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Do Service-Providing Nonprofits Contribute to Democratic Inclusion? Analyzing Democracy Promotion by Canadian Homeless Shelters

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ABSTRACT

Nonprofits are key social service providers in many Western welfare states. Yet the nonprofits that deliver government-funded public services are also an important part of civil society and, in theory, promote democratic inclusion through their democratic civil society function. But to what extent do welfare-providing nonprofits carry out democracy-promoting activities in reality and what do these activities include? Using a survey distributed to Canadian charities that operate government-funded homeless shelters, we find evidence of activities falling within three areas of democracy promotion: support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice. The variation amongst different activities is presented in ideal types, which can inform future studies of the democratic function of nonprofits. Our empirical results point to a vital role of homeless shelters that extends beyond the provision of basic needs and contribute to a better understanding of the modalities of democratic inclusion for excluded populations.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans plusieurs États-providences occidentaux, les organismes sans but lucratif jouent un rôle clé dans la fourniture de services sociaux. En même temps, les OSBL qui offrent des services publics financés par le gouvernement font partie intégrante de la société civile et, en théorie, ils promeuvent l'inclusion démocratique par leurs contributions à la société civile démocratique. Mais dans quelle mesure les OSBL axés sur le bien-être effectuent-ils réellement des activités qui appuient la démocratie et quelles seraient ces activités? Grâce à un sondage distribué à des organismes de bienfaisance canadiens qui gèrent des refuges pour sans-abris financés par le gouvernement, nous avons identifié des activités correspondant à trois types de promotion de la démocratie : l'appui pour l'engagement politique, la gouvernance interne démocratique, et le respect pour la parole représentative. Nous présentons les variations entre ces diverses activités sous forme d'idéal-types qui pourraient inspirer de futures études sur la fonction démocratique des OSBL. Nos résultats empiriques suggèrent que les refuges pour sans-abris ont un rôle essentiel à jouer au-delà de la simple satisfaction de besoins fondamentaux. Nos résultats peuvent contribuer en outre à une meilleure compréhension des modalités de l'inclusion démocratique pour les populations exclues.

Keywords / Mots clés : homelessness, shelters, inclusion, democracy promotion, poverty / itinérance, refuges, inclusion, promotion de la démocratie, pauvreté

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INTRODUCTION

Democracies rely on participation, and egalitarian democracy requires equal rights to participate (Teorell, Sum, & Tobiasen, 2006). But we know that participation in democratic processes is highly skewed toward affluent, white, and well-connected individuals (Bartels, 2016). Marginalized populations vote in lower numbers, have less contact with their democratic representatives, and do not have the means to form interest organizations to lobby for their policy preferences (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012; Warren, 2002). As a result of the political exclusion of marginalized populations, the views of these communities are underrepresented in policy outcomes (Rigby & Wright, 2013).

This democratic gap is a result of systemic barriers and exclusion that marginalized populations face. For many marginalized groups, welfare-providing nonprofits that deliver government-funded public services may be the main sites through which individuals access the state. And, in fact, this is one of the normative justifications for organizing welfare service provision through nonprofits, rather than direct government delivery. In normative civil society theory, nonprofits are seen as democracy promoting organizations that connect individuals to what might otherwise be quite distant processes (van Deth, 1997). It is imagined that welfare-providing nonprofits also serve as representatives for the interests—and conduits for the voices—of marginalized service users (Guo & Saxton, 2010). In this narrative we see welfare-providing nonprofits not only as public service providers, but also as forces for egalitarian democracy. Yet, we know very little about whether welfare-providing nonprofits fulfill this function in reality. This article asks: to what extent do welfare-providing nonprofits carry out democracy promoting activities? Which activities do they utilize and how do organizations vary in their fulfillment of this role? The authors explore these questions in the case of Canadian homelessness, focusing on emergency sheltering.

This analysis finds evidence of democracy promotion. A survey distributed to Canadian charities that operate government-funded homeless shelters uncovered that most participants report carrying out democracy promotion activities in three categories: support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice. In the context of this article, s*upport for political participation* means activities to facilitate, inform, and encourage service users to engage in voting processes. *Internal democratic governance* refers to efforts to involve service users in the organization's activities and service provision. *Representative voice* refers to advocacy behaviours that support and amplify the voice of constituents, namely, the individuals who receive services.

Canadian homeless shelters commonly participate in democracy promotion, although there is variation in the prevalence of different activities. Survey responses are used to score organizations on each of the democracy promotion categories and overall. These scores are then used to present five ideal type configurations revealing how nonprofits can specialize as, say, campaigners who focus on representative voice or people-centred providers that emphasize inward-looking democratic governance. Using organizational characteristics drawn from respondents approximating each ideal type, this article presents hypotheses about what might drive these different patterns in democracy promotion activity, and implications for the inclusion of individuals experiencing homelessness.

These empirical results point to a vital role of homeless shelters that extends beyond the provision of basic needs. Welfare-providing nonprofits can and do play a role in promoting democratic rights. Few studies have considered the role of homeless shelters in the political system, and these findings

point to the need for future research on their impact on the political engagement of people experiencing homelessness. Understanding how shelters may be encouraging political agency speaks to mobilization efforts that can lead to changes in homelessness policies.

We begin by situating the study within the civil society literature. The functions of nonprofits extend beyond the provision of services to also include community, pluralistic, and democratic functions. We pay particular attention to the democratic function. We then introduce three categories of democracy promotion activities and apply that framework using survey data from Canadian homeless shelter nonprofit organizations (HSNPOs). Following the analysis of democracy promoting activities, this article offers qualitative ideal types that consider the variation in democracy promotion among HSNPOs. Following the survey findings is a discussion on how HSNPOs can influence the political engagement of individuals experiencing homelessness and the value associated.

THEORY

Nonprofit welfare and its political consequences

Nonprofit welfare, the delivery of public services by government-funded nonprofit organizations, is becoming an increasingly common welfare state arrangement around the world (Salamon, 2015; Cordelli, 2020; Ranci, 2015; Lundberg, 2020; Pue, 2021), spurred by new public management thinking from the 1980s and 1990s (Smith & Lipsky, 1993). Although this shift was most dramatic in the United States and United Kingdom, researchers have identified new public management thinking at work in Canadian nonprofit welfare (Evans & Shields, 2018; Shields & Evans, 1998; Joy & Shields, 2020). A sizable body of work has emerged on the causes and consequences of nonprofit public service contracting (Arvidson, Johansson, & Scaramuzzino, 2018; Bailey, 2021; Fehsenfeld & Levinson, 2019).

Research on nonprofit welfare has primarily focused on the political consequences as directly connected to service provision, for instance, how nonprofit welfare impacts service quality, access to care, accountability, and the long-run impact on service expansiveness (Smith & Lipsky, 1993; Amirkhanyan, 2008; Cordelli, 2012; Cammett & MacLean, 2014; Marwell & Calabrese, 2015; Pue, 2021). But the nonprofits that deliver public services are also an important part of civil society, and it is important to understand this aspect of their identity. According to normative political theory on civil society, there are at least four functions that nonprofit associations are posited as fulfilling: the service, community, pluralism, and democratic functions.[1] First, nonprofits *provide social goods*, whether these are governmental or private/philanthropic. Second, nonprofit associations fulfill psychological and cultural needs through their *community* function. Third, nonprofit associations are *pluralistic* organizations—associations, ideally, introduce a diversity of viewpoints that compete for legitimacy in the public discourse (Habermas, 1993; Chambers & Kopstein, 2006). Finally, nonprofits help to support the healthy functioning of democracy through their *democratic* function.

Together, these four functions serve as the normative justification for the sector's importance. While not every nonprofit organization undertakes all four of these functions, many are engaged in multiple functions at different times. It is important to understand whether welfare-providing nonprofits also serve as sites of democratic inclusion, and therefore how they contribute to an egalitarian participatory democracy.

The democratic function of civil society

A strong and independent civil society is often considered essential for a robust democracy. Associations are seen as playing a role in dispersing power, and thereby acting as a check on the state (Chambers & Kopstein, 2006). Associations serve as "effective vehicles for the representation and formulation of the interests of citizens" (Wright, 1995, p. 2). They allow for cooperation, engagement with different environments, as well as the development of skills that can stimulate participation (van Deth, 1997; Lundberg, 2022).

Associations also augment participation in political processes, especially amongst those most likely to be excluded (Cohen & Rogers, 1994; Hirst, 1994).[2] Nonprofit associations facilitate participation in democratic processes by developing individual as well as political autonomy (Warren, 2001). They also develop feelings of citizen efficacy, collect, organize, and convey information, and inculcate political skills (Warren, 2001). Finally, they act as schools of democracy through collective decision-making practices (King & Griffin, 2019; Lee, 2022).

Conceptualizing the democratic function: Support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice

The following is a framework for operationalizing the democratic civil society function. This framework helps bridge political theory on the purpose of civil society together with empirical work, which tends to focus on specific nonprofit behaviours such as advocacy and inclusive board governance (Pilon & Brouard, 2022; Guo & Saxton, 2010; Glasius & Ishkanian, 2015). By connecting disparate activities to their core function as democracy-supporting, the authors shed new light on the role of service-providing nonprofits in ensuring that democratic values are extended to vulnerable groups. This data also point to the different ways nonprofits can choose to specialize in democracy promotion, as well as possible connections to organizational characteristics. Extant research focuses primarily on one way that nonprofits contribute to democratic society, through advocacy (Arvidson et al., 2018; Guo & Saxton, 2010). By viewing democracy promotion holistically, this article considers the greater potential of service provider nonprofits as democracy promoters. The authors argue that the democratic function consists of at least three sets of activities: support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice.

Support for Political Participation

First, welfare-providing nonprofits potentially fulfil a democratic function when they act to increase political participation. This is the most direct form of democracy promotion, and yet there are few studies examining activities that fall under this category for service provider nonprofits (Marwell, 2004), aside from studies linking volunteerism with political engagement (Jeong, 2013; Lee, 2022). Support for political participation means activities to facilitate, inform, and encourage service users to vote. As organizations that can reach marginalized people, nonprofits are perhaps best placed to facilitate, inform, and encourage voting amongst service users. They can provide necessary resources to vote, share information on the process of voting, and address barriers—such as the need for documentation—to voting. This is especially important for marginalized individuals that experience barriers to participation, such as those lacking a permanent address (Mundell, 2003; Lynch, 2002; Lynch & Cole, 2003). Without a permanent address in Canada, voting is a unique process and nonprofits can help inform service users they have the right to vote (Kopec, 2017).

Internal Democratic Governance

Second, nonprofits potentially fulfill the democratic function by governing themselves democratically. Participatory and deliberative models of decision-making expand the venues of democracy beyond the state and instill values of individual empowerment and civic mindedness (Pateman, 1970; Warren, 2003). Internal democratic governance refers to efforts to involve service users in the organization's activities. In contexts where an organization serves marginalized communities, internal democratic governance should ideally be participatory to ensure decisions are made with, rather than for, communities (Buss, Redburn, & Guo, 2006; Levac & Wiebe, 2020). The extent to which nonprofits govern themselves accountably or inclusively is a common theme in extant research (Williams & Taylor, 2013; Williamson, Kingston, & Bennison, 2021; Pilon & Brouard, 2022), but research tends not to connect these questions to other democracy promoting activities like advocacy, except as an explanatory variable (Guo & Saxton, 2010; Guo, 2007; Mosley, 2010; Lu, 2018).

Forms of participation in internal democratic governance can include committees, consultations, and panels, among others (Tempfer & Nowak, 2011). These forms offer a wide range of benefits for organizations and consumers and are found to empower and benefit service users (Phillips & Kuyini, 2017). Including peer workers in actual service provision is another internal governance structure that can be classified as promoting democracy. It offers opportunities of socialization amongst peers and introduces individuals with lived experience into the service delivery system, which in turn can increase individual agency whilst also improving services and outcomes (Tracy & Wallace, 2016; Solomon, 2004).

Representative Voice

Third, nonprofits potentially serve a democratic function when they participate in political processes as representatives. Representative voice refers to advocacy behaviours that support and amplify the voice of constituents, namely, service users.[3] As organizations with privileged access to the state, welfare-providing nonprofits have opportunities to articulate the underrepresented interests of marginalized communities (Guo & Saxton, 2010).

There is, of course, a wide-ranging literature on nonprofit advocacy. While this literature largely does not focus on government contracted welfare-providing nonprofits, there are studies that address advocacy by nonprofit service providers in public service areas (Mosley & Jarpe, 2019). Advocacy is "the attempt to influence public policy, either directly or indirectly" (Pekkanen & Smith, 2014, p. 3). There are, broadly, three different objectives of nonprofit advocacy: case, policy, and self-interest organizational (Litzelfelner & Petr, 1997; Donaldson, 2008; Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014). Case advocacy seeks to influence outcomes for a particular individual, usually a service user. Policy advocacy attempts to influence institutions that impact the broader public or groups within the broader public. Both case and policy advocacy objectives constitute representative voice, whereas self-interest organizational advocacy, which attempts to influence policies as they affect the nonprofit itself (Lu, 2015), does not. Nonprofits can exercise representative voice through case and policy advocacy when they articulate the interests of service user constituencies.

An even more democratic form of representative voice is advocacy that includes service users and others with lived experience in conversations with government. Direct citizen participation in policy processes leads to more responsive, accountable, and effective public agencies (Fung, 2004). It can

also enhance trust and legitimacy in government, protect rights, and encourage political stability (McIntyre-Mills, 2010; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Such forms of advocacy might include informing service users about consultations, inviting people with lived experience to meetings with government officials, and other opportunities such as public forums and consultations.

Nonprofits, as service providers but also in their democratic functions, interact with the state and can become vehicles for democracy. They can include the voices of their service users through representative advocacy and through the direct inclusion of service users into political and policymaking processes.

Democracy promotion and homeless shelters

Homeless shelters provide services. But HSNPOs are also part of civil society, and potentially fulfill a democratic function. As organizations that serve some of society's most socially, politically, and economically marginalized people, HSNPOs have the potential to act as important sites of political inclusion. Democratic participation is a key element of combating exclusion and marginalization (Young, 1990). As such, investigating the extent to which these organizations undertake democracy promotion activities can help us understand opportunities for enhancing democratic fairness and accountability.

Homeless shelters, also called emergency or overnight shelters, are temporary residences. They range from dorm room style accommodations to single bed spaces in congregate settings and can be permanent establishments or seasonal "inn from the cold" programs that operate in winter months. The scope of many Canadian shelters has grown from providing meals and a place of sleep to also providing social supports and resources such as employment, life-skills development, and physical and mental health care (Dej, 2020).

Homeless shelters are particularly interesting venues of within-association democracy (Warren, 2003) because of their complex cross-class dynamics. They serve as potential sites of "poverty politics" (Lawson & Elwood, 2014, p. 210). On the other hand, shelters are places that isolate and contain homelessness, which some argue limits their potential as spaces for political inclusion (Feldman, 2004). While acknowledging the validity of Feldman's (2004) argument, the authors posit that to the extent that HSNPOs facilitate democratic participation, one might expect these political dynamics to be more inclusive. If shelters provide basic needs while also encouraging political participation, including individuals in internal governance structures and advancing the interests of people experiencing homelessness in political institutions, that could be a powerful form of inclusion indeed. The consideration of the democracy promoting role of HSNPOs can inform the forums and processes that can change or maintain exclusion and poverty (Webster & Engberg-Pedersen, 2002). Democracy promoting activities can fight exclusion and lead to not only more effective service provision but also policy change.

A starting point, then, is to understand whether homeless shelters engage in democracy promotion activities in any of the three categories: supporting political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice.

METHODS

Canadian homelessness is the ideal case for exploring nonprofit democracy promotion. First, un-

housed people are among the most marginalized groups in society. In Canada, approximately 35,000 people experience homelessness on any given night (Gaetz, Dej, Richter, & Redman, 2016). Unhoused people face immense difficulties in accessing democratic processes. Politicians and candidates rarely frequent shelters and drop-in centres during elections, and lack of information and social exclusion often keep individuals from accessing other events or opportunities in the community (Gaetz, 2004; Kopec, 2017).

Second, Canadian homelessness policy is highly nonprofitized, meaning that services are primarily delivered through welfare-providing nonprofits. For example, nonprofits operate 94 percent of homeless shelters in Canada (Pue, 2021). Nonprofits deliver most public services targeted at addressing homelessness and, through the federal Reaching Home system, are also involved in systems planning and service evaluation (Smith, 2016). Moreover, unlike many cases of public service contracting, there is very little involvement of for-profit businesses in delivering Canadian homelessness services. This allows us to understand the role of welfare-providing nonprofits without market pressures for these organizations to behave like businesses (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). If the expectations of normative civil society theory are upheld by welfare-providing nonprofits in any setting, therefore, we would expect to observe it in this case. Homelessness is an extreme case of exclusion, making the democratic function of services not only vital to unhoused people's connection with the state, but also their inclusion into social, economic, and political aspects of society.

A sample from the population of Canadian registered charities that operate a homeless shelter were surveyed. Like the United Kingdom, charities are a regulated category in Canada, and must meet a set of criteria such as being nonprofit-distributing and meeting a recognized charitable objective.

Sampling procedure

The survey samples the population of 392 registered charitable organizations that operate at least one homeless shelter listed in the National Service Providers List (NSPL) in 2017. The NSPL is a dataset managed by the federal government. Because the NSPL identifies individual shelters as observations, rather than organizations, the researchers matched shelters to the organizations that administer them, resulting in a dataset of 392 registered charities. Limiting the sample to registered charities—rather than all shelter-administering nonprofits—excluded a very small number of nonprofits (12) and allowed the researchers to draw on charity data in, for example, assessing the representativeness of the sample. A detailed explanation of the procedure used in converting the NSPL to the list of homeless shelter nonprofits is described in Appendix A.

Because there is a relatively small number of charities that operate homeless shelters in Canada, a comprehensive approach to sampling was taken. Utilizing publicly available web sources, email contact information was found for 375 of the 392 organizations. The virtual survey was distributed to all 375 organizations on September 21 and 22, 2020. Thus, 96 percent of the survey frame had an opportunity to participate in the research. Participants received a reminder email, and one further reminder was sent to those who had started the survey but not completed it. To facilitate participation, the survey, as well as recruitment and follow-up emails, were available in English and French.

Data collection

The survey included fourteen questions pertaining to the perceptions about and behaviour of HSNPOs on democracy promotion. We asked about the three types of democratic participation activities. The median participant took nine minutes to complete the questionnaire. The full text of the survey questionnaire is available in Appendix B.

A total of 55 respondents completed the survey—a response rate of 15 percent.[4] While low, this response rate is to be expected given the method of distributing the surveys via email (Fowler, 2014) and given that data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic's second wave—a time when homeless shelters were extremely busy in Canada adapting the modalities of service delivery while also confronting increased service demand and staff shortages. Respondents are relatively well distributed geographically as seen in Table 1, although the western Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan are underrepresented. The survey is also representative in terms of organization size.[5]

Table 1. Regional distribution of homeless shelter nonprofits

	Western Canada	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Territories
HSNPO Respondents	10 (18%)	20 (36%)	15 (27%)	8 (15%)	2 (4%)
HSNPO Population	134 (34%)	111 (28%)	117 (30%)	25 (6%)	6 (2%)

Of course, the small sample size is a limitation of the study and prevents the authors from offering statistical analysis of the relationship between survey responses, or between survey responses and organizational characteristics. Another limitation of the study is the potential for survey bias; this study likely over reports democracy promotion activities, as more active nonprofits are more likely to have opted to respond to the survey. Nevertheless, the responses are helpful in showing the relative prevalence of different democracy promotion activities, as well as their different configurations within organizations.

Democracy promotion index

The survey results were used to develop a "democracy promotion index" to understand how active HSNPOs are overall and within each of the three categories. For each of the three categories—political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice—HSNPOs were assigned a score based on the proportion of activities they reported undertaking, with each activity being given equal weighting. An overall score was determined by adding the scores in each category and presenting as a proportion of the maximum possible score. These are, of course, imperfect measures. For instance, some activities may be considerably lower effort than others and one could critique the method of simply counting activities. However, the democracy promotion scores are a useful heuristic for understanding which HSNPOs are most active and whether HSNPOs tend to specialize in one category, as compared with being evenly involved across all three democracy promotion categories.

To make best use of the data given the small sample size of this study, a qualitative case approach was used to develop ideal type democracy promotion profiles, including organizational character-

istics for each of the ideal types. To preserve the confidentiality of respondents, organizational characteristics are composites derived from the cases associated with each ideal type. Presenting ideal types using organizational composites can assist in hypothesis generation by identifying organizational characteristics that are shared across an ideal type category, which is valuable for making best use of survey research where the sample size limits the potential for regression analysis. Of course, ideal types developed from medium-*n* composite analysis are limited in that they can neither match the richness of small-*n* qualitative case comparison nor validate or invalidate hypotheses as is possible in large-*n* regression analysis. As such, this approach is best suited to hypothesis generation rather than hypothesis testing.

The ideal types were identified by examining HSNPOs with particularly high and low scores across the democracy promotion index overall, as well as within each category. In this process, small groupings of HSNPOs (between three and 10) were identified, based on these organizations' similarity with respect to their index scores relative to the average HSNPO. Once ideal type groupings were identified, organizational composites were constructed using a combination of Canada Revenue Agency charity disclosure data, the organizations' web presences, and survey responses. The findings reported below identify shared organizational characteristics for HSNPOs in each of the ideal type groupings, which directs researchers to potentially interesting variables for future research.

FINDINGS

The survey results provide evidence of activities falling within three areas of democracy promotion: support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice. The overall mean and median democracy promotion index score was 0.5 out of 1.0, meaning that HSNPOs reported engaging in about half of the activities presented in the questionnaire, across all three categories. Of the three democracy promotion categories, participants were most active in representative voice and least active in activities to support internal democracy, with median scores of 0.67 and 0.38, respectively.

Support for political participation

A majority of HSNPOs engage in four activities that support political participation (i.e., voting): assisting with voter registration, publicizing election information, encouraging service users to vote, and informing service users about how and when to vote. The results show that HSNPOs do commonly act to encourage service users to vote, especially through supporting the modalities of voting. The median HSNPO reported carrying out fewer than half of the political participation activities included in the questionnaire, resulting in a median index score of 0.44 for this category, as seen in Table 2.

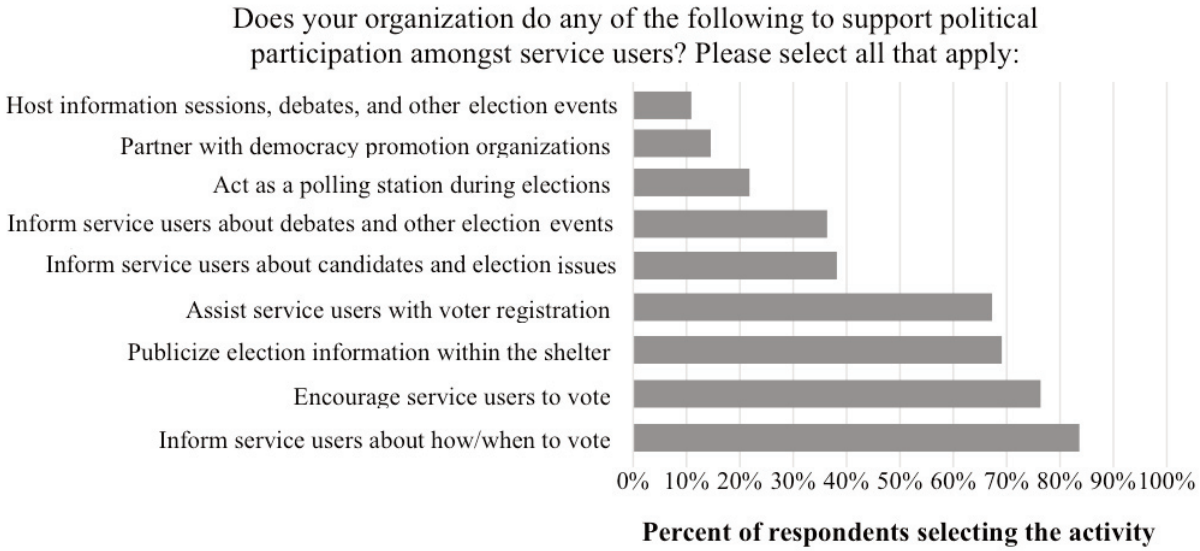
Table 2. Democracy promotion index: Mean and median scores

	Representative voice	Political participation	Internal democracy	Overall score
Mean	0.59	0.46	0.45	0.50
Median	0.67	0.44	0.38	0.50
Standard Deviation	0.23	0.24	0.26	0.19

The political participation activities that most respondents report undertaking focus primarily on informing service users about voting (e.g., informing service users about how and when to vote, as-

sisting service users with voter registration). As depicted in Figure 1, HSNPOs were less frequently active in informing service users about their electoral choices (e.g., informing service users about candidates and election issues). Only a handful of HSNPOs took on what could be considered the highest effort political promotion activities, that is, acting as a polling station during elections, partnering with democracy promotion organizations, and holding information sessions, debates, or other election events.

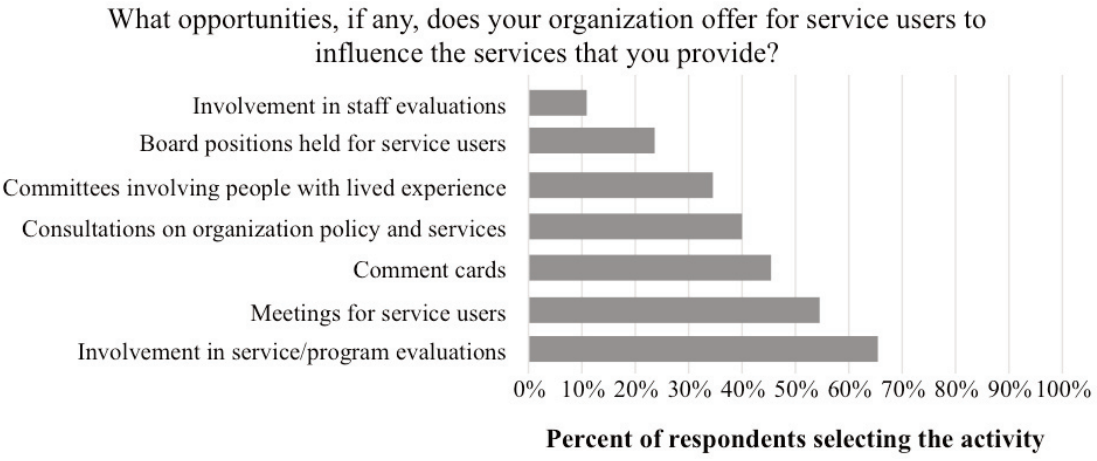
Figure 1. Political participation activities



Internal democratic governance

Participants in this study were least active in internal democratic governance, with a median index score of just 0.38 for this category. This low score reflects the fact that service users have only modest opportunities to influence organizational policies of the HSNPOs surveyed, typically through service or program evaluations and meetings. In addition to the activities reported in the Figure 2, just over a third of HSNPOs reported employing peer support workers, meaning people employed to provide support and who share a lived experience with those they are supporting (e.g., of homelessness).

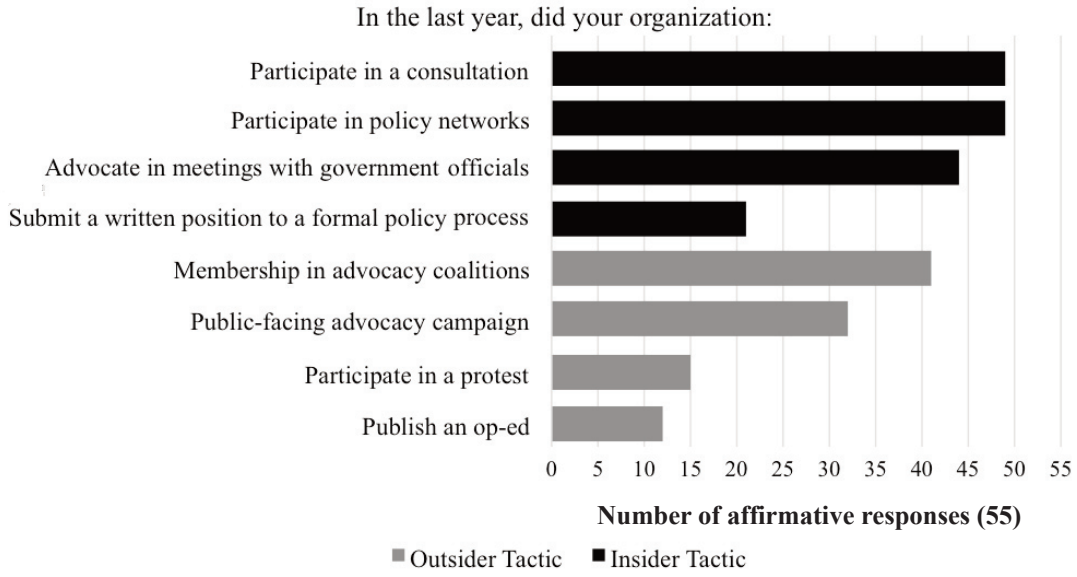
Figure 2. Service user influence



Representative voice

Of the three democracy promotion categories, HSNPOs reported being most active in representative voice (with a median index score of 0.67 out of 1.0). Figure 3 shows the frequency of affirmative responses to a question asking whether the organization had undertaken listed advocacy tactics in the last year. Consistent with the literature on service providing nonprofits (Verschuere & de Corte, 2015), the HSNPOs in this study most frequently reported undertaking insider advocacy tactics rather than outsider advocacy tactics that address the public.

Figure 3. Involvement in advocacy tactics, insider and outsider

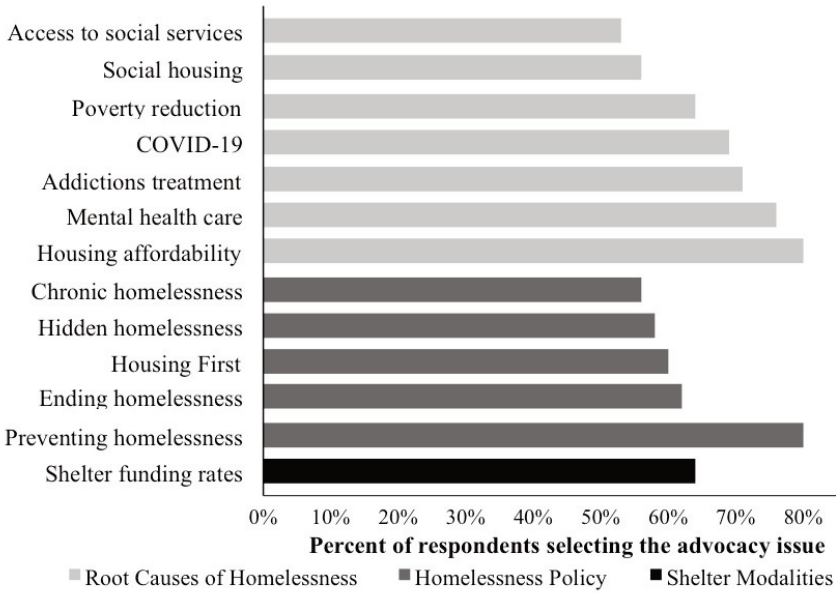


In addition, a different question revealed that 53 percent of HSNPOs reported involving people with lived experience in policy advocacy.

Homeless shelter nonprofits are active in advocacy at all three scales of change presented in the survey: advocacy addressing the modalities of operating a shelter, homelessness policy, and policy affecting the root causes of homelessness. As Figure 4 shows, the two top advocacy issues were preventing homelessness and housing affordability, with 80 percent of HSNPOs reporting that they advocated on these issues in the last year.

One point of interest is the relatively small proportion of HSNPOs that reported advocacy on democratic participation and voting access (20%).

Figure 4. Top advocacy issues, percent of HSNPOs reporting



Ideal types

HSNPOs can and do specialize in different dimensions of democracy promotion. This section presents five ideal types, developed based on observed similarities in democracy promotion index scores across different categories: super democracy promoters, campaigners, empowerers, people-centred service providers, and service-focused organization. Alongside each ideal type is a composite profile outlining organizational characteristics that were common for HSNPOs approximating each ideal type, based on survey responses, as well as Canada Revenue Agency charity financial disclosure data and HSNPO websites.

Super democracy promoters are active in all three dimensions of democracy promotion: political participation, internal democracy, and representative voice. Although active in all three categories, these organizations tend to be least involved in internal democracy, with the lowest index scores in this category. Super promoters are located in cities, often a provincial or national capital, giving them physical proximity to government. They may be large organizations that operate multiple shelters, or shelters that support unhoused youth or women escaping family violence. They have million- or multi-million-dollar budgets, a majority of which is provided by the government but with philanthropy providing about a quarter of funding. The large budgets of these organizations may afford them the capacity to be active in all three democracy promotion areas, whereas smaller organizations may have to specialize.

Campaigners specialize in exercising representative voice. Unlike super promoters, they report below average involvement in the other democracy promotion areas, especially political participation activities. Housing is part of a broader mission for most of these organizations, with shelter services addressing a need for their primary population of focus. As such, these organizations operate smaller shelters (fewer than 50 bed spaces). Campaigners have smaller budgets than super democracy promoters, but still in the realm of one million dollars annually. Most of their funding, about three-quarters, comes from government.

Empowerers specialize in promoting political participation among service users, with moderate involvement in representative voice and minimal involvement with activities supporting internal democratic governance. Empowerers provide housing and other services for unhoused youth (including young adults) as a primary mission. These organizations operate small shelters (under 25 bed spaces) in communities with populations below 100,000 people. They have budgets around $500,000 and are almost exclusively funded by government.

People-centred service providers specialize in internal democratic governance, with moderate or minimal involvement in the other dimensions of democracy promotion. These organizations are not primarily focused on homelessness, but rather provide resource-intensive supports that include housing to niche groups (e.g., HIV-positive persons), on a short- and long-term basis. As such, they have multi-million-dollar budgets despite operating 30 or fewer bed spaces. People-centred providers receive about half of their funding from government, with philanthropy and commercial revenue serving as substantial revenue sources as well.

Finally, ***service-focused organizations*** carry out only a few democracy promotion activities across all three dimensions. Organizations in this category did still have a democracy promoting role, but

this was a relatively small focus for them. Service-focused organizations had relatively little in common, though several were associated with religious networks.

DISCUSSION

The empirical results point to a vital role of homeless shelters that extends beyond the provision of basic needs. In doing so, it contributes to a better understanding of the dualities of welfare-providing nonprofits. Rather than being mere appendages of state services, welfare-providing nonprofits like homeless shelters can and do also play a role in promoting the democratic rights of those accessing them. This is important to understanding the actors involved in democracy promotion, and therefore the role of nonprofits in the inclusion of marginalized populations, and where perhaps nonprofits stand to expand this role.

This analysis also points to how HSNPOs are democracy promoting and offers ideal types that speak to not only activities, but also the possibility that these choices are connected to organizational characteristics like size, location, target population, and government dependence. For example, it may be the case that organizations with larger budgets (such as super democracy promoters and campaigners) have the capacity to be active in all three democracy promotion categories, whereas smaller organizations may need to specialize in one or two (such as empowerers and people-centred service providers). For smaller organizations, supporting political participation may be the least resource intensive. It may also be the safest option for those organizations that are exclusively funded by government—though in the Canadian context, nonprofit homeless shelters do not view it as likely that governments will cut their funding (Pue, 2021). Similarities in the missions of homeless shelters in some of the categories suggests that this, too, could play a role in how nonprofits decide to specialize. These are all hypotheses that could be examined in future research.

This research also points to the different roles of nonprofits and where nonprofits can expand democracy promotion. The fact that homeless shelters were least engaged in internal democratic governance poses important questions about the value (or a lack thereof) of lived experience in service provision and the limited role of shelters as sites of inclusion, and rather sites that maintain power imbalances and marginalization. Engaging individuals experiencing homelessness in service delivery can lead to more comprehensive support and better addressed problems and needs, with benefits for policy and service delivery (Clark, Cheshire, & Parsell, 2020; Ponce & Rowe, 2018). Lived expertise is a vital form of expertise that can inform policy and services, as well as influence political agency and autonomy (Kopec, 2022; Tracy & Wallace, 2016; Solomon, 2004). These findings therefore also point to important avenues for expanding this role, in addition to the existing practices of democracy promotion.

Support for political participation was somewhat common among the sample. As voting without a permanent address includes a unique process, nonprofit shelters serve a crucial role in informing residents of their right to vote and the processes it entails.[6] As a key interaction—and often one of few—individuals have with the "state," nonprofit homeless shelters are vital actors in sharing such information. This also includes informing individuals of when and how to vote, acting as a place of address, and publicizing necessary information. Given the role of homelessness agencies, including nonprofit shelters, in the process of voting, it is unsurprising that a majority of the sample assisted

service users with voter registration. Less than 40 percent of the sample of HSNPOs, however, reported providing information about candidates and election events. Resource constraints may prevent HSNPOs from sharing more meaningful information (HSNPO funding is quite scarce in many cases). Charity rules regarding political activities, as well as norms around the apolitical role of charities, may influence the types of election information HSNPOs provide.

It is worth noting however, that campaigners in this study—although with smaller budgets than super democracy promoters—still function with approximately one-million-dollar annual budgets, most of which comes from government. Their funding and support and advocacy initiatives make it surprising that they do not play a more significant role in political participation. Although these HSNPOs are advocates for issues relating to homelessness, their involvement with political participation activities is below average. This seems rather counter-intuitive, since it could be assumed that increasing the participation of individuals experiencing homelessness may in fact lead to the policy changes campaigner's support. Empowerers, on the other hand, specialized in promoting political participation among service users with generally smaller budgets. Their funding, however, is almost exclusively from government. The relationship between government funding and political participation promotion cannot be fully examined here; however, it could be fruitfully explored in future case comparison or quantitative research.

Service providers reported having some internal mechanisms that allowed for service users to influence service delivery; however, these were limited to meetings and evaluations. Participation in service delivery can be a route to empowerment and an opportunity to contribute to change (Tanekenov, Fitzpatrick, & Johnsen, 2018). Meetings and evaluations are therefore important, although their accessibility and influence on service delivery need to also be considered. Consultations, committees for service users, and board positions were less prevalent, but still occurred: 40, 35, and 24 percent of respondents reported these activities, respectively. Although the use of consultations, committees, and board memberships still include unequal power relations, they do create potential for contact zones for inclusive poverty politics (Lawson & Elwood, 2014). Our ideal type cases show that, in this sample at least, HSNPOs that serve as venues of internal democratic governance—super democracy promoters and people-centred service providers in particular—have million- or multi-million-dollar budgets. This may speak to the relationship between organizational capacity and internal governance mechanisms. Future research could examine under which conditions larger budgets may enable HSNPOs and other nonprofits to govern themselves more democratically.

Just over a third of respondents employ peer workers in their shelters, with most of them falling within the ideal types with larger budgets. The benefits of peer workers in the homelessness space have been found in several studies of peer-led overdose prevention and harm reduction facilities (Bardwell, Fleming, Collins, Boyd, & McNeil, 2019), housing and health services (Magwood, Salvalaggio, Beder et al., 2019) and outreach programs (Deering, Kerr, Tyndall et al., 2011). Studies find that peer support workers in homelessness agencies can improve access to services as well as create awareness of important issues and concerns (Baumann, Hamilton-Wright, Riley et al., 2019).

Eighty percent of HSNPOs reported advocating on housing affordability and preventing homelessness. This suggests that, rather than advocating primarily for organizational self-interest, HSNPOs

do exercise representative voice in support of policies to curtail homelessness. Thus, there is at least an attempt by HSNPOs to represent the interests of service users through this function, although less so through internal governance measures that would offer more power to service users themselves.

It is important to note that this survey was designed for service providers and does not offer a service user perspective. Rather, it reports on democracy promotion activities from the HSNPO's perspective at a particular point in time. Furthermore, the survey asks HSNPOs to identify which activities they undertake. It may therefore overrepresent HSNPOs that are more active on democracy promotion due to selection bias.

A final limitation is the survey method itself, which does not allow for a rich examination of the nature, content, accessibility, and dispersion of democracy promotion activities. The survey did not allow researchers to examine the details of democracy promotion activities. Although there may be efforts by nonprofits to increase the political participation, not only is it impossible to ask if this information is in fact passed on to users, but barriers towards participation for the unhoused remain (Kopec, 2017). Barriers to participating in internal governance structures have also been identified in other studies. They include staff attitudes toward accessibility of, and knowledge about, forms of participation (Phillips & Kuyini, 2017; Ferguson, Kim, & McCoy, 2011).

Oftentimes, the participation of marginalized groups can simply serve as a mechanism through which the powerful maintain their power under a guise of equitable participation (Arnstein, 1969). Despite the relative comfort of Canadian HSNPOs in exercising representative voice, often for approaches like preventing homelessness and Housing First, Canada's homelessness policy is still heavily reliant on emergency sheltering, leaving many unhoused Canadians in precarious, unsafe, and unhealthy situations. Although nonstate actors have influenced government decisions, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown (Kopec, 2023), the ability of service provider nonprofits to lead in transformative egalitarian politics may be limited.

This research provides one piece of the puzzle. Nonprofit service providers have a role to play in democracy promotion and do so through three main functions: promoting political participation, governing themselves democratically, and exercising representative voice. They are therefore key players in the inclusion of some of the most marginalized populations in Western democracies. This is an important step for future research regarding the political inclusion of individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as other marginalized groups that primarily access the state through frontline service provider nonprofits. Research has considered various other civil society actors, such as tenant organizations, as political actors that create critical opportunities for marginalized actors to exercise power (Michener & SoRelle, 2022). Knowing the role of nonprofits allows us to consider the participatory opportunities available to marginalized groups (Han & Kim, 2022). It allows for the closer examination of the role of nonprofits in social change efforts, and in reconciling the polarities of democracy, namely the participation-representation polarity (Benet, 2013). By pointing to the role of different actors in democracy promotion, we can consider the positive and negative aspects of the various elements of democracy (Benet, 2013). Further research should investigate the modalities of participation from different inclusionary lenses, especially the drivers of active participation.

CONCLUSION

Nonprofit welfare providers occupy a unique position as both frontline public service providers and part of civil society. The role of these organizations is not limited to service provision—nonprofit welfare providers can also be active participants in the democratic, pluralism, and community functions of civil society. This article on Canadian homeless shelters provides evidence that HSNPOs act to promote democracy through three sets of activities: support for political participation, internal democratic governance, and representative voice. It also offers case study ideal types. Both frameworks contribute to existing studies of nonprofit organizations as well as inform future research. An analysis of their democracy promoting function serves to underscore the potential of nonprofits as actors that fight marginalization and exclusion. The ideal types, furthermore, point to organizational characteristics that may influence how HSNPOs fulfill their democratic function. Future research can utilize these frameworks and further our understanding of democracy promotion beyond traditional forms of participation and among marginalized populations.

Homeless shelters, in at least some contexts and through some actions, promote participation in democratic processes. In other cases, there are ways in which HSNPOs can further embrace their democratic role. This research informs future research and nonprofit sectors. It has identified specific activities that HSNPOs can facilitate, whether within their organizations or in bridging the divide between vulnerable service users and the government, to fulfill their democratic function.

NOTES

1. Given the diversity of organizations in civil society, these functions are generalizations; nevertheless, they are generalizations that scholars have seen as having applicability across civil society.
2. However, inequalities are also reflected in civic voluntarism participation rates (Verba et al., 1995; Schlozman & Brady, 1995).
3. This article focuses on the representation of service users, but representative voice can also represent other nonprofit constituencies, such as members, volunteers, and donors.
4. A further 18 respondents started the survey. However, as the vast majority (15) of these completed 20 percent of the survey or less, the authors opted to exclude those incomplete surveys from the data.
5. The median total revenue of respondents was $1.4 million, compared with $1.5 million for the total HSNPO population. The median respondent operates just one homeless shelter, consistent with the broader HSNPO population.
6. There has been little research conducted on homelessness and voting in Canada. A preliminary study in Toronto, however, found that access to information regarding processes of voting vary depending on the homelessness service and agency (Kopec, 2017).

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APPENDIX A. IDENTIFYING HOMELESS SHELTER NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS LIST

The Community Development Homelessness Partnerships Directorate of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) publishes the National Service Providers List (NSPL), a "comprehensive" listing of homeless shelters in Canada, as part of the National Homelessness Information System (NHIS). The NSPL is curated for the purpose of retaining national capacity statistics and includes both emergency and transitional shelters. Importantly, not all homeless shelters in the dataset are nonprofit shelters. On 18 June 2018 we downloaded the dataset for 2017. According to the NSPL, there were 687 homeless shelters in Canada in 2017. The following is a data dictionary that accompanies the NSPL, downloaded on 13 November 2018.

Table A1. Data dictionary: Nonprofit service provider list

Variable name	Description	Values and value labels
Shelter type	Shelter facilities are categorized by the type of service provided to clients.	*Emergency:* Emergency shelter facilities provide temporary, short-term accommodation for homeless individuals and families. Other services, such as food, clothing or counselling, may or may not be provided. *Transitional:* Transitional housing provides temporary shelter, but is differentiated from emergency shelters by longer lengths of stay and greater intensity of support services offered to clients. Transitional housing is an intermediate step between emergency shelter and permanent housing.
Province code	Canadian provincial code	AB – Alberta BC – British Columbia MB – Manitoba NB – New Brunswick NL – Newfoundland NS – Nova Scotia NT – Northwest Territories NU – Nunavut ON – Ontario PI – Prince Edward Island QC – Quebec SK – Saskatchewan YT – Yukon
City	Municipality or community	Text
Target clientele	Emergency shelters and transitional housing are further categorized by the clients they serve.	*General:* Provide services to adult males and/or females. Some accept youth. *Family:* Provide services to families and adults with dependants. Some also accept single adult women without dependents. *Youth:* Provide services to youth. Shelters have varying definitions of youth, which may include a range of ages between 12 and 29 years.
Gender(s) served	General and youth shelters may or may not offer facilities for a specific gender.	*Males:* Provide services to males. *Females:* Provide services to females. *Both:* Provide services to both genders.
Shelter name	The registered shelter name in the National Service Provider List for emergency shelters and transitional housing.	Text

Table A1. (continued)

Variable name	Description	Values and value labels
Number of beds	The number of permanent beds provided by each facility, which describes the shelter capacity.	Numeric

Updated: June 21, 2017

The NSPL identifies individual shelters as observations. In reality, a single organization may operate more than one shelter. Accordingly, we used web searches to identify the organizations that operate each shelter. For each shelter, we added values for the following:

- *Organization*: refers to the administering organization that operates the shelter.
- *Organization type*: refers to whether the organization is a registered charity, non-charity nonprofit, government (municipal, provincial, federal, First Nations), for-profit company, cooperative, public-private partnership, or nonprofit partnership.
- *Charity BN*: where the administering organization was a registered charity, this was recorded.

There were 16 shelters (out of a total 687) for which we could not identify the administering organization.

Based on the web searches used to link homeless shelters with shelter administering organization, a new dataset was created with administering organizations as the unit of observation. That worksheet identified 429 organizations that operate the 671 homeless shelters in the NSPL for which data on the administering organization was available (as stated above, data was unavailable for 16 of the 687 homeless shelters in the dataset).

Table A2. Number of Shelter Administering Organizations, by Organization Type

Organization type	Number of organizations
Nonprofit organization, registered charity	393
Nonprofit organization, not registered as a charity	12
Government (municipal, provincial, and First Nation)	14
For-profit company	5
Public-private partnership	3
Co-operative	1
Nonprofit partnership	1
Total	**429**

We then created a new worksheet that included only the subset of 393 administering organizations that are registered charities. One of these organizations, Just'elle de l'Estrie, is no longer active and as such this organization was removed from the dataset.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

NONPROFIT ADVOCACY SURVEY

Start of Block: Consent

Study on Participation in Advocacy by Homeless-Serving Nonprofit Organizations in Canada

Consent to Participate in Research
You are invited to participate in this project on the advocacy behaviour of Canadian nonprofit organizations serving people experiencing homelessness.

Your participation is voluntary. Please carefully consider the information in this letter and feel free to ask questions before making your decision as to whether or not you will participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to click 'I understand the purpose and nature of the research, and agree to participate under the ethical considerations indicated' below. You may exit the survey at any time. If you decide to cease participation there will be no penalty to you or your organization. Furthermore, you may decline to answer any question while participating in the study. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with Carleton University.

This project has been approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (clearance number: 113247). If you have any questions about the project or the ethics clearance, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at ethics@carleton.ca.

Purpose: This project aims to understand how, why, and under what conditions homeless-serving nonprofit organizations exercise policy voice. This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Procedures: Participation will consist of an online survey, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: No personal or professional risk is reasonably expected to arise from participation in this study. Responses will be reported in aggregate, meaning that no individual or organisation will be named in the reporting of survey results. In the context of the minimal risks to participants outlined above, we believe that the study will provide benefits to scholarly, nonprofit, and policy communities through the findings that it generates.

Access to Information, Confidentiality, and Publication of Results: Only the researcher, Ms. Kristen Pue, will have access to the survey data, although an anonymized version may be shared (with no personal or organizational identifying information). Efforts will be made to keep survey data confidential, and there are no reasonably foreseeable grounds under which we would be compelled to release this information. Efforts will be made to keep this information electronically secure. Data stored within Qualtrics is encrypted and data will be stored on an encrypted external hard drive. Survey data will be destroyed after ten years. We do intend to publish and make public presentations based on this research, using aggregate data.

Please feel welcome to contact the researcher, Ms. Kristen Pue, for further information, including to obtain a copy of this consent form. Kristen Pue, Postdoctoral Fellow, Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University, Email: kristen.pue@carleton.ca

(Please click on the below *'I understand the purpose and nature of the research, and agree to participate under the ethical considerations indicated', to continue)*

- I understand the purpose and nature of the research, and agree to participate under the ethical considerations indicated. (1)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Advocacy Tactics

Q1 Does your organization do advocacy?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q2 In the last year, did your organization:

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Don't Know/ Not Applicable (3)
Publish an op-ed in a local newspaper (1)			
Hold membership in one or more advocacy coalitions (e.g. Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness) (2)			
Participate in one or more policy tables or networks (3)			
Advocate for policy change in meetings with public servants or elected officials (4)			
Initiate or participate in a public-facing advocacy campaign (5)			
Submit a written position or statement to a formal policy process (6)			
Participate in a consultation (7)			
Participate in a protest (8)			

Q3 In the last year, did your organization advocate for policy change with any of the following government actors? Please select all that apply.

- Public servants in local government (1)
- Public servants in provincial/territorial government (2)
- Public servants in federal government (3)
- Elected officials in local government (4)
- Elected officials in provincial/territorial government (5)
- Elected officials in federal government (6)
- Indigenous band council members (7)
- Other traditional leaders in Indigenous communities (8)

End of Block: Advocacy Tactics

Start of Block: Access

Q4 When you pick up the phone and call each of the following actors, how likely is it that you'll either get through to the intended person or that your call will be returned?

	Almost always (1)	Usually (2)	Usually Not (3)	Almost Never (4)	Not applicable (5)
The government department responsible for homelessness services (1)					
Other government departments (2)					
The Mayor's office (3)					
The Premier's office (4)					
The local community foundation (5)					
The local United Way/Centraide (6)					

Q5 Over the past year, how often did city officials approach your organization's executive director, staff, or board members to discuss policy decisions of mutual interest?

- Four or more times a month (1)
- Two to three times a month (2)
- Once a month (3)
- At least once, but less than once a month (4)
- Never (5)

Q6 Over the past year, how often did provincial/territorial officials approach your organization's executive director, staff, or board members to discuss policy decisions of mutual interest?

- Four or more times a month (1)
- Two to three times a month (2)
- Once a month (3)
- At least once, but less than once a month (4)
- Never (5)

Q7 Over the past year, how often did federal officials approach your organization's executive director, staff, or board members to discuss policy decisions of mutual interest?

- Four or more times a month (1)
- Two to three times a month (2)
- Once a month (3)
- At least once, but less than once a month (4)
- Never (5)

End of Block: Access

Start of Block: Criticizing Government

Q8 How likely is your organization to publicly criticize government policy?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Somewhat likely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat unlikely (4)
- Extremely unlikely (5)

Q9 For each of the following statements below, please indicate your agreement or disagreement:

Q9A It is appropriate for organizations like ours to publicly criticize government for policy failures.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9B It is effective for organizations like ours to publicly criticize government for policy failures.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9C Organizations like ours have the right expertise to criticize government for policy failures.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9D Homeless-serving charities like ours should be vocal proponents for ending homelessness.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9E Homeless-serving charities like ours should focus on providing services, rather than advocating for policy change.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9F Homeless-serving charities like ours that publicly criticize government risk losing government funding.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9G Homeless-serving charities like ours that publicly criticize government risk losing philanthropic funding.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q9H Homeless-serving charities like ours that publicly criticize government risk losing funding from businesses.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

End of Block: Criticizing Government

Start of Block: Advocacy Issues

Q10 In the last year, did your organization advocate on any of the following issues (select all that apply):

Q10A Shelter funding, reporting, and requirements

- Government shelter funding rates (1)
- Government shelter funding rules (e.g. eligible expenses, how funding is allocated or disbursed) (2)
- Reporting requirements (3)
- The content of shelter standards (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q10B Homelessness policy

- Housing First (1)
- Ending homelessness (2)
- Preventing homelessness (3)
- Chronic homelessness (4)
- Hidden homelessness (5)
- Shelter conditions (6)
- Indigenous homelessness (7)
- Refugee homelessness (8)
- Youth homelessness (9)
- Veterans homelessness (10)
- Women's homelessness (11)
- LGBTQ2S homelessness (12)
- Senior citizens' homelessness (13)
- Other (14) _____

Q10C Broader causes of homelessness

- The foster care system (1)
- Mental health care (2)
- Addictions treatment (3)
- Safe injection sites (4)
- Family violence (5)
- Housing affordability (6)
- Social housing (7)
- Poverty reduction (8)
- Unemployment (9)
- Disabilities inclusion (10)
- Indigenous reconciliation (11)
- Jordan's Principle (12)
- Racism (13)
- LGBTQ2S discrimination (14)
- Social assistance rates/policies (15)
- Access to social services (16)
- Access to justice (17)
- Democratic participation, voting access (18)
- COVID-19 (19)
- Other (20) _____

End of Block: Advocacy Issues

Start of Block: Questions on Democracy Promotion

Q11 Does your organization do any of the following to support political participation amongst service users? Please select all that apply.

- Publicize election information within the shelter (1)
- Inform service users about how/when to vote (2)
- Inform service users about candidates and election issues (3)
- Encourage service users to vote (4)
- Assist service users with voter registration (5)
- Inform service users about debates and other election events (6)
- Partner with democracy promotion organizations (7)
- Hold information sessions, debates, or other election events (8)
- Act as a polling station during elections (9)

Q12 Does your organization employ peer support workers?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't Know (3)

Q13 What opportunities, of any, does your organization offer for service users to influence the services that you provide?

- Board positions held for service users (1)
- Meetings for service users (monthly, weekly, etc.) (2)
- Involvement in service/program evaluations (3)
- Involvement in staff evaluations (4)
- Comment cards (5)
- Consultations on organization policy and services (6)
- Committees involving people with lived experience (7)

Q14 Has your organization ever involved people with lived experience directly in policy advocacy? (E.g., bringing people with lived experience to meetings with a Member of Parliament, putting service user names forward for policy consultations)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't Know (3)

End of Block: Questions on Democracy Promotion

Start of Block: Final Block

END

Please click the arrow below to submit your final answers.

End of Block: Final Block