Challenges facing Volunteer-Managed Nonprofit Organizations with Non-Bureaucratic Governance and Non-Hierarchical Structures

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education Ontario Institute of Studies in Education University of Toronto

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Abstract

Volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations (VNPOs) are defined as nonprofit organizations managed exclusively by volunteers without paid-staff. There is no well-recognized theory describing how to govern or structure VNPOs, despite their significance in the social economy. This study argues non-bureaucratic governance and non-hierarchical structures are appropriate for some VNPOs. Rothschild-Whitt (1979) proposes six significant challenges for organizations with non-bureaucratic governance. Using multiple case-study methodology, the magnitude of these challenges was assessed in three VNPOs adopting non-bureaucratic governance and non-hierarchical structure. Four challenges, namely, time, homogeneity, emotional intensity, and individual differences, did not adversely affect the selected VNPOs. Two challenges, namely, nondemocratic individuals and environmental constraints, remained obstacles for the selected VNPOs. Five other challenges to non-bureaucratic governance specific to VNPOs were also identified and discussed, specifically, succession planning and recruitment, task completion, minimal socialization, pressure to achieve consensus, and administrative issues. Insights from such studies may help to better manage non-bureaucratic/non-hierarchical VNPOs.
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The start of a VNPO, which I am grateful to be part of, was the motivation for this thesis and continued to give this project purpose. Thank you to the Towards Ahimsa Inc. team.

My family, Riverdale and Rean, endured the most and felt the brunt of my trials and tribulations over the last two years, thank you. I thank my parents who generously helped me manage my life so I could write—thank you Mom and Dad, your love is forever appreciated. Thank you Atam for showing me direction and supporting me always—this project is dedicated to you.

To my babes, who have had to hear the most excuses for why I couldn’t play with them right then and there, sorry and thank you. And to my biggest fan, thank you for being my catalyst, my sounding board, my logic, my therapist, and my love…this project has meaning because of you.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... iii
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................... v
List of Figures ..................................................................................................................... vi
List of Appendices ............................................................................................................. vii

Chapter

1. **Rational** ....................................................................................................................... 1

2. **Volunteer-Managed Nonprofit Organizations** ......................................................... 4
   - Overview of Terminology
   - Bureaucracy and Non-bureaucracy
   - Organizational Theory: Governance and Structure
   - Governance and Structure Specific to VNPOs
   - Challenges that Inhibit Non-Bureaucratic Governance
   - Effective Management of Challenges
   - Gaps in Research

3. **Case Study Methodology** .......................................................................................... 30
   - Ethical Considerations
   - Recruitment
   - Data Collection
   - Data Analysis

4. **Results** ....................................................................................................................... 37
   - Profiles of Case Studies
   - Research Findings
   - Summary

5. **Discussion** ................................................................................................................. 61
   - Hybrid Organizations
   - Putting the Challenges into Perspective
   - Implications for Practice
   - Challenges that Inhibit Non-Bureaucratic Governance in VNPOs
   - Limitations of the Study
   - Future Research
   - Conclusions

References ............................................................................................................................ 83
Appendices .......................................................................................................................... 90
List of Tables

Table 1. Overview of Terminology
Table 2. Variations in complex organizations
Table 3. Comparing values of VNPOs to bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic governance
Table 4. Specifics of data collected
Table 5. Summary of research findings
Table 6. Implications for practice intended for non-bureaucratic VNPOs
List of Figures

Figure 1: Spectrum of organizational theories
Figure 2: Pyramidal structure
Figure 3: Flat structure
Figure 4: Circular organizational model
Figure 5: Composite autonomous group
Figure 6: Matrix structure
Figure 7: Modified consensual structure
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment email to organizations
Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter for Organizations
Appendix C: Informed Consent Letter for Individual Participants
Appendix D: Interview Protocol
Appendix E: Direct Observation Protocol
Chapter 1: Rationale

Volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations (VNPOs) are the largest subsection within the social economy. In Canada, 54% of registered nonprofits are VNPOs (Gumulka, Hay, & Lasby, 2006). Further, VNPOs play a significant role in providing social cohesion, engaging communities, and promoting civic participation (Smith, 1999a). Despite their numbers and significance, VNPOs have not been extensively researched (Roberts, 2001).

A volunteer-managed nonprofit organization is defined as a nonprofit organization that is exclusively managed by volunteers, with no paid staff. Such organizations vary in scope, geographic location, and membership size.

There is no well-recognized organizational theory, i.e. governance and structure, for VNPOs. Some VNPOs take heed from dominant theories and use bureaucratic governance and hierarchical structures, with standard rules and division of labour (Amis and Stern, 1974). Other VNPOs, either intentionally or unintentionally, use non-bureaucratic governance with informal rules, egalitarian structures, and minimal role distinction.

Challenges, risks, and inefficiencies of non-bureaucratic governance and non-hierarchical structure have been well documented. In a seminal paper, Rothschild-Whitt (1979) outlines six broad challenges that inhibit non-bureaucratic governance in organizations (or what she calls constraints and social costs which inhibit organizational democracy in collectivist organizations). These challenges include: excess time required for collective processes, need for homogeneity amongst members, debilitating level of emotional intensity, nondemocratic individuals who stand in opposition, externally imposed environmental constraints, and individual differences causing an unequal distribution of power (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Such challenges have been echoed by other researchers (Avery, Auvine, Streibel, & Weiss, 1981; Smith, 1999a, Mansbridge,
1973). Cafferata (1982) further describes the challenge of balancing non-bureaucratic ideals to rational bureaucratic administration. However, there are VNPOs with non-bureaucratic governance and non-hierarchical structures that have been able to survive and effectively manage the aforementioned challenges.

The purpose of this study is to understand how selected non-bureaucratic and non-hierarchical VNPOs have effectively managed the challenges described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979).

My interest in this subject comes from my own experiences in the nonprofit sector. Recently, I co-founded a Canadian, legally incorporated nonprofit organization which is volunteer-managed and has unintentionally adopted a non-bureaucratic governance model with no defined structure. Through this thesis I hope to learn from other non-bureaucratic and non-hierarchical VNPOs which have been able to manage the given challenges over time. The thesis is meant to be a guide for emerging VNPOs striving for non-bureaucratic governance.

There are five chapters in this thesis. Chapter one describes the rational and motivation behind this study. Chapter two reviews literature to define and discuss volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations, bureaucracy, organizational theory, and challenges to non-bureaucratic governance. Further the chapter identifies gaps in existing literature. Chapter three describes the methodology and data analysis used. Chapter four outlines the results including case profiles and a description of how the VNPOs studied managed the given challenges. Chapter five offers a discussion of the research data, implications for practice, and describes prevailing challenges for the VNPOs. The chapter concludes by describing limitations to the study and provides suggestions for further research.
The theoretical grounding for the thesis relies on scholars who justify alternatives to the bureaucratic models of organizational governance including Dr. Joyce Rothschild, a sociologist and professor recognized for her work on the cooperative workplace; Mary P. Follett (1868-1933), a pioneer management theorist; and Kathleen Iannello, author and associate professor of political science.
Chapter 2: Volunteer-Managed Nonprofit Organizations

Volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations are a subset of the social economy, distinct from the public and private sectors. Generally, nonprofits are driven by a social mission, maintain autonomy, and are socially owned organizations (Gumulka et al., 2006; Quarter, Mook & Armstrong, 2009; Salamon, 1994). Volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations (VNPOs) are nonprofit organizations led, managed and operated primarily by volunteers striving to accomplish common goals (Smith, 2006; Smith and Shen, 1996). VNPOs may on occasion hire help to complete a specific task e.g. gardeners for historical sites, bus drivers for a trip, or referees for a sports tournament (Masaoka, 1999). Unless otherwise stated, any type of volunteer-managed nonprofit organization, including charities, are classified as VNPOs in this thesis. VNPOs have existed in almost all ancient civilizations as social clubs, youth groups, religious groups, gilds and other mutual aid associations (Smith, 1997). Scholar, Alexis de Tocqueville (1840), recognized the significant presence of volunteer-managed associations in the United States in the late 1800s:

Americans of all ages, all conditions and all dispositions constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of thousand other kinds—religious, moral, serious, futile, extensive or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found establishments for education, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; and in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools (p.114).

Fifty-four percent of Canada’s 161,000 incorporated nonprofit organizations are VNPOs (Hall et al., 2005). The number of VNPOs would likely be higher if unincorporated organizations
could be accounted for; Roberts (2001) estimates there are about 870,000 unregistered, unincorporated nonprofit organizations in Canada. In United States, Smith and Shen (1996) estimates there are 7.5 million grassroots VNPOs.

There is a diverse range of VNPOs. Although local, grassroots associations by definition are volunteer-managed and nonprofit (Smith, 1997), there is no prerequisite for VNPOs to be grassroots or locally-based organizations. Internet resources have allowed VNPOs to solicit a broad membership base, conduct long-distance virtual meetings, and recruit online volunteer workers from a large geographic area (Quarter et al, 2009). Some VNPOs have elaborate hierarchies with trustees, board of directors, executive team, senior officers, and members at large. Such organizations tend to have defined rules, procedures and decision-making methods. Other VNPOs have minimal hierarchy with few bureaucratic procedures and protocols. VNPOs may or may not be legally incorporated. Some are start-ups and others decades old; assets range from minimal to multi-millions of dollars; and the number of members in any VNPOs may vary from one to several hundred. Further, VNPOs also adopt a variety of missions, including international aid, religious service, cultural promotion, animal welfare, sports and recreation, arts and crafts, women rights, social causes, hobbies, education, networking and others.

**Overview of Terminology**

The lack of common terminology has made it difficult to study VNPOs within the social economy (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2004). Table 1 differentiates organizations by their legal status and presence of paid staff. These criteria correlate with the level of formality and bureaucracy within an organization.
Table 1. Overview of Terminology: Categorizing nonprofit organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Synonym</th>
<th>Is it incorporated?</th>
<th>Has paid staff?</th>
<th>Legal Requirements</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable purpose, no profit motive, and no significant advocacy component.</td>
<td>Volunteer-managed Charity</td>
<td>Charity; Voluntary Agency; Members Association; Voluntary Group</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High; formal entity registered with the government</td>
<td>Shen &amp; Smith, 1996; Wilderom &amp; Miner, 1991; CRA, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defined organization, charitable purpose or self-benefiting purpose, no profit motive, and can have an advocacy component.</td>
<td>Volunteer-managed Nonprofit Organization (VNPO)</td>
<td>Voluntary Association; Membership Association; Volunteer Nonprofits; All-volunteer Organization; Voluntary Group</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Medium; formal entity incorporated with the government</td>
<td>Shen &amp; Smith, 1996; Smith, 1997; Masaoka, 1999; Wilderom &amp; Miner, 1991; CRA, 2009; Amis &amp; Stern, 1974; Smith, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defined organization, charitable purpose or self-benefiting purpose, no profit motive, and can have an advocacy component.</td>
<td>Grassroots Association (GA)</td>
<td>Voluntary Association; Membership Association; Voluntary Group; Mutual Benefit Assoc.; Nonprofit (self-defined)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None; no legal requirements to the government or paid staff</td>
<td>Smith (1997); Smith (2006); Wilderom and Miner, 1991; CRA, 2009; Wilderom &amp; Miner, 1991; Masaoka, 1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Research subjects for this study include a Volunteer-managed Charity, VNPO, and GA. (CRA stands for Canadian Revenue Agency.)
This thesis focuses on three kinds of VNPOs: namely, a volunteer-managed charity, volunteer-managed nonprofit organization without chartable registration, and a grassroots association as defined in Table 1. The thesis refers to all three types as VNPOs.

**Bureaucracy and Non-Bureaucracy**

Max Weber’s (1946) influential paper outlines the following characteristics of bureaucracy:

1. An organization with a fixed and official administrative organ, structured by rules and regulations.
2. The existence of office hierarchy where lower offices are controlled and supervised by higher ones, with specific divisions of labour.
3. Office management is based on preserved written documents and follows stable, exhaustive general rules.
4. Thorough and expert training is a prerequisite for office management positions which are generally appointed positions in a pure bureaucracy

Other major theorists describe bureaucracy similarly (Hall, 1963). Hierarchy of authority is common to all nine definitions of bureaucracy compared by Hall (1963). Weber (1946) states “the principle of hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures” (p.197). Iannello (1992) corroborates saying “it can be argued that hierarchy is the key component of bureaucracy, around which channels of authority, systems of communications, and performance guidelines have developed” (p.12). For instance, organizations with some bureaucratic elements like rules and operating procedures, but without a hierarchy would not be considered to have a bureaucratic structure (Iannello, 1992).
Weber (1964) describes a pure model of bureaucracy. Non-bureaucracy would exist as its polar opposite. There are many other types of organizational models in between these two extremes (Hall, 1963). For instance, horizontal bureaucracy and representative democracy described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979), Kaplan’s (1968) development bureaucracy or Hegelson’s (2005) web of inclusion models.

Cafferata’s (1982) analysis of structures within an organization suggests flexibility in the traditionally held definition of bureaucracy and non-bureaucracy. For instance, a large business corporation like the Brazilian Semco Group may be bureaucratic in its normative structure and for-profit in its economic structure but also politically democratic and collectivist in its value structure (Semler, 2000). The organizational components proposed by Cafferata (1982) can be broken into four aspects – economic, political, normative and value (p. 285) – as presented in Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Trait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Structure</td>
<td>For-profit vs Nonprofit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Structure</td>
<td>Nondemocratic vs Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Structure</td>
<td>Bureaucratic vs Non-bureaucratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Structure</td>
<td>Individualism vs Collectivism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The terms Cafferata (1982) uses are defined as follows in their pure forms:

- Nondemocratic political structure is centralized, giving decision-making power and authority to one or a select few members.

- Democratic political structure is decentralized, distributing decision-making power and authority to members.
• Individualism as a value structure differentiates members, where some members are experts and have authority over their own specialization.

• Collectivism as a value structure requires equality amongst all members, where no one member has authority over another, no matter their expertise or incumbency.

Despite the possible permutations of a structure, Weber (1947) held bureaucracy “superior to any other [organizational] form” in terms of precision, stability, reliability and maintaining discipline, and further suggests bureaucracy is “capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency” (p.337). Like the mechanization of industry, Weber felt bureaucracy routinized administrative processes (Morgan, 2006). According to Weber (1947), bureaucracy is “the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings” (p.337).

Bureaucracy is even seen to penetrate organizations that hold collectivist value structures. Michels (1915) “iron law of oligarchy” argues that individual self-interest will eventually take precedence over any collective mission and push all types of organizations to become bureaucratic oligarchies where authority lies only with an elite few.

In this thesis non-bureaucratic suggests a type of governance which minimizes vertical differentiation of authority/hierarchy; shares power amongst members; minimizes and adjusts rules to accommodate individual circumstance; uses a mutual decision-making method such as formal or informal consensus, and shares work responsibilities amongst members with little role distinction. From Cafferata (1982), non-bureaucratic as defined here includes a democratic political structure and collectivist value structure. Others terms such as, participatory, collectivist-democratic, nonhierarchical, and egalitarian, describe elements of and are considered akin to non-bureaucratic governance.
**Organizational Theory: Governance and Structure**

Organizational theory discusses both governance and structure (Cunliffe, 2008). Governance is the deciding or authoritative body of an organization. Governance creates strategic plans, management protocol, and accountability measurements (Chaskin and Garg, 1997; Smith, 2006). Structure describes the doing or implementing body of an organization. Structure distributes jobs and tasks throughout the organization (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Generally, the greater the distance between the deciding and the doing bodies, the greater the level of bureaucracy in an organization (Herbst, 1976).

Figure 1 charts the structure of an organization as related to governance. The exact placement of the structure on the spectrum may vary depending on the how the structure is understood, what the structure is being evaluated against, and how the structure is applied.

![Diagram of Organizational Theories](image)

**Figure 1.** The diagram shows the relationship between the structure of an organization and types of governance.

Again, there exists a multitude of organizational theories within the non-bureaucratic and bureaucratic spectrum. The following discusses the two types of governance and four types of structure outlined in Figure 1.
Governance:

**Bureaucratic.** In bureaucratic governance models (right side of the spectrum), authority is centralized amongst upper levels management. The bodies in charge of deciding and doing are not integrated. Hierarchy exists because of an unequal distribution of knowledge, leadership and power (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). In the nonprofit scenario, upper level management generally means a board and an executive director. Authority between the board and executive director varies depending on the model adopted (Carver & Carver, 1996; Drucker 1990; Houle, 1989; Inglis and Hoye, 2004).

**Non-Bureaucratic.** In non-bureaucratic governance models (left side of the spectrum), authority exists in the collectivity of the whole membership, rather than in an individual’s position or expertise (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Hierarchy is minimized through the equal distribution of resources such as knowledge, leadership, and power (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Instead of *power-over*, Follet (2004) explains it is possible to develop *power-with*, i.e. where power is jointly developed amongst members of an organization (Follett, 2004). Shared leadership is essential where, as Follett (2004) states, “in some things Smith is boss over Brown and in some things Brown is boss over Smith” (p.239). Further, leadership can be rotated or not exist at all (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986).

Rules do not garner authority here. Rather non-bureaucratic governance minimizes fixed, standardized rules and opts to resolve issues on a case-by-case basis (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Social control is self-imposed. Members control their own behavior within the organization because they feel personally indebted or morally responsible to the mission (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Instead of remuneration, personal satisfaction and peer-solidarity motivate members to stay with an organization (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979).
Herbst (1974) explains, in non-bureaucratic organizations *deciding* and *doing* is integrated. Non-bureaucratic decision-making involves effective participation where ideas are mutually shared, listened to and examined by all members; simply registering an opinion through a vote is not considered effective participation (Follett, 2004). Consensus decision-making is considered well suited for collectivist organizations (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). In consensus decision-making, all members must consent to the decision before the group adopts it (Avery et al., 1981). As Rothschild and Whitt (1986) elaborate, in the consensus process “all members participate in the collective formulation of problems and negotiation of decisions” (p.51).

Supermajority decision-making, e.g. *consensus-minus-one*, is also used to avoid the group being steered by one non-conforming member (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). Steps of how to coordinate consensus decision-making have been outlined in various handbooks (Avery et al., 1981; Susskind, McKearnan, Thomas-Larmer, 1999).

According to O’Neill (1984, p.63) successful non-bureaucratic governance requires that:

i. The organization is small…[because nonhierarchical organizations] involve more intense interaction amongst members…[there should be] no more than about 50 members;

ii. The environment and the task are complex, unpredictable and call for innovative solutions…[similar to] adhocracies;

iii. The members are motivated by the goals of the organization, not by a desire for money, status, or power;

iv. The members understand and have a personal commitment to nonhierarchical structures.
**Structure:**

*Pyramidal.* Bureaucratic organizational theory relies on some variation of the pyramidal or hierarchical structure. The pyramidal structure maximizes the distance between the deciding and doing bodies. Herbst (1976) and O’Neill (1984) discuss preconditions to the pyramidal model. The pyramidal structure requires a situation where every member, except for the one on top, is subordinate to another member and each member performs one specific task in the organization (Herbst, 1976). Further, the pyramidal structure, as seen in Figure 2, occurs if one member has authority to make a unilateral decision in a dispute between themselves and another member (O’Neill, 1984).

![Pyramidal structure](image)

*Figure 2. Pyramidal structure.*

Each circle represents an individual in the organization; the level of authority is indicated by the colour of the circle with the greatest authority given to the darkest colour on top of the pyramid.

In *autocratic structures*, one person, typically the head of the organization, has the most authority and makes the decisions in the organization. This can occur with or without asking for opinions from other members (Avery et al., 1981). In organizations governed by an *oligarchy* or minority rule, decisions are made by a few top members of an organization, namely the board of directors, with or without consultation with other members (Avery et al., 1981). Other researchers offer similar pyramidal structures which emphasize centralized control and strict
standardization of all lower level work (Mintzberg, 1981). Cafferata’s (1982) would classify such pyramidal structures as *bureaucratic non-democratic*.

The position of the *majority rule* structure on the spectrum is more debatable. Majority Rule occurs when decisions are made through a voting system of one member, one vote. The choice that garners over half of the membership votes is decided upon (Avery et al., 1981). More critical decisions may require a higher majority fraction, like two-thirds majority. Cafferata (1982) would classify such an organization as *bureaucratic democratic*. In contrast, theorists also suggest majority rule decision-making disregards minority concerns; is heavily influenced by assertive or more powerful members; and only registers an opinion instead of allowing for collective conversation (Avery et al., 1981; Follett, 2004).

**Mixed Model.** Mixed models combine bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic governance. In these structures, authority is dispersed and decision-making is participatory; however, ultimate power still lies with the upper management/board/executive director. Note that the level of non-bureaucracy a mixed model structure adopts depends on the implementing body; a non-bureaucratic flat structure for instance can very easily become a bureaucratic oligarchy.

*Flat* structures have no intermediate levels of authority between board/executive and front-line volunteers. With minimal stratification, all members interact frequently, decision-making is highly participatory, and standardized rules are minimized (Daft, 2004; Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006; Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006).

*Figure 3. Flat structure.*
Each circle represents an individual in the organization; the level of authority is indicated by the colour of the circle with the greatest authority given to the darkest colour. The colour variation between the top and subordinate circles is minimal to indicate a high participatory environment.

In the *adhocracy* model, the emphasis is on creating teams rather than a hierarchal structure. Member’s work together on project teams and power is dispersed amongst all staff depending on the issue at hand (Mintzberg, 1981). Project teams are given autonomy over their work; however, are coordinated by a higher authority which is in turn dependent on the project teams to further the organization’s objectives (Mintzberg, 1981). The model uses compromises and mutual adjustments to coordinate work and is considered to have little formalization (Mintzberg, 1981). Mintzberg (1981) suggests young, innovative industries like “aerospace, petrochemicals, think-tank consulting, and film making” would employ adhocracy (p.111).

In Morgan’s (2006) *holograph* structure, members are capable of performing most every task in the organization, and the “system has an ability to self-organize and regenerate itself on a continuous basis” (p.97). The holographic structure gives all members—board, executive, staff, and constituents—an opportunity to actively participate in core governance functions providing a strong sense of ownership in the organization (Diniz, 2005). To emphasize distributed authority, Diniz (2005) depicts the holographic structure as an inverted pyramid with arrows to indicate internal movement between ranks, i.e., constituents, staff, executive and board.

*Circular* structures are considered the most non-bureaucratic of the mixed models. The structure can be represented by concentric circles that disperse authority from the center to the outer ring of the circle (Laiken, 1999). The structure alone is not sufficient enough to create non-bureaucratic governance. Instead measures to foster shared leadership and minimize exclusive powers are necessary. For instance Laiken’s (1999) suggests the board of directors be comprised
of constituents and executive team members; the executive team be comprised of representatives from the staff; all positions have a limited term and rotate; and all board of directors work with staff throughout their term to understand frontline issues.

![Circular structure using concentric circles.](image)

**Figure 4.** Circular structure using concentric circles.

**Self-Managed.** Similar to some mixed models, members in self-managed structures function autonomously with a high degree of authority. Differentiating self-managed structures is the lack of any upper level management or executive authority (Herbst, 1976). Self-managed structures function without hierarchy and do not necessarily employ consensus decision-making or collective governance. As Herbst (1976) explains, self-managed structures “support the individual autonomous development of members…going beyond the choice…of competitive individualism and...of collectivistic and authoritarian solutions” (p.68). Members support and facilitate each other’s work for the common directive or joint aim, which is considered more important than the advancement of the organization or individual interests (Herbst, 1976; Wei-Skillern and Marciano, 2008).

In the *composite autonomous* structure, each member has equal expertise and equal power (Herbst, 1976). Members rely on direct interaction and mutual facilitation (Herbst, 1976). This structure is useful where the product *outcome* and the *resources* are defined, however the members must decide the *procedures* to achieve the outcome (Herbst, 1976).
Many theorists have described the matrix structure. In Herbst’s (1976) model, besides having several overlapping expertise, each member has his or her own specialization. The matrix is useful where the product outcome is defined; however the members decide the resources and procedures of achieving the outcome (Herbst, 1976).

In the network structure, members have a number of overlapping expertise. Members are dispersed and rarely meet (Herbst, 1976). The networked structure is useful where the members self-define the product outcomes, the resources and procedures to achieve them, with a long-term commitment to the common directive (Herbst, 1976). Externally, the structure is practical when a number of different organizations work together towards a long-term change process (Herbst, 1976). Herbst (1976) describes the structure as a web but does not provide any diagram.
Collectivist. Collectivist organizations vary in their definition. Generally, the collectivist organizational model is considered to have the most democratic internal structure, supported by consensus decision-making and collective participation (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006).

In a worker-based structure, collective governance is reserved only for working members of the organization, not non-working members or clients being served by the organization (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). Different scenarios may allow non-working members and/or clients to elect board members.

Modified consensual structure distinguishes critical and routine decisions, where critical decisions are reserved for the entire group (coordinators and non-coordinators) and routine decisions are delegated to coordinators. The model does not recognize rank or position but appreciates ability and expertise (Iannello, 1992). Also this model does not include constituents or clients of the organization into the governance or decision-making.

Figure 7. Modified consensual structure.

Key: Lines represents paths of communication; 0 denotes organization members; and r denotes routine decisions. Source: Decisions Without Hierarchy (p.96), by K. P. Iannello, 1992, Great Britain: Routledge. Copyright 1992 by Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.

In a constituent-based structure, all members, including working members, non-working members and clients, participate in governing the organization (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). No distinction is made between those giving and receiving services, which eliminate
professional superiority and deeply embeds the organization in its community (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2006) did not provide a diagram for this model.

**Governance and Structure Specific to VNPOs**

There is no commonly accepted organizational theory for VNPOs. Just as VNPOs vary in definition and terminology, so do their governance models and structures. VNPOs can range from being authoritarian to participative, and any combination in between. VNPOs can be autocratic, governed by a single charismatic or religious leader; or oligarchic like in a sports team where adults rather than members (i.e. the youth) make the decisions for the majority (Smith, 1999b); or consensus-based like an organization adhering to feminist ideals (Gouin, Cocq, & McGavin, 2011); or a mixture of democracy, bureaucracy, professionalism, and oligarchy as in an all-volunteer firefighters organization described by Perkins and Poole (1996).

In a longitudinal study, Wollebaek (2009) found local voluntary associations with mechanistic, hierarchical structures were more likely to survive (p.275). Other how-to handbooks created specifically for “community associations” and “all-volunteer organizations” recommend bureaucratic models which include a prevailing board, division of labour, and firm governing policies (Community Associations Institute, 2005; Masaoka, 1999). Also Lichterman (2009) suggests contemporary volunteers want short-term tasks and unambiguous instructions instead of involving themselves as “group enthusiasts” interested in the collective (p.848).

In contrast, Putman (1993) shows that the most successful local organizations are those that rise from the bottom-up through indigenous, participatory initiatives rather than those “implanted” from above (p.91). Wilderom and Miner (1991) found that volunteer organizations without paid staff differ significantly from hierarchic, professional and entrepreneurial types of organizations and tend to use group systems, described by Herbst (1976) as socio-technical units.
In group systems, as described by Wilderom and Miner (1991), “decisions are made by consensus or majority vote…leadership is emergent, occurs at the will of the majority, and is often rotating…there must be a cohesive group with stable membership” (p.371).

Alternatively, Chaskin and Garg (1997) reveal many community-based initiatives use a mixed model which links “top-down and bottom-up approaches” (p.641).

It is evident from the authoritative to participatory continuum, there is no agreement amongst researchers as to which governance or structure is most appropriate for VNPOs. Despite there being no definitive models, a considerable amount of long-standing and current theoretical research suggests there is a tendency for VNPOs to be non-bureaucratic, as seen in Table 2 (Barber, 1950; Chantier de l’économie sociale, 2005; Hall, 1991; Myers, 2004; Rothschild-Whitt, 1979; Smith, 1999a, 1999b). Table 2 compares practices common of VNPOs to characteristics typical of non-bureaucratic and bureaucratic governance models as described by Rothschild and Whitt (1986). Rothschild and Whitt (1986) distinguish between non-bureaucratic and bureaucratic governance models on eight specific characteristics: authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment, incentives/motivations, social stratification, and differentiation. Table 2 is modified from Rothschild and Whitt (1986) original (p.62), with the column Practices Common to VNPOs added.
Table 3. Comparing values of VNPOs to bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Bureaucratic Governance</th>
<th>Practices common to VNPOs</th>
<th>Non-bureaucratic Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Resides in individuals by virtue of incumbency; hierarchical*</td>
<td>Democratic process*; formal authority resides in the whole membership*</td>
<td>Resides with the collective as a whole; compliance is to the consensus of the collective*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Formalization of fixed and universalistic rules†</td>
<td>No references found</td>
<td>Minimal stipulated rules; individuated decisions†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Control</td>
<td>Based on direct supervision or standardized rules†</td>
<td>Based on high internal social cohesion and solidarity; substantial homogeneity&lt;</td>
<td>Based on personalistic or moralistic appeals and the selection of homogeneous personnel†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relations</td>
<td>Ideal of impersonality; role-based relations*</td>
<td>Creates and maintains a sense of community; avoids fractionalism✓</td>
<td>Ideal of community; holistic, personal relations†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Employment based on credentials†</td>
<td>Recruits mainly peer members (people with common interest)✓</td>
<td>Employment based on peers and social-political values†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive and Motivation</td>
<td>Remunerative or material incentives are primary*</td>
<td>No material remuneration; intrinsic motivation primary; driven by social mission</td>
<td>Material incentives are secondary; solidarity incentives are primary†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Stratification</td>
<td>Inequality of prestige, privilege and power; hierarchy†</td>
<td>Other members are peers not superiors; high level of participation or mobilization&lt;</td>
<td>Egalitarian*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>Maximum division of labour; dichotomy between intellectual work and manual work†</td>
<td>Blurred division of labour, tasks shared depending on need*</td>
<td>Minimal division of labour; demystification of expertise*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Barber, (1950, p.487); †Hall, (1991, p.122); ‡Myers, (2004, p.645); †Rothschild and Whitt, (1986, p.62); §Smith (1999b, p. 451); ¶Smith (1999b, p. 105,107)
Comparing the practices typical of VNPOs to Rothschild and Whitt (1986) descriptions, it is evident that VNPOs intentionally or unintentionally have a tendency towards non-bureaucratic governance. The following elaborates on the specifics found in Table 3.

**Authority.** Voluntary associations largely have an internal democratic structure with formal authority given to the whole membership (Barber, 1950). Barber (1950) explains that collective authority encourages and allows for “active participation of all members, that is, for their regular and frequent attendance at meetings, their taking part in discussion, their working on committees and holding office at some time...their participation in the formulation and realization of policy” (p.488). Decisions may be made by vote, where one member has one vote. Unlike in bureaucratic structures, an official posting or degree of ownership does not garner greater authority. Quarter, Mook, and Armstrong (2009) explain that in member-based nonprofit organizations such as VNPOs, “members do have the right to control the organizations to which they belong” (p.19).

**Social control.** In bureaucratic structures, social control is maintained through direct supervision and standardized rules administered by a selection of homogenous upper level managers (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). In VNPOs, however, the emphasis is on a homogenous group of volunteers which replace direct supervision with internal solidarity to the mission and social support (Smith, 1999b). Such member homogeneity fosters a commitment to the organization and to other members (Smith, 1999a).

**Social relations.** It is crucial for VNPOs to have members who are dedicated and motivated to volunteer for organizations without material compensation. Close personal relationships, instead of monetary rewards or salaries, foster the necessary solidarity and commitment to the organization (Smith, 1999a). Factionalism, i.e. dividing members on
ideological basis, is avoided (Smith, 1999a). Instead, a uniform objective or homogeneity produces a sense of community, creates stronger friendships and improves social cohesiveness (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1986; Smith, 1999a).

**Recruitment.** In VNPOs, new member recruitment is based less on formal credentials and more on peer relationships. Friends of existing members who are also interested in the same purpose and have similar personalities are generally encouraged to become members of the VNPO (Smith, 1999b). This peer-to-peer recruitment maintains a degree of homogeneity amongst members.

**Incentive structure.** There is no monetary compensation or rewards for volunteers working for a VNPO. Volunteers are motivated by a social mission, however, as Smith (1999b) explains, personal interaction is also necessary to maintain motivation. Job experience, skills-building and social relationships may also be incentives for volunteers.

**Social Stratification.** Members in VNPOs are peers without superior-subordinate relationship (Smith, 1999b). Hierarchy is minimized through knowledge and information sharing. Members may be respected for their individual expertise, time donated, or history with the organization. However, this respect is not meant to create a power differential.

**Differentiation.** In VNPOs tasks are generally shared with minimal lines of division (Myers, 2004). Expert roles are avoided, rather knowledge is shared to avoid skill-based hierarchy. Individuals with specific roles may depend on others, if they are unable to meet their responsibilities; other members who are conscious of the mission help to fill in the gaps (Myers, 2004).
Challenges that Inhibit Non-Bureaucratic Governance

It is not easy to implement non-bureaucratic governance. Similar to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Rothschild and Stephenson (2009) state “widespread pressures to mimic the formality, competition, avarice and hierarchy of the world around them” inhibit non-bureaucratic or egalitarian organizations (p.801).

Beeman, Guberman, Lamoureux, Fournier and Gervais (2009) and Lichterman (2009) found putting in a non-bureaucratic structure is not enough to ensure successful group systems; developing a democratic culture is necessary for non-bureaucratic governance. Such democratic culture must be constantly transformed and renewed and integrated at all levels of the organization to be significant (Beeman et al., 2009). Without such a culture, it is likely that the organization may be additional proof of the iron law of oligarchy, as Bolduc (1980) describes in his study of a specific neighbourhood association.

Rothschild-Whitt (1979) describes six broad challenges that inhibit the realization of organizational democracy in non-bureaucratic organizations: time, homogeneity, emotional intensity, nondemocratic individuals, environmental constraints, and individual differences.

**Time.** As Rothschild and Whitt (1986) states: “Democracy takes time” (p.64). Formal decision making processes in collectivist organizations generally include: reading a proposal, discussing the proposal within an allotted time, revising the proposal if needed, testing for consensus/majority through a vote, approving or rejecting the proposal (if rejected, a new proposal is developed and the process is repeated; if the new proposal is rejected as well, the proposal is likely tabled for another time) (Avery et al., 1981). As compared to an autocratic leader in a bureaucratic structure, in a collectivist structure decision making is complicated by multiple opinions and lengthy deliberation (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). Though this deliberation often proves to be more satisfying and empowering for members (Sager and Gastil,
2006), it can be time-consuming and inefficient. The lack of time amongst members or the need to make a decision quickly may hinder the collectivist process in non-bureaucratic organizations.

**Homogeneity.** To sustain volunteer motivation, organizations need to maintain a sense of community, encourage high levels of participation, and create opportunities for social cohesion (Smith, 1999a). A set of common values and beliefs helps to bind an organization together (Lewis, 2007). Smith (1999a) suggests organizations use a “selective peer-homogeneity”, where members recruit peers who share a common vision to help social cohesion and sustain enthusiasm amongst volunteers. Sometimes this happens by coincidence where potential members self-select themselves to be a part of an organization. For example, an animal shelter will predominately attract members interested in protecting stray animals. Homogeneity may also exist when organizations are averse to change, and indirectly deter diversity. Rothschild and Whitt (1986) explain, such homogeneity regretfully “narrows the membership base of the collective and it makes it less representative to the surrounding community” (p.97).

Homogeneity, necessary for group function, may be a challenge for members who prefer diversity and would like to broaden their membership base (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979).

**Emotional Intensity.** In bureaucratic structures, relationships are generally more impersonal and upper management delegates decisions which are not typically deliberated (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Relationships in non-bureaucratic, collectivist organizations are familial, value-laden and interactions occur in intimate, face-to-face settings (Miner, 1980). As such, relationships are more emotionally threatening and members attempt to avoid conflict by concealing criticism with praise, compromising to reach consensus, and privately offering support to members (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). High emotional intensity is expected in collectivist organizations and is considered to be rooted in the very structure of such
organizations (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). Unmanageable levels of emotional intensity may lead to the formation of cliques, exclusion of some members and dissolution of the organization.

**Nondemocratic Individuals.** A non-bureaucratic organization requires members that sincerely agree with the model. As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) explains, “major institutions of our society, such as educational institutions, combine to reinforce ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are congruent with capitalist-bureaucratic life and incompatible with collectivist orientations” (p.521). The dominance of bureaucratic structures requires members to *shift gears* when entering into a collectivist space (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Miner (1980) explains, in group systems, “members must be favorably disposed toward them [democratic processes] and desire to contribute to their effective operation” (p.278). Individuals unable or unwilling to accept the norms of a collectivist organization may deter potential members and hinder social cohesiveness.

**Environmental Constraints.** Throughout history, legal, economic, political and cultural influences have also constrained non-bureaucratic governance. The concept of legitimacy has become synonymous with professionalization, formality, and bureaucracy. Through history, Maurutto (2009) explains that government grants “were nearly always tied to expanding bureaucratic supervision in the form of cost accounting, inspection, standardized forms, annual reports, and centralized bureaucracies, all of which extended the ability of governments to monitor the independent operations of charities” (p 165).

Advancing neoliberal policies, which emphasize market-based values, led to the decline of the welfare state (Harvey, 2007; Sanchez, 2001; Martinez & Garcia, 1997; Brown, 1996). With minimal government becoming the norm, state welfare provisions were being downloaded to NPOs through project-specific funding, i.e. contracts (Roberts, 2001; Woolford and Curran, 2011). Roberts (2001) describes a pronounced vulnerability for small, community-based
nonprofits where “the lack of core funding for operational costs meant that agencies were chasing project funding for specific, new programs and things, with no secure money for the tried and true programs and services”; “planning and sustainability” became difficult with only “short-term funding” and organizations felt “the increased emphasis on applying for money to stay afloat was taking too much time away from doing the work” (p.7).

Batsleer (1995) illustrates: “The last two decades have seen the emergence of a recognizable ‘culture of management’ in the voluntary sector. Even small community projects have begun to use the language of business plans, strategic choice, quality outcomes, mission statements and competing stakeholders” (p. 228). Egalitarian or collectivist associations face scrutiny and pressure from hierarchical organizations to adopt some type of formal or bureaucratic model (Bush, 1992; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Environmental pressure towards bureaucratization has led to: increased competition amongst nonprofits for contracts; a drift from the core mission as organizations try to meet funding requirements; dampened advocacy efforts; minimized autonomy; the commercialization of operations; increased administrative formalities most burdensome for VNPOs; professionalization which excludes unqualified volunteers and those uneasy with a formal application process; alienation of the organization from the community being served; greater dependency on the state; increased state control in private community affairs; and a damaged voluntary spirit (Baines, 2010; Bush, 1992; Carey, Braunack-Mayer and Barraket, 2009; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Dolhinow, 2005; Fyfe 2005; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Katz, 2005; Mason, 1992; Miller, 1998; Richmond and Shields, 2004; Roberts, 2001; Smith, J. D. 1996; Sterne, 1990; Woolford and Curran, 2011). Such constraints immobilize the non-bureaucratic functioning of a collectivist organization.
Individual Differences. Specialists, or members with a different expertise or skill-set, inadvertently create an inequality of influence (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). For instance, a tech-savvy member may become the sole-manager and controller of the organization’s website or a charismatic member be become the media spokesperson for the organization. Such inequality of influence creates a hierarchy of expertise and must be managed to secure non-bureaucratic governance. Rothschild and Whitt (1986) suggest that “even in the collectivist organization that might achieve universal competence, other sources of unequal influence would persist, such as commitment level, verbal fluency, and social skills” (p.71).

Effective Management of Challenges

In this thesis, an organization will have effectively managed the challenges associated with being non-bureaucratic if it has survived for a minimum of five years, attracted and retained volunteer members and leaders, and is aligned with its founding mission. This categorization originates from parameters established by Smith (1999b) for grassroots association.

Gaps in Research

Generally the research on volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations is very limited as compared to research on paid-staff nonprofit organizations (Roberts, 2001). Further within the literature on volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations, there is an emphasis on grassroots organizations, neighbourhood associations, and mutual-benefit groups which are generally not incorporated (Smith 1999a, 1999b; Inglis and Hoye 2004; Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). VNPOs which are incorporated and provide services to nonmembers (such organizations are legally designated as being either nonprofit or charitable) are scarcely represented in the research. It is difficult to estimate the number of such organizations. Interestingly, these incorporated VNPOs straddle the boundaries of being informal associations and active legal
entities. Research is needed to understand effective management for both VNPOs and especially those which are incorporated.
Chapter 3: Case Study Methodology

Berg (2004) explains the benefits of using a case study methodology as “an extremely useful technique for researching relationships, behaviors, attitudes, motivations, and stressors in organizational settings” (p.260). For this thesis, three cases were analyzed using a cross-case or multiple case study methodology (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1989).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns of the study were minimal as participants were not from vulnerable populations, self-selected themselves to the study, were fully informed of its purpose, risks, and benefits, and were insured of confidentiality. Informed consent was taken from the organization and individual interviewees, and participants were free to withdraw specific comments or entirely from the study at any time before completion. Permission of the interviewee was sought if using direct quotations.

Recruitment

When selecting multiple cases for study, Yin (1989) suggests using literal replication, where similar cases are selected to generate predictable, comparable results. Literal replication was attempted in recruiting and selecting cases for this study.

An internet search was conducted to short-list potential organizations. Primary search words used included: volunteer association/group/nonprofit/not-for-profit/organization, volunteer-run, charity, grassroots association, consensus-based, feminist, collective/ist. The following types of organizations were excluded: religious groups, culturally-specific groups, neighbourhood associations specifically ratepayers associations, sports organizations, recreational clubs, cooperative-living communities, and school centered student groups.

Positive indicators for each of following questions were used to short list the organizations:
1. *Is the organization a VNPO, i.e. exclusively managed by volunteers with no paid staff?*

   Initially key phrases such as “supported solely by committed volunteers” or “run wholly by volunteers” from the organization’s website were considered positive indicators.

   Secondly, public data made available by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) was used to determine if the organization paid out any form of compensation/wages.

2. *Does the VNPO strive towards or currently practice non-bureaucratic governance?*

   Public data available on the organization’s website were used initially to determine the level of non-bureaucracy. Minimal stratification within the structure was considered a positive indicator. Other positive indicators included terms/concepts found on the mission and "about us” sections of the website such as: collectivist, egalitarian, democratic, feminist, non-hierarchical, and “all work together”.

3. *Has the non-bureaucratic VNPO been able to effectively manage the challenges posed by Rothschild-Whitt (1979)?* A VNPO with non-bureaucratic governance will be considered effective if it has survived for a minimum of five years, retained volunteer members and leaders, and remain aligned to their founding mission. Positive indicators, mainly the organization’s age and founding mission, were found on the organization’s website in the “about us” or history sections and publically available data from the CRA.

   Forty-seven organizations were short-listed and contacted through a brief informative email (Appendix A), inviting organizations to respond if there was interest. Fifteen organizations responded with interest (two additional organizations responded who were uninterested). Follow-up email/phone conversations were held with each of the fifteen organizations to confirm eligibility for the study. Six organizations were considered eligible for the study as per the above
questions and criteria, of which two organizations stopped responding to email. (Nine were not eligible.)

The four organizations were sent an Informed Consent Letter for Organizations (Appendix B) via email for review and distribution amongst relevant members. (One of the four organizations did not respond.) The researcher met two organizations to officially sign the consent form; the third organization submitted the consent form by email.

Each organization distributed the Informed Consent Letter for Individual Participants (Appendix C) to its members. Interested interviewees responded and local interviews were conducted in person and long-distance interviews were done over internet video conferencing.

**Data Collection**

The same data collection techniques were used in each case study. For construct validity, three sources of were sought for each case study (Yin, 1989): Documentation, interviews and direct observation.

Table 4 outlines the data collected for each organization. Note to maintain confidentiality, the names for each organization studied and its members have been changed.
Table 4.
*Specifics of data collected.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Confirm Eligibility</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Interviewee (length)</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization A: Spoken Art</td>
<td>Volunteer-managed; identify as a collective; no stated mission; many long-term members; 34 years old.</td>
<td>- Meeting minutes and agendas (2007-2012) - Host Handbook - Signage - E-mail letter - Print Marketing - Website</td>
<td>Member A1 (1 hour) Member A2 (2.5 hours) Member A3 (2 hours)</td>
<td>Meeting observation 2 two-hour event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization B: Feminist Force</td>
<td>No paid staff; identify as a flat structure; consistent feminist mission; some long-term members; 40 years old.</td>
<td>- Constitution &amp; Bylaws - Print Marketing - Facebook site - Blog site - Website</td>
<td>Member B1 (3.5 hours) Member B2 (4 hours)</td>
<td>Meeting observation one 15 hour workshop held over two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization C: Education for All</td>
<td>No paid staff; identify as non-hierarchical; consistent but evolving mission; few long-term volunteers; 5 years old.</td>
<td>- Strategic Goals - Meeting minutes (one) - E-Communication Guide - Hiring Questions - Orientation guide - Research Assistant job - Volunteer Information Form - Website</td>
<td>Member C1 (2 hours) Member C2 (1.5 hours) Member C3 (1 hour)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Documentation.** Yin (1989) explains that the usefulness of documents “is not based on their necessary accuracy or lack of bias…the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p.86).

Documentation was collected for each organization. The types of documents varied in each case study; they included the organization’s internet site(s), archived meeting minutes, constitution, bylaws, email correspondence, printed documents for distribution like handbooks, pamphlets, signage, news media/testimonials on the organization, and miscellaneous documents.
Interview. Semi-structured or open-format interviews (Yin, 1989) were conducted with members of each organization. Interviews were to be conducted in person with three members of each organization. However due to distance, two interviews were conducted via phone/Skype and one interview candidate had to decline the interview due to reasons unrelated to the research project. Hence a total of eight interviews were conducted. Interviewees received the informed consent form (Appendix C) via email well before the meeting and confirmed their participation by signing the form in person. For the two long-distance interviews, verbal consent was taken and considered sufficient.

An interview protocol (Appendix D) was established to guide the line of questioning and establish the data which was sought. Each interview began by explaining the interviewees anonymity, option to withdraw from any question or the interview itself, overview of the interview, and an invitation to the interviewee to ask any questions prior to the interview. All but one interview was conducted in a conversational, casual tone where interviewees spoke freely around any given question; on average interviews lasted just over two hours. To keep the interviews natural and informal, minimal notes were taken during the interview. Instead, with the interviewee’s permission, the interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder for future analysis.

The interviewees came from diverse professional backgrounds, including theatre, community service, retail, human resources, and publishing. None of the interviewees were from a visible ethnic minority. Ages of the interviewees ranged from 30 to 65 years and seven of the eight interviewees were women.

Direct observation. The research planned to observe an organizational meeting for each organization. The observations were conducted to corroborate information found from other
situations as well as to collect new data on the interactions of members within a meeting. Non-identifying notes were taken during the observations using a direct observation protocol (Appendix E).

**Data Analysis**

A cross-case analysis method was used to study data and investigate how each organization managed challenges typical in VNPOs with non-bureaucratic governance. Each organization studied was regarded as an individual case.

Individual cases were initially analyzed independently. This preserved the historical basis and complexities of each case (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Document, interview, and observation data for a case was reviewed and put into a matrix. The matrix provided a means and a form to extract information from the data. The top horizontal axis of the matrix included a list of the variables being studied i.e. the common challenges. The vertical axis described the sources of data within each case which varied from seven to twelve sources. The matrix data were then condensed for the individual case using pattern matching and explanation building. After the data were analyzed and condensed for one case, the process was repeated for the other two cases. A comparative analysis of all three cases was conducted once each individual case was analyzed.

The comparative analysis placed the condensed data of each case into a meta-matrix which was then compared and condensed further. This approach moved away from the particulars of each case to a more generalized conclusions. However since each case was first thoroughly analyzed as a single case study, the generalized conclusion still appreciated the uniqueness of each case.

This analysis approach is considered a mixed strategy, which combines the case-oriented and variable-oriented approaches to conduct a cross-case analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) call the approach, *stacking comparable cases*, where:
You write up each of a series of cases, using a more or less standard set of variables (with leeway for uniqueness as it emerges). Then you use a matrix…to analyze each case in depth. After each case is well understood…you ‘stack’ the case-level displays in a ‘meta-matrix’, which is then further condensed, permitting systematic comparison (p.176).
Chapter 4: Results

Chapter four begins with a description of each organization researched, followed by the research findings. The findings outline how the six challenges described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) present themselves in each organization. The last section summarizes the findings.

Profiles of Case Studies

This section describes each VNPO studied. As well, the discussion below attempts to define the governance and structure of each organization studied with respect to Figure 1: Spectrum of Organizational Theories.

Organization A, Spoken Art. Spoken Art is a grassroots association (GA), as defined in Table 1, which provides a leisure/cultural art activity to its members and the general public. Since 1978, Spoken Art has hosted a weekly open-microphone event for adult performers and listeners to experience the oral tradition of sharing songs, stories, poems etc. Approximately 25 to 30 people attend the weekly event.

Any audience member can perform at the events; there are no restrictions on who performs and performers are not preplanned. A volunteer for Spoken Art hosts the event each week at a fixed public location. New audience members are encouraged to attend through the website, word-of-mouth, and referrals from spoken art teachers at schools and libraries. The admission fee is a suggested five dollar donation.

The organization does not have a membership policy or membership fees. Instead anyone interested in attending event is welcome to do so. Individuals who attend regularly are invited to join the email list. For the purpose of this paper, these individuals will be considered members of the organization. Few founding members are still active in the organization.

Spoken Art is not incorporated or registered with the government in any way. As such Spoken Art does not have a constitution, bylaws or a stated mission. The organization is
governed by individuals who attend the quarterly planning meeting. The meeting is open to anyone from the storytelling community and is announced on the organization’s website. On average 12 individuals attend the meeting and most are active members.

Before 2005, the organization was informally managed by a rotating group of three or four members. The group was responsible for managing the organization and the weekly spoken art event. Group membership rotated within three to six months to avoid burnout. In 2005, responsibilities were dispersed. Members-at-large began hosting the weekly event and a Coordinating Committee was established to manage the organization. This structure persists and Coordinating Committee currently has four members.

The Coordinating Committee’s composition, renewal process, authority and power have not been defined. The Secretary provides central management, i.e., preparing written materials, website and business cards, distributing information and meeting minutes, establishing the meeting agenda, replying to external emails, composing protocols, compiling any issues/complaints from the members at large, etc. Other members organize events, chair meetings, advise, organize weekly hosts, prepare the monthly newsletter and undertake the bookkeeping. The committee does not have any other executive positions like president or treasurer. Members of the Coordinating Committee had not gone through a renewal/election/turn-over since 2008.

Participants of Spoken Art meet socially both at weekly events and at the potluck dinner which precedes the quarterly planning meeting.

The organization does not own any real estate or significant physical property. Instead Spoken Art rents a facility, including a storage space, for its event. Assets are under $6,000, which are derived exclusively from weekly donations collected.
From *Figure 1. Spectrum of Organization Theories*, Organization A has a *non-bureaucratic* governance model supported by a *constituent-based* organizational structure (subset of Collectivist Structures). The organization is defined as such because it does not have a distinct governing body and all constituents/clients collectively govern the organization. The organization is managed by a Coordinating Committee; however, the governance lies in the hands of the constituents or clients who attend the quarterly planning meeting.

**Organization B, Feminist Force.** Feminist Force is a volunteer-managed charity, which offers courses in safety and self-protection to women and girls over the age of ten. The 40-year-old organization is considered a leader in the field of women's safety and is regularly invited to teach at a variety of for-profit and nonprofit venues.

The organization fulfils several roles. Feminist Force offers courses to the public – some of which are subsidized; trains and acts as a certifying body for instructors; and meets the administrative needs for instructors such as telephone answering, waiver forms, publicity through the website/social media, trademarked logo etc. Other organizations frequently engage Feminist Force instructors to teach courses for their female clients, staff, and members of the general public.

Feminist Force is incorporated by the Canadian federal government as a non-profit organization with charitable status. As such, the organization has a constitution, bylaws and senior executive officers. For significant issues of governance, all voting members of the organization are consulted.

Membership is open to any woman who has attended a Feminist Force course. There are no membership fees. The organization’s social media site has over 200 subscribers. However, voting rights are restricted to the board of directors, instructors and active volunteers, which
currently total thirteen members. The number of voting members shifts as new members are recruited, however the organization has not actively recruited members in the recent past. Founding members are no longer involved in the organization.

The organization is managed by a Board of Directors which has a maximum of nine members and is elected at the Annual General Meeting. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms after which they must step down for a minimum of one year. Elections are non-competitive and members encourage one another to take leadership roles. There are no distinct roles within the Board.

Feminist Force members come together during the Annual General Meeting, planned social events, courses and organizational meetings. Social gatherings, outside of the context of the organization, are variable.

Feminist Force does not own or rent an office space. Instead, directors use their home for organizational work and property is rented for specific events or classes. The organization is funded by fees instructors pay to the organization for certification, course fees, and private donations. Total financial assets for the organization are under $10,000.

From Figure 1. Spectrum of Organization Theories, Organization B has a non-bureaucratic governance model supported by a modified consensual organizational structure (subset of Collectivist Structures). The organization is defined as such because routine decisions are made amongst board members and the broader membership is consulted on critical decisions.

**Organization C, Education for All.** Education for All is a volunteer-managed nonprofit organization (VNPO), as defined in Table 1, which seeks to empower youth through education and understanding of international development. The organization began five years ago funding schools for girls in Africa and as grown to develop programs for Canadian youth. With
partnerships with other local organizations, Education for All has benefited over 600 students in Africa through programs and fundraising.

Programs by Education for All target youth. There are no restrictions as to which youth participate. Advertising for their programs occurs through school board and partner organizations.

Education for All has a membership protocol. Volunteers of the organization are considered members. The organization solicits new members on an as needed basis, through an application and interview process. There are no membership fees. Membership includes the founder, volunteer coordinator and project coordinators, totaling 14 members; the organization’s social media site has over 40 members.

The organization is legally incorporated but does not hold charitable status, and does not have a constitution or bylaws. The organization is considering applying for a charitable status. The founder and volunteer coordinator oversee and facilitate all projects. The founder and coordinator are responsible for administrative aspects of the organization like soliciting and hiring new volunteers, writing volunteer protocol documents, coordinating with partnering organizations, advising project coordinators, fostering collaboration between projects, and providing continuity as other members would come and go. The broader membership is not consulted on the administrative aspects of the organization. There is no turn over of the founder and volunteer coordinator roles. Currently, the organization has an inactive Board of Directors. The organization plans to recruit a new Board of Directors to replace the role of the founder and volunteer coordinator in the next year. The Board of Directors would be active and work closely with project coordinators.
Education for All is a virtual organization. Members live throughout Canada and have never met in person. All meetings are conducted by telephone or through online video conferencing. As such, members have never met for social reasons though the organization recognizes the benefits of meeting socially and had applied for funding to do so.

The organization does not own or rent office space. Documents pertaining to the organization are kept on a virtual database and relevant files are made accessible to members. The organization is funded by private donations.

From Figure 1. Spectrum of Organization Theories, Organization C has a non-bureaucratic governance model supported by a matrix organizational structure (subset of Self-Managed Structures). The organization is defined as such because each member has their own specialization. The organization is divided into distinct projects with specific members in charge of each project. The product or outcome of each project is broadly defined by the organization; e.g., the organization would like a project on educational outreach for urban youth in Canada. But the means and the procedures of how to achieve this outcome are defined by the member(s) in charge of that project with consultation. Members have autonomy over their work and are not involved with decision-making on other projects. Though this model generally describes Organization C, the roles of the facilitators do not fit neatly into this model as this model is “self-managed”. The adhocracy model would accommodate facilitators, and power would be with the volunteers who would be supported by the facilitators. However, in adhocracy the facilitators would govern the organization and Organization C strives to involve both volunteers and facilitators on significant governance issues.
Research Findings

The research findings for each organization have been described below. The findings discuss how the Rothschild-Whitt (1979) challenges present themselves in each organization.

Organization A.

*Is the time required to make decisions debilitating?* Meetings are generally 1.5 hours. None of the members interviewed felt the meetings were too long. Two of the three members interviewed felt longer meetings would be beneficial.

All members interviewed felt time-sensitive and routine decisions were made quickly. This was observed at the planning meeting where two routine decisions were made quickly with minimal deliberation between members.

Two of the three members interviewed felt decision making for non-routine issues or matters of principle was time-consuming and decisions were often postponed for the next meeting. Meeting minutes showed the same issues were discussed over multiple meetings, lasting over three years.

All three members appreciated taking a long time to decide on issues of principle i.e. non-routine issues. One member would like more time to discuss controversial issues. Member A3 stated, “making good decisions is worth the time and effort you put in”.

Based on the above data, there is evidence to suggest that the time required to make decisions is manageable.

*Is the level of homogeneity a concern for members?* The level of homogeneity amongst members was difficult to assess because the organization did not have a fixed membership list. The organization did not have a definition of member. New individuals were welcome to attend the organization’s events and meetings without signing up or informing the organization.
There were no barriers to individuals joining the organization. Recruitment was informal and mainly occurred by word-of-mouth or peer-to-peer contact. Occasionally the organization distributed information at storytelling festivals. The website also invited anyone from the general public to attend events and informed all readers of the upcoming quarterly planning meeting. Attendance at planning meeting was not restricted, however the organization encourages individuals from the storytelling community to attend. Individuals who attended events regularly were added to the internal email list.

All three members interviewed agreed it was the appreciation of spoken art which brought the members of their group together. One of the three members interviewed emphasized the group was demographically diverse in terms education level, income level, and level of physical ability. Two of the three members interviewed suggested there was diversity within the type of spoken art individuals preferred. At the planning meeting, attendees opposed standardized hosting rules and preferred diverse hosting styles.

Member A2 noted the organization “only retains people more or less in agreement with the group” and “we are much more of a self-selective group than, say, a neighbourhood association”.

Eleven of the 14 attendees at the planning meeting were female. It is estimated that most of the attendees were over the age of 50 and nine were longtime participants in the organization. Documents stated the organization had not been able to attract younger members and was run by a small group of longtime participants.

One interviewee felt Organization A was too homogenous in terms of needing “different view points”. This member, however, was not concerned by homogeneity in terms of age or
gender within the group. The other two members expressed no concerns about the level of homogeneity.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests the level of homogeneity is not a concern for members.

**Does emotional intensity make the organization dysfunctional?** All three members interviewed described several controversial issues. All three members believed individuals in the organizations were able to speak openly and honestly. No member felt contentious issues or emotionally intense issues impaired the organization.

One emotionally intense situation was observed during the planning meeting. Members passionately rejected a given proposal which had been discussed on and off since 2008. After the situation, the meeting continued with ease and humor.

Nine emotionally intense situations were found in the meeting minutes dated from 2008-2012. Members interviewed described some of these situations. Another such issue was described in a letter amongst two longtime members.

The three members interviewed stated they resolved conflicts with other members by speaking directly or emailing the other member.

Member A2 described the organization as “conflict-averse”, suggesting the group avoids doing things that may cause conflict. Member A1 described a situation where members refrained from correcting another member, explaining there is a high degree of acceptance within the organization. Member A3 felt members avoided confrontation on minor contentious issues.

Member A3 felt it was necessary to be “diplomatic” when speaking to others. Member A1 described a personal situation where diplomacy was used. In resolving conflicts, two members used indirect approaches rather than confronting the individual directly.
Based on the above data, evidence suggests emotional intensity does not appear to make the organization dysfunctional.

**Have there been issues with nondemocratic individuals?** No one individual acted nondemocratically during the observed planning meeting. None of the members interviewed felt the organization was disrupted by nondemocratic individuals. Member A1 and A3 agreed specific individuals were pillars within the organization and significantly helped manage the organization, but did not feel these individuals had exclusive power within the organization.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests nondemocratic individuals have not created issues within the organization.

**Are imposed environmental constraints a stress?** Member A1 and A3 were not aware of any environmental constraints on the organization. Member A2 felt the organization “functions under the radar” as it was not incorporated. The organization did not receive funding which would impose constraints.

As stated in the minutes, Member A2 explained the position of secretary was established recently as it was useful for the member doing secretarial work to call themselves “Secretary” when communicating on behalf of the group.

Review of the minutes from 2008 to 2012 describes a single instance where a partnering organization asked Organization A to modify their style of presentation in order to collaborate in a combined event. This had no long-term implications for Organization A.

The organizations bank accounts and property lease are signed by members of the organizations as private individuals. The organization was not obliged to have regular meetings or keep minutes but did so.
Based on the above data, evidence suggests environmental constraints do not pose a stress for the organization.

**Do individual differences create hierarchy?** All interviewees agreed the members of the Coordinating Committee had more managerial influence within the organization, and this served a very practical purpose in order to allow the organization to run smoothly. Member A2 stated individual Coordinating Committee members took initiative but did not have the authority to make final decisions without consulting the rest of the Committee and/or the membership at a planning meeting. Member A1 and A3 were comfortable with the Coordinating Committee making decisions on behalf of the organization in urgent or time-sensitive situations.

All members stated the level of authority granted to the Coordinating Committee was not clearly defined. Member A2 and A3 explained the process of becoming a Coordinating Committee member was unclear. A Coordinating Committee member said the committee would welcome new coordinators if someone asked to join. Member A3 felt comfortable approaching the committee to become a coordinator. Minutes indicate renewal of the Coordinating Committee was discussed at three meetings; no clear process was defined.

Member A1 and A3 felt the founder and longtime members had greater influence in the organization. The meeting minutes from 2012 stated members objected to enforcing standard hosting practices by saying “we would *not* want to prevent some of our long-time members from hosting according to their own whims”. A document affirmed the structure of the organization is an “oral-cultural one, where a group of self-appointed *elders* has taken responsibility for as long as they can”. The names of the Coordinating Committee as well as longtime participants are on Organization A’s website.
The organization was governed by anyone who attended the quarterly planning meetings to which the general public was invited. Anyone could easily add to the agenda before the meeting and the meeting was chaired by a longtime/coordinating committee member. Member A1 and A3 felt the organization was egalitarian and open to accepting opinions. Member A3 appreciated that “no one, in theory, takes precedence”. One member was more comfortable listening during meetings because they were a “fairly new” member. During the meeting observations, a member from the Coordinating Committee encouraged quiet members to share their opinions, members spoke freely, and chair was not authoritative.

The Coordinating Committee attempted to share information clearly with the membership. Minutes from the observed meeting were transparent and gave an honest account of the disagreement which occurred during the meeting.

The Coordinating Committee shared expertise by composing descriptive instructional manuals for volunteers who hosted events. One manual began, “no one knows everything…This handbook will fill in the gaps.” One member felt the level of specificity in the manuals was informative but also micromanaging. Member A2 and A3 said hands-on instructions on how to operate equipment were also made available by one committee member. Two attendees at the planning meeting admitted they were intimidated to host events because of a “lack of expertise”. A similar issue was described in the 2011 minutes. During the observed meeting, the organization opted to create a technical crew to set up equipment for hosts unable to do so.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests individual differences within the organization do not appear to create hierarchy.
Organization B.

*Is the time required to make decisions debilitating?* Meetings are held in person once a month and vary in length. On average meetings are 2.5 hours long. The agenda is established quickly at the start of the meeting. The meeting is chaired and minutes are taken. Neither member interviewed felt the meetings were too long.

Member B1 and B2 said there was no fixed decision making process. The members indicated the group would vote on occasion, however voting was preceded by discussion. Both members stated the organization worked towards consensus. For example, in making a potentially divisive decision, Member B1 explained the organization did not vote, but discussed the issue over multiple meetings until consensus was reached. Using an informal consensus process was observed during the planning meeting.

Member B1 and B2 stated urgent or time-sensitive decisions were made quickly. During the planning meeting, one non-controversial proposal was discussed and decided on promptly. Both members interviewed said decisions were also made via email. Urgent emails are marked as such and time-lines are set if needed. Member B2 also mentioned the organization uses an internet based scheduling software to make deciding on meeting times more efficient.

Member B2 stated issues which were controversial or required creative input took time. Member B1 agreed. During the planning meeting members took unscheduled time to discuss one issue which required creative input.

Based on the above data, there is evidence to suggest that the time required to make decisions is manageable.

*Is the level of homogeneity a concern for members?* Member B1 explained there was not a formal membership policy. Member B2 stated “we do not pay as much attention to the
formal membership these days” both because of the lack administrative time to organize a membership list and the non-confrontational climate which made an accurate voter list less critical.

Being a feminist organization, membership was intentionally only female. In other respects, members agreed voting members were diverse in terms of age, interests outside of the organization, sexual orientation, education and profession. At the observed planning meeting the members were able-bodied, varied in age and two members of the six were of a visible minority. Member B2 explained the organization was open to diversity and new members, however, stated "there are some core values of the organization that we are not prepared to have diluted". Member B1 explained new members were recruited informally from the pool of women who have taken courses with the organization. Interviewees stated the organization had tried to encourage diversity by offering courses to individuals with physical disabilities, who use sign language, are from at-risk communities, or require interpreters. Member B1 said if a student “stands out” during a course she is invited by existing members to join the organization and attend the annual general meeting. Despite the organization’s active effort, Member B1 and B2 felt the voting membership remained relatively homogeneous. Both members agreed clients would benefit if there was greater diversity amongst instructors and board members in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic status, physical abilities, and geographic location.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests the level of homogeneity is a concern for members.

*Does emotional intensity make the organization dysfunctional?* Member B1 and B2 felt they spoke honestly at meetings but used diplomacy. Member B2 explained “if it [the issue at hand] is something that’s a matter of important principle to me, then I think being upfront and
honest is very crucial. If it’s something that is more peripheral…I feel a certain need to be supportive and appreciative of people’s ideas”.

One emotionally intense situation was observed at the planning meeting. The disagreement was between two members. Both members seemed to speak frankly and the discussion was becoming emotional. A third member informally mediated by recognizing the sentiments of each member and finding a middle ground. The members agreed and the meeting continued with ease and no obvious tension.

During the meeting, it was evident members were prepared to yield to the greater will of the organization and its mission. Member B2 stated the organization had taken assistance from a professional mediation consultant in the past.

Member B1 felt members did not lay blame or find fault, rather members tolerated shortcomings and accepted “life happens”. Member B2 felt “we’ve been able to talk things through within the meetings themselves in a way that has felt constructive and positive…in the last several years I have not had the feeling of leaving the meeting upset.” Further, Member B2 mentioned she would check-in with other members after an emotionally intense meeting to make sure members were not upset.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests emotional intensity does not appear to make the organization dysfunctional.

**Have there been issues with nondemocratic individuals?** Organization B had issues with nondemocratic individuals in the past. Member B2 described the situation where two members, based on their long history with the organization, attempted to control decisions without the input or consent of the rest of the membership. The situation lasted several years and ultimately resulted in terminating the membership of those nondemocratic members. Member B2 explained,
“it’s a sad way for a conflict to end…and at the same time I am not sure how the organization would have survived if that conflict kept going on and on”. Member B1 was peripherally aware of the situation.

Both Member B1 and B2 said no nondemocratic individuals had disrupted the organization since the conflict described above. Nondemocratic individuals were not observed at the planning meeting.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests nondemocratic individuals have created issues within the organization.

*Are imposed environmental constraints a stress?* Member B1 and B2 indicated the organization uses an informal structure dependent on semi-oral culture. Procedures were outlined at length in the constitution and by-laws; however, both members said few formal procedures were followed.

Both members interviewed felt administrative tasks were tedious but necessary. Member B1 explained, “we still do all the pro forma stuff…we realize that is important because we are a nonprofit, a registered charity, and we have to check off these boxes…[which] are important but they are important for procedural and fairness, but we operate our own way”. Member B2 provided a specific example stating, “we need to follow the protocols [bylaws] and have a secret ballot because let’s say a time did come along that someone is running for the board that people feel they do not want on the board at all. It would be very unfortunate at that moment to attempt to instigate a secret ballot if it had not been done for years.”

Members B1 and B2 confirmed the named executive officers, specifically the president and secretary, fill a legal requirement but have no exclusive power or authority. Member B1
explains the executive titles are useful when “we have to identify ourselves to external bureaucracy…[like] the Canadian Revenue Agency.”

The members interviewed stated the organization was not constrained by a funding body. Member B2 described the following formalities: Instructors were required to go through a certification and apprenticeship process and be re-evaluated annually; courses followed a set curriculum approved by the Board of Directors; the organization’s name and logo were trademarked to prevent any wrongful use of the established brand.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests environmental constraints do pose a stress for the organization.

Do individual differences create hierarchy? Members B1 and B2 said the organization did not have a leader. They both felt few members inadvertently became influential because of their seniority and knowledge of the organization’s history. They both stated a senior member consciously took steps to disperse power to less senior members of the organization. This was also observed at the planning meeting; the senior member did not chair the meeting and was encouraging input from less senior members.

Member B1 said, "there is a very strong culture here that says we are flat…If too much importance gets invested on one person for whatever reason, it can unbalance an organization". Member B2 made similar comments. The constitution document describes the powers of the executive officers, however according to members interviewed and the meeting observation, those powers were not exercised.

Member B1 explained knowledge sharing occurred informally stating, “once I have skills I will teach one other person".
Member B2 explained course instructors had autonomy over their work on routine issues; however, non-routine issues were to be discussed by the Board of Directors or the entire membership.

Members interviewed stated Board elections were not competitive and generally members who showed interest will be elected to the Board at the Annual General Meeting. Organization B did not list the names of Board members, founders, or senior members on the website or social media internet site.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests individual differences within the organization do not appear to create hierarchy.

Organization C.

Is the time required to make decisions debilitating? Members interviewed said meetings occurred over the internet or by phone every 2 to 3 months. Project meetings were held as needed amongst members working on a project with or without the coordinator. Project meetings, as described by Member C1, were mostly for planning and making decisions on projects and lasted over an hour. Member C2 and C3 gave similar descriptions.

The members interviewed explained the founder and coordinator managed routine/administrative and urgent decisions without consulting with or informing all members. Members heading projects had autonomy over their project and made many of their own decisions.

Documents indicated member signed a pledge stating they will respond to email messages within 72 hours.

Member C2 and C3 felt decision making can take time, but did not feel that the time was excessive. Member C2 explained, “I favour the collaboration approach much more because I
think it really does mean your final product is a lot better. It also means that your team members have buy-in and that everybody feels that they are a part of it…I think it’s worth having that little extra time to make sure that what you are doing is what everybody is happy with.”

Based on the above data, evidence suggests the time required to make decisions is manageable.

Is the level of homogeneity a concern for members? Member C2 stated the organization had a formal recruitment process. Individuals were recruited as needed through an external job posting and interview process; “on-call” volunteers without a specific task were not solicited. Individuals, who wanted to be volunteers without a specific job in mind, were asked to wait for a job posting or propose a project. The interview screened for personality type, work ethic, communication skills, collaborative skills, diplomacy skills, and interest in mission.

Individuals hired (without pay) were considered members of the organization. Documents showed members made a formal commitment to the organization through an eleven-point pledge. Volunteers pledge to conduct themselves professionally, cooperate, support colleagues, prioritize team meetings, respond to email, and remain committed to their team while being a reliable team member.

Member C2 emphasized the need to “find someone [a volunteer] who is the right fit” in order to maintain the organization.

Member C2 and C3 stated the membership at the time of this thesis were all female. Member C1 stated the membership had similar interests, background and commitment.

Members were diverse in terms of their age, ethnicity and geographic location. Members interviewed did not express a need for greater diversity except a passing acknowledgement that more male members would further increase diversity.
Based on the above data, evidence suggests the level of homogeneity is not a concern for members.

**Does emotional intensity make the organization dysfunctional?** The three members interviewed said emotionally intense or confrontational issues were not common. Members suggested they were able to speak openly and honestly. Member C1 and C2 suggested they used diplomacy when interacting with other members. Member C3 said she never faced a confrontational situation within the organization. The volunteer coordinator said she routinely checked-in with members to ensure they did not have any issues.

Member C2 explained "because we are good in the formative stages [of drafting a concept], we tend not to have any issues once the final product is ready and people are generally pretty happy”. Member C1 and C3 shared similar thoughts.

Documents advise members to speak to a central coordinator if there is “an issue, altercation or concern in relation to a fellow volunteer”. Minutes provided did not indicate any emotionally intense situations.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests emotional intensity does not appear to make the organization dysfunctional.

**Have there been issues with nondemocratic individuals?** Member C2 reported one incident with a member who was nondemocratic. The nondemocratic member and the organization mutually decided they did not work well together and the member left the organization. Based on this incident, the organization modified its interview process to screen for individuals comfortable with democratic methods. In the current interview questionnaire, over half of the questions deal with an individual’s ability to be a team player.
Member C1 and C3 were not aware of any issues related to nondemocratic individuals. They felt that all their colleagues were democratic.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests nondemocratic individuals have created issues within the organization.

*Are imposed environmental constraints a stress?* Member C2 explained the organization was accountable to its donors and ensured donations were being spent correctly by the partnering organization receiving their funds. Further Member C2 felt the organization would be considered “more professional” in public if it had charitable status.

Documents indicate members are told to conduct themselves professionally and use proper English especially when speaking on behalf of the organization.

Member C2 described minor challenges in partnering with an organization from another culture which had different communication styles and required translators. Members C1 and C2 were unaware of any environmental constraints on the organization.

Based on the above data, the evidence suggest environmental constraints do pose a stress for the organization.

*Do individual differences create hierarchy?* Each member had a specialized task or function in the organization; members had autonomy over their own project. All three members interviewed agreed the founder and coordinator had greater influence in the organization. Each member interviewed respected the opinions of the founder and coordinator. The website distinguished the role of each member and highlighted the founder.

Member C3 felt the members, founder and coordinator were on an “equal footing”. Member C1 and C2 had similar sentiments. Member C1 stated “there has been a very clearly established support for our [volunteers] own autonomy…I can't think of a time I have felt
directed” by the founder or coordinator. Documents stated, “the organization is run on the basis of collaboration and communication instead of a top-down hierarchy”.

All members explained information about the organization or a specific project was recorded and stored centrally on an internet application. Members had access to information pertaining to the general organization and their individual project, rather than other projects within the organization. The founder and coordinator had access to all the online documents. Member C1 felt more information-sharing between members working on different projects would be helpful. One member stated not knowing the full names of other members or the projects other members were working on.

The founder and volunteer coordinator had the most knowledge of the structure and functions of the organization. Project coordinators were not privy to managerial aspects of the organization. One interviewee stated, it “is clear that [X] founded the organization and [the coordinator] would be the second in command”. Another interviewee was not sure whether the organization did or did not have a governing Board of Directors. An Orientation Guide for new volunteers stated Organization C “has a Board of Directors to oversee the policy of the organization…as well as an Advisory Board, made up of experts in the fields of education and development, who mentor and provide advice and suggestions to [Organization C’s] operations”; however, the volunteer coordinator stated such a Board does not yet exist. Only the volunteer coordinator and founder are in charge of posting applications, interviewing, and hiring new volunteers; the positions or responsibilities of the coordinator and founder do not rotate amongst members.

Organization C is striving to ensure individual differences do not cause hierarchy and that individual members do not feel the organization is hierarchical. Collaboration and consensus
decision making within projects teams is evident. However the distribution of managerial knowledge and hiring is not fully transparent.

Based on the above data, evidence suggests individual differences within the organization do appear to create hierarchy.

**Summary**

The research findings are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Summary of research findings**

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<th>Is the time required to make decisions debilitating?</th>
<th>Is the level of homogeneity a concern for members?</th>
<th>Does emotional intensity make the organization dysfunctional?</th>
<th>Have there been issues with nondemocratic individuals?</th>
<th>Are imposed environmental constraints a stress?</th>
<th>Do individual differences create hierarchy?</th>
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Time required to make decisions was not debilitating because the organizations distinguished between routine and non-routine issues. Routine issues were dealt with efficiently and members appreciated the time allotted for non-routine decisions.

All organizations appreciated the similarities amongst members and two of the three organizations felt homogeneity facilitated organizational management. Only one organization of the three felt the high level of homogeneity interfered with its ability to deliver services to a diverse population.

At the time of the study, organizations did not face dysfunctional emotional intensity. Organizations prioritized the mission, group consensus and collaboration. Members felt comfortable to voice their concerns and issues were discussed at meetings. Members chose when to voice and withhold criticism.
Currently, none of the organizations faced difficulties with non-democratic individuals. Although two of the three organizations interviewed had faced challenges with non-democratic individuals in the past.

Two of the three organizations were challenged by environmental constraints, namely a pressure towards professionalization and to have charitable status.

All three organizations had created distinct roles for some or all members. These individual differences were divisive, however, not harmful. Instead, various specializations helped manage the organization. In two organizations, knowledge was shared openly and all members had an opportunity to assume managerial roles. The structure of one organization created an unwanted hierarchy of knowledge; however, members interviewed were not bothered by the role distinctions.

Chapter 5 discusses these issues in further detail and relates them to the organizational theory presented in the Chapter 2. Further, Chapter 5 attempts to understand how the VNPOs studied were able to successfully manage the given challenges.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Hybrid Organization

The following interprets the results of this study in relation to the theories presented in the Chapter 2—Weber (1946), Michel (1915), Rothschild-Whitt (1979), O’Neill (1984), Cafferata (1982), Myers (2004). The VNPOs studied seem to have had a hybrid governance model combining both collectivist and bureaucratic characteristics.

The VNPOs met some of O’Neill’s (1984) recommendations for successful non-bureaucratic governance. For instance, the organizations were small with no more than 15 members in each. A few interviewees agreed a group too large would lose intimacy and would make informal decision making difficult. Members were motivated by the goals of the organization and not self-interest. Each organization was committed to nonhierarchical structures. However members themselves felt they would still be involved with the organization if it had a hierarchical structure as long as members were respected and heard. O’Neill’s (1984) criteria to have a complex or unpredictable environment were not met by any organization. Instead Organization A and B maintained a few manageable goals which had not changed significantly in decades. Organization C, which was still growing and establishing new projects, required the most innovation but to call the organization complex would be an exaggeration.

Cafferata (1982) polarized democratic and non-democratic political structures and individualist and collectivist value structures (Table 2). However, these polar distinctions were not so obvious in the VNPOs studied: The political structure was *non-democratic* for routine decisions and *democratic* for non-routine decisions. The value structure was *individualist* as members exercised autonomy and *collectivist* as members worked towards the same goal. The VNPOs studied blurred the distinctions made by Cafferata (1982).
Myers (2004) recommendations to minimize divisional lines in non-bureaucratic organizations held little relevance in the VNPOs studied. Instead, the VNPOs met some of the criteria for Weberian bureaucracy, i.e., they each had administrative organs, divisions of labour, and experts (Weber, 1946). However, other aspects of Weberian bureaucracy were not met, specifically the administrative organ was not structured by rules and regulations; lower levels were not controlled by higher level management, and expert training was not a requirement for office management. The VNPOs implemented divisional lines to manage tasks, rather than to create hierarchy. In Organization B and C, autonomy over tasks and specific expertise encouraged self-confidence, skill-building, and empowerment. Importantly, expert knowledge was freely shared amongst members and experts were open to feedback. The divisions did not inhibit non-bureaucratic governance.

Michel’s Iron Law of Oligarchy also did not play a role in the organization. There was no evidence that self-interest and seeking control had supplanted the collectivist ideals of the two longstanding organizations. The founder was distinguished most prominently in Organization C, yet members noted the founder was not seeking control out of self-interest. The potential for self-promotion was high in Organization A and B as members could profit from promoting their artistry or instructional skill. But members interviewed did not feel this type of self-interest existed in the organization. Collectivist approaches were central in each organization.

Putting the Challenges into Perspective

The challenges identified by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) – time, emotional intensity, non-democratic individuals, homogeneity, individual differences and environmental constraints – typically inhibit non-bureaucratic governance and non-hierarchical structures within organizations. Researchers such as Mansbridge (1973) and Smith (1999b) have identified similar
challenges which hamper collectivist processes. However from the research, the VNPOs studied were not inhibited by all of the listed challenges. There was some evidence to support the literature outlining the challenge of having nondemocratic individuals and environmental constraints within the non-bureaucratic VNPOs that were studied. The four remaining challenges were an issue for only one of the three VNPOs studied. These four challenges will be discussed below. The discussion refrains from making a theoretical comparison of non-bureaucratic and bureaucratic models, and attempts to understand how the organizations mitigated the four challenges, specifically: time, homogeneity, emotional intensity, and individual differences.

**Why are members not concerned with the time taken to operate collectively?**
Overall, members felt the time taken to make both controversial and routine decisions was appropriate.

*Common theme of trust.* In each VNPO studied, efficiency was enabled through a culture of trust and acceptance. Members were comfortable not being involved in every decision and entrusting other members with administrative decision making. Member A3 and B2 stated their organizations had a climate of trust and good faith, which facilitated decision making. Member A2 felt meetings in Organization A were short because “there’s usually not a great deal that there’s disagreement about”. Trusting other members will make decisions in good faith, minimized deliberation and duration of meetings.

*Redefining priorities.* Members agree with Rothschild and Whitt (1986): *democracy takes time.* However, the prolonged time is appreciated and believed to strengthen, not inhibit, the collectivist process. Both Organization A and B discussed and delayed controversial decisions for multiple meetings lasting over two years. During this time, members tempered their initial reaction, sought external research, reflected on differing opinions, and voiced concerns.
The final decisions were well thought through and agreeable. A swift decision-making model, without time for reflection and deliberation, would cause resentment and likely withdrawal from an organization. As Member A3 explained, “I do want to have my say and have my resolutions heard.” Further Member A3 described the motivation to join an organization depends on “how open they [the leaders] are to ideas that other people have”. As Member C2 explained, allowing time for the collectivist process makes for better decisions and helps members feel included within the organization. If anything, members in Organization A would like more time to discuss controversial issues rather than less.

**On-demand efficiency.** Despite the potential for prolonged decision making, collectivist organizations are surprisingly efficient as well. Each organization studied instinctively separated non-routine and routine decisions. Member B1 explained “we have created a hierarchy, if you will, of important and non-important issues”; Member B2 distinguished “weighty” from “mundane” issues. Non-routine decisions, i.e. controversial discussions on matters of principle, certainly take time, as they should. Yet members are able to make routine decisions or time-sensitive decisions rather efficiently for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the homogeneity of the group minimized conflict. Members were similar in their motivation and did not have self-interest. As Member A2 explained there is little to disagree about. Secondly, members trusted one another to act in “good faith” and did not hesitate to let other members make routine decisions without necessarily waiting for consensus. This was especially true in urgent or emergency situations, as Member B2 noted. Lastly, there was a degree of autonomy afforded to members. Members working on specific projects or tasks were able to make decisions autonomously. Further members had a sense of what decisions they could make independently and which decisions must be brought to the group. Other measures were
also taken to ensure time-sensitive decisions were made quickly; for instance, creating an email protocol where members must reply to email within 72 hours and flagging email as “urgent” or “action required” if necessary.

Tasks which are not very urgent or tedious, for example pertaining to administration, could be slower. As Member B1 explained such tasks require “time, energy, and attention” which is sometimes lacking amongst a group focused on executing a mission. But Member B1 insisted “because the group is committed, follow-through tends to happen”, explaining members kept track and respectfully reminded each other to complete assigned tasks. The organizations also set specific task time-lines, respectfully reminded one another, and phoned individuals directly to get a needed response.

**Why does the level of homogeneity not concern members?** There is homogeneity within the governing body of each organization. In Organization A, there is *self-selected homogeneity* as individuals self-select themselves to attend planning meetings and govern the organization. In Organization B and C, there is *deliberate homogeneity*, where existing members decide who is permitted to govern and vote within the organization through a selection process.

Homogeneity is less of concern and more of paradox for the organizations in the study. Organizations take steps to maintain homogeneity, yet the organizations would also like diversity. Organizations B and C would like their membership to be more reflective of the general population; however, they have few tools to create diversity. Diversity of thought is encouraged; however, individual members make a personal choice whether to speak out or not. And though members appreciate organizational change, diversity is only acceptable if it does not undermine the mission.
**Benefits of being alike.** Homogeneity builds group solidarity, allows for efficient decision making, and facilitates socialization (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). In comparing personal experiences, Member C1 noted “it must be a very real challenge when you have people [volunteers] with such a mix of availabilities, level of passion, motivation for volunteering”. Without homogeneity, organizations could be prone to mission drift, conflict, and dysfunctional management. The importance of homogeneity is seen in a comment made by the coordinator in charge of hiring volunteers for Organization C, “we don’t necessarily want to hire for the position, but more for the person”. The comment and subsequent discussion reflected the need for members to be the right fit for an organization; screening for work ethic, collaborative skills, diplomacy, and interest in mission, the coordinator inadvertently created a level of healthy homogeneity within the organization.

**Diversity exists.** Despite the level of homogeneity, diversity still existed within the VNPOs studied. As echoed by other organizations, Member A2 explained, “we are all very similar in the parts of our lives that are relevant to the organization and what we discuss there. I am sure there is a lot of demographic dissimilarities. We have some members who are very comfortable financially and some who are very marginal. We have some who have advanced university degrees and some who don’t. We have a few members with physical disabilities and so on”. In examining personal histories of members, Member A3 commented, “all of the [members] bring something different and valuable” to the organization.

**Supported individuality.** Homogeneity may be a concern if it obscured individuality for the sake of collectivity and created spaces where members felt unsafe to voice their opinions freely. Generally the opposite was seen in the organizations studied. For instance, members of Organization A mentioned their aversion to standardize practices: ‘we believe in individuals not
rules’, ‘for us, it’s not a form to an art, but an art to a form’ and ‘if you make it compulsory to host a certain way or to know the technology, you are going to lose a lot of us hosts’.

All members interviewed confirmed, speaking up and sharing opinions honestly is encouraged in each organization. Despite this invitation, members may hesitate if they are “fairly new” to the organization or feel an “implicit pressure to collaborate and to have consensus, and not be the lone dissenting voice” as Member A3 and C1 explained. In such instances, homogeneity would be a concern for members, but this did not appear to be a problem for the studied organizations.

Limited Capacity. Although most members agree greater diversity, within the context of the mission, would be beneficial, they have no way of actually increasing diversity. Member B2 explained, “its challenging [to increase diversity] because, when you are the kind of organization we are, without a whole lot of big infrastructure, its a challenge to put in place the kinds of processes or incentives that could very deliberately increase the diversity within an organization”. Member A2 corroborated, “certainly we are a much more self-selective group than say a neighbourhood association” which serves as the single available organization for neighbourhood residents. Hence for a VNPO to be diverse depends both on how welcoming/encouraging the organization is and who is interested in the organization.

Why does emotionally intensity not inhibit the collective process? Generally meetings are not “super-charged”. Meetings have been emotionally intense; however, members do not consider this a constraint or challenge to its collective process.

Mission first. In face of interpersonal conflict or emotionally intense situations, the question becomes what is best for the mission and/or the organization? Member may still differ
on what they feel is best for the mission, but it gives another dimension to an argument. In some way, the mission becomes the leader.

Related is the idea that members did not seem to have a personal agenda. One member explained the climate in the organization is “unpretentious”, that members did not participate to gain recognition and “be famous”. In the VNPOs studied, members accepted that their colleagues acted in “good faith” and “good will” and trusted one another’s intentions. Members were not threatened by other members, rather worked collaboratively to get the best results for the organization. Volunteers, even those only seeking marketable skills, had some level of respect for the mission.

Diplomacy. Intriguingly, members of each organization stated it was necessary to use “diplomacy” in meetings. Diplomacy, with a negative connotation, could mean that members withhold opinions and hamper open participation (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). Yet in the organizations studied, diplomacy carried a positive connotation: using a respectful tone when communicating, listening to one another’s perspective, using humor, choosing when to be involved heavily in a decision and when to yield to another member. Members distinguished between routine and non-routine issues and participated when necessary. For example, it was observed in the planning meetings for Organization A and B, almost all members spoke candidly when considering proposals to amend the direction/image of the organization. On less controversial issues, only a few members chose to contribute to the discussion. This rational diplomacy does not seem to be hindering but just common sense.

Emotionally intense situations do not inhibit collectivist processes if they are mitigated with a respect for the mission, trust of “good faith” amongst members, and rational diplomacy.
How can individual differences still allow for egalitarian governance? Individual differences existed in each organization. Members had distinct roles as experts or had specific responsibilities. Certain members were considered the “go-to” or the leaders of the organization. Still, members described their organizational structure as “flat” or a “horizontal line”, that was “democratic” and “prioritizes a collaborative model”. Although Organization C unintentionally created hierarchy of knowledge, the members did not experience authoritative control. Member A3 explained this contradiction, by stating the level of equality in an organization has more to do with the intent of leaders than the structure.

Benefits of role distinction. Members did not aggressively seek leadership or control over the organization. For each organization, role distinction was a practical step to distribute responsibility, ensure necessary tasks were completed, and provide continuity. In one case with a rotating Board of Directors, role distinction minimized member burn-out. As well, by dividing tasks, members in Organization C were afforded autonomy over their project.

Shared leadership. Role distinction did not deter from the egalitarian nature of the organization nor did it create authoritative decision making. For instance, Member C3 acknowledged the organization is headed by two specific members, however also explained, “from my experience, all the work that we have done has been consensus based and there's been a lot of communication, so it doesn't really seem like a hierarchy”. Member A2 stated “we [members of Organization A] rarely vote on anything”. Similarly Member B1 explained “we operate on some kind of consensus model…everybody gets a chance to say things. And we don’t rule by majority, I mean we do vote on stuff but we discuss”.

Reflective leadership. As well as sharing leadership and facilitating autonomy, it is also essential for those in a leadership position to reflect on their practices to ensure an egalitarian
structure. For instance, the second most senior member of Organization B commented on how the most senior member “has tried over the years to encourage women to look elsewhere other than to her [for guidance] because I think she is very aware of the risks that can come with people relying too heavily on one person and putting an imbalance of authority or leadership in that person’s hands”. As well, the coordinator in Organizations C reflected, “I have worried in the past that it may seem like we [coordinator and founder] are managing the process as opposed to working with them [project coordinators]. And so I have tried to really emphasize when working with a particular program coordinator...that this is their project, that they own, and I am working with them to sort out the process”.

Despite individual differences and role distinctions which helped to manage responsibilities, the three organizations were egalitarian. Further, even though Organization C has a hierarchy of knowledge, it is evident from the interviews with members and the volunteer coordinator that the organization strives toward non-hierarchy in all aspects. The organizations were collaborative, with both shared and reflective leadership, fostering collectivist governance.

**Implications for Practice**

Research findings suggest, the VNPOs in this study effectively managed the challenges associated to having collectivist governance. These finding may be of use to other VNPOs striving towards non-bureaucratic governance and a non-hierarchical structure. Table 6 details the implications for practice of the research findings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing time</td>
<td>- consider Iannello (1992) circular model (Figure 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- distinguish routine from non-routine issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- entrust a group of members to make routine decisions on behalf of the organization and inform others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- allow time to discuss controversial issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- create simple protocol, e.g. reply to email in 72 hours, flagging emails as urgent, setting specific timelines for tasks, phone colleagues if immediate responses are needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing homogeneity</td>
<td>- accept the benefits of having homogeneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- build space for autonomy within the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- create an environment where members feel safe and supported to express differences of opinion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- if possible, place few restrictions on new incoming members and reach out to populations your organization wants to include</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- at events, be welcoming to potential new members with sign-up lists and information/invitation cards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- allow for some diversity to encourage innovation and creativity in thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing emotional intensity</td>
<td>- ensure all members agree with and understand the mission of the organization and how it will be carried out</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- allow the mission to guide decision making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- get input from members individually when drafting proposals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- describe and distribute controversial issues in a written form prior to a meeting to allow members to generate opinions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- use diplomacy when speaking to other members especially on sensitive issues; assess when it is critical for you to refrain to add to a conversation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- postpone controversial decisions to allow time for members to digest the issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- check-in with members regularly and especially after emotionally intense situations</td>
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<td>- encourage members to resolve conflicts quickly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- minimize any opportunity for members to execute a personal agenda by insisting on collaborative mission-based decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- employ a mediator is necessary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- offer gratitude if appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Managing nondemocratic individuals | - use an informal interview process to gauge whether a potential new member is a right fit for the organization  
- ensure new members are fully aware of the mission, rules if any, and governance style of the organization to set expectations  
- new members should agree to the decision making processes of the organization; consider asking new members to sign a pledge to follow desired protocol  
- create distinct roles and allow nondemocratic individuals to have autonomy over their own project to alleviate tension  
- share leadership by rotating leadership-roles and roles of responsibility  
- ways to include a nondemocratic individual within the organization should be discussed together with the individual in a non-threatening manner  
- if a compromise is not possible, nondemocratic individuals who are disruptive and threatening the life of the organization should be discouraged from remaining with the organization |
| Managing environmental constraints | - carefully examine the internal needs of the organization before any externally imposed conditions, i.e. ask what the organization needs before determining what the external environment requires it to have  
- carefully gage the amount of legal recognition, professionalism, and external funding the organization requires  
- consider the need for liability insurance, bank account in the organization’s name, constitution and bylaws  
- consider the implications of accepting earmarked donations/grants  
- ensure there are sufficient volunteers and finances to manage the added legal responsibilities of having charitable status |
| Managing individual differences | - assess the needs and pros/cons of having distinct roles for members  
- practice reflective leadership within the organization either informally or formally, where members reflect on their role and influence within the organization  
- members with pronounced influence should seek ways to minimize or disperse their influence  
- if role distinction is necessary for practical purposes, stress members still work collaboratively as a collective. Attempt to create a culture where members remain on equal footing. Encourage transparency, information sharing, a climate of trust and acceptance, and environment of mutual support and facilitation.  
- if possible, rotate roles so members learn and share different skills to avoid creating a hierarchy of knowledge  
- consider discounting the senior officer roles, i.e. president and vice-president, required for the application for charitable status |
Challenges that Inhibit Non-Bureaucratic Governance in VNPOs

The VNPOs studied were all non-bureaucratic, in that they minimized vertical differentiation of authority; shared power; minimized and adjusted rules to accommodate individual circumstance; and used a mutual decision-making method. As such the organizations studied were subject to the challenges common to non-bureaucratic organizations, as described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) and others. However, from the research findings, it is evident that Organization A, B, and C are not significantly constrained by the given challenges. Difficulties with time and emotional intensity were well managed by the VNPOs studied. Individual differences existed, but they did not create oppressive hierarchies. Homogeneity was acceptable and only one of the three organizations felt greater diversity would cause significant advancements. Of the six constraints to non-bureaucratic governance described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979), only nondemocratic individuals and environmental constraints were challenges for two of the three organizations studied.

More significantly, the VNPOs studied did present other challenges which could inhibit non-bureaucratic governance, namely: lack of succession planning and recruitment; unreliable task completion; minimal socialization and engagement; pressure to achieve consensus; and administrative issues.

The following section discusses seven challenges found to inhibit non-bureaucratic governance in VNPOs specifically.

1. **Conflict with nondemocratic individuals**

Nondemocratic individuals posed conflict in two of the three organizations studied. Both organizations described spending time and energy to integrate and resolve issues with conflicting members. Such time and energy is scarce in an organization where volunteers have other
responsibilities in their professional and personal lives. The VNPOs studied did not have a method to resolve such issues efficiently or productively. Instead collectivist organizations, which strive for cooperation and consensus, invest time to resolve near-impossible interpersonal issues. Such investment of time and energy could harm the progress of the mission, create political cliques amongst the membership, and cause members to withdraw from the organization. As Member B2 explained, such conflicts could break an organization.

It is possible to have nondemocratic individuals who are willing to put their personal approach aside and follow the norms of the group. For instance, one member described a colleague who was more nondemocratic as being “the bureaucratic type...I understand [the colleague’s] frustration; I don't agree with it but understand it.” The colleague was appreciated by many members and worked sincerely for the organization despite having a different personal approach to governance.

To minimize conflict with non-democratic individuals, collectivist VNPOs must either use deliberate homogeneity where new members are selected based on specific criteria or facilitate self-selective homogeneity by informing potential members of the organization’s governance model and structure. Incoming members must agree to the decision making processes of the organization; however, they may be diverse other respects.

Nondemocratic individuals themselves do not harm collectivist governance; however, ensuing conflict challenges the non-bureaucratic model, creates a climate of distrust and requires strict implementation of the by-laws/rules, as was the situation for Organization B.

2. Environmental constraints

Organizations struggled to balance informal governance and formal requisites. One member from Organization A explained, “there's always that balance between having the
bureaucratic hierarchical model which serves some purpose, and a more collaborative place where everybody might have a say”.

Member B2 evaluated, “I would like to see [Organization B] maintain its informal way of working, and at the same time I think I would like us to make a more intentional effort to follow the technical requirements of the bylaws, just so we know things have been done to protocol.” The member noted, the lack of a central, paid staff member sometimes made it too easy for the formalities to fall by the wayside.

Being “professional” was important for members. Organization C, which sought donations from a broad base, needed a professional image. Organization B had to provide students with a course that was up to par to other courses on the market. It was also necessary for Organization A to be “appropriate” when hosting their public event. Yet organizations had no way to enforce professionalism within a collectivist model. Members may unknowingly act inappropriately, be late with necessary documents, not read through the meeting minutes to stay informed, and represent the organization inaccurately with little consequence.

Members have to critically assess the need for formality within their organization and estimate the cost on collectivity. For instance, seeking legal status, like being incorporated as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency, provides professionalism; however, it requires organizations to distinguish a president, secretary, and treasurer. Such distinguished roles create a hierarchy in an organization which is striving for an egalitarian, non-hierarchical structure. To balance this contradiction, members of Organization B decided the titles of president and secretary would have no distinct power or authority within the organization and are only legal formalities.
3. Lack of succession planning and recruitment

The issues of succession planning and recruitment were concerns for each of the organizations. Member B1 mentioned the organization was not losing members, but it also was not attracting new members. As well, Member B2 explained, the organization only had one instructor qualified to train new instructors—a very precarious situation for the organization. Organization A was composed of mostly long-term members and had not recruited younger members. A solemn admission from one senior member in an internal document stated “Gatherings have life-cycles, and at some point [Organization A] may no longer have enough of a core leadership group or audience to sustain it…I'm just making the point that, like many oral cultures, ours is susceptible to the vicissitudes of oral memory. Very little has been written down, and, even when it has been, those who would bring such things forward to new leaders have lost interest/energy before doing so”.

Unlike a bureaucratic nonprofit, which would hire an executive director or have a trustee board to maintain continuity, non-bureaucratic VNPOs must rely on the dedication of volunteers within the organizations and on volunteers who come forward to join the organization. Appropriate structuring of an organization and active recruitment are essential for succession.

Without active recruitment and a defined succession, a small group or a single individual may assume the workload and inevitably garner the most authority within the organization. This has been the growing situation in Organization A. The lack of recruitment and succession planning threatens egalitarian structure and, in turn, non-bureaucratic governance in VNPOs.

4. Task completion

Follow-through on tasks has been an issue for each organization. Members have mentioned that colleagues are slow to follow-through with tasks assigned to them, email
response can be slow, and other members do not bother to read meeting minutes to find out what
decisions were taken. Two members interviewed suggested their colleagues were “comfortable”
and a sense of “inertia” maintained status quo. Member B2 noted volunteers were already so
strapped for time, most also have day jobs and family lives, and that tasks for the organization
were of lower priority. Though members feel urgent tasks will get done if needed, the tedious
tasks to maintain the organization were overlooked. However as a collective, there is no strict
authority which can ensure tasks are done at the appropriate time. Fellow members may
courage each other to finish tasks, but members themselves have to be motivated to complete
their assigned responsibilities. Organizations need to develop a sense of onus amongst members,
this may be done by strengthening the commitment to the mission and the sense of responsibility
members have to one another through socialization.

Stressful delays in completing task can push an organization towards a more bureaucratic
model with strict roles, rules and consequences. The lack of task completion can challenge non-
bureaucratic governance in VNPOs.

5. **Minimal socialization and engagement**

Members lack time and resources to meet socially with other members. Socialization was
especially difficult for Organization C. Members of Organization C had never met in person or
had the opportunity to interact socially. Members of Organization C commented it is “difficult to
picture yourself as a team” and that members “operate in silos a little bit”. As was the case in
each organization studied, members were not necessarily “friends” outside of the context of the
organization. Socialization is considered necessary to form peer solidarity and encourage
accountability amongst colleagues (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). Organizations should build in
time for socialization. Or, as in the case for Organization C, allow members greater autonomy
over a project to maintain engagement, and support a member’s interest in “contributing”. As Member C1 noted, “when you volunteer for something, passion counts for a lot.” Staying engaged and socialization may facilitate follow through on tasks.

Minimal opportunities for socializing or engagement may cause members to withdraw. Remaining members take on a disproportionate number of tasks, gaining authority within the organization and inhibiting non-bureaucratic governance.

6. Pressure to achieve consensus

Of the eight members interviewed, one member mentioned there may be an unspoken pressure forcing members to cooperate and achieve consensus. These sentiments may exist even if the organization encourages and supports members to share their personal opinions. If there was pressure to achieve consensus, the premise of open participation would be compromised. Just allowing participation does not ensure democracy (Beeman et al., 2009). Organizations have to understand how to support members and encourage honesty if they are to be truly participatory and non-bureaucratic. Such pressure to conform to the group undermines non-bureaucratic governance.

7. Administrative issues

Administrative issues were present in each VNPOs studied. These issues include: identifying an internal reporting structure; defining membership and determining the rights of a member; and having bylaws and a constitution which are reflective of the collectivist model. For these issues, organizations will have to search for solutions internally as little research is available. The challenge is for VNPOs to find appropriate non-bureaucratic models amidst the prevailing bureaucratic model. Organization C faces this challenge as it attempts to
professionalize, gain charitable status and adopt a board of directors while giving members autonomy.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, accurately defining VNPOs and identifying relevant research was difficult. Table 1 was created in an attempt to distinguish between types of VNPOs found in the literature. Without a common terminology, a meta-analysis of the existing research is difficult as each author provides a different nuance to the definition of volunteer-managed nonprofit organization. D.H. Smith (2006) has attempted to create a common terminology, but it does not yet appear to be widely adopted.

This study itself was small with three cases and eight interviews, making broad generalizations tentative. Further, a gender bias may have existed as 88% of the interviewees were female.

The search for research subjects was limited. The search left out organizations which were not inclined to have websites and social media sites. The study was also limited to English-speaking organizations. As well, it is not common for organizations to define themselves as being volunteer-managed. Likely, organizations were excluded prematurely because their website did not clearly identify them as volunteer-managed.

The cases in this project were not identical, minimizing the literal replication. One was a grassroots association, the other a volunteer-managed nonprofit organization, and the third a volunteer-managed charity (see Table 1). Further, two organizations were locally-based and met in person regularly; the third was a nationally-based, *virtual* organization that had never met in person. It is likely each organization faced type-specific challenges which were generalized by the study.
Lastly, Smith and Shen (1996) evaluated the effectiveness of VNPOs by studying the reputation of the organization, as perceived by the outside public. This thesis did not garner the opinion of individuals outside of the organization to assess and corroborate data concerning the organization’s inclusivity, efficiency or impact.

**Future Research**

There are many examples of volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations striving to be non-bureaucratic. Despite this study being small in scale, several volunteer-run nonprofit organizations emerged and as I spoke to organizations, more obscure VNPOs were referred to me. The level of non-bureaucracy within the organizations varied, with some VNPOs having elaborate hierarchies to others with none at all. At the time of the study, the collectivist Occupy Toronto movement was also in full swing. A leaderless movement, Occupy Toronto used collaborative, non-hierarchical decision making despite being so large. Their challenge with nondemocratic members and being misrepresented in the media also created headlines. Other organizations such as intentional communities, which typically function without a leader and use consensus decision-making, would also be interesting research subjects. The potential for research in volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations and non-bureaucratic governance is varied, accessible, and extensive. As well, despite having a significant economic and social presence, VNPOs have hardly been researched, leaving the field untapped. Aspects of interest may be the unique circumstance of virtual VNPOs like Organization C from this study. Any of the relevant challenges discussed in Chapter 5 of this paper can be studied at length as an independent project. Greater research of VNPOs, especially those under-researched like incorporated VNPOs, would be beneficial for the field and satisfying for the researcher.
Conclusion

Rothschild-Whitt (1979) outlined challenges or constraints to non-bureaucratic and collectivist governance in organizations. However, the study shows that the selected VNPOs were able to manage most of these challenges effectively. Despite having elements of both bureaucratic and collectivist models, each VNPO studied was striving for non-bureaucratic governance and had a corresponding organizational structure (Figure 1). Two of the VNPOs studied had been functioning effectively for over 30 years despite the challenges described by Rothschild-Whitt (1979). Developing a climate of trust, redefining priorities, focusing on the mission, practicing shared and reflective leadership, and creating distinct roles to serve a practical purpose have helped to effectively manage the challenges in the VNPOs studied. However, the research found other challenges which could inhibit non-bureaucratic governance and are more specific to the circumstance of VNPOs. These challenges include the lack of succession planning, minimal recruitment, unreliable task completion, minimal socialization with the potential for disengagement, a pronounced pressure to achieve consensus, defining members and member rights, and establishing a reporting structure, bylaws and constitution reflective of their governance model. It is crucial VNPOs monitor such challenges if they are to effectively manage themselves as non-bureaucratic organizations.

Although this study suggests non-bureaucratic models are conducive to some VNPOs, there is no prescribed organizational theory for such organizations. VNPOs with a charismatic or religious leader may benefit from an autocratic structure; VNPOs with a large membership base, greater than 50 members, may benefit from a majority rule structure to make decisions. Each organization is different and has its own unique requirements. Strategies implemented by the
VNPOs in this study or the suggested implications for practice may or may not benefit other volunteer-managed nonprofit organizations.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment email to organizations

Hello ____.

I am an OISE/University of Toronto graduate student doing research on volunteer-run organizations. From your website, I understand that your organization is primarily, if not entirely, run by volunteers and that is why I am contacting you.

The aim of this research is to understand governance and decision making methods used to manage a volunteer-run nonprofit organization. The research includes interviewing staff and observing meetings. Before the research begins, you will be given an information letter which will clearly explain everything in greater detail and will ask for your formal consent to participate. The letter will make it clear that your responses will be confidential and the reports of the study will not refer to anyone by name, in other words, your responses would be anonymous. Also, your participation in the project would be completely voluntary and you would be free to withdraw at any time with no adverse consequences.

If your organization is willing and interested in contributing to this research please do reply or phone at (416) ***-**** for more information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ambika Jain

phone: (416) ***-****
email: ambika.jain@utoronto.ca
Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter for Organizations

Dear [name of organization],

Thank you for your interest in the research project. The research project or thesis is a component of my Master of Arts degree in the Adult Education and Community Development program at OISE/University of Toronto. I would like you to be fully informed about what your participation in the research entails.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with specific information about the research. At the end, you will find a form to indicate that you agree to participate. Please fill in the form and sign it. Please keep a copy for your own records.

The research project is titled: Analyzing non-bureaucratic governance models in volunteer-run organizations

The nature and purpose of the research is:

. To understand the strengths and weaknesses of applying non-bureaucratic governance models specifically in volunteer-run organizations.
. To add to the limited body of research on volunteer-run organizations and nonprofit governance

From our discussion earlier, your organization seems to fit the needs of this research project because it is volunteer-run and uses a non-bureaucratic governance model either intentionally or unintentionally.

To complete the research, I will be using the following three research tools:

1. Analyzing documents to better understand your organization’s governance model. Documents may include the constitution including by-laws and archived meeting minutes,
2. Conducting interviews with volunteers working in different capacities in the organization
3. Observing meeting(s).

Your part in the research, if you agree, is:

. To give permission to involve your organization in the research.
. To agree to and assist the researcher in completing the three research tools
. To agree that organization volunteers’ decision to participate will be based on personal choice, be confidential and that you will not influence their decision to participate or not to participate in any way.
. To forward the researchers' recruitment letter to all volunteers, who as individuals will choose whether or not to participate.

Your participation in the project would be completely voluntary and you would be free to withdraw at any time with no adverse consequences to your organization or its volunteers. At
any time, participants may withdraw from the project by informing me either verbally or by email.

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality is very important. Any privacy concerns your organization may have will be discussed before starting the research.

a. All data collected through the research will be confidential and anonymous to protect the identity and minimize any potential risk to your organization or its volunteers.

b. Only the primary investigators, my research supervisor Professor Jack Quarter and myself, will know who has participated in the project and will have access to the data.

c. Individual participants will remain anonymous in any presentations of the findings.

d. Data will be secured in locked office for five years after the research is complete and then destroyed.

There are no anticipated limitations to maintaining anonymity and anonymity will be guaranteed as far as the law permits. There is no harm anticipated from this research project.

You will have the opportunity to review the data collected for accuracy. The results of the case study will be published in a book and digital form for academic and general audiences. Your organization will be given a copy of the research summary.

There are no perceived benefits the research project will have for your organization except that you will be advancing the knowledge of governance models and volunteer-run nonprofit organizations.

I hope you decide to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at either ambika.jain@utoronto.ca or at 416 *** ****. Questions can also be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416 946 3273. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ambika Jain,
Graduate Student
OISE, University of Toronto
To Be Completed by Organizations

I have read through this description of the research project and I understand what is required for participation. I understand the nature and limitations of the research. I agree to participate in the ways described. I have authority to and give permission for Ambika Jain to recruit participants for this research. I understand how to withdraw from the project if necessary. If I am making any exceptions or stipulations, these are:

Name & Organization: _____________________________________________________

Signature: ______________________________ Date: _______________.
Appendix C: Informed Consent Letter for Individual Participants

Dear Volunteer,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about the research project. This information will help you to decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Only I and Professor Jack Quarter, my research supervisor, will know who has participated in the project.

At the end of the letter, you will find a form to indicate that you wish to participate, should you decide to do so. If you would like to participate in this study and are at least 18 years old, fill in the form and sign it. Please keep a copy for your records.

The research project is titled: Analyzing non-bureaucratic governance models in volunteer-run organizations

The nature and purpose of the research is:

. To understand the strengths and weaknesses of applying non-bureaucratic governance models specifically in volunteer-run organizations.
. To add to the limited body of research on volunteer-run organizations and nonprofit governance

To complete the research, I will be using the following three research tools:

1. Analyzing documents to better understand your organization’s governance model. Documents may include the constitution including by-laws and archived meeting minutes.
2. Conducting interviews with volunteers working in different capacities in the organization.
3. Observing meeting(s).

Your part in the research, if you agree, is to be interviewed about the volunteering and decision making in your organization. The interview should be approximately one hour long.

Your participation in the project is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time with no adverse consequences to you or your organization. You may withdraw by simply informing me either verbally or by email. In case you decide not to participate or not to answer particular questions, rest assured that your organization will not be informed and that there will be no adverse consequences for you. Thank you for your consideration.
What will be done to protect your privacy and confidentiality:

. All data collected through the research will be confidential and anonymous to protect the identity and minimize any potential risk to you or your organization.
. Only the primary investigators will have access to this data.
. Individual participants will remain anonymous in any presentations of the findings.
. Data will be secured in locked office for five years and then destroyed.

There are no anticipated limitations to maintaining anonymity and anonymity will be guaranteed as far as the law permits. There is no harm anticipated from this research project.

You will have the opportunity to review the data collected for accuracy. The results of the case study will be published in a book and digital form for academic and general audiences. Your organization will be given a copy of the research summary.

There are no perceived benefits the research project will have for you or your organization directly except that you will be advancing the knowledge of governance models and volunteer-run nonprofit organizations.

I hope you decide to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at either ambika.jain@utoronto.ca or at 416 *** ****. Questions can also be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416 946 3273. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ambika Jain,
Graduate Student
OISE, University of Toronto
To Be Completed by Individual Participants

I have read through this description of the research project and I understand what is required for participation. I understand the nature and limitations of the research. I agree to participate in the ways described. If I am making any exceptions or stipulations, these are:

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time and there will be no implications as a result of my non-participation.

Name & Organization: ________________________________________

Signature: _________________________________________    Date: _______________.
Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Goal: Determine effective management practices of VNPOs with non-bureaucratic governance.

Assume these organizations are effective because they meet the three established criteria: 1) able to retain members and leaders, 2) remain loyal to their mission, 3) are over ten years old.

Specific interview goals:
- Determine how non-bureaucratic governance is defined in practice
- Determine how the organizations manage the constraints and social cost described

Introduction: Repeat of project purpose and confidentiality measures.
Remind: Answers do not need to name other members specifically. The questions are meant to ask general trends. Outline the interview and its length.

1. Before we start the interview, are there any questions you have for me regarding this project?

Background:
2. What is your role in the organization?

Confirm volunteer-run status:
3. Are you paid (with money) for your work in the organization?
4. As far as you know is any member paid for their volunteer work in the organization?

Confirm effective management (maintain members, loyalty to mission, age):
5. Why do you work for this organization? What is your motivation?
6. How long have you been with the organization?
7. In your estimate, how often do volunteers or members leave the organization?
8. In your own words, what is the purpose or mission of the organization?
9. Has the mission remained the same since you have been with the organization?
10. How many projects does the organization have over a year?

Confirm non-bureaucratic governance:
11. Is there someone who leads the organization and makes the majority of decisions? (president, chair)
   a. If yes, please describe the role and responsibilities assigned to the leader.
   b. If no, please describe how your organization is structured.
12. How is information distributed throughout your members?
13. Who is included in the decision making?
14. Can you describe the governance model or structure of your organization?

Constraints and social costs which inhibit the collective process

Time:
15. How often does your organization have meetings?
16. Can you describe a typical meeting?
17. Generally, how long is a meeting?
18. How does your organization manage the meeting? (look for: agenda, chairperson, time keeper)
   a. Is the agenda predetermined? Who plans the agenda for the meeting?
   b. How are new issues or proposals included in the agenda?
19. What sort of decisions are made during the meetings? (how is money spent, hosting, rent etc) (by few or many)
20. Is there a fixed process to make decisions? e.g. How do you decide where to allocate funds?
   a. If yes, can you describe the process? Is it written?
   b. If no, can you describe how are decisions made?

21. In general, what is your opinion of how decision making is conducted in your organization?

22. Is there a potential for decision making to be very time consuming?
   a. If yes, is this an issue for you or other members? How would you change decision making?
   b. If no, what measure are put in place to make sure the process is not time consuming

23. Can you describe a situation where an urgent decision was needed? Where all the information wasn’t available for instance or only a few members understood the issue. How was the decision made in this situation?

24. How are decisions made outside of meetings? (Individuals need to finalize something)

25. Is technology used in meetings or decision making?

26. How efficient is the follow through with decisions once they are made? (% follow thru / % fall thru)

27. How do you manage situations where there is a lack of follow thru by an individual or group?

28. How do you measure the effectiveness of your projects? (evaluation method, client feedback)

29. In your opinion, are all members able to speak openly and honestly during meetings? Explain.

30. How often do meetings become emotionally tense or confrontational?

31. Is there any issue the members are divided on?
   a. If yes, is this a source of conflict?
   b. What are the effects of this conflict? (gossip, members withdraw, dysfunction)

32. How is conflict managed by the organization? (head-on or swept under rug?)

33. In your opinion, are conflicts amongst members managed effectively? Why or why not?

34. Do all members have an opportunity to be involved in managing the organization?
   a. If yes, how is equal opportunity given?
   b. If no, please explain why not? Is this a concern for members or the organization?

35. How is power shared in the organization? Are positions rotated?

36. Are some members considered experts with special skills? Example.
   a. Are these expert roles shared amongst other members?
   b. Are expert members encouraged to share their skills/knowledge?

37. Do some members have greater influence in the organization?
   a. If yes, how did they gain this influence? (expert, assertive, has time) How do you feel about this member’s greater influence in the organization?
      i. In your opinion, how do other members feel? Is their greater influence a concern for other members or the organization?
   b. If no, please explain why not. What measures are taken to ensure all members have similar level of influence?

38. Do positions of influence rotate amongst members? (expert, board, host) How often?

39. Have you volunteered or worked in organizations with other types of structures?

40. Can you compare other governance models you are familiar with to the governance model of this organization?

41. How much do like the governing model of this organization?

42. If the organization had a different governance model, would you still be a part of it?

43. Do you have concerns with the current governance model?
   a. If yes:
i. Can you describe your concerns? Why do you have these concerns?
ii. Would you recommend an alternative model of governance?
iii. Have you presented your concerns to the organization?
   1. If yes, how did the organization respond?
   2. If no, how would you present your concerns? What response do you expect?

   b. If no:
      i. In your estimate, how many active members do not agree with this governance model?
      ii. Can you describe their concerns?
      iii. Do these members pose any difficulty to the organization or other members?
      iv. Does the organization have a strategy to manage members that disrupt the collective process?

**Homogeneity:**

44. Could you estimate the number of members in the organization?
45. Who would be considered a member? (participants/clients, volunteer workers, subscribers) Is there a list?
   a. Are there different designations or types of members? (board, active, organizer, passive, workers)
   b. Who would be considered a non-member? (associated but not members)
46. Is your organization accepting new members or not accepting new members?
   a. If yes, who is allowed to be a new member?
      i. Are new members recruited? (based on peer relations)
      ii. How does someone become a member? Is there a process? (criteria, application, oath, fees, attendance, volunteering)
      iii. How are new members made to feel welcome?
      iv. What are the advantages of being a member?
      v. What restrictions does a new member have?
      vi. Can new members take on positions of influence? How long do they have to wait?
   b. If no, why not?
      i. How do feel about not being open to new members?
      ii. Are there people you think that should be members or invited?
          1. If yes, have you discussed this with the group? What was the (anticipated) reaction?

47. Who is allowed to attend your meetings? (members only or open to non-member)
48. In your estimate, what is similar about all the members?
49. What is different about all the members?
50. In your opinion is the membership more diverse or more similar? Explain how.
51. In your opinion, should there be more or less diversity in your group? Do others members feel the same?
52. Is there a separate board of directors?
   a. If yes, how many board members are there?
   b. How is the board of directors formed?
   c. Is your board closed or open to new members?
   d. Who can become a board member?
   e. What are the responsibilities of the board? (is it a working board)

**Environmental Constraints:**

53. Has your organization considered other more hierarchical models of governance?
a. If yes, why were they considered?
b. If no, have there been any external pressures on your organization to conform to different governing structures?

54. How is your organization funded?
   a. Are there membership fees?
   b. Does your organization accept third party funding?

55. Has your organization accepted funding that had conditions attached to it?
   a. What types of conditions were they?
   b. Are the conditions a concern for the organization?
   c. Did the conditions effect your organization? How are they managed? Take time away from mission?

56. What sort of legal responsibilities is the organization subject to? E.g. paying rent, filing taxes, client liability etc.
   a. Do these legal responsibilities effect your organization? How organization is managed?
   b. How do you manage these legal responsibilities?

57. Is your organization incorporated?
   a. If yes,
      i. How are the required officer positions filled out? (i.e. president, sectary, treasurer)
      ii. How explicit is your constitution?
      iii. How often does your organization rely on its constitution and bylaws?
   b. If no, why have you not incorporated?

58. Has your organization partnered with other organizations on projects?
   a. What challenges did the partnership have? (specifically wrt governance)
   b. How do you manage the challenges?

59. In your estimate, how is your organization regarded in the community?
   a. In your opinion, would your organization be regarded differently if it had a more hierarchical governance model?

60. Have there been any large scale changes in your organization since you have been with the organization? (funding changes, board turnover, leadership transition).
   a. If yes, how did this change effect the organization and volunteers?
   b. If no, was the organization ever at risk of closing?

61. What is the process to refine the mission/vision/goals?

62. Does your organization have a formal or informal succession plan? If you can you describe it.

63. Is there a constitution, bylaws, or some sort of written governing policy?
   a. If yes, how often is it referred to?

64. Does your organization publish an annual report? Does it include a financial report?

65. Do you know where your organization keeps documents? (minutes, bank statements, tax forms) For how long?

66. Does the organization have a whistleblower policy? i.e. any member believes someone is doing something wrong towards or on behalf of the organization, is there a way they are encouraged to share this information with others?

67. Does your organization rent office space?

Closing: Review points discussed.

68. Do members ever gather together for social reasons outside of the context of the organization?

69. Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization that we have not yet talked about? (about its structure, governance, decision making, management).

70. If I needed, could I contact you for any clarifications?

   Thank you.
Appendix E: Direct Observation Protocol

Goal: Observe how challenges specific to non-bureaucratic VNPOs are managed in a meeting.

**Background:** Describe the meeting. Location, set-up & arrangements, attendees…

**Time:** Meeting & decision management. Start, latecomers-consequences, agenda & additions, chairperson/moderator, technology, what decisions are made, how are they made, consensus or other, efficiency…

**Emotional Intensity:** Describe interactions & intensity. Openly talk, types of conflict, level of conflict—participants withdraw/move on, conflict management.

**Individual Differences:** Describe role of specialists. Leader/influencers, involvement/listening, how power given/shared, rotation, is non-hierarchy maintained.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nondemocratic Individuals: Describe if any issues involve members who do not agree with method/oppose structure or decision making model.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneity: Describe members similarities/diversity. Inclusion of any new member.</td>
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