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Neighbourhood Associations

Literature Review

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Feb 8, 2022
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Neighbourhood Associations Literature Review

The City of Kamloops aims to deepen engagement with Neighbourhood Associations (NAs) throughout the city. The purpose of this literature review was to assess the existing literature on NAs as well as to identify any major trends or key findings in the research. The review and this document aim to help inform and guide future research conducted in the City of Kamloops by grounding future work in the existing literature.

Defining Neighbourhood Associations

One important aspect of conducting this literature review was to ensure that the sources eligible for a review focused on NAs rather than other forms of community organizations. In the literature, the terms Homeowner Associations (HOA), and NAs are used somewhat interchangeably. However, there are some key differences between these two types of neighbourhood-based groups in terms of how they organize and operate. HOAs tend to be established by housing developers and their discussion typically revolves around what activities are allowed or prohibited in the neighbourhood (Scheller & Yerena, 2018). These kinds of organizations typically have more rigid forms of governance compared to other types of community organizations. NAs typically form around grassroots efforts and aim to overcome a problem or issue in the local area. There tends to be more variation in how NAs govern themselves and they are much more prone to dissolve than HOA due to issues being solved or residents losing interest (Scheller & Yerena, 2018). NAs tend to be voluntary, issue-based, and play an important role in communication between residents.

Methods

An initial search of the literature was conducted using the following key terms and phrases: neighbo(u)rhood association(s), organizational design, governance, capacity building, civic engagement, NIMBYism, participation, and representation. A total of 28 sources were included in this literature review. Many of these sources were peer-reviewed journal articles from several different academic journals. Initially, the inclusion criteria used to find sources were narrower and focused solely on sources from academic journals. Due to initial searches producing fewer relevant sources than expected, the search criteria were expanded to include non-academic sources (i.e., grey literature). All relevant sources were uploaded to a digital shared library, summarized, and sorted based on their relevancy.

With each article summary, we included a brief description of the study objectives, methods, results, and key definitions. Grey literature sources were summarized differently than the academic journal sources, in that recommendations or key findings were pulled from these non-academic sources. Further, each source was given a rank based on relevancy. Each article was given a ranking of 1, 2, or 3. Articles with a ranking of 1 were sources with relevant objectives, and methods, and included useful key findings or results. Sources with a rank of 2 were found to be somewhat relevant

but did not explore our key search terms in great detail or did not produce results or key findings that were entirely useful for the present study. Sources given a 3 ranking met the inclusion criteria, however, they were not geographically or objectively relevant. Table 1 Source Ranking Criteria and Examples, below, summarizes the organization criteria and provides an example of a source which is representative of the type of sources assigned to the rank. The complete ranking of references can be found in Table 2 Detailed Ranking of Articles on page 8.

Table 1 Source Ranking Criteria and Examples

Rank	Criteria	Citation ex.	Summary
Rank 1 Total – 7	Relevant objectives and methods Focuses on at least one of the key search terms Comparable location Relevant results or key findings	Moore and McGregor (2020) *The Representativeness of Neighbourhood Associations in Toronto and Vancouver*	Survey data from voters during the Vancouver and Toronto 2018 municipal elections using the Canadian Municipal Election Study (CMES). Members of NAs are not representative of the broader population. More likely to be white, older and have higher educations than the average voter
Rank 2 Total – 12	Somewhat relevant objective and/or methods Comparable location Some relevant results or key findings	Austin (1991) *Community context and complexity of organizational structure in neighbourhood associations*	Examined the relationship between local neighbourhood attributes and neighbourhood association structure. Less stable neighbourhoods had less complex NAs, and neighbourhoods with higher 'status' had more complex NAs
Rank 3 Total – 4	Not geographically comparable Complex results or key findings that have relevance to this lit review (ex., makes mention of NA briefly but does not explore NAs in detail)	Auerbach (2017) *Neighbourhood Associations and the Urban Poor: India's Slum Development Committees*	Explores how slum dwellers organize, mobilize, and demand support from the state. In-depth fieldwork and survey study conducted in 80 settlements in northern cities in India. Geographically non-relevant

Discussion

The following section summarizes the main trends and themes that emerged from the literature included in this review. The majority of the information in this section comes from sources assigned to the top rank based on their relevancy to the purpose of this review. It is worth considering how the dearth of academic publications on the topic of NAs points to an interesting opportunity to explore these important civic organizations through several lenses.

NA Formation and Mobilization

Survey research indicates that NAs mobilize more often than HOAs and tend to focus on pressing issues in the immediate area (Scheller & Yerena, 2018). Most NAs form around a single issue and take a defensive stance against project proposals that are perceived as being a threat to the neighbourhood's characteristics (Logan & Rabrenovic, 1990). Because these associations tend to be voluntary, there can be a lot of variation in how they choose to recruit members and mobilize.

Research focusing on NA mobilization strategies has been useful for identifying what kind of mobilization approaches are often used by neighbourhood groups. Some methods identified in the research to increase participation include NAs focusing on improving community satisfaction, addressing public concerns, creating opportunities for interpersonal cohesion in the area, or offering selective incentives for residents with membership to the NA (Olsen et al., 1989). These mobilization strategies do not necessarily have the same impact or efficiency. In a survey study conducted by Olsen et al (1989), strategies which focused on neighbourhood or community problems as a means of promoting participation were not found to be effective in increasing participation. Furthermore, additive community projects were found to be more effective in increasing participation than neighbourhood defensive projects. These findings somewhat conflict with the beliefs about NA being groups that focus solely on defending their neighbourhood from further development. NA are not exclusively defensive and can act as supporter and collaborators when proposed project are perceived as beneficial or nonthreatening. How the city and local government is viewed is can be influenced by what kind of topic the NA is focused on at the time. In a study Logan & Rabrenovic (1990), local government were considered "allies" on the topic of safety and lifestyle. However, perspectives shifted, and local government was positions as an "enemy" when land development was to topic of discussion.

In terms of scope, NAs tend take-on focus on local issues rather than issues in the broader community. These associations are primarily concerned with issues facing the area they represent and are typically less not concerned with the needs of the surrounding area (King, 2004; Meyer & Hyde, 2004). This should be expected because the purpose of the NA is to represent the interests of the members of that specific geographic area. Mobilizing around issues concerning their immediate area is to be expected. There is the potential that tension is created between groups that are

concerned with city-wide needs and NAs who are represented by more localized needs, particularly if these broader and narrower needs are conflicting. It is possible that more frequent reciprocal communication and trust between city groups and neighbourhood groups could help NAs better inform citizens about the needs of the surrounding area. However, no empirical research included in this literature review directly explores the impact of improved reciprocal communication on city-wide cohesion.

Participation in NAs

Despite being groups that are meant to represent the voices in their communities, NAs are not always demographically representative of the neighbourhoods intend to represent. The lack of representation of NA raises questions about the role of these groups in local governance. In a recent study by Moor & McGregor (2020), members of NA in both Vancouver and Toronto were not found to be representative of the broader population. Members were more likely to be white, older, and have higher education than the average voter in the city (Moore & McGregor, 2020). In this same study, the policy priorities of NA members were found to be different from the majority of voters in either city. It is important to note that this survey study focused on two large Canadian cities. Difference trends in NA representation might be found in a small city like Kamloops.

Communication and Social Capital

Social capital is a term used to describe networks of reciprocal relationships formed between individuals and groups. These mutual connections can improve the efficiency of meeting shared or common goals (Hays, 2015). To build social capital, networks must function with an attitude of trust and reciprocity among all participants. 'Bridging' social capital is a means of connecting networks to improve efficiency between all parties. NAs and other neighbourhood-based networks are potential sites for building social capital in communities. There seems to gap between NAs and residents in the areas they operate (Hur & Bollinger, 2015; Moore & McGregor, 2020). Empirical research suggests that communication can be a barrier for NAs which impacts their ability to build social capital in their designated areas and beyond. A problem that NAs commonly face is a lack of participation from residents. In a survey study conducted by Olsen et al (1989), both non-members and members of local associations expressed frustrations over a lack of communication between both parties which prevented increased membership and active involvement. This is an important challenge to acknowledge because connections between NAs and residents in the neighborhood is an important aspect of getting an accurate representation of the needs and opinion within a neighborhood.
Another aspect of social capital is 'bridging' or connecting existing networks as a means of improving communication, sharing resources, and building a sense of community. Connecting or 'bridging' multiple NAs with each could be a means of increasing city-wide social capital. In a study by Knickmeyer and colleagues (2003) which examined collaborative projects between NAs in Baltimore, all 10 of the participating associations interviewed touched on similar issues and expressed similar needs. Despite there being an acknowledgment by members from each NA that they would benefit from collaboration, there had been little evidence that any tangible effort had been made to

establish a connection between the NAs (Knickmeyer et al., 2003). Building lines of communication between NAs may be a way of encouraging better exchange and understanding of needs in other parts of the city. The City of Kamloops could help facilitate opportunities for local NAs to connect and share. These opportunities to connect may encourage members of NAs to acknowledge some of the issues faced throughout the city as well as find opportunities to build social capital.

While NAs were the main focus of this review it is important to acknowledge that there are plenty of other ways people organize in their communities that are more informal than NAs. Neighbourhood networks can be place-based, family-based, and friendship based-networks (Hays, 2015). Connecting these other networks to more formal networks like NAs could be a way of bridging social capital and increasing reciprocal communication between neighbourhood groups, members of the community, and local government.

NIMBY – "Not in my Backyard"

There is an abundance of research focusing on NIMBY attitudes. The NIMBY mindset is typically characterized as being anti-growth, anti-densification and oftentimes anti-gentrification (Holleran, 2019). Although plenty of academic research exists on NIMBY attitudes among community members, there seems to be less research exploring how and if NAs adopt or promote NIMBY attitudes. NIMBY attitudes have been explored for a few decades in urban studies. However, more recent academic research has explored the opposing YIMBY attitude. 'Yes, in my backyard' is in direct opposition to NIMBY. YIMBY groups argue for higher density, and better public transit, and are typically pro-infilling.

In a study by Holleran (2019) on neighbourhood groups, it was found that there are generational trends in terms of attitude toward new development. Defensive or NIMBY groups tended to be made up of members who were older than those participating in pro-growth YIMBY neighbourhood groups, whereas millennials were more involved in pro-growth groups and affordable housing advocacy. More young people, particularly millennials, are interested in denser housing and therefore are more likely to reject NIMBY and adopt YIMBY attitudes (Holleran, 2019). There is little evidence that renters participate in NAs and fewer young people are homeowners. Therefore, it is unlikely that the attitudes of younger generations are being represented within NAs.

Research Methods

The majority of the research encountered during this review relied on surveys or interview methods. This is likely because most research was exploratory, that is focused on getting a sense of who was participating in local NAs, what interests these groups had, and what strategies they were using to organize members. Although there are some overall trends in how NA operate and mobilize, it is important to understand that there is great deal of variability between NAs. Geographic location, community demographics, and historical relationships between residents and local government can have a great deal of influence on how residents perceive their community. Interview

research included in this review typically produced results about NA members' perceptions and motivations. Survey research was often used for getting a sense of membership demographic and representation. Both of these research approaches seemed to aid researchers in better understanding the characteristics of the NA of interest. To work with NAs in Kamloops as partners or knowledge mobilizers, it is first important to understand how they are operating, what perspectives they have, who is participating, and what networks they have formed within or outside of their immediate communities.

Key Takeaways & Questions

- A need for more research: The lack of empirical research encountered in this review might be an indication that there is a gap in the literature and a need for more research on NAs.
- Building social capital: NAs are potential sites for building social and 'bridging' social capital.

    - What about NAs in Kamloops?
    - Who is participating in NAs in Kamloops?
    - Are these associations representative of the neighbourhoods they operate in?
    - What existing perceptions and attitudes do they have?
    - Do NAs in Kamloops have an interest in connecting with other neighbourhood-based groups as a means of creating community connections and knowledge sharing?
    - What kind of mobilization strategies is these organization using?

Table 2 Detailed Ranking of Articles

Rank	Reference
1	Alarcon de Morris, A., & Leistner, P. (2009). From Neighborhood Association System to Participatory Democracy—Broadening and Deepening Public Involvement in Portland, Oregon. *National Civic Review*, *98*(2), 47–55. Corianne Scally, & Tighe, R. (2015). Democracy in Action?: NIMBY as Impediment to Equitable Affordable Housing Siting. *Housing Studies*, *30*(5), 749–769. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1013093 Hur, M., & Bollinger, A. G. (2015). Neighborhood Associations and Their Strategic Actions to Enhance Residents' Neighborhood Satisfaction. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *44*(6), 1152–1172. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764014556775 Knickmeyer, L., Hopkins, K., & Meyer, M. (2003). Exploring Collaboration Among Urban Neighborhood Associations. *Journal of Community Practice*, *11*(2), 13–25. https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v11n02_02 Logan, J., R., & Rabrenovic, G. (1990). Neighborhood associations: Their issues, their allies, and their opponents. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, *26*(1), 68–94. Moore, A. A., & McGregor, R. M. (2020). The Representativeness of Neighbourhood Associations in Toronto and Vancouver. *Urban Studies*, *58*(13), 2782–2797. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020964439 Ruef, M., & Kwon, S.-W. (2016). Neighborhood Associations and Social Capital. *Social Forces*, *95*(1), 159–190. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sow053

2	Austin, M., D. (1991). Community context and complexity of organizational structure in neighborhood associations. *Administration & Society*, *22*(4), 516–531. Doberstein, C., Hickey, R., & Li, E. (2016). *Nudging NIMBY: Do positive messages regarding the benefits of increased housing density influence resident stated housing development preferences? 54*, 276–289. England, M. (2008). When 'Good Neighbors' go Bad: Territorial Geographies of Neighborhood Associations. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, *40*(12), 2879–2894. https://doi.org/10.1068/a39258 Hays, R. A. (2015). Neighborhood Networks, social capital, and political participation: The relationship revisited. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *37*(2), 122–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/juaf.12137 Holleran, M. (2019). Millennial 'YIMBYs' and boomer 'NIMBYs': Generational views on housing affordability in the United States. *The Sociological Review*, *69*(4), 846–861. https://doi.org/httOpsI::/d1o0i.o1r1g7/170/.1010737/80032860122610290196161121 King, K. N. (2004). Neighborhood associations and urban decision making in Albuquerque. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *14*(4), 391–409. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.42 Lenk, K. M., Toomey, T. L., Wagenaar, A. C., Bosma, L. M., & Vessey, J. (2002). Can neighborhood associations be allies in health policy efforts? Political activity among neighborhood associations. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *30*(1), 57–68. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.1050

	Meyer, M., & Hyde, C. (2004). Too Much of a "Good" Thing? Insular Neighborhood Associations, Nonreciprocal Civility, and the Promotion of Civic Health. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *33*(3_suppl), 77S-96S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764004265432 Olsen, M., Perlstadt, H., Fonseca, V., & Hogan, J. (1989). Participation in Neighborhood Associations. *SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS*, 18. Oropesa, S. R. (1995). The Ironies of Human Resource Mobilization by Neighborhood Associations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *24*(3), 235–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976409502400304 Scally, C. P. (2012). The Nuances of NIMBY: Context and Perceptions of Affordable Rental Housing Development. *Urban Affairs Review*, *49*(5), 718–747. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1078087412469341 Scheller, D. S., & Yerena, A. (2018). *Neighborhood Concerns and Mobilization Patterns of Homeowners and Neighborhood Associations*. 40.
3	Applbaum, K. (1996). The endurance of neighborhood associations in a Japanese commuter city. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 1-39. Auerbach, A. M. (2017). Neighborhood Associations and the Urban Poor: India's Slum Development Committees. *World Development*, *96*, 119–135. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.03.002 Gay, R. (2021). *Neighborhood Associations and Political Change in Rio de Janeiro*. 18.

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Enhance Residents' Neighborhood Satisfaction. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector*

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their opponents. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, *26*(1), 68–94.

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Nonreciprocal Civility, and the Promotion of Civic Health. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector*

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    Associations in Toronto and Vancouver. *Urban Studies*, *58*(13), 2782–2797.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020964439

Olsen, M., Perlstadt, H., Fonseca, V., & Hogan, J. (1989). Participation in Neighborhood

    Associations. *SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS*, 18.

Scheller, D. S., & Yerena, A. (2018). *Neighborhood Concerns and Mobilization Patterns of*

    Homeowners and Neighborhood Associations. 40.