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Volunteerism in the University Culture

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Volunteerism in the University Culture

by

STEPHANIE V. BLOCKER

Under the Direction of Dr. Cassandra White

ABSTRACT

This project examines how undergraduate and graduate students at a university in the Southern United States utilize and conceptualize volunteering at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, a time when volunteerism is on the rise despite a severe economic crisis. I was interested in taking an anthropological approach to explore the reasons that people volunteer as well as how their decisions about volunteering might be impacted by different aspects of their identity, including their ethnicity, gender identity, student status, and affiliation with student groups. Based on in-depth interviews and surveys conducted with five undergraduate and five graduate students, I learned about their motivations for volunteering and their perceptions about participating in volunteer activities.

INDEX WORDS: Volunteerism, University culture, Motivation, Costs and benefits, and Social capital

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STEPHANIE V. BLOCKER

A Practicum submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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2011

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May 2011

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the volunteers and organizations that provide the opportunity for volunteering to college students. Secondly, this practicum is dedicated to my fiancée whom was supportive during the process of this research project. Finally this practicum is dedicated to my mother for support of my academic career.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge everyone who participated in this study and those organizations who provided me with a positive volunteering experience. Additionally, I would like to thank the following professors for all of their help: Cassandra White, Faidra Papavasiliou, Kathryn Kozaitis, and Jennifer Patico

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In a recent article in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Debra Blum (2010) discussed how volunteerism in the United States increased dramatically between 2008 and 2009 despite the economic crisis. As she noted, the figures "defied expectations" since the "assumption [is] that when the economy goes sour, people turn inward to focus on their own circumstances." (Blum 2010: online article). Blum suggest different possible reasons for this surge, including increased sympathy for those in need during the crisis, President Obama's call to the American people for greater volunteer participation, and the idea that volunteerism can lead to employment or provide job training (Blum 2010).

College students have been an important part of this surge. The rise in volunteerism on college campuses has been a trend since September 11, according to a report by the Corporation for National and Community Service (2006), leading some to speculate that that we are seeing a new generation of more "civic-minded" students (Jayson 2006). As a graduate student with previous volunteer experience, I was particularly interested in how others understood volunteering and why others participated in volunteer activities. Through my research, I hope to contribute an anthropological perspective to the study of volunteerism and of volunteers themselves.

Personally I have volunteered since I could remember. In middle school I participated in PAWS through the Humane Society, walking and caring for dogs, and in high school, I volunteered in the library during lunch break, shelving and checking books in and out. As an undergraduate at the University of West Georgia, I volunteered through the Anthropological Society and The Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory. With the Society, I assisted with whatever project we were working on; the majority of the time it was fundraising. At the

archeology lab, I cataloged, assessed, and did other tasks related to the upkeep of collections. In addition, I participated in public outreach programs such as Archaeology Day, when we would be open to the public. We gave tours of the lab, staged a mock digs in our pits, set up games for children, and had an expert available to look at any artifacts people may have found. The purpose of the event was to show the public there is more to archaeology that meets the eye. These events were a big success in the three years that I participated in them. I got involved in the archaeology lab through my introduction to archaeology class which required that we volunteer ten hours. After my ten hours were completed, I had grown attached to the staff and loved the work. Two years later, they hired me as a student assistant.

In Theory and Praxis, a class that I took as a graduate student at Georgia State University, we learned about a form of program evaluation [SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats)], and for this class, I focused on the adult volunteer program at Grady Hospital. Once I found a program and had volunteered for a couple of weeks, the subject of volunteering as a topic for anthropological analysis had me hooked. As a volunteer, I assisted the nurses, delivered ice to patients, and provide company for patients. I enjoyed helping the patients and assisting the nurses with their daily activities. Other than helping out at the hospital, I was able to observe areas of the volunteer program in need of improvement such as a need for more training and a clear definition of the Volunteers' responsibilities. Initially, I had hoped to work with Grady's adult volunteer program to provide a free program evaluation; however, this project was not approved by the director of the volunteer program. After this dismissal, I applied to Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness; I sought a volunteer position to do a program evaluation; once again I was denied the opportunity. Hence, I turned to the main

sources of volunteers for these programs: University students. By looking at volunteerism on campus, I desired to learn about students' volunteer experiences.

By studying volunteerism, we have the opportunity to gain fascinating insight into a section of society that gives their time, money, and energy through a variety of activities ranging from fund raising to daily needs of volunteer organizations. Specifically, college students' volunteerism became the focus of my interest. I wanted to learn more about out how what volunteerism meant to them, how they became involved with volunteering, and what benefits they gained from their experiences.

A Brief History of Volunteerism in the U.S. and Abroad

"Volunteer work is a tradition in America" (p.6), according to Hardy and Cull (1973). Today, volunteers can be found in all areas of society today: health care, community organizations, prisons, the educational system, and so on. Volunteerism in the United States has both religious and civic roots, though most scholars agree that it was not a common practice on a large scale in colonial America. Still, Scokpol et al. (2000:529) have noted that while national volunteer organizations did not exist in colonial times, translocal organizations, such as the Masons, were in place prior to the American Revolution. They argue that "large voluntary associations" have "flourished in all eras of U.S. history." These volunteer organizations took the form of "[m]oral crusades and political movements; labor unions and farmers' associations; veterans' and women's groups; recreational and civic associations; and fraternal groups of many sorts . . ." (Scokpol et al. 2000:259). The 18th century "Great Awakening Movement" in New England and subsequent similar Protestant evangelical/revival movements in the U.S. were very

influential in encouraging followers to engage in volunteering and to work toward social change (Rossell 1970).

Warfare has prompted much regional (as in the Civil War) and national solidarity and mobilization in terms of volunteer efforts in the U.S. as well. In addition, presidential mandates for the American public to engage in volunteer service, and the provision of programs, such as the Peace Corps and Americorps, that allow them to serve, have been influential in involving large numbers of people to volunteer. For example, in 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law a plan that would "triple the size of the Americorps program," and he has publicly called upon the American people to volunteer (Baker 2009).

Understanding American Volunteerism Today

Musick and Wilson (2008:3) acknowledge the necessary role of volunteerism in contemporary society. In their assessment, with the influence of American individualism, the field of volunteering has experienced an increase in participation over the years. Though it may sound contradictory to say that individualism leads to "prosocial acts," Kemmelmeier et al. (2006:339) have also argued that though in individualist societies, giving and volunteering are more selective and tend to be associated with "causes that represent individualist values" such as "self-actualization" and "individual achievement", overall volunteerism is stronger in nations that are culturally focused on individualism, as opposed to being more communitarian. To attempt to further explain the individualistic culture in the U.S., Erich Fromm (1956:72) stated, "our whole culture is based on the appetite for buying, on the idea of a mutually favorable exchange." Though volunteers may not be compensated financially, they do benefit from volunteering in tangible ways. Research has shown that volunteering helps booster self-esteem for the volunteers themselves. It can also be beneficial for our careers and our physical and

mental health (Wilson and Musick 1999). Volunteers are sometimes, however, a marginalized segment of society. Musick and Wilson argue that their work is often devalued as insignificant and that if their work was more valued, a paid job position would be created for it (Musick and Wilson 2008:3). Arguably, however, there are many "volunteer" positions that are remunerated in the form of a stipend or in other material benefits. Given this, how can understand and define volunteers, what they gain from volunteering, and what they do?

Ideals and Ideas about Volunteerism

The difference between "service" and "giving" is different from the view of volunteer agencies and volunteers. Volunteer agencies use the term "service" to promote "giving"; whereas, volunteers are vessels of "giving" in the "service" model. Although, volunteers are "giving" vessels, they are providing a "service" and may use the term "service" for their "giving". The concept of volunteers as givers and agencies as service-providers does not work with volunteer agencies in which the leaders are volunteers themselves. This concept works primarily with corporate volunteer programs, which has paid staff to manage the program.

With use of "humanitarianism" and "human rights", volunteering becomes more like activism. Although the two terms seem similar, there are differences. "Humanitarianism" is closer to volunteering, which from this perceptive is giving back to the community in need. With "human rights", the concept is closer to activism, which has been linked with short-term solutions and attacks on structures (Musick and Wilson 2008:18). Activists are not as hands-on as volunteers, hence, another reason why humanitarianism is more closely linked to volunteering. Volunteering works with people. It is not focused solely on finding solutions. By understanding the difference between "humanitarianism" and "human rights", we note the difference between volunteering and activism. From this informed perspective, we can develop a

volunteerism plan that incorporates a fully informed plan to battle humanitarian areas and violations of human rights.

Definition of Volunteerism

The November 2010 issue of *US News and World Report* was titled "Giving Back: a Citizen's Guide to Public Service". Although focused primarily on political issues of volunteerism, the magazine discusses the benefits of volunteering and how to pick the best organizations at which to volunteer. At the end of the editor's note written by Brian Kelly, he states, "[W]e think we've done our part by putting this package together. Helping people make decisions is a service we've long provided. Even if we do get paid a little bit for it" (p.4). The last sentence brings up the issues of how we define volunteerism.

A definite problematic aspect of volunteerism is the various definitions, or requirements, of it. In *The Values of Volunteering*, the authors found four requirements of volunteering: "non-obligatory, carried out for the benefit of others (such as a society or an organization), unpaid, and occurs in organized context" (Dekker and Halman 2003:1). Musick and Wilson investigated the various aspects of volunteerism as a method of definition. They distinguished volunteer membership clubs with volunteering; in addition, they differentiate volunteering from caring and activism. There are four requirements of volunteering according to the net-cost definition: "action is voluntary, unrewarded, organized, and helps out strangers" (Musick and Wilson 2008:14). Net-cost, which is "total cost minus total benefits" (Meijs *et al* 2003: 20), is a method of measuring outcome of volunteer work; the measuring is verified by public perception of volunteering (Meijs *et al* 2003: 19-20). Another factor to consider is the personal context or

reference in which the volunteering action is done as well as the nature of the volunteering work, such as setting and activity (Meijs *et al* 2003: 19).

Let us take into consideration the United Nations' definition of a volunteer: it is someone for whom the actions are voluntary, who does not receive financial compensation, and who helps out others. (Musick and Wilson 2008:12). Once again, the requirements are very similar. The volunteer work should be unpaid, serve others, and be done willingly. The only aspect missing is the organizational requirement.

However, much of the literature that aims to define and provide categories to understand volunteerism are etic. They rarely take into account the perceptions of the volunteers themselves. In anthropological research, the emic understanding of what constitutes volunteerism is significant. In this study, though there were criteria for participation, which included active participation as a volunteer, participants were allowed to self-identify as volunteers and to discuss what they felt was appropriate volunteer behavior and orientation.

Global Differences in Volunteering

To further complicate the issue of defining volunteerism, there are differences in volunteering across the globe. Though my study focuses on volunteerism in the U.S., it is important to note that volunteer movements are influential in many other countries and cultures as well. Volunteerism can have different meanings and purposes in different settings, depending on who is participating and why. A 2001 *Washington Post* article (Buckley 2001) noted that 25 percent of the population of Brazil was serving in some volunteer capacity, one of the highest rates of volunteerism in the developing world; the author cites a study from the late 1990s demonstrating that at least 50 percent of the volunteers in Brazil were themselves living in

"economic desperation." In Brazil, volunteerism historically was about services provided by upper class Catholics to the poor, but with the growth of non-governmental organizations and encouragement by Ruth Cardoso, first lady to then-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, volunteerism gained participants from all segments of the population. Religion continued to be an important motivator for people across social classes in Brazil, however.

Cross-culturally, religion is a very important motivator and facilitator of volunteering and is certainly not exclusive to Christian belief systems. The Ismaili (a sect of Islam) illustrates how in some cultures and religions, volunteerism is integral to and even synonymous with religious piety. Ismailis utilize volunteerism as a method of "putting Islamic ethics in to practice in daily life" (Jamal 2003). Jamal (2003), discussing a study of Ismailis in Houston, Texas, wrote that " 'voluntarism' is an emic term among Ismailis that often glosses voluntary activities neither as obligations, nor as elective activities, but rather as something that one 'just does'—volunteering becomes a natural thing, a matter of common sense action. Unlike their Sunni counterparts, most of his Ismaili informants spoke of voluntarism not in terms of alms (zakat) or charity (sadaqah), but rather in terms of balancing the spiritual (din) and material (duniya) worlds" (online, no page number).

In one study, the four qualities that define volunteerism were similar cross-culturally to those delineated by Dekker and Halman (2003). Meijs et al. (2003) used a fifty question survey about volunteerism with participants in Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Belgium, India, Italy, United States, and Canada. The questions were altered to fit cultural norms in each country. For example, the question "would you volunteer to impress a date?" was changed to "would you volunteer to make personal connections?" in India (Meijs et al. 2003: 21). The volunteering situations that were most commonly rated highly were: a person (teenager, teacher, IBM

executive and medical doctor) volunteering at a soup kitchen and a person (adult) who volunteers as a big sister or brother (Meijs *et al* 2003: 26). The lowest-rated situations involved persons with no free will volunteering, paid staff, or tangible exchange (volunteering in order to receive concert tickets or performing community service instead of going to prison) (Meijs et al. 2003: 27). They found the two most influential factors in public perception of volunteering were free will and remuneration or the rewards to volunteers for volunteering. Hence the use of net-cost analysis offers an intriguing result; the benefits of volunteering must not be excessively explicit (as in monetary compensation). There should be a lucid perception of overbearing cost to benefits (Meijs *et al* 2003: 33).

The European Values Survey (EVS) and World Value Survey (WVS) were used in Virginia Hodgkinson's study of volunteering. The EVS has been distributed from the late 1970s; the WVS is distributed from University of Michigan from 1995-97 and 1999-2002. With the last distribution, twenty-three countries and questions on social capital were added to the survey. The surveys use a simplistic definition of volunteerism as work without pay (Hodgkinson 2003: 38). They found a higher rate of volunteering in Anglo countries. When divided into categories like social welfare, religious, and sports, the highest levels were of social welfare was found in Anglo countries. Social welfare involves the care of elderly and disabled people, childhood activities, and health care and social care. Religious-based volunteering activities and organization were high for several countries (Hong Kong, United States, Sweden, Canada, Philippines, Mexico, South Africa, Chile, Central African Republic, South Korea, and Slovakia). In sports, about ten percent or more adults in handful of countries are active volunteers. The countries are: Czech Republic, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Chile, Slovakia, and United States (Hodgkinson 2003: 42).

Social Resources Theory states "the more social capital and human capital one possesses increases the amount of volunteering one does" (Hodgkinson 2003: 45). The researcher tested four hypotheses with the social resources theory. She hypothesized that people were more likely to volunteer if they were involved with religious activity. This idea was deemed correct in all countries except Poland and Portugal, which have high levels of non-volunteers involved in religious activities (Hodgkinson 2003: 48). Her second hypothesis states that volunteers are more likely to be a member of an organization than non-volunteers; this idea was proven true as well. Third, she tests the importance of social capital in the socialization of volunteers. She found the volunteers have a wider range of socialization than non-volunteers. Fourth, she hypothesized the volunteers are more likely to discuss politics and be engaged in civic matters than non-volunteers. She found this to be true in most countries; however Hong Kong and Lavina proved to be exceptions.

Anthropology and Volunteerism

Anthropologists have written about volunteers and the concept of volunteerism in the context of applied projects, the study of NGOs, and in their own roles and identities during research or projects. However, in terms of research directly related to the experiences and motivations of volunteers themselves, there are relatively few studies that have been conducted by anthropologists, though some sociologists have employed ethnographic methods in collecting data on this topic. For example, sociologist Susan Eckstein conducted ethnographic research on volunteerism and focused on "collectivistic roots for giving" (Eckstein 2001:829) for her study of an "old immigrant working class inner-ring suburb" of Boston. She noted that the assumption that American volunteerism is about individualism, as discussed above, needs to be

deconstructed through ethnographic data. She pays particular attention to the role of collectivistic action among immigrant groups in American history and in the contemporary context and calls for an attention to transnational migration and its role in encouraging collectivistic social action.

Patrick Huff, who received his M.A. in the Department of Anthropology at Georgia State in 2007, studied volunteerism in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana, during the post Katrina period. In addition of studying volunteerism, he also participated as a volunteer in the disaster relief effort. He stated that his ethnography is one "of hope" (Huff 2007:1) due to the positive outreach of the volunteers. He also discussed the complexities of his dual roles as volunteer and ethnographer.

Harley Scherck (2008) also used an exchange model in looking at volunteering to serve the elderly among church members in Washington state. He found that the idea of exchange to be important among those he interviewed, and he suggested that volunteers in some circumstances get or expect something in return (for example, power or prestige) for their theoretically "altruistic" behavior (Schreck 2008:166). In addition, he observed how volunteers he interviewed made decisions about who to serve or to continue serving based on their assessments of who was "truly needy" (2008:167).

A recent anthropological doctoral thesis about volunteerism pertains to the anthropology of giving. The author, Tomoko Hayakawa, conducted research on volunteerism in London. She focused on gift exchange theory and how it is relevant in volunteerism. She discovered that volunteering does not fit easily into the gift exchange model; it falls into an area between gift and exchange. In addition, she broke her research down into five areas of investigation: "motivations, relationships, perception and function of money and professionalism, and

volunteering's significance for social solidarity" (Hayakawa 2009). In my research, I was particularly interested in students' motivations for volunteering and in the social capital it provided them.

Volunteerism in the University Culture

There are several studies involving college students, typically freshmen, and volunteerism. In a longitudinal study of college students, researchers gave an original survey to students during their first year (1985), a follow up survey (1989), and a second follow up survey (1994-1995). They found that the dependent variables highly influenced to rate of volunteering. Students that had volunteer experience would try to volunteer more during college; however situational conditions dictated the amount of time available to volunteer. Ultimately, they found that volunteers volunteered often during their last year of high school and throughout college; volunteers were more likely to volunteer post-graduation (Astin et al 1999).

At the University of St. Thomas, a study of volunteerism found that students were more likely to continue volunteering (if they have prior volunteering experience) with low levels of external control. The more external control causes a less strong relation between intentions and experience. This study was done with a survey (Stukas et al 1999).

At the University of Minnesota, a study was conducted to test the effect of mandatory volunteering by students through survey and interviews. The students first took a survey, after which the students were "recruited" (Stukas et al 1999:62) by telephone to be interviewed in the lab. In the interview, students were given the mandate to volunteer in an activity for thirty minutes. Half of the students got to choose their activity and the other half were required to perform a certain activity. The high external control produced significant negative results for students who "feel less inclined to volunteer of their own free will" (Stukas et al 1999:63).In

summation, students more inclined to willing volunteer are not affected negatively by mandatory volunteering.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism Movement

The volunteerism movement is worthy of investigating due to the complex nature of volunteerism in society. It has positive and negative conations. It can build self-esteem, looks good on résumés, and is helpful for entering college or obtaining a good job. Volunteering has become a requirement to be a "full citizen", which involves separating volunteers from the rest of society in order to be more competitive. Negative conations are due to the appearance of volunteerism to society. It is seen as a "hippie" or "goodie-goodie" activity and is highly gendered. There is a prevalence of females in the volunteer sector.

Literature on Volunteerism

Charlotte Lobb discusses how volunteering can be a method of exploring possible careers in her book aimed at high school juniors and seniors. She mentions other benefits such as its helpfulness in obtaining a job (Lobb 1979). Another researcher, Robert Stebbins has studied volunteerism as a type of serious leisure. The components of serious leisure are: need to preserve, finding a career, requires personal effort, a participant's unique ethos, and identification with purpose of volunteer organization (Stebbins 2004: 202-3). Many of these components are involved in the definition and requirement of volunteering (Musick and Wilson 2008).

Motivations for Volunteering

With the multiple motivations for volunteering, there are two main types: selfish reasons (to help oneself) or altruistic reasons (to help others with no expectation of personal gain). Penner and Finkelstien (1998) found through the volunteer process model that volunteers volunteered longer if they were motivated by selfish reasons (p.525). Penner and Finkelstien also tested the role identity model and found that volunteers continue volunteering to fit into the role of a volunteer. One possible reason for selfish reasons is the gain of social capital. Social capital is linked to improved health and emotional well-being along with cohesion and community engagement (Haworth and Veal 2004:227). However, social capital also has the capacity to shun marginalized groups in a community. These marginalized groups are "different"; therefore these groups are not allowed to give back in an accepted and praised way.

Why People Volunteer

The three areas of causality for the increased or decreased amount of volunteering are: economic, imagery, and encouragement. Economically, the job market is highly competitive and students are using volunteering as method of "getting a foot in the door" to get to meet the people. Volunteering is also a way to gain experience (as noted above by Lobb 1979) and build a résumé to look more attractive when one does apply for a job.

The imagery aspect of volunteerism is highly gendered; as a volunteer I interviewed for my Theory and Praxis class noted, at Grady most of the volunteers were women and only two were men. The feminine image of volunteerism could be due to the history of volunteerism and the perception that women are more "natural" volunteers, according to gender stereotypes. In the

past, it was not the expected role for women to work outside the home, though women have done such work throughout U.S. history; however, in the "traditional" role of housewives, they theoretically had more leisure time to perform volunteer work. Additionally, volunteering is seen as a caring field (Musick and Wilson 2008: 23). Women are often stereotyped as being the more nurturing and caring of the two sexes. These gender expectations may be responsible for there being more female volunteers than males in the U.S.

The third category is encouragement. There are at least two forms of encouragement: encouragement with no action and over-encouragement with action. Encouragement with no action occurs when people encourage volunteerism but when push comes to shove, they do not perform any work. An example of this is a fraternity collects money for a Habitat for Humanity build. Once they collected the money, they give it to the charity instead of helping build the house. Over-encouragement occurs when one is pushed and pushed to volunteer in the hopes that it will make you competitive for entry into college or a job. The obvious downside to the over-encouragement is that you are creating people who do not genuinely care about the cause; they are just volunteering as a means to an end. Sherry Ortner's definition of agency helps me theorize on this third category. The choice to volunteer or not is presented in a way that questions intentionality. The option to volunteer is ever present and the treatment of volunteerism has a universal nature. It is not "cool" to volunteer across the country; those students who do volunteer typically support a specific cause or organization. Through agency, students have the "power" to make a change. It is up to them to harness the power for a greater good as social actors (Ortner 2006).

Conclusion

Volunteerism is a growing, but still relatively understudied, topic in anthropology. In light of the increasing interest in volunteerism, there has been a need to define in more lucid established definition of “volunteer”. With the multiple definitions, several studies use the simplistic definition in studies of rates of volunteering among college students while attending and after graduating.

Chapter 2: Models and Theories of volunteerism

Within the social sciences, there are several models for approaching the study of volunteerism. Some of the models utilized in Sociology and Psychology include social resources theory, life-span perspective, life-course perspective, social norm model, theory of comparative advantage, integrated theory, service-learning, volunteer process model, role identity model, and other models. I will talk about how some of these models related to my project, and I will highlight how models of understanding social capital were particularly influential as I formulated my project.

Volunteer Process Model

To Omoto and Synder (2002), who delineated this model, volunteerism is a process that occurs in three stages with multiple "levels of analysis" (p. 848). The three stages (in order of occurrence) are antecedents, experiences, and consequences. The three levels of analysis are the volunteer agency, the individual volunteer, and the social system. This system could be used to predict motivations and as a method of program evaluation. They use the model in consideration with AIDS and HIV volunteerism. For my study, it was useful in terms of formulating interview and survey questions for volunteers, in terms of thinking about their experiences in terms of these different levels and processes.

Role Identity Model

The role identity model asserts that volunteers need to continue volunteering in order to fit an identity. As a result, the commitment to the volunteer agency is more solidified. Almost like an addiction, the volunteer will continue to strive to fit the "volunteer identity" in behavior and actions. Penner and Finkelstein (1998) believe that the need to fit a role is the "best predictor

of future volunteer activity" (p.526). I was interested to see if this was true for university student volunteers.

Social Norm Perspective

Norm theory is based on the idea that behaviors can be regulated by norms that ensure the welfare of a society as well as punish and reward socially acceptable behavior (Fisher and Ackerman 1998: 263).

Service-Learning

"[S]ervice-learning" is becoming a catch-all term for projects in education. The idea of service learning vs. volunteerism is important to consider when looking at university volunteers. Much like volunteering, service learning might be defined differently depending on the context, but Georgia State University, for example, defines it as "a strategy that enables an individual to gain valuable knowledge, while they engage in meaningful community service" (Georgia State University 2011). Volunteerism aligns with service-learning due to the integral nature of students in activities which are providing a service to others. Georgia State distinguishes volunteerism from service-learning, however:

> **Service learning differs from volunteering in two important ways** [bold from website]. First, the service activity purposefully engages students with diverse groups in local communities, to promote awareness of the complexity of social problems. The second part is reaching beyond helping individuals to addressing the larger social structures that produce problems such as poverty, domestic violence, illiteracy and other social ills (Georgia State University 2011).

Despite the above distinction, many volunteers can engage with the people and organizations they work with just as described in this passage. Increasingly, the service-learning model is being sought on university campuses. Terms like "civic engagement" and "service-learning" can bring prestige to universities and colleges (Levine 2007).

Social Capital

Introduction

Social capital has a variety of definitions depending on the theorist and the field of study. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's definition pertains to resources of individuals in association with their relationships with others. An American sociologist, James Coleman, deals with the use of social capital in education. Robert Putnam, an American political scientist, has brought about a revival of interest in social capital. His main contribution is the book *Bowling Alone*, in which he documents the decline of social capital in America.

Bourdieu's Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu described different types of capital, although he is particularly known for cultural capital. Social capital is an extension of cultural capital. Bourdieu defined social capital as

> the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119).

There are three essential concepts of social capital from Bourdieu's theory: relationships, forms of capital, and material base of social assets. He related capital to gambling; you gamble with multiple colors of chips; therefore there must be multiple types of capital. Similarly, there are different types of capital that one must recognize, such as cultural, social, and economic. As mentioned in the definition above, relationships and the assets that emerge from them (in the form of social networks) are the main components that constitute social capital. These relationships require hard work and through relationships an individual gains access to resources.

His theory of social capital is heavily influenced by Marxist theory. By asserting that there are different forms of capital, Bourdieu also critiqued Marx for his emphasize of kinship in social capital formulation and the "static model of social hierarchy" (Field 2008:20). For Bourdieu, however, social capital was something to which only the elite had access. He does not explore the potential effect of social capital for the lower class.

Coleman's Social Capital

Coleman's theory is intriguing as it refutes certain aspects of Bourdieu's model. Coleman researched social capital in American Ghettos as part of education attainment where he found a great demand for social capital in terms of expectations of reciprocity. His model utilizes the rational choice theory, which states that people are highly individualistic and will do whatever is necessary to reach a goal. Social capital is a method in which "bridges individual and collective" goals; social capital is also a "by-product of activities engaged in for other purposes" (Field 2008: 28). Social capital for Coleman explains how and why people cooperate with each other. He defines social capital in two ways:

a) The set of resources that are inherent in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of child or young person. These resources for children and adolescents in the development of their human capital (Coleman 1994:300)
b) The norms, the social networks, and the relations between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing up. Social capital exists within the family, but also outside the family in the community (Coleman 1990: 334).

These definitions are similar to Bourdieu's; however Coleman focuses more on the development of children compared to Bourdieu. Ironically, it was the study of education that initiated both theorists into the study of social capital.

Coleman desires to demonstrate the link between human capital (economic capital) and social capital. He does this through the study of private and public schools. In his research he focuses on the family structure as the best predicator of social capital. Given the definitions above, there are two necessary components for Coleman's social capital: "actual extent of obligations held" and "the level of trustworthiness of the social environment" (Field 2008:28, Coleman 1994:306). Although his theory is weak in some areas, it is strong in others such as the usage of social capital by the lower class.

Putnam's Social Capital

Putnam first began studying social capital in Italy, which lasted over a twenty year period. He studied the difference between the two regions of Italy (Northern and Southern), based on their levels of trust in the government. The Southern regions were more involved in community and had higher levels of governmental trust, whereas the Northern regions were more urban and had less community involvement. The heart of his argument in *Bowling Alone* is that social capital has been on the "decline" since the 1940s. Due to the Tocquevillian idea of America as a democracy based on civic service, the supposed loss of social capital equates to a loss of identity. Putnam states his message received attention because it "suggests that the Tocquevillian foundation stone of American Democracy is starting to crumble" (Fields 2008: 33).

Putnam's definition of social capital is social life features (norms, networks, and trust) that involve connection between individuals and intrinsic value in networks (Fields 2008:35,

Putnam 2000:18-19). To complicate the matter further, he mentions two types of social capital: bridging or inclusive, which brings people of different classes together, and bonding or exclusive, which reinforces exclusive identities and maintains homogeneity. For example, an all Asian country club practices bonding social capital. Comparatively, a local Boys and Girls Club brings together people from all ages, ethnic identities, and socioeconomic status. Depending on the organization, members or volunteers may be recruited using both or one type of social capital. It depends on the needs for member or volunteers and the motivations of the potential members/volunteers to help the organization. In this case, it is best to know which type of social capital would be most efficient.

Putnam states that televisions along with three other reasons are the cause of the demise of social capital. He paints a scary pessimistic view of modern American society with the four reasons of social capital demise. First, the influx of home based electronic entertainment (or simply television) is one of two major reasons people are not connecting with others. We are simply too busy watching television according to Putnam. The second major reason is generational change. As technology gets more advanced, younger generations are growing up with technology as a norm; whereas older generations remember growing up with a non-high-definition television that received only one or two channels. Youth today have flat LCD screen televisions with hundreds of channels. The third cause of declining civic engagement involves the high levels of activeness and pressures of two income families. With both parents at work, the time spent with children become precious. Although many people could volunteer with their children, many people would rather relax around the house or mall with the kids. Lastly because it takes people longer to drive in the metro areas, people will reserve energy for their own

interest such as watching television instead of coaching a children's baseball team (Field 2008:39, Putnam 2000: 203,215, 240-2).

Like most scholars, Putnam is criticized for his ideas from sociologists and other scholars. Scholars have attacked him for use of well-established voluntary clubs such as the Rotary Clubs, Masons, Order of the Eastern Star, Boy Scouts of America, Children of the American Revolution, and Daughters of the American Revolution that have definite gender roles in data collection. Another critic voiced is the circular nature of Putnam's social capital definition. Compared to Bourdieu and Coleman, it lacks a focus. The terms used in Putnam's definition are similar to Bourdieu's and Coleman's definition. Jean Cohen (1999) does not approve of how Putnam presents social capital as a way to fix all problems in communities. Misztal disapproves of how Putnam fails to acknowledge of community networks can also foster distrust in addition to trust. He presents a "romanticized image of community" (Misztal 2000: 121). Other criticisms include the overemphasizing of volunteering, ignoring political influences, and the need for more field work or data collection.

Positive and Negative Effects of Social Capital

The positive effects of social capital are more commonly discussed than the negative. Social capital creates bonds between neighbors, builds networks for communities, and strengths feelings of solidarity. It is the warm, fuzzy feeling you get when someone thanks you for helping out at the local soup kitchen or humane society. Whenever you are recognized for your good deeds, you are accruing social capital.

However, social capital has a dark side. Social capital has the capacity to be abused by the elite for their own purposes. Out of the three theorist mentioned above, Bourdieu and Coleman disagree on which group social capital is most useful to. Bourdieu believes social

capital is useful for the elite only whereas Coleman believes social capital is more useful for the lower class.

In Murray's study of Halifax, Nova Scotia, she discovers how the white political leaders abuse the social capital that Africville, a small section of town, accumulates. The social capital of a network and relationships are not used in any other method; it is solely used for political reasons. As Murray's case describes, social capital (much like other types of capital) can be abused by those in high positions of decision making.

Another misuse of social capital is as a method of exclusion. This is like Putnam's bonding or exclusive type of social capital, which reinforces exclusive identities and maintains homogeneity. This dark side of social capital is used to demean others whom wish to join groups but are not allowed due to a peculiar reason. This form of social capital is discussed in Jennings' study of inner-city neighborhoods. He asserts an example of how a public policy, welfare, is against social capital. In this case, social capital of politicians is used to exclude the use of amassed social capital by blacks and Latinos. It is ironic that social capital is used to discourage the use of social capital. How is this possible? Welfare reform discourages any form of cooperation and civic engagement in lower class communities; therefore whatever social capital amassed has no outlet or means of cashing in. If one could "cash in", the bonds of a community would be strengthen; thus a strong "social fabric of neighborhoods" creates stronger networks and more tightly-knit relationships (Jennings 2007: 95).

Summary

In conclusion, social capital crosses the lines of volunteerism and economic development. The use of social capital (as well as economic capital) in development has been widely attributed

with mix of success and failures. Volunteers are typically used in development projects such as the Peace Corps and Engineers without Borders. With a focus on the use of social capital in the development projects, volunteers are exposed to the networks and relationships of a community or group. They see how a community works without the technology and luxuries they are accustomed to and how relationships affect the actions of a group. By assisting with the project, volunteers are in a position to see the change in society that projects cause. Volunteers are also amassing social capital in the community as well in their native country. Volunteers receive social capital for volunteering for the development project. In this interconnected web of social capital, development projects, and volunteers, there is a complex interplay and exchange that requires further study to fully understand the interaction of the three areas (and people).

Chapter 3: Methods

My Project: Volunteerism in University Culture

The methods utilized in the study were in-depth interviews and survey. The research was approved by the Georgia State University Institutional Review Board. I began with a brief quantitative survey, which included basic questions related to their feelings about volunteering, and I followed up with questions on about locations where the participant had volunteered, perceived benefits of volunteering, motivations for volunteering, and perception of volunteerism on the university campus. Some of these questions were similar to the survey questions. By asking the questions a second time in the interview questions, I wanted to test the consistency of the students' first answer as well as have the students' elaborate more on their initial answer. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. Interviews were transcribed and thematically coded for analysis. Student participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identities.

Recruitment

An advertisement was posted around campus(es) throughout buildings, offices, and departments. It stated the research question, qualifications to fit the study, how to contact me through email or phone number, and optimal times to reach me. In addition to the advertisement, I asked fellow students whom I know volunteer to be interviewed as part of my study. I asked if they knew of other students who also volunteer and would be willing to participate in my study.

Ethical Concerns

The subjects of my research were given a consent form to sign before the interview began, and I made the motives of the research clear. The consent form stated the confidentially agreement as well as the research question. Their identities are protected by the use of

pseudonyms. The name of the agency or organization students participated in has been changed unless otherwise noted. When discussed in this paper, students cannot be identifiable through the information given. Students' information will not be given to parents, professors, or organization leaders. The data is kept in two secure locations, one on campus and one off campus.

Target Population

The target population of this study was undergraduate and graduate students in Southeastern Universities. Students had to be active in volunteer activities or have participated in the volunteer activities in the past. The age requirement was eighteen and older. This study does not discriminate against non-traditional students (in terms of age), for recruitment purposes.

Participants

I interviewed ten students from two Southern universities: Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology. Out of ten students, seven of them are female and all attend Georgia State University. Two of the males attended Georgia State University and one attends Georgia Institute of Technology. The participants involved five graduate students and five undergraduate students. The interviews were conducted in places where participants were comfortable. Seven interviews were conducted on Georgia State University campus. The other three were conducted in an off campus location called The Flats. Participants were found for this study through the advertisement and through personal contacts. Participants from personal contacts also recommended friends whom volunteered to me.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

The participants in my study began volunteering through different avenues and found different motivations to continue their volunteerism. Their stories tell how experiences either encourage or discourage volunteerism for college students. Three out of ten participants stated their involvement with a church influenced their decision to volunteer. Out of ten participants, six students volunteered during high school; out of the six, three of them cited church influence in their decision to volunteer. Below I provide profiles of each participant, followed by a discussion of their qualitative responses to some of the questions that were central to my study.

Maria

Maria is a twenty year old, Hispanic undergraduate student at Georgia State University. She did not volunteer in high school although she expressed the desire to. During college she found out about the volunteer program Jumpstart through an internet search. Jumpstart is led by a Georgia State employee and allows Georgia State students to help prepare pre-kindergarten kids for kindergarten. She was attracted to volunteer at Jumpstart because she enjoys working with the kids. One of the benefits of volunteering there is the experience of working with the children. "To me, it's the experience and learning to deal with children. Because I have always said I love children and now this puts it to the test. This sees if I have the patience to be around them."

Maria volunteers three times a week for three hours each time. She has volunteered at Jumpstart for almost a year. In addition to the daily activities which include reading to the children and helping them write, she also volunteers for the special events like MLK service day and holiday parties. She hopes to start a program at her high school that pairs up a college

student to a female high school student; the college student would mentor the high school student until she graduates from high school. “The foundation of it for me is that you are not a mentor of one month and you walk out of that person’s life. You are a mentor those four years in that girl’s life. You see them their freshman year and you see them walk across the stage when they graduate.”

When discussing insight that she had gained from her volunteer experience, Maria discussed how the troubles and issues in a community are evident. The problems with economic difference, parents, teachers who do not care become apparent to volunteers; it brings awareness for issues and motives her to help out even more. More importantly, the impact of volunteering has the possibility of making a big difference in someone’s life. She described how one experience when she taught a little girl how to write a lower case E “she was just so (excited). She filled her whole piece of paper with lower case E and me telling her ‘Good job’. You saw her brighten up and smile and show everybody.” Lastly, she asserted the difficult in instilling the hunger to volunteer in others for the right reasons. People should volunteer to genuinely help out others not because they are required to, according to her.

Michael

Michael is a twenty-three year old Caucasian undergraduate student at Georgia Institute of Technology. He began volunteering in high school through his family’s Masonic connections. He has volunteered at the Shrine Circus several times. Today as a college student, he volunteers with honor societies with their local community service projects. He participates in one or two projects a semester. One of the projects he was involved in showing inner city kids Georgia Tech’s campus and how to run a chemistry experiment. Another project involved painting buildings, cleaning up walkways, and other activities of that nature. He began volunteering with

the local projects as soon as he started college four years ago. At orientation, he did not hear much about volunteering; they did not dedication a session to community outreach or volunteerism. He heard about volunteering through emails sent by clubs and organizations. The emails allowed him to pick and choose which opportunities he wanted to pursue. Motivation for Michael is a mixture of altruistic and non-altruistic. He is required to volunteer for the organizations he is a member of. Also he likes giving back to others; it provides him with a feeling of satisfaction to be able to give back to others. He stated the volunteering felt different when it was required. "It does not feel as good when you have to do it verses when you just want to do it." If one thinks of a common stereotype of college students, one is that if you advertise 'Free Food' you will attract hungry students. The same idea is applied to volunteers; the benefits Michael has received are similar: free food and t-shirts.

Martha

Martha is a twenty-three year old Caucasian graduate student at Georgia State University. She was an avid volunteer during her undergraduate studies at a private university in North Carolina. At that university, she became involved with the community outreach club called University Community Assistance Network (UCAN). She and her roommate learned about the club by chance during the first week of her freshman year. UCAN had several branches of outreach: Habit for Humanity, nursing homes, Angelic Riders, and others. During her sophomore year, she and her friends became the leaders of UCAN and decided to head up different branches. Martha was in charge of Angelic Riders which occurred at Mephibosheth Farms. The program provides therapeutic horseback riding for children with disabilities, physical and mental. She helped children with disabilities ranging from the autistic spectrum to learning disabilities to Cerebral Palsy and Muscular Dystrophy. The farm is privately owned and funded.

In addition to Angelic Riders, she participated in the clean-up of Katrina in Gulf Port, Mississippi. She also worked on several Habitat for Humanity projects and hunger for homeless events. She spent the remaining three years with UCAN as one of the leaders. She volunteered at least once a week for one or two hours. Her motivation for volunteering is to self-giving; "You are helping people out but in a way you are growing as a person inside." She had the unique experience of being a volunteer leader and a volunteer.

Andrea

Andrea is a twenty-nine year old Hispanic graduate student at Georgia State University. She volunteers formally at the High Museum and informally at conferences hosted by academic departments. At the High Museum she is a volunteer docent; as a docent she gives tours to the public and attends a monthly educational meeting for docents. The High Museum's goals are to bring art to the public and engage more patrons in museum activities. When she volunteers at conferences, she helps out at the registration table. Her motivation for volunteering pertains to doing activities related to her personal interests. The benefits the High gives to its volunteers involves free admission to the museum; however volunteers are required to pay for a membership to be a docent. Considering the requirement, they receive all the benefits of a member plus some extra such as more advanced knowledge of exhibits and private lectures with curators and special visitors. As docents they receive inside scoops and personal attention for museum staff. Andrea like Marta has the unique experience of being a volunteer coordinator and a volunteer. At a previous job, she managed volunteers, whom gave tours of the campus. The volunteers received points for every tour they gave and received a gift at the end of the year.

Anna

Anna is a twenty-three year old Caucasian graduate student at Georgia State University. Unlike other participants in my study, Anna is married; all of the other participants are single. She volunteered during her undergraduate studies at the Blue Grass Rape Crisis Center, which is located in Lexington, Kentucky. She began volunteering at the organization because it matched her interest in women's issues. As a women's study minor and anthropology major, she was interested in domestic violence. At the Blue Grass Rape Crisis Center, she counseled people on the telephone and face to face. This involved answering phones, driving to the hospital, and counseling training. She heard about it through her advisor when she was talking about volunteer opportunities. She volunteered at the organization for two years with about twenty hours of volunteer service a month. An interesting aspect she discussed was how volunteers should pick an organization because they like the cause. When volunteers randomly choose a place to volunteer, their experience is not as fulfilling as when the cause (and goals) of the organization are close to their heart. The benefits she received from the Crisis Center involved food during training sessions.

Jimmy

Jimmy is a twenty-seven Caucasian graduate student at Georgia State University. Like the other graduate students, he volunteered during his undergraduate studies but not during graduate school. The organization he chose to volunteer at is the Southern Museum in Kennesaw, Georgia. The Southern Museum specializes in the history of Kennesaw in relation to the civil war and its locomotive background. He volunteered at the Museum once a week for almost a year. He heard about the museum his freshman year through other students whom volunteered and interned at the museum. His reason for volunteering pertained to getting

experience with his major. Also he asserted that volunteering appears attractive on C.V.s. When asked what the benefits he received, he stated that there were none; however, by volunteering, his experience enabled him to make a career decision.

Marzin

Marzin is a twenty-three year old Caucasian undergraduate student at Georgia State University. He volunteered through his church's youth group on mission trips throughout high school and college for about five years. The mission trips he has participated in involve traveling to Memphis, TN, Savannah, GA and Honduras. During the mission trips, volunteers would build houses or structures for people in need of homes. While working on the projects, he remembers the awkward interactions between volunteers and the people that are being helped. His reasons for volunteering are vastly different from other. He asserts that he volunteered for "selfish reasons or forced to at a young age." Now that he is older, he hopes to find an organization that he feels comfortable supporting and give his time assisting the organization. However, he has his hands full between work and school; he thinks maybe there is a chance to make time for volunteering but he has not dedicated any service yet. His father was the leader of the youth church group and highly encouraged Marzin to participate in mission trips. Because of this encouragement, Marzin treated the mission trip as if they were vacations that included some manual labor. He told me about his first experience in Honduras. He describes it as terrible. The group was making a concrete house for this traveling minister. However from his point of view, the volunteers got in the way of the trained workers. In addition, the workers and volunteers could not communicate with each other due to lack of common language. He felt that the trip was useless and would have been more productive if they had donated the money. "So we basically wasted a lot time going through but the way that people on the trip view it as they are

really into this when they get together it is just this big masturbation session where is it's just like 'ohhh look what we are doing. Did you see their faces' so what like we are here for a week and then we are going to left and they are still going to poor and we just did something unnecessary."

Zoso

Zoso is a twenty-one year old Middle Eastern undergraduate at Georgia State University. Her sister introduced her to volunteerism while Zoso was in middle school. Zoso's sister volunteered through several Georgia Tech organizations and would bring Zoso along with her on some events. Throughout high school, she volunteered at the Boys and Girls club for three years. As a Georgia State student, Zoso has volunteered with Trees Atlanta and Habitat for Humanity. She is attracted to these organizations because of the opportunities it provides volunteers and the service it provides for others. Although, she supports these organizations she sees issues with them as well. For example, with the Boys and Girls Club, the annual fee of fifty dollars may not be expensive; however, the parents may have issues with transportation and the child may not be able to attend. She admires Habitat for Humanity because it was started by Jimmy Carter and is very accessible; however it is also glorified. Zoso has planted trees, build houses, and other activities through her volunteerism. She volunteers a couple of times a month. She volunteers to be part of something bigger than herself. She enjoys provide an opportunity to people who would not have it without volunteers. When asked if her background influcened her to volunteer, she agreed that her sister's volunteerism demonstrated to her how important volunteering is. Zoso also asserted that her major, anthropology, influenced her to volunteer as a way to gain hands on experience.

Christy

Christy is a twenty-four year old Caucasian graduate student at Georgia State University. She began her volunteering at a speech center where she worked with deaf children and at Grady Hospital in the infectious diseases unit. As a graduate student, she has an impressive variety of community service activities that she does through her neighborhood and her church. From tutoring to pancake breakfasts, she also works with other non-religious affiliated organizations that help the homeless. Her main motivation is her faith. "Also I love my neighborhood. So I do all my volunteering in my neighborhood or close by geographically. I try to locate myself there and to volunteer with programs and services that are in need with what people are doing in my neighborhood. So I think I am motivated by wanting to see change there but I am also motivated by like being mindful to what I think God wants me to do."

In addition to her faith, she has a strong desire to build relationships with her neighbors. She wants to get to know them better and help them whenever they need it. When she was young, she was involved in Girl Scouts. Although she does not attribute learning about volunteerism through Girl Scouts, another student from Georgia State University does. One of the featured stories on the Georgia State University website in April 2011 was about student Jasmine Frink, who believes that Girls Scouts instilled in her the desire to help others in whatever method possible (Seupersad 2011). Christy mainly learned about volunteerism through church. When she lived in Germany, a youth pastor took her to a nursing home to volunteer. After sitting an elderly woman with dementia, she realized there were multiple areas and groups that need help. It is not just the young children and homeless; volunteering can include other age groups and issues. Christy has been volunteering in her community for three years. Unlike the other participants in my study, Christy was uncomfortable with the term "volunteering". She believes that the term is glorified and feels that some people "volunteer" to make themselves feel

better. She advocates for volunteers to be engaged in service for an extended period of time. The longer a person volunteers at a location the stronger the relationship between the people receiving the service and the volunteer is. When someone is volunteering with no genuine desire to help others, it is a waste of time for the volunteer and the people who train them. It also harms the people receiving the service. She would like to see more people volunteer with genuine desire to assist those in need.

Salley

Salley is a twenty year old African-American undergraduate student at Georgia State University. She volunteered during high school through several clubs. As a college student, she volunteers with Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM), Office of Civil Engagement (through Spotlight), and Office of African American Association (OAAA). She was attracted to these organizations because they provide her with an opportunity to network with a diverse group of people. She had participated in ministering to the homeless and assisting with programs hosted by the organizations such as Love Jones which was hosted by Spotlight. She has volunteered for almost three years. Her motivation to volunteer stems from her desire to give back. When her father died, people helped out her and her family; although she cannot help the people that help her, she wants to help others get through their rough times. Like Christy, Salley's faith influences her decision to volunteer. Salley believes she should do as much as she can to help her neighborhoods and to follow the golden rule. In addition, she wants to help children who are bullied by listening to them and helping them however possible. She was bullied as child and wants to be there to help other bullied children. She believes that by volunteering she will become more like her extroverted self instead of her currently introverted self. Much like Georgia Tech, Georgia State does not dedicate a session or meeting for community service or

volunteering. Salley heard about organizations that promote volunteerism through conversation with her Incept tour guide.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Volunteering

The participants in my study spoke of various things when I asked about the positive and negative aspects of volunteering. One theme is how required volunteering may cause people to volunteer when their heart is not in it. In response to my survey question about whether volunteering should be a required part of college courses, the majority agreed (five "agreed",; one "strongly agreed", one had "no opinion," one "disagreed", and two participants, both male, "strongly disagreed." Maria enjoys the opportunity volunteering allows for her to work with little kids. However she does not like to see other students volunteer when they are not doing it for the right reason. The right reason, according to her, is to be passionate about the cause or people you are helping; your heart must be invested. The few people that she sees, who are not invested with their heart, volunteer to boost a resume.

Michael and Martha found the pleasure of helping others in need of assistance as a positive aspect. They felt as if volunteering helped them grow as people. Through his volunteer experience, he has learned that not everything is nice; the exposure of issues and hidden problems opened his eyes. Martha stated "apathy was the biggest problem." She found it difficult to receive positive recognition for the university. Salley and Andrea addressed one the major issues with volunteer programs: disorganization. Sometimes volunteer coordinators did not inform volunteers of events ahead of time; by not providing volunteers advance notification, volunteers are not able to clear their schedules at the last minute and therefore not able to give their time and service. Andrea has a unique perception with her experience as a volunteer

coordinator at her previous employer. She understands the difficulties that arise when dealing with volunteers. Andrea and Anna emphasize that you volunteer for something you a passionate about then you will gain knowledge and experience from volunteering. Jimmy has a similar experience with the Southern Museum; he was able to gain knowledge of how museum work. However with Anna, she had to deal with depressing topics such as rape; since she was trained as a counselor, she was able to handle situations. Marzin was discouraged with his volunteering experience on the mission trips. He felt like the trip was not really creating change. The trips seemed misguided to him. For Zoso and Salley, they enjoy how volunteering builds character. However, the volunteer program might have areas to improve upon such as ensuring transportation for kids. Christy enjoys how volunteering allows her to learn more about other people; however, depending on your schedule, volunteering can be a time drain. She stated "I feel like I am volunteering and not living my life and I hate that."

University and Volunteerism: Balancing Act and Perception

Our everyday lives are a balancing act between work, school, family, and other activities. I was surprised by the number of people who balanced school and volunteering with ease. Michael and Marzin volunteer on the weekends or during school breaks such as spring break; other participants, Salley, Martha, Jimmy and Anna put school first but have little difficult scheduling when they volunteer. The organizations they were involved in flexible which helped them out tremendously. Although the High Museum is flexible, Andrea still has difficulty balancing school, volunteering, work, and other activities. With Maria, she begins three days out of the week by volunteering before her classes start. She wakes up early to volunteer and gets home late. Another factor to consider when balancing school and volunteer is the difficulty of courses; Zoso volunteers less because she needs to devote more time to intense courses. Out of

all my participants, Christy had the most difficult time balancing school and volunteering. She had to learn boundaries, which were tested when she lost a loved one in a tragic accident. After the accident, she stopped volunteering for a period, during which support from the community helped her get on her feet again. The key to balancing your time, according to her, is to learn your boundaries. Know how much you can give without giving too much of yourself.

The perception of volunteering on university campuses is another aspect I was intrigued by. There were mixed responses about whether participants thought volunteerism had a strong presence on campus (six agreed and four disagreed). When asked if they see many opportunities to volunteer on campus, half of participants agreed; four strongly agreed and one had no opinion. When asked if they would like to see an increase in volunteering on campus, the majority was spilt between strongly agree and agree with four each; two participants had no opinion. Salley and Maria agree that volunteerism is promoted on campus but not to the capacity that it could be. Maria asserted "I think volunteering is encouraged but not a 100%. I think it is something people talk about and they get excited about. Their heart is not in it." Her thoughts are similar to other participants' responses. Michael, Martha, Anna, and Jimmy think that it depends on the group of people; some people are more willingly to give their free time and energy toward a cause. Other people need to be convinced that volunteerism is not a waste of time. Those people are told "if you volunteer you can boost your resume". Marzin and Zoso believe that volunteerism is perceived as popular these days but with hesitation on how many more people actually volunteer. Just because you hear and talk about it, does not necessarily mean you are volunteering. Christy agrees with Marzin and Zoso but emphasizes that volunteers should find a program that they will stay with. She worries that short term volunteering harms organizations. Andrea firmly asserts that volunteerism is perceived as unpopular on campus. She said "I just

don't see that kind of spirit in students these days. I think it is rare. I think people spent a lot of time kind of holed in by themselves on the computer or whatever. I think we have gotten to the point where people are more likely to donate money than they are time."

Duration: Survey Data and Steady Volunteerism versus Occasional Volunteerism

There was a tie with four each between participants who volunteered none (as in they volunteered in the past but not currently) and participants whom volunteer once or twice a month. There was one participant who volunteers two-three times a week and one who volunteers 4-5 times a week. When asked how often they wished they could volunteer, the majority of participants would like to volunteer once or twice a month. Three volunteers would like to volunteer once a week and one would like to volunteer two-three times a week. Last by not least, two participants would like to volunteer four-five times a week. It is paramount to note that several of the graduate student formally volunteered as undergraduates and do not have the leisure time to volunteer presently. Out of the five graduate students interviewed, only two are active volunteers. In fact, for one of them her volunteerism spurred her desire to enter graduate school. I broke down the volunteers into two categories: steady volunteers and occasional volunteers. Steady volunteers volunteer at least once a month. Occasional volunteers volunteer once or twice a semester. Surprisingly, considering how often volunteers presently or formerly gave their time, eight out of the ten are steady volunteers. The two occasional volunteers are Michael and Marzin. As stated above, they volunteer once or twice a semester during breaks or weekends. They are not involved in an organization with the main goal of volunteerism such as Trees Atlanta or Boys and Girls Club.

Social Capital: Participants' Perceptions

I was surprised by how participants in my study reacted to the concept of social capital. One common benefit of volunteering is how it can improve a resumé. As high school students, we are told to volunteer and participate in after-school activities to increase the likelihood of being accepted into a university. As an undergraduate student, you are told to volunteer to increase your chances of being accepted into graduate school. It would seem acceptable to be individualistic in this sense. However, many of the participants disparaged this type of overt individualism. They found it acceptable to be individualistic when you and the people you are helping benefit from volunteering. Maria asserts, "It's frustrating seeing people who are doing it and they are not doing it for the right reasons. They are just there to be there and you can tell they not motivated and their heart is not in it." The right reason is subjective of course. When people are required to volunteer for clubs or groups, Michael says "Requirement (volunteering) does not feel the same as (non-required volunteering). It does not feel as good when you have to do it verses when you just want to do it." Whether it is required or not, volunteers have the choice to include their service on their resumés. If they include it like Martha did, after a couple of years, the volunteers' resume will look very good as a benefit of service. The sentiment that "volunteering helps me and others" was the most commonly cited reason for volunteering by participants in my study.

When discussing social capital, one must discuss networks and social class of volunteers. Networks consist of people with the same or similar interests. Unlike any other volunteers in my study, Michael has volunteered through Masonic organizations like the Shrine Club. His family

is heavily involved in Masonic organizations such as Rainbow and Eastern Star. Through volunteering with these organizations, he has seen the connections he can make with others. He hopes that in the future he will have the opportunity to join the Masons. Jimmy, Andrea, and Anna volunteered in different organizations all which matched their interest and helped them provide a service for an organization. As a benefit of the experience, Jimmy chose a career path; Andrea participates with a museum; and Anna was able to help other women. However, there is another additional benefit to social capital, it enables you to meet with other people that have similar interest to your own and make contacts; further enabling you to reach your goals. Michael is a member of several honor societies; as a member of these organizations he is a more attractive candidate for jobs. Lastly, Christy uses her volunteerism around her community to build relationships with her neighbors and to improve the community for everyone. Because of the relationships she built, when her brother died, the love she typically spend pouring out on her community was poured back into her. She received letters from children she helped; elderly women would call her and tell her how much she mattered to them. They wanted to be there to support her in her time of need. Similarly, Salley was also on the receiving end of such support; because of this support, she desires to give back as much as she can to those in need. Martha stated "It's (volunteering is) not all altruistic and it's not all selfish... I think it depends a lot on class. You know a lot of people I volunteered with come from middle class background. You know it's almost like a guilt trip like you feel like you have to do this sometimes because you have been given so much. You know you have these kind of abilities to volunteer."

Faith (Based) Organizations or Lack of Faith (Based) Organizations in Study

About half of my participants have participated in religious or religious-based organizations' volunteer events such as mission trips. Although four participants identified with a religion, some volunteers participated in religious organizations despite non-religious beliefs. Martha volunteered at Mephibosheth Farms Angelic Riders for four years. The program began in 2002 when the owner felt God tell him to use his farm land to teach disabled children how to ride horses (Mephibosheth Farms Angelic Riders, Inc. 2011). In addition to Angelic Riders, Martha also participated in a mission trip to Katrina. Interestingly, before she began volunteering in college, she considered volunteering something "cool that church kids did and had nothing better to do or rich kids cause they hate themselves and had to do something." She enjoyed her experience with the mission trip; however she had to separate the goodness of volunteer from Christian charity. Salley and Christy volunteer through their church. Salley lacks transportation and finds it difficult to volunteer as much as she would like; she tries to follow the golden rule and live according to how God says to. However, she feels guilty when she runs away from the homeless because she distrusts them. Christy is motivated to volunteer by her faith. She tries to help out her neighborhood in the way that she believes God wants her too. She asserts "I guess then my only strong experience would be through like the church I go to in Atlanta. But I wouldn't even say that they promote volunteerism but more like loving the city. Like there is Lazarus and they do; I done some stuff with that organization. It is a non-profit. It does stuff for homeless ministry, and they do a health day, and I have helped out with that in the past like doing pedicures for the homeless 'cause footcare is really important especially if you are on the street. I didn't even realize that until I started doing that. Yeah I kind of shy away from the term "volunteerism" in the first place. It just sounds like I don't really, like I wouldn't be attracted to volunteer as much as I would be lifestyle of wanting to be involved."

She perceives her faith as a type of lifestyle and incorporates volunteerism (or community service) as part of the lifestyle. It does not matter to her if the organization is religious based or not. If it concurs with the lifestyle and is a need of her community she will participate in the organization's activities. She states, "well, I definitely think the faith component for me keeps me going. If that wasn't there I don't think I would probably do it. These organization are not all faith-based, most of them are not even faith based. For me that's an internal motivator for me. You know I just want to build a relationship with my neighbors. So it is an opportunity to service them. It is an opportunity to get to know them better. And I think that really motivates me in the moment. And I just think about its not like I am struggle to do that; it is like I wouldn't do it any other way. I wouldn't live my life any different." Her first eye opening experience of volunteering through her faith occurred in Germany when the pastor took her to sit with an elderly woman suffering from dementia.

Marzin had a vastly different experience with mission trips. He told me about his first mission trip to Honduras. "It was terrible. The first year we go and we are making a concrete house for this minister who travels. (He was) a circuit, Methodist minister. He has a circuit and he goes from church to church. So we help make this concrete house that we were half of these gringos or whatever and half this bad ass work crew of people who know what the fuck they are doing. And so we got in their way; we didn't speak Spanish; (we) couldn't help them very much. We could've sent money to have them do in like two days for less money. So we basically wasted a lot time going through but the way that people on the trip view it as they are really into this when they get together it is just this big masturbation session where is it's just like 'ohhh look what we are doing. Did you see their faces?,' so what like we are here for a week and then we are going to left and they are still going to poor and we just did something unnecessary. So, I

felt like its usefulness was greatly overstated by the people on it." His experience demonstrates some of the logistical issues that occur with volunteer projects as well as a critique of other volunteers' perceptions of their "good deeds" associated with volunteerism.

Orientations: Lack of Mentioning Volunteerism

When is the first chance university students learn about volunteer opportunities? At orientation, of course. Ironically, few of my participants remember hearing about volunteerism during orientation. There was no section dedicated to describing the opportunities or where to go if one was interested. For Michael, he first heard about volunteering opportunities through emails his freshman year. Martha never received an email about volunteering opportunities. At her orientation, they focused on sports and Greek life. She found out about a community service program by chance her freshman year. Ironically, volunteerism is part of the mission statement of her undergraduate private college. She said, "And as well as being a private university, you don't have a lot of support because they would much rather focus on sports that's the main income. That is focus on their fraternities and sororities which got a lot more support and funding and recognition. So you're combating a culture, a school culture focused on money and not exactly volunteerism even though it is in the school mission statement. Volunteerism is in the mission statement. But it is just something nice to look at and to have on a piece of paper and not to implement in the school culture". Salley remembers her tour guide mentioning volunteer opportunities briefly during conversation at her orientation. Orientation is an excellent opportunity to present students with volunteer organizations and opportunities. I understand that colleges have a lot of information to share with students; however if the university includes it on the mission statement, they should honor it by giving more recognition during orientation.

Origin of Volunteerism: Instilling Hunger to Volunteer in Students

Where and when do students learn about volunteerism? From school? Parents? One theme a participant mentioned was how important family was to developing a strong desire to volunteer. Zoso's sister introduced her to volunteerism and ever since Zoso's life has changed; she understand how volunteering helps one's character develop. Studies have shown that familial influence (by volunteering with parents or other means) increase volunteering in children. (for example, Janoski and Wilson 1995).

Let us go back to the first step of volunteering: finding an organization. Volunteers should try to find an organization that matches an interest or one that is worthy of giving to. In addition, the volunteer agency should use volunteers to their full capacity. Through volunteering at Grady, I felt that volunteers were not matched up with specific units as well as they could be; also, volunteers were not used to the full capacity possibly due to legal issues as well as ethical issues. One participant in this study (Christy) said she advises other volunteers to choose an organization that she or he will work with for a long term; she believes that short-term volunteerism hurts organizations. Christy asserted, "I just don't know how much of an impact it is having on those places. You know because those places have to train them and you know it costs money to train them. And if these people don't really have a heart change to want to serve it is hard for me to think it is really going to help those organizations."

The giving spirit appears popular, but one participant questioned this in considering her fellow college students. Andrea stated "I just don't see that kind of spirit in students these days. I think it is rare. I think people spent a lot of time kind of holed in by themselves on the computer

or whatever. I think we have gotten to the point where people are more likely to donate money than they are time if they are likely to do either." Lastly, how do we instill the hunger to volunteer in students whom were not introduced to it by family members or through school experience? Clubs and other organizations such as fraternities and sororities are required to do community service. Members of these organizations may not particularly care about what they are doing when they volunteer; however, Maria believes that volunteers need to be consciousness of how their volunteerism is affecting others. Picking up trash may not seem like a big deal but it is still an important form of service than benefits other people and the environment.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Findings and Expectations

My study involved five men and five women, five undergraduates and five graduates. The participants attend two Southern Universities: Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology. They were all self-described middle class and of mixed ethnic identities, including White, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and African-American. Though this was not a representative sample of student volunteers at Southern Universities, I felt I was able to gain some interesting perspectives on volunteerism from the volunteers themselves through survey and in-depth interviews. My study analyzed how volunteerism works as a morale of American culture. There is no established method of volunteering for students; it can be with children or the elderly as well as with fellow students at a tailgating party. By contextualizing the activities of the participants, I gained a better understanding of how volunteerism works in American culture and developing a more accurate definition of volunteer.

I expected that I would hear more selfish reasons for volunteering. However, this was not the case. In fact, many participants disparaged those who volunteer for purely selfish reasons. Still, several did reap benefits in terms of personal satisfaction with the experience, social capital in terms of connections made, and new skills. Overall, I found that most of the participants were able to be reflexive about their volunteer experiences and were active in terms of analyzing (and sometimes critiquing or criticizing) the motives of other participants and of the organizations with which they worked. I was also surprised to learn that students did not learn about volunteer

opportunities at the orientations of their universities; if universities want their students to be more engaged, orientation could be an important place for this information to be disseminated.

Future Applications

This study could be done on a larger scale with more participants and with other universities. It would be interesting to see if there is a difference between private and public universities. It provides insight to how volunteerism impacts students' lives and how volunteerism can be incorporated into the classroom with better ease. My study can help universities booster the knowledge factor on their students' service to the community. The information provided can assist in the formation of a brochure or flyer which could be passed out at orientation to introduce students to the opportunities earlier.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Survey Questions

The survey is the first step of the interview.

Do you think volunteerism has a strong presence in University culture? one (very weak) to five (very strongly)

Do you see many opportunities to volunteer on campus? One (very few) to five (very many). There is an opportunity for a probing question such as what organization or office) is telling students about the volunteer opportunities.

Would you like to see an increase in volunteering on campus? One (not favorable) to five (very favorable)

How favorably do you see required volunteering in college courses? One (not favorable) to five (very favorable)

How often do you volunteer? One (none) to five (4-5 times a week). I will ask a probing question (when you volunteer, how long do you volunteer?) in which they will provide a number of hours.

How often do you wish you could volunteer? The scale of this question is the same as question five.

Interview Questions

Once the survey questions are completed, I will ask students the following questions:

Are you an undergraduate or graduate student?

What are your age, racial identity/ethnicity, marital status, and gender?

When did you first hear about volunteering on campus?

Where do you volunteer? What are the goals of the organization with which you volunteer?

Describe the volunteer activities in which you have participated.

What are some of the positive aspects of volunteering for you? Negative aspects?

How often do you volunteer?

How long have you volunteered at (insert location)?

How do you balance volunteering and school?

Do you think volunteering is unpopular or popular these days? Why?

Why do you volunteer?

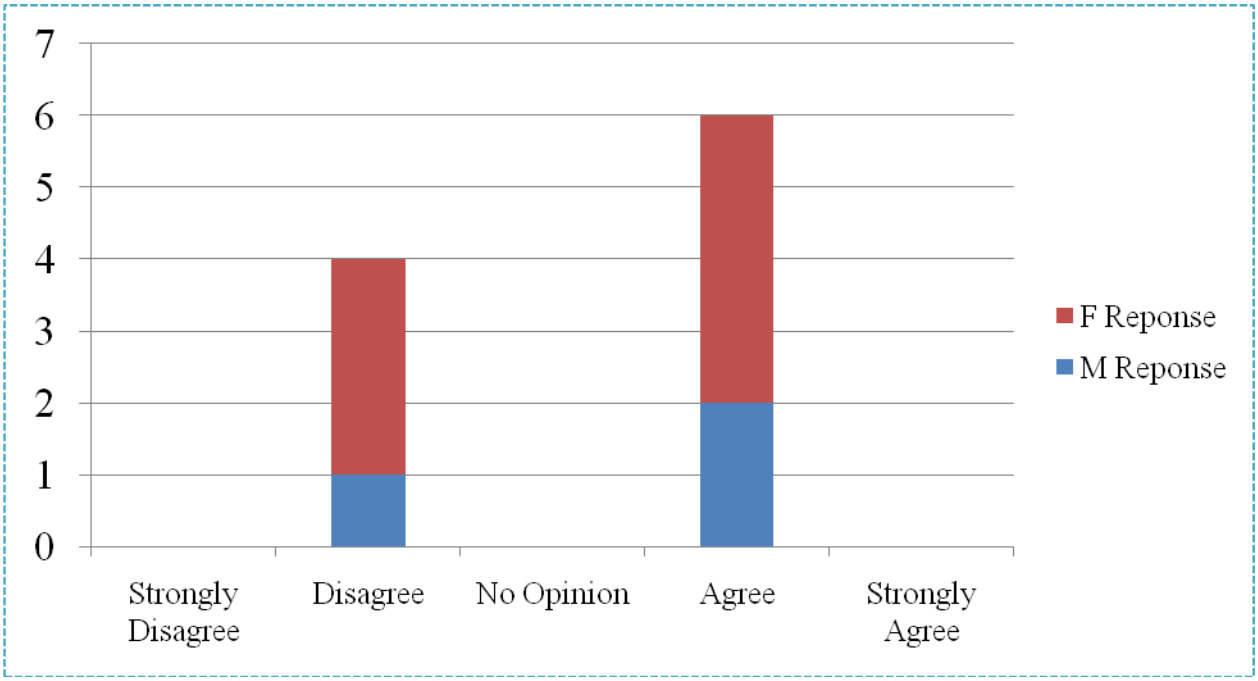
Did you volunteer in high school?

Do you enjoy volunteer at (insert location)?

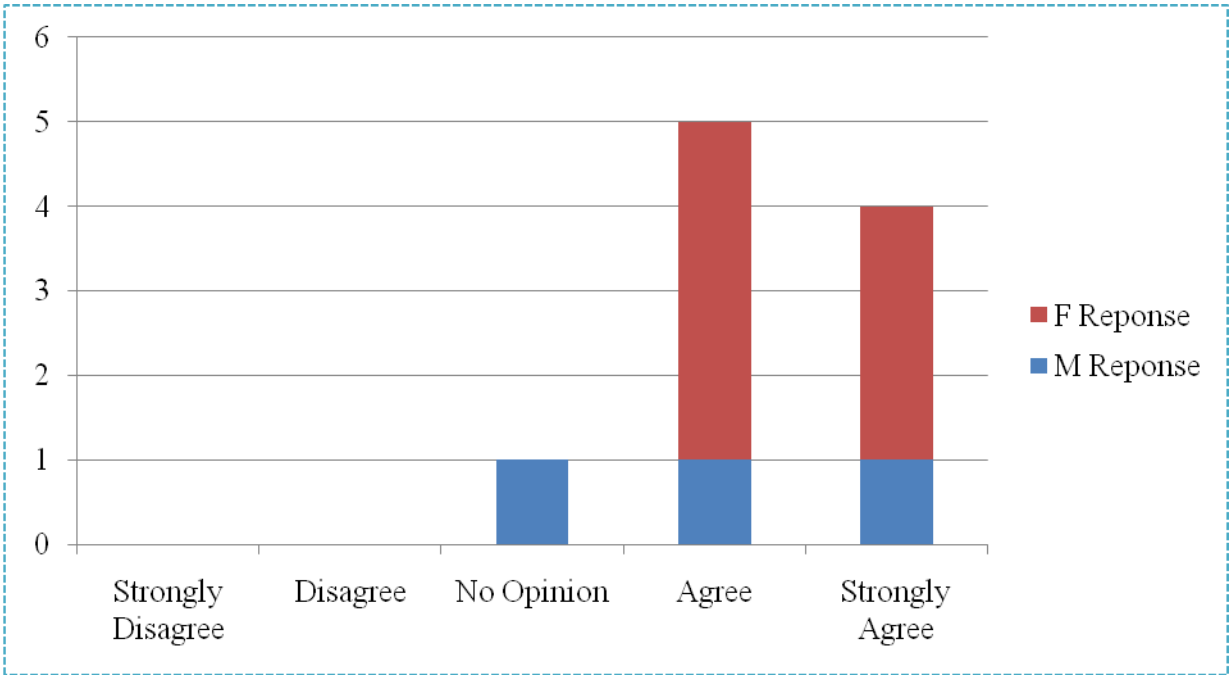
What benefits are you receiving from (insert location of volunteering)?

APPENDIX B: Survey Results

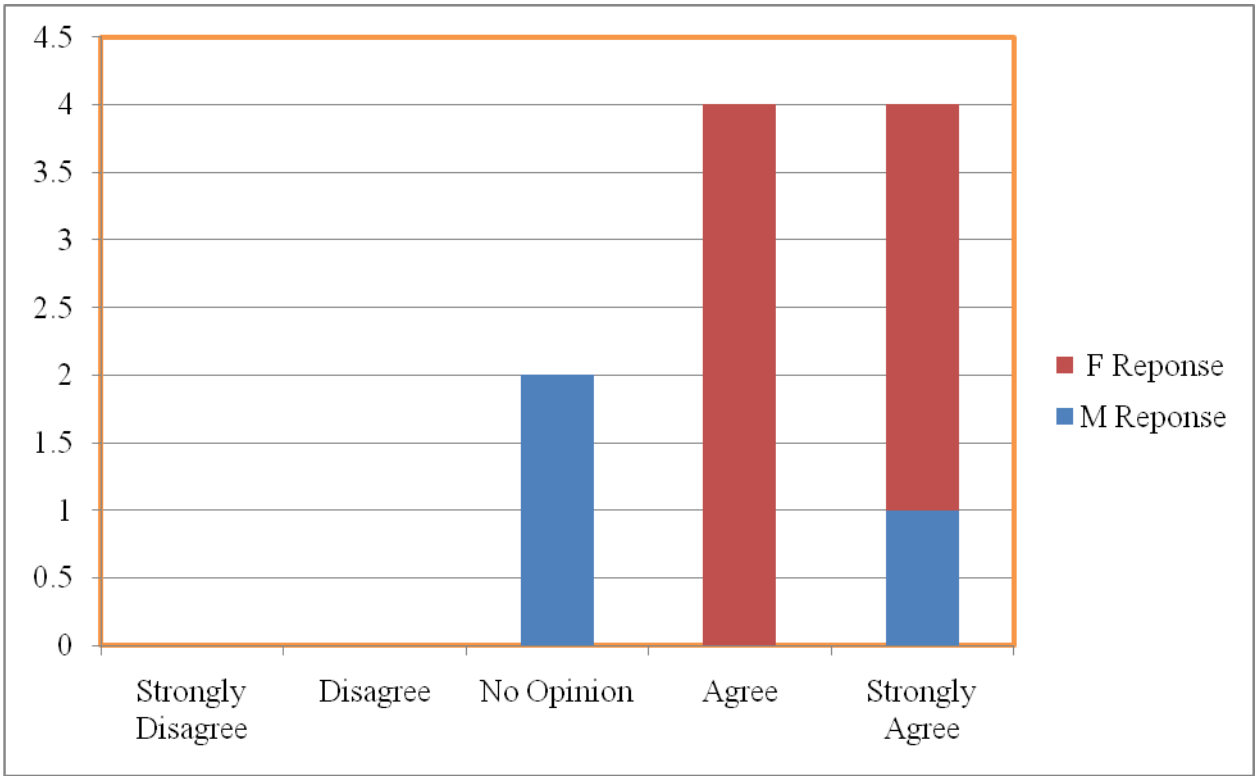
Question #1:Does Volunteerism has a strong presence in University Culture?



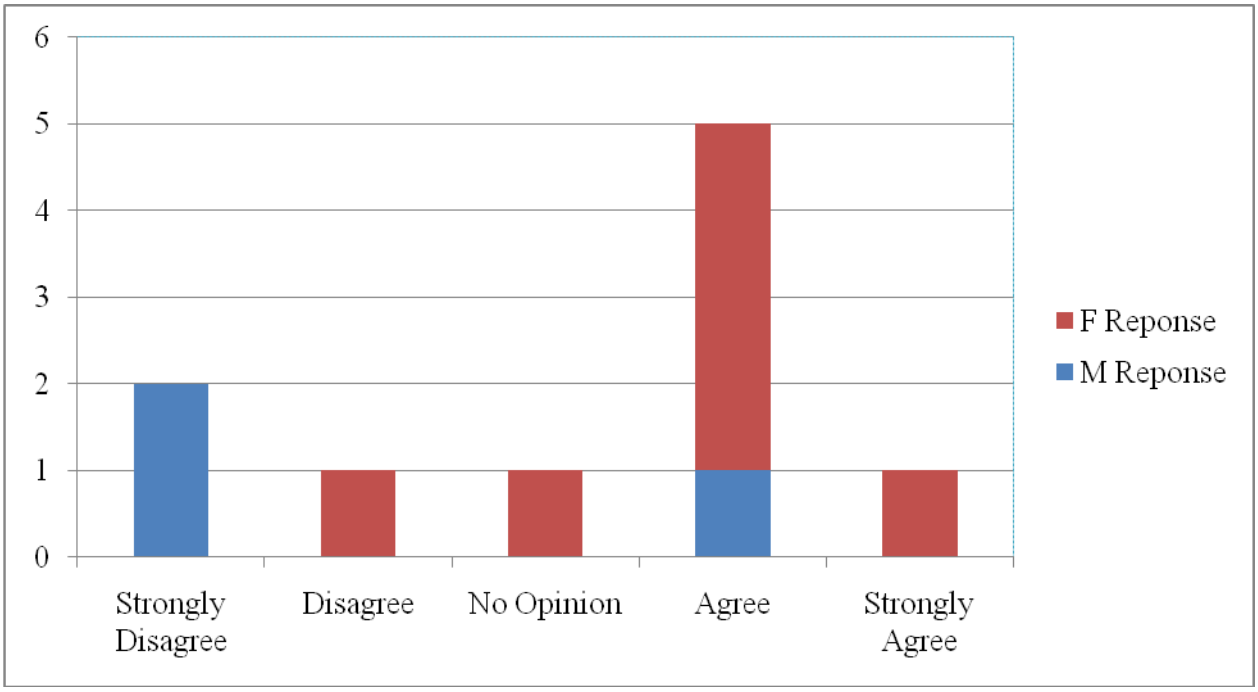
Question #2: Do you see many opportunities to volunteer on campus?



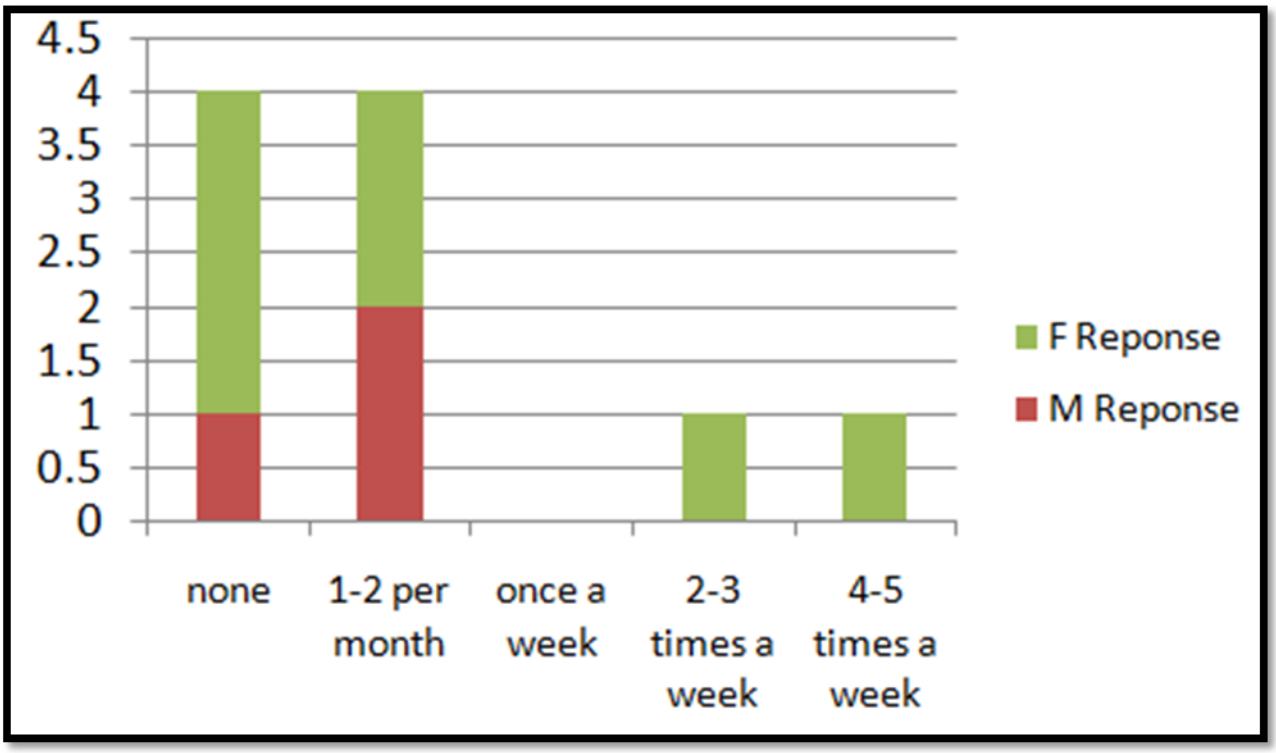
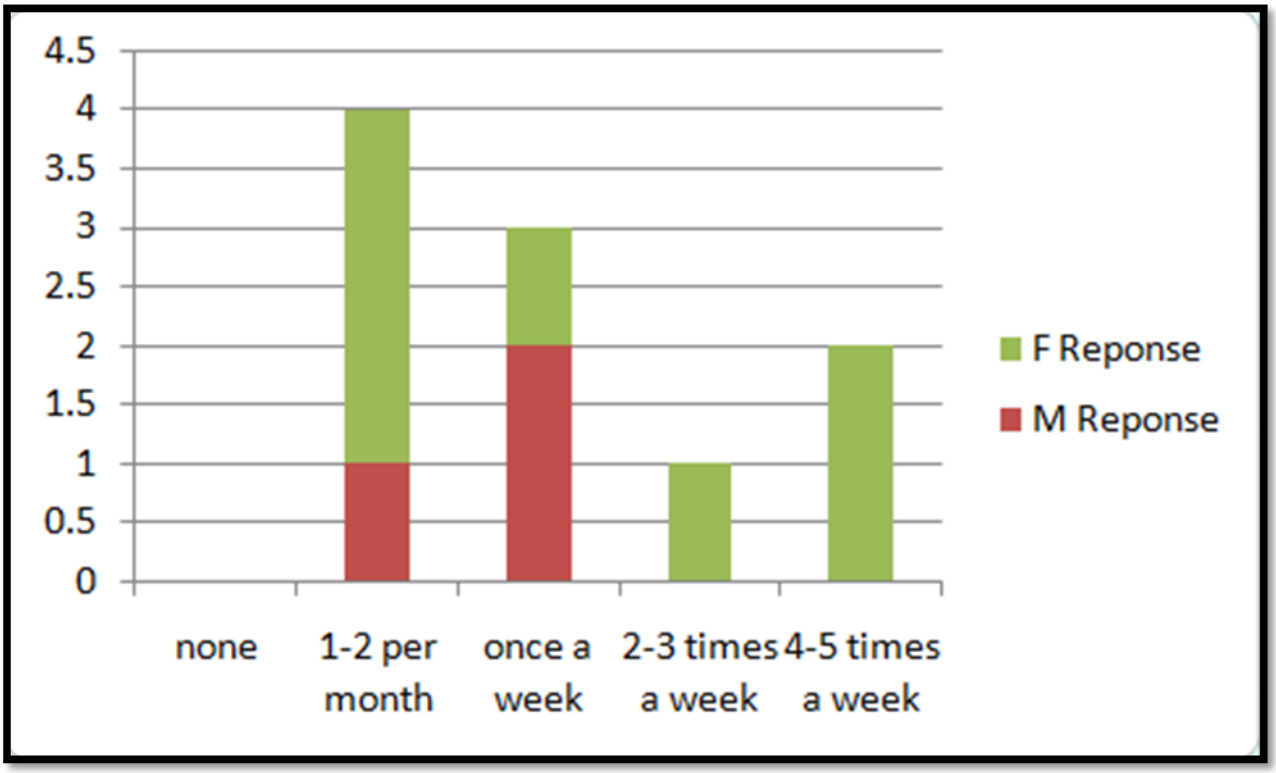
Question #3: Would you like to see an increase in volunteering on campus?



Question #4: How favorably do you see required volunteering in college courses?



Question #5: How often do you volunteer?



Question #6: How often do you wish you could volunteer?