Public Management: The Challenges of Collaborative Networks in the 21st Century
Working with Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Homeless Vulnerable Populations in Los Angeles County.

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract


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This research paper identifies the challenges for public and private sector managers working in collaboration to provide public service to diverse homeless vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. The research will help identify the problems that nonprofits, government entities, public and private sector managers face when dealing with collaborative networks that take on the social problems of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The research design will be comprised of qualitative and quantitative data utilizing a vulnerable population theoretical framework and common ground model analysis to analyze how the public and private sectors can work together in better serving the diverse homeless vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. Also, data from the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authorities (LAHSA) greater Los Angeles annual homeless count and the Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (LACoC HMIS) will be utilized to evaluate and assess the effects of the housing and service programs that are being provided to homeless vulnerable populations. This research will further provide recommendations that can be used by nonprofits, government entities, and non-governmental organizations to become more effective in collaborative networks that cater to diverse racial and ethnic homeless vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County and other managers in communities that participate in cross-sector leadership techniques.
Introduction

The vulnerable homeless population in Los Angeles County is a critical issue. There is not one city in the county of Los Angeles where one does not come across someone who is experiencing homelessness. There are often complete families who suffer and do not receive the services that are needed to survive even though there are public and private sectors who collaborate and network together to try and resolve these issues. Furthermore, in the delivery of public services it is considered a coincidence if one organization sees an opportunity to form a partnership with another organization (McDonald, 2014). Although nonprofit organization collaborations have been growing at a steady pace over the years, and are argued to be in the best position to lead a partnership due to their ability to motivate volunteers and pursue relationships with other faith-based organizations without the stress of political concerns or the mixing of religion and state (Valero and Jang, 2016). There still are challenges that both public and private collaborative managers face in providing effective communication or services during times when they are needed. “For example, grants, contracts, and outsourcing of certain public functions raise the need for connectivity that engenders new structures that emerge devoted to managing intersector issues and problems” (Agranoff, 2014). In addition, research has revealed that African Americans and Hispanics receive fewer health services, housing, and other necessities than their counterparts due to discrimination or marginalization (Carter, 2011). During modern times in the city of Los Angeles, it would seem as if more and more attention from politicians and citizens alike are acknowledging that our homeless crisis needs attention. Faced with a rise in people experiencing homelessness, it is becoming harder for nonprofits, and government entities to keep up with providing services. In 2019 the Los Angeles homeless crisis has risen by five thousand three hundred fifteen since last reported in 2018 by the Los Angeles Almanac (Los Angeles
With the majority of the homeless population being of African American and Hispanic/Latino descent in Los Angeles County. Despite the growth of the homeless population, nonprofit human service agencies, and government entities who form collaborations play a significant role in delivering public service to individuals and families within the city of Los Angeles. "In many policy fields, such as community care, workforce development, and disability services are growing, the funding, delivery, and the entire configuration of human services are changing in the US" (Smith and Phillips, 2016). Often the initial starting of collaborations or partnerships is due to a need that the government cannot provide for on its own. If the government can't figure out how to provide the services on its own, a contract is designed and bided on by nonprofits or others in the private sector to fulfill the needed assistance (Agranoff, 2006; Babiak and Thibault, 2010; Gazley, 2010). However, collaborations change over time, and those that form afterward may not have the same objectives as those formerly sought by the previous network. Causing actions that need to be taken in helping families and individuals to receive services to become hindered due to budget restraints and lack of shared communication or resources. Therefore, time and effort are required when forming a network, and although organizational efficiency allows for an organization to provide faster services without utilizing more resources. A plan must be devised beforehand to lessen the impact from a public interruption of services that may take place from the result of problems that may cause the collaboration to fail (Forrer et al. 2010). The limitations, reduction of revenues, higher demands for services, and overwhelming workloads have caused managers of partnerships to search for and align with partners who can deliver services within their community. While other collaborative network managers have turned to technology and invested in education to enhance the skills of their employees. Even though "there are prerequisites and managerial challenges that
collaborative service arrangements require to be successful" (Hilvert and Swindell, 2013). With the creation of innovative hybrid organizations taking form in Los Angeles. Collaborative networks require a restructuring of their public service delivery system so that they can provide better services to diverse, homeless vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. As well as provide better program monitoring that can be utilized to evaluate their programs and services offered to the community while allowing for better performance measures to be obtained.
Background

Merton (1957) “suggests that the homeless adapt to the social environment through “retreatism,” a condition where an individual is barred from success within society and subsequently retreats to drugs, psychosis, or skid row” (Merton, 1957) However, the racially diverse homeless population has been a target of study since 1980, when scholars who studied homelessness found that the homeless population was more varied than before the 1980s (Carter, 2011). Size and visibility were said to be the leading causes for studying the homeless that was conducted by advocacy groups who wanted to change the stereotype of how the homeless were perceived by society (Hill, 1994). Retrospectively, during the 80s, the number one cause of homelessness was not due to substance abuse, mental illness, or lack of housing. It was due to a large number of minorities becoming unemployed (Hill, 1994). Whereas today, Individuals and families experiencing homelessness “not only experience personal and economic hardship; they also frequently face discrimination and exclusion because of their housing status” (Johnstone, Jetten, Dingle, Parsel, and Walter, 2015).

Research conducted by scholars have found that homelessness is not experienced the same for everyone who is homeless and that there are many diverse groups (Berg, 2013). Vulnerable homeless populations “are quite various consisting of people of different ages, reasons for being homeless, and opportunities for exiting homelessness” (Johnstone et al. 2015). The United States government acknowledges that homeless people are the least able to help themselves and therefore require special assistance programs (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). However, Los Angeles has become the most known city in the United States to have the most significant number of various individuals and families experiencing homelessness. According to the latest homeless count conducted in the county of Los Angeles, there is currently 58,936 individuals and families experiencing homelessness (Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority). Out of the 58,936 individuals and families, the majority are of African American at 33.2%, and Latino/Hispanic descent at 47.7%. Yet in the city of Los Angeles alone, the number is also a staggering 36,000. With the passage of the Measure H homeless initiative voted in by California voters in 2017, following Proposition HHH made it possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to receive supportive housing. Back then, the challenge was and still is who will come with the best plan to develop housing units affordable to house those who are experiencing homelessness (Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority). To date,
although funding has been forthcoming to provide services and housing. "In-city specific programs due to a lack of communication and data sharing form across government entities are becoming frustrated from not receiving enough money to provide services"(Yee, 2019).

The Los Angeles Housing Service Authority recently reported that homelessness has risen in the county of Los Angeles by 12% due to skyrocketing rent, evictions, and flat wages (Vilca, 2019). According to the Homeless initiative, (May 2019), "the number of people falling into homelessness is far outpacing these record housing placements."

Furthermore, according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, those who are chronically homeless has risen by 17%, and 9,200 individuals comprising of 23% are experiencing homelessness for the first time. There is still a large number of individuals and families awaiting services. In addition, The Los Angeles Mission, Mercy Housing, and The Family Solutions Center are all nonprofit organization that collaborates with the government to provide solutions to those who are experiencing homelessness.

Developed under the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) signed into law in 2009 is the modification to the Continuum of Care program. Which "is an integrated system of care that guides and tracks homeless individuals and families"(LASHA). The HEARTH Act allowed for homeless individuals and families to receive housing before any other services were rendered, and operate programs to prevent future homelessness (Berg, 2013, p. 321). The act also encouraged nonprofits to collaborate with others in the public and private sector to address the issues of homelessness (Valero and Jang, 2016).

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently allotted 2.2 billion to the Continuum of Care program.

This funding is to be used towards effective programs that are showing success in housing homeless individuals and families (HUD.gov). Advocacy programs, bridge housing, and many other organizations that are working under the Los Angeles Continuum of Care program. Are proving that funding provided by measure H is working on housing individuals and families (LAHSA, 2019). Nevertheless, discrimination hinders the progress of minorities receiving services due to how others in society feel that homelessness is based solely on the individual and their conduct. Furthermore, the problems of receiving services can also be attributed to the homeless discriminating amongst themselves (Johnstone, 2015; Hill, 1994), and a lack of case managers to help in getting services to those in
need (Yee, 2019). When developing integrative services that will become consolidated. The focus is to remain on the targeted population of clients that will be receiving the services and not on the external factors that are involved. “The essential purpose of providing integrated services to the homeless is to see which services will provide the best outcomes for the delivery of social services, education, justice, housing, and health” (Turner and Krecsy, 2019). Homelessness is a situation that is unpredictable for anyone. At any time during someone’s life cycle, they could occur into becoming homeless, and since homelessness has become increasingly prominent in Los Angeles County. Anti-homeless ordinances used to regulate the homeless population and prevent them from sleeping in public places have become enacted in several parts of the county (Kieschnick, 2018). Targeting the vulnerable people that are basically avoided due to being shut out of any political processes. (Kieschnick, 2018). Causing the homeless to either become isolated in specific communities or not being accepted at all due to a lack of shelters.
Literature Review

In the Los Angeles County region, there are plenty of nonprofit's, non-governmental organizations and governmental entities that collaborate to deliver public services to vulnerable populations. Research has found that most government and nonprofit collaborations focus their attention on providing provisions and social services (MacIndoe, 2013, p.2). Although vulnerable, families, children, young adults and individuals become equipped with health care, housing, and other necessities. Cross-sector networks providing and managing these services face numerous challenges when collaborating with government entities, nonprofits organizations, and non-for-profit organizations. Problems linked to diversity in organizational aims; lack of communication, struggles for power, building trust, and several other factors (Babiak, and Thibault, 2009, p.117), may arise when partnering with public or private sector management. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2015) argue that "the challenge of designing and implementing effective cross-sector collaboration is daunting” (p.658), and that a reasonable expectation ought to be that success will be complicated to achieve (Fratantuono and Sarcone, 2017, p.1).

Although, there is a notable history of nonprofits collaborating with other private and public sector entities to deliver and manage public services. Research conducted by MacIndoe (2013) on the likelihood and intensity of nonprofit and government collaborations found that the characteristics of an organization can directly affect the tendency and depth of a partnership with local governments (p.288). For example, recent research found that nonprofits are cautious in their attempts of having a formal alliance with the government due to complications, and being considered as vendors who only deliver programs and community initiatives (Coupet, Albrecht, Williams, and Farrugia, 2019; Bouek, 2017; Coupet and Mc Williams, 2017; Salamon and Toepler, 2015), but seek out strategic partnerships that can provide vital resources and legitimacy(MacIndoe, 2013; Suarez and Esparza, 2017). According to Lecy and Vanslyke
(2012) nonprofit organizations have a notable history of collaborating with other private and public sector entities to deliver and manage public services by networking across sectors (p.191).  

**Challenges of Public Service Delivery Collaborations**

Public management networks consist of real-world public entities that cooperate as one in providing the delivery of public services to resolve problems that may occur internally, between, or externally outside of formal or informal organizations (Agranoff, 2006). The descriptions of collaborations by researchers vary, but all stem from the same conclusions that networks, public-private partnerships, and collaborations are formulated to solve complex situations in society that cannot easily be resolved by one organization (Gazley, 2010; Raab and Kenis, 2009, Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006; Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Bardach,1989). For example, Agranoff and Mcguire (2003) argue that collaborative management processes are usually formed and arranged to deal with issues that cannot be solved or resolved by one organization alone (p.5). Raab and Kenis (2009) describe collaborations as a “consciously created groups of three or more autonomous but interdependent organizations that strive to achieve a common goal” (p.198). Although there are disadvantages to cross-sector working relationships they are extensive amongst nonprofits and government entities and can be "supported by a combination of coercive, incentive-based, and normative influences that occur at both the individual and institutional level”(Gazley, 2010, p.52). Collaborations change over time, but for the most part managers of these collaborations continue to form friendships with those in other organizations due to nonprofits, local government, and for-profit entities having bilateral links to state and federal grants, contracts, or other collaborative agreements (Agranoff, 2006). Ostensibly, collaborations, networks, or public and private partnerships form to work on public problems. On the other hand, when nonprofit organizations contract with other governmental agencies, it is not always considered a
good thing. Provan and Lemaire (2012) found that when forming multiple networks, all participating organizations need not collaborate due to network performance being ineffective due to the organizations being widespread from each other. Also, even though collaborative governance occurs by way of networks, they may not involve cross-sector collaboration or the public sector at all. Not only is there variability in cross-sector network performance, but unintended negative consequences, poor outcomes, and failure can occur within collaborative networks (Herranz, 2010, p.312). Collaborations who contract for delivery services find it difficult to manage due to monitoring requirements and the nature of the services provided (Hilvert and Swindell, 2013, p.247).

**Trust and Conflict**

Although most cross-sector systems are organized or formed by the government and could consist of any public or private organization. The public mainly funds the assignments of the collaboration. In addition to the partnership coming together through membership or affiliation, the problem of knowing who is in or who is out of the network can cause the confusion of boundaries, loss of control, cooptation, and mission drift (Gazley, 2010,). Several researchers have found that trust is the key to collaborations (Bardach, 1998; Bryson et al., 2015, Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh, Lee et al. 2012; Gazley, 2010; Sullivan et al. 2012, Norris-Terrell, 2014). For example, Sullivan, Williams, and Jeffares (2012) argue that the "prime assignments for leaders in collaborations are building trust and productive relationships between partners and in finding ways of influencing people and organizations"(p.56). Trust building between cross-sector partnerships is a continuous and ongoing process in creating a successful collaboration (Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh, 2012; Walker and Hills, 2012). Trust builds a commitment from having a mutual understanding of a shared motivation that becomes used as a self-
reinforcing cycle that allows people to look beyond their own “personal, institutional, and jurisdictional frames of reference and perspectives towards understanding other people's interest, needs, values and constraints” (Emerson et al. 2012). Advocates who carry mutual trust for each other seek fewer resources on the part of network leadership” (Lee et al. 2012). Situations that may compromise internal and external trust between the collaborations of nonprofit and general managers are the emphasizes placed on the monitoring and reporting of financial relationships (Norris -Terrell, 2014, p.317). Failure to follow through on the mission of the collaboration or serving the self-interest of an organization or one's own, in general, can undermine the trust of others who are a part of the network (Bryson et al., 2015; Vagen and Huxham, 2012). For example, research in 2012 conducted on city managers by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) found that 68% reported a lack of mutual trust (Hilvert and Swindell, 2013, p.247). Furthermore, managers often have a tough time in dealing with the conflicts that can arise from individuals who have goals other than what is allegedly set by the collaboration (Crosby et al.2015; Vagen and Huxham, 2012, p.757). According to Mikhaylov, Esteve, and Averil (2018) having multiple public and private objectives that are non-forming to the partnership can also create tension that can lead managers into having a status quo bias due to not knowing what purposes need their attention the most. In addition, they argue that trust is grounded in the role of authority, and conflict in managing cooperation's is inevitable due to the adversarial character of management and contractual nature of the partnership (p.19). Understanding what the problem is and building commitment to the objectives and goals as a whole can create less tension as well as establish relationships by sharing resources and information that will lead to a build-up of trust with other organizations within the same network (Bryson et al., Lee et al. 2012). Cross-sector managers may
also face conflict from differing aims and expectations from working with others whose tension derive from having loyalties outside of the collaboration. Strategies, tactics, power struggles, and attempts at taking over the work or outcomes of the network can bring about problems in a partnership (Berardo, Heikkila, and Gerlak, 2014).

As Fligstein and McAdam (2012) note, endogenous and exogenous shocks are liable to exacerbate a conflict that can affect partners, resources, and the network all at once, as well as stability and upheavals that can bring about future conflict (p.np5). Lee et al. (2012) found that network managers, based on their confidence and trust of each other, have fewer worries about conflict because of shared goals and beliefs in the outcome of the collaboration as a whole (p.610). However, the outsourcing of contracts that are represented by the government and assigned to a nonprofit or any public or private organization that has caused conflict are usually customarily resolved “through contract renegotiations, a dispute resolution or the courts” (Forrer, Kee, Newcomer, and Boyer, 2010, p.476).

**Power Imbalances and Boundary limits**

Purdy and Jones (2012) conducted a study on power in collaborative governance and found that force is necessary to convene stakeholders participating in a collaboration, but the government tries to find a way to be in control of the process. They also argue that without authority, the common goal or shared issue that has brought the collaboration together would not be put to rest or achieved even if participants of the group reached a consensus (p.410).

Additional research has also found that managers who obtain power in cross-sector collaborations are described “as the inability of individual actors to influence collective decisions of the partnership to their advantage” (Purdy and Jones, 2012, Torting et al, 2012). In a study
conducted by Dewulf and Elbers (2018) it was found that imbalances can bring forth an abundance of undesirable consequences such as actors with low power considered to be co-opted, swept aside, avoided, over-ruled, or wholly omitted by parties with dominance over a cross-sector partnership (p.1). With the abundance of organizations, actors, and individuals involved, that can be a part of an alliance. The deficiency of having a single organizational hierarchy and a shared authority relationship only adds to the complexity of managing cross-sector collaborations (Vangen and Huxham, 2012, p.734).

Shared power in cross-sector management can come from different sources within a partnership, and invoking power sits uncomfortably with the thought of many partners having a say in decision making. Each form of governance from a public or private sector can lead a network, partnership, or collaboration (Hilvert and Swindell, 2013, p.241). However, boundary limitations produce challenges that can threaten the identity of an organization (Proulx, Hagar, and Klien, 2014, p. 748), due to the difficulties of power imbalances amongst cross-sector collaborations causing resentment and uncertainty (Babiak, and Thibault, 2009). Some leaders of the association may have more power than others (Crosby et al. 2015). Governance structures are often subject to change and are fashioned by regulatory and legal procedures, which makes collaborations harder to manage behind changes in partnerships (Cornforth, Hayes, and Vangen, 2015; Stone, Crosby, and Bryson, 2013). For example, Bryson et al. (2015) argue that nonprofit organizations can have authority and strength because of ties and connections with other constituencies and are likely to perform well in dealing with sophisticated services.

According to Babiak and Thibault (2009), for-profits, although they may supply goods and services internal struggles still exist behind managers wanting to obtain power over others continually without relinquishing autonomy or share in decision-making with other organizations.
Also, even though power imbalances are a co-issue in cross-sector collaborations. It is suggested by Bryson et al. (2015) that those who lead networks should learn to work through their power struggle indifferences if they intend to organize the "inclusive processes and structures that collaboration requires" (p.1). If power imbalances are not worked through individual and group interests can outweigh the collaboration because of managerial instability and chaos (Stone et al., 2013). To this end, most partners who collaborate with different sectors have managerial values, beliefs, and expectations that can force a nonprofit into unfortunate situations that may be incompatible for the organization (Babiak and Thibault, 2009, p.120). However, nonprofit managers also have certain expectations of their own in accepting a partnership with others. These expectations concern "the mission, training, experiential history, organizational and policy environment, and donor expectation" (Macondo, 2013; Gazley, 2010, p.52). In the reduction of a nonprofits autonomy to make decisions. Research has also found that problems for the structure of the organization’s, human resource management, and program delivery can begin to surface (Sowa, 2009, p.1022). In turn, Babiak and Thibault (2009) argue that if organizations who collaborated across sectors were to negotiate their values and mission during the process of creating a partnership, they could accomplish their values and mission during the process of creating a partnership, as well as the objectives of their relationship.

In addition, research by Hilvert and Swindell (2013) turf protection struggles are avoidable if managers would take time to train their skilled or talented employees on public jurisdictions and the citizens they represent (p.251). Furthermore, Purdy and Jones (2012) argue that if a power assessment of participants involved in collaboration were to be conducted it "could reveal mistaken beliefs, hidden resources of power that may reduce overconfidently, and any defensive or domineering behaviors" (p.415). Therefore, it is best to negotiate away from the presence of the
public eye and others who are a part of the cooperation so that more direct appeals could be made to those who are in authority (Dewulf and Elbers, 2018, p.9).

**Accountability and Performance Measures**

Forrer, Kee, Newcomer, and Boyer (2010) argue that accountability is the foundation of public management, and civil liability has mainly been about control. Also, since the people do not elect public managers, it is left up to elected officials to ensure that general managers serve the needs of the citizens. They also argue that public and private partnerships can be affected if the services of the cross-sector network do not meet the social and environmental needs of the people. Furthermore, they argue that it’s hard for citizens to sustain public trust in government and even harder to obtain a general interest in the delivery of multi-sector public services (Pp. 477-480). In similar research conducted by Norris (2014) found that government and nonprofit relationships with examples of high profile unethical and inappropriate behavior has increased the demand for accountability and performance measures while stressing the need for better leadership that focuses on the mission of the nonprofit and the needs of the people in the community. Hilvert and Swindell (2013) found that communities that are involved with networks and service delivery do not do a well enough job when it comes to monitoring and managing the problems and challenges that cross-sector managing entails. Facing political pressures, and budgetary constraints from private entities who negotiate public contracts and hold bargaining positions of high priority can bring forth the erosion of accountability between citizens and those who provide public services (p.251).
Mission Drift, and Free Riding

Bielefeld (2009) found that organizational change can cause severe issues of mission drift due to dominating financial goals or social mandates that have changed. Further research has found that organizations tend to free ride off of the work of other participants of a partnership so that they can reap the benefits without having to put in work themselves (Hilvert, and Swindell, 2013 p.244). Research conducted by Herlin (2015) on commercial and nonprofit collaborations found that nonprofits can lose their distinctiveness and philanthropic orientation due to mission drift activities that can revert time and resources away from the organization, which in turn can lead to participant stakeholders of the partnership to rescind on their support for the organization (p.829). In turn, it was found that overlap and the overall goals of an organization can decrease the cause of mission drift and help the nonprofits characteristics stay in place without being questioned and that nonprofits should only connect with partners that support the mission of the organization (Herlin, 2015, p. 832). Also, to protect the identity and legitimacy of the organization as well as to avoid mission drift. Nonprofits should try to stay in control of a social-based partnership due to being less of a hassle to manage (Herlin, 2015, p. 848).

However, Hilvert and Swindell (2013) argue that developing joint service delivery contracts can cost and are challenging to manage and monitor. Therefore, the challenge with any cross-sector network that managers face is to influence all involved to stay committed to the joint effort of the project while dissuading others from free-riding, if not, the partnership tends to fall apart (p.247). Free riding can also bring about structural atrophy were managers would rely heavily upon one partner of the collaboration to provide their time and resources instead of going out and finding other partners. (Babiak and Thibault, 2009, p.120). In a similar study by Ramus
and Vaccaro (2017), they found that social accounting cannot prevent a mission drift from happening, but it can supplement and engage stakeholders into conversating. Furthermore, they argue that mission drift is associated with the organization's core values, strategies, and objectives, which merely makes it complicated to prevent mission drift from happening (p.308-309). However, in research conducted by De Briun, Shaw, and Lewis (2017) found that studies on mission drift are mild "democratic outcomes of co-creation and co-production processes"(p.577). They also found that mission drift is most likely to boost the overall social impact of a partnership. In a similar research, it is argued that a mission spoken of in high regard and appreciated by society is expected to maintain the trust of its stakeholders. Which, in turn, can help to divert any mission drift from occurring. The public's perception of a nonprofit's mission is what defines the organization to its stakeholders. Therefore, before any nonprofit cross-sector collaboration takes place, it is argued that the nonprofit and the cooperation should have a clear mission statement for their partnership (Al, Leach, and March, 2014, p.670).

**Funding Collaborative Networks**

Research has found that both public and private organizations operate in a marketplace setting where they vie with each other for client, and financial resources when nonprofits look to build a government alliance, they often look forward to the government paying for the services rendered which are typically handed off by the public sector as transfer payments(Sowa, 2009, p.1015). These payments are essential for a nonprofit to operate. On the other hand, governments who face privatization often form strategic alliances with nonprofit organizations because of trust and the ability to get more done (Coupet, Albrecht, Williams, and Farruggia, 2019, p.4). In addition, due to economic situations (Al -Tabba et al., 2014) found that nonprofits seeking similar missions are vying for limited collaborations due to businesses being more selective in
creating a partnership. The cost of establishing the organization because of the value of the transaction outweighing the preferred outcomes. Although most nonprofit and public partnerships are funded by the government and receive funding on a regular basis, nonprofits still may face challenges when needing government support if they have not received it before (Suarez, 2011, p.308). Further research found that "public agencies provide essential resources for many nonprofits to carry out their mission"(Saurez, 2011, p. 309), and that grants and contracts can provide a political process that can lead to policymakers. However, Suarez (2011) also argues that government grants and contracts can hinder and weaken nonprofit autonomy, professionalize nonprofit boards, and lessen community engagement while causing goal displacement. In a similar study, McIndoe (2013) found that nonprofit organizations that accomplish better resource diversification by engaging in new revenue resources can practically eliminate being unsure of their funding environment. McIndoe also found that nonprofit organizations can create new sources of revenue while facilitating better partnerships (p.285). In turn, although nonprofit and local governments partnerships can have positive outcomes for each other, they are still entrenched in a sophisticated organizational, resource, and institutional environment (McIndoe, 2013, p.291). According to Gazley (2010) it was found that funding and environmental uncertainty due to collaborative activities can begin the process of a strategic response. However, research conducted by Smith and Phillips (2016), found that public funding is sparse due to competition in public and private sectors vying for grants and contracts in social services against for-profit entities, and that government responsibilities are lacking in their services of programs and institutions due to having a sparse budget. They argue that due to a lack of personal negotiation skills and resources, nonprofits during this current day and age will need to raise a large amount of capital from either government bonds or private philanthropy, foundations,
and individual fundraising or the private market to combat the high amount of upfront cost of delivering collaborative public services (p.67-69). Furthermore, they found that the uncertainty and fluctuation of human services will continue due to funding changes, government regulations, and program environments. Besides, although funding has become competitive, they argue that governments and private foundations are still looking forward to the development of more collaborations (Smith and Phillips, 2016, p.71-73). Sowa (2009) found that although nonprofit and public organizations compete for financial resources, nonprofits need to take steps that will secure their services so that they can continue to meet their service needs and be able to continue to operate (p.1015).

**Goals, Hierarchical, and Communication**

It is argued by the definition that "goals serve to direct what partners aspire to achieve for themselves and collectively" (Vangen and Huxem, 2013, p.734). Reaching the shared goals of collaboration can be difficult if everyone that is a part of the partnership is not on the same link. Vagen and Huxam (2013) found that having "too much homogeneity in goals" can make organizations unwilling to depart with any information that they may have, and can lead to organizations searching for unwanted and confusing outcomes. They argue that the assumption of common goals reached by a partnership is required for the success of collaboration and that every one that is a part of the network should agree upon reaching them (p.732). Moreover, those in partnerships may not know what the specific goals are that they are trying to achieve, and the leadership of the network may have different values and an uncertainty of what their benefits are due to having their specific aspirations. Also, if serving on a nonprofit board, public service managers may be in a better position to ease any negotiations that may take place between nonprofit and local government partnerships while serving as a bridge when shared goals are
involved even if different cultures persist (McIndoe, 2013, p. 285). In contrast, while goals derived from external causes can contribute to diversity, there can be times when the external objectives are sufficiently in agreement with the purposes of the other members involved with the collaboration. The congruence alone can ease members into potentially recognizing their own productive negotiations (Vangen and Huxham, 2012, p.75).

Further research by Sipovac, Erakovich, and Anderson (2013) found that “values drive behavior” and to achieve “synergistic effects”, each partner's values must be communicated implicitly” across the collaboration to be able to search for new ideas while sharing solutions, and discuss objectives and outcomes (p.169). In addition, implementing a new plan of communication innovation to sway the behavior of others must differ from any communication that is already in existence (Canker and Petkovsek, 2013). Or else collaborative actions will be hard to obtain and difficult to assess if common goals and the reasons for moving into effect are not explicitly clear. Therefore, implying conventional wisdom makes it necessary to be lucid about the objectives of the partnership if working together to accomplish operational policies (Emerson et al, 2012, p17). Goals, when portrayed as hierarchical systems, can relate to some objectives that were once considered lower-level outcomes can become a top priority leading to the achievement of a higher level-one. Besides, all goals involving a partnership, network, or collaboration will have some form of hierarchy between their goal.

Nevertheless, the nature of the goals cannot be frequently determined. So, some goals may be a priority for one organization but not a priority for another. For example, if the organization had hidden goals or a pseudo interest, then it could lead to diversity. Plus, an “organization can also portray false intentions to deceive the other partners from knowing that they are pursuing the same objectives ” (Vangen and Huxham, 2012, p.750). Nevertheless, many argue that practical
cooperation’s resolve from inter-organizational conduct from those within the network who share the same goals and values, communicate with each other, settle conflicts, and share in “interest-based versus position-based –bargaining, trust, and learning” (Herranz, 2010, p. 326). The idea is that collaborative networks that work together on social problems will learn to change their attitudes and their way of thinking as being only one and switch to using we instead of them and us which is a significant challenge for public, private, and nonprofits due to the mixing of each other’s values (Mikhaylov et al., 2018, p.14).

**Leadership and Decision-making**

Research has found that organizations are firmly attached within specific policy contexts, and for the only way to get a grasp of the decision-making process is to have a clear understanding of the policy context (Mosley, 2014, p.295). Also, many of the decisions involving cross-sector networks are developed over the contesting of framed ideals that have been selected and organized to be debated and made sense of over a difficult situation to be analyzed. These complicated situations become fashioned into short narratives or metaphors expressed clearly or vaguely, while providing information on how the complex reality was created and leading to a standing point in figuring out a solution to the problem (Mikhaylov et al., 2018, p. 9). In addition, rules define how a decision within a partnership is handed down. Any verbally agreed upon arrangements are to be mentioned at the beginning of the meeting. During the meeting, action points should be explained and decided upon, as well as any officially signed agreements. Any assigned decisions could be based on the allocation of resources and their usefulness to the partnership while the conclusions of resource control become based on the resources of others that may be utilized or made available to the organization (Dewulf and Elbers, 2018, p.9). In the same manner, since all partnerships do not make decisions, their deliberations can be considered as reached agreements that bring forth
action (Agranoff, 2006, p.59). Furthermore, leadership involving collaborations can become viewed as an outside momentum; a necessary component for the outgrowth of a network. Besides, certain roles that involve leadership are crucial at the beginning while other roles are seemingly adverse during moments of conflict or deliberation (Emerson et al. 2012, p. 15). Moreover, Suarez (2009) argue that if leadership credibility is based on the proven steps of business expertise, then the experience and credentials of managers should be copious among leaders and if a managers actions are based on their knowledge, then they should continue to be in a leadership position (p.699). He also argues that nonprofit managing strategies can face severe consequences when interacting with public agencies (p.308). In turn, research conducted by Babiak and Thibault (2009) found that due to the diversity of partners involved in collaborations make it a challenge to manage across- sectors. They explain that the organization's location, unexplainable goals, and environmental challenges that show up in unclear performance measures make it clear that collaborations are hard to manage(p119). Therefore, if a power assessment of participants involved in collaboration was to be conducted it "could reveal mistaken beliefs, and hidden resources of power that may reduce overconfidently, and any defensive or domineering behaviors"(Purdy and Jones, 2012, p.415). In similarity, Dewulf and Elbers (2018) support that power by corporate decision-makers is one of the core reasons why collaborative partnerships exist. Except for that power in decision making can also be understood as individual actors who want to have influence or sway over others. Instead of being in agreement with each other and coming together to solve an issue. Different actors may desire more power to make decisions so that they can set the rules of the partnership. However, this can cause a communication issue with others involved in the collaboration due to withholding needed information.
**Research Question and Aim**

How can government and nonprofit collaborative network leadership effectively communicate together to provide programs and services that can be measured and evaluated for their effectiveness?

The aim of this research is to find ways to ameliorate the communication and program services that are offered by nonprofit and government collaborative networks who work with diverse homeless vulnerable populations. The purpose will be to describe the current homelessness epidemic that has overwhelmingly crowded the County of Los Angeles and the challenges that are faced by partnering networks working together to provide multiple services. The goal is to provide recommendations for nonprofit organizations, government entities, and non-government organizations who participate in cross-sector management. These recommendations will help in the improvement of communication and lack of performance measures faced by those in leadership positions while establishing better programs and equality in services. This research will assist in organizations strategic planning and the creating of effective programs and housing strategies for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.
Theoretical Frameworks

Cross-Sector Collaborations and The Common Ground Model

The concept of the common ground model is to provide housing and services for individuals and families that are low income or experiencing homelessness by utilizing a holistic approach. The common ground model seeks to eliminate homelessness by providing permanent housing and supportive services (Common Ground, 2010). Converted disguised buildings are converted into housing units that offer employment, medical services, and twenty-four-hour assistance. Cross-sector collaborations are arguably the fundamental foundation for which the Common Ground Model stands upon with its main focus set on how relationships form and began to evolve. “The Common Ground Model identifies cross-sector partnerships as the most appropriate and effective mechanism to deliver solutions to the homelessness” (Mc Donald, 2014).

Grounded Theory

The ground theory is arguably an ethnographer’s attempt to build or test a set of theoretical propositions based on their fieldwork and the process of analytic induction in conducting qualitative research. The Collected data is formulated into a hypothesis and experimented with the attempt to develop the premise into a theory (Seigel, 2009).

Conflict Theory

Based on inequality, conflict view pictures society as a diverse hodgepodge of groups that hold different forms of political power. These groups can be fashioned in any way. From students to professionals or workers to owners. They often assert their political ability to advance their social standing or enhance their economic stability. Therefore, criminal laws are created and established to separate the haves from the have nots and to protect the positions and power of the upper-class (Seigel, 2009). Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are often classified as being weak and destitute of having their necessities. Which, according to Siegel, due to the "denial of physical needs and obligations, and impediments to self-determination can lead to conflict”(p.17). Conflict theory stresses that wealth in a capitalistic society is earned by working hard, determination, and education. Individuals and families that are better off see those experiencing homelessness as people who are
unmotivated and looking for handouts (Frances, 2018). Although services are being provided to families and individuals by collaborative networks. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles county are growing at a steady pace due to a rise in evictions, low -income, and lack of employment. In the city of Los Angeles, there are many families and individuals who live in overcrowded shelters or call their vehicle home.

Conflict among collaborative networks often revolves around issues of communication and the seeking of one's own company or organizations agenda. Although collaborative networks seem as if they are working together to provide a solution to a problem, conflict often arises among partners (Agranoff, 2006). Even as partner networks receive money from citizen enacted homeless policies, several citizens and city council members have expressed anger due to the lack of results from Measure H (Yee, 2019).

**Resource Dependency Theory**

Resource dependency theory indicates the reasons collaborative networks come together are situated from the causes of having little to no resources. Therefore, organizations seek to establish relationships with other organizations or agencies that can provide the necessary properties. Once partnerships are formed, attitudes, behavior, and structure of an organization change to maintain the acquired external resources that are being offered. In turn, allowing the organization to sustain in an environment that lacks certainty. Also, allowing power over the uncertain environment to be control by one or several actors (Oliver and Ebers 1998).
Research Design

Research approach

This research proposal will be an exploratory and descriptive mix methods approach of qualitative and quantitative collected data utilizing ethnography and participant observation techniques. Ethnographic research allows the researcher to hang around and obtain a better understanding of how those experiencing homelessness interact with themselves and others while trying to receive services. Also, it will enable the researcher to assess the services offered from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) partner networks. Further analysis from quantitative data of the Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (LA CoC HMIS) will provide numerical data information on individuals, families, and minority groups who are within their housing tracking system. Following Thomas (1993), to begin an ethnography study one must have a passion for investigating an injustice, rather it be social control, power, racism, stratification, or resources that illustrate the withholding of cultural existence (p.36). Therefore, the values and missions of each partnership that work together to provide public service delivery to those experiencing homelessness will be assessed on their standards of operation.

Design

Utilizing ethnography for this research proposal will allow for the researcher to visit collaborative networks and vulnerable homeless populations within the different demographic areas of Los Angeles County. Ethnographic studies rely on intelligence gathered from participant observation to become more aware of the relationships that go on between individuals, groups, and institutions that help in the creation and continuance of social reality (C. Nachmias, D. Nachmias, and DeWaard, 2015, p.242). Information gathered from collaborative networks across the Los Angeles County area will be analyzed to examine the programs and services offered. Providing valuable insight for the improvement of housing programs and services. Participant researchers view their work relevance and the identity of how close it is with the needs and concerns of their subjects of study. Using mentally distinctive perceptions to resolve issues with an inquiry in the hopes of making changes to existing situations. Participant researchers become
active in their investigations by incorporating their research subjects into their study by gaining and sharing knowledge. They do not act passive but become involved in confronting the problem that directly relates to their research subjects. Instead of debating the truth, participant-observers connect with their subjects and not what will please external policymakers (Thomas, 1993) making ethnography an excellent choice of methodology for this particular research. Not only does it provide a voice for the vulnerable populations of Los Angeles County. It will lead to actions in the improvement of communications, programs, and public service delivery offered to vulnerable homeless populations within Los Angeles County.

**Timeframe**

The research will be a twelve-month longitudinal study looking into the challenges that are faced by collaborative networks. Partnerships that provide public service delivery to the diverse, vulnerable populations within Los Angeles County over time. Numerical data from the LA CoC HMIS will provide a quantitative data analysis of individuals, families, and minorities who have been rendered services, or been accepted into housing programs. The information gathered from this analysis will help in assessing the effectiveness of the current housing programs and services being offered by partnership networks throughout Los Angeles County.

**Methodology**

Ethnographic field research will be the primary source of research for this proposal. Ethnography’s capacity to hold processes and connect what people say with what they do in living their everyday life. It opens the door for ethnography to be utilized as a valuable tool (Hoolachan, J. 2016). By visiting networks, such as the LAHSA and PATH that have been formed to address the issues of homelessness, the researcher will be able to grasp an understanding of the criteria and processes of how collaborative organizations are managed and operate.
Data Collection

Utilizing the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority published public records and The Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (LA CoC HMIS), as well as data collected from their collaborating nonprofit agencies such as PATH, The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), and LA Family Housing (LAFH). The researcher will focus his/her analysis on services offered by these organizations. Also, a review of data retrieved by these sources will provide information on the services that are provided to African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities.

Interviews

Casual conversation interviews will commence by intermingling with individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in different demographic areas of Los Angeles County. Utilizing participant observation as a complete participant allows the researcher the closest opportunity to retrieve data on the researcher’s subjects of interest. By anticipating attachment to the research subjects and adapting to their environment, the researcher will establish the trust of diverse ethnic and minority groups that are often marginalized. Approaching and conversating with others who are experiencing homelessness will provide a segue for conversations to take place on how services are being initiated or provided among the researcher networks of interest.

Often families and individuals experiencing homelessness seeking services are applying for basic necessities such as healthcare, housing vouchers, and nourishment.

However, due to a lack of caseworkers and funding. The waiting period to receive services is often long in duration. Therefore, holding casual conversations with informants of minority groups of interest will provide primary information on the unattended services and needs of an often-marginalized population of society. Also, the intended services and programs needed for those experiencing homelessness will vary per demographic area of Los Angeles County.
Utilizing participant observation as a complete participant allows the researcher the closest opportunity to retrieve data on the researcher’s subjects of interest. Complete participation “makes possible the study of inaccessible groups or groups that do not reveal to outsiders’ certain aspects of their lives” (C. Nachmias, D. Nachmias, and DeWaard, 2015, p.243). Although some information may be vague, all information given will be analyzed accordingly.

**Archival Records**

Publicly published archival data gathered from the LAHSA, LA CoC HMIS and partnership organizations will be analyzed along with other sources of public information to assess the individual demographic characteristics of the vulnerable populations that are served. As well as the reliability and effectiveness of current and previous programs and services. The data retrieved from these organizations will also be analyzed to comprehend the mission and values of each establishment and how they provide their services to those experiencing homelessness. How these organizations are managed and how they communicate with each other. How housing, healthcare, mental health services, jobs, and job training for racial and an ethnic vulnerable population in Los Angeles County are provided as well as how often these services are being sought after within each demographic area. Being that LAHSA and LA CoC HMIS both track individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Annual quantitative data from both organizations will offer an abundance of information on the effectiveness of newly implemented programs and services over time. The number of individuals and families who have successfully completed a program or received services such as job training, mental health, healthcare, and substance abuse treatment.
Analysis

Conducting ethnographic fieldwork as a complete participant allows for a large amount of data to be collected. The information from the sources of the researcher’s networks of interest will be vague in response due to the sensitive nature of the subjects in question. Therefore, inductive coding will be used in processing data collected from the researcher’s networks of interest, such as the LAHSA, LA CoC HMIS, and their partnering systems. Based on the responses derived from the collected data. The following data of the analysis process derived from Varda, Shoup, and Miller (2012) will be used to code and categorize empirical findings of topics related to the researcher’s networks of interest. After the data has been refined a hypothesis will be formulated as the research progresses. An overview of collected data on the practices of leadership and communication efforts with reaching other partners will be analyzed for any regularities, themes or patterns.

The operation of effective partnerships that emphasize the roles and responsibilities of a network. The established communication channels to improve coordination along with the mechanism that can monitor the activities of everyone who is involved. Is crucial in collaborating to provide public services, but hard to achieve when communication between partnerships is not routinized but rather relational (Marie, p.26, 2009). At the existence of emerging themes or patterns within the data, as they are applied theoretically. Further analysis of the data will help in identifying existing challenges that collaborative networks face involving communication and performance measures. Allowing for the researcher to make recommendations based on the findings of this research

Discussion

Nonprofit and public sector collaborations are perceived as essential in providing public services. Giving voice to diverse racial and ethnic groups experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County by advocating for equality and better communication efforts between collaborative networks is paramount. As the homeless crisis in Los Angeles County continues to reach unforeseen heights. Nonprofit and public sector leadership is crucial in collaborating to
deliver human services. Public administration establishes the grounds for public policies that are written to ease the burden of homelessness. As more procedures are enacted to resolve homelessness in Los Angeles County. Nonprofit organizations are said to be in the best position to lead diverse coordination in providing public service coordination’s involving other stakeholders (Valero and Jang, 2016). By adding recommendations to the current literature on collaborative networks that face challenges in communicating and performance measures. It may help to improve the strategic planning of collaborations communicating channels and create compelling, measurable programs.

Likely limitations to this study, the amount of time invested to become familiar with the researcher’s subjects of interest. Researchers have to be careful not to impose questions that may arouse suspicion of them becoming exposed. The loss of data may occur due to a lack of recording or writing notes from conversing and can lead to bias or distortions due to memory lapse (C. Nachmias, D. Nachmias, and DeWaard, 2015, p.250). When conducting fieldwork as a complete participant, the researcher has to be careful of any hidden dangers or situations that may bring about harm to him or herself. However, to fulfill their quest, they would have to become thoroughly involved in the processes of obtaining any services that are offered to those experiencing homelessness. This means carrying themselves as someone who is homeless and in dire need of housing, which may require the researcher to become entangled among others who are in their surrounding environment. Being near research subjects can bring about unwanted quarrels from emotional instability when specific actions are being sought. Therefore, it would be necessary for the researcher to prepare themselves mentally and physically for the levels of stress that he/she is bound to endure during this study.
Research Gap

Several cross-sector collaborative networks have been established to provide services and housing to those who are experiencing homelessness. Often government entities rely on nonprofits to fill in the gaps of delivering services that they may not offer themselves. Government funding is provided to create programs and services that are meant to lead those who are experiencing homelessness into the housing and continuum of care programs throughout Los Angeles County. However, for cross-sector collaborations to be a useful resource, there needs to be a clear and precise understanding of communication established between those in managerial and leadership positions. Although programs have been created, not enough research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the programs offered through collaborative networks. Also, performance measures and the equality of services is vital to the operation of partnership networks. Therefore, learning the most effective way to bolster or establish balance in services to minorities and African–Americans and performance measures requires further research.
Ethical Dilemma

Ethical dilemmas that may arise from complete participant observation is the use of deception and lack of confidentiality. Researchers subjects of interest may believe that the researcher has ties to political affiliations that are able to change policies or current situations (C. Nachmias, D. Nachmias, and DeWaard, 2015, p.256). Although the initial research is designed to look into the challenges that collaborative networks face when providing services to vulnerable homeless populations. Due to the sensitive nature of the study involving human subjects. The researcher has to acquire the permission of his/her institutional review board (IRB) before the study can begin. All other federal regulations and guidelines set forth by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services in regard to human subjects and their invasion of privacy will be followed. However, complete participant observation doesn’t allow for questions to be thought of in advance, so there is bound to be some deception involved once the research has begun and ended. An ethically questionable dilemma which there is no wrong or right answer for either way consists of the researcher conducting research involving fraud. (C. Nachmias, D. Nachmias, and DeWaard, 2015, p.67).
Conclusion and Recommendations

In recent years there have been numerous homeless initiatives that have been voted in by the citizens of Los Angeles County. Measure H provided funding for organizations to build housing units and provide supportive services through collaboration with public and nonprofit organizations. Before Measure H and Proposition HHH, The HEARTH Act, which was an amendment to the McKinney- Vento Homeless Assistance program known as the Rapid Rehousing Program introduced and signed into law in 2009.

However, the public outcry to politicians and governmental entities is that there are not enough services offered or housing units being built. As homelessness continues to become a problem for many due to unforeseen circumstances. Officials who hold government positions, as well as private funders over the years, have been supporting public and nonprofit collaborations in the hope of improving public services. To date, mental health, substance abuse treatment, healthcare, job training, and placement, as well as housing, are provided by networks that collaborate across sectors to deliver public services.

Nevertheless, a lack of communication and accountability hinder the processes of receiving supportive services being rendered and are the causes of the shortcomings that are obstructing individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Supportive services for African American and minorities hoping to receive assistance are often put on hold. This is due to a lack of funding or resources that are not available. These and many other situations are the challenges that cross-sector networks face in delivering public service.

To deliver better programs and services, recommendations in providing programs that are based on the logic model concept utilizing inputs, or resources, outputs, and outcomes. Cross-sector networks can be evaluated on their effectiveness and accountability. For example,
using Shakman’s (2015) “logic model workshop tool kit.” The objective of implementing a program or policy requires having a goal; therefore, utilizing a logic model supports the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of a program (p.11).

One of the main challenges that collaborative networks face is accountability. To design an effective plan that will provide performance measures for accountability requires a theory of change. The method of adjustment is “your organizational program strategy” (Allison and Kaye, 2015, p.109). Therefore, developing a strategic plan that will allow for the leadership of each cooperating organization to provide input in the decision-making process. Each program has to have a goal using SMART objectives and a clear understanding of how the programs will be implemented. For example, identifying a need, substance abuse, intervention method counseling, and treatment. Outcome overcoming the addiction. Hypothesis= If drug prevention methods are given to individuals who suffer from drug abuse, then they will overcome their addiction to drugs. The challenge would be to prevent the future use of drugs after being counseled and treated over six months.

Collaborations communicating with each other during times of need is another major issue for managing across sectors. Without proper communication channels being established beforehand, receiving resources can become a problem. Therefore, the following recommendations are sited:

- “Managers should work with staff and elected officials to create a supportive environment” (Hilvert and Swindell, p. 251). As the network moves forward in its endeavors, this will provide effective leadership and excellent communication.
- Clarity and flexibility of the expectations of the partnership should be established during the initial stages of the collaboration with all stakeholders (Forrer et al., 2010).
• Managers of collaborations should establish regular meetings as often as possible to discuss and resolve any issues regarding the partnership (Bryson et al., 2010).
• Developing a social network can bring corresponding organizations together without any blocks, hindrances, or constraints that are established by cross-sectoral boundaries (Kapucu, 2006).

With the plethora of nonprofit organizations, government entities, non-government entities and public sector collaborations that provide public service delivery. Managing a cross-sectors is a difficult and complex process, having a communication structure that can adhere to all stakeholders is the key to a successful network.
References


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