questions asked:

- Did you (i.e., refugees) perceive that there were open lines of communication between yourself and service providers (Guo & Saxton, 2010)?
- Did you (i.e., refugees) feel empowered to share your perspectives (Woelders & Abma, 2015)? And,
- Did you (i.e., refugees) feel that their opinions were respected (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000)?

Twenty-six refugees reported that they had unmet needs. Twenty-two of these 26 stated that they did not want to share their perspectives regarding nonprofit services or that they did not want to ask for additional help. Four of these refugees specifically indicated this was because they feared being a burden (or a similar term) on those working for the organization. As an example,

[Author]: *Did anyone from [the nonprofit] ever ask you for your opinion of how things were going or if you needed help?*

[Respondent]: *Yeah, yeah a lot of people asked me if I needed help and how I felt about coming to America.*

[Author]: *Oh good. Were you comfortable sharing that with them? Like if you said I need this, this, and this were they able to help you with that, generally?*

[Respondent]: *Well, I was not very comfortable with that.*

[Author]: *Okay. And why was that?*

[Respondent]: *I felt that I was putting a burden on them. That I would be putting a burden on them if they came and asked me if I needed any help and I said yes. I didn't want to be a burden on people.*

Later in the conversation, this refugee was asked *"Is there anything that the organization could have done to help you not feel like you were being a burden?"* She responded, *"no, probably not."*

Another participant stated that it did not seem right to ask for additional support because the organization had already provided her with assistance in the past. She, therefore, did not want to ask for more assistance. As she stated, *"It did not feel right to me to ask [the nonprofit] to give me more than they already had."*

This is a sentiment that seemed to be present among a number of the refugee participants. Indeed, another participant shared how his friends and family felt the same way. *"It seemed that they did so much already. For me, my family, and some of our friends. We did not want to ask for more help."*

Why were so many refugee participants hesitant to ask for help when needed? Power dynamics or feelings of disempowerment may be one explanation. However, differing cultures and/or

cultural barriers may be another. This can include differing views about formal assistance programs and differing cultural norms regarding help-seeking behavior.

For example, refugees from different cultures may have different preferences regarding sources of assistance. Some may prefer to receive support from a social circle, while others may distrust formal aid agencies (Redvers, 2015). Some refugees (and perhaps immigrants in general) may also resist seeking additional assistance due to challenges understanding their new country's laws and policies (Reina, Lohman, & Maldonado, 2013).

Four refugees with unmet needs who received nonprofit services reported that they did feel comfortable asking for additional assistance. As described by the refugee participant below, service providers made an effort to make it clear they truly wanted to help. *"Yes, we could always go to them. They were so wonderful and so helpful. They let us know that they wanted to help us."*

When considering how to improve services for resettled refugees, striving to embody the spirit of the quote above could be a noble goal. This refugee was able to determine when additional assistance was needed and felt welcome to share these needs. Conversely, a lack of communication between service providers and clients may make it challenging to prioritize client perspectives (Adler & Clark, 2008), see clients as collaborators (Zimmerman, 2000), and/or adapt programs to fit client needs (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Lipsky, 1980, 2010). Struggles in these areas may, in turn, lead to refugee disempowerment.

There were clearly differences regarding whether the refugees in this study expressed unmet needs to service providers. However, there was also a common sentiment of thanks and gratitude for any support given. This is explored further in the following section.

Gratitude for Services Received

Nearly all ($n=28$) refugees who participated in this study stated that they were thankful for any and all services they received, even in instances where all of their needs were not met. One participant stated that *"[The nonprofit was] wonderful...we were very thankful."* Another participant mentioned that the nonprofit provided them with more support than they had expected and that the nonprofit service providers *"went above and beyond."*

In two cases, refugees described how they built long-term relationships with their service provider(s). As one participant discussed, *"[W]e made sure to thank them and we are still friends with them today."*

These responses raise an important question. Why (when lines of communication were already established) did refugees not ask for additional support from the nonprofit in addition to expressing gratitude for assistance received? Although open lines of communication are an indicator of empowerment (Guo & Saxton, 2010), in some cases communication alone is not sufficient. It is possible that refugees who only expressed thanks and gratitude, even if they required additional service assistance, may have been engaging in "emotion management." That is, they may have felt that expressing some sentiments (e.g., needs) was not appropriate (Lively & Weed, 2014).

In other cases, however, it could be that they did not feel that their emotions were appropriate to express to certain individuals at certain times (but perhaps these emotions were appropriate to express to other refugees). Still, refugees may have believed that their emotions were inappropriate to express at all. In the case of the latter, this could mean that some refugees may be left entirely on their own, unlike those who may reach out to friends or family for assistance. The use of emotion management may also relate to the aforementioned cultural barriers, as refugees may be hesitant to express emotions that they believe to be culturally inappropriate (Lively & Weed, 2014).

The analysis thus far has demonstrated that refugees do not always have their needs met and they may not always be comfortable sharing their perceptions of services with nonprofit providers. However, literature (e.g., Adler & Clark, 2008; Sigona, 2014) and some refugee participants identified benefits of sharing these perceptions. Indeed, sharing these perceptions can help service providers better adapt practices and programs to client needs. As Lipsky (1980, 2010) discusses in his exploration of street level bureaucracy and as van Selm (2003) and Kettner, Moroney, and Martin (2017) discuss regarding refugees specifically, this adaptation is beneficial.

It is, therefore, important to consider how nonprofits can better understand refugee needs while also respecting the comfort levels and cultural norms and/or preferences of their refugee clients. By doing so, indicators of empowerment such as critically examining current issues, working together to address these issues, and fostering a sense of respect can be achieved (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000).

The following two sections discuss ways that nonprofits encountered challenges and successes in communicating with, interacting with, and adapting their services to prioritize the needs of their refugee clients.

Using Informal Data Collection Methods to Shed Light on Refugee Perspectives

Recently, conversations related to evaluating the effectiveness of organizations working with the public have shifted. This shift has been from focusing on the organization and what it is providing and accomplishing to focusing on the impact of services on the target population (Adler & Clark, 2008; Balser & McClusky, 2005; Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Zammuto, 1984). Seeking refugee perspectives is not only aligned with this emerging practice, but it also aligns with the idea of empowerment. Using this approach, empowerment is considered from the perspective of refugees rather than service providers as the primary determinant of a nonprofit’s actions (Sigona, 2014). This approach also provides refugees an opportunity to voice their own perspectives and it provides nonprofits with information about what services these individuals need most (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000).

In this study, nonprofit service providers were asked if, and how, they solicited client feedback. They were also asked if clients ever shared their perspectives of services with them; and, if so, what actions they took based on those perspectives.

All nonprofit staff and volunteers reported attempts at identifying refugee needs and refugee perceptions of services. However, many ($n=21$) also noted challenges. These challenges included ineffective survey methods and cultural barriers that prevented refugees from sharing their true opinions and needs.

As a potential solution, informal data collection methods such as conversations and client observations may allow staff and volunteers to gain a better understanding of refugee needs (Lipsky 1980, 2010). It can also be helpful to ask questions that are qualitative (Charmaz, 2006) and evaluative in nature (Connolly, Conlon, & Deutsch, 1980).

Sixteen service providers discussed the idea of formalized surveys that used primarily quantitative methods (e.g., asking refugees to rate a nonprofit’s programs and services). In one case, a participant who worked with a local branch of a nationwide refugee serving nonprofit described these surveys that were sent to clients, although she was unsure of the actual results.

I know that [my supervisor] sent out a survey to our refugees, but I’m not sure if the refugees really understood what they were being asked. They all speak different languages and the survey was in English. Or,

if they responded that much. I got the sense that the surveys weren't really that helpful.

In another case, a service provider who worked at a small, local nonprofit was aware that refugees may not be willing to ask for additional support, possibly due to cultural barriers. The provider, however, also felt that the organization did not currently know a better way to gather data.

[W]e are looking to find better measurement tools. To be able to better measure our impact and success. We can say that refugees prefer our organization to others on a very regular basis, and so that is a sign that people know you and the work that we do. We have a lot of verbal gratitude, and thank-yous, and 'you've made a big difference,' but it's all sort of anecdotal in nature. When we try to find ways to measure the impact of the work we do, like if we ask them to rate us, it's really hard to find, there's just a lot of cultural barriers. There're language barriers. There's this cultural barrier that no matter what we do to ask them they're not going to complain.

In a different case, the parents of refugee children at a local nonprofit program were sent a written invitation to share their thoughts with service providers. The option for multiple communication methods (e.g., verbal and written) seemed to be helpful. This allowed for a more informal conversation rather than limiting responses to a survey. As a service provider from this nonprofit stated,

[W]e've sent out a couple letters to their parents letting them know that they're free to talk to us if they have any questions or concerns or anything they want their kids to work on. And parents have responded, they'll give us a call or send us an email, like hey my son needs help with this, or my son has never experienced this. We get the feedback from them and we definitely use their recommendations if it's something doable.

Other service providers, such as one from the local branch of a nationwide refugee focused nonprofit, initiated unplanned conversations with refugee clients to learn more about their perspectives. In this instance, the provider entirely did away with any kind of formalized data collection process. As this provider stated, "...in conversation we'll ask the kids for their input. Like hey, what do you want from the program? Have we been doing that so far?"

The quote below from a service provider at a local nonprofit provides yet another example of the usefulness of informal data collection methods. As Balser and McClusky (2005) described, the nonprofits that work to build relationships with their clients are typically more effective.

[W]e had a kid last year who to our knowledge was living with his mom and older brother. A couple months into the program he started skipping a lot, he wasn't showing up to the program, his teacher from school said he wasn't showing up for class or he would get on the bus and not come to school...and he comes in one day and asks to speak with me, which is like a shocker...he came up to me one day and was like 'Hey

can I talk to you?’ And I said okay and took him outside. So he opened up to me and said his mom doesn’t actually live with him, she lives in Honduras, and he lives with his older brother but his brother had been gone for a couple days...I told the other program coordinator and we went and talked with the director of the program and she got him help. Like she notified social services and they took it from there...he was placed in the care of another family. I want to call it a success story because we were able to have that relationship with that kid. He has a teacher he sees every day but he didn’t feel comfortable enough to talk to her, he didn’t go to a school counselor or any of that but he felt comfortable to talk to me and say what was going on...I think deep down he wanted someone to know what was going on with him.

In this instance, the service provider realized that the refugee child needed assistance and had taken the time to speak with and listen to him. In doing so, she was able to notify those with more experience (i.e., social services) so that they could evaluate the situation and make a decision about what would be best for the child given the circumstances. This example also illustrates how in some cases this type of service provider can build relationships with refugee clients that others (e.g., teachers) may not be able or willing to do. However, because this participant took the time to listen to the refugee, she was able to address needs that others had overlooked. Although he may not have been willing to state his need directly, identifying his unexpressed needs through conversation proved to be a successful strategy.

Ideally, service providers make adaptations to better meet the needs of the community when current practices are ineffective (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Lipsky, 1980, 2010; Zimmerman, 2000). In this case, standardized methods of soliciting refugee opinions may not be the best option. Therefore, nonprofits must reevaluate and adapt. As Connolly, Conlon, and Deutsch (1980) described, evaluative rather than normative survey methods tend to be more useful.

The findings from this study support this idea and suggest that conversations and other evaluative inquiries may be able to yield better data than asking refugees to “rate” the effectiveness of a nonprofit’s services. This process also provides refugees with a chance to share information in a way that they are comfortable with, rather than mandating that they share information in a structure dictated by the nonprofit (e.g., a structured survey). Instead, the refugee’s preferences are respected and adhered to.

Being Well-Positioned to Solicit and Share Refugee Needs at the Street Level

While the data suggest that informal data collection methods are useful, another question arises. That is, who should collect this data? As the literature describes (Lipsky, 1980, 2010; van Selm, 2003), those at the street level work closest with clients. These individuals may, therefore, be in the best position to understand and advocate for client needs. They may also be well-positioned to make recommendations regarding program adaptations and implementation, when necessary.

When service provision and programs are primarily driven by client needs and perspectives, clients typically perceive better overall outcomes (Adler & Clark, 2008). They also become more empowered (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017; Lipsky, 1980, 2010).

Of the 15 service provider participants in street level positions, nine reported that they had positive interactions with their supervisors. They also reported that they felt comfortable making suggestions regarding service delivery improvements. As one service provider participant working with a small, local nonprofit stated,

[My supervisor] is amazing. I think she's very helpful...All we have to do is shoot her a text or a call and let her know what's going on as far as what's not working, what we need, and she'll make it happen. As far as having a higher up that we respond to, I feel that she does a very good job of that.

Another participant working at a local branch of a nationwide refugee serving nonprofit noted that although all of her suggestions to her supervisor may not be implemented, this was generally due to a lack of time or resources rather than a lack of respect or understanding:

[My supervisor] was really receptive...meeting individually or just responding to emails. He was definitely very engaged and listened, even though they are very busy and some of my ideas might not be doable.

Similar thoughts were shared from another local nonprofit participant. This participant discussed ways that her supervisor took action based on her input.

[My supervisor and I] talk all the time. Like I'll go in and say we need a phone for them or something, she'll maybe have a contact. My supervisor is at my church, but if she didn't know what to do she could call down to the Diocese. Or reach out to a member of our congregation. We would always try and find something.

Here we can consider empowerment from two perspectives, that of refugees and that of service providers. On the one hand, refugees should be comfortable sharing their needs and ideas. On the other hand, however, service providers at the street level should:

1. Respect and value refugee input, and
2. Be comfortable working with supervisors to ensure that programs are meeting needs and/or in adapting programs to meet needs.

The quote above illustrates this, as the service provider at the street level was able to understand refugee needs and share those needs with her supervisor. The supervisor, in turn, responded by working to meet those needs. All parties played an important role in the decision-making process.

Summary of Findings

These interviews aimed to explore the extent to which refugees were empowered (or not) by nonprofit service providers. The study sought to specifically understand:

1. How refugees being served by nonprofits expressed their perceptions of the services they received,
2. To what extent refugees felt that nonprofit service providers were responsive to their needs, and

3. How nonprofit staff and volunteers reported responding to the needs expressed by their refugee clients.

In addressing the first two research questions, refugee participants reported that they often expressed thanks for any services received. The majority of refugee participants, however, also reported having unmet needs. The few refugees who did express their unmet needs appeared very satisfied with the service response from nonprofits. However, the majority of those with unmet needs reported hesitation in asking for additional service assistance. Some felt that they simply did not want to “be a burden.” These responses suggest that, in some cases, it may be more a question of “if” refugees choose to share their perceptions of nonprofit effectiveness rather than “how” they choose to share their perceptions.

In addressing the third research question, service providers reported attempts at identifying refugee needs and refugee perceptions of services. However, they also noted challenges. These challenges included ineffective survey methods and cultural barriers that prevented refugees from sharing their true opinions and needs. While they also noted expressions of thanks, they understood that there could be client needs that were not being addressed. The findings indicated that informal data collection methods are a promising way of soliciting refugee opinions since these methods are likely more to be in line with refugee preferences. The findings also indicated that those at the street level who worked directly with clients were best in a position to have these informal conversations.

The following section provides recommendations for improving interactions between refugees and nonprofit service providers. These recommendations are intended to be useful when working with refugees to receive the support that they need and to empower them to drive their own integration process.

Recommendations

In making these recommendations, the primary focus concerns what will ultimately lead to the most positive outcomes for refugees receiving services from nonprofits and how newly resettled refugees can best be empowered to play a role in service provision and community integration. To achieve this, nonprofits need a clear understanding of refugee needs as well as refugee perceptions of current services provided. The findings from this study indicated that not all refugees may feel comfortable sharing their needs. Therefore, nonprofits will likely need to adapt their current methods for seeking refugee opinions and input.

Some of the refugee participants described hesitation to share their needs and perceptions of services. To address this, nonprofits may need to consider seeking refugee perspectives in more indirect and informal ways. As Lipsky (1980, 2010) discussed from a more general perspective and as van Selm (2003) indicated in the case of refugees specifically, service providers at the street level may be in the best position to solicit this information and understand client needs. In turn, these street level providers may better understand what services their clients need (e.g., continuing or adapting existing programs or creating new programs).

Those receiving services can, and should, be seen as collaborators in service provision (Zimmerman, 2000). Viewing refugee clients in this manner can allow refugees more opportunity to voice and demonstrate that their input is valued and respected. In addition, this may help to address the issue of emotion management (i.e., where refugees may feel that they should not express their needs in effort to become less of a burden to others).

The use of indirect and informal data collection methods can also allow refugees to view service providers as a member of their social network, rather than as an authority figure. If the

Table 1. Various Levels of Nonprofit/Refugee Interactions

Service Provider Approach	Example of Service Provider Approach	Status of Refugee/Nonprofit Relationship
Empower Refugee Clients	Nonprofits and refugees work together to make decisions regarding service delivery, with refugees taking lead and having final say in what services are needed.	Refugees able to identify and express needs to nonprofit, work with nonprofit to design programs/services, and still receive support when necessary. They may also begin to live with some level of self-sufficiency and independence as they move away from requiring substantial assistance.
Consult with Refugee Clients	Nonprofits solicit refugee perspectives and make decisions regarding service delivery based on these perspectives.	Refugees able to identify and express needs, which in turn informs service provision. Refugees may still need substantial support from nonprofit, but support is effective.
Direct Refugee Clients	Nonprofits tell refugees what to do and what services will be provided to them.	Refugees told what to do and what support will be given to them, though they have little input in what services they receive. Services may or may not be what is needed.
Disregard Refugee Clients	Nonprofits neither reach out to nor follow up with refugee clients, despite promises to do so.	Refugees may or may not receive assistance from nonprofit after initial contact and are unable to ask for services when needed.

perception of the service provider role is authoritative, those with service needs (in this case refugee clients) may feel that sharing their needs is inappropriate (Lively & Weed, 2014).

When service providers are able to build relationships with their refugee clients they may be able to seek information through conversations. In this way, the traditional hierarchical structure of service provider and service receiver is reformed into a structure that is more equal and collaborative and provides a sense of empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000). Still, it is important for service providers to solicit client perceptions, rather than create hierarchical structures where service providers are the only ones with power to determine what assistance is provided (Woelders & Abma, 2015). This collaborative structure can allow service providers to better understand needs and be more effective and responsive in their service delivery (Balser & McClusky, 2005).

Based on the themes that arose during this study, Table 1 provides examples of ways that nonprofits can collaborate and interact with refugees as well as ways that the nonprofit/refugee relationship can evolve. In instances where refugees interact with multiple service providers, the “status of refugee/nonprofit relationship” column can be influenced by other external entities.

Ultimately, the extent to which nonprofit service providers interact with and consider the perspectives of their refugee clients will determine the extent to which refugees are able to express their needs and play a role in service delivery. As Guo and Saxton (2010) have discussed, increased levels of communication between clients and service providers leads to more positive outcomes.

In addition to open lines of communication between service providers and clients, there should also be open lines of communication between service providers at the street level and the supervisory level. Creating these positive relationships can help those at the street level

become more comfortable with sharing their recommendations with supervisors who ultimately make decisions about the services that nonprofits provide.

Conclusions

As of the writing of this article, the number of refugees being admitted into the United States is the lowest it has been since 1980 (Siegler, 2019). In addition, 51 refugee resettlement programs have closed in recent years; and, an additional 41 programs across 23 states have suspended their work (RCUSA, 2019). For those working in the field of refugee resettlement, these numbers are alarming; and, the future remains uncertain. With limited funding and a decreasing number of programs, the remaining refugee-serving nonprofits and their programs play a crucial role in supporting the integration process of newly resettled refugees.

Empowerment, and empowerment theory, is a value orientation (Zimmerman, 2000); and, by placing a focus on empowerment, service providers can demonstrate that they value the role that refugees play in our communities. It, therefore, seems important to remember that integration is a two-way process. That is, although nonprofits and receiving communities provide support to refugees as they work to integrate and become self-sufficient, they also have much to gain. When refugees and communities give to one another and take from one another, everyone's life can be enriched.

Disclosure Statement

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Appendix A. Participant Information*Refugees*

The demographic information of refugee participants is as follows:

Country of Origin

Country	Number of participants (<i>n</i> =30)
Bosnia	4
Democratic Republic of Congo	10
Liberia	2
Rwanda	1
Former Soviet Union	3
Egypt	7
Vietnam	3

Year of Arrival in the United States

Year of Arrival	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
1990–1994	8
1995–1999	10
2000–2004	1
2005–2009	2
2010–2014	1
2015–2016	8

Age Upon Arrival in the United States

Age in Years	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
Under 10	2
11–17	3
18–24	6
25–34	9
35–44	6
45–54	4

Gender

Gender	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
Male	14
Female	16

Number of Interactions with Nonprofit Service Providers

Number of Interactions	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
1	5
2–5	5
6–10	11
Too many to count	3
Unknown/unsure	6

Nonprofit Staff and Volunteers

The demographic information of nonprofit staff and volunteer participants, including decision-makers and those at the street level, is as follows:

Current Role within Nonprofit Organization

Current Role	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
AmeriCorps Vista	1
Executive director	3
Intern	1
Staff*	12
Volunteer*	13

*Staff members and volunteers fell into both street-level roles and supervisory roles.

Length of Time Involved with Nonprofit Organization

Length of Time	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
Less than 1 year	0
1–5 years	12
6–10 years	8
11–15 years	5
16–20 years	3
20–25 years	2

Refugee Status (i.e., Did the participant arrive in the United States as a refugee before beginning their work with the nonprofit?)

Refugee Status	Number of Participants (<i>n</i> =30)
Former refugee	4
Not a former refugee	26

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How Valuable is Experience? Examining the Impact of Founder Experience on Nonprofit Start-Up Success

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Nonprofit entrepreneurs face a number of liabilities that are particularly significant during the emergent phase of a new nonprofit. Using a human capital perspective, this study examines the influence previous experience plays as it relates to nonprofit organizational start-up success. The study draws on a sample of 118 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. The results from a logistic regression analysis show no significant impact with regard to education or prior nonprofit management experience. The results, however, show that prior start-up experience significantly enhances the likelihood of start-up success.

Keywords: Nonprofit Founder, Experience, Start-Up

Creating a new organization from scratch is not an easy undertaking. As Low and MacMillan (1988) have noted more than three decades ago, “the list of potential pitfalls associated with starting a new venture appears limitless” (p. 142). Entrepreneurship researchers have long attempted to figure out what factors help explain why some entrepreneurs are able to launch new organizations when others are not? Two factors recurrently mentioned as essential for early start-up success among external stakeholders (e.g., investors) are the entrepreneur’s previous industry experience and prior start-up experience (Hall & Hofer, 1993; MacMillan, Siegel & Subbanarasimha, 1985). Research on business entrepreneurs also substantiates the idea that prior experience enhances both the survival and performance of new firms (Delmar & Shane, 2006; Dencker, Gruber & Shah, 2009; Hopp & Sonderegger, 2015).

While interest in nonprofit entrepreneurship appears to be resurging (Andersson, 2016; Dollhopf & Scheitle, 2016; Tan & Yoo, 2015; Thomas & Van Slyke, 2018), the impact of previous experience as it relates to nonprofit organizational start-up success is a topic that, to date, has received scant scholarly attention (for an exception see Simón-Moya, Revuelto-Taboada, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2012). There are examples of qualitative case studies (e.g., Carman & Nesbit, 2013) and descriptive analyses (e.g., Lecy, Van Slyke, & Yoon, 2016) that have examined the prior industry experience of nonprofit entrepreneurs. However, these studies have focused exclusively on start-up efforts which resulted in up-and-running nonprofits. To overcome this selection bias, and to further advance the role previous experience may play for the process of nonprofit entrepreneurship, we also need to consider and include the experience of nonprofit entrepreneurs *not* succeeding in launching a new nonprofit (Simón-Moya et al., 2012).

Using Stinchcombe's (1965) liability of newness concept as a starting point, which argues that such liabilities are particularly significant during the emergent phase of new organizations (Aldrich & Yang, 2012), this article uses a human capital lens to examine the impact of previous experience on nonprofit start-up success among 118 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The nascent entrepreneur concept first emerged in the business entrepreneurship literature to describe individuals engaged in the process of founding a new firm, commonly referred to as the nascent or gestation phase (Reynolds, 1997). This is the phase where nascent entrepreneurs undertake purposeful and intentional actions to construct an organization (Katz & Gartner, 1988).

Nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs can, therefore, be understood as individuals exhibiting intent to start a new nonprofit (Andersson, 2016); and, start-up success is thus reflected in the actual creation and launch of an operational new nonprofit. Because the start-up process can be disbanded at any time after nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs first exhibits their start-up intent, "success" in this very early stage of the nonprofit entrepreneurship process is best represented by not disbanding the start-up process, rather than by performance metrics (e.g., number of beneficiaries served or revenue generation).

The subsequent section offers a more detailed explanation of the liability of newness concept and discusses why this concept is central when examining nonprofit entrepreneurship. This is followed by discussion of how a nonprofit entrepreneur's human capital, as manifested by educational level, prior nonprofit management experience, and prior start-up experience, can aid in mitigating the liability of newness. Next, a description of the sample of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs used in this study, the key variables for the analysis, and the results from a logistic regression analysis are presented. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings and a call for more research to advance our understanding of the role that experience plays in understanding nonprofit entrepreneurship.

Nonprofit Creation and the Liability of Newness

Every year nonprofit entrepreneurs launch a significant number of new nonprofit organizations. Data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) shows that the number of registered nonprofits increased more than 10% between 2005 and 2015 (McKeever, 2018). Though the nonprofit sector has been depicted as having low barriers to entry, in actuality creating a new operational nonprofit organization is not an easy undertaking (Frumkin, 2002). Previous research indicates nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs experience a multitude of problems during the start-up phase (Andersson, 2019); and, frequently these entrepreneurs elect to stop or disband the start-up process altogether (Andersson & Ford, 2017).

One of the most influential perspectives for comprehending the difficulties confronting new organizations was outlined by Stinchcombe (1965). He stressed the many vulnerabilities facing entrepreneurs attempting to start a new organization; and, he argued that the risk of failure during the emergent phase of an organization is amplified as the nascent entrepreneur must address a number of complex challenges (Aldrich & Yang, 2012). Some of the most significant challenges include amassing and marshaling critical resources, creating new routines to orchestrate internal and external relationships, and constructing systems for generating and delivering goods and services. Taken together, these challenges generate what Stinchcombe (1965) characterizes as a *liability of newness* for new organizations.

The liability of newness concept has long been utilized in nonprofit scholarship. Nonprofit organizational ecologists have highlighted the liability of newness as a key component for understanding the births and deaths of nonprofits (e.g., Galaskiewicz & Bielefeld, 1998; Tucker, Singh & Meinhard, 1990). Others have employed the liability of newness concept to demonstrate how new nonprofits face various legitimacy hurdles.

For example, Wiewel and Hunter (1985) pointed out how new nonprofits have no operational or financial history, which limits their legitimacy in the eyes of others. This also makes it difficult for these organizations to secure resources from external actors. Just as a new firm will often struggle to prove that it is a worthwhile investment to external funders, “[...] new not-for-profit community organizations have a hard time convincing foundations, corporations, and city departments of their worthiness. The problem for a new organization is that it has nothing to offer but promises” (Wiewel & Hunter, 1985, p. 486).

The viewpoint that the liability of newness creates challenges in procuring resources from funders was also emphasized in Chambré and Fatt’s (2002) examination of the life and death of new HIV/AIDS nonprofits. Simón-Moya et al. (2012) used a liability of newness lens to analyze survival rates in a sample of over 200 newly launched Spanish social ventures. They reported that approximately half of the organizations were still alive after three years of operations and found a significant positive relationship between survival and amount of start-up capital secured. Finally, in their review article focusing on the success and failure factors of nonprofits, Helmig, Ingerfurth, and Pinz (2014) concluded that the liability of newness argument remains a powerful lens for comprehending nonprofit failure.

Although Stinchcombe’s ideas appear to have gained acceptance among nonprofit scholars, there are still areas where the liability of newness concept remains understudied and underutilized. One such area is the study of nascent entrepreneurship. According to Aldrich and Yang (2012, p. 9), “[...] most research invoking the concept of the ‘liability of newness’ has actually focused on organizations that have already gone through the emergent phase which most concerned Stinchcombe.” For example, scholars have targeted young organizations identified in public records (e.g., the IRS database for tax-exempt organizations). However, Aldrich and Yang posited that such studies “include mostly hardy survivors” (Ibid.) and not the kinds of organizations that are most vulnerable to the liabilities of newness.

Evidence that many nonprofits die while emerging was recently provided by Andersson and Ford (2017). They studied the entry and exit of new nonprofit voucher schools from 1991 to 2015. In their study, they found that 70% of new schools failed during the nascent stage.

According to Aldrich and Yang (2012), when considering the liability of newness in an emerging organization focus inevitably turns to the difficulties confronting the founder(s). That is, scholars will benefit from, and should pay more attention to, ways that nascent entrepreneurs cope with the challenges of launching new organizations. Taking a step in this direction, the next section outlines how the experiences of the nascent nonprofit can aid in mitigating the liability of newness.

Overcoming the Liability of Newness: The Role of Human Capital

Organizational scholars have long explored factors that impact the ability of new organizations to overcome the liability of newness (for an overview see Carroll & Hannan, 2000). For the most part, this literature has focused on environmental or macro factors (e.g., industry characteristics, barriers to entry) as well as individual or micro factors (e.g., founder demography). This article focuses on the latter because previous nonprofit studies have predominantly examined macro factors (e.g., Chambré & Fatt, 2002; Hager, Galaskiewicz & Larson, 2004) and because of the centrality of the founder in the nascent process.

Specifically, this article focuses on a nascent nonprofit entrepreneur’s human capital to explore whether a difference in human capital endowments affects the rate of start-up success. The human capital perspective is rooted in economics and proposes that an individual’s stock of knowledge contributes to their cognitive abilities. This, in turn, leads to more productive and efficient potential activity (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1959).

According to Davidsson and Honig (2003), there are two types of knowledge (beyond possible innate abilities), “know-what” and “know-how.” These types of knowledge help contribute to an entrepreneur’s human capital. “Know-what” knowledge is accumulated via formal schooling and training. “Know-how” is a tacit form of knowledge that is accumulated via practical learning and experience. These types of knowledge interact as the entrepreneur decides to initiate the start-up process; and, they are postulated to be positively correlated with start-up success (Ibid.).

Formal Education

Schooling has long been a key variable in human capital research, partly driven by the fact that formal education is one of the most easily observable elements of human capital investments (Becker, 1964). Through formal education, individuals not only obtain fundamental abilities but are also believed to develop skills that are important for entrepreneurial action, e.g., problem solving and leadership aptitudes. This notion was explicitly highlighted in Dollhopf and Scheitle’s (2016) nonprofit entrepreneurship study, where they argued that “[h]igher levels of formal education may grant founders with the skills, confidence, and higher intellectual capital to make the founding process faster and more orderly [...]” (p. 262).

Better educated entrepreneurs also have more elaborate social networks due to their longer stay in the education system. These social networks are beneficial when attempting to start a new organization (Ucbasaran, Wright & Westhead, 2008). Moreover, education is associated with higher average earnings (Psacharopoulos, 1994), which ought to make it easier to overcome some of the financial hurdles associated with starting a new nonprofit (Andersson, 2019).

Previous research suggests that college educated individuals are more likely to be social entrepreneurs (Van Ryzin, Grossman, DiPadova-Stocks & Bergrud, 2009). Leczy et al. (2016) also found that individuals starting new nonprofits reported having graduate degrees and that their reported average income was almost twice the national average.

Although formal education appears to be a relevant factor in the nonprofit entrepreneurship process, we still know little in terms of how education impacts start-up success. Simón-Moya et al. (2012) offered a rare examination of the survival of newly founded Spanish social ventures. They found a positive relationship between education and survival for new for-profit enterprises. However, they found no significant relationship between education and new social ventures. Simón-Moya et al.’s (2012) study, though, did not consider emerging organizations, which means we still need additional research to better understand the role of education for nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Nonprofit Management Experience

There are two reasons to believe that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs’ previous nonprofit management experiences are important to consider when examining the start-up process. First, in addition to the skills obtained via formal education, important information and several key competencies can be learned by being active in the nonprofit sector (Dollhopf & Scheitle, 2016; Leczy et al., 2016). This knowledge might be connected to vital features that go into the nonprofit start-up process, including how a nonprofit board is structured and operates, how to fundraise in a particular niche, and how to evaluate program outcomes. Nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with more nonprofit management experience might also have a better understanding of how to effectively communicate and interact with clients, board members, regulators, and funders (among others). Such understanding is often only made available through participation.

Second, previous management experience can help build social and/or professional ties (Lecy et al., 2016). These ties can be vital as the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur seeks commitment and/or funding from various external actors. These ties can also help bring greater legitimacy to the emerging nonprofit organization. All of these effects are even greater if nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs create a new nonprofit in the same mission area where they have prior management experience. This experience coupled with the different ties can be more effortlessly transferred from the prior settings to their new nonprofit (Simón-Moya et al., 2012).

Interestingly, empirical research suggests that many founders of new nonprofits have rather limited management experience in the nonprofit sector. In their study of over 800 nonprofit entrepreneurs, Lecy et al. (2016) found that only three out of 10 nonprofit entrepreneurs reported having most, or all, of their previous work experience in the nonprofit sector. Carman and Nesbitt (2013) interviewed members of new nonprofits and found only 10% had had previous experience working for a nonprofit, though 20% reported that they had previous experience from their volunteering efforts.

Start-Up Experience

Creating a new organization has been depicted as an experimental learning process of trial and error (Gartner, 1985). Put differently, entrepreneurs are often required to test different alternatives and, in some cases, go in a completely different direction in order to move forward with their start-up efforts. Furthermore, some entrepreneurship scholars argue that creating a new venture involves a certain number of unique features that are uncertain, i.e., they cannot be planned ahead of time because these features are not yet known or even knowable at the time for the entrepreneur (Sarasvathy, 2001).

Taken together, key knowledge about creating a new organization is often learned through action; and, this knowledge tends to be tacit. The know-how from previous start-up experience is, therefore, considered beneficial if/when an entrepreneur decides to create another organization. Indeed, it constitutes a particular type of human capital that is difficult to obtain via other means (Delmar & Shane, 2006).

In particular, previous start-up experience can provide vital insights into many of the factors Stinchcombe (1965) associated with the liability of newness, for example, how to develop roles and responsibilities in the emerging organization or how to establish links to important external resource providers. Moreover, it seems reasonable to assume that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with prior start-up experience can have a better idea of which start-up activities to prioritize compared to novice nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. Finally, as discussed earlier, a key challenge facing many new nonprofits is their lack of legitimacy. Thus, prior start-up experience can serve as a signal of legitimacy in the eyes of external stakeholders. This, in turn, may positively impact a nascent nonprofit entrepreneur's chances of obtaining key start-up resources (Lecy et al., 2016).

There few examples of nonprofit studies examining the role of prior start-up experience. Lecy et al. (2016) noted the importance of start-up experience for nonprofit entrepreneurs. However, they reported no data on how many of the over 800 nonprofit entrepreneurs that they surveyed had previously started a new organization.

A study by Van Ryzin et al. (2009) suggests social entrepreneurs are more likely to have prior experience managing and owning their own business. However, they did not distinguish between having owned, and having managed, a prior business in their questionnaire. As such, it is impossible to know how many of the respondents in their study had prior start-up experience.

Dollhopf and Scheitle (2016) studied of over 700 nonprofit entrepreneurs having launched new religious nonprofits. They reported 36% had founded a nonprofit before and 39% had founded a for-profit before. Although this study clearly demonstrates that prior start-up experience is a common feature among nonprofit entrepreneurs, they did not account for nonprofit entrepreneurs who were unable to launch new religious nonprofits.

The purpose of this study, then, is to fill this void in the literature. As indicated thus far, research points to the potential role that a nascent nonprofit entrepreneur's human capital can play in mitigating the liability of newness. In this study, I explore this notion via an analysis of the start-up efforts by nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Data and Methods

The data for this project was taken from two follow-up surveys from participants partaking in a free workshop, offered six times a year, called "Planning a New Nonprofit: Essential Planning Steps and Legal Requirements." The workshop is organized by the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership (MCNL) in Kansas City, MO. The workshop covers information about how to become a formal nonprofit organization and it is directed toward (and attracts) nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, i.e., those showing intent and being engaged in activities that are intended to culminate in a viable nonprofit organization.

It is vital to acknowledge that this does not represent a random sample. It is also important to note that not all nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs can, or elect to, attend a start-up workshop. Furthermore, by participating in the workshop, the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs may have obtained information that other nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs do not have access to. It is certainly possible that this information, then, can impact the likelihood for start-up success. As such, it is important to be aware of the potential selection bias associated with the sampling strategy employed in this study.

The two follow-up surveys were not identical. However, they included a set of common core questions. The first common question related to start-up status. Each respondent was asked to indicate the current status of their start-up effort:

- a) My organization is operational and currently running,
- b) I am no longer attempting to start up a new nonprofit organization,
- c) I am still in the process of attempting to create a new nonprofit, and
- d) other status, please explain.

To create a clear juxtaposition between those who succeeded at starting a new nonprofit and those that did not, this study only included respondents answering either "a" or "b." The surveys also asked about the number of founders involved in the start-up process, basic demographic questions (e.g., age and gender), as well as three dichotomous questions about education (e.g., whether the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur had earned a college degree), prior start-up experience (e.g., if the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur had ever started a new organization before), and nonprofit working experience (e.g., if the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur had any nonprofit management working experience).

With the support from MCNL staff, a link to an online survey was embedded in two emails sent out by MCNL in early and late 2016. The online survey was sent to all those (with valid email addresses) that had participated in a workshop between January 2013 to March 2016 ($n=304$). MCNL also sent out two reminders for each survey resulting in 137 usable responses, or a 45% response rate. Nineteen of the respondents were removed as they indicated that they were still trying to launch their new nonprofit. This resulted in a final sample of 118 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Results

Of the 118 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, one-third ($n=40$; approximately 34%) indicated that they had successfully launched, and were currently operating, a new nonprofit organization. Two-thirds ($n=78$; approximately 66%) indicated that they had disbanded and were no longer trying to start a new nonprofit. The average age of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs was 36 years ($s.d=10.29$; minimum=21; maximum=71) and 68 (approximately 58%) were female. The average age and gender distribution did not vary substantially between successful and unsuccessful nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Consistent with prior studies (Lecy et al., 2016; Van Ryzin et al., 2009) this inquiry finds that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are well educated. Nearly three of four (approximately 73%) of the respondents indicated that they had a college degree. Additionally, similar to findings by Carman and Nesbit (2013) as well as Lecy et al. (2016), only 32 of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs (just over 27%) indicated they had prior working experience as a nonprofit manager. In terms of prior start-up experience, 21 respondents (nearly 18%) indicated they had prior start-up experience, which is substantially lower compared to what Dollhopf and Scheitle's (2016) reported in their study of nonprofit entrepreneurs who launched new religious nonprofits.

An interesting initial observation is that few of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with prior start-up experience also indicated having had prior nonprofit management experience. After all, if you start a new venture it seems reasonable to assume that you would also, at some point, take on a management role for that venture. Hence, one could expect the two types of human capital to be correlated. However, the correlation between prior start-up experience and nonprofit working experience is weak ($r=0.22$).

There could be several reasons for this finding. One, those with prior start-up experience never succeeded in getting their previous start-ups operational. As such, they never obtained any experience as a manager. A second explanation is that those with prior start-up experience exited once the new organization was up and running. Thus, they never elected to take on a management role. A third possible explanation, however, is that those with prior start-up experience predominantly created new for-profit organizations and obtained management experience running a for-profit business enterprise. This is in line with Lecy et al. (2006) who found that few nonprofit entrepreneurs reported having significant professional nonprofit sector experience. Combined, this seems to suggest that many nonprofit entrepreneurs may come from other sectors.

I estimated a logistic regression model to explore whether formal education, prior start-up experience, and nonprofit working experience influenced the likelihood of start-up success among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. The dependent variable is start-up success, which is equal to "1" if the respondent indicated "*my organization is operational and currently running*" and "0" if the respondent indicated "*I am no longer attempting to start up a new nonprofit organization.*"

The three human capital indicators were entered as independent variables. The independent variables were coded as "1" if the respondent answered "yes" to having earned a college degree, "yes" to having launched at least one new organization (whether nonprofit or for-profit) in the past, and "yes" to having any type of nonprofit management experience. All "no" responses were coded as "0." Finally, the number of founders involved in the start-up process, age, and gender were included as control variables. The results of the logistic regression are shown in Table 1.

A test of the full model against a constant only model is significant, indicating that the model is a statistically significant improvement over the one with the constant alone. This also

Table 1. Result of Logistic Regression ($n=118$)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Constant	--	--	-2.17**	0.94	0.11
Age	36.12	10.29	-0.04	0.02	0.96
Gender	0.42	0.50	0.79	0.47	2.20
Number of Founders	2.40	1.30	0.71**	0.21	2.03
Education	0.73	0.45	0.35	0.52	1.41
Nonprofit Management Experience	0.27	0.45	0.74	0.59	2.09
Start-Up Experience	0.18	0.38	1.22**	0.56	3.40

Note: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.001$

indicates that the predictors (as a set) reliably distinguish between successful and unsuccessful start-ups ($\chi^2= 24.60$, $p<0.001$, $df=6$).

The results in Table 1 indicate that human capital, measured by having earned a college degree, has no statistically significant effect on the likelihood of start-up success. Similarly, human capital, measured by having prior nonprofit management working experience, also has no statistically significant effect on the likelihood of start-up success. The most potent human capital variable is the knowledge acquired from previous start-up experience. These effects provide the strongest coefficients in the model.

The logit probability (log odds) of individuals with previous start-up experience is statistically significant and increases the probability by a factor of 3.39. This provides a strong indication that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with prior start-up experience are more likely to experience start-up success than those who have no prior start-up experience (controlling for the remaining variables in the model).

The results also indicate that the number of founders is statistically significant. Indeed, having multiple founders provides an increased likelihood of start-up success. Thus, there is some support for the idea that certain aspects of human capital, in this case tacit knowledge from prior start-up experiences, do increase the probability of a nascent nonprofit entrepreneur's successful start a new nonprofit organization.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test the effect of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs' human capital on nonprofit start-up success. Starting from the vantage point that emerging nonprofits face a number of obstacles, when viewed from the lens of the liability of newness, this study examined how different forms of knowledge can aid nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in overcoming these obstacles. To do this, I tested the effects of prior education, nonprofit management, and start-up experience on the start-up success of 118 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in the Kansas City metro region.

An initial finding worth highlighting is the attrition rate of nascent nonprofit ventures, similar to the findings from prior research (Andersson & Ford, 2017), two-thirds of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs indicated they had ceased the nonprofit creation process. This provides insight into just how potent the liability of newness construct can be for nascent nonprofits. It also reinforces Aldrich and Yang's (2012) argument that in order to fully understand Stinchcombe's seminal propositions regarding organizations' liabilities we must focus on emergent organizations and not just formally registered ones.

As scholars seek to better explain nonprofit entrepreneurship success and failure, it is vital to distinguish between different stages and events. For example, as posited in this article, the first “success” that must be attained with a nonprofit is actually getting it started. Thus, nonprofit entrepreneurship scholars should study attempts at starting new nonprofits and the eventual success of those attempts (i.e., success, here, is associated with the founding event itself and it should be distinguished from the success or failure of the nonprofit once founded) (Carroll & Kessina, 2005).

Adding such a nuanced lens to nonprofit entrepreneurship research opens up new and intriguing research questions, e.g., What are the properties of emerging nonprofits organizations (Katz & Gartner, 1988)? At what stage can we say a new nonprofit has been founded? Is a new nonprofit founded when it is formally incorporated, obtains tax-exempt status, delivers services and/or programs, or when it obtains funding? More research is certainly necessary in order to better understand the factors that contribute to nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs’ disbanding of the start-up process. This information could provide more insight into the extent to which these factors are similar or different to those disbanding at later stages in the life-cycle.

A majority of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in this study had earned college degrees. However, this human capital indicator did not influence the likelihood for start-up success. These results are similar to findings by Davidsson and Honig (2003) in their study of for-profit nascent entrepreneurs. As such, although formal schooling may be a useful predictor for entry into nascent entrepreneurship, it is likely less significant in explaining start-up success.

Human capital is also built from experiences. Stinchcombe (1965) emphasized workforce characteristics as a major underpinning to the liability of newness facing emerging organizations; and, described how those involved in the start-up process must learn new roles. Thus, knowing how to manage may be a highly useful skill for nonprofit entrepreneurs.

The results from this study, however, provide no support for the notion that prior nonprofit management experience influences the likelihood of start-up success. It should be noted, though, that the measure I used for management experience did not consider management experience from other sectors, the type of nonprofit management experiences the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur had, or differences in the total years of nonprofit management experience. Each of these considerations should be more thoroughly investigated.

The average age of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur in this study was 36. This suggests that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are likely individuals that have had time to gain a variety of workforce experiences. However, as mentioned above, the data does not account for the type of nonprofit that is being created. Studies of for-profit business entrepreneurship have shown that entrepreneurs are most likely to enter an industry where they have the most experience (Shane, 2008). Future research should, therefore, examine the link between different types of workforce experiences among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs and how these experiences align with the type of nonprofit they seek to start.

The findings from this study show that the only impactful form of human capital on start-up success is prior start-up experience. Those that had previously been involved in starting a new organization were more than three times as likely to achieve start-up success. This finding, combined with the finding that nonprofit management experience did not translate into a form of human capital benefiting nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in combatting the liability of newness, suggests the nascent phase in a nonprofit’s life-cycle is distinctive from subsequent phases.

Stevens (2001) has argued that the transition from the nascent stage to the formal nonprofit start-up stage is unlikely to happen unless the nascent nonprofit can develop a sufficient

capacity endowment. This endowment consists of multiple capacities and must be developed concurrently. In other words, it is not sufficient to merely develop capacity in one key area. Therefore, “until balance is reached, the ‘stalled’ capacity point will continually hold the organization back” (Stevens, 2001 p. 25).

From a nonprofit organizational perspective, prior start-up experience might be considered a particular type of competence that helps coordinate and add to such a capacity endowment. Human competence enables an agent to act in a given situation and is a lever for other resources in organizations. Competence is often described as a soft and non-tradable capacity, signifying that it cannot simply be acquired or purchased but must be built within an organization (e.g., via experience). As a consequence, human competence has been deemed a unique and highly valuable, but also scarce, organizational resource (Eliasson, 1990).

Clearly, the learning that takes place during a start-up experience can be valuable for nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. Thus, more research is needed that will allow us to learn about the learning process of nonprofit entrepreneurs. Furthermore, future scholarship should identify in more detail factors that differentiate nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with start-up experience from those with no or less start-up experience. Finally, while start-up experience might be useful for start-up success we also need to know more about how it impacts continued success i.e., the performance and impact of the new nonprofit once it is operational.

This study also found that the second variable having a significant impact on start-up success was the number of founders. That is, nascent nonprofits with multiple founders were about twice as likely to experience start-up success (controlling for the remaining variables in the model). There are good reasons for including the number of founders in studies of start-ups. As noted by Gartner, Shaver, Gatewood and Katz (1994 p. 6), “[t]he ‘entrepreneur’ in entrepreneurship is more likely to be plural, rather than singular. The locus of entrepreneurial activity often resides not in one person, but in many.”

Prior nonprofit research substantiates this view. Dollhopf and Scheitle (2016) reported close to half (46%) of the new religious nonprofits in their sample were founded by a team (defined as more than two founders). Lecy et al. (2016) reported that a majority of the new nonprofits in their sample (77.9%) had more than two founders and the median start-up team had five members. Lecy et al. also noted that nonprofits created by teams were more likely to be successful since having more founders meant that new nonprofits had more social capital to draw upon when they sought resources and support. This argument could certainly be extended to human capital as well i.e., nascent nonprofits with multiple founders may draw upon the accumulated knowledge and experiences of the start-up team to increase its chances of start-up success.

A *t*-test confirmed that those having start-up success, on average, reported having more founders (mean=2.75; SD=1.39) compared to those disbanding the start-up process (mean=2.17; SD=1.18; $t(116)=3.22$, $p<0.05$). However, compared to the results presented by Dollhopf and Scheitle (2016) and Lecy et al. (2016), this study finds that a significant portion of the nascent nonprofits reported only having a single founder (approximately 30%). Moreover, one-third of the nascent nonprofits reported having two founders, meaning a minority of nascent nonprofits had three or more founders (approximately 38%). As reported in Table 1, the mean number of founders was 2.40 and the median was 2. These numbers are notably different from Lecy et al.’s (2016) findings.

Clearly more research on nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs is warranted. One question that has received very little attention among nonprofit entrepreneurship researchers is: What criteria ought to be used to identify someone as a founder vis-à-vis someone who is simply supporting or helping the founder(s) in the start-up process? In other words, the term nonprofit entrepreneur needs to be adequately specified. As commented by Gartner et al. (1994 p. 6),

“[s]cholars should be very clear about *why* some individuals were identified as the entrepreneurs to be studied in entrepreneurial activity.” Thus, it is possible that who gets labeled as a founder changes as the process from nascent to operational nonprofit organization progresses.

Another possibility is that enrolling more individuals into start-up process represents a key undertaking during the nascent and early start-up phase. For example, if nascent nonprofit entrepreneur(s) intend to incorporate their nonprofit, a board of directors must be created that in most cases must consist of multiple individuals (although there are exceptions, e.g., the State of Kansas). We also need more research determine what, and how, different nonprofit founders contribute to the start-up process and to what extent nonprofit founding teams are more or less heterogenous. All of these factors appear to matter in combatting the liability of newness by contributing to the endowment of resources (e.g. human, social, and physical capital) that support an emerging nonprofit.

Limitations and Conclusions

This study has several key limitations that must be acknowledged. As mentioned, the study relies on a nonrandom sample. Thus, the study suffers from the problems associated with non-random samples. The study is also limited by its inability to account for changes in the human capital of the nascent nonprofits over time. Members of the founding team may have entered or exited. However, this study did not account for this.

An additional limitation is the inability to measure the nature of the different forms of human capital. The study only recognizes the presence or absence of human capital, not its quality. However, more recent experience may be better than less recent experience and more successful experience may be better than unsuccessful experience.

There are also overlooked variables that are important for comprehending start-up success e.g., access to start-up funding and the type of nonprofit that the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur(s) are creating. Moreover, formal education may be more or less essential at different stages in the nonprofit entrepreneurship process. It is also possible that different types of education will have differential impact on start-up success for different types of nonprofits. Thus, there is a need to decompose the notion of formal education to better assess when and how this human capital component matters.

The study is also limited to start-up success. A subsequent step is to continue to follow successful nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs to understand how experience impacts success and performance beyond the end of the nascent stage. It should also be noted that this study relied on a single responder. This creates the risk for common source bias (George & Pandey, 2017), especially since many nonprofit start-up efforts involve more than one nascent nonprofit entrepreneur. Thus, it would be preferable (when possible) to obtain survey responses from multiple members of a nascent nonprofit start-up team.

The above limitations suggest that in order to continue to advance nonprofit entrepreneurship scholarship, future research should find ways to more fully capture *changes over time* in the factors associated with the nonprofit creation process. This includes changes in the human and social capital of the nascent entrepreneur(s). However, getting the temporal order of measurement right is no small task since it requires longitudinal data, the use of variables and constructs suited for capturing change, and it necessitates researchers to acquire data on nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Finding data on nascent nonprofit entrepreneurship is crucial if researchers are to overcome the selection bias resulting from the inclusion of only successful nonprofit start-up efforts. The

challenge, however, is *how* to obtain this data. Nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs lack obvious and easily accessible identifiers. One option, adopted in this study, is to focus on training programs, information sessions, incubators, start-up competitions, and other initiatives that target those who are interested in creating new nonprofits. Although this approach is certainly feasible, it does not allow one to identify a statistically representative sample of on-going nonprofit start-up efforts.

The alternative, as exemplified by the so-called *Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics* (Reynolds, Carter, Gartner & Greene, 2004), is to screen a very large, probabilistic sample of households or individuals in order to identify those who are currently involved in nascent nonprofit activities. These nascent start-up efforts are then subsequently followed over time through repeated waves of data collection. This provides insights into the nonprofit entrepreneurship process and the determinants of outcomes. While such a program would greatly contribute to our understanding of nonprofit entrepreneurship it is also exceptionally resource demanding.

In conclusion, nonprofit scholarship ought to pay more attention to the nascent phase of nonprofit entrepreneurship to more fully capture how nonprofit entrepreneurs are impacted, and overcome, the liability of newness associated with emerging ventures. Human capital represents a vital currency in the resource endowment used by nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs as they seek to create new nonprofit organizations.

The empirical findings from this study show the particular value of prior start-up experience as a tacit form of knowledge that significantly increases the likelihood of start-up success. The study also finds that having more than one founder increases the likelihood for start-up success, which points to the potential value of pooled human resources for nascent nonprofits. However, the size of the founding teams in this study was significantly smaller than what previous research has shown to be effective. This discrepancy leads to new and important questions for future research as we seek to better comprehend the key facets of the nonprofit entrepreneurship process.

Disclosure Statement

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A Path Forward for Advancing Nonprofit Ethics and Accountability: Voices from an Independent Sector Study

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The nonprofit sector continues to grow in size, assets, and influence. However, a critical eye in recent years has brought scrutiny from many stakeholders to the operations of nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Accountability, transparency, and ethical behavior are now part of the everyday language of NPO leaders, staff, volunteers, donors, and board members. This study synthesizes research on a specific set of guidelines developed by Independent Sector and provides a substantive review of key concepts and developments related to nonprofit ethics and accountability. The results should prove useful for NPO staff, stakeholders, regulators, the media, and others interested in improved governance.

Keywords: Nonprofit Accountability, Nonprofit Ethics, Nonprofit Governance, NPO Regulations, Independent Sector

Ensuring high levels of ethics and accountability in nonprofit organizations (NPOs) is vitally important. NPOs rely on public support to operate; and, when public trust in these entities is damaged there can be negative consequences for the entire sector. This is significant when considering that there were more than 1.56 million NPOs in the United States in 2015. Approximately 1.09 million of these NPOs were public charities, of which approximately 35% were human services organizations, 17% were education related, and 12% were healthcare entities (National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), 2019). In total, these NPOs were supported by over \$390 billion in contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations (NCCS, 2019).

Currently, government oversight of these NPOs is conducted through required financial reporting (i.e., Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990) and through the offices of Secretaries of State in each state. In addition, individual NPOs, statewide nonprofit associations, and national advocacy organizations are also engaged in work to promote self-regulation of nonprofit ethics and accountability. This study examines one such initiative and identifies lessons learned that can be used to benefit similar work across the sector. In so doing, this study adds to the growing body of literature that examines what is being done, and what can be done, to strengthen NPO ethics and accountability and build public trust in and support of NPOs as they provide critical services to our communities.

Literature Review

A detailed review of the literature related to self-regulatory strategies, including accreditation programs, voluntary guidelines and codes of ethics, and charity watchdog programs, has been published in a separate study (Ito & Slatten, 2018). The existing literature points to several key factors that may influence effectiveness. First, resource availability and size appear to be positively linked to policy adoption (Blodgett & Melconian, 2012; Nezhina & Brudney, 2010; Ostrower, 2007). Possible explanations include the fact that larger organizations are under a higher level of scrutiny, and at the same time, have greater resources for professional management and training (Blodgett & Melconian, 2012). With regard to accreditation programs, organizations participating in accreditation use both the preparation process and the resulting recommendations to influence change (Carman & Fredericks, 2013; Lee, 2014). Accreditation can also help to “justify changes for further improvements and professionalization” (Lee, 2014, p. 411).

With regard to voluntary guidelines and codes of ethics, the literature is not particularly robust. The existing literature, however, does yield important observations (Ito & Slatten, 2018). Holder-Webb and Cohen (as cited in Lee, 2016) argue that the efficacy of voluntary guidelines appears to improve when these guidelines can be adapted and customized to fit an individual organization’s unique circumstances. For example, a recent Independent Sector report emphasizes the need to consider, adapt, and adopt customized policies related to each of its “Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice” (Independent Sector, 2015). This aligns with Holder-Webb and Cohen’s findings.

Moreover, some literature suggests that codes of ethical conduct are most effective when implemented as one component of an organization’s overall culture of ethics (e.g., Feldheim & Wang, 2002; Schwartz, 2013). In these instances, organizations can promote an “ethical climate” by adopting multiple strategies together, such as a code of ethics, a process for enforcing ethical expectations (e.g., mandating staff attend ethics trainings or conduct ethical conduct reviews) and modeling ethical behaviors (Feldheim & Wang, 2002, p. 80).

Charity watchdog initiatives also support the advancement of ethics and accountability. Current examples of such initiatives are the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance, Guidestar, Charity Navigator, and the American Institute of Philanthropy’s Charity Watch (Szper, 2012). Literature related to these initiatives tends to primarily focus on two areas. First, the extent to which these initiatives increase transparency between organizations and their stakeholders (Gugerty, 2009; Szper, 2012). Second, the extent to which these initiatives are effective in communicating a NPO’s trustworthiness (Gugerty, 2009).

It is important to understand, however, that not all rating systems are the same and the focus of rating systems can be different (e.g., financial versus nonfinancial data and quantity of metrics versus quality of statistics in reporting metrics) (Strathmann, 2018). Still, watchdog organizations play an important role in providing useful data to donors and other stakeholders. As with most situations, discretion is advised when using this information to make donation decisions. However, current research indicates that individuals can have trust in the ratings (Strathmann, 2018).

Literature Limitations and Opportunities

There are significant gaps in the literature. First, a link has yet to be established between ethics and accountability and organizational effectiveness. Second, the connection between policy implementation and behavior change is unclear. In other words, does the approval of new policies result in observable changes in behavior?

Also, how do accreditation programs serve to improve ethics and accountability? Is preparing for accreditation or otherwise paying attention to infrastructure as important (or more important) than the accreditation status that results? Research to date has not yet connected the dots in these areas.

Another gap in the literature relates to our understanding of the factors that motivate organizations to invest in ethics work and the support needed to undertake it. Do strategies differ for large and small organizations? How can small organizations with limited staff be supported? Equally important, how can large organizations, that often have greater risks and greater impacts on the integrity of the sector as a whole, be motivated to pay attention to ethics and accountability work? The literature leaves more questions than answers, providing opportunities for future research.

Study Context: Independent Sector

One organization known in the nonprofit sector for its commitment to upholding the public trust in NPOs is Independent Sector (IS) (see more information in Figure 1). IS has a long history of supporting self-regulation within the nonprofit sector. One example of this is the organization's collaborative development of "Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice" for NPOs (Independent Sector, 2015). Understanding how this self-regulatory tool came about establishes important context for the remainder of this study.

In the early 2000s, conversations about the need for greater transparency and oversight of NPOs were prompted by financial scandals in the private sector as well as within some well-known NPOs. As a result, there was increased regulatory focus on the nonprofit sector. This continued into the late 2000s (Benzing, Leach, & McGee, 2011; Ostrower, 2007). As part of this increased focus, the U.S. Senate asked IS to convene a panel. This panel was referred to as the "Panel on the Nonprofit Sector" and it was intended to "scrutinize nonprofit reform measures" (Smith & Shaver, 2009, p. 142).

The panel, which consisted of charitable and philanthropic leaders from across the country, developed a set of recommendations that they later published in a report known today as "Strengthening Transparency, Governance, and Accountability of Charitable Organizations: A Final Report to Congress and the Nonprofit Sector" (Independent Sector, 2005). The report included recommendations for regulatory bodies and also addressed ways in which NPOs could proactively strengthen their ethics and accountability practices. Based on this report, several regulatory recommendations were ultimately added to the IRS Form 990. These recommendations result in revised questions on the IRS Form 990, which were welcome revisions by many NPOs (Hale, 2013).

IS followed this work by publishing a set of key principles for increasing nonprofit ethics and accountability in a 52-page guide titled, "Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice" (referred to as "Principles" throughout the remainder of this article). A shorter, two-page summary was also published (see Appendix A). The Principles were updated in 2015. They were available at no charge on the IS website. Supplemental materials were fee-based and included a self-assessment tool (discontinued in 2017), an online resource center with samples and background materials, and a legal reference edition of the Principles with legal annotations for each principle (which was made available for free in 2017). In developing these materials, IS sought to strengthen and promote ethics and accountability within the sector. The intent was not to mandate a list of requirements, but rather to prompt organizations to hold discussions about how they could best address each principle.

Figure 1. About the Independent Sector

Independent Sector (IS), based in Washington DC, is a national membership organization of NPOs, foundations, and corporations. The organization's vision statement is, "We envision a world of engaged individuals, robust institutions, and vibrant communities working together to improve lives and the natural world and strengthen democratic societies. To help create this future, we lead and catalyze the charitable community, partnering with government, business, and individuals to advance the common good" (Independent Sector, 2019). One of the organization's key strategic priorities is advancing charitable sector ethics and accountability.

Increasing ethics and accountability in the sector continues to be a strategic priority for IS. Examining how their recommendations and tools impact the sector in practical terms is critical to informing future directions for this work. Today, IS is one of the foremost national organizations bringing together a diverse community of leaders from NPOs, foundations, corporations, and government entities to regularly examine issues important to the nonprofit sector. Lessons learned from IS can inform the work of accrediting bodies, statewide nonprofit organizations, nonprofit certification programs and individual organizations.

The following sections outline the purpose and research questions addressed in this article, describes the methodology used, and presents the findings. An analysis of the findings, which includes recommendations for furthering ethics and accountability throughout the nonprofit sector, concludes the article.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study was designed to learn how the "Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice" are being used in the charitable sector and to identify next steps with regard to how such resources and programs could be leveraged for the greatest impact. Examining the sector's use of the IS materials is vital to informing the larger discussion about next steps to strengthen NPO ethics and accountability. Specifically, what strategies can we learn from IS that could help ensure NPOs are making decisions ethically, maintaining high levels of financial and operational integrity and transparency, and ensuring accountability to stakeholders including society at large?

Advancing ethics and accountability throughout the sector may not only help to maintain a high level of public trust in charitable organizations, but it may also signal the sector's commitment to self-regulation. The three research questions addressed in this study are:

- How many organizations have accessed the IS Principles and associated fee-based materials including the legal edition of the Principles, the Resource Center, and the Self-Assessment Tool?
- What stories do nonprofit leaders have about how they have used the Principles and the impact of the Principles in their organizations?
- What can other bodies interested in providing support to enhance self-regulation learn from IS?

Methodology

For this study, we relied on a methodology that would result in a broad range of qualitative data and create a starting point for future organizational discussions. Given the scope and goal of each research question, we implemented three different research methods. To address the first research question, we conducted a brief descriptive analysis on the data generated by the Principles page of the IS website. To address the second and third research questions, we used two methodologies, a survey and qualitative interviews. Both of these methods enabled the collection of information directly from the nonprofit community.

Website Analysis

We analyzed IS website data to determine the number of ‘hits’ on the website’s Principles page, the number of times the Principles were downloaded electronically, the geographic location, and types of organizations that purchased the printed version of the Principles materials. Data reports were generated and provided by IS staff. We conducted our analysis by examining information from the IS web access logs. This type of methodology has been proven to help extensively when analyzing website information such as general statistics, activity statistics, access statistics, visitors and web browsers most frequently used (Goel & Jha, 2013).

Survey

We developed a SurveyMonkey questionnaire and distributed it electronically in order to collect information from a broad group of respondents. The electronic format allowed us to inform the development of questions for the interview portion of the methodology and solicit participants for the interview process. IS desired data from individual respondents, rather than from organizations, so having more than one response per organization was acceptable. The survey was 1) emailed to those who purchased resources, 2) distributed to the IS membership through the “IS Daily Digest” email, and 3) made accessible on tablets at the IS annual conference in 2016.

The survey included ten questions and had a combination of multiple-choice formats and open-ended questions (see Appendix B). Respondents who had used the Principles were asked to answer a different set of questions than those who had not. Respondents were asked to submit their names and contact information if they were willing to participate in a telephone interview at a later date.

Survey responses were generated using SurveyMonkey and further detailed on two spreadsheets. The first spreadsheet included respondents who had used the free Principles and/or the fee-based materials. The second included those who had not used the Principles. This cost effective and time efficient method of market research and data collection continues to drive management decisions—proving to be more effective than telephone and face-to-face surveys (Keusch, 2015).

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to collect in-depth stories about how individuals and organizations used the Principles, what occurred as a result of their use, and what other types of resources related to the Principles would be helpful (see Appendix C). Interviews were conducted by phone with individuals who either indicated their willingness to participate via the survey or were identified by IS staff based on purchasing records for Principles materials. Sampling within this group was purposive in order to increase variation both in type of organization and geographic location.

There are numerous studies that support the growing popularity of telephone interviews in grounded theory research. Telephone interviewing is often cited as a pragmatic, cost effective (factoring in actual costs and opportunity costs), and user-friendly interview tool that offers enhanced access to geographically dispersed or hard-to-reach participants. It has also been suggested that telephone interviews may also be more appropriate than face-to-face interviews for discussing sensitive issues (Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker, & Korcha, 2016; Lord, Bolton, Fleming, & Anderson, 2016; Ward, Gott, & Hoare, 2015).

Participants included Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), program directors, legal counsel, board chairs, and consultants. Their affiliations were with charitable NPOs, foundations, consulting firms, national federations, and statewide nonprofit associations with budget sizes ranging from \$400,000 to \$86 million. Geographically, they represented 16 different states. Participants included individuals who had purchased fee-based materials, those who had used only the free materials, and those who had not used any of the materials. Based on early findings, additional interviews were also held with the director of a nonprofit accreditation organization and with a program director at a university center for applied ethics. In total, we conducted 21 telephone interviews.

Each telephone interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes. We extracted key points from the notes and recorded on a master data collection spreadsheet. For each respondent, the spreadsheet summarized 1) if the respondent had used the materials (and, if so, which materials), 2) how they used the materials in general, 3) specific stories about their use, 4) what additional tools or resources they thought would be helpful, and 5) other comments and observations related to ethics and accountability in the sector. This data was then analyzed to identify commonly expressed themes. We recorded individual comments related to each theme to provide greater scope and context for each theme.

Findings

Findings related to each research question are presented below. The analysis of website data and associated memos and reports informed the first research question. Both, the survey responses and interviews informed the second and third research questions.

The first part of this analysis sought to answer the question: *How any organizations have accessed the Principles and associated materials?* Together, the website data and IS memos document approximately 40,000 unique views on the Principles landing page of the IS website from February 25, 2015 (when the revised Principles were published) to December 31, 2016. Access to the page generally ranged from 2,000 to 3,000 unique views per month. The Principles were downloaded more than 5,000 times. Website data did not identify those visiting the page or downloading the free materials. As such, information on the demographics is limited.

Demographic data for those who purchased fee-based materials, however, was available and provided by IS. This data was analyzed to determine both the geographic locations and types of organizations that purchased materials (see Tables 1 and 2). Four geographic areas are mapped: West, Midwest, South, and Northeast. The greatest number of orders for all materials (except the Legal Reference Edition) came from the West. The Legal Reference Edition was ordered more frequently by those in the South. With regard to organization types, charitable nonprofit organizations purchased materials at three times the rate of the next highest category, which was foundations. The most frequently purchased tools were the Principles (whether in print or PDF version), followed by the “bundle” (which included all associated materials), and the Legal Reference Edition. The Self-Assessment Tool ranked lowest.

Table 1. Order History Analysis by Geographic Location from 2/25/15 to 12/31/16

Item	West	Midwest	South	Northeast	Other	Unknown	Total
Principles (print or PDF)	44 (34.6%)	16 (12.5%)	26 (20.4%)	21 (16.5%)	3 (2.3%)	17 (13.3%)	127
Legal Reference Edition (print or PDF)	17 (19.5%)	18 (20.7%)	33 (37.9%)	12 (13.8%)	1 (1.1%)	6 (6.9%)	87
Self-Assessment Tool	6 (37.5%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (25.0%)	0 ---	2 (12.5%)	16
Resource Center	12 (31.6%)	6 (15.8%)	10 (26.3%)	10 (26.3%)	0 ---	0 ---	38
Bundle (all fee-based materials)	47 (36.4%)	22 (17.1%)	37 (28.7%)	20 (15.5%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.5%)	129

Table 2. Order History Analysis by Type of Organization from 2/25/15 to 12/31/16

Item	Charitable/ NPO	Foundation	Consulting Firm/ Consultant	Corporate Giving Program/ Foundation	Other	Unknown (no response)	Total
Principles (print or PDF)	56 (44.1%)	5 (3.9%)	3 (2.4%)	0 ---	6 (4.7%)	57 (44.9%)	127
Legal Reference Edition (print or PDF)	23 (26.4%)	6 (7.0%)	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.1%)	12 (13.8%)	43 (49.4%)	87
Self-Assessment Tool	8 (50.0%)	0 ---	3 (18.8%)	0 ---	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.8%)	16
Resource Center	18 (47.4%)	1 (2.6%)	0 ---	0 (0.0%)	4 (10.5%)	15 (39.5%)	38
Bundle (all fee-based materials)	58 (45.0%)	18 (14.0%)	8 (6.2%)	1 (0.8%)	7 (5.4%)	37 (28.7%)	129

Table 3. Survey Results

Question	Number of Responses	Results
Please indicate your position ¹	43	CEOs=30% Managers=19% C-Suite=16% Other=16% Consultants=7% Board Members=7% General Counsel=2% CFO=2%
Please indicate your position ²	20	CEOs=25% Managers=25% C-Suite=25% Other=20% Board Members=5%

¹The survey was distributed to IS members, made available at the IS National Conference in November 2016. It was distributed to organizations who purchased materials. A total of 43 responses were received; of those, 23 had used the Principles and 20 had not.

²The data shown reflects those who indicated they did not use any of the materials and skipped to this question.

Survey Findings

The next part of this analysis seeks to answer the question: *What stories do nonprofit leaders have about how they used the Principles and the impact on their organizations?* As illustrated in Table 3, there are a total of 43 responses to the survey from CEOs, board members, consultants, C-suite staff, and association staff. These respondents represented at least 28 different organizations. Of these respondents, 23 of them (53%) had used the Principles or associated resources. Nearly all (96%) of those who had used the Principles responded that at least one of the following happened as a result: increased dialogue about ethical practice and good governance at the staff or board level, reviewed organizational policies, changed or implemented new policies, and/or planned additional work related to ethics and good governance. The frequency rate for these items ranged from 41% to 55%.

It is clear from the survey findings that those who used these voluntary support tools found them to be important in improving their organization's practices and governance. The Principles served as a catalyst to drive dialogue, change practices and policies, and inform future work. With regard to dialogue, survey respondents shared details about the conversation topics that resulted from use of the Principles. Topics included "cascading ethics through all levels of leadership," "understanding what is expected of board members," "comprehensive discussions of best practices," "following best practices and going above and beyond what is expected," and "ensuring policies are comprehensive and clear."

Related to changing organizational practice and informing future work, responses and examples about use of the Principles varied. For instance, consultants used the Principles as a baseline for best practices in their work with clients and also used them for training purposes. Other examples included a charitable organizations incorporating the Principles into their governing documents; others used the Principles to inform the development of new policies. A foundation used the Principles to incorporate ethical practice components into their funding requirements.

The survey was distributed primarily through IS member channels; however, approximately 26% of the survey respondents were unaware that the Principles existed. Another 12% responded that they used resources other than the Principles. These findings indicate opportunities to generate greater awareness within the IS membership as well as with non-members.

Interview Findings

The interviews provided an opportunity to hear more detailed stories about how the Principles were used by respondents. Several key themes emerged, and these are summarized in Table 4. The comments naturally group into several general categories. First, the materials are used predominantly for consulting and training purposes by statewide associations, federations, and consultants, but also by CEOs and board members. Second, they are used as benchmarks or checklists against which other organizations measure their own tools (such as accreditation standards, affiliation requirements, or their own sets of principles) or their own compliance. Third, the Principles are used to promote board oversight. They are distributed to board members, posted on board portals, discussed at board meetings, and even used to guide the work of board governance committees. Other uses include enhancing one's professional knowledge as a resource to develop other training tools or programs and a general resource for the purpose of addressing board or staff questions that arise.

We collected information about the impact of the Principles on the organizations that used them, and we documented the important role of these voluntary tools. As one example, an arts organization created a committee to strengthen their practices and governance and used the Principles to guide its work. The executive director shared that, *"Over a two year period, we went point-by-point through the Principles to see where we were...The Principles helped us organize our discussions and gave us an outline to follow one step at a time."* This process resulted in strengthened organizational policies and a stronger and more professional board.

In another case, a large healthcare and housing organization with a budget of \$86 million used the Principles to educate and inform the board on an ongoing basis. This board committed to reviewing and discussing three to four of the principles at each quarterly board meeting. This positioned ethics and accountability as an ongoing focus of their governance role. The organization's general counsel noted that discussions included benchmarking each principle *"...against what we do in management, on the board, or through policies."* They did this so that they could either verify compliance or identify the need to bolster practice.

Associations, federated organizations, foundations, and consultants reported leveraging the Principles to strengthen their member entities, grantees, and/or clients. The Principles were frequently used for training and education purposes at conferences or in consulting sessions, resulting in staff and board members who were better equipped to lead their organizations effectively. One foundation organized four, one-day training sessions for community nonprofits. Each session focused on a different set of principles. The foundation's CFO shared that the program *"...prepared people in the community to take on board roles, or in the case of current board members, raised knowledge and awareness about their roles and responsibilities."* As a last example, in the case of a national federation, the Principles were further used to validate its own internal compliance program for all member chapters as well as to inform the development of new standards where needed.!

Table 4. Use of Principles Resources

Theme	Specific Comments
Consulting and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used in consulting and training work with member organizations. (<i>Statewide organization</i>) Made Principles available to their members on website or in training packets and encouraged members to use these to encourage dialogue. (<i>Statewide organization</i>) Provided as a resource to chapters, because chapters are sometimes more receptive to resources that come from outside resources rather than the federation's national office. (<i>National Federation</i>)
Benchmarking, Self-Assessments, and Checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used by a federation and a nonprofit accreditation program as a benchmark against which they measured their own affiliation/accreditation standards. (<i>National Federation and Other organization</i>) Used as a checklist to evaluate their own organization. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>)
Board Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated a portion of every board meeting to discussing several Principles and benchmarking their organization against them. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>) Provided on board portal for easy access by board members. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>) Used by a board governance committee to guide their work; the committee addressed each principle over a two-year period. (<i>Used only free materials</i>) Converted their nominating committee to a governance committee and used the Principles as a way to give them something "meaty" to work on... did a self-assessment, identified gaps, and filled them. (<i>Used only free materials</i>)
Professional Knowledge/Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for learning purposes in order to increase depth of professional knowledge and provide a source for answering questions. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>)
Used to Develop Other Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources were used by an organization to develop their own tools and training programs for leadership development, ongoing CEO training, board trainings, conferences, and technical assistance. (<i>National Federation</i>)

Note: No data is reported on this table from the category "Organizations that did not use any of the materials" because this question was not applicable for those respondents.

We relied on the survey findings to also address the third research question: *What other tools or resources related to the Principles would be helpful?* Approximately 72% of survey respondents noted a preference for digital resources, such as webinars or online forums, compared with 33% desiring conference workshops. Only 22% of respondents expressed a desire for in-person trainings or blog posts. One respondent gave a recommendation to "...provide different mediums as well as 'on demand' access which works with today's time constraints on leaders." Another noted a desire for more sample policies.

Of those respondents who had not used the Principles, 69% indicated that they were unaware they existed; and, 31% reported that they had used resources on governance and ethical practice from

organizations other than IS. Given that the survey was distributed through IS related vehicles, the lack of awareness highlights to an area of opportunity.

The interview process provided an opportunity for in-depth conversations about desired resources. Our findings aligned with survey responses. Key themes emerged including a desire for digital resources such as webinars, YouTube videos, and eLearning courses (see Table 5).

Respondents shared that they wanted resources that are “*just-in-time and stackable*” and that digital resources are more easily accessible for board members who are geographically dispersed and do not attend conferences. Additional comments addressed the need to develop resources targeted toward Millennials as they become the next generation of nonprofit sector leaders.

Many respondents emphasized the need for “*easy-to-use*” resources because time constraints make it difficult to engage in this work. This parallels findings that have shown that time limitations are an obstacle to participation in nonprofit accreditation programs (e.g., Carman & Fredericks, 2013). Types of easy-to-use resources identified were checklists, scorecards, or benchmarking materials that provide “*something concrete that nonprofits can rely on to assess where they are*” or could “*dashboard what an ethical organization looks like.*”

One respondent who purchased other fee-based materials specifically asked if the Principles could be repackaged as a simple checklist. It is noted that the fee-based materials did originally include a comprehensive self-assessment tool. However, this tool was in-depth and detailed, which stands in contrast to the preference for easy-to-use tools.

Another theme was the desire for “*in-a-box*” resources. Given the time constraints on staff and board members, tools that are not only practical but also coordinated were highly desired. One respondent noted, for example, a desire for a policy manual template that could be easily downloaded and customized. This could be one component of a coordinated set of resources that could be used to support an organization’s work to build or strengthen its overall culture of ethics.

With regard to funders, two themes emerged. First, if funders required evidence that the Principles or similar ethics work had been conducted, then organizations would be much more likely to do it. Second, there was a consistent call for more support from the philanthropic community to fund work related to implementation of the Principles. Leaders wanted to engage in this work, but the lack of funding made it difficult. This is consistent with literature that has highlighted links between resource availability and policy adoption (Blodgett & Melconian, 2012; Nezhina & Brudney, 2010; Ostrower, 2007).

Local networking opportunities related to ethics work and other local resources, such as lists of consultants, were also desired (especially by smaller organizations). “*Help us connect locally*” was the theme expressed in this area. Lastly, several respondents expressed a desire for support in creating an organizational culture of ethics. In other words, they wanted to know: What is the next step in terms of the Principles? And, how can organizations then support a culture shift to more firmly establish a new culture of ethical practice and good governance?

Most respondents who had not used the IS Principles commented that they did use other materials related to ethics from organizations including BoardSource, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and the National Council of Nonprofits. One respondent shared a desire to join IS but noted that the cost of membership was prohibitive. Other comments reflected the need for funding and resources in order to do ethics work and the desire for someone to “make sense of all the resources” that already exist in the sector.

Table 5. Interview Themes: Desired Tools and Resources

Theme	Specific Comments
Online Training and Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate to produce resources instead of everyone creating their own. (<i>Statewide Organization</i>) • Offer webinars, distance learning, mini-videos (possible YouTube channel) that are easy to access. “Definitely need this especially with people more geographically dispersed.” (<i>National Federation and Purchased fee-based materials</i>) • Create resources tailored as 101, 201, 301 sessions to fit the needs of beginners vs. professionals. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>) • Promote peer learning through online, private Facebook type sites. These are well received, provide people with opportunities to learn from one another, ask questions, and share resources. (<i>Statewide Organization and National Federation</i>) • Produce online training targeting both experienced board members and new/younger people. (<i>Used only free materials</i>)
Funding and Grant Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage funders to support this work. Funders used to give more capacity building grants but not so much anymore. This work takes funding to do. (<i>Statewide Organization</i>) • Ask funders about the best resources and enlist their help in directing people to those. (<i>Did not use materials</i>) • Encourage foundations to require demonstration of ethics work or training in grant applications; if it is required, more NPOs would do it. (<i>Other organization type</i>)
Checklists, Dashboards, and Samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tools to help organizations evaluate how well they are doing with regard to key components of ethics and accountability work; consider an easy checklist format. (<i>Statewide Organization, Purchased fee-based materials, and Used only free materials</i>) • Find a way to dashboard what an ethical organization looks like so others can benchmark against it. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>) • Develop practical templates that can be downloaded and customized; comments included, “We would have paid for that” and “We don’t have time for things that involve a lot of work and research.” (<i>Used only free materials</i>) • Package “tools in a box”, like those provided by the Maryland Nonprofits’ Standards for Excellence program. Include educational resources, model/sample policies, tools, etc. all in a single package. (<i>Other organization type</i>) • Distribute more samples from real organizations that you can just download and customize. (<i>Purchased fee-based materials</i>) • Lower cost of resources. So many are cost-prohibitive, especially for individual board members who want to learn or for smaller organizations with limited resources. (<i>Used only free materials</i>)
Address Duplication and Growing number of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the duplication and competition between organizations providing similar resources (which are often a source of revenue), and also address the “enormous intellectual property breaches” with materials being adopted by others without citations. (<i>Statewide Organization</i>)

Promote overall culture of ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sense of the resources – there is so much out there and it is hard to know where to go. <i>(Did not use materials)</i> • Elevate the discussion of ethical business models within the nonprofit community. <i>(Statewide Organization)</i> • Broaden the goal to create an organization-wide culture of ethics. Not enough to have policies in place or the board engaged; the entire culture has to be changed and leadership is key to this. <i>(Purchased fee-based materials)</i>
Credentialing Program for Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a credential like the CAE (Certified Association Executive) but for ethics. Even if you know the Principles, have executed them, etc., there is nothing to show that you are an expert in them. A credential would be very appealing to many nonprofit executives. <i>(Purchased fee-based materials)</i> • Promote the hiring of NPO staff with this credential. Encourage boards to hire executive directors who have completed ethics training. As the credentialing program grows, it would put pressure on executives to become credentialed and stay competitive, and more boards would seek out those who are credentialed. <i>(Purchased fee-based materials)</i>
Board Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop affordable board management software to help with organizing/maintaining documents, structuring meetings, and managing boards. <i>(National Federation)</i> • Address how to encourage board engagement in ethics work and how to support executive directors in their efforts to educate and support board members. <i>(Used only free materials)</i> • Encourage board members to challenge, raise issues, raise ethics concerns, and be outspoken. This is a key part of the role, but many don't do it. <i>(Other organization type)</i>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address Needs of Small NPOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Smaller NPOs (under \$500k) need help (with 'no fuss and no muss') so that they can do what they need to do easily. <i>(Used only free materials)</i> ○ Smaller organizations really struggle with some of the basics (like segregation of duties) so more tools to help them figure out how to do these things when they don't have the staff or resources to do it like larger organizations would be helpful. <i>(Purchased fee-based materials)</i> • Expand the Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop additional guidance with regard to board member roles, fundraising, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. <i>(Purchased fee-based materials)</i> • More Local Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a way to help organizations identify local consultants and create more local networking resources. <i>(Did not use materials)</i>

With regard to this last point, an overarching and important theme emerged. A number of respondents commented on the significant duplication of resources in this area and the large number of organizations promoting similar publications and tools. As one example, some statewide associations publish their own principles even though they are members of IS and are aware that the IS Principles exist. As another example, organizations such as IS, BoardSource, GuideStar and others all have identified and promulgate standards in similar areas. While some duplication is viewed as necessary to meet the needs of specific constituencies, in general, the respondents perceive the duplication of tools to be confusing and a waste of scarce resources. Some respondents stated that it is difficult to know which tools they should purchase or use and which organizations offering such tools were the most reputable.

Addressing the problem of duplication is more complicated than merely coordination and collaboration. Many organizations (including IS, BoardSource, statewide associations, and others), generate revenue from publishing these resources. As such, collaboration may have financial ramifications (e.g., revenue may be generated directly through purchases of materials or indirectly through memberships).

At a time when many organizations are struggling with issues of sustainability, competition for financial resources and membership revenue is a significant obstacle to collaboration. Nonetheless, this is an area where tremendous potential exists to benefit the sector both by reducing the duplication of resources and by developing a more collaborative approach to ethics and accountability. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the most commonly cited sources that participants identified for ethics and accountability information.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of this study help to inform future work that strengthens ethics and accountability across the nonprofit sector and within individual NPOs. The literature emphasizes, in particular, the positive influence that resource availability, staff champions, and the ability to customize can have on organizational ethics work. In addition, the literature points to the need for a larger organizational culture of ethics, of which principles or standards is only one component. The literature intersects with the survey and interview findings of this study to point to several potential opportunities for consideration:

- *Raise awareness.* The IS Principles had a positive rating from nearly all who were aware of them and used them in their organizations. However, 47% of those surveyed through IS-related vehicles had not used them; of this group, 69% were unaware that they existed. It should be noted that other organizations also promulgate similar types of ethics and accountability related materials. One example is the “Standards for Excellence” program coordinated by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations. This program offers a certification program that measures success in all areas of nonprofit governance and management (Feng, Neely, & Slatten, 2016). Another example is BoardSource’s “Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards” (BoardSource, 2005). Given that these and other resources are available across the sector, the findings from this IS case study helps point to a potential sector-wide issue related to awareness. In order for resources to be effective, NPOs must first be aware that they exist and know how to access them.

Table 6. Interview Themes: Other Sources for Ethics Information

Resources
BoardSource=67%
Independent Sector=62%
National Council of Nonprofits=24%
Nonprofit Quarterly=19%
Association of Fundraising Professionals=19%
Minnesota Nonprofit Association Principles=14%
Council on Foundations=10%
Chronicle of Philanthropy=10%
One Response Each For:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBB Wise Giving Alliance • Bridgespan • National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy • League of California Community Foundations • Mission Investors Exchange • Nonprofit Risk Management Center • D5: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Philanthropy • Exponent Philanthropy • Grantmakers for Effective Philanthropy • National Center for Family Philanthropy • Charities Review Council • Planned Giving Resources Council • GuideStar • HR Morning • Stanford Social Innovation Review • DiversityInc • Alliance for Nonprofit Management • Society for Association Executives • Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits • Nonprofit Times • Blue Avocado • State agencies such as Secretaries of State offices
n=21

- *Develop or support a collaborative “Center for Nonprofit Ethics.”* This could address the problem of duplication of resources, provide a trusted forum for sector-wide dialogue, advance research, and further promote self-regulation. In essence, such a center could play the role of ethics “champion” for the entire sector and serve to move discussions about NPO ethics and accountability forward.
- *Convene funders for further dialogue.* Funders play a unique role not only in providing specific funding for work in ethics and accountability, but also in requiring grant applicants to demonstrate their work in this area. In addition, the literature indicates that organizations with greater resource availability have a greater likelihood of conducting ethics related work, and funders have a critical opportunity and role in this regard. There are multiple opportunities for existing sector initiatives to intersect with these areas of work. For example, the Charity Defense Council is an organization committed to

generating awareness that “...low overhead is not the way the world gets changed” and that “...inadequate, donated resources are not the path to global transformation” (GuideStar, 2020). Funders could not only begin requiring evidence of ethics work in their grant applications, but also acknowledge the overall need for better resourced NPO overhead budgets.

- *Develop a pipeline of staff champions to promote ethical practice in organizations across the sector.* NPOs and sector leaders should evaluate the feasibility of developing a certification program for individuals who complete an ethics training program or successfully complete an exam. This would encourage the development of a pipeline of staff champions and provide further incentive for individuals to invest time in this area of training. Similar programs, such as BoardSource’s Certified Governance Trainer (CGT) designation or the Association of Fundraising Professionals’ Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) or Advanced Certified Fundraising Executive (ACFRE) designation, could be used as models for developing a similar certification program for nonprofit ethics.
- *Produce a series of YouTube videos, online webinars or interactive eLearning modules.* Videos, webinars and eLearning could address the need for on demand resources, help meet the needs of smaller organizations unable to send staff to in person trainings, and provide a way to target resources to emerging Millennial leaders. One such example is Dan Pallotta’s 2013 TED talk, focused on “The Overhead Myth.” In this 18-minute video, Pallotta challenged the long-standing tenant of nonprofit management to keep overhead low; and, instead he asked why we hold charitable organizations to this standard and not for-profit businesses when both are trying to solve big societal problems (May, 2014). This is the type of video that can spark thoughtful conversations at board meetings or strategic planning retreats. Another example is the YouTube video series on the “Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards” (BoardSource, 2012). This 10-part series allows viewers to watch short, two to three minute, overviews on key topics such as planning, protecting assets, monitoring programs, and building a competent board. Where applicable, these types of online resources could also be modulated to various levels of expertise, further helping to develop the expertise of ethics champions within organizations.
- *Develop ethics related “trainings-in-a-box.”* This model could include policy templates and planning materials that NPO staff can easily download and customize. One interview respondent volunteered, “That would have been tremendous; I would have paid for that.” The literature supports vehicles that provide such information while allowing for customization. The IS Principles, for example, provide key points related to each topic area and then encourage NPOs to develop customized policies to fit their individual organizational needs. Supplementing this model with training materials and policy templates would achieve the “in-the-box” format desired. A more general example is from the Standards for Excellence Institute which uses this type of packaged model to support their nonprofit accreditation applicants. NPOs seeking the “Seal of Excellence” have access to a package of resources which includes educational materials, planning guides, downloadable policy samples, templates and self-assessment tools (Feng et al., 2016).

In considering these recommendations, sector leaders should also consider whether to be involved in developing competing resources, or rather, in promoting collaboration on the resources that already exist. Understanding how participants in this study used and viewed the resources produced by IS can help practitioners develop strategies to take ethics and accountability work forward in the years to come.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study include a small sample size (less than 50) and a sample population consisting only of individuals who had some prior or current association with IS. However, for the purposes of this study (i.e., learning how individuals use the IS Principles), the methodology appropriately enabled the collection of desired data.

It should also be noted that while the qualitative nature of this study provides in-depth information and viewpoints, it does not allow for the results to be generalized to a larger population or to the larger nonprofit sector. Gaining insight from study participants representing a wide range of roles does, however, point to future directions for advancing nonprofit ethics and accountability. At the statewide or national level, understanding how resources are utilized by NPOs can better inform how these resources are developed and delivered in the future.

At the organizational level, where time and financial limitations are present, this study connects the dots between research and practical application of resources. Listening to voices from across the sector and identifying common themes can help to hone in on strategies to move this work forward.

The findings also indicate opportunities for future research. In particular, we still do not yet know whether there is a connection between ethics and accountability and organizational effectiveness. Could that connection serve as additional motivation for organizations to commit resources (both time and money) to improving ethics and accountability?

Also, nonprofit leaders have exceptional opportunities to promote ethics and accountability in the sector as their careers take them from organization to organization. What factors motivate individual practitioners to engage in ongoing learning in this area? And, how might their increased expertise intersect with job market competitiveness? Examining nonprofit ethics and accountability in both of these areas may yield important findings with tremendous potential to change the nonprofit landscape.

Conclusion

While conducting this research, it became clear that people in all areas of the nonprofit sector (e.g., CEOs, foundations, consultants, federations, and associations) are committed to strengthening ethics and accountability within their own organizations, within the professional community of individuals working in the sector, and within the nonprofit sector at large. Participants in this study were generous with their time and enthusiastic about sharing their stories, their challenges, and their perspectives on how to develop stronger, more transparent and ethical NPOs. Perhaps most compelling, however, is the commitment that participants expressed about furthering ethics and accountability in their own organizations as well as in the sector as a whole. This is work that people want to do, want to discuss, and want to promote; and, the ideas shared in this study should play an important role in shaping this work in the years to come.

Disclosure Statement

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Appendix A. Summary of the Principles

PRINCIPLES

FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

Independent Sector's *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice* is the foremost guide for sound and successful practice by charities and foundations in the U.S., providing clarity about legal compliance and public disclosure, effective governance, strong financial oversight, and responsible fundraising. The 2015 edition provides considerable new value, reflecting changes in law as well as new circumstances in which the charitable sector functions, and new relationships within and between sectors. The following 33 Principles reflect the scope of the guide, while rationales and actionable steps for implementation can be found in the full guide, available at PrinciplesForGood.com.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

1. A charitable organization must comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations, as well as applicable laws and regulations of the states and the local jurisdictions in which it is formed or operates. If the organization conducts programs outside the United States, it must also abide by applicable international laws, regulations and conventions.
2. A charitable organization should formally adopt a written code of ethics with which all of its directors or trustees, staff, and volunteers are familiar and to which they adhere.
3. A charitable organization should adopt and implement policies and procedures to ensure that all conflicts of interest (real and potential), or the appearance thereof, within the organization and the governing board are appropriately managed through disclosure, recusal, or other means.
4. A charitable organization should establish and implement policies and procedures that enable individuals to come forward with information on illegal practices or violations of organizational policies. This "whistleblower" policy should specify that the organization will not retaliate against, and will seek to protect the confidentiality of, individuals who make good-faith reports.
5. A charitable organization should establish and implement policies and procedures to protect and preserve the organization's important data, documents, and business records.
6. A charitable organization's board should ensure that the organization has adequate plans to protect its assets — its property, documents and data, financial and human resources, programmatic content and material, and its integrity and reputation — against damage or loss. The board should review regularly the organization's need for general liability and directors' and officers' liability insurance, as well as take other actions necessary to mitigate risks.
7. A charitable organization should make information about its operations, including its governance, finances, programs, and activities, widely available to the public. Charitable organizations also should consider making information available on the methods they use to evaluate the outcomes of their work and sharing the results of those evaluations.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

8. A charitable organization must have a governing body that is responsible for reviewing and approving the organization's mission and strategic direction, annual budget and key financial transactions, compensation practices and policies, and fiscal and governance policies.
9. The board of a charitable organization should meet regularly enough to conduct its business and fulfill its duties.
10. The board of a charitable organization should establish its own size and structure and review these periodically. The board should have enough members to allow for full deliberation and diversity of thinking on governance and other organizational matters. Except for very small organizations, this generally means that the board should have at least five members.
11. The board of a charitable organization should include members with the diverse background (including, but not limited to, ethnicity, race, and gender perspectives), experience, and organizational and financial skills necessary to advance the organization's mission.
12. A substantial majority of the board of a public charity, usually meaning at least two-thirds of its members, should be independent. Independent members should not: (1) be compensated by the organization as employees or independent contractors; (2) have their compensation determined by individuals who are compensated by the organization; (3) receive, directly or indirectly, material financial benefits from the organization except as a member of the charitable class served by the organization; or (4) be related to anyone described above (as a spouse, sibling, parent or child), or reside with any person so described.
13. The board should hire, oversee, and annually evaluate the performance of the chief executive officer of the organization. It should conduct such an evaluation prior to any change in that officer's compensation, unless there is a multi-year contract in force or the change consists solely of routine adjustments for inflation or cost of living.
14. The board of a charitable organization that has paid staff should ensure that the positions of chief staff officer, board chair, and board treasurer are held by separate individuals. Organizations without paid staff should ensure that the positions of board chair and treasurer are held by separate individuals.

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15. The board should establish an effective, systematic process for educating and communicating with board members to ensure they are aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities, are knowledgeable about the programs and activities of the organization, and can carry out their oversight functions effectively.

16. Board members should evaluate their performance as a group and as individuals no less frequently than every three years, and should have clear procedures for removing board members who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities.

17. Governing boards should establish clear policies and procedures setting the length of terms and the number of consecutive terms a board member may serve.

18. The board should review organizational and governing instruments no less frequently than every five years.

19. The board should establish and review regularly the organization's mission and goals and should evaluate, no less frequently than every five years, the organization's programs, goals and activities to be sure they advance its mission and make prudent use of its resources.

20. Board members are generally expected to serve without compensation, other than reimbursement for expenses incurred to fulfill their board-related duties. A charitable organization that provides compensation to its board members should use appropriate comparability data to determine the amount to be paid, document the decision, and provide full disclosure to anyone, upon request, of the amount and rationale for the compensation.

STRONG FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

21. A charitable organization must keep complete, current, and accurate financial records and ensure strong financial controls are in place. Its board should receive and review timely reports of the organization's financial activities and should have a qualified, independent financial expert audit or review these statements annually in a manner appropriate to the organization's size and scale of operations.

22. The board of a charitable organization must institute policies and procedures to ensure that the organization (and, if applicable, its subsidiaries) manages and invests its funds responsibly, in accordance with all legal requirements. The full board should review and approve the organization's annual budget and should monitor actual performance against the budget.

23. A charitable organization should not provide loans (or the equivalent, such as loan guarantees, purchasing or transferring ownership of a residence or office, or relieving a debt or lease obligation) to directors, officers, or trustees.

24. A charitable organization should spend a significant amount of its annual budget on programs that pursue its mission while ensuring that the organization has sufficient administrative and fundraising capacity to deliver those programs responsibly and effectively.

25. A charitable organization should establish clear, written policies for paying or reimbursing expenses incurred by anyone conducting business or traveling on behalf of the organization, including the types of expenses that can be paid for or reimbursed and the documentation required. Such policies should require that travel on behalf of the organization is to be undertaken cost-effectively.

26. A charitable organization should neither pay for nor reimburse travel expenditures for spouses, dependents or others who are accompanying someone conducting business for the organization unless they, too, are conducting such business.

RESPONSIBLE FUNDRAISING

27. Solicitation materials and other communications addressed to donors and the public must clearly identify the organization and be accurate and truthful.

28. Contributions must be used for purposes consistent with the donor's intent, whether as described in the relevant solicitation materials or as specifically directed by the donor.

29. A charitable organization must provide donors with specific acknowledgments of charitable contributions, in accordance with IRS requirements, as well as information to facilitate the donors' compliance with tax law requirements.

30. A charitable organization should adopt clear policies, based on its specific exempt purpose, to determine whether accepting a gift would compromise its ethics, financial circumstances, program focus, or other interests.

31. A charitable organization should provide appropriate training and supervision of the people soliciting funds on its behalf to ensure that they understand their responsibilities and applicable federal, state, and local laws, and do not employ techniques that are coercive, intimidating, or intended to harass potential donors.

32. A charitable organization should not compensate internal or external fundraisers based on a commission or a percentage of the amount raised.

33. A charitable organization should respect the privacy of individual donors and, except where disclosure is required by law, should not sell or otherwise make available the names and contact information of its donors without providing them an opportunity at least once a year to opt out of the use of their names.

FULL ACCESS TO THE PRINCIPLES



VISIT
PRINCIPLESFORGOOD.COM
FOR ACCESS TO

- The Complete 2015 *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice*
- *Principles* Legal Reference Edition
- Organizational Assessment Tool
- Comprehensive Resource Center

Appendix B. Survey Questions

1. Name or Organization (*optional and confidential*)

2. Please indicate your position:

- ☐ Board Member
- ☐ CEO
- ☐ C-Suite (VP, Senior Director)
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Other

[If you have not used the Principles or if you are not sure, please skip to question 10.]

3. Please indicate which "Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice" materials you or your organization has used (Select all that apply):

- ☐ Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice (free version)
- ☐ Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice - Legal Reference Edition (fee-based)
- ☐ Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice Resource Center (fee-based)
- ☐ Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice Organizational Self-Assessment Tool (fee-based)
- ☐ None

4. Which of the following did your organization do as a result of using the Principles? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Increased dialogue at the staff level about governance and ethics
- ☐ Increased dialogue at the board level about governance and ethics
- ☐ Reviewed any policies and/or procedures to ensure they address governance and ethics considerations described in the Principles
- ☐ Implemented or changed any policies and/or procedures to better address governance and ethics
- ☐ Developed plans to conduct future work related to governance and ethical practices
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify):

5. Do you believe that using the Principles increased awareness of ethical practice at the senior staff level and/or the board level?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please provide detail about your answer. What have you observed within your organization that leads you to feel that there is, or isn't, increased awareness of ethical practices?

6. What conversation topics have you observed being discussed among senior staff or the board as a result of using the Principles?

7. Would you recommend the Principles and related tools to other organizations? (Please respond only to those items you used)

	Would Recommend	Would Not Recommend
Principles Document (free)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principles Document, Legal Reference Edition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizational Self-Assessment Tool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Why or why not for any of the above?		

8. Are there other tools or resources related to good governance and ethical practice you would find helpful? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Digital or online opportunities (webinars, podcasts, etc.)
- ☐ Blog posts
- ☐ In-person workshops
- ☐ Conference presentations
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. Would you be willing to share more about your experience using the Principles of Good Governance and Ethical Practice in a confidential, 10 minute phone interview? If so, please enter your contact information below:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

10. (Only for those who have not used the principles and skipped to this question.)

I have not used the Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice because (check all that apply):

- ☐ I was not aware they existed
- ☐ I believe that my organization does not need work in this area
- ☐ I do not have the time or resources to pursue them at this time
- ☐ I use resources on governance and ethical practice from organizations other than Independent Sector.
- ☐ Other (please describe):

11. If you would you be willing to help us by participating in a confidential, ten minute phone interview, please enter your contact information below:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Appendix C. Interview Questions and Purposes

For internal completion prior to interview:

Interviewee: _____ Title: _____
Organization: _____ Phone: _____
Type of Org.: ☐ Nonprofit ☐ Foundation ☐ Statewide Org ☐ Other: _____
Purchased Resources: ☐ Legal Guide ☐ Self-Assessment Tool ☐ Online Resource Access
Other Notes: _____

Structured Interview Questions (with follow up questions based on the conversation):

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization and your role in the organization? *[Provides Context]*
2. What prompted you or your organization to download and/or purchase the Principles and related resources? *[Identifies Motivating Factors]*
3. Which of the resources did you use?
____ Principles ____ Legal Reference Guide ____ Self-Assessment Tool ____ Online Resources
4. How did you use them, who used them (Board, Executive Staff, C-Suite Staff, others?) and could you share some examples? *[Gathers Stories]*
5. What happened as a result of your using these materials? *[Identifies Impact]*
 - Did it result in changes to your policies and/or procedures? How so and in what areas?
 - What impact did this have on conversations related to ethics at either the board or staff level, or both?
6. What was the most beneficial about the tools and/or process, and why? What was the least helpful and why? *[Identifies Recommendations for Future Work]*
7. Did you use (or consider using) other tools or resources? What other sources do you access for information about organizational ethics and accountability? *[Identifies Recommendations for Future Work]*
8. What other resources would be helpful (examples include webinars, consulting, online resources, additional publications, etc.)? *[Identifies Recommendations for Future Work]*

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City on the Line: How Baltimore Transformed its Budget to Beat the Great Recession and Deliver Outcomes by Andrew Kleine

Vincent Reitano – Western Michigan University

Kleine, A (2019). *City on the line: How Baltimore transformed its budget to beat the Great Recession and deliver outcomes*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. \$35.00 (Paperback), ISBN: 978-1538121887.

Keywords: Public Budgeting, Baltimore, Book Review

In *City on the Line*, Andrew Kleine offers a self-described “memoir, manifesto, and manual” on budgeting. He begins by considering the “old way” versus the “new way” of budgeting. The “old way” is focused on last year’s spending on an agency basis and creates contention over “what to cut” (p. 12). In contrast, the “new way” of outcome budgeting essentially focuses on outcomes for results in the future by fostering more effective discourse among stakeholders about “what to keep” (p. 13). This demarcation creates a novel foundation for Kleine to show how to turn budgeting from a technocratic exercise into a transformative approach focused on outcomes despite bureaucratic norms, conflicting stakeholder priorities, and resource constraints.

Kleine uses each of the eleven chapters in his book to detail not only the technical aspects of outcome budgeting but also the insightful, candid, and challenging conversations that occurred during implementation. Chapter 1 introduces the outcome budgeting cycle by succinctly detailing each of its eight phases, from selecting outcomes to budget decision-making. In Chapter 2, the argument that “agencies don’t matter” in outcome budgeting is translated into practice, with vivid examples showing how programs are reconsidered as services (p. 29). There is also an intuitive matrix showing how to evaluate service importance versus service satisfaction and how to counter challenges from agency bureaucrats unwilling to cede power, let alone adopt a new approach to budgeting. Chapter 3 builds on the prior foundations and shows how to think about performance measures with respect to output, efficiency, effectiveness, and outcome.

Chapter 4 details implementation in terms of “Results Teams.” These are teams that “focus...on the value offered by the service proposals they receive” and can offer “a mixture of subject-matter expertise and unconventional thinking” when considering conflicting budget priorities (p. 81). To do so, the book details the concept of a “Cause-and-Effect Map” so that Results Teams consider how certain factors are related to outcomes that yield results without falling into myopic decision-making. This is a critical chapter and is appropriately titled “Making the Magic Happen.”

Not surprisingly, Chapter 5 details the various shifts in stakeholder perspectives and assumptions, harkening back to the old versus new way of budgeting detailed in Chapter 1. Kleine makes the case that challenging old assumptions, such as hiring for experience versus talent and understanding how to work with leadership, are critical components to outcome budgeting. Kleine reiterates the point that the behaviors of stakeholders, whether internal or external, matter. This view takes on increasing importance when considering all of the stakeholders that could potentially be involved with government, especially with outcome budgeting.

Chapter 6 continues with the theme of stakeholders and considers the critical importance of engaging the public. Kleine states that,

I was determined to change everything about how residents were involved in the city’s budget, first by explaining it to them, next by showing them why they should care about it, and finally by giving them a chance to roll up their sleeves. (p. 137)

He advocates that residents should engage in budgeting for visible change in Baltimore. Throughout the chapter, there are sections devoted to a variety of concerns, such as the role of special interest groups and methods of civic engagement. Much of the chapter provides a firsthand account about how to actually engage the public in budgeting.

Chapters 7 through 9 continue to detail various facets of outcome budgeting and explores concepts such as strategic planning and implementation. In Chapter 8, there is a step-by-step guide to “Turn the Curve Planning” which any government can use (p. 180). Kleine continues the theme that budgeting is not just about the numbers or a visualized curve measuring historical and projected performance in this case, but also the story and stakeholders engaged with outcomes that matter.

In Chapter 10, Kleine specifies the “Value as Results” equation as results divided by dollars spent given “more results for the same money, the same results for less money, or best of all, more results for less money” (p. 219). Results are conceptualized along a continuum. This further shows how to think about outcomes over time. Chapter 11 concludes with a call to action and lists ten questions facilitate such action. This is a critical addition for practitioners.

Throughout each of these chapters, Kleine clearly presents a range of strategies and tools; and, in each chapter he details how to use them. He appears to advocate for use of a mixed

methods approach, where quantitative analysis matters for prioritization, evaluation, and long-term planning but qualitative insight from key stakeholders is just as important. Underlying the range of content are succinct chapters that conclude with takeaways, questions, and resources that can benefit students, professors, and practitioners, and even citizens who want to become more knowledgeable of public budgeting. This critical text manages to offer all of this with a light-heartedness that will interest even the most uninterested students in a public budgeting class.

Kleine concludes on a candid note by stating that “Baltimore’s Outcome Budgeting experience was one of trial-and-error.” These experiences, he suggests, can inform future budgeting (p. 238). Students, scholars, practitioners, consultants, and members of the public can all benefit immensely from Kleine’s text. Without reservation, it should be standard reading for any course on public budgeting. Indeed, it is relevant to a range of other graduate courses and will hopefully pave the way for even more insightful texts from practitioners, including Kleine, in the future.

Disclosure Statement

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