

Gendered Trajectories Towards Professional Success: Volunteering among Immigrant Professionals in Six Cities¹

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Abstract

Civic engagement among immigrants matters in two distinct ways. The first lies with the benefits to the community from immigrant civic engagement by immigrants. The second lies in the advantages that may accrue to immigrants. Numerous studies have shown that civic engagement and economic success often go hand in hand. It is important to determine if this relationship holds for immigrants as well. In addition, most research typically assumes that it is initial economic success that fosters subsequent civic engagement. We explore the possibility that immigrant civic engagement is correlated with their economic success. The analyses presented here are based on surveys with 2,230 foreign-born residents of the U.S., all of whom have postsecondary education experience outside the U.S. and, in some cases, also in the U.S. Our analyses suggest that the trajectories associated with professional success are gendered. Men who volunteer at business, neighborhood, or community organizations have a greater likelihood of reporting professional success than women who volunteer in similar organizations. We conclude with specific suggestions for local officials interested in facilitating professional success among all immigrant professionals.

Keywords: Immigrants, Success, Volunteering, Civic engagement, Professionals

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Introduction

Civic engagement among immigrants matters for two distinct reasons. The first lies with the benefits that immigrant civic engagement brings to the communities in which they live. As the proportion of foreign-born in the United States has increased from under 5% in 1970 to over 13% today, maintaining an active and engaged community life will increasingly depend on the participation of the foreign-born. This includes recognizing that how new immigrants engage with the community may look different than historical patterns of civic engagement in the United States. The second reason lies in the advantages that may accrue

to immigrants. Studies have shown that civic engagement and professional success often go hand in hand (e.g., Rose 2013). Whether this same relationship holds among the foreign-born is an open empirical question. Moreover, most research typically assumes that it is initial professional success that fosters subsequent civic engagement. However, we explore the possibility that immigrant civic engagement also contributes to their subsequent professional success.

In this paper, we examine the extent to which a specific type of volunteering, volunteering at a

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neighborhood, business, or community group, may be associated with professional success. We argue that this kind of volunteering could afford the opportunity to accrue social capital that in turn can be translated into professional success, which we define through earnings, the use of credentialed skills on the job, and holding a professional occupation. As such, we investigate the extent to which there is an association between this specific type of volunteering and immigrant professional success.

Civic participation in neighborhood, business, and community organizations also benefits individuals by providing key skills that are transferable to other social situations. For example, individuals whose volunteer work includes the everyday activities of a neighborhood or community organization have greater self-efficacy (including leadership, neighborhood policy control, and specific knowledge and skills) and organizational collective efficacy (Ohmer 2007, 2008). Self-efficacy and organizational collective efficacy (an organization's or group's perception of its problem-solving skills and ability to improve the lives of members of an organization or group (Pecukonis and Wenocur 1994) are key skills that can facilitate professional success. These volunteer opportunities may be especially valuable for immigrants as they attempt to navigate the local labor market by providing employment-related, transferable skills, access to knowledge regarding the local economic landscape, and valuable local social capital (Handy and Greenspan 2009).

It is widely recognized that there are distinctly gendered patterns to professional success in the United States for both native-born and immigrant women and men. Men have greater income on average, are more likely to use their accumulated skills in their employment, and are more likely to hold a professional occupation (Joint Economic Committee 2016). Further, both native-born and immigrant women and men volunteer at different rates and for different types of organizations (Handy and Greenspan 2009; Wilson, 2000). There is also evidence from the European Social Survey that the emotional benefits of civic engagement vary by gender and parental status (Kroll 2011). It is possible, then, that one of the contributors to differential levels of professional success for women and men, especially among immigrant professionals, is differential levels and types of civic engagement.

Our paper examines whether civic participation in neighborhood and community organizations is correlated with immigrant professionals' reports of professional success. To foreshadow our findings, volunteering in neighborhood and community organizations is associated with gendered trajectories of professional success. Recognizing these pathways

adds to our appreciation of the structural underpinnings of gender-based inequality. In addition, developing a better understanding of these pathways can provide clear capacity-building insights for agencies and organizations seeking to support immigrant professional success.

Civic Engagement and Volunteering: General Overview

Civic engagement, behaviors that are performed out of obligation to one's community as a citizen of that community, includes volunteer service activities performed individually or as part of group membership and is often performed with the intent of improving the community (Crowley 2003; Diller 2001). As noted in a past National Academies of Science report (National Research Council 2014), not only is civic engagement important to the country, but also volunteering is a particularly important form of engagement because it requires action.

Volunteering is a generalized concept that encapsulates multiple forms of activities intended to uplift the community or society. Volunteerism could also be defined as any planned activity that is an individual giving time and resources, excluding financial donations, to a charitable organization (Rodell 2013). According to Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996), there are two types of volunteerism formal and informal volunteering. Formal volunteering is any unpaid action that contributes benefits to the community through an organization or institution. However, informal volunteering provides help directly, outside of an organization, to make positive changes such as helping a neighbor or friend (Carson 1999; Reed and Selbee 2001). Scholars have a difficult time categorizing and distinguishing whether an activity for the community can be defined as informal volunteering. (Carson 1999; Finkelstein and Brannick 2007).

In general, volunteering is more likely among individuals who are educated, individuals who strongly believe that they are relied on by others, and those who have more social contacts. These factors do not differ by gender (Taniguchi, 2006). However, rates of participation in volunteer activity depend on how civic engagement is measured, as individuals report lower levels of formal volunteering than informal helping (Wilson and Musick 1997; National Research Council 2014; Einolf et al. 2016). Further, there are different correlates of formal volunteering and informal helping, and these two types of civic engagement are not necessarily mutually reinforcing. For example, in one study (Wilson and Musick 1997), individuals with more human capital, more children in their household, and those who had higher social

capital or were more religious also more frequently formally volunteered. Women, younger individuals, and those in good health were more likely to engage in informal helping (tasks like assisting a neighbor). Further, those who engaged in formal volunteering activities were more likely to also report informal helping but reports of more informal helping did not necessarily lead to greater involvement in formal volunteering (Wilson and Musick 1997). In a more recent study, based on data from the European Social Survey, Glanville et al. (2016) found that community-level measures of social capital (perceived trust and social ties) were a stronger predictor of formal volunteering and donating to charities than of informal helping.

Volunteering is connected with upward occupational mobility (Wilson and Musick 1999), though the causal link and direction are less than clear. There are a number of studies that consider the economic and social benefits that individuals accrue from volunteer work. Volunteering aids individuals in making social claims about their identity and their social roles through working with organizations that are emblematic of their values (Hoyer and MacInnis 1997). Developing a deeper understanding of social interactions within specific organizations and how those organizations are integrated into the community are key benefits derived from volunteering (Chinman and Wandersman 1999; Statistics Canada 2001).

Benenson et al. (2015) specifically consider the benefits of volunteering for low-income individuals and discuss how such individuals may leverage and build upon various forms of nonfinancial assets—human capital, cultural capital, social capital, and political capital—to the benefit of themselves and their communities. This perspective lends itself to consideration of the benefits of volunteering for immigrants and immigrant women in particular.

Volunteering among Immigrants

Volunteering is an important aspect of immigrant professional and economic integration as it serves to develop the social and cultural capital needed for integration (Baert and Vujić 2016; Gonzales et al. 2014; Grenier and Xue 2011). Individuals who seek to work in nonprofessional jobs, such as sales and services, trades, transport and equipment operators, primary industry, and processing and manufacturing occupations, tend to settle more quickly into their desired occupations than professionals, suggesting specific challenges for immigrant professionals (Grenier and Xue 2011; Oreopoulos 2011).

Volunteering helps immigrants gain English skills, self-confidence, local work experience, and social skills (Dudley 2007; Duguid et al. 2006a;

Grenier and Xue 2011; Slade et al. 2013). Immigrants in Slade et al.'s (2013) study noted that what they valued most from volunteering was “time spent informally with others” because people would give them informal advice and build relationships that were beneficial outside of the volunteer organization (106). For immigrants who have few friends and family in their new country, volunteering can be a key method through which individuals develop new social ties (Dudley 2007). These social ties can then become networks upon which immigrants can rely for job contacts and other information.

However, there are questions as to whether immigrants can maximize the volunteering experience for their long-term economic and professional integration (Wilson-Forsbert and Sethi 2015). Volunteering has a substantial impact on the social integration of immigrants but has also been found to only minimally benefit their economic integration (Wilson-Forsbert and Sethi 2015). This is particularly troubling for immigrant professionals seeking to utilize their professional skills in their new country (Wilson-Forsbert and Sethi 2015). Perhaps this is because immigrants do not necessarily see volunteering as a pathway to professional opportunities when they first arrive in their destination country (Slade et al. 2013). Immigrants determine that volunteering is a mechanism for securing employment through social networks (Slade et al. 2013). The participants in Slade et al. (2013) study were immigrant professionals who had a difficult time finding volunteer work in their fields. Only about one-fourth of their sample of immigrant professionals were able to find volunteer work in their field. Wilson-Forsbert and Sethi's (2015) qualitative interviews highlight the frustration of immigrant professionals in volunteering, as some felt exploited and underutilized in their volunteer setting and a few dropped out of the labor market altogether.

Gender, Volunteering, and Economic Returns among Immigrants

Gender operates as an organizing principle in interactions and institutions (Risman 1998), yielding different and usually unequal experiences for women and men. Previous research has noted distinct gender differences in volunteer behavior, motivations to volunteer, and volunteering experience. Women are more likely to volunteer than men but are also more likely to engage in informal rather than formal volunteering (Wilson and Musick 1997). In a study of volunteering in Germany, Helms and McKenzie (2014) found that women were more likely to volunteer formally if they also volunteered informally, but for men, the decisions to volunteer formally or

informally were independent of one another. This suggests that men may be making their volunteering decisions more strategically. Informal volunteer experiences provide fewer opportunities to acquire social capital that can be translated into professional opportunities. Men volunteer for more organizations and spend more time volunteering, showing greater dedication to volunteer work if they do volunteer (Oswald 2000). Further, men are more able to use their social capital to access resources during volunteering than are women (Lowndes 2004). The literature reports that women are more likely to volunteer for organizations that are connected to caring activities, such as health, education, or community service organizations (including religious organizations), whereas men are more likely to volunteer for business and professional organizations (Lowndes 2000).

Organizations also often exploit traditional gender norms highlighting volunteer work as an extension of the women's gendered responsibilities to their families and communities (Molyneux 2002), potentially limiting women's opportunities to acquire both social and human capital through volunteering. Among native-born women within a country, those able to volunteer already benefit from privileges, such as higher levels of education and socioeconomic status (Osborne et al. 2008). Moreover, in workplace settings, women are more likely than men to volunteer for tasks that are less likely to lead to promotions and career advancement (Babcock et al. 2017).

Women and men may have differing motivations for volunteering. Men who volunteer are more likely to be motivated by a need for social recognition than women, whereas women who volunteer are more likely to do so for personal fulfillment and a sense of social accomplishment than men (Wymer and Samu 2002). However, other research has found that employed women were more likely to volunteer if they were volunteering for an instrumental reason; that is, volunteering for a professional organization connected with their employment or professional background (Osborne et al. 2008). Mailloux et al. (2002), in their review of volunteering research and experiences in Canada, documented that men are more likely to volunteer for activities involving coaching/teaching, driving, and home repair. Women are more likely to volunteer for activities involving serving food, providing care, and campaigning/fundraising. Research on Canadian volunteers noted that men were more likely to approach a volunteer organization on their own and women were more likely to respond to a public appeal campaign (Mailloux et al. 2002). However, Osborne et al. (2008) found that mothers would often report feeling guilty while volunteering because they felt that they were ignoring their duties to their families.

Gender operates to further challenge the professional, economic, and social experiences of immigrant women. Men were more able to find employment in desired occupations than women. Immigrant women have a more difficult time matching their professional skills to jobs and volunteer work than men (Slade et al. 2013). Tastsoglou and Miedema (2000) found that immigrant women generally had more education than Canadian women, but immigrant women were not well-integrated and earned less on average. They were often underemployed and had lower-status jobs.

Wilson-Forsberg and Sethi (2015) found that immigrant women who were professionals felt especially frustrated as they had lost their careers after immigrating and became housebound due to challenges in credential and experience transfer. Between difficulties in getting skills-based employment, difficulties attending new job training and language classes, and gender norms highlighting their caretaking responsibilities, these immigrant professional women became frustrated and lonely. Volunteering became a way to relieve boredom and make connections with other people among these women (Wilson-Forsberg and Sethi 2015). Social capital is especially important for immigrant women: Female immigrants who made new connections after arrival in Canada had a 45.3 percent higher rate of getting a first job in their desired field (Grenier and Xue 2011). Language skills were influential only for women and educational attainment was influential only for men (Grenier and Xue 2011).

The Present Study

Volunteering has been found to provide both social and professional opportunities for those performing unpaid labor. In particular, volunteering is suggested to enable professional success through the accumulation of human, social, and cultural capital. However, the extent to which immigrants can secure those benefits, especially in the U.S. context, has not been well-studied. Further, there seem to be gender differences in volunteering rates, motivations, and benefits. This study seeks to examine the extent to which volunteering in local community or business organizations is associated with professional benefits for immigrants, and whether those benefits differ for women and men. Given the findings of previous research, we hypothesize that volunteering for community or business organizations is more closely tied to benefits for men than for women.

Methods and Data

Sample

To investigate the possible gendered relationship between volunteering and professional success, we use unique online survey data collected in 2014 by two large non-profits serving immigrant professionals and the authors' institution. Focusing on six targeted cities (Boston, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, San Jose, and Seattle), this survey collected information regarding the professional and civic integration of immigrants in their local communities. Four cities were selected as a basis for the sample because they had a long history of private efforts to increase civic engagement, while Boston and Philadelphia were included because of their vibrant and growing communities of immigrant professionals. Survey respondents were recruited using contact information provided by a large non-profit specializing in the evaluation and recognition of international higher education credentials. A total of 4,002 individuals participated in the online survey. Our analyses in this paper are based on 2,230 individuals who had received higher education outside the U.S. (and perhaps also in the U.S.) but excluding those individuals who had only received higher education in the U.S. and provided information about their recent volunteering activities, basic demographic information, and key data regarding their professional activities. Over half of the migrants come from just fifteen countries (India, Colombia, Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Iraq, Russia, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Haiti, Peru, China, and Iran). They may have made inquiries about jobs or be responding to inquiries, but recruitment in the study was based on their contact with a transcript and credential recognition service that independently assessed the quality of their higher education transcripts for higher education received outside the U.S. Thus, they did not necessarily have a job "lined up" in the U.S., and due to data limitations, we cannot claim about any of the participant's understanding of the legal implications of job searching in the U.S.

Measures

Professional success. Our measure of professional success has three components. Respondents were coded as being professionally successful if they (1) were currently employed and making at least more than a specific income threshold per year; (2) were making at least some use of their higher education in their current employment; and (3) held a managerial or professional occupation. Accordingly, we view success not just in economic

terms, but also consider indicators of professional fulfillment and occupational attainment. In our analyses, we specify two different income thresholds: a narrow definition set at \$50,000 and a broader definition set at \$30,000. These thresholds may appear low, but 36 percent of the respondents in the survey were 35 years of age or younger and in 2023 dollars these thresholds are equivalent to \$38,000 and \$64,000², respectively. Moreover, the \$50,000 figure approximates the U.S. Census Bureau's estimates of real median earning for men (\$50,383) and women (\$39,621) in 2014, the year the data was originally collected. We used the age cutoff of 35 as this allows for the longer transition period for immigrants to have foreign educational credentials recognized in the U.S. and perhaps supplemented by U.S. higher education—a supplement that significantly increases the likelihood of professional success. In fact, a recent study suggests that in today's labor market, a cut-off point of 35 years may be more appropriate than the traditional use of the age of 25 years as the touchstone for completion of educational attainment (Cohen et al., 2022).

Volunteering. Respondents were asked about their volunteer activities over the previous twelve months. In this paper, we examine whether respondents had "volunteered with a neighborhood, business, or community group." Using a twelve-month period allows for seasonal variation in volunteering, while questions about clearly defined activities such as volunteering are less prone to measurement error than more subjective measures of civic engagement (National Research Council 2014).

Control variables.

We control for the U.S. metro area a respondent was associated with when they requested an evaluation of their credentials, whether the respondent perceives that he or she speaks English very well (yes = 1), whether the respondent received any of their higher education in the U.S. (yes = 1), whether or not they were under the age of 35 (under 35 = 1), and whether or not the respondent had been in the U.S. for six years or more (yes=1)³.

Analytic Approach.

In our main analyses, we conducted logistic regression analyses to model the binary outcome, professional success. Estimated with SPSS Version 28, these models yield Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) of the underlying parameters related to the observed data. Dummy variables were used to

² https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

³ Typically, one must be in the U.S. for a minimum of five years to qualify to become a naturalized citizen.

control for the local context of each of the six metro areas with all other individuals living in other locations at the time of the survey serving as the reference category. Results were estimated with both the \$50,000 and \$30,000 income thresholds to consider the robustness of the findings to that aspect of our definition of professional success.

As previous research implied that the effects of volunteering on professional success would differ by gender, we performed the analysis with a dummy variable for gender and an interaction term to capture the relationship between gender and volunteering. We also conduct the analyses separately for women and men. Not only does this latter strategy reflect our conceptual understanding of volunteering as a fully gendered social process, but also yields a slightly higher statistical fit between observed and predicted outcomes than when the model for men and women together was estimated using a dummy variable to represent the difference between men and women. It is noteworthy that with both income thresholds, the model fits the data better for men than for women. Moreover, when the model was estimated with men and women together and an interaction term for gender and volunteering was added, the interaction term was not significant. As noted above, the models were estimated by controlling for language proficiency, higher education experience in the U.S., age, and whether or not respondents had been in the United States for more than five years.

Results

Table 1 presents the bivariate relationship between gender and professional success for both the narrow and broad definitions, gender and the control variables, and volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group. Notable with the narrow definition are the relatively low levels of professional success with just 22% of all respondents reporting professional success with a significant difference between men (25%) and women (19%). Using the broader definition, as expected we see a higher percentage of professionally successful respondents (29%), but also the difference between men (31%) and women (28%) is no longer statistically significant. The lack of a gender difference with a lower income threshold is consistent with widely recognized differences in earnings and professional opportunities between men and women.

Approximately two-thirds of all respondents (68%) reported that they spoke English very well and this number did not vary significantly according to gender. There was a significant gender difference in higher education experience in the U.S. with more women (57%) than men (52%) indicating that they had obtained at least some higher education in the U.S. Just over one-third (36%) of all respondents were under the age of 35 with no significant difference here between men and women. Looking at those respondents who had been in the U.S. for six years or more we do see a significant difference according to gender, as 64 percent of women had been in the U.S. for six years or more as compared to just 54 percent of men. Virtually the same proportion of men (24%) as women (23%) reported having volunteered for a neighborhood, business, or community group in the past year.

Table 1. Professional Success, Control Variables, and Volunteering According to Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Professionally successful (narrow definition) ***			
Yes	25%	19%	22%
Professionally successful (broad definition)			
Yes	31%	28%	29%
Speaks English very well			
Yes	67%	69%	68%
Higher education in the U.S.**			
Yes	52%	57%	55%
Under age 35			
Yes	38%	35%	36%
In the U.S. six years or more			
Yes	54%	64%	60%
Volunteered with neighborhood, business, or community group			
Yes	24%	23%	23%

N= 2,230, *** p < .001. ** p < .01. * p < .05. Comparison between male and female respondents.

At the bivariate level, we find significant differences in reports of professional success for all individuals who volunteered at neighborhood, business, or community groups. Using the narrow definition of professional success looking at all respondents (the upper panel of Table 2), among those who volunteered 27 percent were successful as compared to 20 percent of those who did not volunteer. This finding remains significant for men when the analysis is performed separately by gender; that is,

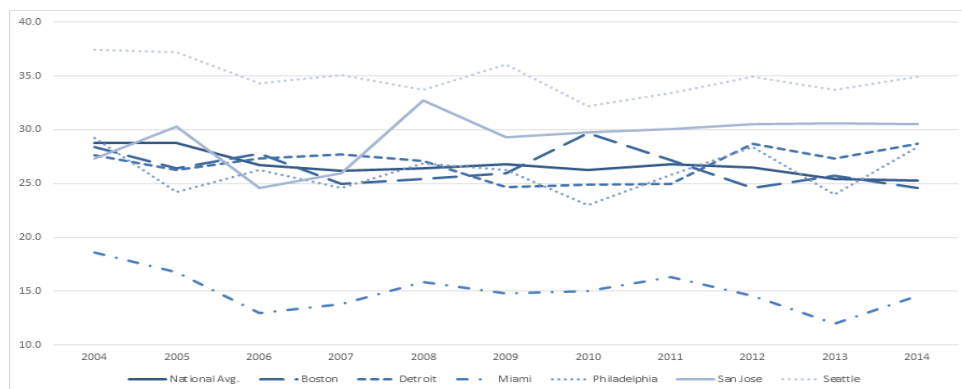
men who volunteer in these organizations are more likely to be professionally successful than men who do not. The pattern is the same for women, but the difference is not statistically significant. The pattern is the same when we use the broad definition of professional success (the lower panel of Table 2). A significant difference between those who volunteered and those who did not is found among all respondents; however, this difference is only significant for men and not for women.

Table 2. Volunteering for Neighborhood, Business, or Community Group and Professional Success: A Bivariate Relationship

	Did you volunteer with a neighborhood, business, or community group in the past twelve months?	
	Yes	No
	All respondents	
Professionally successful (narrow definition)	27% *	20%
	Male respondents	
Professionally successful (narrow definition)	34% **	23%
	Female respondents	
Professionally successful (narrow definition)	21%	18%
	All respondents	
Professionally successful (broad definition)	35% **	28%
	Male respondents	
Professionally successful (broad definition)	39% **	29%
	Female respondents	
Professionally successful (broad definition)	31%	27%

All respondents N=2,230, Male respondents N=924, Female respondents N=1,306.
 *** p < .001. ** p < .01. * p < .05. Comparison between those who volunteered and those who did not.

Figure 1. Volunteer Rates in the United States and Six Cities 2004-2014



Source: Corporation for National and Community Service (www.vounteeringinamerica.gov)

As noted above and illustrated in Figure 1, there is variation in volunteering overall by city. As was the case with gender, where the overall relationship between professional success and volunteering was very different between men and women, Table 3 indicates this is also the case across cities with a significant difference across all cities ($F=2.235$ with 6 df-between, 2,223 df-within and $p=0.037$); however, none of the individual comparisons between specific cities reach statistical significance. As also reported in Table 3, in some specific instances, there is a significant bivariate relationship between volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group and

professional success. Using the narrow definition of professional success, there is a relationship between volunteering and professional success in Detroit and Philadelphia, but no relationship in the other areas. When the broad definition is applied, there is a significant difference in Boston, but not in any other specific areas. To accommodate the broad differences in volunteering between cities, in the logistic regression analyses in Tables 4 and 5, dummy variables are employed for each of the six specific areas with the respondents in all other parts of the U.S. serving as the reference group.

Table 3. Volunteering for Neighborhood, Business, or Community Group and Professional Success: A Bivariate Relationship by City

	Did you volunteer with a neighborhood, business, or community group in the past 12 months?				
	Total this type of volunteer by area ¹⁾	Narrow definition		Broad definition	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
		All respondents¹⁾			
Professionally successful	23%	27%**	20%	35%**	28%
		Boston²⁾			
Professionally successful	28%	33%	22%	46%**	29%
		Detroit³⁾			
Professionally successful	22%	36%*	23%	45%	32%
		Miami⁴⁾			
Professionally successful	18%	34%	23%	45%	36%
		Philadelphia⁵⁾			
Professionally successful	27%	36%*	23%	42%	34%
		Seattle⁶⁾			
Professionally successful	27%	17%	16%	26%	22%
		San Jose⁷⁾			
Professionally successful	19%	37%	30%	44%	33%
		Other respondents⁸⁾			
Professionally successful	23%	17%	16%	23%	23%

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. Comparison between those who volunteered and those who did not overall and in each area by narrow or broad definition of professional success. ¹⁾ $N=2,230$, ²⁾ $N=244$, ³⁾ $N=242$, ⁴⁾ $N=244$, ⁵⁾ $N=282$, ⁶⁾ $N=166$, ⁷⁾ $N=215$, ⁸⁾ $N=837$. ¹⁾ There is a significant difference across all cities ($F=2.235$ with 6 df-between, 2,223 df-within, and $p=0.037$); however, none of the individual comparisons between specific cities reach statistical significance.

As seen in Tables 4 and 5, the bivariate gender difference in the effect of volunteering remains once we move to a multivariate logistic regression framework variation across the cities and for individual characteristics. That is, the positive impact of volunteering for neighborhood, business, or community groups on professional success is present among professional immigrant men, but not among

women. We examine this in two ways: 1) using a dummy variable for gender, as well as an interaction term for women who volunteered, and; 2) estimating separate models for men and women. Table 4 reports these results for our narrow definition of professional success and Table 5 for our broader definition based on a lower income threshold.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Exponentiated Coefficients for Narrow Definition of Professional Success Regressed on Metro Areas, English Language Skills, Higher Education in the U.S., Age, Time in the U.S. and, Volunteering for Neighborhood/Business/Community Group on Success

	[1] All Respondents ¹	[2] All Respondents ²	[3] Men ³	[4] Women ⁴
Boston	1.744** (0.187)	1.765** (0.187)	2.114* (0.309)	1.500 (0.236)
Detroit	1.428 (0.184)	1.434 (0.185)	1.802* (0.276)	1.217 (0.253)
Miami	1.514* (0.185)	1.508* (0.185)	1.953* (0.280)	1.229 (0.251)
Philadelphia	1.471* (0.174)	1.485* (0.175)	1.713* (0.271)	1.325 (0.229)
San Jose	1.956 (0.205)	1.949 (0.205)	3.089*** (0.308)	1.361 (0.289)
Seattle	1.004 (0.218)	1.064 (0.218)	1.064 (0.339)	0.946 (0.285)
Other area	---	---	--	--
Speaks English very well	3.364** (0.149)	3.372** (0.149)	4.645*** (0.233)	2.665*** (0.196)
Higher education in the U.S.	1.488** (0.123)	1.485** (0.123)	1.477* (0.184)	1.496* (0.166)
Under age 35	.0587*** (0.131)	.0588*** (0.131)	0.603* (0.207)	0.616** (0.171)
In U.S. six years or more	1.992** (0.140)	1.994** (0.140)	2.617*** (0.210)	1.575* (0.188)
Volunteered with a neighborhood/business/community group	1.195* (0.125)	1.489* (0.182)	1.485* (0.189)	1.006 (0.171)
Female	0.584*** (0.111)	0.652*** (0.129)	--	--
Female and volunteered with a neighborhood/business/community group		0.659 (0.249)	--	--
Constant	.063***	.059***	.032*** (0.307)	0.062*** (0.247)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	.173	.174	.267	.099
-2 * log-likelihood	2,065.931	2,063.133	963.037	1,186.799

¹N= 2,230 ²N= 2,230 ³N= 924 ⁴N= 1,306. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$. (xx)=logistic regression standard errors

Turning first to Table 4, Model [1] is estimated with all respondents together using the narrow definition of professional success. Respondents in Boston, Miami, and Philadelphia are significantly

more likely to be professionally successful compared to the reference group, while those in Detroit, San Jose, and Seattle are not. Controlling for the metro area, speaking English well, having higher education

in the U.S. (in addition to higher education outside the U.S. and being in the U.S. for six years or more are also significantly more likely to be associated with professional success. Those under the age of 35 were significantly less likely to be successful. Most importantly for purposes of this paper, there is a main effect for those who volunteered with a neighborhood, business, or community group; they are 19 percent more likely to be professionally successful. However, for women much of this effect is cancelled out by the significant negative coefficient associated with gender indicating that women are 41.6 percent less likely to be professionally successful than men. Overall, this model accounts for 17.3 percent of the variation in the log of the odds of being professionally successful.

Model [2] adds an interaction term, for women who have volunteered in neighborhood, business, or community groups. The interaction term, however, is not significant and the sign and significance of the coefficients of all terms in the previous model do not change and the R² measure of the proportional reduction in error only increases from 0.173 to 0.174. Model [3] in Table 4, which takes a different approach, is estimated separately for men and produces very similar results. Respondents from Boston, Miami, and Philadelphia, but here also in Detroit and San Jose are significantly more likely to be professionally successful as compared to those from other parts of the U.S. English proficiency, higher education in the U.S., time in the U.S., and age are also significantly correlated with professional success. Moreover, the positive relationship between volunteering and professional success found in Model [1] is essentially unchanged, as men who volunteered are 48.5 percent more likely to be professionally successful. Taken together, Model [3] accounts for an estimated 26.7 percent of the log of the odds of men being professionally successful.

Model [4] in Table 4, estimated separately for women, tells a different story. None of the city-specific coefficients are statistically significant. As was the case for men, English proficiency, higher education in the U.S., age, and time in the U.S. are statistically significant in the same direction as in Model [2]. However, for women, the effect of volunteering with a neighborhood, business, or community group is not statistically significant. In fact, the exponentiated coefficient of 1.006 means there is essentially no difference in professional success regardless of whether a woman volunteered or not. With an estimated Nagelkerke Pseudo R² of 0.99, we see that this model explains far less for women than men in describing predictors of professional success.

Compared to Table 4, which is based on the narrow definition of professional success, the results found in Table 5, based on the broader definition of

professional success, are very similar. Significant positive metro area-specific effects for Boston, Miami, Philadelphia, and San Jose are again present in Model [1] of Table 5 with the lower income threshold. Speaking English very well, having a higher education in the United States, and being in the United States for six years or more are all positively associated with professional success, as is volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group. Women, compared to men, however, are significantly less likely to be professionally successful. The model explains .174 percent of the overall variation in professional success.

Model [2] in Table 5 then adds an interaction term for being female and volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group. The majority of the coefficients are unchanged compared to Model [1] with the exception of respondents living in Detroit who are now also significantly more likely to be professionally successful compared to those living outside of the six other metropolitan areas. Not only is the coefficient for the interaction term not significant, but now the coefficient for the direct effect of gender is no longer significant.

Looking at Model [3] in Table 5, which is estimated solely for men, most of the city-specific coefficients are unchanged in terms of direction and significance are unchanged compared to Model [2], with the exception of the coefficient for respondents in Philadelphia, which is no longer significant. Age is no longer significant for men in Model [3] of Table 5, but speaking English well, having higher education United States, and being in the country for six years or more, as is volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group are positively and significantly associated with professional success. In Model [4] of Table 5, significant positive effects for female respondents in Detroit and San Jose are no longer significant, while those for other specific metropolitan areas, speaking English very well, having a higher education in the United States, and being in the United States for six years or more are unchanged compared to Model [3]. However, compared to men, in Model [4] the effect for women of being under 35 is significant for men and there is no longer a positive and significant coefficient associated with volunteering for a neighborhood, business, or community group for women.

Comparing the models in Tables 4 and 5, most significantly in Models [1] and [2] with men and women modeled together, the exponentiated coefficient for women while consistently under one—indicating that women are less likely to be professionally successful—is not significant in Model [2] of Table 5, but in both tables, the interaction term for being female and volunteering in a neighborhood,

business, or community group is not significant. Looking at model fit and comparing Tables 4 and 5, there is little difference between Model [1] and Model [2] in each Table, as is the case with Models [3] and

[4], though the gender-specific models in both tables explain slightly more of the variation for men than for women.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Exponentiated Coefficients for Broader Definition of Professional Success Regressed on Metro Areas, English Language Skills, Higher Education in the U.S., Age, Time in the U.S., and Volunteering for Neighborhood, Business, or Community Group on Economic Success by Gender

	[1] All Respondents ¹	[2] All Respondents ¹	[3] Men ²	[4] Women ³
Boston	1.685** (0.170)	1.699** (0.170)	1.944* (0.290)	1.531* (0.212)
Detroit	1.468 (0.168)	1.474* (0.168)	1.857* (0.255)	1.259 (0.227)
Miami	1.813** (0.166)	1.806** (0.166)	1.994** (0.263)	1.727* (0.217)
Philadelphia	1.522** (0.159)	1.533** (0.159)	1.404 (0.256)	1.624* (0.203)
San Jose	1.482* (0.194)	1.478* (0.195)	2.342** (0.293)	1.055 (0.271)
Seattle	0.999 (0.192)	1.005 (0.193)	0.921 (0.315)	1.052 (0.244)
Other area (reference category)	--	--	--	--
Speaks English very well	3.025*** (0.125)	3.033*** (0.125)	4.115*** (0.201)	2.509*** (0.162)
Higher education in the U.S.	1.571*** (0.110)	1.569*** (0.110)	1.461* (0.171)	1.661*** (0.145)
Under age 35	0.615*** (0.116)	0.616*** (0.116)	0.743 (0.187)	0.569*** (0.150)
In U.S. six years or more	1.895*** (0.123)	1.898*** (0.123)	2.333*** (0.190)	1.676** (0.162)
Volunteered with a neighborhood/business/community group	1.134* (0.115)	1.396* (0.174)	1.402* (0.179)	0.971 (0.154)
Female	0.757** (0.102)	0.831 (0.118)	--	--
Female and volunteered with a neighborhood/business/community group	--	0.694 (0.231)	--	--
Constant	0.095*** (0.167)	0.089*** (0.172)	0.056*** (0.266)	0.098*** (0.209)
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	.174	.176	.241	.137
-2 * log-likelihood	2,410.860	2,408.364	971.757	1,423.807

¹N= 2,230 ²N= 2,230 ³N= 924 ⁴N= 1,306. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$. (xx)=logistic regression standard errors

Conclusion and Discussion

Our findings are quite clear. Consistent with previous research (Handy and Greenspan 2009; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wilson 2000), there is a connection between volunteering and professional success. Immigrant professionals who have volunteered in business, community, or neighborhood organizations are more likely to be earning \$50,000 (or more), use skills from their higher education, and be in

a professional or managerial occupation. These local organizations seem to be assets for immigrant professionals as they become integrated into their current city of residence, not only by providing opportunities to gain skills for professional success but also to accumulate social capital through the role acquisition process (Hoyer and MacInnis 1997; Wilson and Musick 1997; see also Lee and Zhou 2015). Therefore, one key policy implication from this research is for local officials to find ways to

facilitate immigrant professionals' participation in local business, community, or neighborhood organizations. While we suspect that volunteering in these organizations leads to increased professional success through skill acquisition (Dudley 2007; Duguid et al. 2006a; Grenier and Xue 2011; Slade et al. 2013), local officials could encourage volunteerism should the association run the opposite direction. Community engagement is a net social positive.

However, if local officials want to facilitate professional success for professional immigrants broadly, there needs to be a deeper understanding of why volunteering with business, community, or neighborhood organizations is positively correlated with men's professional success, but has no such association with women's professional success. There are two components to this conundrum. First, though overall women are more likely to volunteer than men (CNCS 2017), why are women volunteering for neighborhood, business, or community groups at the same rate as men rather than at a higher rate? Second, while women do volunteer in these organizations at approximately the same rate as men, the question remains as to why these efforts are not associated with the same professional benefits for women as they are for men. On the one hand, is there something about the organizations that may account for the observed difference in the relationship according to gender? On the other hand, for individual men and women, how do volunteer motivations, identities, and expectations for the volunteering experience shape their volunteer work? These motivations, identities, and expectations include the extent to which immigrants perceive volunteering as an instrumental activity from which they may accrue benefits. Similarly, cultural expectations for women may shape whether they believe they should personally gain from volunteering (Wilson and Musick 1997). If volunteering is considered care work, intentionally approaching volunteering as an instrumental activity for one's professional gain would counter internalized traditional gendered norms.

Based on this, a second policy implication is for local officials to create specific, targeted, policies that facilitate immigrant professional women's ability to volunteer in local neighborhoods, businesses, and community organizations. Programs and policies to facilitate volunteering in such organizations by immigrant professional women should do so in a way that draws upon traditional gender norms while generally supporting the inclusion of all residents in community activities.

A third policy implication is to recognize the potential for exploitation created when women view volunteering as part of their gender identity. In such cases, they may be more willing to take on volunteer

work that is of no benefit to themselves or their families, but of considerable value to others. Organizations may exploit this connection between caring as women's work and gender norms by encouraging women to do unpaid labor as an example of their altruistic, caring natures (Molyneux 2002). Local regulations, monitoring, and outreach efforts may identify and mitigate situations where volunteering takes on an overly exploitative character.

Moreover, additional research is needed to support and refine these policy recommendations. Our analyses are based on cross-sectional data. The claims made here would benefit from being examined using longitudinal panel data that could afford the modeling of causal processes through a form of path analysis. Indeed, we have struggled to situate these findings as non-causal associations given our understanding of previous scholarship. We welcome subsequent longitudinal analyses testing hypotheses derived from our findings. In addition, the quantitative findings in this paper suggest that qualitative research is needed to document the processes that both facilitate and inhibit women's participation as volunteers in business, community, and neighborhood organizations. For example, Duguid et al. (2006b) illustrate the importance of the varying meanings and definitions of civic engagement in immigrants' countries of origin; the cultural context of when and why to volunteer likely shapes both women's and men's participation in business, community, and neighborhood organizations. Further, qualitative researchers may be able to conduct organizational ethnographies that reveal the processes and mechanisms behind the association between professional success and volunteering in business, community, and neighborhood organizations found for men but not for women. This type of work can inform specific policies that could encourage greater volunteering among all immigrant professionals and thus support their likelihood of experiencing professional success, while also strengthening the communities in which they live.

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