Emotional labour in non-governmental organisations: narrative analysis and theory expansion

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore emotional labour in the context of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) using word data from interviews of five NGO directors on their recruitment criteria when hiring staff. We analyse interview transcripts using semiotic clustering. First-order concepts are organised into second-order themes which are summarised as aggregate dimensions to develop a proposition and expand emotional labour theory. We find evidence of emotional labour in NGOs: modelling behaviour for clients, serving as mentors to new staff members, maintaining boundaries between self and clients, suppressing panic in crisis, cognitive reframing, and compartmentalisation. We provide evidence of emotional labour in NGOs, which contributes to emotional labour theory by focusing solely on this important sector of public service. Little research has been done on emotional labour in such organisations, and consistent with prior findings, we find aspects of emotional labour in NGOs can be rewarding and fulfilling as well.

Keywords: emotional labour; non-governmental organisations; NGOs; human resource management; narrative analysis.

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1 Introduction

Emotional labour is the skill that powers the modern service economy. Two streams of research have emerged since Hochschild's seminal 1983 *The Managed Heart*; the first further developing the concept in the private sector, the second expanding the theory to government. Broadly, Hochschild's starting definition of emotional labour as emotional effort in exchange for a wage, which initially developed the theory of emotional labour and continues to guide research in this area. Non-governmental organisations (NGO) complicate this strict definition. With over 13.6 million employees in the US alone – more than 10% of non-farm employment – NGOs possess the labour base to warrant attention, and volunteers outnumber paid employees in the non-governmental sector five to one. While the theory of emotional labour has been under development for more than thirty-five years, ultimately it must offer a compelling explanation for the emotive efforts of such a large proportion of the economy if it is to remain a leading theory of front-line service work.

Understanding emotional labour in NGOs depends first on accepting that these organisations are part of the broader 'social sector' which exists in response to, alongside, is dependent upon, and overlaps the public and private sectors (Bromley and Meyer, 2014), with all the positive and negative outcomes arising from organising human activity. Scholarship examining these types of organisations have been vigorous, but even the naming conventions remain different across contexts. Variously referred to as NGOs, non-profit organisations, the charitable sector, the third sector, or the commons, these organisations represent an increasingly large share of the work in public service.

Despite the size and importance of the NGO sector, the scope of emotional labour research has yet to reach how employees and volunteers of NGOs use their own emotional labour skills in their work, the outcomes of that effort, or (in the case of volunteers) what exactly that effort is being exchanged for. Without first recognising that emotional labour effort is occurring, it cannot be evaluated, or compensated. Expansion of the theory to understand how NGOs use emotional labour in their work – and what is exchanged for that effort – must be an eventual focus for researchers. However, given how little scholarship has devoted time to understanding emotional labour in NGOs in any meaningful way, the middle path to theory expansion must start with the paid employees of NGOs. This allows theorists to establish the effort, before eventually turning to the exchange. The purpose of this paper is to open that middle path, exploring emotional labour in the non-profit context using word data from interviews of five director-level women in organisations that serve victims of domestic violence.

Emotional labour research, concerned with surfacing the unacknowledged efforts of people in organisations, must take note of work done without a wage. Where the state relies on "coercion and sanctions (or threat of them) and market organisations work through rewards and remuneration" [Corry, (2010), p.39], non-governmental organisations coalesce around voluntary participation, shared ideals, and charity. The non-profit sector in the US alone relies upon $245 to $280 billion in federal grants and subsidies (Sherlock and Gravelle, 2009), comprisingfully one-third of the sector's revenue (Weitzman et al., 2002). With billions of dollars in government subsidies at stake, competitive pressures have forced rapid change in NGOs since the 1980s. Following retrenchment of federal spending, shifts to consumer-side subsidies, and an emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency, the US government adopted private-sector practices like performance management (Gronbjerg and Salamon, 2012). To remain

competitive, NGOs in the US have increasingly focused on reducing costs, marketing, and organisational best practices drawn from their private-sector competitors (Gronbjerg and Salamon, 2012).

Emotional labour theory originated in the American private sector (Hochschild, 1983), and later expanded to public services (Guy and Newman, 2004) due, in part, to the growth of market-based management principles in non-market entities that deliver public services. But the role of human resource management principles in NGOs has not been the focus of much emotional labour research, likely due to the fundamental role of pay in emotional labour theory. Adhering to this definition and overlooking NGOs leaves emotional labour theory incomplete.

2 Emotional labour: what it is and why it matters in NGOs

Display rules are unwritten regulations governing a worker's observed affect, or outward expression (Grandey, 2003). Different jobs and professions use different emotion management strategies to navigate display rules (Carlson et al., 2012; Steinberg and Figart, 1999). Emotion management in the service of conforming to display rules is emotional labour. Emotional labour is the effort to suppress inappropriate emotions and/or elicit appropriate emotions within oneself or in another person, where 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' are dictated by the demands of the job. Hochschild (1983/2003) introduced emotional labour to the study of organisations by sociologists and management theorists, and Guy and Newman (2004) introduced the concept to public administration (Guy et al., 2008; Mastracci et al., 2012). All employ Hochschild's (1983/2003) definition of emotional labour, which differentiates emotional labour from emotion work based on pay. Emotional labour is part of the exchange of work effort for pay between employee and employer. In public service work, emotional labour represents a substantial proportion of that exchange (Guy, et al., 2008) but it often remains unrecognised and unremunerated (Mastracci et al., 2006). Individuals following display rules can take one of two approaches: They can convince themselves that the display rules are objectively right and true (deep acting) or they can fake it (surface acting). Surface acting is more stressful and produces more negative outcomes than deep acting (Lu and Guy, 2014; Needham et al., 2017). Furthermore, display rules to suppress negative emotional expression, (e.g., anger, boredom, disgust) – whether performed through surface or deep acting – increase exhaustion (van Gelderen et al., 2011).

We posit that display rules govern non-governmental sector work just as they do in government and the private sector: non-governmental organisations engage with clients both face-to-face and voice-to-voice. Emotional labour is fundamentally communicative and goal oriented: emotional labourers employ a range of techniques to manifest an outcome. Hochschild categorised types of emotional labour based on the desired outcomes to be observed or experienced: either nicer-than-nice or tougher-than-tough. Within public service roles, nicer-than-nice job types have included care workers (Miller et al., 2017) and tougher-than-tough jobs corrections such as officers and police officers (Mastracci et al., 2012). Emergency-services telecommunicators, emergency medical technicians, and fire fighters toggle across a range of expressions based on situational demands (Guy, 2017; Guy, et al., 2008; Mastracci, et al., 2012). We suggest that the nature of NGO work demands a similarly-wide range of display rules, from tough love to

detached professionalism to compassionate and caring emotional displays. Suppression and expression take their toll on staff, however. For instance, suppression of negativity is linked to exhaustion (van Gelderen et al., 2011), and suppression leads to on-the-job mistakes. Richards and Gross (1999) directed study subjects to suppress reactions to graphic images of auto accidents. These subjects consistently performed poorly on subsequent tests of working memory compared to subjects not directed to suppress reactions and to subjects viewing benign images. Emotional labour can lead to mistakes on the job, and when the stakes are high, as they often are in NGO work, then emotional labour must be understood.

2.1 Wage versus exchange: a difference that makes all the difference

Hochschild (1983/2003, p.7) distinguishes between emotional labour and emotion work, and following Marx, underscores the transactional nature of the former: "Emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value … it is bought on one hand and sold on the other". As in Marx, Hochschild equates 'exchange' with 'wage'. Emotion work is unpaid and benefits one's personal relationships, while emotional labour is paid work that benefits the employer. Emotion work is the effort put forth to listen politely to the same old story you have heard your uncle tell dozens of times or the surprise you feign when your friend tells you that he and his girlfriend have called it quits. Again emotional labour, on the other hand, is effort put forth for the sake of the employer.

Does a Red Cross volunteer, charged with serving the needs of a community in the aftermath of a natural disaster, not face emotional labour demands? Could this volunteer not be separated from the organisation for failure to comply with organisational display rules? To argue that her emotional labour skills are emotion work and therefore given freely because she volunteers seems unnecessarily narrow in light of the same labour done by the emergency responder from the nearby firehouse, responding to the same natural disaster, serving the same community.

Corry (2010, p.11) explains this blind spot in emotional labour research: "whereas the state has 'state theory' and the academic subject of public administration and comparative politics to theorise it, and the study of markets has its own highly prestigious scientific discipline of economics, the third sector remains comparatively under-theorised". Emotional labour theory rooted in the private sector and only recently expanded to the public sector, explains the nongovernmental sector by defining what it is not – neither the state nor private sector – without examining what it is. Blackwood et al. (2012) analyse the distribution of volunteer time across functions and find that volunteer hours are spent on administration and support activities, social service and care, performing and cultural activities, and public health and safety; activities that are all compensated in other contexts. Research on non-governmental organisations has grown markedly in the last thirty years. Shier and Handy (2014) reveal five themes over four decades of scholarship on NGOs: human resources, personnel and volunteer motivation, behaviour, development, and perceptions. All are common foci in emotional labour scholarship and scholarship on public-sector management, emphasising several shared areas of interest and thereby furthering the justification for specific research on emotional labour in NGOs. The economic impact, employment demands, and growth in scholarship all demand further study through an emotional labour lens.

3 The present study: sample selection and evidence

As an exploratory, grounded endeavour, we engage with five NGO directors, all of whom work in providing services to the victims of domestic violence. The focus on managers is intentional, as they interface with both paid employees and volunteers in their respective organisations. Through our focus on NGO directors and asking specifically about their staff recruitment criteria, we are able to define more clearly the expected contributions of front-line service providers. Study participants were part of a convenience sample of public servants in a larger study on human resource management. Given the nature of the sample and our approach, external validity was not among our objectives. We follow other researchers who find the applicability of the concept of 'saturation' in interview studies to be incomplete, and an unnecessary or even useful lodestar. Complete description of the phenomenon of emotional labour in the nongovernmental sector is not an achievable goal, and we head instead for establishment and surfacing of previously overlooked aspects of emotional labour effort within the NGO context. Researchers in these cases ought to be "satisfied when a study offers new insights that contribute substantially to or challenge current understandings" [Malterud et al., (2016), p.1759].

Moreover, an interview with five key informants falls within the range, though admittedly at the low end, of grounded interview research identified by previous epistemological studies (Thomson, 2004; Mason, 2010). The flexible nature of saturation must be considered in light of the goals of the constructivist and interpretivist nature of grounded interviews. The study at hand, the research questions developed, and the researchers' own judgement regarding the value and depth of insights produced in the 'meaning making' which takes place between interviewer and interviewee (Schwandt, 1994) guide our selection.

3.1 Evidence from exploratory research

Key informants were interviewed from nongovernmental organisations providing services to victims of domestic violence in one metropolitan area in the western United States. The population of this metropolitan area exceeds one million, it is the capital of the state, and is among the 20 largest cities in the country. To explore the concept of emotional labour in the nongovernmental sector, we interviewed directors in these organisations on key attributes and skills that they look for when recruiting staff. We interviewed two executive directors (EDs) and three program directors, one of whom manages a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) program. All five directors spoke directly to the emotional labour demands facing their staff. All organisations use a mix of volunteer and paid personnel in direct service delivery, and reveal:

- *Evidence of emotional labour in the nongovernmental sector*: modelling behaviour for both clients and co-workers including efforts to calm others in crises and suppressing one owns panic in crisis; reframing situations to change one's reaction to it, which is an antecedent-based emotional regulation strategy, and; compartmentalisation.

- *Evidence that emotional labour is not unequivocally negative*: prior research emphasises the negative outcomes from emotional labour such as burnout and alienation (Brook, 2009a, 2009b). Our exploratory research reveals evidence that even very difficult, emotion-laden service work has positive, rewarding aspects.
- *Presence of display rules*: consequences, including dismissal, meet both paid staff and volunteers who fail to exhibit certain feelings and beliefs including self-awareness and a commitment to an organisation's self-care plan. Paid staff and volunteers who appear to pass judgement of victims of domestic violence or who assume the role of expert in their interactions with victims are also subject to sanction.
- *Human resource management practices are applicable in NGOs*: recommendations to public-sector organisations with respect to HRM practices to support and sustain emotional labourers apply to the nongovernmental sector as well.

We arrive at these results through systematic analysis of interview transcripts using semiotic clustering (Gioia et al., 2012; Gioia and Pitre, 1990). The methodology proceeds in three steps: First, direct quotes from interview transcripts are grouped into first-order concepts. Concepts are organised into second-order themes which characterise common elements among groups of first-order concepts. Finally, second-order themes are summarised as aggregate dimensions. This process "introduces methodological rigor into qualitative analysis" [Gioia et al., (2012), p.18]. Theory is then developed by describing the relationships among aggregate dimensions, resulting in theory that is firmly grounded in word data from key informants (Mastracci, 2015). We build from there to explain relationships among emotional labour, display rules, and HRM practices in non-governmental organisations. Direct quotes from key informants comprise the first-order concepts. These concepts are grouped by their common elements and those groupings become second-order themes. Second-order themes are then summarised as aggregate dimensions, which are: emotional labour, display rules, and HRM practices. We explain the relationships between the three aggregate dimensions, which is presented as a proposition at the end of the analysis. This proposition may be used to test hypotheses in future empirical research.

3.2 Evidence of emotional labour

We find evidence of emotional labour in nongovernmental organisations: modelling behaviour for both clients and as mentors to new staff members, maintaining boundaries between self and clients, suppressing panic in a crisis, cognitive reframing, and compartmentalisation. Below, one executive director describes advocates' efforts to sense victims' feelings and how they embody the target feeling of calmness in order to benefit the evidence-collection process. She further describes how an advocate embodied calmness for a family in order to conduct her investigation:

> What we do calms [victims] down … the intervention that we do helps them to feel safer, and as they feel safer and calm down, the trauma level goes down and they're able to remember more things.
>
> We have to maintain an aura of calm and reasonableness and shield [victims] from exposure to some of the things we just witnessed … my advocate was

> taken aback … she had to really do some work with the family to calm them down and talk to them about an investigation.

Below, the director of counselling and advocacy describes advocates' efforts to maintain boundaries with crime victims, and the emotional skill both being present and distant; the Director of Shelter Services describes a different example of an advocate's work to model desired behaviour for a mother with children in the shelter:

> I can usually tell within three months if they'll make it a year or not, and for sure by six months … I think it's about managing. I think it's about your ability to be able to be present and distant.

> [The mother] really didn't know what to do, so we ended up modeling for her for quite a long time how to redirect, and [the child's] tantrums would last 2, 3, hours, so it was 2 or 3 hours of one advocate modeling for mom how to just be calm, let him slam the door, let him cuss you out.

3.2.1 Rewarding aspects of emotional labour

Each interviewee characterised her work as difficult, yet also rewarding. Some reflected upon individual cases, while others discussed the positive aspects of their work in more general terms. This evidence contributes to the literature on emotional labour by characterising emotional labour as something that can increase job satisfaction, not just leading to burnout and alienation. Below, the SANE director and one of the EDs recall specific rewarding cases:

> I just knew that I had done everything I could do for that woman just by treating her like a person and not taking into [account] all of the troubles she was in or maybe the bad choices she had made … I'm here to take care of patients.

> I never forgot that experience for her … we are the victim's voice … I helped her voice come through in that experience.

In the next set of quotes, the counselling and advocacy director, the SANE director, and each of the EDs discuss rewarding aspects of emotional labour in general:

> We can't do anything about what just happened but we can do something about what happens next, so part of our mission is to keep people from being revictimized by the [judicial] system.

> We're a group of nurses who want to take care of this special population of patients [victims of sexual assault]. We believe we provide the best care possible to this population when they have experienced this serious trauma in their lives.

> It's good work. I'm sorry that we have to have this work, but it's good work. It's good work because I truly believe that we provide the environment where folks who have been victimized can change that experience for themselves [and] can use that experience.

> I never have a day when I don't want to come to work, and this is hard work.

3.3 Presence of display rules

Three display rules arose from the interviews: displaying self-awareness, displaying a non-judgmental attitude, and in one agency, demonstrating support for the institution's

self-care plan. All five interviewees discussed the importance of demonstrating one's own self-awareness in service delivery to victims of domestic violence. Evidence also emerged among three of the five participants that job applicants cannot show a judgmental attitude toward victims of domestic violence. One agency strictly enforced its explicit display rule to support its self-care plan.

3.3.1 Self-awareness

Displaying a sense of self-awareness was important to all of our director-level respondents when they screen applicants for employment. Possessing an awareness of self is not enough: one must articulate it during the applicant-screening process. Every respondent spoke at length about the importance of self-awareness. Below, each ED describes the role of self-awareness in advocacy work, particularly as it relates to protecting oneself from emotional demands (the first two extended quotes are from one ED, and the third quote is from the other ED. Emphasis supplied):

> We're exposed to the roughest and the rawest experiences people can have and we see the meanest things that people do to each other so you've got to be in a place where you're able to do that work and then can be able to go home and take care of yourself or be able to acknowledge that it's had an impact and be able to talk about the impact.

> We talk about it [self-awareness] all the time … we make it a safe environment for [staff] to talk about things they struggle with and not only do we give them permission to talk about it but we identify it as a sign of health and an expectation.

> The advocate who is working on this case said to me 'I'm afraid that I'm so aligned with the kids right now that I don't think I could be a good advocate for the mom.' Good for her for saying that, and also she's struggling with separating from the emotional piece because she's got a child the same age … she's strong enough to recognize that this is probably not a good case for her to work on right now.

The next two quotes are from the counselling and advocacy director, who discusses screening for new hires and self-awareness for all staff:

> That's what I'm looking for: Who has that self-awareness? Because that's the only way you can protect yourself in this business is to be self-aware and to be able to assess yourself all the time and then use that in your work.

> To do trauma work … the critical piece is self-awareness and what's happening for me and how am I managing what I do during the day at home, how does it affect me? How do I balance?

The shelter services director echoes these sentiments:

> Self-awareness is the biggest piece because you've got to be able to—even in a crisis, in a situation – be able to know what's going on for yourself and then either be able to step out of the situation or finish it up and then process that with a coworker or your supervisor.

> I need to be self-aware enough to say okay I need to take more breaks today, I need to ask for more help today, I need to maybe come in today at the beginning of my shift and let all of my coworkers know where I'm at so they know if I'm going to need extra space or if I'm going to need extra help.

3.3.2 Non-judgmental attitude

When describing their processes to screen applicants, display rules governing beliefs were articulated by four of the five directors interviewed. The first of these display rules is to betray a non-judgmental attitude. The second is to support the organisation's self-care plan, which is explicit in its human resource management practices and enforced strictly in one agency. In the following passages, the counselling and advocacy director and the shelter services director discuss the non-judgmental attitude display rule as it arises for applicants for employment. An ED follows, with her observations on general attitudes about domestic abuse:

> I need to see what [an applicant's] belief system is about domestic abuse and being victimized. What your belief is about the victim—does she have a choice or not have a choice, can she leave or not leave—I want to know what you think about that.
>
> If [applicants] have a general kind of opinion that why doesn't she just leave, that's a problem. You're not her, and you don't know what he's told her. I mean when your husband threatens to kill your kids if you leave, you're not leaving.
>
> People talk about, you know, tell that woman to get a restraining order. Well it's the woman's decision about getting a restraining order. There may be some things that we're not even considering … he's told her in the past that if you get a restraining order that's telling me that you're signing up with the cops and I'm going to kill you. We might not know that.

3.3.3 Belief in the self-care plan

One agency embedded individual self-care plans into job descriptions and performance evaluations. Workers are assessed not only on their on-the-job performance, but also on progress in several areas including physical, emotional, financial, intellectual, and spiritual health. A worker could do his job well yet be penalised in the annual performance review if goals in any of these areas went unmet. This ED recalled: "The one employee who didn't believe we were serious was separated from employment after he decided he would absolutely refuse to do a self-care plan". The other three organisations mentioned self-care, but their approach is less formal and the plans are not explicit aspects of HRM.

3.4 HRM recommendations

Our evidence suggests HR practices in public services work in NGOs as well. The centrality of emotions in these organisations, just like in private and public sector organisations, runs counter to the norms of scientific management (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). Guy et al. (2008) reveal several HRM practices to support emotional labour in public services, including debriefings, cross training, screening applicants for experience with emotionally-intense trauma work, and ongoing training to ward off burnout and minimise turnover. These practices were evident in the NGOs represented by our interviewees. The shelter services director discusses formal debriefing sessions, while the SANE director describes a much less formal approach to debriefing:

> Every week we sit down together and we say okay, this incident happened on Monday. What was going on for everybody? Would you guys have wanted to do it differently? If it happens again, how would you want to have handled it?…we're constantly reevaluating how situations are going because you can never predict.

> We don't have anything specific in place for decompressing after a particular exam. Since we're all on call, we work autonomously, so it's not like there's another nurse readily available to talk with that person. Most of the time when we do have a pretty bad exam, that nurse reaches out to me or another friend that she has on the team.

When screening applicants for positions in their organisations, one of the EDs emphasises flexibility, familiarity with the criminal justice system, and victim advocacy; and the SANE Director underscores the central role of victims:

> What I want is for people to have had experience working with the system somewhere, whether it's a criminal justice background, they've worked in other nonprofits, social service … someone who can think on their feet and has common sense, because I can train about victims' issues, I can train about the system, but every single thing is different … everyone needs to be able to do it all.

> I look for people who verbalize without me asking that they work with patients who experience trauma. An example would be labour and delivery nurses who specialize in fetal demise, like when the mom gives birth to a baby who has died. Obviously, that's not a legal issue, it's not a forensic issue, but the trauma that the family experiences knowing that their baby has died is horrific … if [an applicant] goes through all of that and doesn't mention the patient, then they're not going to be a good fit for us because patient care has to be at the top of the list.

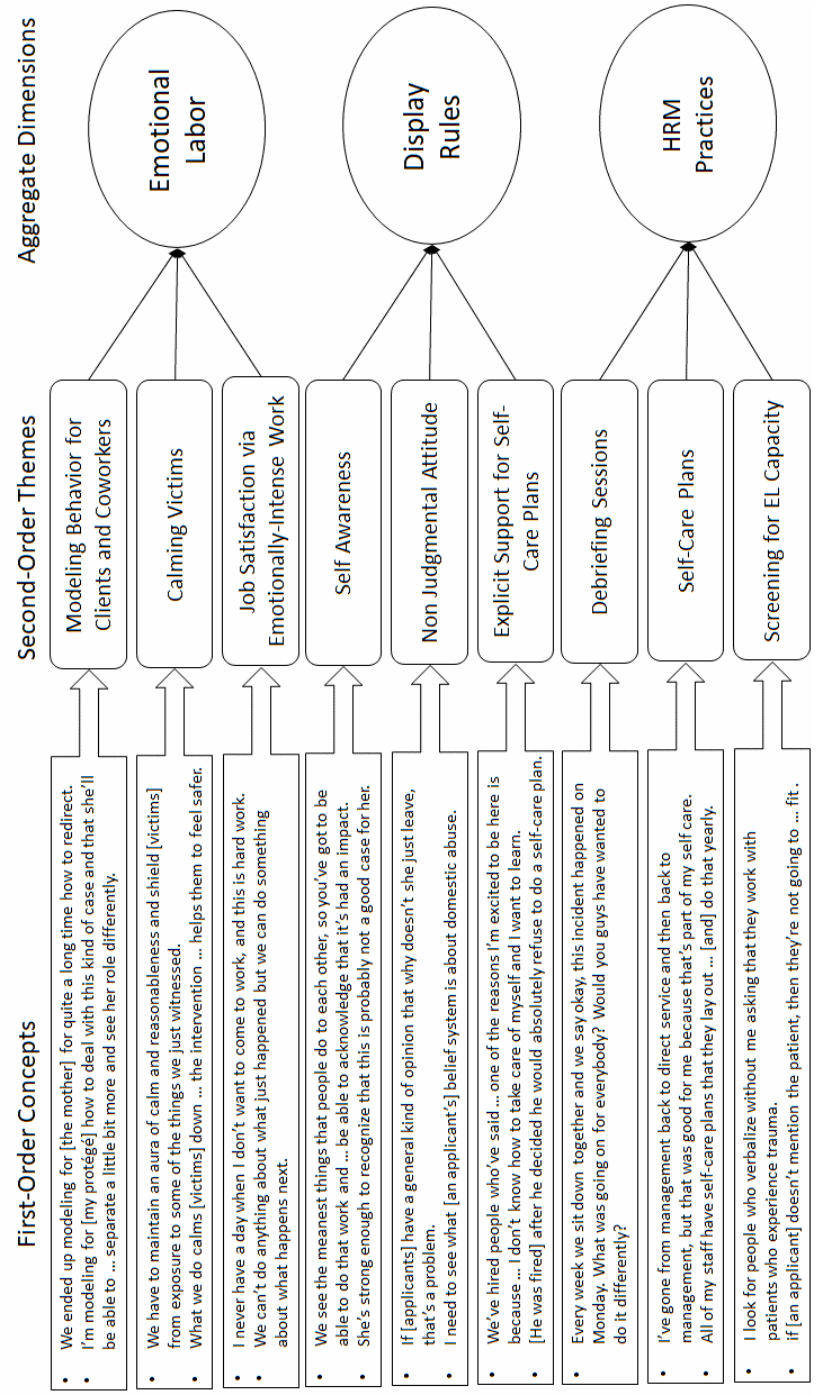
We now organise the above quotes into a data structure (Gioia et al., 2012). Direct quotes from respondents are first-order concepts. The data structure shows how first-order concepts are grouped into themes, which become second-order themes, also known as axial coding (Gioia and Pitre, 1990). Second-order themes are then organised according to their similarities as aggregate dimensions. We then propose explanations for the relationships among aggregate dimensions as propositions that may be used in future hypothesis testing research. Figure 1 shows many of the above quotes organised into a data structure:

The relationship that we theorise among the three aggregate dimensions – along with additional direct quotes used throughout this paper – produce the following proposition:

Proposition 1: HRM practices from the public sector may also be used in nongovernmental organisations to support employees who must engage in emotional labour to follow organisational display rules.

We provide evidence of emotional labour in the nongovernmental sector, contributing to emotional labour theory by focusing solely on this sector. Little research has been done on emotional labour in such organisations, and consistent with findings from the public sector, we find emotional labour in NGOs can be rewarding and fulfilling. This also expands theory.

Figure 1 Data structure



Source: Based on Gioia et al. (2012)

4 The scant literature on emotional labour in NGOs

Surprisingly little has been written on emotional labour in NGOs. Sass (2000) examines emotional labour as cultural performance, but although the context is an American non-profit, the focus is actually healthcare. Three other studies focus explicitly on emotional labour (Beres and Wilson, 1997; Fair, 2006; Thornton and Novak, 2010) and three others address emotional labour indirectly (McNamee and Peterson, 2014, 2016; Wilson, 2012). With respect to the former, Beres and Wilson (1997) underscore the dearth of research on emotional labour, particularly as it relates to unpaid volunteer work, and call on scholars to pay closer attention to the issue. Emotional labour is fundamental to leadership in nongovernmental organisations (Allen et al., 2013) and collabouration (AbouAssi et al., 2016). Thornton and Novak (2010) study emotion work of volunteers at a rape crisis centre and reveal a mix of feeling rules, from the norm among staff to maintain dispassionate professionalism to expressing positivity amidst negative circumstances. Fair (2006) interviews 25 domestic violence counsellor/volunteers who are also survivors of domestic violence and reveals the central role of emotional labour to their effectiveness. Fair (2006, p 237) reveals that counsellor/survivors cope by putting their feelings on hold and "focused on keeping their personal and professional lives separate". Display rules in non-governmental organisations are found to range from neutral (Fair, 2006) to positive (Thornton and Novak, 2010). Our exploratory interviews with EDs reveal additional display rules: Some prescribing professional detachment, but others requiring the expression of unique sentiments and behaviours, which were discussed earlier.

Beres and Wilson (1997, p.171) examine the Hungarian feminist network, emphasising "the importance of emotions in the founding and development of an organisation". Fifty women established the Hungarian feminist network in 1990 as an entirely volunteer, non-hierarchical collective. Beres and Wilson (1997, p.179) note the role of pay to differentiate emotion work from emotional labour but assert "volunteers are not paid but give their labour freely. The emotional work that they do on behalf of an organisation can therefore be redefined as emotional labour as other unpaid work done by volunteers". Tracing the Hungarian feminist network's development through their nationwide pro-choice campaign and beyond, researchers underscore the role of emotions in the campaign's effectiveness. Organisation theory downplays the role of emotion by rationalising it as a strategy to realise organisational goals and misses the key effect of emotions in advocacy organisations – especially in organisations representing marginalised communities such as the feminist network. Beres and Wilson (1997, p.179) characterise emotions as powerful organisational resources:

> Organizations need to be able to recognize and balance different stages of emotional activity if they are to give volunteers the maximum opportunities for creativity and commitment. The benefits of emotional labor performed in alternative organizations can be very great but do not necessarily make for efficient organizational functioning in the conventional sense.

Theories of organisations that disappear the role of emotions – or at best position emotions in opposition to organisational effectiveness, decision making, and achieving goals – ignore a fundamental reality of the role of emotions in reasoning (Damasio, 1995) but also ignore an important aspect of advocacy organisations: "Reducing emotion can

also reduce commitment" [Beres and Wilson, (1997), p.180]. Beres and Wilson (1997, p.180) further assert:

> Emotions should be accepted and that an analysis of the emotional labor needed in any organization is one way of understanding how to move forward. Third-sectororganizations have a great deal to offer to researchers and organizational theorists in advancing this new understanding … Theory that conflicts with reality can only undermine rather than enhance our understanding of the substantive pressures felt by an organization's members.

Fair (2006) explores the emotional labour strategies used by counsellor/survivors to serve victims of domestic violence; specifically, whether survivors tell their own stories to put their clients at ease, and if so, how they avoid reliving their own victimising experiences. More than three-fourths of the counsellor/survivors emphasised the importance of "dealing with their own issues before ever becoming a counsellor" [Fair, (2006), p.243]. Counsellor/survivors also underscored the importance of debriefing with co-workers, maintaining a circle of mentors and support groups, and having interests outside work. Nearly half also emphasise demotional masking, when clients: "tell you something completely shocking, and you are trained as a therapist to keep a neutral expression on your face" [Fair, (2006), p.244]. Not all shared their own stories, however. One counsellor/survivor "believed that her own experiences hindered the process because it can bring back old memories and personal feelings within counseling sessions" [Fair, (2006), p.245]. Mindfulness, debriefing, outside interests, supportive co-workers, and therapy were all cited as crucial elements of support systems for these counsellor/survivors.

Thornton and Novak (2010) examine emotional labour of staff at a rape crisis centre in the American Midwest. Fieldwork included nearly two years of participant observation and in-depth interviews with 14 key stakeholders including three SANEs, volunteer advocates, and paid staff. Their study addresses the shortcomings of emotional labour theory in the nongovernmental sector by emphasising the problematic definition of work: "Volunteer work defies the traditional binary logic of public and private spheres … volunteers work to achieve organisational goals, but not for their economic livelihood" [Thornton and Novak, (2010), p.439]. Though unpaid, volunteer advocates "described efforts to check their own emotions before talking with a client" [Thornton and Novak, (2010), p.442] and clearly engaged in emotional labour. Volunteer advocates described a range of emotions to manage, including sadness, fear, helplessness, frustration, empathy, anger, and outrage, but also hope. Volunteers cited two main strategies to managing emotions: Serving as shock absorbers and acting as mirrors. Volunteers absorb the emotions of the victim without reacting and/or take cues from victims to mirror their emotions to be fully present for victims and validate their feelings. In both absorbing and mirroring, volunteers note the tendency to postpone their own emotional expressions or set them aside altogether. The authors conclude that to learn from extensive literature on emotional labour and accommodating techniques, definitions of work will have to change and encompass voluntarism, where labour services are exchanged outside the market.

Three additional studies focus on volunteering and imply emotional labour but do not mention it specifically: McNamee and Peterson (2014, 2016) interviewed so-called high-stakes volunteers (HSVs), defined by the extensive time commitment, intensive training involved, and the nature of services provided: "medical, social, and/or psychological assistance to clients, such as trauma/abuse victims" [McNamee and

Peterson, (2016), p.277]. McNamee and Peterson critiqued the contested and liminal space held by volunteering, following Thornton and Novak (2010), and also to call for further research on how volunteers "navigate the cultural codes of professionalism and how they might 'do' professional" [McNamee and Peterson, (2014), p.239]; in other words, how volunteers recognise and accommodate display rules. The purpose of their 2016 study was to examine the social network ties of volunteers and the organisational resources available to them to manage the emotional and psychological stress of high-stakes volunteering. Social network ties and organisational resources buffer "negative outcomes associated with volunteer demands and volunteer-life conflict … [and] promote positive outcomes and diminish negative effects like stress and burnout" [McNamee and Peterson, (2016), p.290].

Wilson (2012) surveys the literature on volunteering and summarises findings on antecedents, experiences, and consequences of emotions at work. Like McNamee and Peterson, Wilson (2012, p.199) examines volunteering and topics substantially connected to emotional labour, without invoking emotional labour theory. Among the consequences of volunteering are improved health outcomes in general, but HSVs "also suffer emotionally". Wilson outlines a program of future research on volunteering, particularly emphasising the context in which individuals volunteer: "To know if people benefit from their volunteer work it is necessary to study the characteristics of the volunteer experience, the quality of social interaction, the meaning attributed to the work, the support and guidance of staff and other volunteers" (2012, p.199). McNamee and Peterson (2014, 2016) answer Wilson's call for further research on context by focusing on volunteers and organisational and social resources available to them. Together, the handful of previous studies that have examined emotional labour explicitly or emotional labour related topics underscore the potential for future research on volunteering and NGOs in general to integrate emotional labour theory and also critique its definition of work.

In sum, the body of literature examining emotional labour in non-governmental organisations is small: three studies clearly demonstrate the presence of emotional labour and three more suggest its presence indirectly. We build upon the extant research examining emotional labour in NGOs by providing additional evidence of its presence in service delivery. We further develop emotional labour theory by surfacing display rules found in non-governmental organisations serving domestic violence victims and identifying human resource management practices that support workers engaged in service delivery. Our evidence also indicates that while emotional labour is effortful and potentially results in burnout, it can also be rewarding and contribute to job satisfaction.

5 Conclusions: limitations and future research

Although illuminating, the results from our research are not without limitations. First, we explore emotional labour in nongovernmental organisations based on interviews with directors about their recruitment criteria. This provides the barest introduction to the issue of emotional labour in nongovernmental organisations. Continuing research must capture the experiences of front-line workers themselves. Volunteerism is an important focus for future research on emotional labour in NGOs. Although unpaid, it is difficult to argue that 'HSVs' [McNamee and Peterson, (2016), p.276] either do not work, or that their emotional labour is actually emotion work. Yet, emotional labour theory has not yet

begun to explain what volunteers and NGOs exchange in lieu of wages. Further, as NGO staff tend to be paid less than their public-sector counterparts, does the idea that they work for a mission mean their emotional labour can remain unacknowledged and unpaid; that because they love their jobs and the mission of the organisation for which they work, they should expect to receive less pay yet still follow display rules? Volunteers provide services to NGOs because they love the mission or the work such that they are willing to spend their free time doing the work. When that work is difficult, does there remain an expectation of positive display because they are volunteering for a cause to which they are dedicated? After all, Wilson (2012, p.179) states that "the trait most often associated with doing volunteer work is extraversion, followed by agreeableness". Conversely, because they are 'only volunteering' they may be more willing to opt out of tough situations quicker, leaving volunteer managers with more service gaps to fill. To this end, the better the organisation understands display rules, the better it can match volunteers to the work it needs through a more formal volunteer interviewing process.

Second, our interviews capture emotional labour in NGOs in a particular area of service delivery: Services to victims of domestic violence. Although we discussed our results in terms of NGOs in general, generalising to all such organisations may not be warranted. Display rules may differ depending upon the issue area: Work in homeless services is different than environmental advocacy and different than working for a community foundation. Emotional labour has been found across a range of public-service jobs (Hsieh et al., 2012); the same may be found among non-governmental organisations as well. Furthermore, display rules may differ by jobs in the same organisation: case management may involve a different set of display rules compared to property management or back-office functions like human resource management and accounting. Emotional labour is as important to working in the nongovernmental sector as it has been shown to be in public services (Guy et al., 2008).

The original depiction of emotional labour demands an update in light of the unique circumstances of NGOs and the nature of pay. Emotional labour performed in nongovernmental organisations meets the definition of emotional labour in that the effort is for the benefit of an organisation and not for one's personal relationships. It falls short, in that it is unpaid, which would indicate that the efforts of volunteers are emotion work not emotional labour. Future research could determine the extent to which the effort is freely given yet performed in the service of an organisation, or not freely given and, by definition, emotional labour. Altering emotional labour theory to preserve its emphasis on exchange but eliminate the emphasis on pay would account for the very real efforts of volunteers.

Finally, questions unique to emotional labour in the nongovernmental-sector context include: What is the role of mission in display rules? What role does intrinsic motivation play; in other words, does the work somehow mean more to volunteers because they are paid less or unpaid? How does public service motivation affect a worker's choices in adopting surface acting versus deep acting strategies? How does the nongovernmental sector build and enforce organisational display rules? This final question may be a particularly fruitful inquiry, as no other sector has to balance executive, paid, and volunteer employees, and the implicit and explicit display rules in NGOs likely have unique elements which have adapted to that challenge. These questions and more remain to be addressed in further research on emotional labour in NGOs.

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Appendix

Interviews were approximately one hour in duration, recorded and transcribed, and informed consent was obtained in writing at the beginning of each interview. Interviews were conducted in key informants' workplaces between 06/15/10-06/28/10. Open-ended questions were asked as follows, with flexibility allowed to explore other topics as they arise: Describe your organization and your role; Describe a typical case/call/workday; Discuss difficult cases/calls; Discuss screening, hiring, and training staff, reasons why staff have left, and general human resource management practices. From these basic topics, interviews were allowed to evolve from one key informant to the next, consistent with new information obtained and consistent with an exploratory methodology (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2012).