Decisionmaking Processes in grantmaking foundations: Harnessing subjectivity to create objectivity

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1. Introduction

When altruism is "pure," i.e. undertaken with the intention of helping another, another large stream of literature has sought to create normative recommendations for how altruism may "best" be applied. The effective philanthropy movement (Singer, 1972, 2011) advocates for the rigourous application a utilitarian social value maximization logic to be applied to decision making regarding altruism. Similarly, the advent of "venture philanthropy" (Frumkin, 2003) has launched the metaphor of philanthropy as an investment whose social returns should be optimized. These recommendations have led to a flood of both practical and academic publications on how one could and should maximize the good done by one's altruistic acts. Yet this literature also faces severe challenges due to the lack of comparability among the exceedingly diverse variety of genus and species of altruistic interventions. There is no unit of measurement of social utility or good to rely upon, and even if there were, it would likely be difficult-to-impossible to calculate accurately for a specific intervention (DiMaggio, 2002; Kroeger & Weber, 2014; Nicholls, 2009). Practical attempts at creating valid comparisons of potential recipients of philanthropy based on potential impact have been widely criticized as over-reductionist, myopic, and distorted (Behn, 2003; DiMaggio, 2002; Ebrahim, 2005; Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Nicholls, 2009; Roche, 1999). Thus, the metaphor of altruistic decision-making resembling investment logics that compare financial performance is fundamentally limited.

Ultimately, these limitation has also meant that philanthropic action is often decried as "subjective" and lacking in the rational, objective analysis of the sort that has lead for-profit organizations toward ever-greater efficiency and effectiveness (Brest, Katz, Peeler, & Stangler, 2012; Ebrahim, 2005; Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Indeed, the complexity of social impact assessment has lead organizations who wish to do good, such as philanthropic foundations, to need to rely on experts to drive their strategy and select appropriate beneficiaries. Yet, without strong rationalized and objective processes, the legitimacy of their even efforts are suspect as "subjective" and potentially biased by the experts own interests our personal beleifs.

Foundations, then, needed to strategically mediate between their need to create accounts of their potential target beneficiaries which provide impartial and rational comparisons needed to be deemed legitimate and their need to creating accounts that reflect the full reality and context of projects to ensure the validity of their accounts and ultimate decisions. This leads us to our research questions: How do organizations decide among alternatives on altruistic grounds? And, how do organizations harness the subjective and expert opinion without losing their objectivity.

To answer this question, we use a multiple case study methodology on four philanthropic foundations as they go thereought the process of identifying and selecting recipients for their philanthropy. We study the decisionmaking behind how groups decide among their alternatives when there are multiple potential beneficiaries. We find that organizations use three primary

mechanisms to harness and control the needed subjective elements of their decisionmaking process to create objective and impartial measures. First, they attempt to neutralize impartiality by using multiple competing viewpoints to cancel out individual biases and triangulate a collective truth. Second, they rely on evaluative methodologies that use holistic comparisons of specific potential recipients instead of trying to score applicants on some matrix of attributes that can then be calculated. Finally, they ensure inclusive, adjustable processes that facilitate fairness of opportunity across recipients᾽ requests.

Overall this provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind altruistic decision making, and can inform a broader understanding of how philanthropic and CSR turn into specific choices to support specific pro-social causes and partnerships. It should also help illuminate how much of the currently individual-level understandings of altruistic behavior translate to the organizational level.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Philanthropic Behavior at the Individual Level

At the micro level, research into giving from psychology, consumer behavior, and behavioral economics have identified a collection of core motivations and mechanisms at play behind individual philanthropic action. Individuals may act altruistically, for example, when they become aware of another᾽s suffering or need, either because the philanthropist vicariously matches or parallels another᾽s condition or emotional state and becomes motivated by feelings of empathy (Batson et al., 1991), or because the awareness arouses aversive feelings of guilt or distress, which the philanthropic act seeks to reduce (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Cialdini et al., 1987). Philanthropy of this type is generally reactive, responding to specific exposures to another᾽s situation via personal encounters (e.g. passing a homeless person on the street), personal or professional networks (news of a friend or neighbor in distress), or mass or social media (coverage of a natural disaster or tragedy). Altruism may also stem from the ᾽᾽warm glow᾽᾽ of internal satisfaction that philanthropic acts generate (Andreoni, 1990; Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008; Harbaugh, 1998b). Neurologists have found that acts of giving activate reward centers in a person᾽ brain, often to a larger degree than is activated when receiving gifts (Moll et al., 2006), and economists characterize this mechanism as ᾽᾽a purchase of moral satisfaction᾽᾽ (Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992). Here, the target of the philanthropic act is diffuse, as any altruistic act is capable generate the positive feelings, regardless of the beneficiary, although the magnitude of the emotional reward response may be correlated with the perceived value of the social good created (Dickert, Sagara, & Slovic, 2011; Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992).

        Philanthropy also arises from moral and religious obligations. Here, philanthropy may be directed either toward a religious organization itself or toward specific causes or groups singled out for aid by religious elders or scriptures (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Berger, 2006). Next, philanthropic action also may be understood as more eogistic opportunities to gain material or social rewards. For example, philanthropy motivated by egoistic benefits may predispose individuals to target their giving toward beneficiaries that can provide benefits: tax-eligible non-profits that can enable tax reductions (Fack & Landais, 2016), local venues that can exchange access for contributions (Odendahl, 1990), sales of cookies or other goods to raise funds, or organizations that provide calendars, plush animals, or other small thank-you gifts (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Falk, 2007). Giving may gain social rewards by granting status or prestige to sponsor or donors (Ariely, Bracha, & Meier, 2007; Harbaugh, 1998a). Donations have been noted to occur at a greater rate in public settings where they can serve as signifiers of wealth, power, or humanitarianism to others (Bateson,

Nettle, & Roberts, 2006; Glazer & Konrad, 1996). These types of philanthropic acts primarily occur either at or just above the minimum level needed to obtain recognition or benefits (Harbaugh, 1998b). In the same vein, philanthropy is often used as a way to build relationships based on reciprocal exchanges (Mauss, 1923). Here, philanthropic acts in the present creates benefits for others who, in turn, become likely to reciprocate aid at a later time, either in direct tit-for-tat exchanges between individuals or groups, or indirectly, through societal capital where altruistically helping a collective ensures the collective will include the individual in shared goods and protections, while non-altruistic individuals may be excluded (Brown & Ferris, 2007; Buss, 2015; Packer, 1977). Philanthropy motivated by the reciprocal mechanism is likely to by targeted toward beneficiaries to whom the philanthropist may envision needing future aid or support. Conversely, philanthropy may take a negative, punishing form where individuals may forego benefits or donate time and effort to proactively punish those the philanthropist believes has harmed others, failed to contribute adequately to society, or violated social norms (Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Henrich et al., 2006). In response, philanthropists may direct their actions toward those that an individual may have previously caused harm or unduly benefitted from as a way to offset the perceived debt and thus relieve guilt and avoid potential retribution or punishment (Basil, Ridgway, & Basil, 2006; Batson, 1987; Batson & Shaw, 1991).

While many of these philanthropic mechanisms may provide insight into how individuals decide where to target their donations, it remains unclear how they may be translated into philanthropic decisionmaking at the Foundation level. Many of the individual mechanisms rely on affective reactions as one becomes aware of another's' adversity. Such awareness is generally unplanned and incidental – based current news cycles, unsolicited solicitations, or random hardships to others within one's social networks. Foundations often must justify their decisions in rational terms to an executive board, and cannot rely on justifications based on affective reactions to chance adversity its members encounter. While foundations may respond proactively on prevailing tragedies, they are more likely to focus on maximizing impact toward specific goals and thus be less susceptible to chance events or solicitations. Further, To the degree that foundations do respond to events, literature has little to say about how the multiple decisionmakers in a foundation may resolve the competing affective reactions among individual foundation members.

In the second approach, researchers have considered the individual as just one of many factors that can shape moral awareness. Much of this research has focused on context, including the role of issue characteristics, characterized by T. M. Jones (1991) as an issue's moral intensity. T. M. Jones (1991) identified six dimensions of moral intensity: magnitude Treviño et al. / Behavioral Ethics in Organizations 953 Figure 1 Categories of influences on behavioral ethics outcomes Individual Cognitive, such as Moral awareness Moral judgment Moral disengagement Other cognitive biases Affective Identity-based Contextual--organizational, such as Reward/punishment Ethical infrastructure Ethical climate/culture Leadership Contextual--issue related, such as Work-related/not work-related Magnitude of consequences Language Awareness Aspects of ethical behavior Judgment Motivation/intention Ethical/unethical behavior of consequences, concentration of effect, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, social consensus, and proximity. Social cognition research suggests that issues with high moral intensity are more vivid and salient, and therefore gain the individual's attention and are more likely to be identified as ethical issues. Subsequent research has demonstrated that characteristics of a moral issue influence moral awareness (as well as ethical intentions), particularly the magnitude of consequences and social consensus dimensions (Flannery & May, 2000; B. F. Frey, 2000; May & Pauli, 2002; Singhapadki, Vitell, & Kraft, 1996). – pgs953-954 Treviño et al. / Behavioral Ethics in Organizations

2.2 Philanthropic Behavior at the Organizational and Institutional Level

At the macro level, research on how philanthropic decisions are made often comes from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and corporate philanthropy research, which has focused on why organizations reallocate resources from shareholder wealth maximization and invest it in social and altruistic actions instead. From a strategic perspective, a long stream of research justifies altruistic action by creating a business case for it – investigating the link between corporations "doing good" via prosocial acts and "doing well" in terms of long-term strategic position and financial performance (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Campbell, 2007; Hamilton, Jo, & Statman, 1993; Margolis, Elfenbein, & Walsh, 2007; Margolis & Walsh, 2001; Saiia, Carroll, & Buchholtz, 2003). Beneficiaries of pro-social action, in this perspective, would be chosen opportunistically based on their instrumental value (Jones, 1995), to serve as incentives to win customers their ability to create relational ties through which resources, knowledge, and political access may flow (Leider, Möbius, Rosenblat, & Do, 2009; Wang & Qian, 2011), or which may create useful social capital by improving the organization's reputation and image (Brammer & Millington, 2005).

From an institutional perspective, literature understands altruistic action in terms of the role a corporation plays to its stakeholders and to the societies it operates within (Carroll, 1979; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Philanthropic acts, in this perspective, are directed in response to stakeholder and institutional pressures (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Brammer & Millington, 2004, 2005; Sharma & Henriques, 2005). The degree to which a corporation aligns their philanthropy with particular stakeholders' preferences depends on the power, strategic position (i.e. a firm's dependence upon), and legitimacy of the stakeholders, as well as the urgency of their claims and the determination of their activism (David, Bloom, & Hillman, 2007; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). In this view, where organizations elect to target their donations is determined specifically and directly by stakeholder pressures, or more generally and indirectly through broad attempts to establish or maintain societal legitimacy (Aguilera et al., 2007; Bitektine, 2011; Doh, Howton, Howton, & Siegel, 2010; Human & Provan, 2000; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Sridhar, 2012; Suchman, 1995; Tyler, 2006). For example, corporations may target their support toward causes their stakeholders care about or to create relationships with organizations stakeholders are members of (i.e. donations to local community groups or employee alumni universities)(Glavas & Kelley, 2014; Rupp, Shao, Thornton, & Skarlicki, 2013).

From a moral/ethical perspective organizations prosocial action also comes from moral and ethical senses duty and obligation. This literature often notes the individual ethical convictions of organization's founders (Godos-Díez, Fernández-Gago, & Martínez-Campillo, 2011), board members (Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010; Wang & Coffey, 1992) and other top managers (Swanson, 2008). Here, those that set the direction and culture of the organization act as stewards for the organization, whose organizational action must be justified or "rendered morally acceptable in relation to a particular set of ethical standards" (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001: 165). See table one for additional theoretical mechanisms for ethical judgments.

Further, when altruism is impure (Andreoni, 1990; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011), that is, when altruism is mixed with social, strategic, or marketing needs, research has shed some light on how answers to the "to whom" question may be shaped by the instrumental and relational benefits they provide to the donor (Brammer & Millington, 2005; Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Campbell, 2007; Campbell, Gulas, & Gruca, 1999; Gan, 2006; Haley, 1991; Margolis et al., 2007; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Sridhar, 2012). Yet these studies provide, at best, broad strokes. They may state, for example, the wisdom of altruism in support of "local cluster development," (Porter & Kramer, 2011) but do

not specify if altruism is best steered to the local museum or to literacy programs. Firms in mining, tobacco, oil, and alcohol have been advised of the wisdom of "defensive CSR" to atone for their social and environmental externalities (Gan, 2006; Tesler & Malone, 2008). Yet, research does not yet provide insights on the decision-making regarding whether defensive altruism is best directed toward malaria eradication, poverty alleviation, clean air initiatives, or something else entirely. If the "impure," self-interested aspects of organizational altruism can be equally well served by support of multiple different causes, how and why do organizations decide "to whom" they will target their

Table 1 – Mechanisms behind Philanthropy

Key Authors	Level	Theory	Implication
Bekkers & Wiepking (2011)	Individual	8 mechanisms motivating philanthropy: awareness of need; solicitation; costs and benefits; altruism; reputation; psychological benefits; values; efficacy	Each philanthropic mechanism may work on or be targeted toward different, broad categories of beneficiaries.
Aguilera, Rupp, Williams,& Ganapathi (2007); Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, Ng (2001; 2001)	Individual, (especially employee perspective) & Organizational	*Support for causes granted according to different assessments of the justness of supporting them. These judgments are broken down into four types: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational.*	Individuals reciprocate action to ensure overall justice is served regarding distributive outcomes, procedural fairness, and interpersonal treatment of all involved.
Rest (1986)	Individual (focus on attributes of individual)	Field of moral psychology - four-component analysis, which distinguishes among moral awareness, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral behavior	Different individuals have different capacities for recognizing and possessing moral realm and progressively more sophisticated forms of judgement is targeted at different types of beneficiaries. Individuals will target beneficiaries according to their individual capacity for altruism.
Jones(1991)	Individual (focus on attributes of context	Moral Intensity of alternatives. Six dimensions of moral intensity: magnitude of consequences, concentration of effect, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, social consensus, and proximity	Individuals target beneficiaries with highest moral intensity. Moral intensity primarily a function of the beneficiary (factors external to individual).
Garriga & Melé (2004)	Organizational	Social motivation derives from: • Instrumental Mechanisms – means to the end of profits • Political Mechanisms arising from responsibilities to maintain power & position of business in society. • Integrative Mechanisms – social demands for legitimacy and stakeholder management	Philanthropy stems from obligations to others and society. Different types of obligations and how they are perceived steer action toward different categories of beneficiaries.

altruistic efforts. Absent clear, rational justifications that altruism is well-targeted to create significant outcomes, suspicions arise of whether the philanthropy is really altruism or merely creative marketing and public relations.

3. Methods

We adopted an inductive, multiple-case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989) of four philanthropic foundations to investigate our research questions. Philanthropic foundations represent a strong setting for studying group philanthropic decisionmaking because they require multiple internal and external individuals to collectively allocate financial support among multiple beneficiaries according to some justifiable set of criteria. The foundations in our study had control over both the development of the criteria and the process of interpreting different beneficiaries according to those criteria. This research design permits a "replication logic" (Yin, 2014) whereby each case serves as successive experiments to validate, invalidate, or nuance conceptual insights. One dimension of theoretical interest was funding source, and so our sampling strategy contrasted two distinct types of foundations: family foundations accountable to the broad direction and philanthropic desires of the individuals that created the foundation, and corporate foundations that served as the independent but affiliated philanthropic arm of a major corporation. The four foundations contrast across pairs for theoretical completeness and replicate both within and across pairs to improve theoretical generalizability. We were able investigate philanthropic over three core philanthropic decisionmaking stages: the decision of which broad philanthropic themes to target, decisionmaking regarding the types of beneficiaries should be targeted within the broad themes and the criteria to identify them, and decisionmaking during the process of selecting beneficiaries from applications. We accomplished this by integrating and triangulating information and perspectives obtained from three and up to five levels of foundation hierarchy, as well as both successful and unsuccessful applicants. This study includes interviews with at least one individuals in every role of the philanthropic decisionmaking process, with real-time observations of selection meetings and board meetings over the lifecycle of the annual grantmaking process, through real-time data of the applicants being considered, and with retrospective and archival data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for each person at both the start and the end of the grantmaking cycle. Initial interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes each, while the exit interviews lasted x minutes on average, and included additional follow up questions specific to our emergent findings to that point. See figure 1 for details on foundations studied and the data sources used in the analysis of each foundation's decisionmaking.

During a first phase of analysis, coding was done independently for each foundation. Analysis started with two researchers independently open coding a foundation's interviews line by line. The "gerunding" technique was employed, in which each code contains a gerund -- an "-ing" verb used as a noun such as thinking, uncovering, or asking — as a way to keep analyses active and emergent while also enabling heightened awareness of the substantive thoughts, actions, and processes at play (Charmaz, 2011; Glaser, 1978, 1998). As coding progressed, we transitioned to second-level, focused coding which explored and categorized relations and patterns among codes from which theoretical insights could emerge. The output of this phase was individual case models for each foundation's philanthropic process, describing in detail both the substantive decisionmaking processes and the theoretical dimensions of decisionmaking which had emerged from each.

As each individual case neared full development, we then built on our prior analysis in the next phase of our analysis, which employed cross-cases comparisons according to the methods

described by Eisenhardt (1989) and Miles and Huberman (1994). This phase iteratively created comparisons between successive pairs of cases. These systematic comparisons allowed us to compare, contrast, and identify patterns in each's decisionmaking. We also attempted triangulating the divergences and similarities we found against the unique aspects of each case to identify potential boundary conditions or mediators/moderators in our emergent theories. As the incorporation of each new case introduced additional support or challenges to our existing theory, the three authors discussed and adjusted iteratively. Each step required a return to the all cases to review and reconfirm the evolving constructs. By recursively cycling among the cases, our emerging theory, and later, extant literature we were able to raise the level of abstraction and test the theoretical logic and conceptual relationships we now present in our findings.

4. Findings

*****Disclaimer: this paper is still in an early stage of research. Only one of the four foundations have been investigated. What follows reflects an initial findings section based on this first foundation, but we expect it to change significantly as we repeat our investigation with successive foundations.*****

The first major finding involved the tension creating objective and comparable evaluations of their potential beneficiaries creating valid ones. This tension stems from decisions the foundations had to make regarding how to select and format the information they collected about each beneficiary's attributes. One on hand, matching beneficiaries against a standardized set of criteria to enable objective comparisons required uniform sets of information presented in relatively consistent formats. To achieve this, the foundations achieved this by creating a standardized application form for applicants to fill out in systematic way, and by creating a detailed evaluation template with multiple criteria across different sections to be analyzed in methodical ways. On the other hand, it was immediately apparent, and indeed considered an essential part of the evaluative process, to acknowledge and assume that the information received on the applications and through the evaluation template was insufficient to truly understand the beneficiaries. The members of the juries discussed how the formats used to create rigor and comparability lacked the rich, holistic sense of the projects. Key information often did not fit precisely into the data that the forms requested. Weaknesses could be hidden by strategic disclosures and framing. The use of jargon confused and distracted. And key considerations regarding context and culture were lost in translation. Further, the applications force the candidates' projects and activities into a foreign format which skewed and distorted the narrative, and decisionmakers found that their perceptions of projects changed when they allowed the applicants to restate their project in their own terms. One the other hand, straying from the standardized frameworks in order to account for full holistic reality of a project quickly lead to accounts of projects that were so heterogeneous and contextual that they rendered objective comparisons impossible. Foundations, then, needed to strategically mediate between their need to create accounts of their potential beneficiaries which would allow impartial and rational comparisons, and creating accounts that would reflect the full reality and context of projects to ensure the validity of their accounts and ultimate decisions.

The solution, we found, was that foundations were open and upfront about the need "fill in the blanks" and to correct the distortions that existed in their application and evaluation frameworks by incorporating their jury members subjective interpretations and opinions of each beneficiary. This, however, leads to its own challenge: how did foundations ensure that the subjective nature of their jury members' subjective interpretations and opinions did not overwhelm or undermine the integrity and impartiality of the process. How did they prevent the cure from being worse than the disease?

The rest of our findings explore the way the subjective interpretations of the decisionmakers were both harnessed and constrained to achieve both subjective insight and objective impartiality. We see three overall strategies developing:

4.1 Neutralizing impartiality through multiple competing viewpoints

The first strategy is to ensure that decisions are made collectively, with the hopes that any biases among individual members will counteract each other. Interviewees talked about the importance of really embracing differences of opinion and spending time comparing subjective judgments against each other. Making subjective judgements was encouraged, and efforts were made so that each individualʾsubjective judgements could be added to a marketplace of ideals. In this situation, the subjectivity is viewed like a confounding factor in the evaluation – the more they can be exposed, and the more multiple individualsʾ biases can be stratified across all the projects (Pourhoseingholi, Baghestani, & Vahedi, 2012) – the more they can be controlled. This, of course, assumes that the direction of the biases varies in the direction of its effect between individuals. If all individuals are predisposed to the same biases, or different biases that all move in the same direction, the biases are amplified rather than offset. This concern leads to a second aspect of using multiple voices: the selection of the included voices to include.

Not only is having multiple voices important, it was important to have the right voices. The first consideration was expertise. Subjectivity was thought to be prevented by including people whose identity and credentials imply they will be impartial and who have enough experience to not be misled or ʿʿhave the wool pulled over their eyes.ʾʾ Academics, for example, were perceived to have (and represented themselves as having) been trained to evaluate things impartially from a scientific, neutral viewpoint. Experts were also viewed as less susceptible to be misled or confused by jargon and technical systems, to know what is important and not, and know where to look for weaknesses in proposals. Next, it was important to have experts from a wide variety of backgrounds and subjects in order to triangulate different opinions and ensure diversity of perspectives. One foundation that awarded grants for sustainable fishing programs, for example, ensured it had not only professors of sustainable agriculture, but actual fishermen on the panel.

Finally, there was an acknowledgement that some biases could be guarded against more proactively. The consistent example here was defending against conflicts-of-interest. The prominence of this topic, although this topic is not elicited by our questions shows how subjectivity is suspect if it is tainted by personal interest and that is something to guard against particularly.

4.2 Comparisons Not Calculations

A second mechanism for harnessing and controlling for subjectivity and bias was by using comparative methods of evaluating projects, rather than processes that attempt to assign values or weights to individual beneficiary attributes. Making process comparative – end product is not to create an objective ʿʿscoreʾʾ for each project, but a ranking of the projects in comparison to each other. We observed that jurors avoided translating attributes into common units or scores. One director discussed how the framework does not require the jurors to evaluate most criteria beyond a very basic A, B, C system, and how even this elemental ranking is ignored:

> *We know that we will answer A, because if the project meets the general interest, it would not have passed the filter, I think. This kind of criterion, I have never put*

anything other than A. It is broad enough. It's light enough to say . . . It's done on purpose, it's a synthesis.

The act of assigning the score, even though the score is always rated "A," served more as a common reference and catalyst for how beneficiaries might be compared. Likewise, even if rankings were attempted, the jurors discussed frequent conflicts on which attributes should carry the most weight. Opinions of many attributes were described as spanning the entire spectrum of possibilities – an attribute was likely to have jurors who found an individual attribute crucial as well as jurors that thought it marginal and jurors somewhere between the two poles. This variation was not a source of embarrassment or concern, but treated as a matter of fact and a valuable element for triangulating multiple jurors' opinion as projects were ranked. Instead, projects were compared against each other on a more overall or holistic basis – the end product presented was a ranked list of projects. Jurors found this method quite effective.

4.3 Ensuring Fair Processes

A third and final dimension of harnessing and controlling for subjectivity was through structural safeguards in the evaluation process itself. Our observations regarding this dimension actually arose in the negative – they arose via some of the few true criticisms we encountered. Some jurors were concerned with the process involved with the first-round of decisionmaking, where a small sub-set of the jury eliminated applications that they felt did not meet the scope of the grants being awarded or that were deemed very week candidates. Give the focus on having projects evaluated by multiple people, and the propensity for different jurors to have different views, the jurors who were not involved in this initial cut were concerned that some projects might be eliminated prematurely before the jurors who would have advocated for them were involved. These jurors discussed the importance of each application be evaluated properly by multiple viewpoints. Similarly, another place where there was concern that projects may not receive a full hearing involved deadlines. Time to evaluate projects was rather short and fragmented, because it had to fit around the experts' other responsibilities. This lead to an advantage to projects that were easy to comprehend and did not require significant additional work. More difficult projects risked not being understood completely.
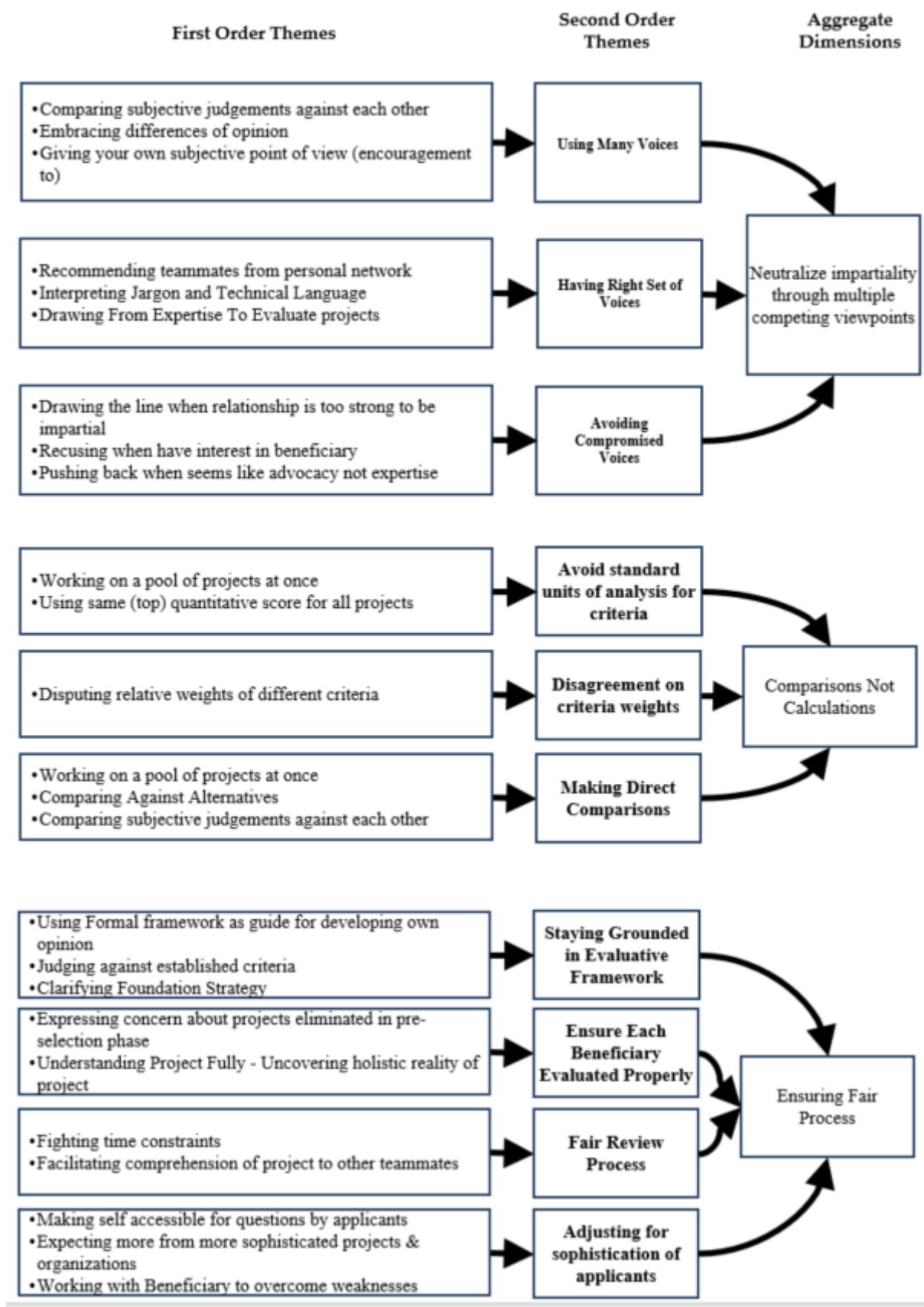
Further, another challenge that jurors discussed was that certain beneficiary were simply more sophisticated in their capacity to put together a professional application. Jurors wanted to ensure that they not penalize good projects because certain applicants were not as savvy at playing the grant-application game. Thus, applications from small non-profits working on the ground were given more leeway than those coming from more professional environments such as research laboratories. Further, interviewers would actively aid applications that had some weakness that could be easily remedied or help address some key factor that had been overlooked. While this was done for all applicants, certain applicants needed this aid more. However, this aid did not extend to "sugar-coating" or downplay negative information. Jurors worked with the applicants to support their success, but it was repeatedly brought up that they should not cross the line from expert advisors to advocates. Indeed, the biggest dissatisfaction jurors had with others was the perception that a juror was being an activist pushing favorites rather than being an expert consultant.

Finally, there was an emphasis in keeping one's subjective opinions and insights grounded within the evaluative framework. Having everybody use the same templates and same criteria was felt to keep people aligned. But it was considered a starting point, a guide for developing their own opinion, and not an iron cage. Both the creators of the evaluative framework and the jurors who filled it in for each application expressed strong support for the framework even if, ultimately, it was the expert opinions and more-holistic project-to-project comparisons that had the most significance

to decisionmaking. The framework seemed to ensure that everyone was having the same conversation.

Figure 1 – Coding Structure for Mechanisms for Ensuring Objectivity and Impartiality

First Order Themes

Second Order Themes

Aggregate Dimensions

- Comparing subjective judgements against each other
- Embracing differences of opinion
- Giving your own subjective point of view (encouragement to)

Using Many Voices

- Recommending teammates from personal network
- Interpreting Jargon and Technical Language
- Drawing From Expertise To Evaluate projects

Having Right Set of Voices

Neutralize impartiality through multiple competing viewpoints

- Drawing the line when relationship is too strong to be impartial
- Recusing when have interest in beneficiary
- Pushing back when seems like advocacy not expertise

Avoiding Compromised Voices

- Working on a pool of projects at once
- Using same (top) quantitative score for all projects

Avoid standard units of analysis for criteria

- Disputing relative weights of different criteria

Disagreement on criteria weights

Comparisons Not Calculations

- Working on a pool of projects at once
- Comparing Against Alternatives
- Comparing subjective judgements against each other

Making Direct Comparisons

- Using Formal framework as guide for developing own opinion
- Judging against established criteria
- Clarifying Foundation Strategy

Staying Grounded in Evaluative Framework

- Expressing concern about projects eliminated in pre-selection phase
- Understanding Project Fully - Uncovering holistic reality of project

Ensure Each Beneficiary Evaluated Properly

Ensuring Fair Process

- Fighting time constraints
- Facilitating comprehension of project to other teammates

Fair Review Process

- Making self accessible for questions by applicants
- Expecting more from more sophisticated projects & organizations
- Working with Beneficiary to overcome weaknesses

Adjusting for sophistication of applicants

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