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(JBSM) What Is the Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly

Care from Stakeholder Perspectives: A Content-Analysis Based Review



What Is the Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly Care from Stakeholder Perspectives: A Content-Analysis Based Review



*Zhuofeng Li

The University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education and Sport, UK. EH8 8AQ

*Corresponding author's email: lipiandex@gmail.com



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Abstract

Purpose: To clarify the distinctive positions of essential stakeholders and to explore a systematic understanding of the service system of the NPO community elderly care sector, this study seeks to construct a theoretical basis for this sector from the stakeholder perspective.

Methodology: This study adopted the content-analysis based systematic review to synthesize relevant studies and used inductive content analysis method to analyze the mainstream theoretical schools and stakeholder classifications of stakeholder theory in a time-sequence manner, and compare different stakeholder participation modes of the sector.

Findings: Themes of the theory development, classifications of stakeholder theory, and the practices of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives were coded. It was found that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model, as a theoretical prototype, helps to explain the roles of essential stakeholders in the sector from social dimensions.

Unique contributions to theory, policy and practice: this study contributed to constructing a conceptual framework exclusively for the NPO community elderly care sector. It is implicated to lend some theoretical basis for clarifying the distinctive roles of essential stakeholders for the management of NPOs to overcome current challenges in practice and providing insights for practitioners to promote the sectoral sustainable development.

Keywords: *Nonprofit Organizations, Community Elderly Care, Stakeholder Theory, Stakeholder Participation, Content-Analysis Based Review*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

1.1.1 Rapid aging population in China

The UNESCO stipulates that a country enters an aging society when 10% or more of its population is over 60 years old or when 7% or more of its population is over 65 years old (Henry & Van de Walle, 1982). According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC), the proportion of China's population aged 65 and above was over 7% in 2001, which means that China has entered into an aging society since then (NBSC, retrieved on 1/20/2023). Based on the age composition ratio from NBSC, the study summarized the proportion of its population aged over 65 and the elderly dependency ratio since 2010. See Table 1.

Table 1. China's population aged over 65 and the dependency ratio since 2010

Year	Total population (100million)	Population aged over 65 (million)	The proportion of total population (%)	Elderly dependency ratio (%)
2010	13.40	118.94	8.9	11.3
2018	14.05	167.24	11.9	16.8
2019	14.10	177.67	12.6	17.8
2020	14.121	190.64	13.5	19.7
2021	14.126	200.56	14.2	20.8

Source: Compiled by the author according to the statistics from NBSC (2022)

It can be seen that China's population is aging increasingly since the elderly dependency ratio has increased from 11.3% to 20.8% during this period.

1.1.2 Excessive government pressure prompts NPOs to participate

In China, local governments are the main bodies responsible for community elderly care services (Jiang, 2020). However, with the increasing demand for community elderly care, it will be difficult for them to undertake the ongoing responsibility. On the one hand, the younger generations are leaving home for individual development, thus the traditional family-led elderly

care system is weakened. On the other hand, the physical, material, and spiritual needs of the elderly care group are extending rapidly, while the government-led management of elderly care organizations holds limited resources and is incapable to satisfy their needs. These challenges put forward higher requirements for the governments to cope with the aging crisis (Zhang & Guo, 2021). In this context, the State Council proposed to establish a “community-based and institution-supported elderly care service system” in the *Opinions of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of the Elderly Care Service Industry (2022)*. It argues that nonprofit organizations (NPOs) can participate in community elderly care as a potent supplement to reduce the government pressure. Therefore, strategies must be taken to enhance the sustainability of the sector with the assistance of social power (Jiang, 2020).

1.1.3 Significance of stakeholder participation

According to literature, the essential stakeholders engaging in NPO community elderly care include the government (agencies), volunteers, the elderly care group, as well as social media and the public. It is significant to explore the mechanism of stakeholder participation with following reasons. First, stakeholder participation is conducive to enhancing the life quality and social well-being for the elderly (Thomas & Blanchard, 2009). For example, it helps to establish a positive feedback loop for NPOs to improve services, influence the policy stipulation and refinement, broaden financing channels for NPOs, and increase job opportunities (Jiang, 2020). Second, stakeholder participation facilitates identifying the distinctive roles of relevant stakeholders and creating more inclusive, impartial, and responsive public services (Durose & Richardson, 2015). As a whole, the formed collaborative governance further promotes the interdependence of essential stakeholders in the sector (Thomas & Blanchard, 2009). Third, stakeholder participation facilitates management’s insights into identifying stakeholder salience in NPO community elderly care (Conaty & Robbins, 2021). Specifically, awareness of stakeholder salience among stakeholder participation is found to provide a valuable framework for developing organizational performance constructs (Ferns et al., 2022). Moreover, it assists in understanding performance conflicts and tensions captured in salience asymmetries in relation to the power of different stakeholders (Conaty & Robbins, 2021). It can also facilitate identifying hostile stakeholders that might not be easy to detect initially (Ferns et al., 2022; Ramoglou et al., 2023).

1.1.4 Existing challenges in NPO community elderly care

Although governments encourage the NPO participation through government policies, there are

numerous factors influencing the sector's sustainable development. First, in terms of funding sources, the financial support of NPO community elderly care is largely subject to the pension policies of local governments (Wang, 2015). Most NPOs have long been subordinated to government agencies in the execution of activities and rarely receive consistent grants or subsidies except for certain categories of funding, such as direct government purchases and commissioned services. Second, in terms of the evaluation and supervision system, it lacks a set of complete laws and regulations stipulated by the central government (Jiang, 2020). Third, in terms of public awareness, it lacks a trust basis within the public that still has insufficient understanding of NPO in China. Fourth, there are a series of internal challenges that influence the sustainability of the sector, for example, unclear self-positioning, insufficient workforce, low professionalism, and incompetence to provide differentiated services (Shi, 2018). What is worse, some NPOs' unscrupulous behaviors jeopardize the sector's reputation, and further harm the enthusiasm of external participants to engage in the sector (Hou & Teng, 2015).

Considering the existing challenges from various stakeholders and based on the government's aim to promote the sector's sustainable development, therefore, it is imperative to probe into the distinctive roles of the essential stakeholders engaged in the sector.

1.2 Some key concepts

NPO: Salamon and Helmut (1998) define an NPO as an organization which is organized, private, nonprofit, self-governing, and voluntary. They contend that NPOs are small in size, flexible and capable of stimulating the vitality of essential workers and, therefore, are ideally suited to fill the gaps caused by the shortcomings of the State (Salamon & Helmut, 1998).

Community: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines community as a group of people with common characteristics or interests living together within a larger society. To keep the concept of 'community' align with the context in China, 'community' adopted in this study refers to the commonplace of residents' lives within the governance scope of the government agencies (i.e., neighborhood committees).

Community elderly care: refers to establishing places within the community that provide comprehensive elderly care services, such as life care and daily entertainment activities for the elderly to alleviate the lack of care from the family and caregivers during the day (Jiang, 2020). In this study, it refers to the community home-based care model. That is, the elderly still live at home and is looked after by their families; at the same time, they also enjoy the elderly care

services in the community provided by NPOs, such as free meals in the elderly restaurants, entertainment activities in the NPO premises, and home-based daycare.

Stakeholder: different researchers define stakeholders from their own perspectives, but overall, the definition of ‘stakeholder’ raised by Freeman (1984) endures the broadest applicability in business and strategic management (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994). Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as all individuals and groups who can influence the achievement of an organization’s goals or are influenced by its process of achieving its goals.

2 RESEARCH GAP

Although there is emerging research on e-healthcare system and technology (Jonsson et al., 2022), community pharmacy service (Yao et al., 2020), self-care in community-dwelling (Lawless et al., 2021), transitional care (O’Hara et al., 2020) and community-care approach for social work practice (Putri et al., 2020) in developed countries, NPO community elderly care is a new area in China, and it lacks a theoretical basis to understand the roles of essential stakeholders in practice (Ji, 2021) since the majority of domestic research are descriptive rather than explanatory or exploratory (Liu & Wu, 2019). Moreover, current research on community elderly care mainly focuses on single-subject participation, while there is minimal research probing into multi-subject participation or analyzing stakeholder relationships. Consequently, it causes difficulties in probing strategies to tackle existing challenges in the sector (Zhang & Mou, 2014).

Therefore, it is significant to identify or form a theoretical framework by clarifying the distinctive roles of essential stakeholders in the sector to navigate their practices.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above research objective, three specific research questions are generated:

Research question 1: What is the chronological development of stakeholder theory including its classification approach?

Research question 2: What is the recent research status of the participation mode of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives?

Research question 3: What is the conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives based on research questions 1 and 2?

4 METHODS

4.1 Study design: systematic review

A systematic literature review is employed based on the objective of this study. Fink (2019) defines a systematic review as a systematic, explicit, and reproducible design for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting the existing body of recorded documents (Fink, 2019, p. 3). By synthesizing and refining scattered knowledge regarding all stages of the ‘normal research cycle,’ systematic review helps to map, consolidate knowledge and identify knowledge gaps, thus developing a theory of a certain research area and facilitating subsequent research to build onto this ground (Tranfield et al., 2003).

4.2 Unit of analysis and sampling method

4.2.1 Unit of analysis

The preparation phase starts with the selection of the unit of analysis (Guthrie et al., 2004). Since our research objective is to construct a tenable theoretical basis of the sector, this study took ‘stakeholder theory’ as the unit of analysis.

4.2.2 Sampling method

Peer-reviewed articles related to the development of stakeholder theory, stakeholder classification approach, and NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives, have been the objects of the literature search.

To identify the most pertinent articles, the author adopted the following screening criteria:

1. Article databases: ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and CNKI
2. Keywords searched: ‘stakeholder theory development’ and/or ‘stakeholder classification’, adding ‘nonprofit organizations/NPO community elderly care’ after screening the above two keyword combinations.
3. Article types: open access, peer-reviewed articles.
4. Article languages: English in ScienceDirect and Mendeley, Chinese in CNKI
5. Subject areas: business, management and accounting, nursing and health.
6. Publication period: from January 2014 to April 2023.
7. Sources: both original and secondary research were considered. That is, when a reference

was available to be sourced or retrieved, it would be adopted to review.

The preliminary screening result through the databases shows in Table 2:

Table 2. Preliminary search of literature from delimited databases

	Stakeholder theory development	Stakeholder classification	Adding ‘NPO community elderly care’
ScienceDirect	38 articles	43articles	6 articles
Mendeley	31 articles	46 articles	9 articles
CNKI	50 articles	52 articles	14 articles

The full screening process is shown in the following figure (see next page):

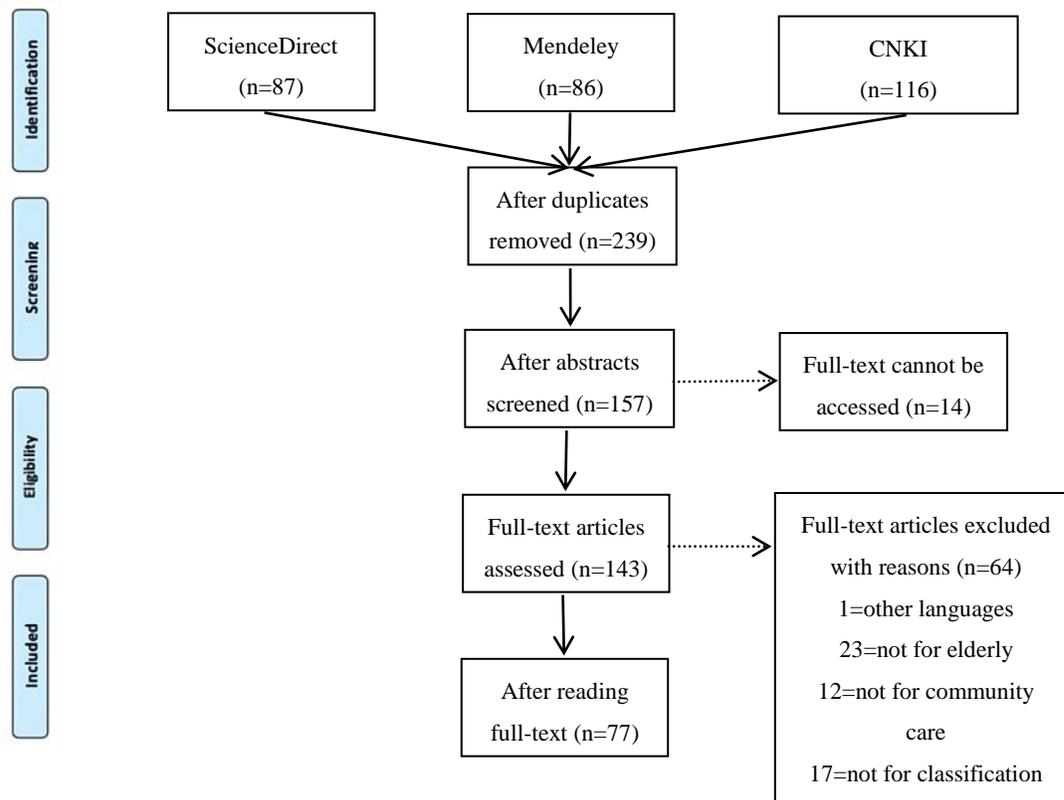


Figure 1. PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

4.3 Data analysis: inductive content analysis

Content analysis has been used in social science for analyzing various qualitative and unstructured data collected from interviews, published materials, literature review, diaries, or web-based documents (Seuring & Gold, 2012). The purpose of using content analysis as a research method is to provide new insights, increase the understanding of a specific phenomenon, and gain a broader and more condensed description of the phenomenon (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). Content analysis is distinguished into two approaches: inductive (qualitative) analysis and deductive analysis (Moretti et al., 2011). The adoption of this method is determined by the main purpose of the study. Inductive content analysis (ICA) is used when there are no previous studies that deal with the phenomenon or when the former knowledge is fragmented, while deductive content analysis is recommended when the purpose of the study is to test a theory (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). The advantage of ICA is that information is gained directly from the data without imposing preconceived theoretical perspectives, and it focuses more on the background, context and thick findings based on the frequency of codes as complementary to theme development (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Abstraction and interpretation are two basic tools for ICA, and abstraction helps transfer constituents to a higher logical level, showing a kind of classification (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). Since numerous research revealed that there is a lack of theoretical basis to understand the mechanism of stakeholders in the sector (Ji, 2021; Zhang & Mou, 2014), it is rational to employ ICA in this study. Moreover, ICA can be both descriptive and interpretative (Lindgren et al., 2020), where trustworthiness is crucial as the categories are created from raw data without a theory-based categorization matrix (Elo et al., 2014).

4.4 Procedure

According to Mayring (2014), one may distill four main steps to form the process model of ICA: (1) The data to be analyzed is delimited, and the unit of analysis is defined; (2) Formal characteristics of the data are assessed based on the frequency of the same or similar codes in the transcription, providing background for subsequent descriptive analysis; (3) Structural dimensions are selected to obtain easy-achieved classifications and manifest contents to develop categories; (4) The data is analyzed according to the categories.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A systematic review in line with the research questions was conducted, from which insights into developing the theoretical basis of NPO community elderly care can be facilitated.

5.1 The chronological development of stakeholder theory

5.1.1 The initial development stage (1960s)

Concept proposition: the initial proposition of stakeholder was proposed by Dodd from Harvard Law School and Berle from Columbia University Law School during their debate about corporate social responsibility (Pedrini & Ferri, 2019). But, the concept of stakeholder was not defined until 1963 that the Stanford Research Institute defined stakeholders as the benefit-related groups of organizations without which they can not survive. These groups include shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, creditors and relevant communities (Freeman, 1984).

Shareholder first: In the 1960s, the western countries (e.g., the US, the UK) pursued the corporate governance ideology of ‘shareholder first,’ believing that shareholders were the owners of organizations. Thus, the operations of organizations must serve the goal of maximizing shareholders’ benefits. The ‘shareholder first’ perspective overrides the stakeholder perspective, and it requires managers to make business decisions with the goal of maximizing shareholder benefits, obligating them to focus on short-term goals and even harm the interests of stakeholders (e.g., employees) and the long-term development of the organization (Hou & Teng, 2015).

5.1.2 The early development stage (1970s)

Entering the 1970s, the turbulent business environmental changes made managers difficult to judge which changes needed to cope while which needed to take preventive measures (Freeman, 1984). Such changing environment called for evolving ideologies to tackle the challenges. Strategic management, systems approach, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are the main research interests in stakeholder theory during this period (Parmar et al., 2010).

Strategic management

Since the 1970s, research on stakeholder had began to appear in numerous strategic management literature. For example, Dill (1975) explored stakeholder relationships from the perspective of ‘influence’ and ‘responsibility,’ arguing that an organization is accountable to its stakeholders, and vice versa. Stakeholders can become active participants in strategic decision-making (Dill, 1975). Wharton School launched a stakeholder management course in 1977 to apply the concept of stakeholders to the strategic management of enterprises. Since then, both the academia and the industry have begun recognizing the stakeholder theory (Eskerod, 2020). Hussey and Langham (1979) developed a stakeholder model for private business corporations and their environments with stakeholders in order to analyze the crucial role of management during the strategic

corporate planning. In addition, in the hypothetical strategic study, Mitroff et al. (1979) emphasized that managers ought to consider all stakeholder groups that could influence or be influenced by key strategic decisions.

Systems approach

On the basis of Ansoff (1965)'s perspective that contextual variables empower stakeholders to influence an organization's survival, Ackoff (1974) developed a stakeholder analysis approach within the organizational systemic design and argued that the organizational system could not be accomplished without stakeholder participation. He proposed that when solving problems at the level of organizational system design, stakeholder groups should be taken into account of because they are interdependent with each other (Ackoff, 1974).

Corporate social responsibility

Also, some CSR researchers have begun to pay attention to the concept of stakeholder, resulting in massive CSR literature that takes the stakeholder perspective as the studying point. Some of them analyzed the relationships between minor stakeholder groups and organizations, and emphasized that managers should consider the interests of minor stakeholder groups, such as the public, communities, and part-time employees (Parmar et al., 2010). Dill (1975) denoted that stakeholders were treated only as extraneous factors for long in strategic planning and management, or as legal or social constraints that limit the management decision-making. However, the role of stakeholders has shifted today from extraneous factors to internal factors, and some external stakeholders may even seek opportunities to actively participate in the management decision-making (Dill, 1975).

5.1.3 The modern development stage (1980s-2010s)

Refined strategic management: Freeman (1984) further divided the strategic management process into three levels—rational level, process level, and transactional level. The rational level explains how to identify stakeholders of an organization, analyzes the interests they pursue, and requires managers to be familiar with stakeholders in the evaluation of their roles and interests comprehensively and objectively. The process level is about how to develop stakeholder strategies, how to leverage stakeholders' rights and benefits when analyzing the organization's goals and strategies, and how stakeholder behaviors influence the organizational achievement. The transaction level involves interaction, communication and business transactions between organizations and stakeholders. Freeman (1984) advanced the study of stakeholder theory from a

managerial perspective as he constructed a theoretical framework for analyzing stakeholder roles systematically. See Figure 2. His research made other researchers realize that shareholders were not the only stakeholders of the organization and were also crucial to the organizational survival and sustainable development (Parmar et al., 2010).

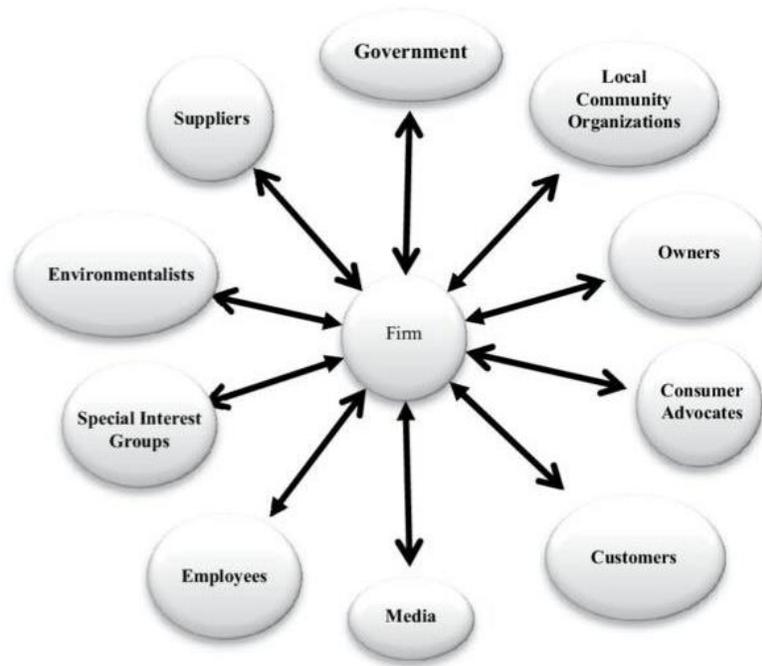


Figure 2. Stakeholder view of firm (Freeman, 1984, p. 25)

Corporate governance: In the 1990s, researchers began to study corporate governance from stakeholder perspectives (Sakawa & Watanabel, 2020). For instance, Clarkson (1994) believes that an organization is a socio-economic system composed of stakeholders, and the fundamental goal of corporate governance is to reinforce value to its stakeholders. Therefore, it needs to regulate a variety of relationships, such as those between shareholders and managers, major and minor shareholders, and shareholders and other stakeholders. The management should maximize the organization's value while protecting all stakeholders' interests. Williams and Hatton-Yeo (2015) further propose that the essence of an organization is the connection of dedicated assets that lays the foundation for stakeholder participation in corporate governance and that can not be replicated by the market, while the essence of corporate governance is to explore whether stakeholders can share the ownership of the organization. In addition, Mitchell et al. (2015) developed an interdisciplinary value creation stakeholder accounting (VCSA) based on

stakeholder risk sharing, introducing the value creation stakeholder partnerships (VCSPs) as a mechanism for VCSA implementation. This mechanism helps to capture the key process of stakeholder value creation through risk assessment, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship.

It can be identified that the research of stakeholder theory has developed from the stage of ‘influencing organizational survival’ and ‘implementing strategic management’ to ‘participating in ownership distribution’.

5.2 Stakeholder classification approaches

In the 1980s, researchers gradually realized that simply studying the application of stakeholders in different fields was not enough to clarify the unique roles and functions of stakeholders, therefore, further classification of stakeholders were demanded on this basis (Miragaia et al., 2016). Representative classification approaches include the multi-dimensional classification approach and score-based approach (Wang & Wang, 2021; Wu et al., 2019).

5.2.1 Multi-dimensional classification approach

From a multi-dimensional perspective based on different interests criteria, typical stakeholder classifications include the research from Freeman (1984), Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998) and other researchers. See Table 3:

Table 3. Stakeholder classifications from multi-dimensional classification approach

Research	Classification criteria	Type of stakeholders	Scope of stakeholders
Freeman (1984)	Ownership, economic dependency, and social interests	Stakeholders related to business ownership	Managers, directors and other shareholders who hold shares in the company
		Stakeholders who are economically dependent on the business	All managers, internal service institutions, employees, creditors, consumers, suppliers, competitors, local communities, management agencies, etc., that receive salaries in the company
		Stakeholders who have a relationship with the interests of the company in society	Special interests groups, government leaders and social media, etc.
Savage et al. (1991)	Dynamically classified by threat potential and cooperation potential. Criteria: (1) Whether key resources are held by the stakeholder; (2) Strength of the stakeholder to the company; its potential actions; (3) Possibly with whom to ally with	Supportive stakeholders (<i>High cooperation with the company and low threats; the company should adopt a collaborative strategy</i>)	Boards of directors, managers, employees, parent companies, suppliers, service providers, and nonprofits
		Marginal stakeholders (<i>Potential interests with the company; should adopt a participatory strategy</i>)	Consumer interest organizations, public shareholders, trade unions, etc.
		Hybrid stakeholders (<i>High potential threat and cooperation to the company; should adopt a monitoring strategy</i>)	Employees in short-supply positions, agents, customers, organizations that provide ancillary products or services, etc.

		Opposition stakeholders <i>(High threat potential to the company and low cooperation; should adopt a defensive strategy)</i>	Competitors, trade unions, governments, news media, etc.
Charkham (1992)	Contract relationship	Contractual stakeholders	Shareholders, employees, distributors, suppliers, lenders
		Public stakeholders	Consumers, regulators, government departments, media, local communities, etc.
Clarkson (1994)	Ways to take risks	Voluntary stakeholders	Individuals or groups who actively invest materials, capital, or human resources with the company
		Involuntary stakeholders	Individuals or groups who passively bear the risks brought about by business management and decision-making
	Closeness to the business	Primary stakeholders	People who significantly influence the company's survival and development, including shareholders, employees, investors, suppliers, customers, etc.

		Secondary stakeholders	People who indirectly affect or are affected by the operations of the company but do not have direct transactions with the company and thus do not fundamentally affect its survival, such as social media
Starik (1995)	Business operation dynamics	Real stakeholders	Individuals or groups that invest dedicated assets in the company
		Latent stakeholders	Individuals and groups who may or may be affected by the achievement of business goals
Frederick (1998)	Degree of direct connection with the interests of the firm	Direct stakeholders	Shareholders, employees, creditors, suppliers, retailers, consumers, competitors, etc.
		Indirect stakeholders	Domestic and foreign governments, social groups, media, the general public and other groups
Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)	Social attributes and stakeholder closeness	Primary social stakeholders	Individuals or groups directly related to company activities, including customers, investors, employees, local communities, suppliers, other business partners, etc.

Secondary social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have indirect associations with the company through social activities, including residential communities, affiliated companies, numerous interest groups, etc.
Primary non-social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have a direct influence on the company but do not associate with its internal staff, such as natural environment, human offspring, etc.
Secondary non-social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have indirect influence on the company but do not associate with any people, such as environmental organizations, animal protection organizations, etc.

Source: Compiled by the author

Due to space constraint, only the most representative classification approaches will be elaborated:

For example, Freeman (1984) classified stakeholders into three dimensions: ownership, economic dependence and social interests, prompting managers to realize that the influence of stakeholders on enterprises can be divided into the levels of economy, politics, society, technology and management. Therefore, managers should adopt diversified management strategies for various stakeholders (Pedrini & Ferri, 2019). In addition, based on Clarkson (1994)'s classification of primary and secondary stakeholders, Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998) classified stakeholders into four categories from social dimensions according to stakeholder closeness to the organization: primary social stakeholders (PSS), secondary social stakeholders (SSS), primary non-social stakeholders (PNS) and secondary non-social stakeholders (SNS). Herein, 'social stakeholders' refer to the civil society, business at large and various interest groups (Wheeler & Sillanpa, 1998). See Figure 3:



Figure 3: Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s Stakeholder Classification Model

5.2.2 Score-based approach

Mitchell et al. (1997) proposed the *Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience*, and the corresponding method of evaluating stakeholder salience is referred to as the score-based approach. They suggested that according to the organization’s specific situation, stakeholders can be scored from three attributes: legitimacy, power, and urgency. Legitimacy refers to a stakeholder having legal or moral claims to the organization. Power refers to whether a stakeholder holds the ability and corresponding method to influence the organization’s decision-making. Urgency refers to whether the interest demands of a stakeholder can immediately attract the organization’s attention (Xie & Hu, 2016). Whether an individual or a group is a stakeholder of the organization depends on whether or not it holds one or more of these attributes. When the score is above some threshold value, the stakeholder is considered to possess relevant attribute (Mitchell et al., 1997). Based on this, stakeholders can be further classified into three types. See Figure 4:

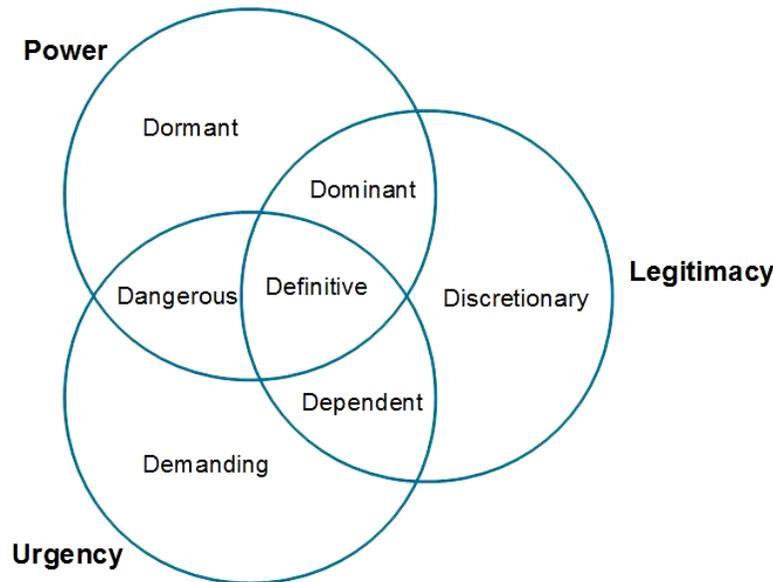


Figure 4. Stakeholder Salience Model (Mitchell et al., 1997)

The first type is called *Latent Stakeholder* that holds only one attribute of power, legitimacy, or urgency. It can be further refined into dormant stakeholders, discretionary stakeholders, and demanding stakeholders. (1) Dormant stakeholders (e.g., dismissed employees) may empower their sustainability to the organization but lack legitimacy and urgency, so the power of this type of stakeholders can not actually function. (2) Discretionary stakeholders (e.g., CSR researchers) hold legitimacy but lack urgency and power to influence the organization. (3) Demanding stakeholders (e.g., individual protesters) possess urgency but lack legitimacy and power, such that they are troublemakers and tend to distract the management (Kapiriri & Razavi, 2021).

The second type is called *Expectant Stakeholders* that possess two of the three attributes and maintain close ties with the organization. Expectant stakeholders can be further refined into dominant stakeholders, dependent stakeholders, and dangerous stakeholders. (1) Dominant stakeholders (e.g., board of directors) possess power and legitimacy; as such, their influence in the organization can be guaranteed by possessing the power of legitimacy. They hold the dominant position in the organization and the management should value their demands. (2) Dependent stakeholders (e.g., factory workers) possess legitimacy and urgency but lack power; as such, they have to depend on others to influence the organization. (3) Dangerous stakeholders (e.g., corporate spies) possess power and urgency but lack legitimacy. They might be dangerous because they may take violent actions that endanger the organization's interests (Yiapanas &

Thrassou, 2022).

The third type is called *Definitive Stakeholders* that possess all three attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency. For the organization's sustainable development, the management must value and meet the interests of definitive stakeholders at any time and explore ways to enhance their satisfaction. Typical stakeholders of this type include shareholders and customers (Rendtorff, 2020). Managers need to prioritize the requirements of definitive stakeholders with all three attributes, followed by expectant stakeholders, and finally latent stakeholders (Rendtorff, 2020). However, Mitchell et al. (1997) also purport that the classification is dynamic rather than static, as any stakeholder may change from one type to another when obtaining or losing certain attributes. The responsibility of the management is to analyze and monitor this possible change. Mitchell et al. (1997)'s score-based approach largely improves the operability of stakeholder classification and promotes the application of stakeholder theory in different fields (Xue, 2021).

Based on the above systematic review, there is considerable research exploring stakeholder models and classification approaches that facilitate people's understanding of the complexities of contemporary business challenges, and the stakeholder theory has become a practical approach that provides insights for the management to understand how value is recognized among different roles of stakeholders (Parmar et al., 2010).

5.3 NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives

The literature searching results showed that there was limited research in this area, implicating that strategies to cope with the prevailing sectoral challenges are still pending to explore. Nevertheless, some coded themes studied in prior research may provide insights into the development of the sector, such as the stakeholder participation modes and the limitations of stakeholder participation.

5.3.1 Stakeholder participation modes

Schematic model of NPO elderly home care: Zhang et al. (2022) conducted interviews with the disabled elderly and their primary caregivers (N=118) in Beijing to explore the appropriate healthcare and to develop a schematic elderly care mode to satisfy their needs. Research results suggested that governmental incentive policies, affordable medical care services, rehabilitation training, bespoke daily healthcare and psychological interventions were demanded. Zhang et al. (2022) mapped out the schematic model of the relationships among stakeholders involved in the service supply process for the elderly home care. See Figure 5:

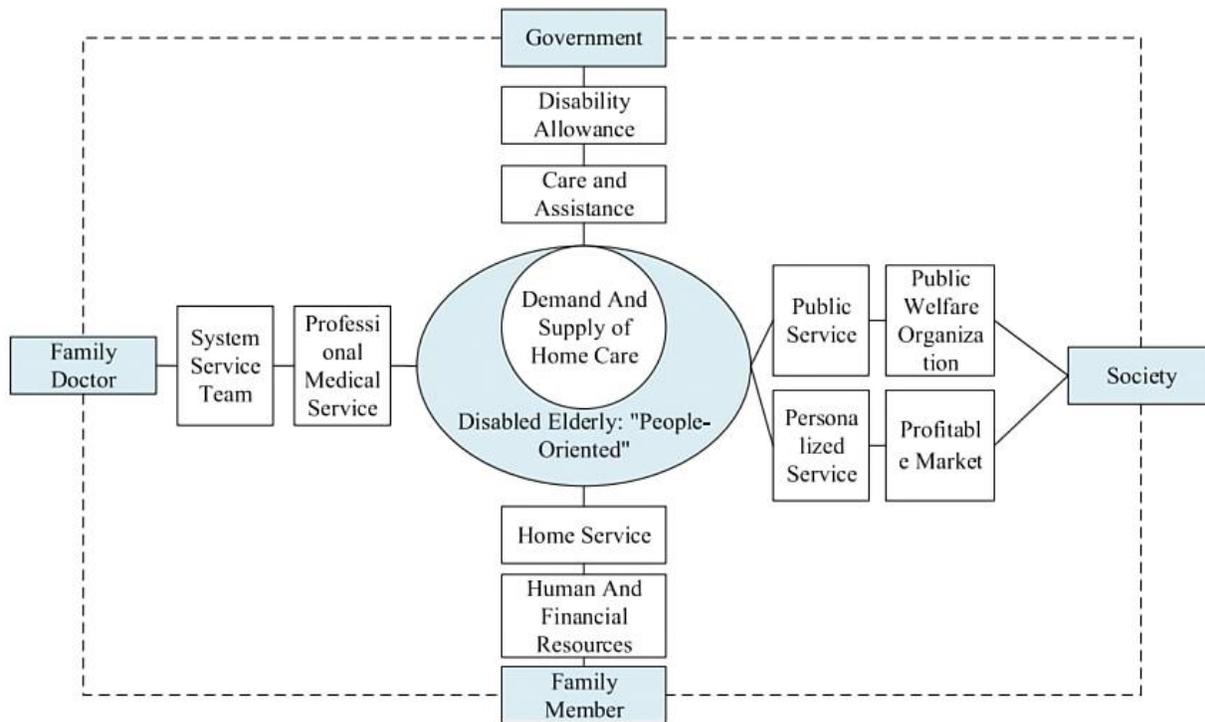


Figure 5. Schematic model of NPO elderly home care (Zhang et al., 2022)

Note: the dotted line represents the subjects not having close cooperative relationships

Government franchise operation mode: Davey and Patsios (1999) compared the formal and informal community elderly care services between the UK and the US, and proposed that NPOs may collaborate with the government to supply community public services. They offered to employ the government franchise operation mode—the government does not procure goods or services as a taxpayer but franchises the bid-winning NPOs to provide (Wang et al., 2021). Specifically, NPOs are franchised to formulate and arrange the operational details of public services, products and projects on ‘Elderly and Disabled Aid.’ Given that residents should not be charged for these kinds of public services or only charged with a meager cost, NPOs need to seek external funding sources, and the government makes up for the difference in the form of subsidies (Wang et al., 2021). However, a systematic review by Nijmeijer et al. (2014) showed that the quality of this mode is merely low. They argue that franchising is predominantly associated with client volumes, physical accessibility, and some types of healthcare quality, while the research findings regarding service utilization, the elderly loyalty, supplier efficiency and performance outcomes are mixed. They conclude that franchising can potentially improve outcomes in healthcare practices, but the evidence base is too weak for firm conclusions

(Nijmeijer et al., 2014).

Contractual developmental mode: Henderson and Caplan (2008) argue that the reality of timely and equitable care for all senior Australians living in the community is elusive because the multiplicity and rigidity of care services are sometimes unsatisfactory on delivery. However, the ongoing rationing of residential care beds owing to seniors' desire for home care provides room for contractual developmental mode between the government and NPOs for community care services. In this framework, the governments act as purchasers of services, while NPOs act as providers. Meanwhile, the elderly care is governed by strict service-level agreements, key performance indicators and rigorous reporting, ensuring that care is quantifiable and legally defensible. In essence, this mode introduces a hybrid system that tries to marry the efficiency and accountability of a collaborative contract with the compassionate, person-centered goals of community development.

Community elderly care and disability care differentiation: Leahy (2018) analyzed the operational problems of social organizations in terms of elderly disability care in Ireland, and concluded that the main problem of aging was the challenges in health and suggested that Ireland's community elderly care and elderly disability care services should be strictly distinguished and handled by different social entities. The community elderly care can be executed by NPOs, while the elderly disability care should be undertaken by professional nursing and medical institutions (Leahy, 2018).

5.3.2 Limitations of stakeholder participation

Some limitations of stakeholder participation in the NPO community elderly care were identified, which may offer insights into understanding the roles of essential stakeholders and corresponding strategies to mitigate the challenges in the sector. First, because of the overt report by public media on incidental misconducts of NPOs, such as maltreatment to the elderly and account falsification to swindle government funding, the recognition of NPOs remains sluggish among the Chinese public (Ju & Meng, 2021). Second, the elderly are generally considered as passive recipients of care services, while they can also be active participants (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015). For example, the Wales government encourages seniors to participate in community care services as peer support; meanwhile, their feedback will be treated as a mirror of local governments through which the performance of the latter can be reflected more comprehensively; also, the adaptability and quality of seniors' lives can be improved by peer support (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015). Third, NPOs are regulated by a series of regulatory

agencies, such that there is a lack of effective communication and coordination among stakeholders in the overall arrangement of services. When acute situations occur, the leading regulatory agency is usually ineffective in mobilizing resources of other agencies, resulting in the impediment for the management efficiency of NPOs (Shi, 2018).

5.4 Conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care

5.4.1 Wheeler and Sillanpa's (1998) model as the theoretical prototype

Based on the research findings, this study argues that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s *Stakeholder Classification Model* contributes to formulating the theoretical prototype for NPO community elderly care with two reasons: (1) They classified stakeholders into four categories according to the closeness of interests from the social attributes: primary social stakeholders, secondary social stakeholders, primary non-social stakeholders, and secondary non-social stakeholders. Therefore, this model well explains the attribute differences of respective stakeholders and their influences on NPOs. (2) Other stakeholder models and stakeholder classification approaches reviewed in this study explore stakeholder relationships from the business perspective. For example, Freeman (1984)'s *Stakeholder View Model* is developed based on the ownership, economic dependence, and social benefits of different stakeholders. Savage et al. (1991)'s stakeholder classification is on account of the threat potential and cooperation potential for enterprises; Charkham (1992)'s is on the basis of the contractual relationships of enterprises; Clarkson (1994)'s is on the basis of stakeholder approaches to taking economic risks; Starik (1995) illustrated stakeholder roles from the perspective of business operation dynamics of enterprises; and, Frederick (1998) classified stakeholders according to their interest relevance to enterprises. However, all these studies overlooked that NPO participants also involve social stakeholders (i.e., the elderly and volunteers) whose social attributes, such as economic status, personal experiences and perceptions of NPO, will collectively influence the sustainability of the sector. In view of this, this study believes that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model best fits in adapting to the conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care.

5.4.2 Conceptual Framework of NPO community elderly care

The stakeholder groups described in Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model will be subject to substitute, and their positions will be elucidated respectively as follows:

Government (agency): acts as the primary stakeholder that directly influences the sustainable development of NPO community elderly care. The government is the funder of NPOs, leading

the amount and frequency of funding, the funding approval procedure, the formulation and issuance of policies, and the governing of NPOs, so it is more critical than other stakeholders (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015). In addition, according to the literature review by Zhang and Guo (2021), 13% of the 1,222 reviewed articles touched upon the subject of government-nonprofits relationship, especially on its political representative role towards NPO. What is more, 37.8% of the research on nonprofits was sponsored by the government (Zhang & Guo, 2021). This suggests a strong governmental intervention both in research and practice. Therefore, it is tenable that the government, including its agency (i.e., neighborhood committee), takes the role of the primary social stakeholder in NPO community elderly care.

Volunteers: are essential for the survival of NPOs in pursuit of their sustainability mission (Zollo et al., 2019). Bastiaens et al. (2007) point out that volunteers are fundamental helpers for NPOs in daily care services, and their service quality directly influences the life quality and the perception of the elderly. Moreover, volunteers' commitment to NPOs was demonstrated to positively mediate the relationship between management effectiveness and NPO's organizational performance ($p < 0.01$). Volunteers' organizational identity also positively influences their commitment to NPOs, and positively moderates the relationship between management effectiveness and NPO's organizational performance ($p < 0.01$) (Zollo et al., 2019). Considering that volunteers are found to play the mediating or moderating roles rather than the dominating role in the organizational performance of NPOs, this study classifies volunteers as secondary social stakeholders.

The elderly care group: acts as the primary non-social stakeholder because they are the recipients of care services. They are usually the retired, the disabled, the widows or widowers who have withdrawn or are about to withdraw from the traditional workplace environment. What is worse, the ageist discourses and the subtext of negativity and devaluing of this group will very likely contribute to their feelings of worthlessness, a sense of being burdensome and having no value (Brooke & Jackson, 2020). It can be regarded that they are the vulnerable group or marginalized group in the society. Therefore, this group is reasonably classified as the primary non-social stakeholders.

Social media and the public: act as the secondary non-social stakeholders. They do not participate in daily NPO operations, but can indirectly influence the public attitudes and recognition of NPOs, such that it promotes or hinders the sector's sustainability. As for the media, Namisango et al. (2021) explain how social media drives nonprofits-public collaborative

outcomes such as social media-enabled service co-creation in NPOs. The role of social media is enacted in three dimensions: the action possibilities afforded by the media, the constructed symbolic meaning and values to NPOs, and the privacy preferences of disclosure and interaction as possibilities to minimum constraints (Namisango et al., 2021). In addition, in the era of media exposure, the governance design of private-public-nonprofits collaboration is strategically crucial for NPO community elderly care (Lundrigan et al., 2015), during which the social cohesion and the capabilities of stakeholders can be enhanced (Cabral et al., 2019). Considering that the value creation and appropriation principally stem from the collaboration process among private-public-nonprofits, it is reasonable that social media and the public are classified as secondary non-social stakeholders.

In conclusion, these stakeholder groups are found to be interdependent with one another with distinctive roles and functions in the services of NPO community elderly care. Therefore, this study constructs a conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives, as shown in Figure 6:

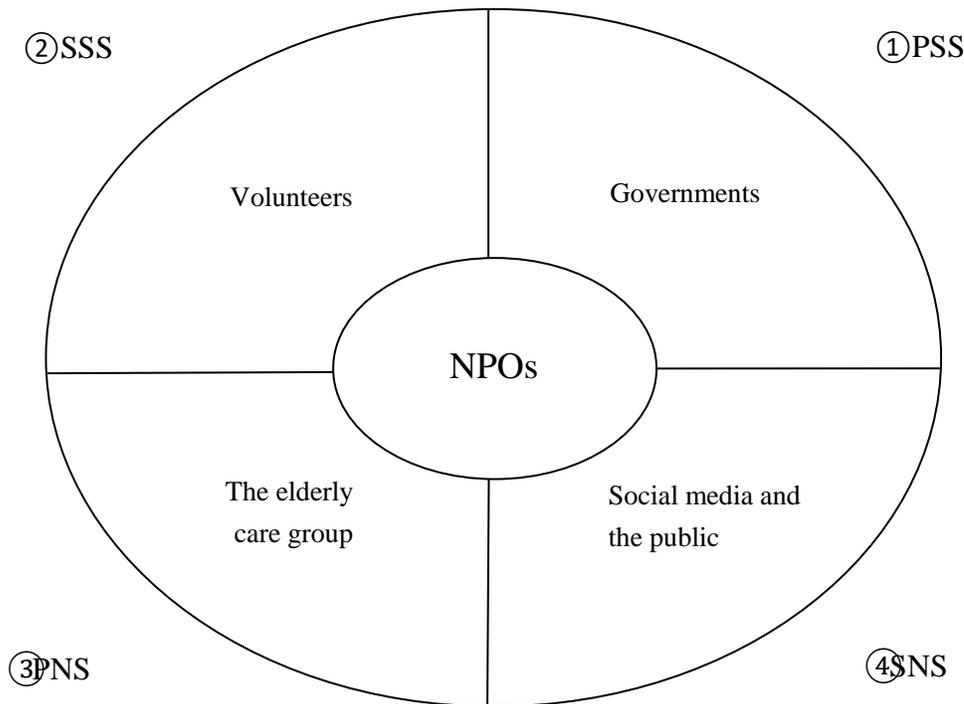


Fig 6. Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly Care from Stakeholder Perspectives

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Concluding remarks

To figure out the stakeholder model that best addresses our research aim which is to construct a theoretical basis for the NPO community elderly care sector, this study conducted a systematic review on the development of stakeholder theory to introduce its different definitions, identify the mainstreams of the theory (e.g., strategic management, systems approach), and summarize the typical stakeholder classification approaches based on different classification criteria.

Subsequently, this study coded and analyzed relevant literature with the inductive content analysis method to explore insights into understanding the roles of essential stakeholders and their relationships with NPOs. Although the result of the literature review indicated a lack of theoretical depth in this area, some coded themes provided insights into fulfilling the research aim. These themes encompassed the stakeholder participation modes and the limitations of stakeholder participation in the sector.

This study found that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model is most appropriate as a theoretical prototype for constructing the conceptual framework of the sector. The reason is that it focused on stakeholders' social attributes that are considered suitable for interpreting stakeholder roles and functions in the nonprofit sector. Accordingly, the roles and functions of essential stakeholders within the conceptual framework were elucidated respectively.

6.2 Research implications and limitations

In theory, the findings of this study offer implications for researchers to clarify the roles and functions of essential stakeholders based on the constructed conceptual model, which is of some insights for them to figure out a tenable scheme for the sustainable development of the sector. In practice, the findings of this study offer implications for practitioners to increase awareness of the relationships of essential stakeholders with NPOs to enhance their work performance. For example, the government is seen dominant by being perceived as powerful in financially supporting the NPO services. The elderly care group is seen potentially demanding by being perceived as urgent in solving their various care needs, such that the NPO management may improve their services. The volunteers are seen potentially discretionary by perceiving their voluntary needs, therefore, the government and NPOs may cooperate to enhance the volunteer incentives system. Also, the social media and the public are seen potentially dependent by being perceived as legitimate, depending on the behaviors of NPOs, to leverage the social symbolic

value for them. In sum, managers are recommended to be aware of these characteristics of essential stakeholders to enhance organizational performance and the sustainability of the sector.

There are limitations to this study. The conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care proposed in this study is based on inductive content analysis, therefore, the analysis is more inductive and formative than deductive, suggesting a potential lack of validity. Moreover, the interrelations of the essential stakeholders and their mechanism are still expecting to explore, and thus request for further examination empirically.

6.3 Future expectations

In the future, the author expects to explore the interrelations of the essential stakeholders of the sector and employ quantitative analysis methods to verify their relationships empirically, so that a more solid theoretical basis of NPO community elderly care can be constructed.

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

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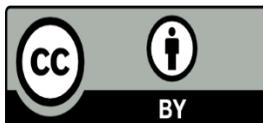
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