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Job Mobility Among Millennials: Do They Stay or Do They Go?

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Abstract

Millennials are a substantial segment of the workforce; they are perceived to be driven by higher pay, quick to be dissatisfied and leave a job, and committed to volunteering. This article examines how these perceptions translate to job mobility in terms of job switching within and across sectors, without drawing cross-generation comparisons. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97) from 2008 to 2013, we notice a trend among millennials of frequent job switching within rather than across sectors. Job dissatisfaction is the strongest predictor of public-sector employees switching jobs within the sector. For sector switching, we find some variation: Low pay corresponds with exiting the nonprofit sector, whereas job dissatisfaction is the strongest predictor of leaving the public sector. Millennials working in the public and nonprofit sectors are less likely to switch sectors if they volunteer. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords

millennials, sector switching, public sector, nonprofit sector, private sector, employer

Job turnover and sector switching have been receiving increased attention in the public management literature, due to criticality of the issue. Cho and Lewis (2012) indicate federal employees tend to leave in the early years on the job where around "one quarter of federal employees hired between 2006 and 2008 left within 2 years"

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(p. 5). At the same time, "Today's workforce is changing. Employees across all three job sectors—government, nonprofit, and for-profit—are becoming both older and younger, where workplaces now have employees from up-to-five different generations" (Piatak, 2017, p. 2). Despite the changes in the composition of workforce, and as older workers prepare to exit the workforce, it is critical to understand the employment dynamics of younger workers, in particular the turnover and sector-switching decisions of millennials (individuals born between 1981 and 1996), who compose one third of the labor force in the United States in 2015 (Dimock, 2019; Fry, 2015). Public administration research has not sufficiently examined these workforce dynamics across the public and nonprofit sectors (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Empirical scholarship is limited to a few peer-reviewed studies and a plethora of anecdotal reports. In this article, we examine the determinants of millennials turnover within and across sectors by empirically testing common assumptions about the 69.2 million millennials in the workforce.

For managers in public and nonprofit organizations, common assumptions about millennials' work behaviors create conflicting expectations for these employees. On one hand, some assumptions emphasize millennials' propensity to be easily dissatisfied with a job, to leave their jobs quickly, and to look for better pay. On the other hand, millennials are understood to be committed to social causes, reflected in their likelihood to volunteer (Alsop, 2008; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Lyons, Ng, & Schweitzer, 2014; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Recognizing the prevalence of these assumptions, we examine the degree to which they are reflected in the behaviors of millennials; we focus on the following three assumptions: interest in better pay, job dissatisfaction, and volunteering. Empirically examining these assumptions may shed light on the career-related decisions among millennials and provide more clarity for public and nonprofit managers.

The relevance of this research is threefold. First, systematic examination of millennials' career decision-making has been limited (see McGinnis, 2011; McGinnis & Ng, 2016, for a few examples). Public- and nonprofit-sector managers need to understand the behavior of this generation during an era of baby boomer retirement and millennials growth as a share of the workforce. Millennials' tendency to frequently change employers—and, potentially, sectors of work—may bring some benefits to these organizations but can also be costly, complicating efforts to build a specialized workforce for many organizations. Furthermore, if millennials' job choices are primarily based on pecuniary incentives, these motivations have their own implications and may necessitate alternate management approaches in the public service.

Second, the expected large number of retirements in public and nonprofit organizations (Cho & Lewis, 2012; Johnson, 2009) in the next decade will leave a large void in the leadership of these organizations. Millennials will eventually assume these leadership positions. This approaching generational transition underscores the importance of moving beyond assumptions toward a more rigorous examination of millennials' work preferences and patterns. More generally, job and sector switching are important worker behaviors to consider and present a useful starting point for understanding this rising generation of workers.

Finally, most of the turnover literature focuses on intention to turnover, which limits our understanding of job mobility in the public and nonprofit sectors, especially as the relationship between intention to turnover and actual turnover is not always clear as existing research produces conflicting results (Cho & Lewis, 2012; Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016; Jung, 2010). In addition, the sector-switching literature often addresses the issue within a specific agency or sector; such an approach does not tell us how and why workers move in and out of different sectors of the economy. We enhance this literature by examining voluntary turnover and sector switching within the public and nonprofit sectors broadly defined. Drawing on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) data, we also leverage longitudinal data to examine the sector of post-switch jobs.

In this article, we ask the following research question: What factors influence millennials' propensity to stay in a job or sector? In answering this question, we are particularly interested in the role pay or compensation, satisfaction with the job, and volunteerism play in the decision to stay or go. Two important caveats are due here.

First, we are not attempting any comparisons across generations. A multigenerational study requires different data that should be based on a survey of each generation during the same life cycle; such data are not readily available. Instead, we examine one generation that is understudied in the public administration literature. Applying existing theoretical arguments to millennials, we aim to offer additional insights that then might have certain practical implications and set the stage for future research that should address the sample and methodological limitations we encounter herein. Second, we recognize that individuals could leave their jobs involuntarily for various reasons. In this article, we focus only on voluntarily turnover across the borders of an organization or a sector, especially as most turnover in the public sector is voluntary (Wald, 2018).

Millennials as a Generation

Generations have been a focus of understanding individuals' choices, attitudes, and behaviors. The generational concept is coined by two theories. The first is the cohort theory (Strauss & Howe, 1997), which suggests that generations exist because people were born into a certain time period that shapes their personas. The second is the social forces theory; Mannheim (1952) explains that events that occur when people are young shape their lives, affecting individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Millennials are one of the generations that experienced dramatic events (9-11 and the 2007 Recession) that may have affected their lives and shaped their identity and behaviors.

In 2013, *Time* journalist, Joel Stein, dubbed millennials the "Me, Me, Me" generation. Millennials have a set of psychological traits that are different from previous generations. Examining whether generational differences exist along a battery of psychology measures, Twenge and Campbell (2012) find millennials score higher on individualism, narcissism, and anxiety and these traits hold across ethnic groups (Twenge & Foster, 2008). Others argue that millennials have sturdy opinions, profound commitment to social causes, and a strong belief that they can make a difference in their communities and the world (Alsop, 2008; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). This often makes millennials seem contradictory in what they are interested in and how they might act, potentially correlating with certain work behaviors.

In addition, dozens of anecdotal and practitioner-oriented reports generate tips on how to deal with millennials in the workplace. On one hand, some research suggests millennials ask for promotions and pay raises—as high as 60% increase in salary—earlier in their job tenure (Lyons et al., 2014). On the other hand, millennials volunteer at unprecedented rates (Stone, 2009). In comparison with the 2% increase in the total number of volunteers in the United States between 2007 and 2008, the number of volunteer millennials increased by 5.7% (Koch, 2009). Thus, managers of public and nonprofit organizations face inconsistent information about millennials that carries conflicting prescriptions for recruitment and retention strategies. If millennials reflect a generation that is systematically more likely to focus on self-interest, as the "Me Generation" moniker in popular reporting suggests, managers should focus on increased pay, career ladders that offer opportunities for regular advancement, and perhaps pay bonuses linked to individual performance. A lack of individualized markers of success, regular performance feedback, and rewards in recognition of individual accomplishments may lead millennials to search elsewhere to fulfill these priorities. If millennials instead prefer socially beneficial roles in their work, as their documented volunteering patterns suggest, questions of fit with the organization and opportunities to see the social benefits of their work may dominate pay concerns for millennials in deciding whether to leave an organization. Given these conflicting assumptions about millennials, we examine the extent of employer and sector switching among millennials and the factors that seem associated with observed switching.

Job Mobility Within or Across Sectors

To understand the employer- and sector-switching behavior among millennials, it is important to understand job mobility. Job mobility takes two forms: leaving a current employer but staying within a sector or switching sectors. Sector switching was initially defined by Bozeman and Ponomariov (2009) as moving out of a sector and into another. In this article, we focus on voluntary turnover, within and across sectors, which is defined as "the employee exerts the decision to leave . . . a decision the organization would presumably wish to prevent in most instances" (Selden & Moynihan, 2000).

The underlying reasons for voluntary turnover vary: individual demographic characteristics (Cho & Lewis, 2012), personal attitudes (Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Maertz & Campion, 1998; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001), job fit (Christensen & Wright, 2011; Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013), organizational management practices, pecuniary and nonpecuniary motivations and rewards (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007; Leete, 2006). Therefore, it is inconclusive which factors matter most in an employee's decision to leave a job.

Despite existing tendencies to leave a job, the public management literature (e.g., Choi, 2017; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2003; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2006) emphasizes the commitment of public- and nonprofit-sector employees to their sector, driven by the match between their work values and their employer fulfilling these values. The impact of match is manifested in the tendency of public- and nonprofit-sector workers to remain more satisfied within their careers when compared with for-profit employees (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006). Yet, some recent research provides a snapshot on sector switching.

Higher pay and more room for creativity motivate a public employee to switch sectors while public service motivation, job security, and having a strategic influence have the opposite effects (Hansen, 2014). For private-sector employees, managerial experience is the driver to switch into the public sector and they are promoted once they enter the nonprofit sector (Su & Bozeman, 2009). Seniority on the job also indicates the direction of sector switching. While the switch can go either way for middle managers, the switch from the public to the private sector increases among senior managers (Fredericksen & Hansen, 2017). Nonprofit managers are more likely to switch sectors, whereas rank-and-file nonprofit employees are not (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016).

Having said that, switching sectors potentially represents a costly move, although there are "no good cost estimates for the federal service" (Cho & Lewis, 2012, p. 5). For an individual worker, there is the cost of learning a new organizational culture and role; sector-specific skills might also be less useful or transferrable (Su & Bozeman, 2009; Withey & Cooper, 1989). For organizations, movement of labor across sectors might bring the benefit of improved innovation and better fiscal outcomes (Connolly, 2018), yet "most personnel specialists believe the costs of high turnover exceed the benefits" (Lewis & Stoycheva, 2016, p. 788). There are substantial direct costs associated with employee severances and replacement (i.e., new hires' recruitment, selection, and training; Bertelli, 2007; G. Lee & Jimenez, 2011; Pitts, Marvel, & Fernandez, 2011). The average economic cost to replace an employee can be anywhere between 50% and 213% of the employee's annual total compensation (Boushey & Glynn, 2012; Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2010, p. 1). The financial cost of replacing one full-time employee was around US$4,000 (Paiement, 2009), with a total bill of US$11 billion a year industry-wide (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). In addition, there are hidden or consequential costs in terms of workforce stability, expertise, and even organizational social capital and outcomes (Stritch, Molina, & Favero, 2018). Flower, McDonald, and Sumski (2008) find when caseworkers leave their foster care jobs, kids are 60% less likely to be placed in a home. In the existing public administration literature, millennials as the largest portion of the current workforce are understudied. Do they stay in their jobs or sectors, or do they move?

Mobility Among Millennials: Salary/Pay Hypotheses

Along with job security and benefits, pay is one of the rewards employees expect from putting in effort at work (Gursoy, Geng-Qing Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Van de Walle, Steijn, & Jilke, 2015). There could be a difference in the importance of compensation based on sector of employment, mainly the public and nonprofit sectors compared with the private sector (Choi, 2017), yet compensation still factors into a person's decision to choose or switch an employer or a sector while considering the risks associated with such movement.

Government employees are driven to join and stay in the public sector by their commitment to serve others (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2011; Hansen, 2014; Piatak, 2017). By the same token, nonprofit employees are willing to donate their labor to the cause an organization is serving and receive lower compensation (Handy & Katz, 1998; Leete, 2006). Being committed to the organization or the cause (Hamann & Foster, 2014), those employees accept the limited benefits such as professional development, raises, and promotions and are oriented to serve a mission and the sector as a whole (Harrow & Mole, 2005). Notably, some scholars (Georgellis et al., 2011; Jurkiewicz and Brown, 1998) have downplayed the significance of pay as a preference or influence to move between sectors, especially from the private sector to the public sector.

Yet, benefits are still important to government employees (Y. Lee & Wilkins, 2011), and, along with pay, they are critical in preventing turnover (Shaw et al., 1998). Public-sector employees who move to the private sector report more interest in higher wages (Hansen, 2014) or in a promotion, which is often associated with a salary increase (Su & Bozeman, 2009). This is particularly common during times of economic instability, which signifies budget cuts and lower pay in both the public and nonprofit sectors (Piatak, 2017), leading scholars (Faulk et al., 2013; McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016) to caution against the increased mobility and turnover, particularly of nonprofit employees, that are usually motivated by pay differentials (Lewis, 2010).

In the case of millennials, they favor extrinsic rewards, especially compensation, placing heavier emphasis on pay. This is possibly due to changes in culture and an increased willingness to disclose narcissistic traits (Twenge & Foster, 2010), changes in the labor market conditions (Krahn & Galambos, 2014), or insecurity in terms of hardship or living in a recession (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008; Twenge & Kasser, 2013). McGinnis Johnson and Ng (2016) highlight millennial nonprofit managers' willingness to switch sectors due to compensation. Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) point out the high expectation of 4 times an initial compensation even among students with the lowest grade point averages (GPAs). This suggests that millennials in both the public and nonprofit sectors would only make a costly move to another sector for substantial pay increases, as Friedell, Puskala, Smith, and Villa (2011) also argue. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Across job sectors, millennials will switch (a) employers in search of higher wages or (b) sectors in search of higher wages.

Mobility Among Millennials: Dissatisfaction Hypotheses

In addition to research that examines the effect that compensation has on sector switching, extant research highlights the negative relation between job satisfaction and turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Iverson & Currivan, 2003), with job satisfaction as "[the single most reliable predictor of turnover], with employees expressing high job satisfaction being unlikely to leave" (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007, p. 208). By the same token, "the more employees feel dissatisfied with the organization, the easier it is for them to leave" (Kang et al., 2015, p. 646). After all, an individual looks for and stays in a job that best satisfies her or his needs or values (Y. Lee & Wilkins, 2011), and a dissatisfied worker will leave for another job or organization (Boardman et al., 2010). Motivators are essential to satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors—those related to the organizational environment and the work condition—can prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1964; Taylor, 2008), yet "workers not satisfied with hygiene factors will be dissatisfied despite the presence of acceptable motivators" (Jamison, 2003, p. 128). Changing the work environment or a condition could then lead to less dissatisfaction; these are hygiene factors that are related to the job and essential at workplace.

Generally speaking, job dissatisfaction can be the result of personal or organizational factors or a mix of both, such as personal values, work–life balance, person-organization fit, job design, or organizational culture (see, for example, Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007; Norris, 2003; Taylor, 2014). Scholars (see Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989) examined different options employees have when they become dissatisfied with the job. A dissatisfied employee could quit his or her job or voice concerns to the management, or alternatively could be loyal to the organization or the job itself and neglect the situation (Farrell, 1983; Griffeth et al., 2000; Whitford & Lee, 2015). The decision will depend on a variety of factors, including prior satisfaction with and personal investment in the job, and could vary by the sector of employment (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992).

Public-sector employees' relative levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs are not always clear in the literature. Y. Lee and Wilkins (2011) state that "organizational outputs of government agencies . . . provide psychological satisfaction to employees" (p. 47), but inflexibility of the pay structure and high level of red tape induce higher dissatisfaction (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Feeney & Bozeman, 2009). Nonprofit employees have higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs; they are attracted to the mission or values of an organization, self-select into the sector, and donate their labor (Hamann & Foster, 2014; Handy & Katz, 1998).

Dissatisfaction in the nonprofit sector appears to be limited. Chen (2014) finds that job satisfaction among nonprofit managers in Georgia and Illinois was negatively predicted by extrinsic factors. Becchetti et al. (2014) note that moving to the nonprofit sector is intrinsically motivated and associated with higher satisfaction despite the lower wage. Therefore, we expect nonprofit employees to be less likely to leave a job or a sector due to dissatisfaction. Kang et al. (2015) reach a different conclusion: Low job satisfaction among Korean nonprofit employees leads to turnover; however, such turnover is among entry-level jobs and mainly into the private sector due to its large size that allows more opportunities at entry level.

For millennials who are early in their careers, dissatisfaction with a job may sometimes lead to generalized disillusionment with working in a given sector. Disillusionment can relate to the efficacy that reflects the belief in the possibility of change to happen

(Piatak, 2015; Withey & Cooper, 1989), especially in the public sector. When such a belief in change is low, a dissatisfied employee would leave the employer and explore options elsewhere. Even in the nonprofit sector, the psychological research on millennials suggests personality traits such as narcissism and individualism possibly drive job dissatisfaction (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008) coupled with their willingness to work in any sector (Fine, 2008). Therefore, we expect dissatisfied millennials to be more likely to leave their employers and sectors. We, then, hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Across job sectors, as job dissatisfaction increases, millennials will more likely (a) leave the current employer or (b) leave the current sector.

Mobility Among Millennials: Volunteering Hypotheses

Millennials are assumed to be very civically engaged, and yet, self-interested. This contradiction is puzzling and potentially affects work behavior and attitude. We ask, how does millennials' volunteering behavior outside of work affect their likelihood to leave or stay in their public/nonprofit jobs?

Scholars (Brewer, 2003; Houston, 2005; Y. Lee, 2012; Y. Lee & Wilkins, 2011; Piatak, 2015; Rodell, 2013) note that volunteerism, in general, represents a prosocial behavior that can be attributed, in part, to a motivation to serve others in the community. Volunteering can be driven by an individual's desire to make a difference (Christensen & Wright, 2011; Houston, 2005; Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006) by the need to establish connections (Schwartz & Suyemoto, 2013; Townsend et al., 2012), or by the expectations of good outcomes that are valued (Chen & Bozeman, 2013; Wilson, 2000). Yet, individuals are motivated to volunteer for other reasons that are less altruistic in nature and geared more toward personal gains or benefits (Prouteau & Wolff, 2008; Rotolo & Wilson, 2006).

Prior research has documented sector differences in volunteerism. Compared with private-sector counterparts, public and nonprofit employees are more likely to volunteer (Houston, 2006, 2008; Piatak, 2015; Rotolo & Wilson, 2006). Ertas (2012) argues the likelihood of volunteering is significantly higher among public-sector employees compared with non-public-sector employees; plausibly, those entering the public sector are more likely to value opportunities to help the community. Y. Lee and Wilkins (2011) make a further distinction by positively associating participation in volunteering with nonprofit employment compared with the public-sector employment.

Volunteer opportunities are not perceived to be a compensation for unfulfilling or dissatisfying work but could complement the work being done (Rodell, 2013). Jones (2010) suggests that employee's commitment to and identification with an employing organization increases in response to participation in sponsored volunteerism. The increase occurs through increased organizational pride and identification. These results suggest potential higher retention rates among employees who also have history of volunteerism, particularly among public and nonprofit workers, which is attributed to an alignment between personal and sector values. Volunteering is prevalent among millennials, demonstrating a deep commitment to social causes and solid conviction in their ability to induce change. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Across job sectors, millennials who volunteer will more likely (a) stay with the same employer or (b) stay within the same sector.

Research Methodology

We test our hypotheses using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97), which contains data from a nationally representative sample of 9,000 young people who were between the ages of 12 and 18 years by the beginning of 1997. The sample is surveyed annually until 2011 and biennially after 2011; individuals are between 26 and 31 years. Important for our purposes, participants are asked about their volunteering habits, labor market experiences, and current occupation, allowing us to identify factors affecting job mobility.

As the sample includes millennials who enter the sample at a wide range of ages, we focus on employer and sector decisions made between 2008 and 2013. We examine this period because in 2008, the youngest members of the sample will be reaching their post-college age years and the full sample will be in the first stages of their careers. After restricting the sample to workers in public-, private-, or nonprofit-sector jobs between 2008 and 2013 and who provided complete data on all variables relevant to the study, we examine an analytic sample of 1,687 millennials and 4,775 observations. Note that one common problem with longitudinal data collection efforts, particularly those with as ambitious a timeline and design as the NLSY series of studies, is nonrandom attrition from the study. Thus, although the sample frame was nationally representative, our analytic sample relies on NLSY-provided sampling weights to correct for known oversampling and sample attrition. The results presented here are robust to the inclusion or exclusion of weights.

Dependent Variables

The current study focuses on two primary outcomes: turnover and sector switching. As noted previously, prior research suggests millennials tend to switch jobs more often than prior generations (Friedell et al., 2011; Piatak, 2015), and simultaneously report higher focus on both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from their jobs (Lyons et al., 2014). However, the extent to which millennials move across jobs and sectors in search of aligning personal values and work remains unclear. We first use the unique employer identifier provided by the NLSY97 to measure an employer switch as a binary outcome equal to one if the employer identifier changes between survey rounds and zero otherwise.[1]

We then construct a sector indicator using Census industry and occupation codes included in the NLSY for each respondent's primary job. We adopt a similar approach to Almond and Kendall (2000), recognizing its limitation. We construct mutually exclusive, categorical indicators for public-, nonprofit-, and private-sector jobs, using industry and occupation codes observed predominantly in one sector.[2] Specifically, we code public administration, education workers (teachers, principals, and support workers), social workers, library staff, and safety and security workers (fire safety workers, police, and corrections workers) in occupations and industries as public-sector workers; we code religious, civic, social, and advocacy organizations and labor unions as nonprofit-sector workers; and we code finance, business, real estate, insurance, and company and enterprise management occupations as private-sector works. Table A1 in the appendix uses the nationally representative current population survey (CPS), a cross-sectional survey which includes both sector classification and occupation and industry codes, to confirm that our chosen occupation and industry codes are observed primarily in the sector we assign.

Using the aggregated sector indicators, we measure a sector switch using a binary equal to one if the sector changes between years and zero otherwise.[3] As Almond and Kendall (2000) suggest, we understand the limitation of the strong assumptions made in aggregating occupations and industries into sectors. This approach likely understates the proportion of millennials working in nonprofit and public organizations, as we exclude industries that are evenly distributed across sectors (e.g., health care occupations, engineering occupations). Ideally, future data collection efforts should include questions regarding sector for the purposes of replication but that is not readily available in longitudinal data sets that can be used to answer our research questions.

Independent Variables

We focus on three primary factors that might predict either employer- or sector-switching behavior: compensation, job satisfaction, and a history of volunteering. First, we measure compensation using the percent change in hourly wages from year to year. Intuitively, while wages will change annually, even within the same job, a systematic increase in wages in the switch year will reflect an increase in the likelihood of switching attributable to an above-average wage increase offered by the new job. On the contrary, a small relationship would indicate that the change in wages at a new job do not differ substantively from average annual wage changes in nonswitch years and would be consistent with nonpecuniary factors driving employer- and sector-switch behavior.[4] After calculating the annual change in wages, we create binary indicators for negative changes in wages equal to 1 when the percent change in wages from the previous year is negative and positive changes equal to 1 when the percent change in wages from the previous year is greater than 2%. Thus, the baseline comparison is people who received an annual wage change from 0% to 2%, which allows for inflation adjustment increases not likely to be viewed as true raises by employees. Intuitively, this approach allows for the distinction between workers who leave due to a major wage increase in the switch year and workers who saw a large pay cut in their switch year, possibly attributable to an involuntary exit from their job.

Second, we are interested in the effect of job dissatisfaction on employer and sector switching. The NLSY respondents are asked in each round of data collection how satisfied they are with their primary jobs using a 5-point Likert-type scale: *like it very much, like it fairly well, think it is ok, dislike it somewhat*, and *dislike it very much*. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction capture arguably different dispositions that affect behavioral decisions in different ways (Herzberg, 1964; Jamison, 2003); therefore, we measure satisfaction using the top two categories ("like it very much" and "like it fairly well") and dissatisfaction using the bottom two ("dislike it somewhat" and "dislike it very much"). This allows us to capture differences between being satisfied and dissatisfied relative to a neutral view of a primary job.

Third, NLSY respondents were asked biennially about volunteering habits; we create binary indicators for "regular volunteering" equal to one if the respondent reports volunteering at least once in both 2005 and 2007.[5] These years would capture volunteering prior to the labor market years considered here, and would suggest, at least in part, a preexisting prosocial motivation on behalf of the worker.

Finally, we control for a variety of other individual characteristics and circumstances that might account for employer- and sector-switching behaviors and have been used in previous studies. For instance, education levels and demographics may also play a role in employer-switching behaviors (Hansen, 2014; McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016; Su & Bozeman, 2009). Consequently, we control for respondents' race, gender, age, educational attainment, tenure at their primary job (in years), and the region and urbanicity of a respondents' childhood.

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive characteristics of the analytic sample, overall and separately by switching behavior. As shown in column 1, 64% of the sample switches employers at least once in the 5-year window covered by our analysis. The extensive switching to new employers is consistent with our prior understanding of Millennial job market behaviors (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). However, column 1 also shows that millennials rarely switch sectors. Using our measure of sector, coded using occupation and industry codes, only 9% of millennials change sectors in our window. Examining the characteristics of those who switch employers and sectors, in columns 2 and 3, reveals some notable patterns. First, consistent with the possibility that workers with more education might have more employment options (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016), sector switchers are much more likely to have a 4-year college degree than the rest of the sample. Second, the percent increase in wages in the year of a switch is much higher for sector switchers than employer switchers, which suggests that a larger pay increase is needed to induce workers to switch sectors entirely than to simply attract them from another employer.

A final note about the analytic sample suggests a potential limitation of the study. While the NLSY97 begins with a nationally representative sample of youth, our focus on job market behavior necessitates the use of data collected in the latest rounds of the study to capture post-college-age job decisions. Unfortunately, as in many longitudinal studies, participants in the NLSY97 begin to drop out of the study over time. Consequently, the resulting sample in the later years is not nationally representative. For instance, as Table 1 shows, even using weights to adjust for attrition and

Table 1. Summary Statistics of Analytic Sample, Separately by Switching Behavior (%).

	All (1)	Employer switch (2)	Sector switch (3)
Dependent variables			
Ever switch employer	0.64	1.00	0.92
Ever switch sector	0.09	0.12	1.00
Independent variables			
Regular volunteering	0.17	0.16	0.23
Tenure at job (in years)	3.38	2.41***	2.66
	(2.79)	(2.22)	(2.27)
% pay change	0.68	0.98***	1.64
	(16.85)	(20.99)	(23.85)
Positive pay change	0.54	0.52	0.55
Negative pay change	0.28	0.32**	0.34
Satisfied	0.69	0.67***	0.73
Neutral	0.23	0.24	0.18
Dissatisfied	0.08	0.09***	0.09
Control variables			
Male	0.47	0.46***	0.35
Black	0.19	0.21	0.21
Latino/a	0.14	0.13*	0.15
Multi	0.01	0.01***	0.04
BY age	14.62	14.55***	14.55
	(1.46)	(1.45)	(1.46)
Poverty ratio	270.46	253.08***	293.09
	(226.14)	(220.90)	(207.71)
Mother had college or more	0.13	0.12	0.20
NE region	0.15	0.13	0.12
MW region	0.30	0.28	0.22
SO region	0.37	0.40**	0.39
WE region	0.18	0.19	0.28
Citizen	0.92	0.94	0.92
Religious	0.56	0.59***	0.58
HS diploma	0.55	0.56	0.50
Some college	0.07	0.06	0.09
College or more	0.17	0.13***	0.30
Observations	4,775	3,125	457

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses. Asterisks report the significance of *t*-test for difference in means on observable characteristics between respondents who switched employers and those who switched sectors. The no. of observations at the person-year level include $n = 506$ public-sector person-years, $n = 50$ nonprofit person-years, and $n = 4{,}219$ private-sector person-years. HS = high school; NE = Northeast; MW = Midwest; SO = Southern; WE = Western; BY age = Base Year age or age the respondent was in the base year of the study.
$^{*}p < .1$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

Table 2. Summary Statistics of Analytic Sample, Separately by Initial Sector (%) in 2008.

	Public (1)	Nonprofit (2)	Private (3)
Dependent variables			
Ever switch employer	0.53***	0.60*	0.75
Ever switch sector	0.45***	0.55***	0.07
Independent variables			
Regular volunteering	0.25***	0.31***	0.11
Tenure at job (in years)	2.56***	3.48***	2.61
	(1.92)	(2.61)	(2.25)
% pay change	0.13*	0.19	0.60
	(0.54)	(0.21)	(10.07)
Satisfied	0.84***	0.69	0.67
Neutral	0.13***	0.23	0.25
Dissatisfied	0.04**	0.08	0.08
Control variables			
Male	0.29***	0.23**	0.46
Black	0.35	0.46	0.30
Latino/a	0.22	0.08**	0.24
Multi	0.01	0.00***	0.01
BY age	14.62	14.77**	14.55
	(1.46)	(1.48)	(1.47)
Religious	0.59*	0.54	0.59
College or more	0.41***	0.15***	0.07
Observations	128	13	1,410

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses. Asterisk report the significance of *t* test for difference in means on observable characteristics between respondents who began in the public and nonprofit sectors and those who began in the private sector. No. of observations at the individual level for the first year in the analytic sample; BY age = Base Year age or age the respondent was in the base year of the study.
*$p < .1$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

oversampling, non-Whites are slightly overrepresented in the analytic sample and males are slightly underrepresented. Similarly, a much smaller share of the sample has a college degree by 2007 than what would be expected in a national sample. We caution readers that this may present some limitations in the external validity of our results. Yet, the data provide one of the few available samples of millennials that allows for the observation of multiple years in the labor market.

Table 2 provides a similar summary of the sample broken out by the initial sector of the worker in 2008. As the data follow the same workers over time, many respondents switch in and out of sectors and employers within our panel; thus, the number of individuals in each sector in Table 2 does not reflect the total number of individuals we observe in each sector during the full panel of time. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the respondents in the NLSY97 who entered the time period we analyze, which covers the post-college years for most respondents, in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. The first two rows of Table 2 show that workers initially in the private sector are much more likely to change employers than their public- and nonprofit-sector peers. Consistent with prior research (e.g., Houston, 2005; Y. Lee, 2012), a larger share of workers initially in the public and nonprofit sectors regularly volunteered in the past. Similarly, workers in the public and nonprofit sectors are more likely to have a 4-year college degree.

Method

We test hypotheses about job and sector switching by modeling the likelihood of changing employers or sectors as a function of rewards preferences and job satisfaction. Specifically, we model the decision to switch employers (sectors) of individual *i* in time *t* as the linear function:

$$\Pr\left(Y_{it}=1|X_i\right)=\beta_1\text{wages}_i+\beta_2\text{volunteering}_i+\beta_3\text{satisfied}_{i,t-1}+X_i+Z_i+\tau_t+\varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where Y represents a binary indicator for employer or sector switches, as previously described; "wages" represents a change in pay using the binaries discussed previously; "volunteering" represents indicators for regular volunteering in the past; "satisfied" represents lagged indicators for satisfaction and dissatisfaction; X represents controls for individuals' characteristics (e.g., race, gender, family income, educational attainment, family events); Z controls for primary job characteristics that may contribute to switching decisions (e.g., sector of job and years of tenure at job); τ represents year fixed-effects (FE) to control for latent, year-specific trends that may affect switching behaviors nationally; and ε represents an idiosyncratic error term.

The primary parameters of interest in Equation 1 are β_n, as they capture the conditional partial effect of job- and fit-related factors that might explain switching behavior. Intuitively, β_1 captures the change in the likelihood of switching employers or sectors attributable to positive or negative wage differences between new and old jobs. In Equation 1, β_2 captures the average difference in the likelihood of switching between people with a history of volunteering and nonvolunteers, and the size and direction would indicate the relative importance of fit within an employer or sector. Finally, β_3 captures the difference in the likelihood of switching between groups of respondents with different levels of job satisfaction, holding all else constant.

We estimate linear probability models (LPMs) of Equation 1.[6] As workers across sectors likely enter with different bases of motivation and interest in their jobs, job satisfaction and motivation likely carry different effects on job- and sector-switching decisions across sectors. We explore this possibility by augmenting Equation 1 with interactions between the initial sector of a job and extrinsic and intrinsic reward preferences and job satisfaction level.

Results

We begin by estimating LPM regressions of Equation 1 to investigate the factors that predict employer switching. Table 3 presents LPM estimates of the factors that

Table 3. LPM Estimates of Factors That Predict Employer Change.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lagged public sector	−0.0600	−0.0574	0.0492
	(0.0162)***	(0.0194)***	(0.0660)
Lagged nonprofit sector	−0.0565	−0.0660	0.0899
	(0.0462)	(0.0480)	(0.1875)
Regular volunteering		−0.0019	−0.0016
		(0.0155)	(0.0176)
Tenure at job (in years)		0.0047	0.0047
		(0.0020)**	(0.0020)**
Satisfied with job		−0.0263	−0.0253
		(0.0138)*	(0.0142)*
Dissatisfied with job		0.0835	0.0887
		(0.0264)***	(0.0273)***
Negative pay change		0.2096	0.2207
		(0.0154)***	(0.0164)***
Positive pay change		0.1121	0.1200
		(0.0115)***	(0.0120)***
Public × Positive Pay Change			−0.1108
			(0.0417)***
Public × Negative Pay Change			−0.1375
			(0.0509)***
Nonprofit × Positive Pay Change			−0.0224
			(0.0711)
Nonprofit × Negative Pay Change			−0.0065
			(0.1169)
Public × Satisfied			−0.0006
			(0.0573)
Nonprofit × Satisfied			−0.1334
			(0.1910)
Public × Dissatisfied			−0.0499
			(0.1049)
Nonprofit × Dissatisfied			−0.5439
			(0.2203)**
Public × Volunteers Frequency			−0.0022
			(0.0368)
Nonprofit × Volunteers Frequency			−0.0422
			(0.0881)
Respondent X	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted *R*	.02	.07	.07
Observations	4,775	4,775	4,775

Note. Heteroskedastic robust standard errors in parentheses; LPM = linear probability model; FE = fixed-effects.
*$p < .1$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

predict switching employers. Column 1 presents the estimated difference in employer switching across sectors. Column 2 adds controls for worker characteristics and our primary factors of interest: wages, past volunteering, and satisfaction. Finally, column 3 adds interactions between initial sector and the primary factors. As the results in column 1 demonstrate, public-sector workers are significantly less likely to switch employers than private-sector workers. The results suggest public-sector workers are about 6 percentage points less likely to switch employers, and the difference is significant at all levels. Although the estimate for nonprofit-sector workers is negative, the difference between nonprofit- and private-sector workers remains statistically insignificant.

As shown in column 2, the estimated differences across sectors in the likelihood of employer switching remain even after accounting for worker characteristics, pay preferences, regular volunteering, and job satisfaction. In Table 2, the sample means show that 75% of for-profit workers switch employers early in their careers compared with 60% of nonprofit workers. The results in Table 3 suggest the unconditional 15 percentage-point gap in employer switching between nonprofit and for-profit workers shown in Table 2 is driven primarily by differences in observable worker characteristics between the two sectors.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, tenure and dissatisfaction are both positively associated in the likelihood of leaving an employer, and satisfaction with one's job is negatively associated with the likelihood of switching employers. Notably, dissatisfaction has a slightly stronger effect on switching employers than satisfaction. Holding all else constant, relative to an employee neutral in their job satisfaction, an employee who is satisfied is 2.6 percentage points less likely to switch employers while an employee who is dissatisfied is 8.4 percentage points more likely to switch employers. Notably, millennials are less likely to experience no change in their pay when switching employers. That is, wage changes higher than inflation and negative wage changes are both more likely to correlate with switching employers, which suggests millennials exit jobs either involuntarily, perhaps from termination or downsizing, or to seek higher wages.

Finally, column 3 includes interactions between sector and our primary factors of interest. As public- and nonprofit-sector workers may be more responsive to aspects of organizational fit, workers who volunteer may be less likely to switch employers regularly in the public and nonprofit sector. Similarly, pay and job satisfaction may have differential effects on employer-switching decisions across sectors. As the bottom rows of column 3 indicate, none of the interaction terms are significantly different from zero at conventional levels aside from dissatisfaction and pay. Dissatisfied millennials working in nonprofit employers are nearly 55 percentage points less likely to switch employers than observationally similar dissatisfied workers in public- or private-sector organizations.

Meanwhile, while nonprofit-sector millennials do not differ from private-sector millennials in their wage sensitivity for changing employers, millennials in the public sector seem relatively unmoved by wages. While all millennials are about 12 percentage points more likely to switch employers for an above-inflation wage increase, the net effect for public-sector workers in column 3 suggests they are only about 1 percentage point more likely to change employers in a year with a large wage change. Similarly, on net, the results suggest millennials in the public sector are only 8.3 percentage points more likely to switch employers in a year with a negative change in their wages. If negative wages capture, in part, involuntary exit, this likely reflects millennials in the public sector being more likely to have a college degree and thereby more likely to have outside options at a similar wage rate.

As noted previously, employer switching among millennials is quite common. Generally, employer-switching behavior seems driven by dissatisfaction with a job. While employer switching appears to be quite common, sector switching occurs much less often. This suggests that most of the job-switching behavior among millennials occurs within sectors.

Table 4 estimates the baseline model of sector-switching behaviors, described previously. Column 1 begins with the unconditional estimated differences across sectors of the likelihood to switch sectors. Notably, both millennials in the public and nonprofit sector are significantly more likely to switch sectors than their private-sector counterparts. Relative to workers in the private sector, workers in the public and nonprofit sectors are, respectively, 8.7 and 17.5 percentage points more likely to switch sectors. As the results in column 2 indicate, even after accounting for worker characteristics, public and nonprofit workers are significantly and substantively more likely to switch sectors. Notably, tenure at a job has the reverse effect on sector switching. Although the likelihood of leaving an employer increases with tenure in a job, the likelihood of switching sectors decreases. This suggests that the costs of switching sectors are much higher than simply switching employers. Workers are less willing to pay those costs as they specialize in a given sector.

The results in column 2 also suggest the fit between sector and our factors of interest do not play an independent role in sector switching. That is, regular volunteering does not significantly affect sector switching across workers in all sectors. Similarly, the relationship of change in pay and switching sectors is about zero. However, the effects of past volunteering and wages on sector switching might vary substantially across sectors.

Column 3 includes interactions between initial sector and measures of pay changes, regular volunteering, and dissatisfaction. As noted previously, if public- and nonprofit-sector workers systematically seek employment in a particular sector to fulfill prosocial goals through their work, we might expect those who regularly volunteered in previous years to be less likely to leave public- and nonprofit-sector work than those who do not. The interaction terms provide some support for this hypothesis. For instance, those in the nonprofit sector who regularly volunteered prior to 2008 were about 37 percentage points less likely to leave the nonprofit sector than their nonprofit peers who did not regularly volunteer, and this difference is significant. On the contrary, for public-sector workers, although the point estimate is negative, the difference is not statistically significant.

Despite the theoretical proposition that person-sector fit makes a large difference in shaping sector-switching decisions (Wright & Christensen, 2010), our results show

Table 4. LPM Estimates of Baseline Model of Switching Sectors Among Millennials.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lagged public sector	0.0877 (0.0159)***	0.0772 (0.0190)***	0.0060 (0.0425)
Lagged nonprofit sector	0.1755 (0.0635)***	0.1663 (0.0676)**	−0.1063 (0.1138)
Regular volunteering		−0.0021 (0.0080)	0.0061 (0.0072)
Tenure at job (in years)		−0.0034 (0.0009)***	−0.0032 (0.0009)***
Satisfied with job		−0.0069 (0.0064)	−0.0083 (0.0061)
Dissatisfied with job		0.0005 (0.0116)	−0.0016 (0.0108)
Positive pay change		0.0244 (0.0065)***	0.0094 (0.0057)*
Negative pay change		0.0190 (0.0052)***	0.0155 (0.0049)***
Public × Positive Pay Change			0.0332 (0.0329)
Public × Negative Pay Change			0.1361 (0.0420)***
Nonprofit × Positive Pay Change			0.3706 (0.1228)***
Nonprofit × Negative Pay Change			0.4622 (0.1460)***
Public × Satisfied			0.0180 (0.0457)
Nonprofit × Satisfied			0.1242 (0.1082)
Public × Dissatisfied			0.0484 (0.0911)
Nonprofit × Dissatisfied			−0.3884 (0.1408)***
Public × Volunteers Frequency			−0.0228 (0.0336)
Nonprofit × Volunteers Frequency			−0.3666 (0.1177)***
Respondent X	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted *R*	.04	.05	.07
Observations	4,775	4,775	4,775

Note. Heteroskedastic robust standard errors in parentheses; LPM = linear probability model; FE = fixed-effects.
**p* < .1. ***p* < .05. ****p* < .01.

dissatisfaction has a small, positive, but insignificant relationship with sector switching among public-sector workers. However, nonprofit-sector workers seem *less* affected by dissatisfaction. Among millennials in the nonprofit sector, workers dissatisfied with their jobs are less likely to switch sectors than millennials in the private sector who are dissatisfied. Relative to millennials in the for-profit sector, millennials working in nonprofits are 39 percentage points less likely to switch sectors if they are dissatisfied with their job.

Finally, pay seems to be a particularly salient predictor of sector switching in the nonprofit sector. While the results in column 2 suggests millennials overall are 2.4 percent more likely to switch sectors for higher wages, the results in column 3 suggest millennials in the nonprofit sector are 37 percentage points more likely to switch sectors for a pay increase than their peers in the for-profit sector. Meanwhile, millennials in the public sector do not seem to switch sectors for higher pay.

Millennials: Do They Stay or Do They Go?

As Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng (2015) also note in their research on changing career patterns across generation, millennials, in our sample, appear to be job hoppers; they move jobs quickly and often. About 64% of sampled millennials switched employers at least once in the 5-year span we examined. However, in general, this takes place within the sector of employment, suggesting some stability in workers' sector preferences, aligning with the previous research (e.g., Tschirhart, Reed, Freeman, & Anker, 2008). Millennials may favor a sector upon graduation and tend to switch employers within the sector rather than changing career paths entirely by switching sectors. At the surface, this is good news for attracting and retaining millennials. For public and nonprofit managers, figuring out ways to engage millennials' prosocial inclinations may be a useful retention strategy. As such, the results remain broadly consistent with the research on public service motivation (Asseburg & Homberg, 2018; Perry & Wise, 1990; Wright & Christensen, 2010); employees who are attracted to public service self-select into these sectors because they are mission driven.

However, the descriptive statistics raise some concerns about exiting the public and nonprofit sectors. Millennials in the nonprofit sector may be driven by pecuniary motivations in their decisions to switch sectors, confirming Hansen's (2014) and McGinnis Johnson and Ng's (2016) findings. Meaningful work in the nonprofit sector does not seem to offset pecuniary considerations. This deviation from theoretical expectations could be attributable to at least two possibilities. First, millennials may have deep expectations for both meaningful work and financial returns (Twenge & Foster, 2010). Alternatively, as McGinnis Johnson and Ng (2016) argue, the low pay might make it difficult for the nonprofit sector to attract and retain millennials, especially with lower wages, compared with the private sector (Handy & Katz, 1998). Consequently, exiting the nonprofit sector may be a temporary phenomenon resulting from suboptimal relative wages that could be corrected with funding availability. Future research should investigate workers' switching behaviors, perhaps by comparing between larger, well-resourced and smaller, more constrained nonprofits.

Millennials in the public sector did not seem to exit for financial considerations in our sample. Satisfaction appears to play a mixed role in switching behaviors. On one hand, satisfaction has a weaker effect on both employer and sector switches than other factors, particularly in the nonprofit sector. On the other hand, the availability of alternatives within each sector could possibly explain the lower likelihood of millennials in the public sector to switch employers within sector compared with their counterparts in the other sectors, even when they carry only tepid feelings toward their work. Employment opportunities in the public sector might be constrained due to hiring freezes, entry requirements, or limited opportunities for skill transferability, especially in periods of recession (Brown, McKeever, Dietz, Koulish, & Pollak, 2013). Another possible explanation is the perceived efficacy of switching (Withey & Cooper, 1989); efficacy concerns the belief in the possibility of change in the situation. As change in the public sector tends to be slow and incremental (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006), millennials discouraged by their environment are less likely to feel able to affect their organizations' environment due to the nature of the public sector. They simply leave the sector altogether to ensure that their dissatisfaction is substantially and immediately addressed, coupled with their belief in their ability to make a difference, engage in public service, and achieve their goals, regardless of the sector of employment (Fine, 2008; Piatak, 2015). Again, if millennials are not happy, they will likely move.

All in all, the herein results call for further attention to the dissatisfaction side of the coin in addition to extant consideration of worker satisfaction: "without the proper attention to hygiene factors, motivators may provide limited satisfaction but overall satisfaction will not be achieved" (Jamison, 2003, p. 128). Yet, it is important to note that dissatisfaction–satisfaction model can be simplistic (DeSantis & Durst, 1996; Taylor, Steel, & Simon, 2013) and has been questioned by the results of existing research (Sabharwal, 2011). Future research should model the balance between the factors and possibly consider nonlinear relationships.

Finally, we find millennials who volunteer are less likely to leave public- and nonprofit-sector work, a result that aligns with existing research on the positive relationship between volunteering and employment behavior (Ertas, 2012; Jones, 2010; Rodell, 2013). The desire to serve or make a difference drives millennials to volunteer, which appears to be common across generations (Christensen & Wright, 2011; Houston, 2005; Mann, 2006; Perry et al., 2006). Such underlying values may make millennials who volunteer feel more satisfied in the public and nonprofit sectors; they are already perceived to be "civic minded" or even "experienced" (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). In a nutshell, as existing research indicates, volunteering among millennials does not appear to be a substitute or compensation or a job but rather a sense of duty and justice or an expression of altruism and interests vested in the community (Piatak, 2015; Rotolo & Wilson, 2006). However, some caution is necessary; volunteerism among millennials should not be taken for granted as it can be conditioned on sustaining a certain standard of living (Alsop, 2008).

What do these findings mean for managers and decision-makers in any of the three sectors? First, millennials are a growing portion of the workforce; we need to understand their mobility inclinations and to see how different they are from other generations in their job behaviors; to do so, additional research on cross-generational comparisons is needed. Second, compensation is an important motive behind leaving the nonprofit sector, which is consistent with emerging research (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016). Managers should consider increased pay or other extrinsic rewards such as maternity leave, paid time off, and work from home options to keep nonprofit talent. Third, there is a need to appeal to what keeps millennials satisfied to offset the switch from the public sector: high self-esteem, profound commitment to social causes and serving others, and strong conviction in creating and inducing change (Y. Lee & Wilkins, 2011; Mesch & Rooney, 2008; Rotolo & Wilson, 2006). Managers could consider institutionalizing volunteer programs and assigning creative tasks that allow millennials more opportunities for direct service to citizens, re-connecting millennial workers with the values that brought them into public service in the first place (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010).

Conclusion

To conclude, sector still matters. Sector and individual value alignment in conjunction with changing career paradigms may lead to more job switching and less sector switching. Both dynamics carry implications for public and nonprofit management theory and practice that need to be further examined in future research. Despite the strengths of rich, nationally representative, longitudinal data, this study is limited to occupational proxies for sector, possibly resulting in conservative estimates of general relationships between job factors, sector, and switching behavior. We therefore caution readers to interpret our results within the context of sample attrition and the likely inclusion of both public- and nonprofit-sector workers in the private sector. For instance, while only about 9% of our sample begins their career in the public sector, estimates suggest around 16% of the workforce is in the public sector (Holt, 2019) and around 14% of a national cohort could be expected to enter the public sector (Holt, 2018). The issue of relying on occupational proxies is even more stark when considering nonprofit work, as our approach yields a sample in which 1% of the sample enters the nonprofit sector while estimates using directly reported sector suggests around 13% of a cohort nationally will enter the nonprofit sector (Holt, 2018). Our caution in including only occupations extensively represented in one sector yields only 50 person-years (33 individuals) observed in the nonprofit sector and 506 person-years (294 individuals) in the public sector, perhaps limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Future research should use a direct measure of sector to explore job mobility. Moreover, this current study neither claims causality or exclusivity of the reasons of job switching nor compares millennials' behaviors to those of previous cohorts of workers. Future research should also compare between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that could incentivize or deter job mobility, and empirically examine causality to determine drivers of job mobility. To do that, it is particularly important for scholars to compare millennials with previous generations, but possibly including early assessments of Generation Z, a considerable part of the workforce in 2020.

Given the persistence in public and nonprofit workers we observed among those who volunteered before the labor market, we believe that managers of public and nonprofit organizations should consider how their personnel practices influence their ability to recruit candidates who fit their organization. Indeed, prior work suggests both fit and broader economic conditions influence job- and sector-switching behavior (Choi, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2001; Piatak, 2017). Factors such as the time to review, interview, and select candidates and the criteria used in selection might lead public and nonprofit organizations to miss good candidates, particularly in good economic times where job seekers might receive competitive offers quickly. Future research should investigate personnel processes in public and nonprofit organizations that contribute to selecting and retaining millennials.

Finally, prior research suggests family milestones, such as getting married or having children, affects job decisions (T. Lee & Maurer, 1999). Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) rightfully ask whether these behaviors and practices "will change over time as millennials marry [or] have children of their own" (p. 233). This should be a focus of future research. Do the factors that affect switching behavior, both within and across sectors, change over time? Moreover, do millennials' patterns of employer and sector switching differ from previous generations in ways that should inform public and nonprofit management strategies going forward?

Appendix

Table A1. List of Industries and Occupations Aggregated Into Sector.

			2016 current population survey		
Sector		Industry or occupation	Public	Nonprofit	Private
Public	O	Public administration	100%	0%	0%
	I	Libraries and archives	79.72	12.91	7.37
	O	Educational services	Not available		
	O	Social workers	47.66	27.2	25.14
	O	Elementary and middle school teachers	80.37	8.01	11.61
	O	Secondary teachers	80.58	8.52	10.9
	O	Special education teachers	85.42	5.76	8.82
	O	Archivists, curators, and museum technicians	45.83	38.94	15.23
	O	Librarians	69.28	17.4	13.32
	O	Library technicians	76.32	14.16	9.51
	O	First-line supervisors/managers of correctional officers	100	0	0
	O	First-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives	100	0	0
	O	First-line supervisors/managers of firefighting and prevention workers	95.9	0.15	3.95

(continued)

Table A1. (continued)

Sector		Industry or occupation	2016 current population survey		
			Public	Nonprofit	Private
	O	Fire fighters	98.55	0	1.45
	O	Fire inspectors	74.04	0.64	25.32
	O	Bailiffs, correctional officers, and jailers	100	0	0
	O	Detectives and criminal investigators	93.57	0.52	5.91
	O	Police and sheriff's patrol officers	99.79	0	0.21
Nonprofit	I	Religious organizations	0	100	0
	I	Civic, social, advocacy organizations, and grantmaking and giving services	0	100	0
	I	Labor unions	0	100	0
Private	I	Finance and insurance	Not available		
	I	Banking and related activities	1.46	1.28	97.25
	I	Savings institutions, including credit unions	2.72	25.08	72.21
	I	Nondepository credit and related activities	2.39	2.5	95.11
	I	Securities, commodities, funds, trusts, and other financial investments	2.19	1.64	96.17
	I	Insurance carriers and related activities	3.34	4.26	92.4
	I	Real estate and rental and leasing	Not available		
	I	Professional and business services	Not available		
	I	Management of companies and enterprises	0.9	1.17	97.93
	I	Business support services	2.59	1.98	95.43
	I	Other administrative and other support services	2.58	2.64	94.78

Note. O = Occupation code used; I = Industry code used.

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Notes

1. For both employer- and sector-switching behaviors, we focus on the primary job reported by the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). A person might work multiple jobs simultaneously or multiple jobs over the course of a year. However, the NLSY reports a primary occupation as the job the individual currently works. Consequently, we examine year-to-year primary employer switches, not all employer switches.

2. We also estimated the primary model on all respondents with a 4-year degree or more. Although the estimates are less precise, due to the much smaller sample, the point estimates are broadly similar to our primary results. These results are available upon request.
3. Because we use occupations predominantly observed in a particular sector, nonprofit work, in particular, is underrepresented in our sample. As a result, we do not have the statistical power to identify the direction of sector switches with precision. Notably, 98% of public-sector workers who switch sectors move to an occupation in the private sector, and 86% of nonprofit workers who switch sectors move to the private sector. Thus, as defined here, there is little switching between the public and nonprofit sectors. Of course, in occupations and industries that are spread evenly across sectors, such as health care provision, there may be more sector switching than we observe here.
4. Notably, localized market conditions, such as unemployment and cost of living, might affect job mobility and switching behavior. Unfortunately, the NLSY does not include geographic indicators beyond urbanicity of the respondent's residence and Census region. Thus, the while the longitudinal nature of the data allows us to control for national shocks to employment and costs of living, more localized conditions remain partially unobserved.
5. Unfortunately, the NLSY does not provide counts of volunteering or community meetings. The NLSY provides categorical variables with categories for "never," "1-4," "5-11" and "12 or more." In addition to a categorical measure of the frequency, the NLSY asks respondent about the reason for the volunteer work, with response options of "court ordered," "required for a school or religious group," or "strictly voluntary." We use the combination of these two items to identify people who volunteered for strictly voluntary reasons in both 2005 and 2007. The results presented here are qualitatively similar when using definitions of volunteering with higher frequencies; however, the results are less precise, as fewer people in the sample volunteer at higher frequencies, leading to the interaction terms containing too few observations for precise estimates.
6. Given the binary nature of the outcomes of interest, we also estimate logistic regressions of Equation 1 and the results are available upon request. The results are generally in the same direction and qualitatively similar to the corresponding linear probability model (LPM) estimates. We prefer the LPM estimates for ease of interpretation of interaction terms.

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