

Youth violence prevention, coalitions, & political action: A city-wide organizational network analysis

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29,569 handguns pictured ... equivalent to the number of handgun deaths in the United States in 2004.
Chris Jordan, photographer, 2007

Previous Studies

- Research of youth violence prevention efforts (YVP) unable to identify direct service methods at the organizational level that are consistently both effective and truly preventive for the whole population
- In response, various types of communities and cities across the country have turned to collaborative partnerships and coalitions in YVP efforts, which have been shown to be effective in cases of substance abuse and public health (Hays, Hays, DeVille, & Mulhall, 2000; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).
- This approach is being adopted internationally (Stevens, Seedat, Swart, & van der Walt, 2003).

Coalition Effectiveness:

- Ability of coalitions to cause extraorganizational change stems from networking and collaborative partnerships that work to:
 - Bring together key stakeholders
 - Pool and increase access to information
 - Increase influence in politics
 - Increase ability to engage in the community and disseminate information (Griffith et al, 2008)

Political Advocacy:

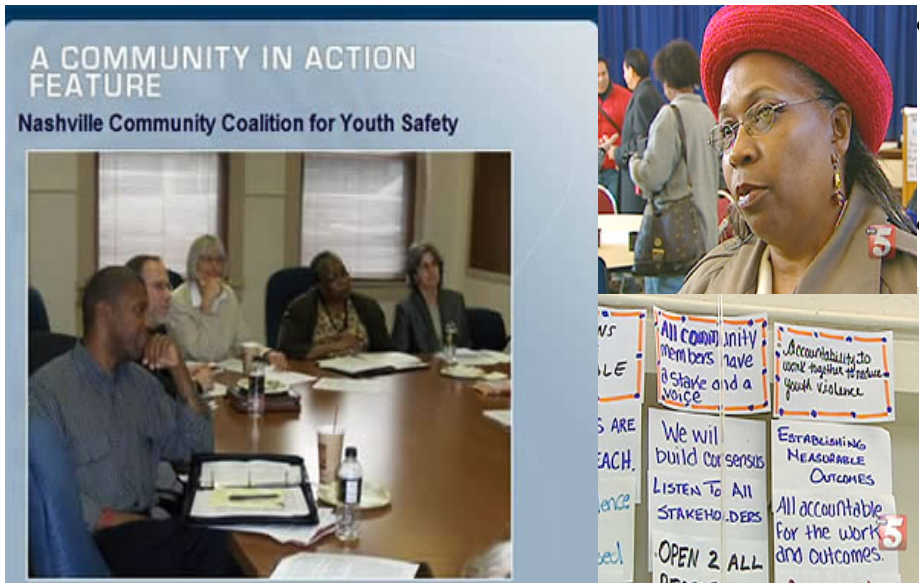
- To have any chance of demonstrating an impact at the community or wider level, clearly public policy changes are needed, e.g., to reduce youth access to firearms, but few organizations participating in government-supported coalitions have the capacity, knowledge, training, or inclination to engage in policy-related research, education or advocacy (Schmid, Bar & Nirel, 2008).
- Yet a few organizations in any given city typically do have members who understand structural causes of violence & have the capacity for political action (Boris & Krehely, 2002).
- Several factors correlate with increased political activity:
 - Organizational level: Higher access to resources, e.g., large volunteer base and budget, (Schmid et al, 2008), and networking with and involving community leaders in decision-making (Pentz, 2000)
 - Coalition level: member diversity and number of sectors of community represented (Hays et al, 2000)
 - Mixed results of whether collaboration/networking of coalition members leads to increased political advocacy or not (Hays et al, 2000; Griffith et al, 2008)

Study Aim & Background & Questions

Aim: to predict over time the approach taken by all public and private organizations addressing youth violence (both coalition members & nonmembers) in a particular city, with particular attn. to those engaged in advocacy for policy change.

Background:

- Based on years 1 & 3 of a 5-year, mixed-method study based on in-depth interviews of organizational leaders of 90 organizations involved in Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) work in Nashville, TN
- NUPACE is the Nashville Urban Partnership Academic Centers for Excellence, part of a nationwide network of research centers on YVP funded by the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention & Control
 - Employs a community-based participatory [CBPR] & multi-disciplinary approach to youth violence prevention
 - Conducts research & surveillance on youth violence
 - Fosters collaboration between academic institutions and local community partners to help develop, implement, and evaluate promising prevention efforts
 - Organized, staffs & supports the Nashville Community Coalition for Youth Safety to mobilize and empower local organizations, schools & other public agencies, & communities to address youth violence

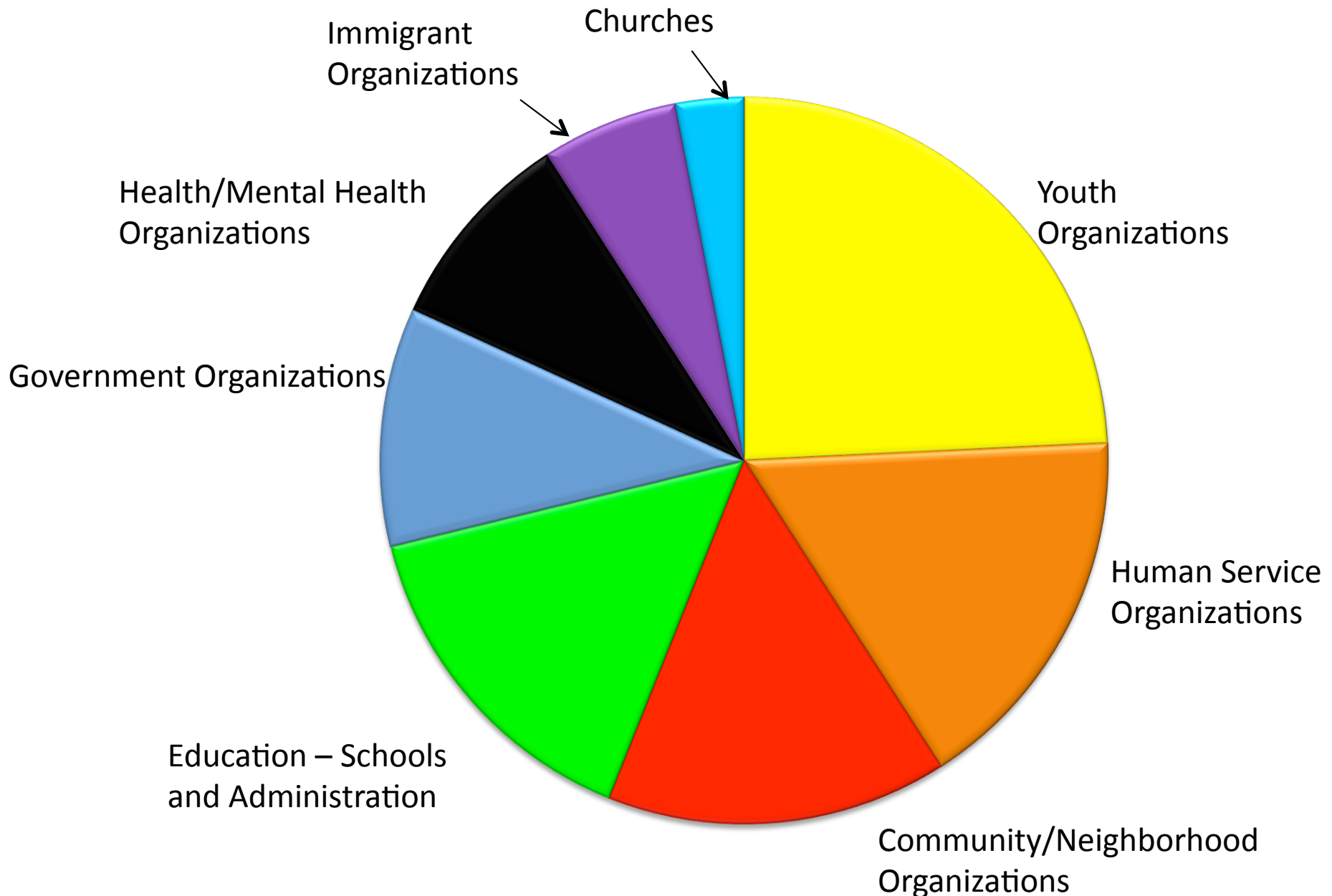


Questions:

1. Descriptively, what YVP strategies are being used to what proportional extent?
2. Have those strategies changed over 3 years?
3. What is the impact of relations between organizations (information sharing, training and education, etc.) on the likelihood of collaborating on advocacy or policy change?

Methods: A. Types of Organizations

2007 Sample: N = 66 Local Organizations: Coalition Participants = 28, Non-Participants = 38



B. Annual Organizational Interviews

consisted of 3 parts:

1. open-ended questions on the nature of the organization's YVP work including goals, descriptions of activities, types of programs, targets of change;
2. organizational characteristics incl. # of staff & volunteers, budget, specialized YVP training; & perceived extent to which their activities were a) strengths-based, b) preventive (vs. treatment-oriented), c) empowering (vs. service oriented), & d) focused on changing community conditions (rather than adapting individuals to existing community conditions);
3. organizational network questions in which respondents were shown a list of all local public, nonprofit & voluntary organizations that engage in YVP & asked about their organization's relationship with each one over the previous 12 months (each w/ additional probes):
 - Worked with this organization in the past on any issue?
 - Consider this organization a leader or innovator in Youth Violence Prevention?
 - Worked with this organization in the past on youth violence prevention issues?
 - Is this relationship formal (contractual) or informal (voluntary)?
 - Type of Relationship/Collaboration: training/education, community/coalition event, resource sharing, information sharing, program/service delivery, policy/advocacy

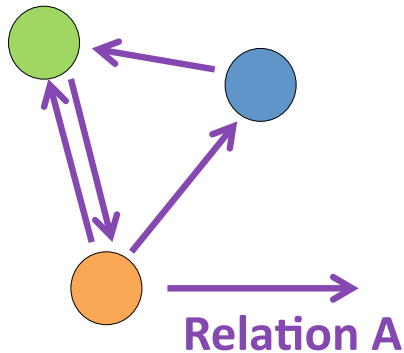
Preliminary Results

1. Descriptively, what YVP strategies are being used to what extent?
2. Have those strategies changed over 3 years?

Approach to Youth Violence Prevention:	Year 1 (58)	Year 3 (68)
<u>Youth-focused prevention/promotion [total orgs using 1+ of following]:</u>	44 [76%]	59 [87%]
Positive youth development: resiliency skills & prosocial behaviors	29 [50]	37 [54]
Adult/peer mentoring & providing positive role models	4 [7]	33 [49]
Educating youth/families re gangs/drugs/alcohol & violence	27 [47]	31 [46]
Counseling at-risk youth or those affected by violence	6 [10]	27 [40]
Advocating on behalf of youth	1 [2]	8 [12]
<u>Youth supervision/Activities [total orgs using 1+ of following]:</u>	18 [31%]	33 [49%]
Providing a safer environment--increased adult supervision	5 [9]	9 [13]
Providing positive activities & alternatives for youth	15 [26]	30 [44]
<u>Collaborative organizational approaches [total]:</u>	16 [28%]	27 [40%]
Sponsoring programs/activities	2 [3]	7 [10]
Working w/ other org's on YVP events (e.g. picnic, rally, summit...)	15 [26]	25 [37]
<u>Influencing government policy (e.g. advocating for equitable schools, policing) on organizational level</u>	6 [10%]	22 [32%]

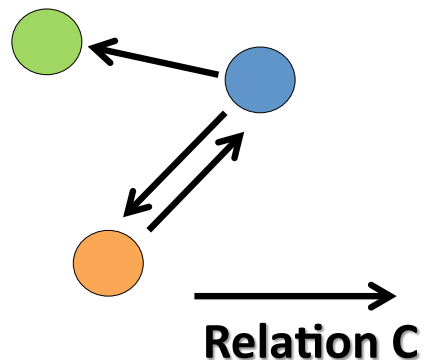
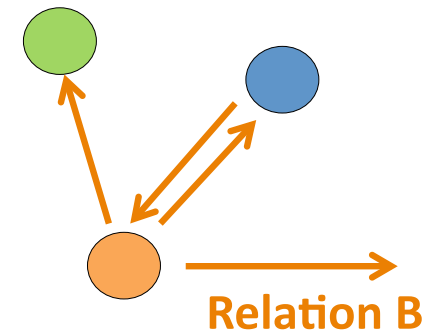
Predictive Analysis

What is the impact of relations between organizations (information sharing, training and education, etc.) on the likelihood of having a relation in the advocacy/policy arena?



QAP regression describes the relative impact of having certain kinds of relations (independent variables) on the likelihood of having some other kind of relation (dependent variable).

For example: if we had measured three relations between a given set of nodes, QAP regression allows us to say:



If two nodes are connected on relation A, they are 20% more likely to be connected on relation C.

If two nodes are connected on relation B, they are 30% less likely to be connected on relation C.

If two nodes are connected on relations A and B, they are 10% less likely to be connected on relation C.

QAP Regression

Year One – Advocacy and Policy Collaboration

r²=.112	Un-stdized	Stdized		Proportion	Proportion	
Independent	Coefficient	Coefficient	Significance	As Large	As Small	Std Err
Intercept	0.002964	0				
CCE - YR 1	0.04542	0.077462	0.001	0.001	0.9995	0.040558
IS - YR 1	0.108331	0.214299	0.0005	0.0005	1	0.036862
PD - YR 1	0.012268	0.021219	0.1064	0.1064	0.8941	0.040178
RS - YR 1	0.062052	0.112384	0.0005	0.0005	1	0.04255
TE - YR 1	0.015401	0.026638	0.081	0.081	0.9195	0.038605
Government Organization?	-0.01188	-0.02065	0.1354	0.8651	0.1354	0.037367
Qualitative Evidence of Advocacy?	-0.0071	-0.00422	0.5057	0.4948	0.5057	0.041142

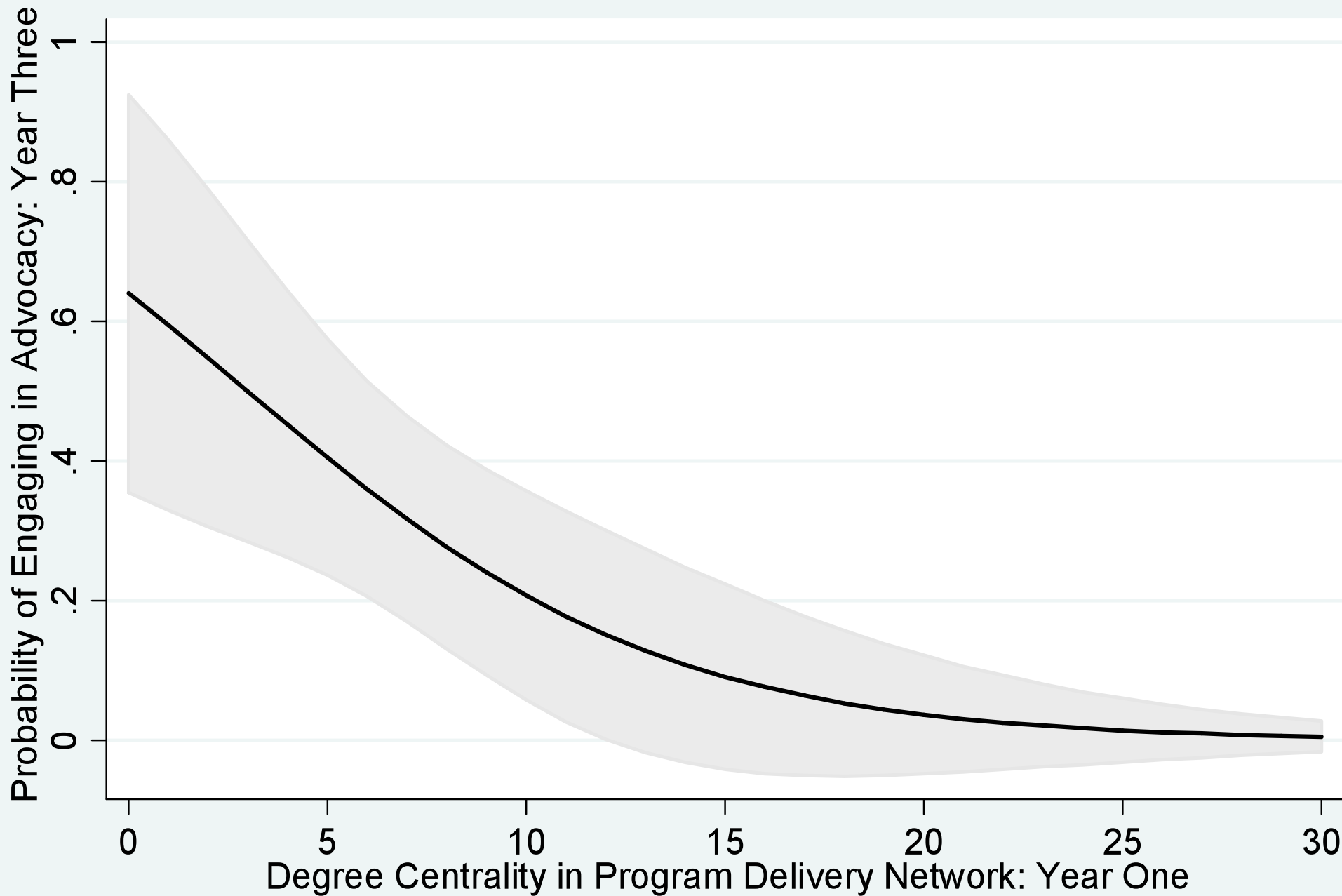
- Connection via community events increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 4.5%
- Connection via information sharing increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 10.8%
- Connection via resource sharing increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 6.2%

QAP Regression

Year Three – Advocacy and Policy Collaboration

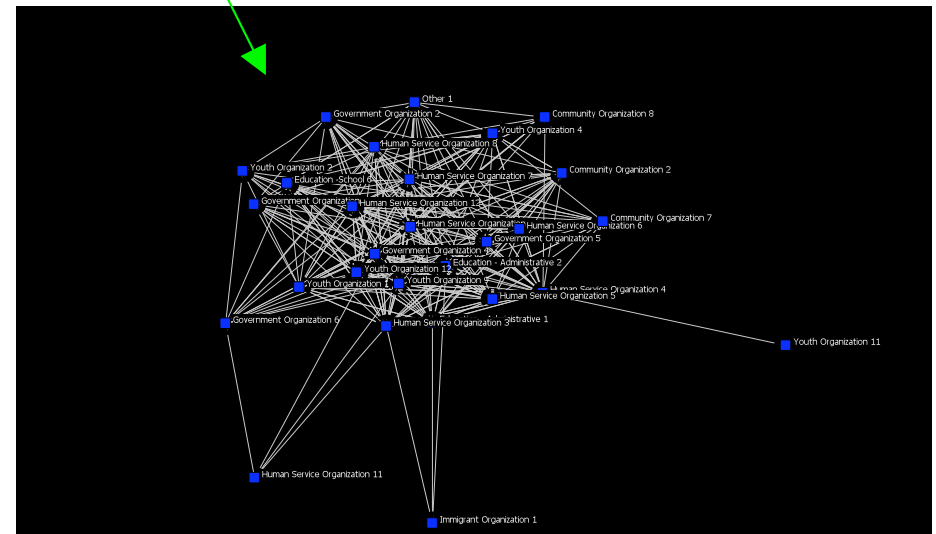
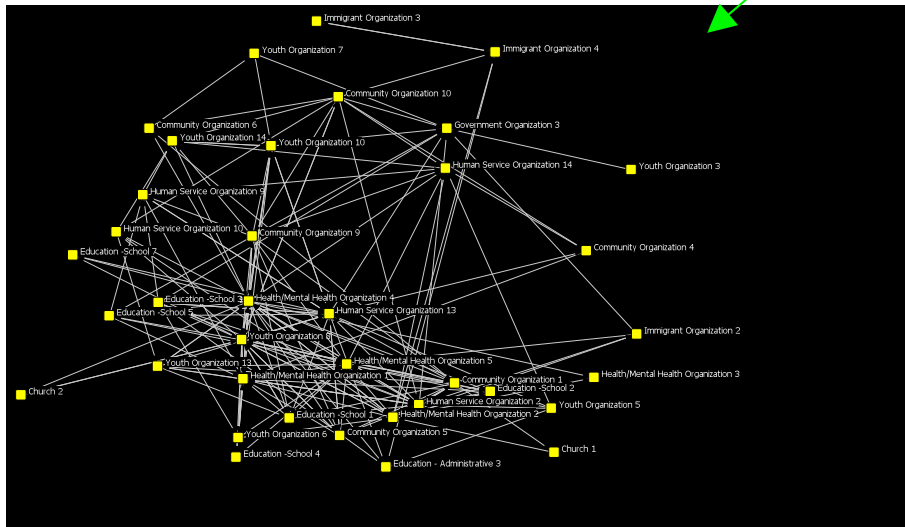
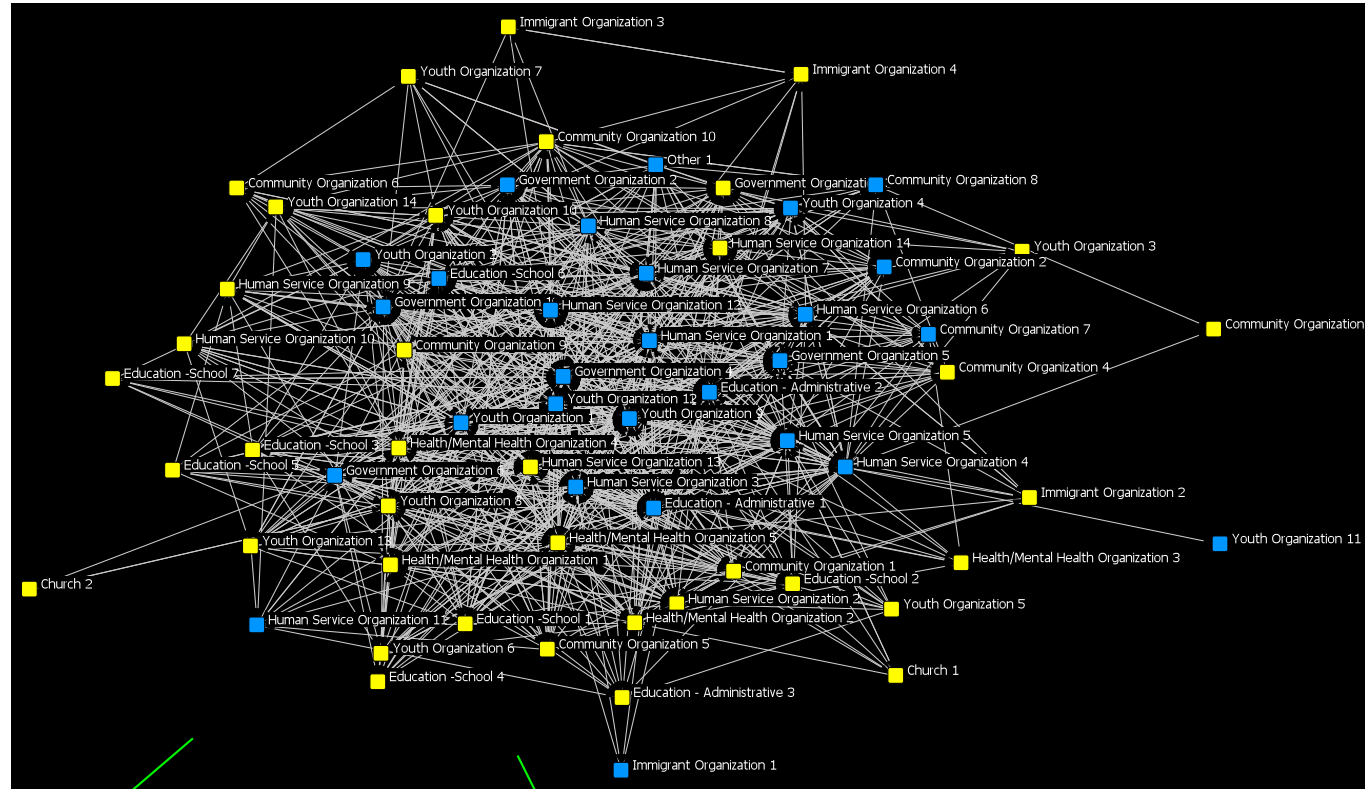
r²=.286	Un-stdized	Stdized		Proportion	Proportion	
Independent	Coefficient	Coefficient	Significance	As Large	As Small	Std Err
Intercept	0.001029	0				
CCE - YR 3	0.184372	0.252205	0.0005	0.0005	1	0.065239
IS - YR 3	0.10973	0.173608	0.0005	0.0005	1	0.076843
PD - YR 3	0.025304	0.039883	0.0165	0.0165	0.984	0.070767
RS - YR 3	0.052477	0.070627	0.001	0.001	0.9995	0.071373
TE - YR 3	0.100838	0.133841	0.0005	0.0005	1	0.07333
Government Organization?	0.000542	0.000607	0.4693	0.4693	0.5312	0.065594
Qualitative Evidence of Advocacy?	-0.02283	-0.03088	0.03	0.9705	0.03	0.063679

- Connection via community events increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 18.4%
- Connection via information sharing increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 10.9%
- Connection via training/education sharing increased likelihood of advocacy collaboration by 10.0%
- Unexpectedly, advocacy work (as coded in qualitative interview) had a slight negative impact on the likelihood of policy advocacy collaboration.



95% Confidence Interval Predicted Probability

Any collaboration in youth violence prevention: Year 1



nonparticipating org. network

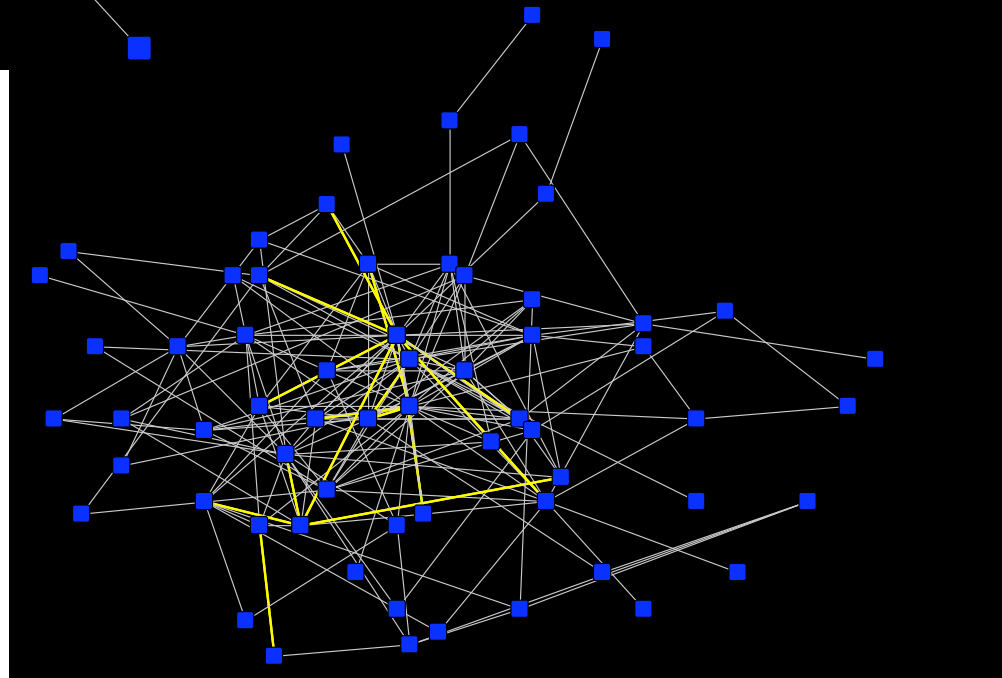
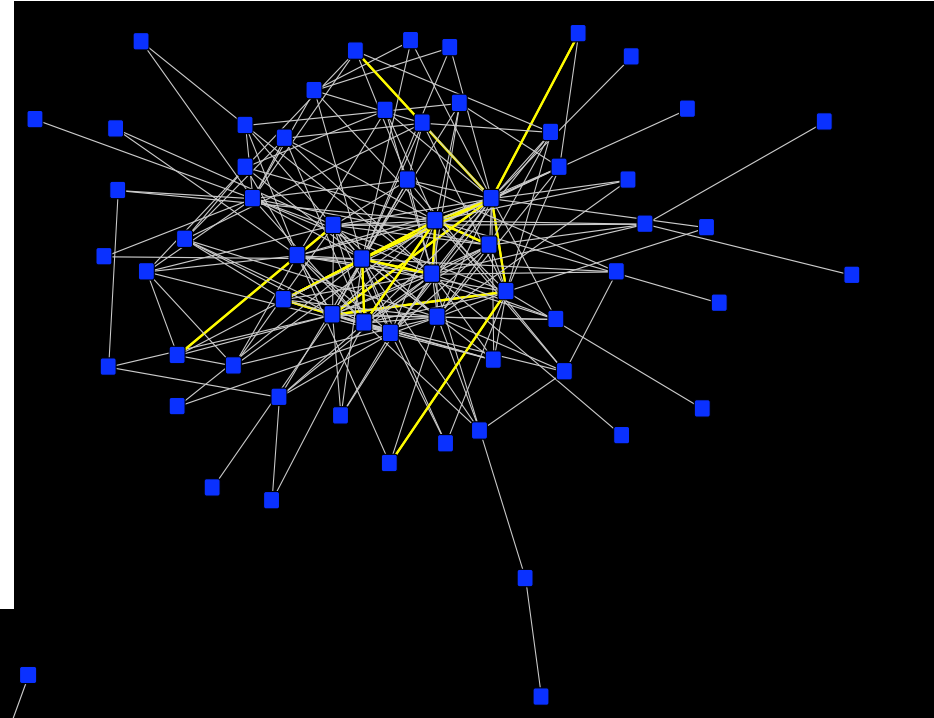
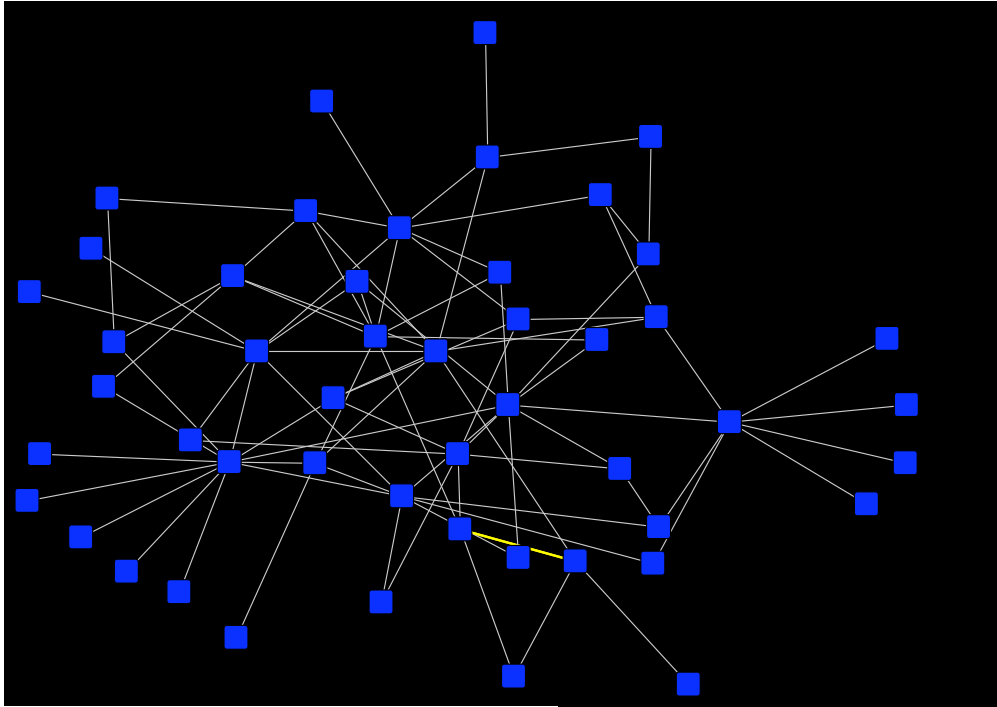
coalition participant network

Policy/Advocacy Org. Network Collaboration (diff. question than open-ended)

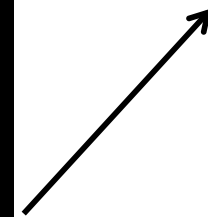
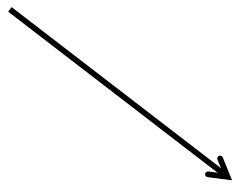
Year 1 (2007)

Year 2 (2008)

Year 3 (2009)



 Reciprocal Tie



Discussion

- Coalitions of schools, human services & other public & private nonprofit & voluntary organizations have been organized throughout the U.S., often with Federal support, to address a variety of public health issues, including substance abuse and, in the present study, youth violence prevention (YVP)
- The vast majority of such coalitions & individual organizations engage in direct social services, public education & information sharing, & school & community-based prevention programs, that focus on individual responsibility & have largely been proven ineffective at reducing rates of substance abuse, violence or other crimes in the targeted communities, let alone in the local population as a whole (Perkins et al, 2007).

Conclusions

- Most organizations addressing youth violence do so through individually focused prevention/promotion (such as positive youth development programs that provide structured, supervised group activities) despite limited demonstrated effectiveness [it is where funding is]
- Unexpectedly, volunteer organizations NOT significantly more likely to engage in advocacy for policy change
- Organizations participating in 1st year of Coalition more likely to engage in advocacy 2 years later [though not through Coalition, which is behind most of its own membership when it comes to advocacy]
- Those more central to the entire program delivery network of local organizations addressing youth violence were LESS likely to engage in advocacy; immigrant & other orgs more peripheral to the network are more sensitive to structural causes & so should be actively recruited by the coalition.
- *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision allowing unlimited corporate & lobby spending on political advertising may require counter-weights in allowable public education/policy advocacy. Nonprofit & volunteer orgs & even public agencies have underutilized potential for that purpose.

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