Editorial

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Editor's Note for Issue 11(1)

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A common, if simplistic, way of categorizing nonprofit organizations is to divide them into service producing versus advocacy organizations. The implication of this bifurcation is that some nonprofits focus solely on service delivery, while others are exclusively active in the policymaking arena. The first three articles in this issue demonstrate that policy-related activity in the nonprofit sector is far more nuanced than that, and is distributed among such diverse fields as think tanks, business and professional associations, and philanthropic foundations.

The first article, by Renee Irvin, studies the field of think tanks, nonprofit organizations that generate research and ideas that influence public policy decision making. Specifically, Irvin examines the differences between left- and right-leaning think tanks that were engaged in tax policy issues prior to the passage of the U.S. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, and she considers a set of reforms that could bring greater balance to this field, especially in terms of the influence of high wealth donors.

The second article, by Marina Saitgalina, Lisa Dicke and Patricia Birungi, examines the political involvement of trade and professional membership associations, specifically the likelihood that such associations engage in advocacy, lobbying, grassroots activity and Political Action Committees. Based on analysis of survey data from the American Society of Association Executives, they find wide variation in practices and identify key factors that determine such engagement, including association size, diversification of income sources, and field of service.

The third article, by Alexandra Williamson and Belinda Luke, analyzes the advocacy, agenda-setting and public policy foci of private philanthropic foundations in Australia, through exclusive interviews and scrutiny of publicly available data. Contrary to impressions based on a few highly visible actors, the authors find that these institutions tend to eschew a visible public presence in favor of more subtle policy-influencing activity that they describe as “quiet philanthropy”.

The fourth paper in this issue, by Christopher Pallas and Mark Sidel, moves to the issue of the contemporary decline in donor support of International NGOs and

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how donor organizations can better protect against harms to local civil society organizations caused by the withdrawal or reduction of their funding. Based on intensive examination of recent research literature, the authors argue for strategies to build the legal framework of local civil society, facilitate local philanthropy and establish an infrastructure for national government support.

The final research paper in this issue, by Filip Wijkstrom, Ebba Hendrekson, Fredrik Andersson and Michael Ford, also concerns funding. It offers a fascinating comparison of school reform initiatives in Sweden and in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as both jurisdictions implemented comparable voucher programs to finance their schools. The two jurisdictions experienced markedly different institutional results, however, with Milwaukee underwriting the growth of independent, largely religious nonprofit schools, while Sweden primarily witnessed an increase in for-profit providers. The authors demonstrate the importance of context, i. e., the character of local civil society, in determining the resulting changes in the two systems.

In our feature section, Stuart Mendel writes a review of a recent book, *The Logic of Public-Private Partnerships* by Graeme Hodge and Carsten Greve. Mendel finds value in the book but criticizes its neglect of the role of nonprofit organizations in PPPs in the United States.

Finally, I would like to alert readers to the fact that I am planning to step down as editor-in-chief of *Nonprofit Policy Forum* this year, and that we have a search underway for my successor. If you have an interest in applying or want to nominate someone, please contact the chair of the search committee, Dr. Elizabeth Boris, at E-mail: eboris@urban.org I will offer some reflections on my tenure as founding editor of this journal, in my final issue as editor, hopefully later this year.

As always, I hope you enjoy reading this issue and will think of *Nonprofit Policy Forum* for publishing your future research on the relationships between the nonprofit sector and public policy and for keeping abreast of contemporary research in this field.