

# The Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy

## **THE EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH ON PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AS AN INTELLECTUAL FIELD: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADING JOURNALS**

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## Abstract

This paper considers the development of philanthropic and nonprofit studies as a distinct field of intellectual inquiry through an analysis of the work published in the three leading dedicated nonprofit journals – *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, and *Voluntas*. The analysis compares articles published between 1996 and 1998 with those published a decade later in 2005 and 2007 to assess trends in the field as revealed by changes in authors and sources. We find evidence of a dispersion of nonprofit scholars, with an increasing number of scholars from more countries and a reduced institutional concentration. In addition, although research continues to draw from various other fields and disciplines, especially business/management, sociology and economics, we find an increasing reliance on nonprofit-specific references, suggesting the establishment of a distinct field of study. While the field continues to evolve, it is clear that it remains relatively young and would benefit from more conscious efforts at field development.

# **THE EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH ON PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AS AN INTELLECTUAL FIELD: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADING JOURNALS**

Research that examines the activities of the nonprofit sector has been undertaken for decades within several disciplines. Economists studying individual behavior have explored giving decisions. Legal scholars have addressed the incentives and constraints created by nonprofit legal status. Organization theorists have considered the behavior of nonprofit organizations. Sociologists have studied civic associations. Each of these research areas emerged from general disciplinary questions, with the nonprofit dimension only of ancillary interest. The research most often appeared in disciplinary journals which defined their intellectual context. Over time, scholars with a common interest in the nonprofit sector began to communicate across disciplines, and there is now much to suggest that a distinct field of study has emerged. There are dedicated journals, scholarly professional associations, university research centers, and interdisciplinary academic programs and degrees along with affiliated faculty positions.

We consider here how the field of philanthropic and nonprofit studies is evolving based on an analysis of the articles published in the three leading peer-reviewed journals – *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, and *Voluntas*. We begin with a brief discussion of how the field has developed, followed by our study methodology. Then we focus on the community of scholars publishing in this field and how it has changed over time. Subsequently, we analyze the works cited in these published articles, considering both the knowledge base that nonprofit scholars draw on in their research and the most influential authors and works, and how each have changed over time. We conclude with

some observations on how the field has developed to date and offer some conjectures about what the future holds.

## **Brief History of the Field**

There is no doubt that the field of philanthropy and nonprofit studies has been established. Its emergence as a field of inquiry is linked to a number of developments in the sector itself that can be traced back to the early 1970s. After the passage of the 1969 Tax Reform Act, which fundamentally altered how public policy treated the sector, particularly philanthropic foundations, there was an ambitious effort to understand and preserve the sector with the creation of the Peterson Commission and subsequently the Filer Commission (Brillant, 2000). These efforts included a number of the early studies of the sector, some of which were focused studies of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations.

One of the consequences of these efforts was the formation of the Independent Sector in 1980. While the Independent Sector was instrumental in establishing an identity and a voice for the nonprofit sector, it was also the catalyst – largely through the efforts of Virginia Hodgkinson – for the creation of the research base for the field through the collection of nonprofit data, the organization of the Spring Research Conference, and convening the directors of the nonprofit academic centers (which has been spun off as the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council) . While the Independent Sector stimulated and helped to support the development of the field, a number of academic institutions took up the cause.

The first and most prominent in the early days was the Program on Nonprofit Organizations (PONPO) at Yale, which was founded in 1978 “to foster interdisciplinary research aimed at developing an understanding of nonprofit organizations and their role in economic and political life.” According to its website, through its support, PONPO encouraged approximately

300 senior and junior scholars in the field, in the U.S. and abroad. It also published some of the seminal works that signaled the development of philanthropy and nonprofit studies, including the first edition of *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, which appeared in 1987, and a series of edited volumes on specific dimensions of the nonprofit sector that began around the same time. These edited volumes signified that there was a growing number of scholars exploring the intellectual underpinnings of the sector and established the foundation for the field as we know it today.

At the same time the research base of the field was being established, the importance of philanthropy and nonprofit studies in university curricula was taking root, either as new degree programs or as specializations within existing degree programs such as the MPA or MBA. Pioneers in the development of sector-specific professional master degrees were the Mandel Center at Case Western (1984) and the University of San Francisco (1985)<sup>1</sup>. And, in the subsequent 25 years, we have seen tremendous growth in university-based graduate programs in the field within the United States (Mirabella and Wish, 2001, Mirabella, 2007), the introduction of nonprofits into the undergraduate curriculum (Mirabella, 2007) and the diffusion of graduate programs to universities throughout the world (Mirabella, et al, 2007).

A look at the institutional homes within universities of these research and academic degree programs suggests that nonprofit research should draw on several related fields and disciplines. The origins of the field in associations, philanthropy and volunteers, and community suggest that sociology is likely to be an important influence. The widely acknowledged importance of tax policy and finance in the development of the field in the United States suggests that economics and policy analysis broadly are important to the study of the nonprofit sector. Finally, efforts to distinguish nonprofit organizations and their management from that of

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<sup>1</sup> The USF degree started as a MPA with a Nonprofit Management Concentration in 1983, but the degree was changed to a Masters of Nonprofit Administration two years later.

business and public organizations suggests that the public and business management literatures will be important influences on the development of nonprofit research. Our goal here is to understand the extent to which these influences and others have merged into a distinctive field of study. Our research methodology and findings are described in the next section.

## **Study Methodology**

We explore the intellectual development of nonprofit research through an analysis of the work published in the three major dedicated field journals – *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly (NVSQ)*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership (NML)*, and *Voluntas* – by comparing two three-year periods spanning two decades. These journals, all peer-reviewed academic journals, were selected because of their explicit focus on the field, their breadth of topics, and their relative longevity. *NVSQ* is the oldest, publishing its first issue in 1972 under the title, *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, and under its current title since 1989<sup>2</sup>. Both *NML* and *Voluntas* began publishing in 1990. The scope of interest for each journal (as described on its webpage), its sponsoring association, and publisher are summarized in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Brudney and Durden (1993), the title change signaled the journal's focus on philanthropy and nonprofit organization.



Table 1. Leading Peer-Reviewed Nonprofit Journals

***Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*** is “an international, interdisciplinary journal for nonprofit sector research dedicated to enhancing our knowledge of nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, and voluntarism by providing cutting-edge research, discussion, and analysis of the field.” *NVSQ* is sponsored by the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), and is published by Sage.

***Nonprofit Management and Leadership*** is “the first journal to bring together the best thinking and most advanced knowledge about the special needs, challenges, and opportunities of nonprofit organizations.” *NML* is sponsored by the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Case Western Reserve University, and is published by Wiley.

***Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*** is “an interdisciplinary journal that provides a central forum for worldwide research in the area between the state, market and household sectors.” *Voluntas* is sponsored by the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR), and is published by Springer.

In order to assess the change over time, we have chosen to compare the period 1996-98 with a period ten years later, 2005-07. The use of a three-year period helps to minimize the impact of aberrations that might appear in a given year. We chose the period 1996-98 to allow sufficient time for the two newer journals to become established, and also to allow for an interval of time sufficient to discern changes given the growth curve in the field’s development. Data were downloaded from the websites of each journal, which provided all the publications for each issue during the two time periods. Special issues were excluded, since they are often subject to different editorial processes. For each article, we collected the publication information, the authors, author affiliation and location, as well as all references used in the article.

We expect that as research on the nonprofit sector evolves there will be a growing number of scholars contributing to the literature, as well as an increasing diversity in their affiliations and locations. In addition, as the knowledge base of the field develops we expect that there will be changes in the nature of the work, as reflected in the methods used and the references which provide the knowledge base. We examine these expected trends by analyzing

data on the authors who have published in the three journals during the two periods, followed by an analysis of citations used in the articles that appear in the journals during the two periods.

### **Who is Contributing to Nonprofit Research? An Analysis of Authors**

As the field of nonprofit studies develops, we expect diffusion in the scholars that comprise the field – in term of numbers, those with academic affiliations, and the geographic spread (Smith, 1999). One of the clearest indications of the growth of a field of study is an increasing number of individuals who are drawn to the field, identify with it, and become actively engaged in producing research that contributes to it. This should translate into increases in the number of individuals publishing in academic-based journals. In addition, as the field develops we would expect that a growing number of universities would sanction this work by developing academic programs and research centers that are staffed by scholars that are contributing to the knowledge base of the field. And, of course, we would expect that the universities with which these scholars are affiliated would increasingly be found in a growing number of countries across the world as the field gains stature and legitimacy.

While research can be disseminated in a variety of scholarly outlets – books, professional conference presentations, and journals – in this analysis we focus on journals. Academic journals garner the greatest credibility due to the rigors of the peer-review process. Specifically, we focus on the authors that are represented in the articles that appear in the three leading journals for the two time periods to explore the following three hypotheses. We expect to observe:

*H1: An increase in the number of authors over time.* Given the growth in the number of scholars writing in academic journals in general, a simple increase in the number publications does not indicate field development. But, an increase in the number of authors is consistent with field development (Smith, 1999).

*H2: An increase in the number of associated academic institutions.* In the early stages of a field's development, there may be only a handful of academic institutions that engage in its development, as components of existing departments. Over time, as the field becomes established, we expect to see an increasing number of academic institutions becoming involved in the field, and eventually creating separate academic units. Here we view increases in the number of distinct universities in which journal authors are based as an indication of growth in the field.

*H3: An increase in the geographic dispersion of authors.* As fields develop, we expect to see that authors come from a growing number of countries, assuming their institutional context or focus has relevance beyond a few localities. Given the significance of nonprofit and organizations and civil society throughout the world (Salamon, 1994), we would expect an international diffusion of scholars studying the field if indeed the field is growing in importance (Mirabella, et al, 2007).

### ***Number of Authors***

During 1996-98, 205 articles were published in these three journals by 258 different authors. During 2005-07, 223 articles were published by 348 distinct authors. Thus we see a significant expansion in the number of authors publishing nonprofit research. The number of authors increased 35% between the two periods, while the number of articles published by the three journals only increased 9%. This growth in the number of scholars contributing to these journals supports Hypothesis 1. The magnitude suggests substantial expansion in the number of scholars engaging in research on the nonprofit sector, broadly defined.

### ***University Affiliations***

The authors publishing in the 1996-98 period were affiliated with 126 different universities. During 2005-07, authors were affiliated with 178 different universities. This is a 41% increase in the number of universities that are represented in the three leading nonprofit journals. We also see a decrease in the number of unaffiliated authors over time. In the early period, thirty nine of the 258 authors did not list university affiliations. In the later period, only 23 of the 348 authors in the 2005-07 were unaffiliated with a university. Thus the percentage of authors unaffiliated with universities declined from 15% to 7% over the decade. This diffusion

of the university affiliations of the institutions of nonprofit researchers, in addition to the increasing academic affiliation of authors, is clearly supportive of Hypothesis 2 and consistent with progress in the development of the nonprofit sector as an academic field of study.

To explore further the nature of university affiliations, we identified the universities that had the greatest impact on producing nonprofit research in each period. Table 2 lists all universities with at least three different authors publishing at least 3 different articles in these journals in each of the two time periods studied. The universities are sorted by the total number of articles in the studied journals published by their faculty. Universities appearing in both periods are highlighted.

Only 17 institutions had a significant presence in this field in the first period; 15 of these universities are located in the United States, two are in Canada. Nevertheless, this small number of universities housed the faculty that produced 36% of the articles in the studied journals in this period. This suggests that those producing in the field of nonprofit research in 1996-98 were highly concentrated in a few universities, often with an organized nonprofit research center. Using the same selection criterion as in the earlier period, only 14 institutions had a significant presence in the field during 2005-07, down from 17. The faculty housed by these 14 institutions represented 30% of the articles produced in the studied journals in the later period. Eleven are located in the United States, two in Canada, and one in Israel.

This is a relatively small set of institutions, indicating a concentration of nonprofit research. Given the relative youthfulness of the nonprofit field, such a concentration is not surprising. At the same time, these dominant institutions represented a lower percentage of both authors and articles in 2005-07 than in 1996-98. The diffusion of nonprofit scholars thus also reduced institutional concentration, which is consistent with the growth and development of an academic field.

Table 2. Universities with Clusters of Researchers

1996-98 Universities	Authors	Articles		2005-07 Universities	Authors	Articles
York University, Canada	6	7		Virginia Polytechnic Institute	7	8
Boston College	4	7		Harvard University	7	7
Yale University	5	6		Indiana University-Purdue	7	7
The Johns Hopkins University	4	6		University of Southern California	7	5
Rutgers University	4	6		University of Georgia	6	5
Case Western Reserve University	5	5		Indiana University, Bloomington	6	5
Indiana University-Purdue	5	4		University of Minnesota	3	5
New York University	4	4		University of Missouri, St. Louis	6	4
University of Victoria, Canada	3	4		University of Toronto, Canada	6	4
Indiana University, Bloomington	5	3		North Carolina State University	4	4
University of Texas, Dallas	5	3		Ryerson University, Canada	3	3
Pennsylvania State University	4	3		Ben Gurion University, Israel	3	3
University of Georgia	3	3		Georgia State University	3	3
Harvard University	3	3		Syracuse University	3	3
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	3	3				
University of Minnesota	3	3				
University of Missouri, Kansas City	3	3				
<i>Sum</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>73</i>		<i>Sum</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>% of authors/articles</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>36%</i>		<i>% of authors/articles</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>30%</i>

There are five institutions that are present in both periods – the two Indiana campuses, Harvard, Georgia, and Minnesota. Interestingly, several institutions that dominated in the earlier period no longer have a concentration of faculty producing work for the three nonprofit-focused journals. This reflects the fact that a handful of scholars might be responsible for the research being produced at these institutions and as there is mobility, the presence of these institutions in the journals may ebb. This mobility is often linked to changes in institutional commitments to

the field of philanthropic and nonprofit studies as manifested in research center or academic programs. For example, USC, Ben Gurion, and Georgia State all developed new nonprofit programs or centers between the two periods; while one of the pioneers, the Program on Nonprofit Organizations (PONPO) at Yale has closed.

Where are nonprofit scholars located within universities? Table 3 summarizes the departmental affiliation of faculty members producing nonprofit research within the universities that had a substantial profile in these journals (those listed in Table 2). Departments are ranked by their importance in the earlier period. The importance of specific units within the set of authors in dominant institutions is noted in the percentage column.

*Table 3. Departmental Affiliation of Authors within Dominant Universities*

<i>Department</i>	1996-98 Authors		2005-07 Authors	
Business/Management	19	27.5%	10	14.1%
Public Affairs/Administration/Policy	18	26.1%	36	50.1%
Public Health, Medicine & Nursing	7	10.1%		
Social Work	7	10.1%	4	5.6%
Sociology	6	8.7%	3	4.2%
Economics	4	5.8%	3	4.2%
Social Sciences	3	4.3%		
Education			5	7.0%
Political Science			4	5.6%
Other*	5	7.1%	6	8.4%
<i>N Authors</i>	<i>69</i>		<i>71</i>	

\*Units that housed only 1 or 2 authors.

In the 1990s, business and public affairs units dominated as university homes for nonprofit scholars, followed by various health oriented schools and departments, social work and sociology. In the next decade we see that business and public affairs units continue to house most faculty members producing nonprofit research in the dominant universities, but public affairs units far dominate all others. This suggests that public affairs units have become the primary locus of university-based philanthropic and nonprofit research. Social work and sociology continue to be academic homes for some field scholars, but the health-oriented units

no longer appear as base units in the dominant universities. Finally, education and political science emerge in the later period as new homes for some philanthropic and nonprofit scholars.

### ***Globalization of the field***

Finally, we consider the geographic distribution of authors. Table 4 reveals national diversity as represented by the country in which each author is based, by journal and over time. First, the journals vary as expected. Both *NVSQ* and *NML* are dominated by authors with U.S. affiliations, but both journals expanded their geographical reach over time. In 1996-98, 86% of *NVSQ*'s contributing authors were at U.S. institutions; only six countries are represented among all authors – indicating a strongly American-centric focus. The percentage of authors with U.S. affiliations fell to 73% during 2005-07, while the number of countries represented among all articles increased to 16 – revealing increased geographic diversity over the time. American authors also dominate *NML*, but to a lesser extent than in *NVSQ*. For *NML*, 75% of the authors of the articles in 1996-98 have U.S. affiliations; this dipped to 63% during 2005-07. *NML* thus also increased the geographic diversity of its authors over the decade. As one would expect given its international focus as the official journal of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR), *Voluntas* has the most diverse author composition over the decade. Only 40% of its authors were from American institutions in 1996-98, and this fell to 22% during 2005-07. The number of countries represented by its authors remains relatively constant for the decade, but at a higher level – about 20 countries are represented by authors in both periods – than either *NVSQ* or *NML*.

Although there is a growing geographical diffusion of nonprofit research as evidenced by the increased diversity of country affiliations in the journals over time, there remains a concentration in a handful of countries. Aggregating across all three journals, only 10 countries

provided at least 1% (three or more) of the authors to these journals during 1996-98, and three countries – the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom - contributed 85% of all authors. During 2005-07, the number of countries contributing at least 1% (4 or more) of authors only grew to 12, but the dominance of these three countries fell to 77% of authors. Other countries with notable strength in nonprofit scholarship include Australia and Israel over the decade and Belgium and Spain emerging in 2005-07. Moreover, 28 countries contributed authors in 2005-07 to the three journals we analyzed. This is a 27% increase over the 22 countries represented by authors in 1996-98. We are thus beginning to see a greater spread of nonprofit scholarship, as represented in these journals. The broader coverage, in particular in Europe, complements the continuing, but decreasing, relative frequency of authors from North America.

*Table 4. Author/Country Distribution*

	<b>NVSQ 96-98</b>	<b>NVSQ 05-07</b>	<b>NML 96-98</b>	<b>NML 05-07</b>	<b>Voluntas 96-98</b>	<b>Voluntas 05-07</b>	<b>All 96-98</b>	<b>All 05-07</b>
N Authors	112	172	122	142	84	98	318	412
N Countries	6	16	8	13	21	20	22	28
<i>Most Prominent Countries:</i>								
United States	96	126	92	89	34	22	222	237
Canada	7	8	15	14	4	19	26	41
United Kingdom	5	5	5	13	12	23	22	41
Australia		2	4	4	2	6	6	12
Israel		6	3	1	3	3	6	10
Belgium	1	2		12		1	1	15
Spain		9				1		10

The complete table can be obtained from the authors upon request.



## **How is the Knowledge Base of the Field Changing? An Analysis of Citations**

An analysis of the citations in the journal articles in our sample can reveal much about the intellectual foundations of nonprofit research and how it has evolved between the two periods. As new fields develop, they rely heavily on other fields. However, as a field becomes more established and distinct, we might expect a greater reliance on within-field sources. At the same time, we anticipate that a field will become more sophisticated theoretically and empirically over time, and we expect that will be reflected in the types of sources upon which the research draws. As the field grows, so does the emergence of an identified community of scholars that participate in associated research workshops and conferences that produce working papers and doctoral dissertations that become part of the knowledge base for the field, and serve as potential references for journal articles.

In this section, we describe the nature of the citations for the articles included in our sample and analyze changes in types of references used over time to explore the intellectual foundations of nonprofit scholarship. We begin by exploring four hypotheses on field development that are related to the nature of references used in nonprofit publications, followed by a descriptive analysis of field influences in terms of disciplines, specific authors, and specific works.

### ***The Nature of References***

We posit four hypotheses linking the development of the field with the sources relied on in the journal articles. Specifically, we consider the relationship with field-specific resources, non-refereed resources, methodological references, and conference proceedings and working papers.

*H1: Reliance on nonprofit field sources should increase.* New fields of inquiry develop from related disciplines and fields. Early on as economists, for example, began to study charitable giving behavior, they often published this work in economics journals. Likewise, sociologists who were the first to study the behavior of advocacy groups and social movements would publish in sociological journals. However, as nonprofit research becomes a distinctive field and field-specific journals are established, such as *NVSQ*, *NML*, and *Voluntas*, scholars – regardless of their disciplinary orientation – are likely to increasingly publish in field journals and over time, rely more heavily on these sources for their research. Thus we expect to see an increase in the proportion of field specific citation sources over time.

*H2: Reliance on non-refereed sources should decline.* As a field develops its own identity and gains academic standing, we would expect that there would be an increasing knowledge base to draw upon. Peer review brings increased confidence in the reliability of the information and thus provides a more credible basis for the research. As scholars need to communicate their findings to academic audiences, they should increase their reliance on such sources. As a result, we would expect nonprofit research would become more reliant on peer-reviewed sources and less reliant on non-refereed sources over time.

*H3: Reliance on methodology sources should increase.* As social science fields develop, scholars begin to collect data. As more data become available, the use of empirical methods of research is likely to increase. Although one would expect to see an evolution in the types of methods employed (e.g., from case studies to multivariate analysis), here we just argue that methodology sources in general will increase. This weaker hypothesis should hold in even early stages in field development.

*H4: Reliance on unpublished academic work should increase.* Unpublished academic work includes working papers and dissertations that capture work in progress that is being discussed at conferences and other gatherings of field researchers. Increased citations to such work are consistent with the growth of a field academically as they reflect a robust community of scholars with well-established networks.

We examine these four hypotheses about changes in the sources used in nonprofit research by analyzing the citations in the articles from the three leading academic journals for the two periods. Each reference cited in each published article was reviewed and categorized into one of eight different types of references as described in Table 5. Then, we compare the prevalence of the different sources across the two time periods – 1996-98 and 2005-07. Based on our hypotheses, we expect to see an increase in citations

from nonprofit journals and books, from methodology sources, and from unpublished academic work. We expect a decrease in citations from non-refereed sources.

*Table 5. Source Categories*

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nonprofit journals</i> (nonprofit, civil society, philanthropy, volunteerism in title)</li> <li>• <i>Other scholarly journals</i></li> <li>• <i>Nonprofit books</i> (nonprofit, non-governmental organization (NGO), civil society, civic engagement, philanthropy, giving, volunteerism, Third Sector, social cooperatives in title, or a specific nonprofit/foundation)</li> <li>• <i>Other books</i></li> <li>• <i>Non-refereed</i> sources (reports, newspapers, magazines, professional publications)</li> <li>• <i>Unpublished academic work</i> (dissertations, theses, working papers, conference proceedings)</li> <li>• <i>Methodology</i> (social science methods in journals or books)</li> <li>• <i>Reference</i> (data or reference sources – all source types)</li> </ul> |
|--|

Table 6 presents our citation data disaggregated by journal and time period. The number of each type of source and its percentage of all sources are provided for each period. Then, we present the change from 1996-98 in the citation type as a percentage of all citations in the journal, and the statistical significance of the change for proportions predicated by our hypotheses (the relevant changes are in bold). Finally, we note the percentage change from 1996-98 levels that is represented by the change in number.

The general patterns of citation sources are interesting. During 1996-98, books (NPBooks + Other Books) were the dominant source for articles in all three journals, ranging from a low of 37% in *NML* to a high of 52.5% in *Voluntas*. Journals (NP Journals + Other Journals) represented about 1/3 of all citation sources, ranging from a low of 24% in *Voluntas* to a high of 41% in *NML*. Non-refereed sources represented about 12% of all citations; unpublished sources represented 5.5%, and methodology sources represented only 1%. A decade later in the 2005-07 publications, the role of journals and books as citation sources had reversed. Journals represented about 44% of sources on average, while books were 34%. For *NVSQ* and *NML*,

journals were even more dominant, representing at least 46% of citations. Methodology sources increased notably (but from very small levels) in *NML* and *NVSQ*, increasing more than 250% in both journals to 3% in *NML* and to 2.5% in *NVSQ* (from about 1% in the earlier period). Citations to unpublished works decreased across the board. Now we consider each hypothesis separately.

Table 6. Citation Sources

Journal	N	%	N	%	Change in % of citations	Statistical significance <sup>3</sup>	% Change in number
<b>NVSQ</b>	<b>1996-98</b>		<b>2005-07</b>				
NP Journals	203	7.4%	358	9.9%	<b>2.5%</b>	***	76.4%
Other Journals	712	26.0%	1344	37.3%	11.2%		88.8%
NP Books	393	14.4%	402	11.1%	<b>-3.2%</b>	***	2.3%
Other Books	826	30.2%	719	19.9%	-10.3%		-13.0%
Non-refereed	299	10.9%	381	10.6%	<b>-0.4%</b>	NS	27.4%
Unpublished	168	6.1%	143	4.0%	<b>-2.2%</b>	***	-14.9%
Methodology	25	0.9%	92	2.5%	<b>1.6%</b>	***	268.0%
Reference	110	4.0%	169	4.7%	0.7%		53.6%
Sum	2736		3608				31.9%
<b>NML</b>	<b>1996-98</b>		<b>2005-07</b>				
NP Journals	204	11.3%	253	10.6%	<b>-0.7%</b>	NS	24.0%
Other Journals	525	29.0%	847	35.5%	6.5%		61.3%
NP Books	242	13.4%	237	9.9%	<b>-3.4%</b>	***	-2.1%
Other Books	429	23.7%	512	21.4%	-2.3%		19.3%
Non-refereed	247	13.6%	331	13.9%	<b>0.2%</b>	NS	34.0%
Unpublished	60	3.3%	69	2.9%	<b>-0.4%</b>	NS	15.0%
Methodology	23	1.3%	82	3.4%	<b>2.2%</b>	***	256.5%
Reference	80	4.4%	57	2.4%	-2.0%		-28.8%
Sum	1810		2388				31.9%
<b>Voluntas</b>	<b>1996-98</b>		<b>2005-07</b>				
NP Journals	92	4.3%	229	8.7%	<b>4.4%</b>	***	148.9%
Other Journals	428	20.0%	727	27.7%	7.7%		69.9%
NP Books	420	19.6%	354	13.5%	<b>-6.1%</b>	***	-15.7%
Other Books	705	32.9%	683	26.0%	-6.9%		-3.1%
Non-refereed	249	11.6%	405	15.4%	<b>3.8%</b>	***	62.7%
Unpublished	140	6.5%	128	4.9%	<b>-1.7%</b>	*	-8.6%
Methodology	24	1.1%	38	1.4%	<b>0.3%</b>	NS	58.3%
Reference	83	3.9%	60	2.3%	-1.6%		-27.7%
Sum	2141		2624				22.6%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>1996-98</b>		<b>2005-07</b>				
NP Journals	499	7.5%	840	9.7%	<b>2.3%</b>	***	68.3%
Other Journals	1665	24.9%	2918	33.9%	9.0%		75.3%
NP Books	1055	15.8%	993	11.5%	<b>-4.3%</b>	***	-5.9%
Other Books	1960	29.3%	1914	22.2%	-7.1%		-2.3%
Non-refereed	795	11.9%	1117	13.0%	<b>1.1%</b>	*	40.5%
Unpublished	368	5.5%	340	3.9%	<b>-1.6%</b>	***	-7.6%
Methodology	72	1.1%	212	2.5%	<b>1.4%</b>	***	194.4%
Reference	273	4.1%	286	3.3%	-0.8%		4.8%
Sum	6687		8620				28.9%

<sup>3</sup> The statistical significance of the difference in proportions across the two sample is noted for those proportions predicted by our hypotheses (in bold) and are noted as follows: \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , NS denotes that the null hypothesis of no change in the proportion across periods could not be rejected at the .05 level.

### Nonprofit field sources

We find mixed results for Hypothesis 1. Citations to nonprofit journals increased between 1996-98 and 2005-07, rising from 7.5% to 9.7% of all citations across all 3 journals. The increases were statistically significant in *NVSQ* and in *Voluntas*. The largest increase occurred in *Voluntas* where the number of citations to nonprofit journals increased from 4.3% to 8.7% (149%). In contrast, there was no significant difference in the reliance of publications in *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* on field journals over this period, but the level of reliance on field journals (about 11%) is the highest among these three journals. Citations to nonprofit books, however, decreased, falling from 15.8% to 11.5% of all citations across the three study journals. Moreover a statistically significant decline was observed in the articles for each of the three journals.

### Non-refereed sources

Hypothesis 2 is not supported in our data. The reliance by nonprofit scholars on non-refereed sources increased between 1996-98 and 2005-07, rising from 11.9% to 13% of citations in all three study journals. This increase was driven by *Voluntas* articles, where non-refereed sources rose from 11.6% to 15.4% of all citations. In contrast, the proportion of non-refereed sources in *NVSQ* and *NML* articles did not significantly change over this decade.

### Methodology sources

Hypothesis 3 is clearly supported in our sample. The number of citations to methodological sources increased from 1.1% to 2.5% of all citations in the three study journals. Changes in *NVSQ* and in *NML* citation patterns account for this increase, with the largest change occurring in *NML* articles where methodology sources increased from 1.3% to 3.4% of citations. In contrast, there was no statistically significant change in the reliance of *Voluntas* articles on methodological sources over this period.

### Unpublished academic work

Finally, Hypothesis 4 is not supported in our data. Reliance on unpublished academic work declined from 5.5% to 3.9% of all citations. Decreases in *NVSQ* and *Voluntas* citation patterns drive the overall decrease. The proportion of citation from unpublished sources did not change at *NML* over the decade. There is thus no indication that nonprofit scholars are increasing their reliance on conference papers or other working papers that have yet to be published.

These mixed results suggest that nonprofit research is in the early stages of field development. Nonprofit scholars are increasing their reliance on field journals and on methodological sources, which is consistent with the development of a distinctive field. But, we do not see a concurrent movement away from non-refereed sources, nor do we see evidence of broad sharing of working papers, at least not yet. A related factor may be that the field is not developing at the same rate in all countries. Some of the countries that are joining the field's development may have relatively few refereed sources about their country or may lack data that lead to papers that meet journal standards.

### ***Field Influences***

We end with an analysis of the key influences on the field over the decade, as revealed by an analysis of citations. We first examine the primary disciplinary influences, and then consider the specific works and authors that have been the most influential (most cited) during these two periods.

### Disciplinary Influences

Disciplinary influences on the field can be revealed by looking at citations in journals from outside the nonprofit field. The 10 most cited non-field journals in each of the study

journals in each period are presented in Tables 7abc. For each of our study journals, this table lists the number of times the journal was cited in a three-year period, the percentage of total non-field journal citations this number represents, and the disciplinary focus of the journal. The disciplinary foci are based on ISI Web of Knowledge classifications.

*Table 7a. Most Cited Non-field Journals in NVSQ*

<b>NVSQ 1996-98</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>NVSQ 2005-07</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><i>Sociology</i></b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b><i>Sociology</i></b>	<b>93</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
American Sociological Review	40	5.6%	American Sociological Review	45	3.3%
American Journal of Sociology	19	2.7%	American Journal of Sociology	28	2.1%
Annual Review of Sociology	14	2.0%	Annual Review of Sociology	20	1.5%
<b><i>Business/Management</i></b>	<b>54</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b><i>Business/Management</i></b>	<b>112</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
Administrative Science Quarterly	25	3.5%	Administrative Science Quarterly	23	1.7%
Academy of Management Journal	17	2.4%	Academy of Management Journal	38	2.8%
Academy of Management Review	12	1.7%	Academy of Management Review	32	2.4%
			Harvard Business Review	19	1.4%
<b><i>Public Administration</i></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b><i>Public Administration</i></b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Public Administration Review	10	1.4%	Public Administration Review	35	2.6%
<b><i>Social Work</i></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.4%</b>			
Social Work	10	1.4%			
Social Service Review	10	1.4%			
			<b><i>Economics</i></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
			Journal of Public Economics	38	2.8%
			American Economic Review	19	1.4%
<b><i>Health Policy</i></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.4%</b>			
Journal of Health Politics, Policy & Law	10	1.4%			
<b>SUM</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>25.1%</b>		<b>1344</b>	<b>22.1%</b>



Table 7b. Most Cited Non-field Journals in NML

NML 1996-98			NML 2005-07		
	N	%		N	%
<b><i>Business/Management</i></b>	<b>151</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b><i>Business/Management</i></b>	<b>165</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
Administrative Science Quarterly	45	8.6%	Administrative Science Quarterly	25	3.0%
Strategic Management Journal	27	5.1%	Strategic Management Journal	21	2.5%
Academy of Management Review	26	5.0%	Academy of Management Review	29	3.4%
Harvard Business Review	25	4.8%	Harvard Business Review	16	1.9%
Academy of Management Journal	19	3.6%	Academy of Management Journal	37	4.4%
Human Relations	9	1.7%	Organization Science	15	1.8%
			Journal of Management	11	1.3%
			Journal of Marketing	11	1.3%
<b><i>Public Administration</i></b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b><i>Public Administration</i></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
Public Administration Review	17	3.2%	Public Administration Review	14	1.7%
<b><i>Sociology</i></b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5.3%</b>			
American Journal of Sociology	14	2.7%			
American Sociological Review	14	2.7%			
<b><i>Social Work/Public Admin</i></b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2.3%</b>			
Administration in Social Work	12	2.3%			
			<b><i>Psychology</i></b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
			Journal of Applied Psychology	13	1.5%
			<b><i>Economics</i></b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
			Journal of Public Economics	11	1.3%
<b>SUM</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>39.6%</b>		<b>847</b>	<b>24%</b>

Table 7c. Most Cited Non-field Journals in *Voluntas*

<b>Voluntas 1996-98</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Voluntas 2005-07</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><i>Sociology</i></b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b><i>Sociology</i></b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
American Sociological Review	11	2.6%	American Sociological Review	15	2.1%
American Journal of Sociology	9	2.1%	American Journal of Sociology	12	1.7%
Annual Review of Sociology	9	2.1%	Annual Review of Sociology	9	1.2%
<b><i>Economics</i></b>	<b>82</b>	<b>19.2%</b>			
American Economic Review	19	4.4%			
Annals Public & Cooperative Economics	16	3.7%			
Journal of Public Economics	15	3.5%			
Journal of Political Economy	13	3.0%			
National Tax Journal	10	2.3%			
Economic Inquiry	9	2.1%			
			<b><i>Business/Management</i></b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
			Administrative Science Quarterly	15	2.1%
			Academy of Management Journal	14	1.9%
			Strategic Management Journal	7	1.0%
<b><i>Law</i></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3.3%</b>			
Yale Law Journal	14	3.3%			
			<b><i>Psychology</i></b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
			Journal Personality & Social Psychology	12	1.7%
			Journal of Applied Psychology	7	1.0%
			<b><i>Public Administration</i></b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
			Public Administration Review	11	1.5%
			<b><i>International Relations</i></b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
			Review of International Studies	7	1.0%
<b>SUM</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>29.2%</b>		<b>727</b>	<b>15%</b>

The three journals vary in the extent to which citations are concentrated in a few journals. The most concentrated journal was *NML* (Table 7b) during 1996-98, in which the top 10 most cited journals represent 31% of all non-field journal citations. In contrast the top 10 non-field journals cited in *Voluntas* (Table 7c) in 2005-07 represent only 15% of all such citations. The journals also vary in the disciplines from which their citations are drawn. This is not surprising given the particular focus of the different journals. Business and management journals dominate citations to *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*. For *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (Table 7a), sociology and business/management are dominant influences in the early

period, and while they continue to be important sources during 2005-07, economics has become more important in the recent period. In contrast, *Voluntas* was heavily influenced by economics in the 1990s but that influence disappears in the recent period, and is replaced by sociology and business/management.

Aggregating across all three journals to draw conclusions about the nonprofit field, we find that the dominant disciplinary influence is business/management. This is true for both time periods, with citations from these journals representing between 11 and 12% of all non-field journal citations. The top journals are consistent across the time periods with most citations coming from the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Academy of Management Review*, and *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

The second most influential discipline is sociology. In the 1996-98 periods, three sociology journals – *American Sociological Review*, the *American Journal of Sociology*, and the *Annual Review of Sociology* – represented 8% of all non-field journal citations to the articles analyzed in this paper. In 2005-07, the relative importance of sociology fell and citations from these journals represented only 4% of citations, but sociology remained the second most influential discipline.

The third key discipline is economics. Citations from economic journals represented 5% of all non-field journal citations during 1996-98, but this fell to 2% in 2005-07. The *American Economic Review* and the *Journal of Public Economics* were important influences in both periods. Finally, social work was an influential field in the early period with journal citations representing 3% of all citations, but was not influential in the later period.

As noted earlier, citations from non-field journals have increased over time and have increased more than citations from nonprofit journals, suggesting that disciplinary influences are of continuing importance to the field. This analysis reveals that these influences are relatively

concentrated, with business/management, sociology, and economics making the leading external contributions to nonprofit research. These influences are also consistent with the disciplinary location of scholars as noted in the analysis of authors.

### Most Influential Works and Authors

Finally, it is useful to consider the specific works and authors that were the most influential during these two periods. During 1996-98, four pieces were cited more than 10 times in the three study journals. “The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise” written by Henry Hansmann and published in the *Yale Law Journal* in 1980 was the most influential piece, and was cited 20 times in two of the study journals, *NVSQ* and *Voluntas*, during 1996-98. Lester Salamon’s “Partners in Public Service: The Scope and Theory of Government-Nonprofit Relations” which appeared in Walter Powell’s edited book *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook* (published by Yale University Press in 1987), and Burton Weisbrod’s book, *The Nonprofit Economy* (published by Harvard University Press in 1988) were each cited 17 times. These three nonprofit pieces were thus seminal to the early development of the field. The fourth most cited work reveals the importance of sociology to the field. “The Iron Cage Revisited: Traditional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Needs” by Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, published in the *American Sociological Review* in 1983 was cited 14 times in our study journals in this period.

A decade later, there were again four pieces that were cited more than 10 times in the study journals. The most cited work in these journals during 2005-07 is Robert Putman’s 2000 book, *Bowling Alone* (published by Simon & Schuster in 2000), which was listed as a source 28 times and appeared in all 3 study journals. The other frequently cited works included an organization theory book, an *NVSQ* article, and a field book. *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective* by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik

(published by HarperCollins in 1978), a general organization theory book, was cited 14 times. Daniel Forbes' *NVSQ* article, "Measuring the Unmeasurable: Empirical Studies of Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness from 1977 to 1997" published in 1998, and Lester Salamon's collection of works, *Partners in Public Service: Government-nonprofit relations in the modern welfare state* (published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1993) were each cited 12 times in the study journals between 2005 and 2007. Finally, *Nonprofits for Hire: The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting* by Steven Smith and Michael Lipsky was cited 10 times in each period, indicating a strong influence across the entire period of our study.

Next we consider the most influential authors, a lens which can reveal the combined impact of multiple scholarly products. During 1996-98, Lester Salamon was easily the most influential scholar in the field. During this period, Salamon was at the Johns Hopkins University and led its Center for Civil Society Studies. Six of his pieces are cited 62 times and appear in all three study journals. Four other individuals had multiple publications that were cited at least 15 times in our study journals in this period: Henry Hansmann from Yale University, Burton Weisbrod from the University of Wisconsin, Helmut Anheier from Rutgers and the Johns Hopkins University, and Estelle James from the State University of New York, Stony Brook.

In the later period, Robert Putman was the most influential scholar with 35 citations to two works. Based at Harvard University, his citations, alone among influential authors in this period, span all three study journals. Three other authors deserve special mention. Robert Herman and David Renz, both of the University of Missouri, Kansas City, had 5 works that were cited 25 times in *NML* and *NVSQ* during 2005-07. Finally, Lester Salamon continues to be influential in this period, with 4 works cited 25 times in *NVSQ* and *Voluntas*.

Looking across the time periods, there are indications of a dispersion of influences. The number of citations to a few specific authors declined, even though the total number of citations increased. In 1996-98 the top five cited authors (Salamon, Hansmann, Weisbrod, Anheier, James) were cited 154 times (2.3% of the 6687 citations). In 2005-07 the top five<sup>4</sup> cited authors (Putnam, Herman and Renz, Salamon, Pfeffer and Salancik, Smith) were cited 116 times (1.3% of the 8620 citations). This suggests that nonprofit scholars are relying less on the ideas of a few influential individuals, and by implication relying on a broader literature as the basis for their research.

## **Conclusion**

What did we learn? The field of philanthropy and nonprofit studies has become established over the past few decades, though it remains at an early stage of development. Notable progress in the field's development over the decade studied here is revealed by the increasing number of scholars publishing in the study journals, their growing national diversity, and reduced institutional concentration. The increasing reliance on nonprofit-specific references also suggests the establishment of a distinct field of study. At the same time, the field continues to draw heavily on other fields and disciplines, in particular business/management, sociology, and economics. Moreover, while there has been robust growth in academic programs and academic centers, they are usually housed in academic units like public affairs and business schools, rather than in separate nonprofit departments or schools within the university. Finally, there are indications that nonprofit programs and centers are sometimes fragile, depending on soft money and one or two individuals, as evidenced by the fading of some of the early and most influential centers such as POPNO, the Mandel Center, and USF.

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<sup>4</sup> When all cited work is joint, the authors are counted here as one author.

Where is the field likely to be headed? Given the early stage of its development, how it might evolve is an open question. Yet, for those interested in philanthropic and nonprofit research, it is a question that merits a fuller discussion. Although we find evidence of diffusion in the increasing number of scholars and countries involved in the research enterprise, the process is uneven. The field has been fairly well established in the United States, but its diffusion to other countries is likely to be a function of local contextual factors such as academic entrepreneurship, visibility of the sector, and intellectual resources. This suggests there is a need to continue efforts to build strong networks across countries to facilitate information sharing and enhance intellectual resources, and to support efforts within countries to increase the visibility of the sector and thus an understanding of its importance (Salamon, 2010).

In addition to nurturing cross-country networks to enhance field development, there is a need to more fully develop the intellectual foundations of the field. This requires greater attention to developing theories that can explain phenomena across different contexts and developing hypotheses that can be tested with data. Only then will the knowledge base of the field be expanded.

It is also important that the field continue to address the breadth of issues that have underlay its development. There is the possibility that the field will begin to place a greater emphasis on nonprofit management as universities respond to the revenue streams generated by students pursuing degrees with such a focus. This suggests the need to support research beyond professional practice and into the varied dimensions of the field such as philanthropy, civil society, and public policy rather than a singular focus on the management of nonprofit organizations.

What might accelerate field development? As there is more activity, we might expect a growing number of outlets for field-specific peer-reviewed work. For example, some new

journals have been introduced in recent years such as *Nonprofit Policy Forum* and *Giving: Thematic issues in Philanthropy and Social Innovation*. It is important however that this expansion in number of articles and authors coincides with an increase in quality. This may suggest the importance of complementing the large conferences held by ARNOVA and ISTR with smaller more focused, in-depth workshops/meetings, and more support for research – including the development of research data bases and funding to undertake the development of the field.

Finally, one of the most challenging questions is whether there is a need to push for freestanding programs within universities. At the moment it is clear that philanthropic and nonprofit studies, at least in the U.S. context, is becoming a subfield under public affairs and to a lesser extent business. What does that mean over the long run? Presumably faculty placement affects research foci. Faculty located in public administration units may focus on nonprofit management, while those in public policy schools may focus on public policy or the institutions of civil society, and those housed in business schools may emphasize nonprofit management or social innovation. Will these placements limit the development of the field? Will we see greater emphasis than is justified on the links between nonprofits and government or nonprofit management? Or, will these units remain hospitable homes for nonprofit studies, broadly defined, as the field continues to develop. There is no obvious answer, but it is a question well worth contemplating.



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