

VOLUNTEERISM IN CONTEXT

VOLUNTEERISM IN CONTEXT: A COMPARISON OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
CANADA PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis applies a Bourdieuan analysis to a qualitative study of volunteerism that focuses on the question of how 'doing good' relates to social change overall? - in particular, the ways that social class influences the volunteer experience and the overall culture of volunteerism. I argue that the leading theoretical research models of volunteerism need to recognize the evolving nature of the activity and theorize the influences that are structuring the culture of volunteerism. What emerges is a model of volunteering where motivation is understood as a complex set of factors that are structured by social class identities and volunteering is understood as a form of distinction that can be used to acquire cultural capital. Social class-based ideas, in particular, the values related to the middle class, have become a part of the culture of volunteerism and, in part, create and reproduce the social change/volunteerism paradox. The volunteerism/social change paradox is the idea that volunteerism is often perceived as a social change activity when in many cases it reproduced the status quo. Without a strong activism component to the volunteerism, it is not an inequality challenging activity.

This thesis presents interview and observation data collected with Habitat for Humanity Canada in their two largest programs – the National program (domestic) and the Global Village program (international). By utilizing ideas of class, class distinction and social and cultural capital from Bourdieu's work, the role of class, the culture of benevolence (or volunteerism) can be explored in a new way. What emerges is a culture of volunteerism that is deeply influenced by middle class values where social change ideas are common but structural change is not – resulting in the volunteer/social change paradox.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction

The study of volunteerism is part of a wider field of inquiry that focuses on the role and social impacts of what is known as the voluntary, non-profit, charitable, or third sector of society. The third or voluntary sector has been described as one of the “three pillars of Canadian society alongside the public and private sector” and is the sector that encourages citizens to become involved in their communities and engage with society “in a meaningful way” (The Canada Volunteerism Initiative: The Report of the National Volunteer Initiative Joint Table, 2006). There are a number of different ways that citizens can become involved with the third sector and recently, trends in volunteering have started to change including increased popularity in short-term (Stebbins, 2005) and international (Wearing, 2004) volunteerism and an overall inclination towards volunteerism becoming more structured (Cull & Hardy, 1974).

Given that many organizations rely on volunteers for their success, it is not surprising that there is strong interest from within the third sector to understand why people volunteer and what influences the volunteer experience. This is especially important given that the role of volunteerism in society appears to be expanding. Since the early 1990s, there has been an ongoing trend on the part of governments (at all levels) to reduce the use of taxpayers’ money when investing in and supporting the various kinds of social services, programs and activities that many community members rely on and people demand (Selbee, 2004). This is part of a global neo-liberal trend where governments move towards a more capitalistic model and shift social welfare responsibility onto the societies (and therefore, the people) they serve.

For many social programs and organizations, volunteer labour, volunteer boards and charitable donations become the main resources on which groups rely to deliver their services or programs. In addition to this role as the provider of socially important goods and services, volunteer organizations are seen as important places of social integration and locations for civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). Volunteerism continues to be one of the main ways civic responsibility and engagement can be encouraged (MacCannell, 1976).

Research about participation in the voluntary sector has generally been conducted with a focus on its role within society. As a result, volunteering has been analytically framed as (a) a charitable activity contributing to the collective good, (b) a form of civic engagement, or (c) a form of unpaid labour (Selbee, 2004). While each of these perspectives highlights some part of volunteerism, viewing volunteerism through any one particular lens limits possible viewpoints and does not capture the complexity of the experience.

Modernization has also changed the kinds of volunteerism available and people's preferences for certain kinds of opportunities. For example, in most industrial societies short term volunteerism with little upfront commitment is growing in popularity (Wilson, 2012) and volunteerism is becoming less membership based (like in voluntary associations). In addition, there has been an explosion of international volunteer opportunities and, in general, research into international volunteer service has lagged behind (McBride et al., 2011). This study is, in part, a response to the call for research

documenting these changes in the voluntary sector (McBride et al., 2011; Wilson, 2012; Zavitz, 2004).

Modern poverty-focused volunteerism sits at a nexus of influence where volunteers act on middle class values of help, rely on a discourse of social change and acquire cultural capital and status through their participation. This study, seeks to expand the volunteerism literature by utilizing the theories of Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1994) (particularly ideas of distinction and social and cultural capital) to examine the culture of volunteerism and the ways volunteerism negotiates with and utilizes ideas of social change. Poverty-focused volunteerism is primarily about a desire on the part of some (individuals and groups) to help change the factors that lead to inequality (activism) or alleviate and help with some burden (volunteerism). Volunteers believe that they are ‘doing good’, giving back to the community and are involved in social change. In most cases, volunteers are people with good intentions, who volunteer to inspire and create social change. In essence, volunteers are often trying to help other members of their community by meeting a particular need or alleviating a particular burden. When examining poverty-focused volunteerism, the question emerges, how does ‘doing good’ relate to social change overall?

This thesis applies a Bourdieuan analysis to a qualitative study of volunteerism that focuses on the question of how ‘doing good’ relates to social change overall? In addition, I am particularly interested in the ways that social class influences the volunteer experience and the overall culture of volunteerism. I argue that the leading theoretical models of volunteerism need to recognize the evolving nature of the activity and

theorize the influences that are structuring the culture and experience of volunteerism. Through this research, a critical gap is exposed in the volunteer literature which tends to focus on quantitative data from the United States and foreground volunteer sacrifice and focuses on community integration and trust but does not offer much about the beliefs, ideas and values commonly associated with volunteering. Instead, I focus on how volunteers interact with and utilize the culture of volunteerism by studying their experiences qualitatively.

Five themes dominate the research findings, represent the experiences of these volunteers and have produced sub-questions that drive this project. These include: (1) what motivates volunteers and how do we, as scholars, capture the complexity of volunteer motivation? (2) What influences the culture of volunteerism and how does it relate to social class ideas of helping? (3) What is the role of the organization in volunteerism and what is the relationship between the volunteer and the organization? (4) What do volunteers learn while volunteering and what is volunteerism relationship to social change? And, (5) do volunteers form social networks and are they useful to the volunteers?

What emerges is a model of volunteering that rejects the rewards versus altruism dichotomy of motivation commonly associated with volunteerism. In this model of volunteering, motivation is a complex set of factors that are structured by social class identities and volunteering is viewed as a form of distinction that can be used to acquire cultural capital. The symbolic meaning of volunteerism is explored using a lens that foregrounds social class and compares giving to class-based (status-based)

consumptive practices. To explore these issues, Bourdieu's work on class distinction (1984) and types of capital (social, cultural, symbolic) (1986) are applied to the Habitat for Humanity Canada case. Social class-based ideas, in particular, the values related to the middle class, have become a part of the culture of volunteerism and, in part, create and reproduce a social change/volunteerism paradox.

The volunteerism/social change paradox is the idea that volunteerism is often perceived as a social change activity when in many cases it reproduces the status quo. Without a strong activism component to the volunteerism, as is the case with Habitat for Humanity Canada, it is not an inequality challenging activity. In fact, Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers are working within the middle class culture and very few develop into activists (where they seek structural changes to poverty). Instead, these volunteers are involved with helping a particular group of working class individuals who meet a middle class-based set of criteria with the intention of helping them find more stability so that they may end the cycle of poverty.

Volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada engage in work that is carefully situated at the nexus of middle class values (around helping), status (cultural capital) and need (who is deserving) and this work is carefully organized and framed by the organizing group. This is not to say that volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada do not help people; on the contrary, they do but there is an under-reported role for class that needs to be recognized and explored so as to capture the complexity of this activity.

Volunteerism scholarship is expanding to capture more of the social complexity present in the experience by looking at emerging volunteer experiences and asking volunteers and volunteer organizations in-depth questions about what they do. Volunteerism has now evolved to include more short-term time donation (single events, weekends, or projects) and international volunteering (sometimes called *voluntourism*) and so the analyses and theories previously used to study volunteerism (primarily quantitative and membership focused) need to be expanded and reconsidered to capture the modern volunteer experience.

While volunteerism is often thought of as a “neutral” or “static” activity (Arai, 2004), volunteering is a socially constructed activity and is affected by and affects the social and political contexts and values of a society. Volunteerism can be seen as representing both structural influences and individual choices. Studies of volunteerism cannot ignore the links between structure and micro-interactions because they work in tandem and help organizations endure. Modern volunteerism represents a complex mix of values, ideas about helping, social class expectations and discourses of social change.

The idea that volunteerism is a fundamental part of society and can be a measure of connectedness in communities (Putnam, 2000) has influenced much of the scholarship around volunteering over the past two decades. When volunteerism is understood as a form of civic engagement, it is subsequently viewed as simply another form of participation in the civic sector (Putnam, 2000). Studies from this perspective focus on how organizations can promote civic engagement and how volunteering can be a measure of the health of a society (Putnam, 2000). Putnam’s (1993) central thesis is that

if a society has a strong economic system and a high level of political integration, these are the result of the society's accumulation of social capital (which can be built through volunteerism). In essence, Putnam (2000) argues that many of the social problems observed in the United States are the result of a three decade long decline in social capital. His concept of social capital, therefore, focuses on community vitality through common action and trust. In sum, Putnam draws "our attention to the possibility of a connection between widespread volunteering and a thriving civil society" as volunteering is thought, from this perspective, to instill appropriate democratic values and habits (Wilson and Musick, 1999: 145).

Selbee (2004) criticizes this approach because it limits or de-emphasizes those volunteer contexts that do not clearly represent civic engagement, for example, sport or hobby clubs. As well, while this approach to volunteerism provides interesting data about many types of social problems and the ways people are engaging with their community, it does not account for those who choose to engage in other communities (such as international volunteers). Overall, Putnam's approach to social capital is focused on societal integration and community trust and while these are helpful measures of civic integration, they do not represent all the different and technologically savvy ways that volunteers approach their work.

Bourdieu's theory of capital (1986), while older than Putnam's (2000), offers a more useful approach as it focuses on the conflicts and struggles in social fields and the forms of power that are influencing the human experience. Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital can be applied in multiple contexts and comparisons can be

made. His conception of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), in particular, can be applied to capture the social resources of volunteers and, importantly, the role the organization plays in managing and utilizing volunteer social resources. As will be seen in the Habitat for Humanity Canada case, Bourdieu (1994) provides a framework for examining volunteerism and considering the way volunteerism can influence personal prestige and social position both of which are often overlooked in the volunteerism literature even when discussing benefits to the volunteer.

Most scholarship on volunteerism focuses on volunteer motivation and giving behaviour. Over the past few decades, the volunteer literature has been dominated by quantitative studies that emphasize motivation (how people get involved and why). This has resulted in an ongoing debate that categorizes motivations into fairly simple, quantitative categories that are focused on the motivations for volunteerism being either focused on rewards or personal altruism. More recently, a number of studies (Arai, 2004; Brown, 2005b; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Eliasoph, 2011; Hays, 2002; McGhee & Santos, 2005; Wearing, Deville, & Lyons, 2008) critically examine volunteering as a complex social phenomenon and have been calling for more qualitative research.

While qualitative data has begun to illuminate some of the contextual, social and individual factors that influence, it these studies are just starting to emerge and tend to be small (groups of less than 20) or single case studies and therefore, there is a need for larger, more in-depth studies of volunteerism. In response to this gap, I use a comparative analysis approach to understand the ways class influences the volunteer experience. Using this approach, it becomes increasingly clear that motivation along with

a number of other experiences within volunteerism cannot be easily captured in quantitative measures and cannot be reduced into an altruism/rewards dichotomy. Instead, I agree with Musick and Wilson (2008) and argue that motives must be linked to macro-structures because recognition and actualization of organizational goals is limited, and influenced, by social structures.

While the quantitative work done by volunteerism scholars has been illuminating, there is the opportunity to build on it by considering the phenomenon qualitatively and therefore, reexamining some of the main concepts. Using a qualitative approach to study volunteerism, allows for an analysis that emphasizes context and meaning and includes structuring factors. This approach allows a depth of experience to emerge and pushes the sociological analysis beyond a dichotomy of “giving back” and “rewards” to see an overall view. In addition, the ways that social class organizes the volunteer experience and structures the culture of volunteerism can be explored. In essence, the previous literature, while quantitative in nature, influences this project and this project, in turn, intends to influence studies of volunteerism regardless of approach.

Volunteerism is a complex social activity. The culture of volunteerism is one that tends to foreground donation and sacrifice and de-emphasize the benefits to the volunteer. It is also a high status activity both within the volunteer organization and the broader community. This status increases when the volunteer participates with a reputable organization with a worthy cause. Very little academic work has focused on the values associated with this kind of help and the influence of the middle class on the culture of volunteerism. Social class has an organizing influence on volunteerism. In fact,

the role of class is amplified in the case of a poverty-focused NGO¹ because the volunteers and the recipients are, generally, from different social classes. It also organizes the ways volunteerism is valued (creates hierarchies of value within the types of giving) and by whom (cultural capital). Volunteers gain (and seek) the distinction of middle class values in their work and, given that volunteering is a predominantly middle class activity (in the poverty-focused case), it reinforces social position. This effect is more obvious in the international context where it takes significant financial and time resources to participate. A pattern emerges where volunteerism becomes an act of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) where middle class and upper middle class volunteers demonstrate their class-based values through their work (and their choice of organization).

Volunteer organizations make conscious and strategic efforts to frame their goals based on shared understandings of the world and then use these shared understandings to motivate collective action (McAdam & McCarthy, 1996). This important role is incorporated into my analysis as it is evident that the organization is proactive in framing the volunteer experience and fostering the culture of volunteerism. Volunteers join organizations that 'fit' with their middle class values of help and need, seek out the 'deserving poor' and help in a way that is still convenient to them. Volunteer organization are adapting to the "emerging desire for community service as a tool for self-realization and discovery" and are looking for ways to maximize the impact for

¹ Non-governmental Organization

volunteers whose work may be short term and sporadic (as is the case with Habitat for Humanity Canada) (Wilson, 2012: 202).

Organizations, like Habitat for Humanity Canada, channel volunteers into activities that reproduce their approach to social change and convey a rhetoric of change that has no direct relationship to structural or systematic change. In general, these types of volunteers work to help others on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, unlike activism (that seeks social change to alter opportunity structures), volunteerism engages in a dialogue about social change that frames the activity as changing lives but maintains a specific focus on individual recipients and, therefore, is not as concerned with altering the causes of inequality. Instead, participants engage in the volunteer realm - within a system designed to attract them, utilize their resources and make them feel good about what they do (produce a warm glow). Ultimately, in order to receive help, recipients are asked to meet the demands of the volunteers. This thesis argues that this results in volunteerism being caught up in a social change paradox. This paradox maintains the culture of volunteerism and utilizes a discourse of social change (because they do help people on a case-by-case basis) but, this discourse also gives the activity more prestige and status.

That is, while volunteerism can take place on a large scale or over the long-term and can help a number of different people, this help is generally given on an individual or family basis. For example, individuals and families picking up food at a food bank; while this alleviates the immediate need for food and is certainly generally thought to be a worthwhile thing for the community at large to contribute to, it is generally help on a

case-by-case basis with a focus on a specific need. What emerges is a paradox of social change versus volunteerism where volunteers clearly want to assist and change the social conditions of those around them but are not necessarily involved in the structural or political systems that could lead to broader poverty relief. This in turn, leads to a number of questions that drive this research including, how do volunteers and organizations negotiate (and reconcile) this paradox? And, how can scholars accurately capture (and critically consider) these negotiations in a culture of volunteerism where the discourse of social change is so meaningful to volunteers, recipients and the organization?

Social networking has a longstanding relationship to volunteerism as it is often associated with how volunteers come to be involved and who invited them to participate. This is due, in part, to the nature of quantitative data and the dominance of responses such as “being asked” representing being recruited through one’s personal networks. However, what became quickly apparent is that volunteers network with each other and with the organization’s staff at multiple stages of participation and networking is far more complex in volunteerism. As well, volunteerism can produce social capital for volunteers so it important to explore how volunteers network, the factors that enhance or hinder networking for volunteers and the purpose of their networks.

In sum, this dissertation is a comparative case study of volunteers with one of Canada’s largest and most widely recognized volunteer organizations, Habitat for Humanity Canada. Habitat for Humanity Canada works with families and volunteers to

build simple and affordable homes. Recipient families are usually low income but working families that would not normally be able to purchase a home. Through Habitat for Humanity Canada, they pay mortgages and become homeowners. Habitat for Humanity Canada's has two programs, the National Program (based in Canada) and the Global Village Program (which sends volunteers abroad). This study compares and works with volunteers from both programs to address the questions noted above.

In this case, the culture of volunteerism is a paradox of social change ideas integrating into mainstream ideas with volunteerism, predominantly, reproducing the status quo. Therefore, it is necessary to critically explore the social change paradox and the role of social class. To achieve this, I move beyond the rewards/altruism dichotomy; foreground the influence of class in the volunteer experience; examine the role of the organization; critically explore the idea of consciousness-raising in volunteerism; and expand social networking and social capital acquisition in volunteerism to include much more than simply "being asked" to participate. First, however, I offer a more detailed introduction to the two programs that provide the data for this study.

A Brief History of Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity Canada

Habitat for Humanity was founded by Millard and Linda Fullard in 1976 in Americus, Georgia, United States and emerged out of the concept of "partnership housing" or the idea of a community working together to build houses for those in need. The organization was built on a number of principles developed by the Fullards but

perhaps most importantly; it was built on Christian values. Habitat for Humanity was created with a Christian focus, which was fostered by the Fullards, and promoted through what they called the *Theology of the Hammer*. The Theology of the Hammer is the idea that “God expects his people to do more than sing and speak of their love for the Lord; they have an obligation to put their love into action and to care for one another” (Youngs, 2007: 98). Beyond these Christian principles, they insisted that the organization use no-interest loans, maximize the use of volunteer labour, maintain a basic independence from all levels of government (though they do regularly accept donations of government land), and sustain an ongoing respect for the people the organization serves (Gaillard, 1996). The mission of the organization is “to mobilize volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting home ownership as a means to break the cycle of poverty” (www.habitat.ca). The vision for the organization is “a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live” (www.habitat.ca).

In 1984, the Fullards wrote a letter to President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalyn Carter explaining the purpose of their organization and asking for their help in growing and encouraging Habitat for Humanity. It would be the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship between the Carters and the organization. Jimmy Carter agreed to sit on the organization’s board of directors and participate in an annual build called “The Jimmy Carter Work Project” where he and Rosalyn would work alongside other volunteers in various cities across the United States. Rosalyn Carter pioneered the first women’s builds with the organization and appearances by the Carters drew considerable

media attention and garnered support for the Habitat for Humanity cause. To this day, Jimmy Carter builds are extraordinarily popular and, in many ways, he remains the public face of Habitat for Humanity. With Jimmy Carter's help, the organization spread rapidly and his participation greatly increased the publicity for Habitat for Humanity - their builds and their cause – the effects of which continue to be seen today (including in the responses of participants in this study).

By the late 1990s, Habitat for Humanity was being hailed a smashing success. Millard Fuller, however, remained dedicated to his original cause and said “Habitat has worked in a hundred countries, but is still isn't in ninety countries. We may have helped a million people find adequate shelter but some billion more are still in need” (Youngs, 2007: xxv). By 2005, the Christian underpinnings of the organization were starting to shift and Habitat for Humanity was being run by more a more corporate minded volunteer board of directors who were interested in promoting a more secular public image they felt would be more modern and inclusive. In 2005, amid controversy², Millard Fuller retired from Habitat for Humanity (Jewell, 2005) in symbolic celebration of the 200,000th house built by Habitat for Humanity in the United States (Youngs, 2007). He eventually went on to start the Fullard Center for Housing.

Since then, Habitat for Humanity has grown into an international faith-based and non-proselytizing, non-governmental organization operating in 93 countries worldwide with a focus on bringing affordable housing to low income families. Habitat for

² On January 31, 2005, Habitat for Humanity announced that it had fired founder and president Millard Fuller and his wife, Linda. Habitat for Humanity's statement read that “the termination decisions culminate several months of differences between the Fullers and the board over an allegation of inappropriate personal behavior of Millard Fuller toward a now-former female employee, and the Fullers' behavior as the investigation into that complaint unfolded” (Jewell, 2005).

Humanity Canada was founded in 1985 with its first affiliate in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Today, the Canadian national office is located in Waterloo, Ontario. Internationally, Habitat for Humanity has built, repaired or improved more than 400,000 houses worldwide and shelters more than two million people.

Habitat for Humanity continues to build and rehabilitate simple and decent homes through volunteer labour and tax-deductible donations of both money and materials. Once built, homes are sold to partner families at no profit. Habitat for Humanity is designed as an affiliate system with each local affiliate being a part of the larger organization while having its own board of directors and its own local volunteer projects and programs. Partner families have affordable, no-interest mortgages and invest hundreds of hours of their own labour through “sweat equity” into the building of their home and others. Volunteers do not need to have any previous building or volunteer experience and all backgrounds, races and religions are welcome.

Habitat for Humanity Canada³ offers both local and international volunteer opportunities. There are two main programs offered by Habitat for Humanity Canada. The *Global Village Program* which organizes Canadian volunteers and takes them abroad to build homes in developing communities around the world and the *National Program* which is widely recognized and advertised in Canada and involves local residents in the building or re-establishment of homes in their city or town. Importantly, the type of work volunteers are asked to do is similar in both programs and therefore, other factors

³ Throughout this dissertation, the terms *Habitat for Humanity* and *Habitat for Humanity Canada* are used in very specific ways. *Habitat for Humanity* is used to represent the organization in the United States. *Habitat for Humanity Canada* is used to represent the Canadian National affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. Wherever possible, these names, in their entirety, are used in an effort to keep the specific organization being discussed clear.

about the context of the volunteer experience can be fore-grounded instead of focusing on the type of work. These factors combine to make Habitat for Humanity Canada an ideal subject for this project and its comparative design. Both programs are based on the same fundamental purpose of building affordable housing and recipients of these homes participate in the same way domestically and abroad. Each program is described in detail below.

Global Village Program

The Global Village program offers Canadians the opportunity to participate in short-term volunteer abroad building projects that consist of traveling to an international affiliate from as close as the United States and to as far as Kenya and Thailand for up to three weeks at a time. Global Village teams provide volunteer labour to Habitat for Humanity's worldwide affiliates and contribute a much-needed donation to Habitat for Humanity programs in developing countries. Habitat for Humanity Canada's webpage describes the experience by saying: "A Global Village trip can be a life changing experience. It's an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of development issues, to learn more about another culture and yourself" (www.habitat.ca). Teams are made up of ten to twenty volunteers with one or two volunteer team leaders who coordinate, plan and run the trip with the help of staff at the Global Village office. Each house is built under the guidance of a local tradesperson (such as a mason) who is an

expert in how to build the appropriate home for the climate, region⁴ and family. The average cost of a home built through this program is \$6,000 and families are chosen using the standard Habitat for Humanity criteria⁵. Trips cost between \$1500 and \$4000 plus airfare and nearly all of the expenses volunteers incur are an eligible tax-deduction.

Habitat for Humanity Canada's Global Village program provides an excellent comparative case (in relation to the National Program) for researching the volunteer experience in different contexts. It is one of the most popular short-term volunteer abroad programs available to Canadians. Trips spanning five continents are consistently listed – “trip full” and applicants are asked to list first, second and third choices of trip in order to be placed onto trips as they fill. The Global Village program represents a well-established, popular Canadian program that, by volunteer abroad standards, is very accessible to a large portion of the public with few barriers to participation. The most obvious barrier is the cost but nearly 100 percent of the cost can be fundraised if the individual is not able to personally provide the funds. Despite the financial demand, the trips are organized well in advance, can include children over 15 years of age, are open to seniors and can be organized with groups. As well, clear expectations and itineraries are associated with each trip, which can make them appealing to inexperienced international travelers.

The Habitat for Humanity Canada Global Village program represents an ideal example of how Canadians participate in short-term volunteer abroad projects. In

⁴ Houses are built according to local needs and with local materials. For example, in Central America the houses are designed to be earthquake resistant.

⁵ Recipients must contribute 500 hours of sweat equity, share the labour of homebuilding, and participate in sessions to prepare them for homeownership. Financially, they must prove consistent income and an ability to make mortgage payments.

terms of the broader volunteer context, Habitat for Humanity Canada (like most volunteer programs) is a poverty-focused program, and is intended to produce tangible results for struggling families and communities. Overall, the Global Village Program fits into the broader Habitat for Humanity Canada organization, finding its foundation in the larger organizational principles but with a focus on linking with international affiliates and doing volunteer work in the international Habitat for Humanity community.

National Program

The Habitat for Humanity Canada National Program is, perhaps, the best-known or understood portion of the Habitat for Humanity Canada organization. The National Program is responsible for supporting Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliates across the country with necessary products and other resources. Habitat for Humanity Canada is made up of 72 local affiliates in ten provinces and two territories and has built more than 1,800 homes since its inception in 1985. Since it began, fifty thousand volunteers have participated in the Habitat for Humanity Canada National Program. The average cost of a home built through this program is \$150,000 - \$180,000 (depending on region) and families are chosen and participate through the standard Habitat for Humanity criteria.

Volunteers in the National Program must be 16 years of age and are encouraged to learn and develop new skills while on a local build or share experiences and expertise. During construction on a typical build, several hundred volunteers work together, with the supervision and guidance of trade professionals, to build a home.

Shifts for volunteers are usually about eight hours long and are available Monday to Saturday each week. Volunteers usually sign up in advance and corporations sometimes bring groups to do one-day community donation/team building days. Affiliates use time donated or discounted by local tradespeople for work that requires permits or particular expertise such as electrical installation. Houses are customized to the region and any special needs of the family, for example, wheelchair accessible homes with ramps and lifts.

In addition to these standard types of builds, Habitat for Humanity Canada offers builds geared towards particular social groups. For example, they offer the Women's Build Program, which promotes women leaders and female volunteerism, and the Aboriginal Housing Program which links specifically with aboriginal families and communities, all within the National Program. Volunteers can also be involved administratively with the builds. All governing boards with Habitat for Humanity Canada are volunteer run and committees that make decisions, such as the "construction committee" and the "family selection committee", are volunteer-based.

Critical to how Habitat for Humanity Canada operates domestically, are the local *Re-Stores*. The *Re-Stores* are home improvement stores that sell new and used donated items and building materials that volunteers have salvaged from homes being demolished or renovated. Local businesses also donate items that they cannot sell and other items like demonstration models. The *Re-Stores*, like the rest of Habitat for Humanity Canada, run on a minimal managerial staff, and volunteers do almost all of the on the ground (or shop floor), work. *Re-Stores* are important because the profits of the *Re-*

Stores cover the administrative costs of the affiliates (such as staff wages, office supplies, etc.) and therefore, generally, one hundred percent of donations made to Habitat for Humanity Canada go directly to building homes with no financial donations going to administrative costs. Volunteer labour is a key part of the organization and, in every way, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a volunteer-based organization.

Organization of the Dissertation

Substantively, this research is a comparative analysis of the two volunteer groups working within the Habitat for Humanity Canada organization. The overarching question guiding the research is to ask how the poverty-focused volunteer experience can be understood within the current volunteerism literature and what is volunteerism's relationship with social change? Of particular focus, is the question – how does 'doing good' through volunteerism, relate to ideas of social change overall? Using the work of Bourdieu and applying ideas of social change, the analysis presents an expanded picture of volunteerism that moves beyond the traditional debates to consider class, context and networking in the experience.

The overarching question is broken down into five interrelated sub-questions that are the outline for this project and form the basis for each of the findings chapters. They bring the volunteerism literature together with the social movements' concept of consciousness-raising and Bourdieu's understandings of capital and class distinction to address the unique experiences of project-based and poverty-focused volunteering in the national and international programs of the Canadian NGO Habitat for Humanity

Canada. This dissertation consists of eight chapters. *Chapter One* introduces the main literatures this research will be contributing to and outlines the purpose of the study. As well, a brief history of *Habitat for Humanity* is given in order to give context and provide some background regarding the organization. This is combined with an overview of the *Habitat for Humanity Canada* organization in order to give context to the comparative research design.

In *Chapter Two*, a rationale for the comparative qualitative research design is followed by a description of the research methods. Three methods, gathering publicly available information, participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, are outlined and their execution described including a discussion of the ethical concerns of the project. An explanation of the analysis protocol is then presented followed by a description of some of the methodological experiences that shaped the research in the field.

The five chapters that follow combine both a review of current literature and the findings related to each sub-question. The volunteer literature is introduced including current ideas of motivation, class identity, the role of the organization, consciousness-raising and social change ideas and social capital. The limits of the current perspectives are discussed and ideas and concepts are then introduced to expand the approach using the theoretical approach of Pierre Bourdieu (in particular, his types of capital and theory of class distinction). This perspective provides a more complex approach to the phenomenon of poverty-focused volunteerism, offers new theoretical tools to recognize and interpret cultural meanings of volunteerism and provides insight into the 'culture of

volunteerism'. Importantly, this study intends to improve and broaden concepts within the volunteer literature in order to better explain volunteer behaviour and develop our understanding of the complex relationship between volunteerism and social change.

Specifically, *Chapter Three* focuses on how volunteers get involved with a particular interest in volunteer motivations. I present the traditional altruism versus rewards approach to the data and make an argument for moving beyond this debate towards a more complex model that incorporates both individual and structural influences on volunteerism while recognizing the ongoing dynamic between self-focused and other-focused motivations. *Chapter Four* develops ideas of identity and how social class influences the volunteer experience. In *Chapter Five*, I explore the role of the organization and the many ways the organizing group frames the volunteer experience while influencing and defining the culture of volunteerism. In *Chapter Six*, I concentrate on how volunteers are changed through their participation. Specifically, I critically examine the usefulness of applying the concept of consciousness-raising in the volunteer experience and whether volunteers become advocates and/or activists for the cause. In *Chapter Seven*, I describe and discuss the important role of social networks in volunteerism including how volunteers create social networks with each other, and the usefulness of these networks in the everyday lives of volunteers.

Lastly, the goal of *Chapter Eight* is to reflect on the objectives and methods of the study and summarize what has been achieved. I accomplish this through a discussion of the study's methodology and an interpretation of the study findings. As well, I present some practical implications of the research that have been presented to Habitat for

Humanity Canada. Finally, *Chapter Eight* concludes with a presentation of ideas that have grown out of this study and could be addressed in future research.

Chapter 2

Research Design

Introduction

Studies of volunteerism use a multitude of methodological approaches. However, the vast majority of North American studies are quantitative designs. While these quantitative studies have developed into a large and growing literature on the diverse types of people who volunteer and the many ways they do, more recently there has been a trend towards using qualitative methods in order to explore some of the details of the volunteer experience and build social theory by maintaining a contextual focus. In order to undertake an in-depth qualitative analysis of volunteerism that focuses on the complexity of the experience, including the role of factors such as class in determining, participation, location, context and opportunities, rich and detailed data needs to be collected.

This thesis presents a qualitative comparative case study of two Habitat for Humanity Canada programs. Multiple methods provide an in-depth look at the volunteer experience both locally and abroad. Data collection involved the gathering of publicly available information, participant observation with both programs and a series of semi-structured interviews with participants from each group. This comparative approach captures resource differences, compares, and contrasts the ways international and local volunteering is viewed, framed and understood.

In general, case studies rely on multiple sources of data and utilize the main points of previous literature to guide data collection and analysis. In this case, a qualitative comparative case approach explores the complexities of volunteerism, particularly, structuring influences and volunteerism's links to social change. In a

comparative design, the cases should be similar in some respects but differ enough to allow deeper, more focused analysis to occur. In the case of Habitat for Humanity Canada, two distinct programs utilize a similar volunteer base and, organizationally, their experiences are based on the same foundational principles and goals. Essentially, both programs have enough commonality of experience (in organizational structure, type of work, framing of participants, etc.) to allow for a comparative case study based on program differences (context, cost, language, etc.).

Methodological Strategy

This project takes a comparative multi-method approach. It is designed to produce data that highlights the contextual factors that influence the participants' ideas and inspirations and capture variations in the experiences in two different contexts – in the Global Village program and in the National program - with Habitat for Humanity Canada. For this research, data was collected using three qualitative methods – (1) gathering publicly available information, (2) participant observation and (3) semi-structured interviewing. All methods were used for both groups.

Qualitative methods are appropriate for this case for a number of reasons. First, qualitative methods are sensitive to context and therefore can be used to make compelling arguments regarding how things work in particular settings (Mason, 2002). Second, they allow for research that is, while characteristically data-driven, expected to be both fluid and flexible (Mason, 2002). Given the international character of this project and its exploratory nature, a flexible approach was appropriate throughout the

study. Third, as methods are used strategically in order to best understand the subject of study while considering goals such as cost and usability, qualitative methods have been sparingly used to study volunteers.

More recently, some (for example, Kelly, 1990; McGhee and Santos, 2005; Veal, 1992) argue that the leisure, volunteer and travel literature could benefit from more qualitative inquiry. Kelly (1990) argues that as leisure is a qualitative phenomenon and relies heavily on gestures, symbols and face-to-face interaction, qualitative methods are a better fit for investigating leisure practices such as volunteerism. Last, the methods of participant observation and interviewing both encourage the participant's voice and provide the rich detail needed in a project of this type. As qualitative researchers make connections between lived experiences and larger cultural and social patterns, it is a priority to foreground participant experiences and to understand them in terms of their social context.

Researchers are using multiple method studies more and more as they allow for broader and often better results, particularly in complex social situations (Fontana and Frey, 1994). In this case, interviewing and participant observation offer different limitations in their use and some of these limitations can be minimized through a combination of methods. Another benefit of taking a multi-method approach is that multiple sources of data allows for triangulation during analysis. Data can then be reviewed to see whether experiences and ideas can be corroborated with each other (Mason, 2002) therefore producing more reliable data and stronger interpretations. For example, information on Habitat for Humanity Canada's homepage regarding a volunteer

policy could be compared with field experiences and then, discussed during interviews to get a broader perspective regarding policy and practice.

Gathering Publicly Available Information

When studying an organization, and when there is an interest in understanding how the organization frames the activity and influences the experiences of volunteers, it is critical to examine the information made available publicly available. Groups, like Habitat for Humanity Canada, utilize many forms of media including print media, television and, most often, the Internet (via web pages) in order to disseminate information about their cause, their resources and their volunteers (and volunteer opportunities). Therefore, the gathering of publicly available information became an important step in contextualizing field experiences and understanding the organization.

Scholars show increasing interest in the ways new technologies are being used to communicate information to the public. Organizations, like Habitat for Humanity Canada, that are decentralized and made up of a number of territories, regions or affiliates, often thrive because of web-based media and support (Howard, 2002). This media becomes an important data source when studying the evolution of an organization.

In their study of The Tea Party in the United States, Skocpol and Williamson (2012) relied on public records, media interviews and web pages to capture a broader perspective about the party, its goals and activities. In a similar way, I collected information from many Habitat for Humanity Canada web pages including many local

affiliates. I also received monthly or bi-monthly newsletters targeted to volunteers and kept copies of the organization's current advertising campaigns. These documents represent the larger public image of Habitat for Humanity Canada and what they see as their goals and values.

In terms of web-based information, I employed an approach called *discursive* or *rhetorical* analysis of websites (Schneider and Foot, 2004). This approach is more concerned with the content of a website and the presentation of information than in its structuring elements and takes a broad view of what constitutes text and data (Schneider and Foot, 2004). There is evidence (Skocpol and Williamson, 2012) that this kind of data gathering can aid researchers in understanding how groups engage with their target population and how they frame their most important issues.

While it was not possible to volunteer with each affiliate and gather information regarding every affiliate meeting, volunteer opportunity and discussion, I was able to gather many public records regarding how affiliates run, how recipients are chosen and the policies and goals of Habitat for Humanity Canada. I was particularly interested in publications that focused on volunteers or that were designed to be disseminated by the volunteers themselves (for example, documents to aid with fundraising for Global Village trips). Many documents are available for review including budgets, plans and volunteer orientation materials and are all a part of the public record.

This type of data is gathered in order to understand Habitat for Humanity Canada's public image, the way they communicate with and about volunteers and the way they disseminate their ideas. This data is intended to work with and enhance data

collected through fieldwork as well as triangulate with ideas and perspectives expressed in the field. Data was crosschecked in this way between the public record, interviews and observation to capture a fuller picture of volunteerism with Habitat for Humanity Canada.

Participant Observation

Observation is the method of choice when trying to understand how a phenomenon is acted out and influenced by the setting. Becoming a participant observer requires the active participation of the researcher at some level and is particularly useful in settings where the data cannot be collected any other way (Mason, 2002). While volunteer programs take place in a variety of settings and under a variety of circumstances most research in the area has consisted of quantitative analyses (Brown, 2005a; Callanan and Thomas, 2005) or single case studies (Zavitz, 2004). By participating in two different experiences of volunteerism and participating fully in the volunteer process, I am able to better understand the volunteer experience both abroad and at home. Interviews, as explained below, were used in conjunction with participant observation to better capture these processes and allow participants to voice their experiences.

Participant observation is useful for a wide variety of project types but is particularly useful when the meanings people make and people's interactions are influenced by their environment (Jorgensen, 1989). In the case of volunteering abroad, the travel, tourism, and volunteer experiences are undoubtedly influenced in this way.

The volunteer abroad experience also takes place outside the public eye and is best experienced through real participation (as opposed to spectating or strictly observing) as there may be a development of insider knowledge. Jorgensen (1989: 12) argues that participant observation is best used in projects where the phenomenon is “somehow obscured from the view of outsiders” or is in some way “hidden from public view”. Indeed, it would be unlikely to be able to observe the phenomenon of international volunteerism without being an international volunteer. Moreover, Bailey (1996) claims that participant observation is exceptionally useful where it is important to note non-action as well as action as in this case.

Participant observation also offers advantages because it is “a flexible, open-ended, opportunistic process” (Jorgensen, 1989: 23) and therefore, it anticipates the redefinition and fluidity of ideas and how they may (and should) develop in the field. The methodology requires the researcher to deal with their immediate surroundings and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves or recognize the changing practicalities of other plans. Field researchers must acknowledge the role of their surroundings and the implications of the physical environment (Bailey, 1996). This is always necessary in an international case where unknown contingencies are to be expected and part of what is being explored is the reaction one has in the field.

Most observation consists of routine patterns and behaviours as well as the coming and goings within any particular group (Bailey, 1996). It is common for participant observers to maintain casual and informal conversations with members of the group in order to get “real-time” and detailed data. Bailey (1996:49) argues that “the

basis of the interpretive process” is the researcher’s relationships with group members in the setting and, as with this project, real-time, on the ground reactions and interactions.

Field notes require an ongoing process of reflection and analysis on the part of the researcher and must be written in ways that capture “the perspective, understandings, concerns, and voices of those studied” (Emersen et al., 1995: 11). Field notes were written in the field, as soon as possible following participant observation or, in the case of the Global Village trip, during quiet moments at the end of each day. I followed the method laid out by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) as they recommend interpretive and analytic writing that includes asides, commentaries and in-process memos; all of which suited this subject and the exploratory nature of the project. As the research progressed, the notes became more focused and the goals of observing became more specific.

Mason (2002: 87) observes that observation is rarely experienced as an easy or “ethically straightforward method”. The main limitations of this approach are that it is time consuming and costly. Methodologically, a single researcher “fundamentally is limited in terms of the perspectives on the insiders’ world that may be assumed” (Jorgensen, 1989: 65). Characteristics of my person such as gender, ethnicity and age may have altered the interaction;⁶ however, this has been shown to become less of a

⁶ I acknowledge that social interactions are gendered and other elements such as age influence status and rapport in the field. Therefore, my status as a relatively young white woman may have influenced interactions during participant observation. I believe that these influences were minimized given the fact that my social class and ethnicity included me in the dominant group and because I worked for ongoing periods of time alongside the volunteers. As social indicators such as gender, age and ethnicity have been

factor over time (Jorgensen, 1989). A number of days were spent at each setting and relationships and rapport were able to develop because of the ongoing interaction on the volunteer site.

Semi-structured Interviewing

As a qualitative method, interviews are used when the researcher approaches data collection as a way to access people's knowledge, experiences, social interactions and the ways these are socially meaningful (Mason, 2002). Also, interviewing is particularly helpful in cases, such as in this project, where the information you are likely to get from participants is expected to vary and expose different approaches to the same phenomenon (Veal, 1992). For this project, I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews because they have the flexibility of unplanned and spontaneous questions while maintaining some structure. In addition, they have the potential to offer more depth to the field notes of participant observation as they are in a focused and confidential one-on-one setting.

The majority of questions were asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent way according to an interview guide (Appendix C) but there was the freedom to digress from prepared questions and it was expected that I would probe into responses (Berg, 1995). Interviews were designed to feel informal as this has been shown to draw out information about the setting and the person (Bailey, 1996). They were designed to parallel an extended or modified conversation. In this approach, both

shown to have the most influence in brief encounters, I believe that my ongoing participant observation was the most important factor in minimizing any effect my own social status may have had.

the interviewer and interviewee were expected to be flexible and reflexive (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This was achieved by allowing the conversation to develop naturally, probing with curiosity after responses and allowing the interview schedule to act as an overall guide but not as a rigid protocol so that both parties have an influence over the pace and topics discussed in the interview.

An interviewing sample was recruited through Habitat for Humanity Canada networks. Both the National Program and the Global Village Program have strong online networks that the organization was willing to use in order to promote recruitment through their meetings and alumni network. Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliates were given a sample recruitment notice (Appendix B) that they used to recruit volunteers. The interviewees were organized into two groups depending on which program they participated in - the National Program or the Global Village Program. I continued interviews until a point of saturation (where no new information was emerging) (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) was reached. In both groups, respondents were recruited from across Canada and therefore, interviewees were from a number of different regions. This was especially important for interviewees in the National Program group, as there is representation from affiliates of all sizes in the sample.

Random sampling techniques were not pragmatic for this study nor are they the goals of qualitative research. However, every attempt was made to recruit participants from affiliates across Canada. This was achieved by recruiting participants through every affiliate office in the country and encouraging interviewees from all regions of Canada.

Therefore, regional diversity was maintained and the data collected includes participants from both large and small affiliates.

For ethical reasons, and also at the request of Habitat for Humanity Canada, possible respondents could not be “cold called” – instead, all members of the Habitat for Humanity Canada community that were in the Canadian database were sent emails and advertisements were put up at local affiliates by local volunteer coordinators. As the goal of this project was discovery and understanding as opposed to quantitative representativeness, a convenience sample was used. In the case of the National Program, there were far more respondents than could have possibly been interviewed. These respondents were each given a number, and numbers were drawn at random until a level of saturation was reached. At that time, remaining potential respondents were thanked for their time and were given the option of receiving the study summary like all other interviewees.

In the Global Village Group, 31 interviews were completed and for the National Program 33 interviews were completed for a total of 64 interviewees from the two programs with an almost equal distribution between genders. Interviews ranged in length from 30 to 95 minutes and were completed on the phone or via *Skype*. For the majority of interviews, the delivery of the interview schedule provided a formal beginning to the conversation and then guided the topic of discussion. The conversations consisted of anecdotes and experiences as well as opinions and reflections from each volunteer’s point of view. Often, participants were interested in how I had chosen Habitat for Humanity Canada, how much time I had spent volunteering with

different affiliates, and where I had travelled. The disclosure of experience helped to establish rapport and often led to a more relaxed interview experience.

Although an interview guide was used to provide a basic structure for the interviews and to ensure that the same basic concepts were covered by each of the participants, interviewees often told stories, and spoke at length about their reflections about being a volunteer and their lifestyle in general. For practical reasons, the same interview guide was used for both groups, and therefore, the questions were about volunteering and not necessarily about the context, though participants were specifically asked to describe their affiliate or Global Village group. The interview guide was designed to foster conversation and encourage open and honest responses from interviewees. This format also allows for impromptu questioning and spontaneous probing of responses. All participants were encouraged to voice their opinions and state their thoughts or feelings openly.

The interview guide was developed and arranged according to the issues raised in the substantive and theoretical literature. It was structured into three basic sections. After signing a consent form (Appendix A), participants answered the first section of questions made up of primarily demographic and background questions. This section was designed to be simple and non-threatening to respondents and therefore ease them into the interview (as recommended by Berg, 1995). These questions included, for example, asking respondents to declare their age, educational background and employment status. The second section of questions was designed to allow respondents to describe their personal involvement in volunteering, their past experiences, how they

got involved with Habitat for Humanity Canada and their experiences with the organization. The third section focused on the respondents' opinions and ideas about volunteerism with questions such as "what do you think makes a good volunteer?" or "how do the values of the organization influence your volunteerism?" The interview guide was not changed over the course of data collection. However, probes became more consistent and specific as the interviews progressed.

Ethical Concerns

As with any project of this type where participants share their thoughts, opinions and experiences, there are personal and ethical obligations to the people being studied. In order to obtain high quality information from participants, I was dependent on their cooperation. While the rights of the participants are always the primary concern of ethical principles, this is carefully balanced with the pursuit of knowledge and professional self-interest (Neuman, 2000).

Traditional ethical concerns focus on informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, and the protection of respondents from harm – physical, emotional, or any other kind (Fontana and Frey, 1994). For this project, these basic principles were central to discussions with both Habitat for Humanity Canada and the McMaster University Ethics Board. Given the volunteer context, where people are often committed to their project prior to the possibility of meeting a researcher (especially with projects abroad), informing participants of observation was a particularly careful

process whereby participants were given an information pamphlet and asked to give verbal consent in the field wherever possible.

Confidentiality, both for participant observation and interviewing, was ensured in two ways. First, all participants were given a pseudonym in the recording and transcription of their interviews in order to conceal their identities. Second, all specific or identifying information (including information about specific trips dates and locations) was deleted from the interview record and transcripts as this information could be identifying and was not critical to the findings. Overall, risk to participants was minimal and no greater than any other time they would be asked to recount their experiences or express their opinions. In every case, participants were treated with respect, sensitivity, and patience. All efforts were made to encourage a respectful and positive experience for everyone involved.

Analysis Protocol

A comparative approach can highlight contextual differences and in this study was intended to reveal the role of context in volunteerism. Overall, the analysis focused on the main questions of the research while comparing the organization's two groups. Following the completion of interviews, the transcribed interviews and field notes, including observation notes and documents from the field, were analyzed in relation to the substantive and theoretical literature. Patterns and themes emerged that confirm, dispute and expand on the knowledge in the area of volunteerism. For instance, each interview was reviewed for content regarding issues of motivation, values, beliefs,

meaning-making and social networking while recognizing that these themes are not exhaustive or exclusive - overlap was expected. This was especially important with overarching themes like values that permeated the volunteer experience at a number of different stages of participation.

There were two main phases of analytic qualitative coding. First, open-coding was used to “identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate” (Emersen et al., 1995: 143). Second, the data was subjected to focused-coding in order to concentrate on the topics of particular interest that emerged during open-coding. Following coding, a data index was produced using the themes and topics that emerged.

There were a range of perspectives expressed by individuals about their volunteerism and comparisons were made based on the context of the volunteerism – domestic or international. There were also subtle variations in experience across and within groups including variations related to factors such as age, gender and employment status. Overall, there was not a homogeneous set of experiences from which to draw themes from. Mainly, patterns and themes emerged related to the key issues in the existing literature and ideas expressed in the research questions.

Methodological Field Experiences

The processes of becoming involved and working with an organization are complex and can change over time. Accordingly, how the research was able to develop was influenced by a combination of my own decision-making and agreements made with

Habitat for Humanity Canada. In October 2009, I met with the Vice President of Domestic Affairs, the Vice President of International Relations and the Director of Global Village at Habitat for Humanity Canada's national office in Waterloo, Ontario. In the meeting, I presented an approach for how I would study their volunteers and why I believed Habitat for Humanity Canada was a good fit for the research. In response to my proposal, they recognized how the project could directly help their organization and they subsequently agreed to cooperate and promote the research project. Following their decision, we then negotiated who would be my liaison at Habitat for Humanity Canada and what their expectations would be at the end of the study.

These contacts were critical for the recruitment of participants and for "opening doors" that would have been difficult for me to approach or access. In return, I had to agree to set very high standards of ethical conduct including that all people who were ever in contact with me via Habitat for Humanity Canada networks had to be promptly responded to. In addition, if I had too many people respond to be a part of the research, these 'extra' participants had to be kept informed just as any 'full' participants would be with a summary of the study if they wished. As well, I was asked to present the research results to the executive team of Habitat for Humanity Canada and have a post-research meeting with the director of the Global Village program to give feedback that might improve the program and experiences of volunteers. All of these conditions were agreed upon and then research commenced with Habitat for Humanity Canada's welcomed cooperation.

Participant Observation

For participant observation, the fieldwork strategies used in this study broadly follow the guidelines developed by Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) who organize field experiences into four stages: entering the setting; learning how to play one's role while there; negotiating the relations involved in participation; and leaving the setting. Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) note that these stages can blend together and are not firm categories in that one may be involved in multiple stages simultaneously. The stages can be interwoven and are not sequential or distinct. As this study was not an ethnography of Habitat for Humanity Canada or one of its affiliates these stages were condensed into the periods of participant observation and my integration into each new volunteer setting.

Observation notes, including conversations with volunteers on build sites and at the Re-Store provided 'real-time' responses to situations and a basis for informal conversation. These informal discussions and comments allowed for an immediate and on-going response to on-hand and on-going practices and contexts. Given that participant observation took place in a number of different locations, these notes and conversations played an equal role to the interview transcripts during the project's analysis phase.

Participant observation took place in a number of locations over a period of approximately one year. In order to simplify the description, I have separated the methodological notes into sections on the Global Village and National Programs despite how there were times where I would necessarily be dealing with both programs at once.

For example, nearly all my dealings with the Habitat for Humanity Canada's national office included learning about both programs. As well, in May 2010, I attended the Habitat for Humanity Canada national conference in Ottawa, Ontario, and there were presentations on all Habitat for Humanity Canada programs. Therefore, while it remains straightforward and practical for me to divide the data in this way, there were times and contexts where participant observation was taking place with both groups and where an overall picture of Habitat for Humanity Canada could be observed.

Global Village Program

Participant observation within the Global Village program took place in three ways. First, I went through the process of applying and going on a trip as a Global Village participant. Second, I went through the Global Village leadership-training course and became a Global Village leader. Last, I organized a Global Village trip and led a Global Village team abroad. These three experiences represent the three ways that it is possible to volunteer with the Global Village program – as a volunteer, as a leader in training, and as a full team leader. My experiences in each of the respective roles are discussed below.

First, it was important for me to go through the application process and be chosen to a Global Village team like any other individual volunteer. Consequently, like anyone else, I chose three trip preferences and waited to be interviewed by a team leader. Fortunately, I was selected to my first choice team and from February 20th – March 3rd, 2010 I accompanied eleven other volunteers to San Vicente, El Salvador.

Volunteers were made aware that I was doing research with Habitat for Humanity Canada and this was extraordinarily well received. The team felt it was very interesting to have the opportunity to talk about their trip while it was happening and to “help out in another way” in giving their feedback to Habitat for Humanity Canada and the study.

Formal data collection took place in the evenings while in the host country. I recorded small videos of field notes and had different members of the team talk about their days or how they were feeling about the trip with a small video camera. This approach proved time consuming and sometimes impractical, as it required a lot of power and electricity was not always available where we were staying. However, the video footage was easily combined with pen and paper field notes.

As well, it was difficult to predict the effect physical labour in hot and humid weather conditions, combined with a minimum of basic food, would have on people's ability and desire to focus and contribute to the research. While there was often time at the end of the day for quiet reflection or for me to write out field notes, time was not the only factor in getting the field notes done. Part of the way through the building week, I found I had to compile video and notes earlier and earlier in the day if I was going to get detailed data because fatigue accumulated in a way that no one could have anticipated. In the end, more than 60 hours of video was recorded with the team and field notes were compiled for each day of the trip.

I participated fully as a team member in all aspects of the trip and spent a lot of time talking with and listening to the team. As team members were not permitted out of the compound after sundown there was plenty of time devoted each night to

socializing and reflecting on the day and why we were there. The farewell lunch with the recipient family was especially emotional for the team. The family thanked us for being there, for leaving our families and for helping them. We then moved on for three days of rest and relaxation at a resort on the Pacific coast. Again, there was plenty of time for conversation and reflection including a number of speeches and toasts at the final team dinner.

Upon the suggestion of a seasoned Habitat for Humanity Canada Global Village volunteer, I continued writing about the trip and the transition home for the first week back in Canada. This is primarily because the transition home has been one of the biggest topics of conversations from previous volunteers. I experienced this myself when I struggled to brush my teeth at home because I had not been able to use the water directly from the tap while away. These little observations were critical to understanding some of the emotions expressed later in interviews and the descriptions of personal growth and understanding participants expressed.

Second, in May of 2010, I spent a weekend at a wilderness camp north of Toronto, Ontario in order to train to become a Global Village leader and therefore, spent three days with 15 other leaders-in-training. This allowed me to view the program from a completely different perspective and I believe gave me valuable insight as to how the program is run as a whole. Because the course was designed to teach volunteers the practical necessities about being a leader such as volunteer safety, emergency procedures, preparing a budget, etc. it provided a 'behind the scenes' view of Global Village trips. In addition, it was meant to teach the goals of the organization and convey

how the organization networks around the world, how to use those networks abroad, how the volunteers are viewed by the Global Village staff and managed by leaders.

All of the team leaders in the Global Village program are volunteers that have chosen to run trips for the Global Village program and give their time. Team leaders have to be nominated and recommended by their team leader and must have had at least one trip experience. They do not accept everyone. Team leaders are asked for references and a sort of “travel résumé” that includes their experiences abroad, their approach to travel and summary of their leadership skills. The idea is to make sure the most appropriate volunteers make it to the leadership level as having experienced, trained volunteers in place minimizes risks. Compared to all other Habitat for Humanity Canada programs this was the most intense training and screening required of volunteers.

Volunteers were viewed as vital to the organization but it was made clear that not all people were meant to volunteer or represent Habitat for Humanity Canada abroad. For example, partying and drinking were frowned upon and other “challenging cases” such as a parent forcing their kids to come were noted as undesirable. The real goal seemed to be to have all volunteers come for the “right reasons”, those being - to help, to serve and to not cause any trouble in the host country.

Methodologically, becoming a team leader proved an important step in understanding the Global Village program in a holistic way – incorporating both my experience as well as those of the interviewees. A number of interviewees were team leaders themselves. Becoming a leader was also vital in listening to the interviews

because the leaders played such critical roles in not just leading the trip but leading the attitudes and approaches of each team to the task at hand. By taking the team leader training, I was able to see how the Global Village program frames the experience for their leaders. I was also able to observe how this framing manifests in the field and influences volunteer experiences on the ground.

Lastly, following leadership training, I began planning a second trip to El Salvador for the purposes of participant observation. This was done for a number of reasons. First, I wanted to diversify my experience with the Global Village program to more than one team. Second, I wanted to experience the planning of the trip, interviewing of volunteers and all the volunteer management, which comes with approaching a trip from the team leader's perspective. Lastly, I chose to go back to El Salvador so as not to introduce a new set of variables into the analysis. In short, I wanted to focus on the volunteers and less on the differences between, for example, Kenya and El Salvador.

From March 12th to March 21st, 2011, I led twelve anxious and enthusiastic volunteers through the building of two homes in the Usulután region of El Salvador. There was an overwhelming response to the trip advertisement as the dates corresponded with spring break and a number of people, from different professions and backgrounds, were available to travel at this time. The team was selected through an interview process that gave insight as to how different people approach their trips before they go especially if they have no Global Village experience.

As a team leader, I was responsible for all twelve volunteers from their arrival at the San Salvador airport until their departure ten days later and was directly responsible

for the coordination of the team on the ground with the Habitat for Humanity El Salvador staff. The team leader perspective offered, as anticipated, another unique position from which to observe both the volunteers and the organization. Volunteers came to me with their problems, concerns and questions because of my leadership role. Everything, from local history to scheduling to stomach issues, was constantly being discussed and I was responsible for the resultant decisions made. The Usulután affiliate also had to coordinate with me for schedule changes, dietary needs and building materials. All of these interactions resulted in rich data and observations to a depth I had not experienced on my previous trip.

Unlike the other trip, which was located in a disaster area but in a more stable and affluent region of El Salvador, the Usulután region had fewer amenities and the team faced a number of ongoing challenges. For example, the hotel we were housed in for the “build portion” of the trip was at capacity with a large group of Evangelical Americans on a medical/church promoting mission. This led to a number of issues including problematic interactions about space and noise, to the electricity going out and the hotel daily running out of water (which was only available cold). These challenges provided opportunities for me, in the leadership role, to negotiate with another charitable/religious group (the distinction was at times unclear) while reassuring and renegotiating the expectations of my own Global Village team. From a research perspective, the fact that, as a leader, my teammates turned to me for advice, to complain or discuss their struggles, combined with the unique conditions of the hotel

and region, provided the opportunity for many ideas and opinions about working abroad, living conditions, safety and standards, to emerge.

Methodologically, language differences must also be noted. On the first Global Village trip to San Vicente region, we had a translator with us 24 hours a day who was a long-term volunteer from Canada. For this second trip, we had a local translator who was available to us during build hours (8am-430pm) each day. Therefore, this trip, in particular, relied on my intermediate knowledge of Spanish for all of the hotel interactions and the rest and relaxation portion of the trip. While I believe this research could have been completed with a translator, being able to understand Spanish and communicate directly with the staff of the Usulután affiliate office offered depth to the interactions. This was also experienced with the other people we met from El Salvador both at the affiliate and working alongside us (the families and masons). Because I was the only person on the team with Spanish skills, many of the team members' interactions with locals had to be done with me in order to have some translation available. Again, this allowed me to observe the volunteers and their interactions in such a way that would have been unachievable in the basic "team member" role.

Overall, the Global Village program is an ideal example of how participant observation can be used to complement interview data to produce an overall picture of people's experiences. As I progressed through each level of the program, the volunteer's role and the organization's role became clearer. Participant observation from different roles and perspectives was critical to understanding the experience for

the volunteers and later, understanding people's descriptions and understandings of their own experiences.

National Program

Participant observation in the National Program took place in four Canadian cities – Toronto Ontario, Edmonton Alberta, Red Deer Alberta and Hamilton Ontario. The cities were chosen based on a few considerations. Affiliates were chosen in order to give a cross section of Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliates in terms of size, resources and stages of establishment. Toronto and Edmonton are the largest and most established affiliates in Canada. Red Deer was considered a medium sized affiliate and Hamilton, despite being in a larger city center was considered a “grassroots” affiliate as it was just starting with one of its first builds. For practical reasons, affiliates that were open to having a researcher and that were geographically accessible were considered first.

Each affiliate represented a different experience within Habitat for Humanity Canada's National Program. In Toronto, I attended an evening volunteer orientation session and did one day of building at a multi-unit complex with a corporate team. During June of 2010, I traveled to Edmonton where I was able to build for a week and work with many of their “regulars” – or consistent weekly volunteers. In Red Deer, I also worked for five days on a duplex and learned about some of the challenges of poor weather and recruiting volunteers at less exciting stages of building. I was also able to attend and observe the construction committee meetings for that project.

I spent the most time with Habitat for Humanity Hamilton because its proximity to my home made it possible to maintain an ongoing relationship with the builders. Habitat for Humanity Hamilton was building a multi-unit home on Hamilton's East side and I was able to work alongside members of the multiple apprenticeship programs that were working with the organization. Therefore, it was a very different volunteer experience from the others.

As interviews were going on concurrently with the observation of the National Program, it became clear that there were a number of volunteers who built but also those who volunteered in the Re-Store or did both. In order to better understand the experiences of volunteers and the interview data, I completed a Re-Store orientation and then worked a number of shifts at the Re-Store. It was therefore helpful to have a local affiliate so accessible in order to participate in different ways and as opportunities came up.

Working with the volunteers on the site was an insightful and engaging experience. There are many opportunities in a workday to discuss ideas or ask questions of volunteers. The schedule calls for two 20-minute breaks and a one-hour lunch break and volunteers rarely leave the site for these periods. Accordingly, conversation generally revolved around why people were there or how often they volunteered, among other topics. This allowed me access to a number of volunteers who would not necessarily have chosen to give an interview about their time at their local Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliate. Overall, these days of volunteerism and

participant observation are a key part in understanding the corresponding interviews but they also represent important data in and of themselves.

Interviewing

There were two main challenges in conducting interviews for this study. First, for practical reasons – given that the sample came from a number of different regions in Canada- interviews had to be conducted via phone or *Skype*. In many respects this made the research much more efficient and allowed for people who may not have been able to participate in the research for geographical reasons to be potential participants. Telephone interviews, however, do offer challenges in building rapport and it was sometimes challenging to interpret the interviewees' responses and know when to probe simply from the tone of their voice. In most cases, I was able to ask all my questions and additional probes. However, as compared with the face-to-face time with volunteers, these conversations felt more formal and less like easy conversation.

Mutual sharing often helped to encourage a relaxed conversation. For example, volunteers often wanted to know how I had become involved with Habitat for Humanity Canada or where I had done the participant observation section of my work. By having sites in two different regions of the country and talking about what I had “built” so far, I found volunteers were more open with their ideas and thoughts and made comments about how their work related. Rapport was, therefore, slowly built through participant questions such as “well, you know how long a day can seem”, or “so, you came out West? Great!” and “you know how challenging your first trip can be”.

Second, given that Habitat for Humanity Canada can in some ways be regarded a fairly tight community (members often come in contact with each other), it was often challenging to ensure anonymity among respondents especially, if they had talked about being recruited or had recommended fellow teammates or volunteers for the study. People often wanted to talk about the people they knew had already talked with me. For example, one person participated in the study after talking about it with her most recent Global Village team leader. The volunteer then, often made comments or asked questions like “So, did Jessica tell you about this?” or “I’m sure Jessica told you but, we had this one really awful person on our team?” Over time, as I became aware that volunteers were in contact with each other and, as it became clear they often discussed their interviews with each other, I tried to re-word questions or ask participants to discuss their experience from their own perspective.

Conclusion

In this study, I focus on understanding the participant’s experiences and perceptions through the gathering of publicly available information and semi-structured interviewing and attempt to understand the contexts of these ideas, attitudes and beliefs through the use of participant observation. The methods are complementary and were equally important in capturing the volunteer experience. Qualitative research such as this is designed to emphasize in-depth knowledge and contributed to the refinement and elaboration of concepts. Given this study’s goal of exploring the role of context in volunteerism, cultural capital acquisition as well as class influenced ideas in volunteerism,

a combination of approaches is used to capture the complexity of experience that volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Canada demonstrates. *Chapter Three* is the first of five chapters that explores some of the themes that emerged through this research process.

Chapter 3

Volunteer Motivation: Moving Beyond Altruism and Rewards

Introduction

The volunteer literature of the past few decades focuses primarily on volunteer motivations (why become a volunteer?) and debates the merits of rewards-focused or altruism-focused theories. The analysis I present here addresses this debate and demonstrates that using a self-focused and other-focused approach to motivation produces interesting results and that motivations can be easily classified in this way. This traditional approach, however, is inherently limited. What quickly becomes evident when talking to volunteers is that the ideas, opportunities and personal motivations for volunteering are inherently complex. Ultimately, maintaining a strict altruism or personal reward stance is limiting the sociological understanding of volunteerism. Despite the lack of new examples of emerging motivations within the volunteerism literature, most studies continue to limit their analysis of motivation to these two categories when there are an infinite number of ways that motivations combine. As well, other structuring factors such as class can influence the ways these two themes work together in affecting volunteer motivation. For example, social class-based values of hard work and financial responsibility influence how one chooses to give, their beliefs about giving and who is in need. There is far more complexity present than a simple dichotomy of motivation would suggest.

In this case, where poverty-focused volunteers are interested in helping those with housing needs, there is plenty of data to demonstrate that both self-focused and other-focused motivations are present, occurring concurrently, and that the rewards of volunteering need to include items such as prestige and cultural capital (as will be

discussed in detail in *Chapter Four*). This chapter begins with an overview of the motivation literature and gives a traditional self-focused and other-focused analysis. Describing and analyzing volunteer motivation in this way, lays the foundation for two arguments. First, that theories of volunteer motivation must move forward to capture the complexity of motivation as they appear to interact and form a web including both self-interested and altruistic motives. Second, this web is influenced by ones values and ideas of social responsibility and these emerge from middle class ideas of helping, giving and are a demonstration of social position. These arguments are then expanded throughout the thesis.

Volunteer Motivation

Research on volunteerism tends to ask similar survey questions about volunteer motivation with topics such as recruitment, 'being asked', and church attendance being correlated with volunteer participation. Most studies begin with the assumption that we (actors) do things to benefit ourselves (Flashman and Quick, 1984). This contributes to the overall impressions that the reasons individuals have for volunteering have not changed much over time (Schram, 1984). I argue that this limits our view of volunteer motivation and does not represent the modern diversity of volunteer experience (in particular, the ongoing NGO volunteerism boom) and the complex ways class-based beliefs and values structure the experience.

A primary aim of this research is to better understand how different motivations interact and intersect, and to recognize the role of context in inspiring volunteer

participation. The first research sub-question is what motivates Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers to get involved in these types of projects? This question compares why volunteers get involved with each of Habitat for Humanity Canada's programs and what they perceive as the personal advantages and sacrifices related to their participation. In addressing this question qualitatively, this study contributes to a complex and diverse understanding of volunteer motivation that moves beyond the current (anticipated) quantitative response options. Based on the literature (for example, Dekker and Halman, 2003; McMillon et al., 2009; Stebbins, 2007), volunteers were expected to (and did) discuss a diversity of motivations including altruistic or other-focused ideas (such as, "helping out", community building and "giving back") and personal benefit or self-focused ideas (such as, personal growth and personal development).

The literature on motivation tends to polarize volunteer's motivations and distill them into only two categories. Most research on volunteerism presents contradictory findings in that volunteer motives are found to be mainly altruistic or self-interested depending on the scholar's approach to the subject (Stebbins, 2001). Wilson (2000) argues for more research to be conducted about volunteer motives to further the debate as to whether the definition of volunteering should include some reference to motive or intention, or whether it can be conceptually reduced to the simply the public good with no reference to motivation. Some people, for example, use volunteerism for work experience, socializing or other personal perks (Wilson, 2000) and therefore, including altruism in the definition of volunteerism would not suit this group.

Volunteerism is most commonly understood in the academic literature as being composed, at least in part, by altruism. For example, Bussell and Forbes (2002: 246) conclude that “a volunteer *must* have some altruistic motive” and argue that altruism *must* be the central motive for volunteering. Volunteerism scholars working from this perspective would predict that people join Habitat for Humanity Canada projects in an effort to give back to the community – for altruistic reasons. Flashman and Quick (1984: 156) also argue that “altruism is a central, and potentially the central, impetus for volunteer activity”. Although altruism is often thought of as self-sacrifice, it is common for those who are involved in the activities described as altruistic to also have high levels of personal satisfaction (Hays, 2002). In his more recent work, Stebbins (2007) argues that volunteer participants often find something engaging in the core activity and that this is a major motivation for ongoing participation in an activity – enjoyment. He claims that, “the core activity has a value in its own right” (Stebbins, 2007: 5). Therefore, not everyone agrees about how central a role altruism plays in volunteer motivation and altruism itself is a far more complex concept that is often not critically examined in the volunteerism literature. Smith (1982: 35) summarizes another view in that “volunteers of all types tend to be participating for a variety of complex reasons, most of which are definitely not altruistic”.

How participants understand and balance a more complex set of motives that include both community and personal benefits is not addressed in the literature. This study utilizes an approach that sees volunteer motivation as complex and often including altruistic ideas. However, altruism is not seen as simple, selflessness or as existing in

opposition to self-interest. Instead, I use Flashman and Quick's (1984: 160) version of altruism where altruism is "not an all or none behavior; rather, it exists on a continuum – a continuum that unites self-concern and concern for others as mutually reinforcing rather than antagonistic". Research demonstrates that people can derive pleasure from doing something for others and feeling needed because being needed can flatter a person's ego (Dekker and Halman, 2003). In addition, I will argue in *Chapter Four* and *Chapter Five*, the culture of volunteerism promotes and values altruism to such an extent that volunteer groups encourage their participants to adopt an altruistic focus. In the context of researching volunteerism, this perspective makes altruistic responses to research questions seem more socially acceptable.

In their studies of *voluntourism*⁷, Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2010) find that both the tourist groups and their hosts, give and receive something in the experience, which results in what Matthews (2008: 115) describes as "simultaneous expectations" that "foster the discourse of mutual benefit common to alternative tourism". Wilson (2008), however, emphasizes that relying on a service discourse to describe volunteering tends to focus on the positive or virtuous side of volunteerism, while becoming a volunteer can be inspired by negative emotions such as fear, anxiety or guilt. Therefore, focusing on compassion and emotional reasons for altruism must be done carefully because of "the characterization of volunteering as tinged with emotion is socially constructed" (Musick and Wilson, 2008: 23). In this research, understanding how volunteers are motivated by a complex integration of values, time and personal

⁷ Voluntourism is a concept developed in the tourism industry to describe tourism in which volunteers do voluntary work to help communities or the environment in places they are visiting.

advantages and how context (local or global) can affect motivation is a priority. The role of context is not compared in other studies – particularly in a case where the volunteer activity is primarily the same as is the case with Habitat for Humanity Canada (building homes).

In terms of short-term volunteering abroad, most studies focus on the opportunities for, and barriers to, participation and participant motives. Like other kinds of volunteering the altruistic motive is often described by participants as wanting to ‘make a difference’ (Palmer, 2002). Other motivations include educational opportunities, and opportunities for family-bonding (Brown, 2005a). Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2010: 31) argue that “self-development through tourism and an interest in life long educational pursuits have become increasingly powerful motivators for travel” which has led to higher demands for alternative tourism experiences.

The literature overlooks many influences on motivation. For example, social structure affects motivation and this plays out daily in the many affiliates of Habitat for Humanity International. Volunteers tend to be middle class professionals or semi-professionals who are interested in acting on predominantly middle class ideas of social responsibility. Participants, especially in the Global Village program, tend to make above average salaries and receive plenty of vacation time away from paid work. Therefore, volunteering with the Global Village program requires a series of resources not available to everyone and there are certainly elements of socio-economic status that influence this kind of volunteer participation. Therefore, it is also critical to follow the advice of Dekker and Halman (2003) and not conflate general motives with the tangible reasons

for participating. Volunteers often get involved when they do because of factors such as opportunity, timing or new resources. When the focus shifts to either the ways volunteers get involved or why they chose to get involved an important part of the story is lost.

Pearce (1993) finds that volunteers did not seem to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of volunteering before joining but “tried it out” before deciding to join. This is not the case with Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers. Most of the volunteers are very thoughtful about their participation, how they want to spend their time and how much time they have to give. Their approach did not tend to be expressed as a weighing of pros and cons but more of a search for ‘fit’ (an idea that will be expanded in *Chapter Five*) and a desire to find an opportunity within a cause they felt strongly about giving to and being a part of. All were able to express their reasons for volunteering and how they decided to get involved; most did not choose the organization or their level of commitment to it haphazardly.

In the case of National program volunteers, there are multiple levels of participation and different types of work that people tried and got involved with. Participants within the Global Village program are keenly aware of the time and money needed to invest in a volunteer trip and, given that they are interviewed before joining a team, they had to openly think through the consequences of joining a team both for themselves and other team members (for example, if they were mentally ready to work and give back in sometimes difficult conditions). The Global Village program is not an arena where a team member can simply “try out” the experience – practically speaking,

there is simply too much up front commitment and travel. The complex reasons, including tangible items such as opportunity and short shifts, as well as intangible items such as values and ideas of community, that are thoughtfully expressed by volunteers would not have been easily grasped through survey data and are indicative of the respondents having time to reflect on their participation.

Both types of motivation are observed with all volunteers having some sort of blend of both self-focused and other-focused motives. In every case, there is at least a minimum blending of both kinds of motivation and more often, a unique mix of many motivations. The sociological literature tends to look at this idea of both types of motivations occurring simultaneously with skepticism and with a need to sort out the root motivation. These data indicate that there is no one clear motivation that prompts volunteering. Self-directed and other-directed motives work in tandem to benefit multiple parties and cannot be separated from each other without removing a core element of volunteerism. Both groups demonstrate both kinds of motivations equally.

Self-Directed Motivations

The rewards of volunteering and the pursuit of those rewards by volunteers is one of the primary focuses of the volunteer literature. Stebbins and Graham (2004) argue that volunteers must gain something from the experience in order for them to return to the activity and that volunteers seek the rewards of donated work. In general, Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers speak openly and enthusiastically about the many rewards of volunteering, both expected and unexpected. Overall, volunteering is

often described as unique in that “everyone wins”. Five self-directed themes were identified. Self-directed motivations I discuss here include: (1) enjoyment; (2) mental health benefits; (3) personal growth; (4) human capital and opportunities to learn; and (5) community and camaraderie.

Enjoyment

Many volunteers state that the simple enjoyment of volunteering is one of their main reasons for volunteering. As one Global Village participant, Sonya, describes,

I love it! I am very selfish. I enjoy getting away in the winter time so that's part of the experience but, I just love doing my little part to help somebody else and it's not a great big dent in the whole scheme of things but, it's good for the local people. It's great for me.⁸

Participants describe enjoyment as finding pleasure and satisfaction in the type of work itself or, as enjoying the feeling one gets from doing the work. Both groups express finding the work rewarding, as offering a change of pace and/or enjoying the physical experience of the labour. Many participants find that they enjoy doing the actual work of the projects and of the building. Particularly for Global Village participants (due to their often professional occupations at home), the change to manual labour represented a change of pace which many people find pleasing. As well, people take pleasure in working outside and seeing the results of their work. Participants express satisfaction

⁸ Quotes like these are common and immediately draw out the argument I make above that it is impossible in many ways to separate out one motivation or to try to dissect out parts that are altruistic or self-motivated. Here, for example, this participant spoke about her enjoyment of the volunteer experience and her time away from the cold Canadian winter. However, this is coupled with her equally important love for helping others and giving her time to the local people. Her enjoyment comes, in part, from helping. In this way, her motivations must be understood as more complex than the simple divides the literature has relied on in the past.

with a sometimes-grueling day's work (in 30 degree Celsius plus temperatures) and pride in seeing what they can accomplish.

One of the other main goals of the question, “how does volunteering benefit you” was to have participants to describe how volunteering makes them feel. The types of responses demonstrate the complexity in volunteer motivation, such that the “feelings of altruism” (that one is needed, helpful or has a purpose) are pleasant and therefore, are rewarding for many volunteers. Many express feeling great after volunteering or enjoying the “warmth” of giving back – the ‘warm glow’ effect (Andreoni, 1990). One local volunteer, Jennifer, expresses a typical response when she says,

Benefits to me? This might sound a bit on the corny side but, it's that warm fuzzy feeling you get when you've done something. You go out and do something, but you don't have to tell a lot of people what you've done. Yeah, it's that warm fuzzy feeling you get when you've helped somebody less fortunate than you are.

Another National program member, Thomas, describes how he enjoys the work and finds pleasure in his volunteerism,

I enjoy doing what I'm doing because it's kind of a lot of organizational stuff and I really enjoy that. I am obviously of an analytical mind. So, I like to use my mind and I like to help people and I guess, I always found enjoyment in it.

Participants in both programs note the feelings of giving and many people find the feeling of ‘being helpful’ incredibly rewarding. Members of Global Village teams often express having open emotional reactions upon leaving their project and the family they build alongside during their trip. These feelings are comparable to the joy participants of the National program describe feeling at a key turning ceremony (where the family is given

the keys to their new home). For many, the good feelings they are expecting help motivate them but enjoyment is a particularly strong motivator for repeat volunteerism.

Mental Health

Global Village participants and retirees with the National program often talk about the mental health benefits of participation. First, the Global Village experience does have many aspects of a vacation and, therefore, it is not surprising that some understand the trip as a “mental health break” (as one respondent describes it). From another perspective, it is also a physically and emotionally demanding experience. The trips, however, are described as “stress relieving”, “fulfilling”, “rejuvenating” and “uplifting”. This is exemplified in how one Global Village participant, Robyn, explains what she sees as her personal benefits of participating,

Well, mental health first of all. It's building me up. My life is very draining and after a long day it's not quite the same so when you come back from a build here, it's actually quite invigorating. It's not – it doesn't deplete me from energy. It gives me energy actually and I find few things that can fill me up as much as that does. I do travel in other ways too like, I'll mix it up going with Habitat but, it has a different feel from when you do a Habitat build trip.

In my experience on teams and in talking to Global Village participants, this change of pace, change of work and team atmosphere is something that many participants feel lifts their mood and provides a mental health “pick me up”. For many, with very stressful and demanding lives at home, the trip is a part of how they approach stress relief.

In comparison, National program members do not tend to state mental health benefits except those who are not, for various reasons, employed. Some volunteers are

out of work, some are on disability, and many are retirees. For example, as one retiree in the National Program, John, describes,

If I didn't volunteer, I would sit at home and probably not accomplish a lot of anything. So, with volunteering, for me, it gets me up, it gets me going and even though it's only for a few hours a day or whatever it is, I'm a happier person at the end of the day.

These respondents tend to look at volunteerism as a “way to keep busy” or “fend off boredom”. Many feel it offers them some structure to their day as well as social interaction and a place to go where they feel needed. Volunteerism appears to be a key way that seniors and retirees can meet some of their mental health needs. While the dynamics of volunteerism and retirement are not a primary focus of this research, retirees are a unique and important group and more research would be of benefit to both the organization and future volunteers.

Personal Growth and Development

Another motivational theme is the desire for personal growth or, as Brown (2005a) finds the desire for self-actualization. For example, one Global Village volunteer named Marc expresses his experience with the program in this way,

I really think it makes me grow as a person; I have so much to give and no real outlet to give. I haven't – I'm not married, I have no kids, so this is a great way of kind of sharing, sharing myself with others.

There is a strong desire in both groups to push oneself and continue to learn and grow including learning new things but also, developing new areas of the self. This includes developing leadership skills, confidence and time management skills as well as gaining teamwork experience and self-awareness. While this is one of the harder themes for

interviewees to express, it is often expressed during observation when enthusiasm for trying something new is high. As well, I often observed Global Village participants being very open-minded, patient and less self-focused as trips progressed – this is a development that many Global Village team members feel is invaluable to them.

The Global Village case offers a unique understanding of this desire for personal growth or to “push oneself”. Stebbins and Graham (2004) argue that traditional models of tourist motivation do not fit well with the motivations of international volunteers. For Global Village volunteers, who generally focus on the volunteerism over the tourism portion of the trip, this is especially true. Global Village volunteers are more likely to be motivated by a desire to change their day-to-day routine (though not exclusively as some National program volunteers also discuss this desire for change). This is consistent with Hudson and Inkson’s (2006: 311) findings with overseas volunteer development workers that “often, part of the attraction was to generate change in a conventional life”.

Another growth-focused motivational theme Brown (2005b) notes, which is seen repeatedly in both the National and Global Village programs, is the desire on the part of parents to expose their children to different groups of people, daily challenges and different ways they can contribute to society. For example, when I acted as leader for the Global Village trip, two teenage girls were participants and their parents were incredibly keen to include them on the trip in order to have family bonding time and help them better understand both their own community (with gratitude) and the one they were working in (with new compassion). Brown (2005a: 489) finds with her

volunteers (working on an organic farm in Central America) that “in the case where volunteer vacationers travelled with their children, informants agreed that the volunteer experience was an opportunity for them to impart their value system to their children”. While this is most commonly discussed in relation to children, many volunteers state their desire to do trips and have this type of educational experience with other family members, spouses and friends for similar reasons.

This sharing of values is not limited to the volunteers who traveled abroad. There are many instances where teenagers are encouraged to participate in Habitat for Humanity Canada local builds. For example, as one single mother of two and National Program volunteer, Colleen, explains,

My kids were starting to complain that maybe they didn't have as much money as other people did or many of their friends who of course come from a two parent family with more substantial jobs than myself and so, I thought it was a good thing to take them to _____ and show them – make them a little more socially aware – so that was initially why we did it. A friend of mine and four other kids went to work at the Friendship Inn and serve a meal there. So, it was mostly my motivating factor initially to make my kids more socially conscious.

There are often youth or family members participating for reasons such as family bonding, social awareness, and teaching values. Other youth are involved because they are doing their community service hours for high school (a 40 hour requirement in the province of Ontario) or are doing community service hours as a part of legal sentences. These interactions with youth are among the highlights for some volunteers. As many adult volunteers have little to no contact with “the youth of today”, they feel it offers them the opportunity to learn from younger people and also, many parents feel that it also shows a side of teenagers that is not normally shown in the media. Therefore,

personal growth for participants often comes from contact with new social groups, breaking down barriers (stereotypes) and working on a diverse team.

Human Capital and Opportunities to Learn

Closely linked to the idea of personal growth is the desire to develop human capital or seek out opportunities for learning. Studies find that volunteerism is well received by friends and colleagues and is sometimes used to as a way to build skills or gain employment (Wilson, 2000) and when people are strongly motivated they tend to want to work competently and be useful to the organization (Drucker, 1990). Very few participants describe using Habitat for Humanity Canada to get work experience or gain better employment - to build human capital. One recent university graduate felt it would be helpful to him to join the Global Village program but it was not his main motivation; Rob says,

I mean, it was like a genuine interest in actually going and volunteering but it was also the fact that in order to be in [most positions] you needed international development experience before you can go, so it was kind of a cycle and you had to break into it somewhere so I figured going away on a trip like Habitat was a good way to kind of, you know, get the initial kind of even nominal experience and actually then I could apply for jobs where I could get more meaningful and actual experience and that kind of thing. So, it was kind of both reasons. I just wanted to go. I thought it would be fun. I thought it would be interesting and because I needed international experience and because I couldn't get a job without it, it was a good start.

While these types of stories are not common, others do express that their trip affected the type of work they end up looking for upon graduation or that their volunteerism influences their educational choices. One woman, for example, went back to school and

did a Masters of International Development in order to go into the development field after two Global Village trips.

Other participants are unemployed or graduating and looking for ways to spend their time or gain work experience. Beyond human capital building and maintaining mental health, seeking a community to keep from being isolated at home is also seen as an important motivator for some. As Carol, a National Program volunteer describes after being unemployed for a number of months,

I wanted to find a way to keep busy and connect with my community because when you're unemployed you can be really isolated at times and it's not easy to be unemployed.

In another case, a man I worked with while building with the National program is working with Habitat for Humanity Canada a couple of days a week because he feels it gets him out the house. In addition, he enjoys the other participants, it make him feel useful and when potential employers ask what he has been doing while he is out of work he can talk about his volunteerism. Volunteering is a socially acceptable way to spend 'unemployed time' that may otherwise be viewed negatively as unproductive time.

While these participants do not tend to state that they are looking for human capital development or learning opportunities nearly everyone is quick to point out that they believe it is possible to do so through volunteerism. Those in hiring positions in the paid work arena mention that they would look at the type of volunteering someone has done when considering hiring. In fact, many feel that the leadership and inter-personal skills developed through volunteerism are just as valuable as other work experience. While many young volunteers, in particular, are hesitant to talk about the way they may

use volunteering to get a job, it is clear that volunteering offers great learning prospects. The desire to seem altruistic and not like you are being selfish, or participating solely for self-directed reasons, influences how people want to talk about these kinds of rewards. Certainly, the social construction of volunteering, as needing to first come from an other-directed place, influences how volunteers discuss this type of motivation. Ironically, when many NGOs are hiring, volunteer experience and work experience are held nearly equal in value and applicants are encouraged to include any relative paid or unpaid experience. With the positive association of volunteerism to applicant ability on the job market, framing the volunteer experience as a human capital building activity is advantageous for volunteers and yet volunteers are hesitant to talk about their volunteering in this way, as they do not want to seem selfish in their motivations.

Community and Camaraderie

Many participants, for varying reasons, talk about the ways being involved with Habitat for Humanity Canada's programs helps them connect with others. Many people working full-time jobs in addition to volunteering express the desire to do more but also that they find their volunteer work to be a different kind of work that often provides balance to their professional lives. Two stories that best display this phenomenon are:

For myself, I had a change in jobs in about 2003, 2004 and I no longer worked at the local high school. I work for the school district in _____ and, I guess, it's a great job, I love it. I'm a district consultant there but, I'm not as connected to the activities that go hand in hand with school life. I no longer coach community or school based sport teams or engage in those kinds of activities. So, I think after a year or so of working there, I started to realize that there was a part of my life that was missing and the opportunity had come – getting involved with Habitat started to fill that void. (David, National Program)

For me, being in law enforcement, I see a lot of the dark side of stuff – to be able to volunteer with Habitat, I get to reach out and there's an absolute benefit to the community that I'm working in so that – how to phrase it – it's the better side of the community that they may be in need of assistance but, they're on the – they're doing their best in the situation and it's a case of being able to help those who are less fortunate who are also helping themselves. So it's a positive one – a more positive thing as opposed to constantly being on the job where you are going to the same group of people saying – look, I've counseled you to do this, I've counseled you how to get out of this mess but you keep going back and they're not helping themselves. So, it's a way to get a positive connection with the community as opposed to just the job. (Cheryl, National Program)

This relationship between paid work and volunteerism is a common theme for many employed participants. It appears that unpaid work takes on a different meaning than paid work and offers different links to the community for volunteers.

Another motivational theme in the literature (Brown, 2005a; McGehee and Norman, 2002; McMillon et al., 2009; Wilson, 1973) that participants in both groups express is the enjoyment of camaraderie. The Global Village trips, in particular, tend to bring together like minded people from across Canada and many people cite “the wonderful people you meet” as motivation for ongoing volunteerism. Global Village trips offer free time in the evening where groups discuss ideas, reflect on their day and talk about what they are learning about their surroundings. This type of sharing is encouraged by the program's directors and Global Village leaders are taught to facilitate and view these evening activities as critical to group bonding and the success of the trip. Beyond collecting data, there were many opportunities to talk and reflect offered by the team leader on my first trip and I felt many people purposely sought me out to talk about their ideas when I was in the role of team lead. While this is not a strong

motivational factor for first time volunteers, it is the most important motivational theme after participants have taken their first trip.

National program volunteers also talk about socializing and camaraderie though they do not tend to make the long lasting friends that Global Village participants often claim to make. For example, their discussions of camaraderie tend to be more general and focus on their specific community,

I believe that you have to give back. I enjoy the camaraderie with other people, working together as a team with other people. We're all trying to accomplish the same thing – just having fun. (Meryl, National Program)

I get social exposure as I said before that notion of placing myself in my community. I constantly learn or have an opportunity to learn or apply new skills that I have in terms of either communication or decision-making or parliamentary procedure or whatever it might be. So, but I think a big one for me is the social aspect of making contact with people and like I say, defining what my community is by the people in it. (Stephen, National Program)

While National program volunteers openly speak on the site about teamwork and enjoying working on a team, they tend to talk about socializing and getting out of the house as opposed to making friends. The intensity of social interaction is very different between the groups as Global Village trips offer more time and more structures that support the development of friendships.

Moreover, there is evidence that volunteer retention is influenced by the specific reasons volunteers started to participate in the first place (Pearce, 1993), and that volunteers who do not get a great deal out of working for the organization will not commit to the group and volunteer long term (Drucker, 1990). However, initial motivations are somewhat different than the reasons volunteers choose to continue volunteering. Once volunteers experience the rewards of volunteerism and find

enjoyment in the activity, they are far more likely to remain committed and motivated. In general, initial reasons for volunteering are not separated from ongoing motivations or reasons for ongoing participation but there is evidence that motivations may change over time as one learns about, and gets more comfortable with different organizational expectations and settings. Therefore, it is necessary to begin separating initial motivations from ongoing motivations in future studies and to consider looking into this issue more deeply with long-term or serial volunteers.

Overall, the self-directed motivations of volunteers are varied and combine in many different ways. As it can be seen from many of the quotes here, ideas about the personal benefits of volunteering are integrated with other-directed reasons for volunteering. People do not tend to separate their motives into selfish and altruistic in the ways that sociologists do. Some level of self-interested motivation is expected (it is generally acceptable in the volunteer community to talk about the ideas mentioned above); however, it should be noted that it is considered unacceptable to be volunteering for purely selfish reasons. This too provides strong evidence for the argument that volunteers are motivated in complex and dynamic ways and the culture of volunteerism structures motives or the expression of motivations influencing what ideas are acceptable or the 'right reasons'.

Other-Directed Motivations

All the volunteers in this study talk about "helping", "making a difference" or "giving back" as some part of their reasons for volunteering. There are variations on

this theme from incredibly dedicated social activists and people with a deep sense of social responsibility who feel a duty to act, to those who simply feel they could give time. Accordingly, there is some evidence that Flashman and Quick's (1984: 156) argument that "altruism is a central and potentially *the* central impetus for volunteer activity" has some basis and that altruism and "giving" play a very important role in volunteer motivation. Even if altruism is not the central reason for volunteering, it is likely that this would be the most socially acceptable answer and the one given first among many.

The desire to give back is a strong motivational factor. There are many reasons why people want to give time and the motivations people talk about are varied and complex because "giving back" is layered with one's potential rewards, values, and ability to do so. Overall, four themes of other-directed motivation are identified: (1) beliefs and ideas about helping; (2) religion; (3) feeling fortunate; and (4) the 'cause' or 'need'.

Beliefs and Ideas about Helping

Most people do not work for a non-profit unless they share, at least in part, in the vision of the organization. This vision and their own values are an important motivational factor. Motivational themes around beliefs and values are prevalent including themes of social justice, social responsibility and gratitude, religion and spirituality and self-improvement. Believing in "the cause" is not something well addressed in the literature, nor is the influence the organization has in making the cause seem approachable and accessible. One reason for this is that these ideas are deeply

linked to volunteer meaning making (particularly class-based ideas of helping as will be discussed in *Chapter Four*) and are influenced by organizational framing (an idea discussed in detail in *Chapter Five*).

Dekker and Halman (2003: 5) examine volunteers and values and find that people “derive pleasure from doing something that is needed by others, simply ‘being needed’ flatters their ego”. There is no doubt that volunteering provides meaning for many participants, although whether this fully reflects the concept of “being needed” for many of these volunteers is unclear. Most participants talk about giving, donating or doing “my little part” rather than seeing themselves as crucial to the success of the project. As one National program volunteer, Gordon explains,

One of the biggest things I get out of it is seeing people come in and feel like they’ve contributed. One of the things I do is, I’m a crew leader on a construction site so, I will have a group of people who are volunteers and they may have never done any type of construction work. So, it’s an enjoyment that I get, probably similar to when I was working. I would get a lot of enjoyment from seeing people learning something, accomplish something and go away feeling like they accomplished something.

The ability to see the difference the work makes and the tangible rising of the house walls is motivational to many and keeps people coming back. Values around giving, helping and participating in the community all emerge as motivational for volunteers. Many volunteers feel their volunteerism represents their values and demonstrates an ability to put their beliefs and ideas about helping into action.

Religion

For some, these same types of values or ideas come from a more religious footing. Habitat for Humanity, while inclusive of all faiths, retains its “Christian ethos” and therefore, some Global Village builds, for example, include daily prayer and devotionals. Drawing attention to this, there are participants in both groups that discuss their religious beliefs as being at the core of their volunteerism. Many participants can relate to this idea of “helping one’s brother” as laid out in the Christian faith and see their volunteerism as Christian service. As one Global Village volunteer, Jeff summarizes, “I really think spiritually, being Christian, the Lord stresses us to look after - big time - the poor and the needy”. Others are less specific about the way their spiritual beliefs influenced them. Sherry, a veteran in the Global Village program explains her approach as,

You know, we are very blessed in this country and I think it’s my faith that makes me do it and I think it’s, you know, part of God’s plan that we reach out and help those less fortunate and when you’re able to and you can do it – then I think it’s the best thing in the world you can do.

The desire to help and the call to action as contained within many faith groups often encourages volunteerism and service work and these values can be seen in how Habitat for Humanity is structured and how some volunteers view their work. Most volunteers do not cite any influence of religion on their volunteerism. However, for those that do (in both groups) it is usually their strongest motivating factor.

Feeling Fortunate

Another other-directed motivational theme is the idea that one should give back when they are fortunate or blessed in their own lives. Many people feel that giving back is a part of being grateful and this is motivational. One of Brown's (2005a) major motivational themes (in her study of 'voluntour' farm workers) is the desire to give back and reach out to those less privileged. She finds that many participants "felt that they do well in life and wanted to give back" (Brown, 2005a: 488). These types of feelings are mirrored in many of the Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers' responses, as the words of these two participants (one from each program) show,

I look at my own peers and a lot of us said, you know what, we've worked hard, we've got successful careers of one kind or another so, what else is there to do? I decided to give back. (Anne, National Program)

I recognize that I have been pretty fortunate in my life and had a lot of opportunities. You know, I've had great parents, I get that there is a sense that I should contribute back to my community and internationally if I can just based on the fact that I know I have been very lucky. So, I think that there is some duty and it gives you a citizen that is well engaged as well. (Matthew, Global Village Program)

Feeling gratitude for life's successes and wanting to help others be successful or have opportunities is seen in both groups. However, I argue, it is more predominant in the Global Village group. Because the disparity between the volunteers and the recipients is so much greater and donation money goes so much further, volunteers become optimistic about how much they can help. The social class difference (that are a result of cultural disparities and global economic circumstances) between the volunteers and those they are helping, influences how strongly people express this theme. Volunteers do not generally view the housing recipients as members of their social class and

generally view themselves as living in a more privileged position. In this way, social position and social class become a part of what is acted out on in the volunteer field.

The Cause or Need

At Habitat for Humanity Canada, one organizational goal is that each volunteer feels they have some small part in the overall success of the NGO and this approach is echoed in some of the volunteers' responses. Sarah, a Global Villager, describes that she is motivated because of her perceived contribution,

My motivation is that I can actually – I have the ability to do something. I cannot do everything but, I can do something that actually helps, especially the situation where it helps kids and families with kids. The motivation is that a difference can be made.

The way Habitat for Humanity Canada frames and approaches helping makes the work seem doable and accessible and is designed to make everyone's contribution seem important and critical to the overall success of the individual projects and the organization. This approach is appealing to both groups and can be motivational as it helps raise the confidence and optimism of volunteers.

Volunteers express their motivations in terms of the cause and the role the organization can play in educating others about what individuals can do to help. As one other-directed National program volunteer, Shirley, explains,

You know, I believe in the whole cause of Habitat, in their mission and their vision. Like, I can see a need for putting families into homes where they have a future and that's what keeps me going, seeing the looks on the faces of the people just getting chosen to get a home and they're so excited and sometimes that home isn't going to be built for a year and a half to two years and they still have got that hope and our vision statement – a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. I think that is what keeps me going.

Seeing the need and wanting to address it is at the core of altruistic motivation. While this action is often taken through a volunteer organization, the desire to help others in its basic form is still present.

For some Global Village volunteers, particular world events have given them the impetus to volunteer: for example, the earthquake in Haiti (2010); landslides related to hurricane Mitch (1998); or the earthquake in Chile (2010). The Global Village program tends to have an influx of volunteers when disasters occur as people seek opportunities to help in areas that are in extreme distress or are receiving extensive media coverage⁹. As Gerry, a Global Village volunteer explains when asked about his trip to a disaster region,

I guess the motivation that, like, I see that like, I'm fortunate to be a white guy born in Canada and it's not because I did anything. So, my motivation is that I've been fortunate and I see the world around me, that there are people who have not been as lucky as me and I can do something about it.

Becoming aware of a need in the world and wanting to take action is a much more common theme for Global Village participants. National Program volunteers, by comparison, tend to focus on ideas of community and giving back before concerns of 'need'.

Walker (2008) finds, when studying the link between volunteer association participation and social movement participation, that people generally are not motivated by specific desire to be politically engaged when they start volunteering but that

⁹ Habitat for Humanity Canada does not send volunteers into emergency situations. Instead, they usually collect donations and then will use these donations to support the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate. When teams are going to a 'disaster area', it is usually months or years later to help with ongoing recovery efforts.

volunteerism can lead to participation in social movements. That is, as one becomes more educated about an issue and more integrated in a change focused community, the chances of further participation are likely to increase. This is likely because participation begets participation, and because ideas and values around social responsibility are stimulated and reinforced by being involved. While many participants come to Habitat for Humanity Canada to take action or start “doing something”, the organization plays a critical role in how volunteers approach their work.

It is evident that the self-directed and other-directed motivations volunteers express here do not have to be antagonistic. Motivations do not represent opposing forces but are a part of a complex web of ideas and opportunities that lead to participation. Maintaining the altruism versus personal reward stance hinders the sociological understanding of volunteer motivation (and influence the ways academics approach volunteerism in general). Recent studies find few new self-directed or other-directed motivations (this study also finds the expected motivational factors) and a large amount of motivation-focused literature already exists that describes the types of motivations volunteers discuss. These types, however, combine in an infinite number of ways and it is important to begin theorizing how they combine, recombine, change over time and the structural factors that influence volunteer choices.

Flashman and Quick's (1984) work was produced more than 25 years ago and offers the idea that altruism is not an all or none behaviour but exists on a continuum of self-concern and concern for others. These results indicate that there is far more

complexity within volunteer motivations than can be captured on a continuum. Volunteer motivations are better understood as occurring within an interlocking and intersecting web. This web of motivation is expected to have both other-focused and self-focused motivations and to change with different experiences. It may look different in the international context (such as the Global Village program) or at different life stages (for example, in retirement) to name just two possible intervening factors that participants speak to here. The different ways motivation can come together, in all of its complexity, as well as how it can change and what patterns emerge in different types of volunteerism can then be theorized because studies would be moving beyond the current debate.

Further, when motivation is understood as being a complex and evolving set of ideas, feelings and knowledge, then we (as sociologists) can begin to explore where these ideas, feeling and beliefs come from. In this case, as will be addressed in *Chapter Four*, social class emerges as an important underlying and intervening structural influence. Overall, the motivations volunteers express are both altruistic and self-interested and individuals recognize the mutual benefits of volunteering as one of the rewards of participating in this kind of activity.

Conclusion

Becoming a volunteer is a complex process of learning, finding an opportunity and participating. While there is plenty of literature that continues the altruism/rewards debate, there appears to be no reason why the definition of volunteerism needs to

include specifics about volunteer motivation. Volunteer motivations appear to always include a complex mix of ideas and experiences around values, rewards, giving and what needs to be done.

Habitat for Humanity Canada offers a unique case because it represents a truly modern volunteer experience that can be researched using a website, supported with online fundraising, done at the volunteers' convenience and on a short-term basis. This organization represents, in many ways, the cutting edge of project-based volunteerism both locally and internationally. The reasons why NGOs are interested in understanding why and how volunteers get involved are obvious, as volunteers represent a critical resource pool. Sociologically, however, it is important to understand the motivations of volunteers because the motives are clearly linked to the meaning volunteers make from their participation, their ideas about society and social change and their values, particularly class-based values (related to helping, giving and community).

Dekker and Halman (2003) warn that it is important to not confuse motives with the tangible reasons that people volunteer. It is true that motives and reasons can differ; however, they also have an essential relationship. The reasons people take the step to join an organization or show up at the worksite may not be the same as their motivations. Motivations are deeply linked to values and beliefs even more so than the convenience of a shift or the fact that the trip is at the school break and can be taken with your daughter. Available opportunities and practical conveniences, however, are also critical to someone getting involved.

It is important to note that motivations are often “measured” using quantitative methods (Lang, 1984; McGhee, 2002; Musick and Wilson, 2008; Schram, 1984; Wilson, 2000) and, in general, data (as here) is collected after the volunteer has had time to be educated and reflect on their participation. There is, therefore, a strong possibility that had volunteers been asked about their desire to participate and why, prior to their first experience, they may have given different answers. In most cases, ideas about why to commit or continue are different than the initial reasons for volunteering; overall, reasons evolve over time as volunteers gain experience and knowledge and are more exposed to the organization’s approach.

Structural factors organize the experience of volunteering in terms of opportunities, what volunteering means to those who do it, cultural capital, social capital and the kinds of organizations people join. Therefore, this dissertation moves beyond the altruism debate to argue that far more complexity is evident than a simple altruism/selfish dichotomy and structuring factors, social class in particular, are influencing the experience. The following chapters expand this argument and give evidence to the many ways the experience is influenced by social class. The remaining chapters of this dissertation, therefore, focus on the ways volunteerism can be understood when looking beyond the altruism versus self-focused debate. Motivation and participation in general, need to be understood as a complex social phenomenon influenced by both individual and structural factors. Social class, in particular, emerges as an organizing influence, not just, in who volunteers but also, in how the culture of

volunteerism has developed and how the activity finds its value in the broader community.

Chapter 4

Volunteering, Identity and the Role of Capital

Introduction

Identities represent a mix of both individual and structural factors. Until recently, the literature on volunteerism has been predominantly focused on individual level factors and the influence of social class as determinants of volunteer status (participant/non-participant). As an activity whereby individuals can display, reinforce or develop their identities, it is evident that volunteerism has the potential to endow identities with new attributes, ideas and meanings. This study contributes to the volunteerism literature by examining the role of class on volunteerism. Overall, it argues that an application of Bourdieu's work enlightens previously held ideas about the meaning volunteers give to the idea of volunteerism and their participation. Given this study's focus on class, Bourdieu's work on class and social distinction as well as the symbolic value attached to socially valued actions are applied to highlight some of the links between identities, values and volunteerism.

In this chapter, I argue that volunteerism is a powerful symbolic system through which actors (volunteers) demonstrate their social class (distinction) and acquire what Bourdieu calls 'cultural capital'. Pierre Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu, 1986) theorizes that social class and social status are maintained in society through acts of distinction and the acquisition of cultural capital. Distinction refers to the choices agents make to present themselves in ways that demonstrate their status and distinguish themselves from lower groups (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital is a kind of specialized cultural knowledge (especially class-related knowledge) such as an understanding of the fine arts. Cultural capital is essentially a set of knowledge; whereby the skills, education and social

advantages that a person has can lead to a higher status in society. As social constructs, distinction and cultural capital are intrinsically linked as “differences in cultural capital make the differences between the classes” (Bourdieu, 1984: 66).

Volunteering can be one way of acquiring different types of capital including social capital and cultural capital. I argue that volunteerism is a fertile ground for developing cultural capital, as it is also an act of distinction. As volunteering is a predominantly middle class activity, it presents an opportunity to distinguish one’s self as middle class (particularly in the case of international volunteerism). As a high status activity, the symbolic value of volunteerism is also high. This is the result of how the middle class values giving back and helping behaviours. This symbolic value is further bolstered in the way volunteer organizations promote these values and (as I will argue in *Chapter Five*) frame their importance.

Volunteerism, Identity and Class

There are a number of ways to approach identity and meaning making for volunteers. Bourdieu (1984) argues that individuals and groups draw on cultural, symbolic and social resources in order to maintain, improve and demonstrate their position in the social order. The struggle for social distinction (regardless of symbolic form) is, for Bourdieu, a fundamental dimension of all social life (Swartz, 1997). Class distinction is, therefore, achieved through the demonstration of ‘good taste’ and one can demonstrate good taste through lifestyle choices.

Social actors, from this perspective, are always trying to establish themselves on a series of hierarchically organized fields and symbolic systems, but this is just one of many ways that social agents can demonstrate their position and try to enhance it. Bourdieu (1984) argues that how one chooses to present his or her social space is also a reflection of his or her social status. In this way, one's tastes serve as acts of distinction – they demonstrate one's social position. Social identity, then, becomes important in understanding a social experience such as volunteerism as the ways one symbolically lives their lifestyle becomes representative of their social status. Actors are interested in portraying themselves in particular ways that demonstrate their social class. In order to achieve this, individuals rely on what Bourdieu calls 'cultural capital'.

Bourdieu (1986) expands the common and economical sense of the word capital by "employing a wider system of exchange whereby assets of different kinds of capital are transformed and exchanged within complex networks or circuits and across different fields" (Moore, 2008: 102). The concept was developed to analyze the impact of culture on the class system and explore the relationship between social structure and action (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). Cultural capital is cultivated through the socialization process (especially class related knowledge), through specialized cultural knowledge such as an understanding of the fine arts or scientific instruments and, in an institutionalized form, through the education system (Swartz, 1997). Cultural capital has many roles in social interactions and is a part of a symbolic system that finds its foundation in underlying power relations.

Bourdieu's ideas of distinction and cultural capital, taken together, represent an opportunity for a more structurally focused analysis of action and provide a sociologically powerful framework for examining some of the taken-for-granted aspects of daily life. Lamont and Lareau (1988: 156) propose a definition of cultural capital that is less bound to the French context and offer the idea that cultural capital is made up of institutionalized and "widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for cultural exclusion". This definition moves away from Bourdieu's stricter definition of cultural capital that tends to focus on "high culture" and status filled knowledge such as appreciation of the fine arts. Instead, this definition allows for other activities (particularly those valued in American society) to emerge as high status and signals attached to these activities can be considered a form of cultural capital so long as they are "defined as high status cultural signals by a relatively large group of people" (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 156). It is the institutionalized or 'shared' quality of these signals that makes them salient status markers in society.

Using Lamont and Lareau's (1988) expanded understanding of the concept, volunteering can be understood as one way of acquiring cultural capital and, as it is a predominantly middle class activity, may be one way of distinguishing oneself as a member of the middle class. For example, Zavitz (2004: 66) finds that the volunteer abroad experience "can be used strategically by volunteers to construct the identity they desire to portray and to differentiate themselves from others". In other words, through volunteering, participants can develop what Bourdieu (1986) calls 'cultural capital' as

volunteer participation is seen as a means of increasing personal prestige and enhancing one's social position. The ways that cultural capital are acquired and understood in volunteerism are not addressed in the volunteerism literature. It is unlikely that all kinds of volunteerism hold equal levels of cultural capital or that some form of volunteer hierarchy of capital does not emerge. The roles cultural capital and class identity play in volunteerism, especially international volunteerism, are explored in this study using the Habitat for Humanity Canada case.

Tajfel (1981: 255) describes social identities as “that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Stryker (2000), using Tajfel (1981), argues for a more cultural approach to identity where the self, for all members of society, made up of the ideas, beliefs and practices of a society and people move back and forth between groups and settings where they experience identity salience. I approach the notion of identity in ways similar to those outlined by Stryker (2000: 36) in that identities influence actions and are “transitional, self-reinforcing and motivational”. The volunteer work that one engages in, therefore, is expected to resonate with the participants' beliefs and values and may change over time.

Important to this study of volunteerism is Shamir's (1990) understanding of how values and identities interact and influence action. *Value identities* are based in the commitment to and conception of oneself in terms of one's values and with respect to both desired personal qualities and social conditions (Shamir, 1990). Values, from this perspective, serve as both “standards by which to live, and goals to which to strive”

(Gecas, 2000: 95). Therefore, by acting in accordance with one's values, a process of confirmation takes place where a person affirms their moral commitments (Shamir, 1990). This affirmation is part of what gets and keeps people involved as volunteers. However, given that recruitment and retention are key issues in volunteerism there is also a great deal of interest in understanding how people see themselves as volunteers and what encourages their commitment to volunteerism. These questions have been largely unexplored especially in the area of international volunteerism. As well, the relationship between values and the middle class notion of helping is a well-noted gap in the volunteerism literature.

Mustonen (2005) suggests that when people incorporate volunteering into their travel it is on the basis of their values and how they view themselves. Throughout the volunteer travel literature, many researchers (for example, Lyons and Wearing, 2008; McGhee and Santos, 2005; Taylor and Whittier, 1992) found that participants maintain the sentiment of 'personal as political'. Callanan and Thomas (2005) argue that these kinds of projects have 'symbolic value' and can be seen as a 'worthy' activity. Urry (1990) calls this symbolic consumption. This idea of symbolic consumption is clearly linked to ideas of social and cultural capital, as a person's consumption choices are associated with their beliefs and values which, I argue, are demonstrations of status. What kind of vacation (volunteer experience, voluntour experience) one purchases can therefore be seen as having symbolic value.

Despite not being addressed in the literature, the idea that there is symbolic value in how one spends their time can be expanded and applied to the Habitat for

Humanity Canada case. I argue that conceptualizing the donation of time in this way, allows for the exploration of the links between social and cultural capital, class, values and time. As claims from programs and organizations are being made (around what donating time or money means), it is important to sociologically contextualize this kind of meaning and identity building in order to recognize structural (as well as individual) influences.

Exploring identities is critical to understanding volunteerism. While the volunteer literature focuses predominantly on micro or individual level factors, identities, I argue, are a complex mix of both structural and individual factors. Volunteerism may be able to endow identities with new attributes, ideas and meanings (Peteet, 2000). The second research sub-question asks (in the qualitative tradition) how volunteers understand and make meaning from their experiences with Habitat for Humanity Canada and what individual and structural factors influence the meanings they make? This question emphasizes the volunteer's understanding of their own participation and explores if there are differences in the meaning they make from their volunteerism given different volunteer contexts. What does being a volunteer mean to them and how does their social position (especially social class) influence this meaning? The ways volunteers reflect on their participation, the value of their participation in their lives (cultural capital) and how they understand giving are key points of interest. By using a comparative qualitative design, I explore the ways participants understand their participation and the role self-development plays in each context is explored.

Sociologically, volunteerism (and the meaning people make from being volunteers) is usually understood by applying the leisure literature, which focuses on personal growth and puts volunteerism in under one category or another as a type of leisure because it is not paid work. The dichotomy of work or leisure plagues the volunteerism literature with approaches to volunteerism having to straddle two realms. Volunteering needs to be theorized beyond the leisure/work dichotomy in order to represent the complexity found in this as well as many other studies (Brown, 2005a; Eliasoph, 2011; Graham, 2004; Wearing et al., 2010). The volunteer experiences observed in this study are deeply influenced by class and, in particular middle class values of hard work, deservingness and the value of being involved in one's community. The ways that people act out these values and uphold their class ideology is explored as different hierarchies of volunteerism and giving are clearly established in the belief systems of volunteers. By applying Bourdieu's ideas of class distinction, the analysis of this volunteer data focuses on social status, prestige and cultural capital acquisition.

This second findings chapter is divided into three main sections that explore first, volunteer identities and the role of values in volunteerism. Second, the theory of symbolic consumption is applied to the volunteer case to examine the way volunteer choices represent a strategic demonstration of class and social identity. Last, it examines the differences between donating time and donating money and the symbolic hierarchy of giving that emerges.

Value Identities

This chapter explores value identities and their role in volunteerism as the “values of volunteering” emerged as an important influencing factor when considering how Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers perceive their volunteerism. There is a high degree of commitment and identity salience around value identities for volunteers. Volunteers see volunteering as a way to express their values and demonstrate their commitment to the values of giving and community. In the context of this work, volunteers are very interested in demonstrating a positive image both for themselves and for the organization they choose to volunteer with.

Given that volunteerism has been a long standing aspect of North American life, Schram (1984) argues that it is logical to assume that socialization plays a role in the continuing of volunteerism as a phenomenon. For these Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers, there is an important role for socialization either through a demonstration of helping behaviour by parents or the passing down of values of community (the socialization of middle class values to middle class kids). For example, participants were asked if they were raised with the values that led them to volunteer. As Barb, a National program volunteer responds,

Yes, we were raised with very strong values of community. I was raised in a very small community and then when I was married we moved to the city and I was always involved in – mostly with nursing homes – I’m still involved with that.

Many volunteers claim that they were “raised with” the values of volunteering or that their parents are active volunteers in some way – either through organizations or just “being neighbourly” or “helping out people in the neighbourhood”. Others offer that

they had not been exposed to volunteerism when they were growing up but have developed their own values around community due to their own hardship (and then being supported by the community) or their desire to help their friends.

Participants describe the values of volunteering in many ways and discuss how those values, when manifest through action, represent a part of their identity. In terms of meaning making, the most important reflections volunteers offer are related to the development and maintenance of value identities. As Wuthnow (1994: 241) describes, volunteer work is “a way of demonstrating that one is a good and decent person”. Many volunteers are very interested in demonstrating a positive image for both themselves and the organization and identify strongly with their giving behaviour. As Jeanette, an experienced Global Village volunteer says, “My kids call me a volunteer junkie”. This participant sees this statement from her children as a kind of honour and feels pride in the fact that they view her this way. Her identity as a volunteer is essential to who she understands herself to be and how she wants to be viewed by her family and community.

Gecas (2000) states that in the same way that roles can be taken up as role identities, a commitment to values and understanding of oneself in terms of one's values can become value identities. Beyond the fact that volunteerism is often positively received by friends, family and colleagues (Zavitz, 2004), many volunteers express their motivations around their values. For example, a retiree named Bob with the National Program describes,

I think the reason I volunteer is because I'm very fortunate in a lot of ways, I mean, because I'm retired and in good health, I have a reasonable income. So,

you know, there is that sense of service of that old fashioned idea of there is some kind of duty – you know, if you are fortunate yourself that there's some obligation to do something for other people.

Volunteers describe deep ties to their volunteer identities when asked about their reasons for participation. This may be because, as Gecas (2000) notes, value identities can refer to desired personal attributes but also to desired social conditions. Volunteers feel their participation reflects on *them* as well as their *values*. In this way, volunteerism gives the participant status and is a demonstration of their position and beliefs.

In general, social actors take the world around them for granted and do not have to think deeply about what they do because, to put it simply, they do not have to (Williams, 1995). There are a number of levels of social identity and socialization that influence the value identities one maintains and the choices one makes. Bourdieu (1984) argues that many of these choices are influenced by class and therefore, many of our choices reflect our social class and our desire to establish and demonstrate our social status. Volunteering represents one way that social actors can demonstrate their tastes (Bourdieu, 1984) and establish, build and maintain cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Applying Bourdieu's understanding of displays of taste, it is clear that volunteering represents one way that social actors can demonstrate their 'taste' for giving and community. As many of these values are based in middle class ideas of helping and being a good citizen, volunteering represents a commitment to class values, which in turn, gives the volunteer status and allows him or her to acquire cultural capital. This kind of volunteerism becomes an activity of distinction, where one is demonstrating their middle class values and demonstrating their membership in the middle class.

Value identities, then, for this group, are a critical part of how they view themselves, enjoy their cultural capital and present their status in their community. Shamir (1990) argues that self-motivations are those actions that are motivated by the desire to maintain a favorable self-assessment. That is, people are motivated to have purpose in their lives and seek out opportunities to look and feel good in a way that is meaningful to them. This is evident in the data. As Michelle, a Global Village program member, explains when asked about what motivates her,

Well first, from a selfish point of view, it gives purpose to your life. It makes getting up in the morning and, you know, that old thing it took me a long time – I think you always hear, your parents always tell you, it's better to give than receive, everybody tells you that. And that, you know, goes in one ear and out the other when you're younger but, as you get older, you realize it's actually true because you get back more by giving.

There is overwhelming evidence that volunteerism is considered a positive activity and being a volunteer demonstrates positive attributes in an actor to other community members. It is important to note that most of the status given to volunteers in this study is given by non-participants that is, by those in their respective communities who are not volunteer participants. Volunteers benefit from social and cultural capital gained through volunteerism. This positive reinforcement supports value identities and corroborates the participants' positive ideas about themselves and their beliefs.

Volunteerism, then, is one way that volunteers can activate their social capital to “gain access to social settings or attain desired social results” (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). As an activity, volunteering is high status. In fact, I argue, that it is so broadly regarded as a high status activity that its legitimacy as such has become institutionalized. In essence, the value of volunteering, in the way that Habitat for Humanity Canada

volunteers do, is very widely understood as positive and it is the shared quality of these values and signals (Lamont and Lareau, 1988) that make them salient status markers.

The cultural capital acquired through volunteerism and the positive community response to the activity is enhanced in part because of the nature of the work and the discourse of social change that surrounds volunteering. Volunteers believe they are ‘doing good’ and working towards real change in recipients’ lives. Habitat for Humanity Canada promotes this discourse of change and encourages a culture of volunteerism that reproduces a dialogue of volunteer effectiveness and the idea that “every little bit helps” (an idea that will be discussed in detail in *Chapter Five*). Being involved in this kind of social change is a part of the capital gained through volunteerism.

Bernstein uses the concept of identity deployment to describe expressions of identity where “the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person’s values, categories and practices of individuals become subject to debate” (Bernstein, 2011). Using this concept, along with Bourdieu’s idea of distinction and applying them to volunteerism allows, I argue, for a new understanding of volunteerism, where the work of volunteers can be understood in a broader context. For example, while volunteers demonstrate middle class values of helping and community and utilize a discourse of change, the primary result of their work is not based on activism but is instead based on serving individual needs. Volunteerism can be understood as one way to deploy one’s identity but the concept also encapsulates the terrain of class and social status (primary influencers of social change). While volunteers “deploy” volunteer identities, these

identities tend to be linked more to middle class values and the culture of volunteerism than to activist identities.

International volunteerism is one way that volunteers may choose to “act out” their value identities or engage in identity deployment (Bernstein, 2011) from within the volunteerism context. In the Global Village case, participants are almost exclusively middle class or upper middle class given the resources generally required for the necessary travel. For many volunteers in the Global Village program, taking a trip is a specific and planned attempt to enter the terrain of conflict, demonstrating their commitment to change and acting on their beliefs. For some, this is the moment of identity deployment and volunteering may be one of the locations where these identities can be deployed and explored. Taking a Global Village trip is an important step for many volunteers in the process of cementing their identities with their values around giving back. For many Global Village volunteers the volunteer abroad trip represents their values but also introduces them to new ideas and new ways of viewing poverty, family and hardship. As one Global Village team leader, Paul, describes his understanding of the values expressed while traveling with his team,

What I tell my team – because a team leader has to have a position – each year he has to take a position on how much theological versus spiritual stuff are we going to do. I’ve found that in terms of beliefs, sometimes those so-called poorer people put us to shame in that, so you certainly don’t start proselytizing. Down there, you really have to get some perspective on that. And again, poverty can be poverty in economic and material ways, but rich in terms of family life and relationships.

Values around community, particularly the global community, and helping one another are reinforced while others of gratitude and consumerism are challenged. However, as

will be discussed in *Chapter Six*, volunteerism did not usually result in activism or taking on the structural determinants of poverty.

MacCannell (1976) finds that international volunteers accept a discourse of alternative tourism but generally abandon ideas of volunteerism and virtually ignored the overall discourse of development. There is some evidence that volunteer tourism is one response to disillusionment with mass tourism and, therefore, participants hold strongly to their view of themselves as, first and foremost, volunteers (Eadington and Smith, 1992). The tourism industry has responded with trips packaged and targeted for environmental, cultural, adventure and volunteer tourists as they aim to compete in an increasingly differentiated market (Stevenson, 2000). While the voluntourism industry is being met with some well-earned skepticism, reputable NGOs such as Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross and others, are leveraging the popularity of short-term international volunteerism to expand some of their programs. More people than ever are seeking the opportunity to use their resources to volunteer while on vacation.

Many people join Habitat for Humanity Canada's programs because they see it as a way to fulfill their visions of themselves and act out their values which, in turn, reinforce their value identities. The majority of participants refer to or mention their values and how they impact the way they see the work. Whether their values around social responsibility can become a kind of socially responsible leisure lifestyle or socially aware lifestyle remains to be explored. For these volunteers, being socially responsible or having socially responsible values means they need to participate in their community or in the broader global community in order to reinforce or 'deploy' their value

identities or truly engage with the problem. The pursuit of this lifestyle, however, tends to require resources, both time and money and manifests most often in the middle and upper classes. Certainly, many socially responsible products and lifestyle options are focused on this group and organizations are seeking ways to harness these resources. Beyond the necessary resources, many volunteers have their basic values of helping and community in common with their middle class status. As was discussed in *Chapter Three* volunteers appreciate camaraderie around the values of helping and enjoy working with people that also hold similar beliefs.

These volunteers are admired for the work they do and acquire cultural capital while demonstrating their class status and their class-based values. Becoming a volunteer, especially in the international context, is an act of distinction for many. Wilson's (2000: 219) argues that in general "values are less important in helping decide who volunteers than in helping decide what volunteering means to the people who do". It is evident for the volunteers studied here that their volunteerism is seen as an expression of values and a deliberate step by many people to get involved and demonstrate their ideas of social responsibility, and to act on the desire to "give back". Their participation is deeply meaningful to them especially in fostering and maintaining their value identities and this in turn is very motivational. It is clear that values (especially class values) can be critical to the question of "who gets involved?" as well as the question of "what does volunteering mean to the people who do?"

Symbolic Consumption

Clearly, becoming a volunteer and how one views their volunteer involvement can affect how volunteers view themselves and how they are viewed in their communities. Generally, volunteering holds plenty of symbolic meaning. The idea of “symbolic consumption” emerges as a link between a person’s consumption choices and their beliefs and values. Moreover, these choices can also be seen as ways in which people enact their value identities.

For Bourdieu, *taste* functions to give a person a ‘sense of one’s place’ and acts a kind of social orientation towards certain social positions. Building on Bourdieu’s notion of taste, is the idea of symbolic consumption. The symbolic consumption literature emerges out of the business and marketing sector’s desire to understand product associations and purchasing choices. The basic premise, is that products are often purchased and consumed because of their symbolic value as well as their utility (Soloman and Assael, 1987). Further, symbolic consumption involves “reciprocal and reflexive relationships between products (tastes and distaste) and consumers (positive and negative selves) within their social contexts” (Hogg et al., 2009: 148). For example, different products are associated with health, wealth, etc. and this influences purchasing decisions. Symbolic and experiential consumer behaviors have been shown to be particularly important at moments of transition and exploration of the self and can be used to support new roles and identities (Schouten, 1991).

This concept can be easily extrapolated and applied with Bourdieu’s ideas of taste and class distinction as how one spends their time in the case of volunteering or the

‘consumption’ of a volunteer experience also carries symbolic value. In essence, consumption is one way that members of society can maintain and create the self and it helps to locate us in society (Wattanasuwan, 2005). I argue that a Global Village trip or a day spent volunteering produces symbolic meaning for the participant and there is a symbolic consumption (of an experience), such that the “spending” of time reinforces value identities and produces valuable cultural capital. As well, this symbolic value is structured in part by class expectations of giving, time management and travel.

In general, symbolic consumption research takes a consumer research perspective and does not normally include charitable donations or leisure lifestyles. However, it can be utilized to look at the ways people spend their money and then expanded to look at the symbolic ways people spend their time. In the same way that “product constellations – clusters of complementary products, specific brands, and/or consumption” – activities, charitable donations, volunteerism and activism can be used by consumers to define, communicate, and enact social roles (Soloman and Assael, 1987: 191). Since all consumption (and sometimes non-consumption) holds some kind of expressive meaning it can be a part of how one advances, resists or maintains ideas of the self (Wattanasuwan, 2005). As Wilson and Musick (1997: 696) ask “if appreciating a fine wine is considered a mark of elite status, why isn’t being a good citizen also evidence of elite status? Doesn’t charitable work demonstrate one’s ‘taste’ for volunteering?”

I argue that while a Global Village trip or a day spent volunteering on a local build are not the same as purchasing a product for use, there is a symbolic consumption of

time that reinforces value identities and produces valuable cultural capital. For many volunteers, how they spend their time can help locate them in their community and gives them status. I agree with Wilson and Musick (1997) that a culture of benevolence is an important resource and that social and cultural capital, when developed from this source, can be used in many ways by volunteers in their community. Therefore, while I would hesitate to reduce the volunteer to a simple “consumer”, looking at the symbolic ideas of volunteerism, consumption and the donation of time and money and understanding them in terms of the ways they impact the self through the symbolic consumption literature is a useful exercise.

Becoming involved with an NGO is one way that people can choose to spend time, money or both. Interviewees from both groups express a desire to live a lifestyle that reflects their values. This includes not only how they spend their money (though many were interested in green¹⁰ initiatives, eating local and making donations) but also how they choose to spend and prioritize their time. This trend is especially evident in the Global Village group because, for the vast majority, taking a trip involves using limited vacation hours, which, for most people, represents an important part of each year’s work cycle.

In the case of volunteer abroad opportunities, Callanan and Thomas (2005) argue that these kinds of projects have a particular symbolic value. McGhee and Santos (2005: 764) also find that some individuals choose to participate in volunteer abroad projects because they want to “expand their activist identities into leisure travel”. For some

¹⁰ Being “green”, in essence, refers to using various everyday methods to help conserve the natural world and the earth’s environment. For many in this study, it means becoming environmentally conscious in decision-making and becoming involved in local initiatives such as recycling and urban gardening.

volunteers, taking a trip is a part of taking their ideas of social responsibility from “talking the talk” to “walking the walk” – that is, they want to increase the type of action and the impact of their actions by doing this kind of activity. Donating time (especially abroad) is one way that volunteers expand their socially responsible lifestyles; while for others, it is a way to explore their identities as volunteers, travelers, and to seek a new understanding of themselves.

It is also important to emphasize that different organizations and programs have dramatically different financial demands on the volunteer. The required monetary outputs to the National program are minimal. With the exception of safety equipment, which most affiliates provide (safety boots, safety glasses or hard hats, for example) there is little to no cost to volunteering with the National program. At some affiliates, lunch is also provided to volunteers at no cost. The Global Village program’s cost, though a tax deduction, is still far more expensive than many other vacation options and requires substantial time and financial resources. As the demand for the volunteer’s economic or time resources increases, the symbolic value of the volunteerism increases as it implies a certain amount of sacrifice is necessary for involvement and just as importantly, that one has the disposable income and available time to contribute.¹¹

Zavitz (2004: 66) makes the argument that “international volunteerism, as a social practice, has symbolic meaning that can be used strategically by volunteers to construct the identity they desire to portray and to differentiate themselves from others”. Certainly, members of both groups find the volunteer experience to have

¹¹ It must also be noted that while there is usually no specialized equipment required for a Global Village trip, buying and packing basic supplies, paying for immunizations and, generally, just preparing for travel can be very costly.

social and human capital building advantages. However, the most positive reactions are given to those who have seemingly sacrificed the most – that is, long-term local volunteers and international volunteers. As well, for Global Village volunteers, there is not only symbolic meaning in taking a trip (or consuming this kind of vacation and in developing their socially responsible lifestyle) but they also gain especially positive reactions from external social groups (or non-participants). These kinds of trips become a kind of symbolic consumption as how volunteers spend their time and money (or how they consume) can be understood as part of the development of their own value identities. Furthermore, they also provide evidence of who is a positive, active and socially responsible contributor to the community. In essence, the volunteer is able to demonstrate their beliefs, values, social class and social position.

Accordingly, within the volunteer community, there is an implicit hierarchy based on the sacrifice (perceived altruism) and time spent (donated hours) with those volunteers who donate the most time having the most status. It is important to note that historically, as socioeconomic status increases so does an individual's amount of leisure or 'free' time. In general, then, Global Village volunteers spend their time in the highest status ways as they donate both time and money and appear to make the largest sacrifice. As well, a Global Village trip is seen as significant identity deployment as multiple identities linked to class, donation, hard work, and social responsibility can be deployed at one time. In sum, they demonstrate their 'good taste', signify their position, their volunteerism is positively received in their communities and volunteers acquire status from their involvement.

Donating Time versus Donating Money

In part due to neoliberal trends, the number of non-profit organizations has grown steadily over the past two decades and the NGO sector continues to expand. As the number of organizations increases, the scope of work has also widened to the extent that there is an organization for nearly every human social issue. Sargeant (1999: 215) finds that “in many countries, levels of individual giving have failed to keep pace with both the increase in the number of voluntary organizations and the level of need which these organizations exist to provide for”. This makes for a very competitive market for volunteer time as well as monetary resources. Therefore, organizations, governments and academics are interested in better understanding how volunteers make decisions about their resources and what they believe their time and money can do for a cause.

Lee and Chang (2007) find that often the variables that influence volunteering are psychographic in nature or attitudinal-based, encompassing a sense of social responsibility, empathy and awareness. As giving to non-profit causes comes in two major forms – volunteering and monetary donation (the giving of time or money) - people’s attitude towards each kind of giving represents an important part of how they conceptualize the volunteer experience. In Sargeant’s (1999) study of the motivations affecting monetary charitable donations, the results are similar to the volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada in that, the reasons for giving are complex and inter-related including both altruistic and selfish motivators. Therefore, as Andreoni (1990:

464) finds, there is a clear “mix of social pressure, guilt, sympathy, or simply a desire for a ‘warm glow’” that influences the decisions of agents. One of the best ways to demonstrate the links between meaning making, value identities and symbolic consumption is to look at how volunteers understand their giving behaviours.

There are clear value judgments about the types of people who give time versus those who give money. A hierarchy of commitment was evident throughout the data¹². People who “only donated money” are viewed as only slightly better than those who do not donate at all but those who donate financially are seen as above those who are unaware of the need. Individual choices are judged as a part of the terrain of conflict and how involved one becomes is an indicator of their level of identity deployment (Bernstein, 2011) with different types of donations being linked to different levels of support and knowledge. Importantly, charitable giving (in monetary form) represents the symbolic support of some cause or social group and donation (in one form or another) begins to symbolically represent the donor.

Nearly all volunteers express that they understand the need for both time and money resources in order to make the organization successful but, nearly all also express that there is a difference between giving time and giving money. Giving money is seen as the “easier” thing to do and volunteering holds more social status, provides

¹² Interview participants were asked if they thought there was a difference between donating time and donating money. As well, during participant observation, there were many conversations among and with volunteers where the topic of donation dominated the discussions. Volunteers were keen to talk about different ideas of giving and had strong feelings about the types of giving people do and what that represents about them. Participants often noted that their volunteerism was highly valued by others in their community who “only donated money” and saw volunteering as a much larger commitment. Therefore, probes were often used to ask “in your opinion, what has more value?” or “what kinds of reactions do people have to your volunteerism?” or “what was people’s reaction to your efforts when you were fundraising?” These questions helped to create a picture of the values and meanings associated with different kinds of donations.

more results and represents a stronger commitment (it also holds more cultural capital).

Two volunteers, one with each program, demonstrate typical responses,

Well, in some ways it's easy to donate money, you just donate money and then you're done, you write a cheque – it takes five minutes, you don't sweat or do anything like that right? Donating your time can obviously be more time consuming. (Alan, Global Village Program)

Money is easy. Money is a feel good PR move as far as I'm concerned so that they can say "oh, I gave – I donated a thousand dollars to charities last year and that's a lot money". Whereas donating your time, having to break open your schedule, to perhaps not take the kids to hockey, to not go to whatever show you're planning to go to or business meetings or whatever, and simply booking and committing is something different. Time is huge in this day and age – if you can get someone to commit their time, to me, it's worth five times more than the dollar. It's easy to cut a cheque. (Deborah, National Program)

Most volunteers also agree that donating time is the more challenging donation. Both types of donations do appear to have some impact on social status. However, volunteering is seen as a much larger sacrifice and is therefore also given more social prestige around altruism and social responsibility.

There is a sense that volunteering is also superior because of its reciprocal nature. That is, volunteers feel that donating time has more benefits as the positive impacts flow more directly between the recipients, the organization and the donors. This is linked to some of the values of volunteering and is most pervasive in the Global Village case because volunteers work predominantly alongside local community members (along with the recipient families) also in need. As two volunteers describe,

But I think it is something like, a cheque touches your hand for a couple of seconds, where a visit to that country touches your heart the rest of your life. (Marilynn, Global Village Program)

Money's the easy. I mean, it still has a benefit –donating money – but it's far more when you donate your time. Just the interaction, the cultural exchange – you

know, what we pick up from them and they get the benefit from us. It's definitely far more impact and meaning – the donation of time. (George, Global Village Program)

Volunteers attach much more meaning to their time than to their money and they feel the interactions they have while volunteering are a part of that meaning. This adds to the prestige of volunteering in that volunteers feel their gift is more personal and that they have taken the time to see the human side of need (and not “just the financial”).

Lee and Chang (2007) describe the volunteers' sense of 'fit' with an organization as psychological congruence and argue that the external image that a person wishes to reflect can affect their giving behaviours. Many volunteers feel strongly that their actions (working with Habitat for Humanity Canada) represent their social and political views. Beyond how they spend their time, many respondents discuss ways they choose to donate their money, purchase fair trade or buy local food products. For most, this is seen as a part of socially responsible lifestyle. Volunteering is always seen as the “next step” or a stronger demonstration of commitment both because the volunteers give it more meaning and because the cultural capital of volunteering means that it holds more status in the community. As one Global Village team member, Gary says,

I thought for a long time that if you gave your money and you helped out a cause you'd done your part but, I think there's no comparison to rolling up your sleeves and getting in there and – sweat equity is – it speaks volumes of your character – you know. Somebody may have oodles of money and donate it to a cause but I think somebody that donates their time – we only have so much time, you know – and if we're willing to invest it in those less fortunate I think that's a big issue.

The idea that volunteering demonstrates one's character is a part of the social meaning applied to the concept of volunteerism. But, the fact that volunteerism is viewed as such

a large step further than financial donations represents a new understanding of the cultural capital of volunteerism and how volunteers view themselves.

Being able to donate, comes from a combination of having enthusiasm but also the capability (Lee and Chang, 2007). Time is seen by many as ‘the great equalizer’ as people’s financial resources tend to vary, whereas everyone has an equal 24 hours in a day. As one National program volunteer, Linda, states, “time is something everyone can give; money isn’t”. As another local volunteer Jeremy comments,

I think the ability to donate time affords people that can’t materially afford to donate the opportunity to give back as well. Often we think of people that are in, sort of, a less economic position - we think that they’re not able to or, they feel that they’re not able to contribute in order to feel like they are giving.

While it is true that everyone’s life works on the current 24-hour clock, the idea that anyone can volunteer and give back is many ways a myth (a myth that was strongly maintained by volunteers). Most of the volunteers are middle and upper middle class (nearly all in the Global Village group). Working class volunteers tend to do the local builds but few did the Global Village builds, where it is not only more costly to participate but it also takes up more valuable vacation time. Very few Global Villagers were utilizing all of their vacation time each year on trips. Most are in professional or semi-professional positions and can take other time off unlike their working class counterparts. As well, for many of the positions, working shifts or not having access to a vehicle could have impeded the ability to volunteer.

While, in theory, everyone has the same opportunity to volunteer and, while Habitat for Humanity Canada makes volunteering as accessible as possible, finding a good ‘fit’ would be more challenging for those with fewer financial and structural

resources. In this way, volunteering becomes an activity most readily accessed by the middle class and is one way to demonstrate class position. To summarize, middle class citizens are far more likely to have the necessary resources to volunteer and middle class values of hard work and personal, social and financial responsibility encourage a culture of volunteerism that revolves around the middle class, and in some cases, not around the people receiving help.

Global Village participants tend to sit at the top of the donation hierarchy for a number of reasons. First, they already hold high status positions because the work they are doing is international (symbolic and cultural capital produced by the trips is high). Second, participation with any team requires a mandatory donation of \$600 that is shared between the Canadian Global Village program and the host country's program (financial resources are necessary for participation). Third, the sacrifice of using one's holiday time combined with the risk of working in often-rough conditions results in increased cultural capital. Fourth, Global Villagers report the highest rates of reciprocal change and human impact. Accordingly, Global Village participants tended to have even stronger feelings about the need for time donation abroad. As one Global Villager, Anna, comments when asked if there is a difference between donating time and money,

Both are needed obviously but, I think physically donating time, physically going to these countries is a lot more fulfilling and a lot more meaningful and you form a much closer connection to the cause if you are physically there. For example, I fund raised for my first trip and someone donated \$500 to me or to Habitat essentially but how much connection to the cause did they have? How much did they learn from that? How much are they learning from simply writing me a cheque?

This poses some problems for Habitat for Humanity Canada in trying to maintain a consistent organizational identity, and in trying to promote the belief that “every little bit helps” and each person’s contributions are important. When the Global Village program was developed, they were not permitted to advertise or bring in donations in any way that would affect the fundraising of the National program. This has helped to contain the growth of the program and maintain more equality among affiliates of the National program and the Global Village program. An overarching hierarchy of volunteers, however, has developed within the organization itself with Global Village and long-term local volunteers at the top because of pervasive (predominantly middle class) beliefs about hard work, sacrifice and the value of time resources.

The overall culture of volunteerism appears to view charitable giving as something separate from volunteerism. This attitude is so persistent that Habitat for Humanity Canada is looking for ways to encourage their volunteers to donate money as well as time as they have found that their monetary donations do not tend to come from their volunteers. While volunteers believe donating money is also important to the cause and to keeping the organization running, donations of time are seen as more important, holding more social and cultural capital and being more strongly linked to values and the meaning of giving. There is clear evidence of a hierarchy of giving with volunteers, not surprisingly, place themselves at the top. This was true of this sample, where volunteers donate their time but tend to donate money elsewhere (where they cannot donate their time, for example, in disaster areas).

A hierarchy develops based on sacrifice (perceived altruism) and time spent (donated hours) with those volunteers donating the most having the most status. This, in turn, reinforces and reproduces a culture of volunteerism based in ideas of status and altruism. Global Villagers generally come out on top as they spend their time in the highest status ways as they donate time and money and make the largest sacrifices. As well, volunteer trips have significant identity deployment as multiple identities linked to class, donation, hard work and social responsibility can be deployed at once. It bears noting that it often takes significant time and financial resources to participate in this “brand” of social responsibility.

Building on the previous arguments, volunteering needs to be placed into the context of other donations. This is particularly important as the demand for donations of both time and money is increasing and charitable giving in one form or another is a part of how people can demonstrate value identities. Charitable giving represents the symbolic support of a cause or group, but donation (in one form or another) also comes to symbolically represent the donor. Donations come to represent a number of things about the donor including their ability to give (resources), their values and commitment to the organization, and their expectations and ideas about giving are highly influenced by values associated with the middle class. Therefore, donations also represent class status or position. The hierarchy of volunteerism can therefore be understood within a larger context of giving that includes financial giving. Volunteerism is given much higher social status, is viewed as providing greater results, and is seen as resulting in far more cultural capital than donating money. The idea that volunteering demonstrates one’s

character is a part of the meaning applied to the concept of volunteerism. The fact that volunteerism is viewed as so significantly more representative of the donor's values as compared to financial donations demonstrates the ways social constructions of 'taste' and class begin to influence the value of the donated time (and money) as well as the social value and status of volunteerism.

Conclusion

Values are the most important factor in how volunteers perceive their volunteerism. Volunteers in both settings demonstrate socially important things about themselves through their volunteerism including the middle class values of hard work and helping; in turn, their participation can be regarded as an activity high in cultural capital. I argue that the 'values of volunteering' reflect middle class values and therefore, volunteerism (especially international volunteerism) tends to reinforce class status and can be seen as a symbolic type of spending where a lifestyle that includes volunteering demonstrates one's tastes. Overall, the meaning making and perceptions of volunteers help to define the very value and process of volunteering and what it can mean in a community.

The analysis makes clear that value identities are being demonstrated and upheld through the process of volunteering, which in many ways is relatable to what Bernstein (2011) describes as identity deployment. Volunteers feel that their actions represent them and how they spend their time is indicative of their values. Volunteers receive lots of positive social reinforcement for their participation, which in turn supports their value

identities. Importantly, the 'values of volunteering' tend to reflect middle class values and volunteerism also works to solidify class status while contributing to cultural capital for the participant in their community. This is an idea that is often overlooked in the volunteerism literature.

Related to value identities was the idea of symbolic consumption. I argue that the marketing concept of symbolic consumption, in which products are attached to status, identity and location in a community can be used to look at how people spend their time and the status and position they gain from volunteering. Cultural capital is produced through volunteering and volunteers are consuming the symbols of volunteerism in order to reproduce and project their own identities. There are easily distinguishable overlaps from the marketing perspective - especially in the Global Village case – where the program is competing for tourist dollars and volunteers are seeking ways to expand and reproduce value identities with their travel dollars.

One of the best examples of this display of values is in how volunteers describe the differences between donating time and donating money. How one spends time and money is deeply meaningful for volunteers and each type of donation represents a different demonstration of commitment and, for some, knowledge of the need. Volunteers have strong beliefs about donating money and what the differences were between giving time and money. There is also a clear hierarchy of giving with the donation of time holding the most meaning and status. Overall, volunteers support volunteering as the most meaningful way to help or support change. A hierarchy of social responsibility emerges with volunteers holding the highest status. Like purchasing

the 'right' product, volunteering represents one's 'taste' for helping (Bourdieu, 1984), which helps to establish social status while demonstrating a commitment to middle class values. In other words, volunteering is viewed as a stronger commitment because it is both more educational and experiential while providing greater opportunities for identity deployment than monetary donations do alone.

In summary, the meaning making of volunteers helps define the very process of volunteering, what volunteering can be and the social status of volunteering in the community. Ideas and values surrounding social responsibility come together to motivate, educate and prompt giving. Identifying with helping and helping behaviour and wanting to be seen as a person who "does something" about social issues and for their community are the overarching beliefs that link volunteers to each other, in both groups, and provide the camaraderie that many people craved. Social status (Bourdieu, 1984) and the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) gained from volunteering are just beginning to be explored in the volunteerism literature and international volunteerism and its symbolic capital are topic areas that would benefit from more research.

Chapter 5

The Role of the Organization

Introduction

Organizations play a key role in the voluntary sector and Habitat for Humanity Canada represents just one kind of a diverse group of volunteer-based organizations. Most volunteerism is based on an ongoing exchange between an organization and a volunteer and in order to maintain the relationship, the needs of both must be satisfied (Doherty, 2005). Each year, thousands of organizations in North America recruit and train volunteers to run successful programs. Both local and international volunteer-based organizations must recruit, prepare and maintain their volunteer cores to keep operating. For many organizations, one of the largest outputs of resources (beyond those directed towards their issue or cause) is in the training, maintenance and organization of their volunteers. In almost all cases, volunteer organizations have to be thoughtful about how they are organized and how they approach their people resources. Understanding the organization with which one volunteers is critical in understanding how the volunteer work is framed and how the volunteer/organization dynamic is sustained.

In this work, where volunteerism is considered to be an act of distinction, it is clear that part of what volunteers are seeking was a way to demonstrate their middle class status. Accordingly, their choice of organization is very important, as it has to have the “right” status to produce cultural capital for the volunteer. In essence, the organization with which the volunteerism takes place can have just as much symbolism or importance attached to it as the acts involved in volunteering. Organizations have reputations and people attach different kinds of symbolic meaning to volunteering with

different groups. Habitat for Humanity is one of the best-known NGOs in the world and Habitat for Humanity Canada is ranked among the top ten 'brands' recognized by Canadians. The organization's reputation and brand is a part of what provides status to the volunteer. This status is all the more significant when a power brand, so to speak, like Habitat for Humanity Canada runs an international program as international volunteerism is a very high status activity and given the resources required, it is also an act of distinction.

The organization has a key role to play in framing the volunteer experience, the recipients of help and how the work is viewed and understood by volunteers. Volunteers find policies that reflect middle class values of hard work and individual financial responsibility compelling despite the fact that they can be difficult to implement in practice and the organization often makes exceptions. While middle and upper middle class values influence fit with an organization for volunteers, organizations are also working to have their mission and values suit this large resource pool. Habitat for Humanity Canada works directly to shape the values of the volunteers around their participation. If volunteering is a matter of demonstrating 'taste', then the organization one donates their time to becomes equally important, as the recipients of help are also a reflection of one's 'taste'.

What is clear is that volunteer organizations are thoughtful about how they are organized and how they approach their people resources. Understanding the organization with which one volunteers improves how we, as scholars, understand this important influence in the volunteer experience. Volunteer organizations must clearly

frame their central issue and their approach to it in order to attract people and maintain credibility. In this findings chapter, the role of the organization in the volunteer experience is explored, particularly how the organization frames the volunteer participants, the experience of volunteering and the recipients of help. Overall, this chapter outlines the argument that because volunteerism is a status producing activity the organization carefully frames their issue and brand to cater to middle class values and a predominantly middle class volunteer base. Through this framing, they help shape the *culture of volunteerism* where expectations about volunteers and helping and the kind of status volunteers should get in their communities are established.

The Volunteer Organization

Understanding the role of the organization, and the diverse ways organizations approach their volunteers is critical to understanding the volunteer experience. One of the major challenges to NGO research is to analytically integrate “both the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the NGO scene” (Tvedt, 2004: 134). Like social movement organizations, volunteer organizations have a role to play in organizing and mobilizing people around a cause or issue and are active in their framing of that issue. Non-governmental organizations must work hard in order to attract people to join and remain committed to the cause. As well, issues must be strategically framed “so that they fit or resonate with the beliefs, feeling and desires of potential recruits” (Goodwin and Jasper, 2003: 52). Understanding the organization with which one volunteers is

critical in understanding how the work is framed and how the volunteer/organization dynamic works.

Non-governmental organizations and volunteer organizations are held to some of society's highest standards of conduct. They need to be seen as "non-selfish" in order to maintain credibility, defend and explain all financial decisions, and must "transcend the interests of any single race, religion, culture or nationality" (Kwak, 2003: 13). Research is somewhat limited as to how the reputation of an organization influences a volunteer's choice to become involved with it. There is some evidence, however, to suggest that Habitat for Humanity's strong relationship with the media has helped to shape its brand and reputation in the community (Hackworth, 2009).

Hackworth (2009) conducted a media analysis of the Habitat for Humanity brand in the United Kingdom. He finds that charitable, service and non-governmental organizations strategically align themselves against the public's understanding of the neo-liberal¹³ - "failing welfare state" (Hackworth, 2009). Organizations that promote themselves as meeting the needs of those forgotten in the welfare state tend to be well known and appeal to both conservative and liberal voters. He notes that Habitat for Humanity employs language that is critical of the welfare state and works to demonstrate its ability to serve those left in positions of need. (Later in this chapter, I argue that who is understood to be in "a position of need" is also carefully framed by

¹³ Neo-liberalism is a contemporary form of liberalism that emphasizes the private sector and encourages relatively open markets to promote globalization. Neo-liberals, therefore, seek to maximize the role of the private sector. Canadian issues associated with neo-liberalism include decreasing taxes, reducing welfare spending and minimizing government. In essence, neo-liberalism represents a shift in responsibility to individuals and away from governments. In this way, volunteerism can be understood as a neoliberal project where individuals and voluntary associations step in to support a diverse number of social services and activities in order to help people in need (Selbee 2004).

the organization). This idea of NGOs meeting the needs where governments cannot has long been observed on the international volunteer scene.

International humanitarian organizations have the added challenge of meeting the demands of a wide variety of contributors. International organizations often rely on the “contributions of governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental entities as well as contributions from individuals” (Beigbeder, 1991: 15). Therefore, they may have access to different contributors but must also work with and negotiate different expectations and multiple agencies. One of the contributors, whose needs they must try to meet, are volunteers.

Habitat for Humanity Canada represents just one kind of a diverse group of volunteer-based organizations. For instance, Kriesi (1996) develops a typology of social movement organizations based on a grid along two continuums. The two continuums divide organizations based on their orientation (towards clients or authorities) and whether or not the organization works directly with the constituents. Volunteer organizations, by this model, are client oriented with direct contact with constituents and are therefore, linked to self-help, altruism and movement associations but are not authority oriented enough to be seen as true social movement organizations or cause political mobilization (Kriesi, 1996). Habitat for Humanity, for example, maintains an apolitical stance, avoids political statements and, up until recently, shies away from government funding.¹⁴ Moreover, Musick and Wilson (2008) find that there is quite a

¹⁴ While Habitat for Humanity was originally created with an expressed desire to work independently and not take funding from the government, the current funding system in Canada has now changed and is predominantly grant-based. Therefore, Habitat for Humanity Canada does apply for some grant funding. As well, there have been recent exceptions where donation money was collected in Canada and matched

range in how political volunteer organizations saw their role as actors in a political system. For example, they note that “some organizations provide social services; others see their mission as political or social change, their goal being to bring people together into an organization that can exert power” (Musick and Wilson, 2008: 19).

Volunteer organizations, like Habitat for Humanity Canada, work in communities and with governments and other stakeholders to improve living conditions, help with basic needs or encourage social responsibility or social justice. When volunteers choose organizations to work with, they must consider a number of factors including different practical issues such as hours, location and costs and social considerations such as their beliefs about the cause, the organization and its recipients. There is fierce competition for the resources people offer and making an organization attractive to potential volunteers is a key goal for boards and executives in NGOs.

This chapter focuses on the third research sub-question, which asks, what is the role of the volunteer organization in the volunteer experience? What emerges when examining volunteerism is that the organization is an important component of the volunteer experience. However, very few studies have critically examined the ways the organization and the volunteer interact. As well, the organization influences the kinds of opportunities available to volunteers and has a stake in maintaining its network of volunteers and promoting the idea of volunteerism.

by the Canadian government. For example, when a devastating earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, the Canadian government matched donations to certain charities and NGOs – Habitat for Humanity Canada was one of the approved charities. The result is that they collected money to support their affiliate in Haiti.

Framing and the Organization

The organization plays a crucial role in how volunteers view their participation. Most volunteers take their choice of organization seriously as they consider many factors. Most volunteers also look to match their own participation goals and values with the goals and values of an organization. This logic applies not only in the type of help needed but the delivery of help and the provided evidence of social and financial responsibility. As well, there are important influences of class that should not be overlooked. Habitat for Humanity was established on Christian, middle class values of hard work and personal responsibility. Not surprisingly, these values resonate with their, predominantly middle class, volunteer base who want the organization they work with to be well managed fiscally and want to make sure housing recipients demonstrate both an actual need for a new house along with the work ethic to change their financial and social circumstances. As such, it is essential to critically explore the role an organization plays in framing the work, the cause and the recipients of help because these frames influence volunteer ideas of social responsibility and the meaning they make from their volunteerism.

McGehee and Santos (2005) argue that the coordinating organization can intensify the experience in a social movement and this appears to be true for NGO volunteers as well. As Hudson and Inkson (2006: 307) note “volunteer work does involve some aspects of organizational control” and both the individual and organization play a part. Therefore, it is important to understand how the organization approaches the need they seek to fulfill or situation they seek to change. It is just as important to

recognize that the organization is also framing who volunteers and the meaning of volunteerism in the community.

How the organization influences volunteer ideas and the culture of giving is not well theorized in the literature. In most instances, the volunteer is the main area of focus while the ways the organization and volunteers interact with it tend to be overlooked. There were five main characteristics repeatedly identified by Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers when looking for a volunteer organization to work with – (1) reputation, (2) social and financial responsibility, (3) a good cause, (4) good method of administration and (5) good method of delivering help; all of which were seen as indicators of the organization's social responsibility. These are undoubtedly an interrelated set of qualities and they come together to give an overall picture of an organization and the important role it plays in the volunteer experience.

First, the reputation of the organization is critical to the organization's success and captures some of the many ways potential volunteers assess prospective organizations. This is evident in both the Global Village and the National program groups. Both groups focus heavily on how they had heard about the Habitat for Humanity Canada programs; for example, through the media, the corporate program has developed a reputation for being well run and efficiently organized. This is consistent with Hackworth's (2009) findings that Habitat for Humanity is a recognizable brand that enjoys a unique prominence in the NGO sector. Habitat for Humanity Canada promotes its philosophy and ethics while framing the volunteer experience in a number of different ways including through orientation sessions and written materials,

pamphlets, team leaders and their website. This work is done in ways similar to those outlined by Goodwin and Jasper (2003: 52) who describe the ways that social movements attract people and encourage them to commit as “its issues must be presented or framed so that they fit or resonate with the beliefs, feelings and desires of potential recruits”.

It is evident that an organization’s reputation is built upon a number of factors. While other characteristics are also considered and can affect an organization’s reputation, the most common issues Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers discuss are socially responsible policies, financially responsible practices and a clear need in the community. Brian, a National Program volunteer gives a typical response encompassing some of this complexity,

Usually I research the organization before I start volunteering because it has got to be something I believe is a good cause for a start. And the organization has to be kind of socially responsible and look after the money. So, if I’m a volunteer and 90 percent of whatever they do is going into administration then I probably wouldn’t be volunteering for that.

When asked about choosing an organization, volunteers are often interested in being informed about what type of organization they are helping. Volunteers often feel that they are “good judges” and can adequately recognize a “good organization”. This is not always true and most participants focus far more on an organization’s representation in the media than any in-depth research into the history of the group or delivery of services. The majority of volunteers have very little knowledge of how the programs are actually run or what the by-laws and rules are that govern the organization. The exception to this is the small number of interviewees who are members of

administrative committees and governing boards who express frustration about other volunteers often not understanding “how things worked” or that “they had rules to follow”.

Second, volunteers judge the organization based on indicators of social and financial responsibility. Hamada and Swartz (2003: xii) note that “with increased impact comes increased responsibility. NGOs have a responsibility to be transparent, honest, accountable, and ethical, to give out accurate information and to not manipulate the situation for personal benefit”. Volunteers also recognize that NGOs and non-profit organizations are held to a high standard and are often directly involved in the maintenance of these standards, as mentioned, through participation with and involvement on the board of directors. Therefore, it is not surprising that two of the most important aspects of reputation are social and financial responsibility. Both give the organization credibility and people are likely to seek out a reputation of financial transparency and responsibility. For those that dig deeper into the workings of NGOs, their work is made easier when financial records are easily accessible and financial reports clear, transparent and readable. While a business earns its own money, the money in the non-profit sector is held in trust by the organization’s board and they are asked to use it for the purpose which it was given (Drucker, 1990).

While most volunteers in this study do not have a comprehensive knowledge of how the organizational structure works, there is evidence that some general knowledge did reach volunteers (for example, that the Re-Store’s profits provide the funds for administration and not donations) and they are happy to discuss the advantages of the

organization they have chosen. Habitat for Humanity Canada's financial responsibility is a point of pride for many volunteers. It is often part of their understanding of themselves as a "good judge" of organizations. A typical response is given by Ron, a National program and board member volunteer regarding financial responsibility when he says,

In Habitat so much focuses on the volunteers. It's about the volunteers. We don't have a big administrative structure. We try to keep our fundraising to our expenses, our expenses to a minimum so that as much as possible of the money that we bring in goes back to helping and supporting our cause. That is really important to me, you know, when I am looking to donate.

Transparency regarding the allocation of money, particularly the amount going from donations to administration is well regarded by participants in both programs.

While few volunteers know the realities of running these programs, the day to day struggles, the exceptions and the ways that different cultures negotiate this type of work, they often express that knowing a few policies makes them educated about what Habitat for Humanity is about and what the organization believes in. One local volunteer, Krista, expresses that this is key to why she chooses Habitat for Humanity Canada in that,

I know that when I do fundraising for them, 100 percent of what we raise goes to building homes because the administrative costs are covered by the Re-Store.

This links directly with the values and standards of financial responsibility for NGOs. Two popular programs, the sweat equity program and the Re-Store as administration funding, are two of the programs most cited when volunteers give evidence of what they know of the organization and how the programs 'fit' their values. However, these two

programs are also most representative of the vast majority of the volunteer's middle class based values.

There are a few differences in how the international volunteers understand the role of the organization in comparison with the local volunteers. In general, Global Village participants are impressed with the organization and reliability of Habitat for Humanity Canada staff and volunteer leaders. Volunteers are especially impressed by the ease with which money can be exchanged through the Global Village program given the need for using multiple currencies. With the exception of long time Global Village volunteers (those doing three or more trips), most Global Village volunteers do not have a strong knowledge of how the international program works or even the rules that govern Habitat for Humanity Canada as an organization. The Global Village volunteers appear more interested in logistics and “fit” for their needs than in doing in-depth research about the NGO. During observation, I quickly noticed that participants often do extensive research on the location, the weather, and the type of houses and sometimes the needs of the local people but little into the Global Village program. This type of information is often brought up or addressed during the trip by both participants and team leaders as volunteers become aware of how much they do not understand about how NGOs in general, and, Habitat for Humanity in particular, work. Volunteers often express a better understanding of how the organization works after they have taken their trip. This is part of the educational experience they seek when volunteering abroad. In some cases, Global Village volunteers question the use of the fees paid on the trip, because unlike the National Program there is a mandatory 600-dollar donation,

however, this is often brought up after participation or well after they have committed to the trip.

Non-government organizations need to be seen as ‘unselfish’ as their credibility is linked to the ethics of the organization in that they “transcend the interests of any single race, religion, culture and nationality” (Kwak, 2003: 13). Therefore, the social ethics of an organization can also influence who volunteers. As Nancy, a local volunteer describes,

I think the other part of volunteering with Habitat is that it's an organization – first of all, it's very highly regarded and it's known worldwide but, I think it's ethics – the ethics of the organization are important.

Habitat for Humanity Canada maintains an inclusive stance on religion, gender, and sexuality and is anti-discrimination. For some volunteers this is an especially important quality. For individuals who, for various reasons, feel they cannot or do not fit into other groups, an inclusive environment is key to their participation. For example, Carla, a National Program volunteer expresses her biggest concern,

Probably respect, like a lot of other places that I've tried to volunteer at that I won't ever return to is that – I'm gay and they don't support gays because it's their beliefs because they are religious. I'm religious too but it doesn't mean that I have to give up something. You can help someone – they can be homeless and it doesn't matter.

As well, many minority groups want to know that all kinds of people could be helped and could equally be offered the opportunity to receive a house. Both Global Village and National program volunteers cite the organization's values and the way those values are acted out through the organization's methods of delivery as influencing their choice

to volunteer. The ability to maintain non-judgmental, inclusive volunteer-recruitment and retention policies is important to volunteers.

Third, volunteers and potential volunteers want to believe in the organization's purpose and want to contribute to a good cause. Both groups find the goals of the organization or 'cause' worthwhile and express that they can 'see the need'. This is especially evident on the Global Village trips during observation as many Canadians experienced emergency and extreme poverty housing for the first time. Many participants are deeply moved (for some nearly traumatized) by their first experience with these types of settings and there is a general consensus that housing is an important human need. Others from the National program express their first hand understanding of the need for housing. For example, Rachel talks about her circumstances growing up and how they affect her,

If we go back to the core values of Habitat – I grew up in a poor home and basically we grew up in substandard housing so, you know ... I really believe that kids in particular deserve a safe and decent place to live and I believe people need a hand up to get ahead in this world.

The vast majority of volunteers in both groups feel that both programs are necessary and provide something of importance both in Canada and abroad. Very few volunteers express any concern that the alternate program is unnecessary (because Canada has a good social welfare program and the poverty is not as dire) or not a priority (because Canadians should "clean up in their own backyard first"). Nearly all volunteers see both programs as addressing a true need in each community and regard the possibility of diversifying participation as another benefit of the organization they have chosen.

It is important to note that it not just the 'cause' that motivates volunteers. A compelling cause helps bring people through the door but how the help is approached is also critical as it can influence how people make meaning from their experience and this is deeply connected to how people feel their values can be expressed. While a few studies (for example, Lang, 1984; Schram, 1984) list the cause as motivational, there is a critical point where the organization frames the cause and produces information about the need, the opportunities available to get involved and the "difference you can make". As well, the way the organization approaches the cause indicates a level of commitment to values that the volunteers must feel also match their ideals. In this way, a culture of volunteering has developed so that the way the organization frames the need, the type of help available and how one can participate becomes self-reinforcing and volunteers are given status for their work. The values promoted by the organization are generally values associated with the middle class and give status to volunteers when they are in their communities, workplace, etc.

Last, volunteers want to agree with the methods of administration and the method of delivering help. These final two requirements link directly with volunteer values and expectations of the organization. They represent the reasons the organization frames its work. When volunteers seek out an organization, they want to see that the organization gives help in a way that they believe in, they would promote and they feel encourages their values. For many people, they like the idea of a permanent home and asking families to work to pay it back in responsible manner (an idea discussed in detail below) because this way of helping aligns with what they believe.

The fit between an organization and the volunteer and the volunteer's ability to recognize how the values of the organization fit with their own is very important. Organizations are keenly aware that they must attract volunteers and donations and that their largest resource pool is within the middle and upper middle classes. They then work to have their values (and the perceived values of those they help) align with middle class values of giving, community and hard work. Therefore, it is just as important to recognize that the organization is also framing who volunteers and the meaning of volunteerism in the community. The organization wants working with them to be a high status activity that produces cultural capital. They want their brand to have status and the people volunteering to benefit from that status and become repeat volunteers.

Habitat for Humanity Canada works to frame the volunteer experience as a “life changing”, socially responsible experience that is the “right thing to do”. Everyone's contribution is given great value and helping those in need in one's own community is seen as an important use of one's time. They deliver their services in a way that suits middle class schedules, ideas about helping and values of social and financial responsibility. The help that Habitat for Humanity Canada offers is in many ways tailored to the volunteers far more than to the recipients of the help.

In these ways, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Canada produces cultural capital and can be an act of distinction because it is a very middle class thing to do – help those “below” you or of lower socio-economic status in your community (or, in the case of the Global Village program – in developing countries). In essence, the framing used by Habitat for Humanity Canada promotes a culture of volunteering that is very

high status for volunteers, encourages volunteers to think of their work as important and almost guarantees that the recipients are “the type of people” middle class people want to help (mostly, they are working poor but, definitely working class). These values also become self-reinforcing for the brand as the high status of their volunteers, in turn, promotes their organization as a “good” or “responsible” organization.

Framing the “Deserving Poor”

The most common comment Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers, in both programs, make is their praise of the ‘sweat equity policy’. The ‘hand up not a hand out’ policy, along with the ‘sweat equity’ policy are two of the most popular reasons for choosing the organization and fit well with the value system of the vast majority of volunteers, particularly the Global Village teams. These policies dictate that recipient families contribute, in hours of labour, to the building of their house (in the Global Village program) or the affiliate’s houses (in the National program). In Canada, the commitment is to 500 hours of ‘sweat equity’. In the Global Village program, the commitment is to the completion of the house. This is representative of the middle class and upper middle class values of hard work (and personal economic responsibility) maintained by the volunteers who also work to build the houses. The sweat equity policy resonates with volunteers because of an overall strong guiding belief that people need to work for themselves and that they will have more appreciation for something that they work for (pride of ownership).

Volunteers relate to these policies because they are congruent with their beliefs about how one can demonstrate that they are a part of the “deserving poor” (Katz, 1989). Growing out of a climate of welfare reform, most studies of the working poor emerged to address criticisms of the welfare system (Arneson, 1997) and the need to determine who among those in need should be helped when resources are finite – who is the deserving poor? Middle class volunteers tend to want some evidence that the housing recipients are hardworking and responsible people whose need is based on situational factors (for example, disability, overcoming abuse, single motherhood, etc.). and not problems of individual responsibility. These policies resonate because they are based on the moral norm that one should be self-supporting (Arneson, 1997) and volunteers believe that with recipient input (sweat equity hours) recipient families are able to demonstrate individual responsibility and essentially, demonstrate that they are a part of the ‘deserving poor’.

Historically, poverty was redefined as a moral issue with the turn to capitalism around the time of the industrial revolution. Despite evidence that poverty is made up of a complex set of social circumstances, there is very little societal pressure to pull poverty discourse away from discussions of the family and individual responsibility to ideas of power (Katz, 1989). Therefore, if people are considered responsible for their poverty, they are therefore deserving of their condition and will be judged on these ideals when determining aid (Appelbaum, 2001). Organizations like Habitat for Humanity, therefore, use policies like the sweat equity policy to strengthen their argument that they are providing aid to a deserving group and meeting a real need that

is not based on individual moral or economic choices but on social and economic conditions. In essence, they frame who the recipients are and make them demonstrate that they are a part of the *deserving poor* through their *sweat equity* in order to encourage both the donation of time and money from a predominantly middle and upper middle class resource base whose ideas of poverty and individual responsibility are strongly influencing the ideas and politics of who deserves help.

These ideas are clear in the ways the volunteers describe and talk about the sweat equity policy and the value of a *hand up instead of hand out*. For example, Mike (a Global Village participant) comments on the sweat equity policy when asked if he was compelled by the cause,

I do believe in that but, the other thing I really like about it is that the people have to put sweat equity into the home and they also pay for the home – it's not just a gift. It's something they are going to get ownership through work and payment.

As another Global Villager, Ryan, describes of Habitat for Humanity Canada abroad,

I do like that it has affordable loans, that get paid back, and a certain percentage goes into local [Habitat], and it's a lending pool, and all the financial mechanisms in place there are good and I think that the idea of sweat equity is an amazing idea. It is not just a charitable handout. They can physically and spiritually raise themselves up.

As an organization, Habitat for Humanity is built on predominantly American middle class values and these are evident in their policies, how they frame their work, and how they demonstrate that their recipients are in need but also responsible enough to deserve their type of help. In general, these policies reflect the volunteer's and the organization's needs more than the recipient's.

Unsurprisingly, these policies resonate strongly with volunteers who are predominantly middle and upper middle class. However, while volunteers often cite the policy as attractive, most volunteers know very little about how it is implemented in practice. For example, most Global Village participants know little beyond the general orientation package provided by their program and do not have knowledge of the Habitat for Humanity International policies that have impacted their trip (for example, financial transparency standards in developing countries). In reality, the homeowner does not always put in the sweat equity required to receive their home either domestically or abroad.

In El Salvador, it is common for recipient families (who were usually middle or nearing middle class) to hire local workers or unemployed family members to share the available work and put in their sweat equity hours. Some Global Village team members were disappointed with this because they wanted to work with “the family getting the home”. This is often due to cultural misunderstandings about the ways that families live communally, share courtyards and common areas and, in regions where work is scarce; this hiring of acquaintances or family represents a dignified way to spread the work (and money) around. Compared to many of the hired workers, those receiving the home are often far better off economically leading some volunteers to question the ‘need’ of the recipient family, especially as they are surrounded by others living in extreme poverty conditions¹⁵. This represents a misunderstanding of Habitat for Humanity’s goals and

¹⁵ On my first trip to El Salvador, we were in a region that had been devastated by Hurricane Mitch. In the region, there were large numbers of people living in Red Cross housing. This emergency housing was extremely basic. The ‘homes’ were crafted of corrugated metal hung on four posts. Water was trucked in to large vats in the center of the settlement and sanitation services were scarce. This was a striking

policies, as the poorest people in a society would find qualifying for a home almost impossible. Simply put, they are too poor. In the field, this led to some discussion of who deserves or needs the most help and how this could be achieved. In essence, participants began debating who made up the ‘deserving poor’.

In the National program, some recipients simply cannot put 500 hours into their home. Volunteers can donate their hours to the sweat equity chart of the home owner; for example, when she is a single mother with three young children at home, working full time and needing her time off to care for her family. As well, in the National program, volunteers have lower expectations of always working alongside the family as the houses take longer and recipient families often work on multiple sites. Therefore, while the policy is something that volunteers defend and admire, the reality of putting in 500 hours for those receiving a house is often different.

This expectation of working “along-side” the recipient family has interesting implications. Many people on Global Village teams want to be able to say whom they are helping and that they are directly acquainted with the recipient family. For many, there is disappointment in the first few days of work as there seems to be status gained from working with the most deserving people (as chosen by Habitat for Humanity). Over time, however, as people get to know the people they are working with (and who generally needed the hours and money from working far more than the recipient family) attitudes change.

scene. Compared to the people who were receiving the Habitat for Humanity house, these hurricane survivors seemed in dire need. This led many to wonder who was the most deserving in situations like this and it was a debate that continued for the group for some time as the work of different NGOs could be readily compared.

In summary, the organization frames who the recipients of help are and require that housing recipients demonstrate their worthiness based on a middle class definition of success, personal responsibility and hard work. In order to be an act of distinction, volunteers (in a way) demonstrate that they are not like those in need but then ask recipients to work to be like them (middle class). In this way, recipients demonstrate that they are a part of the deserving poor and the volunteers feel they are helping people who deserve the help. Over time, as the organization gets a reputation for helping people who are deserving their status rises and the volunteer enjoys this greater cultural capital in their work. Volunteerism becomes a place to reproduce a middle class ideology of help and community and the volunteer work is an act of distinction that demonstrates their desire to reach middle class ideals and help those who seem willing to help themselves.

Conclusion

Volunteer organizations must attract and maintain their volunteer base. In order to do so, they need to have policies and programs that suit their target demographic. Volunteers give the highest status to those organizations that hold policies that fit with middle class values of financial responsibility and help those they determine to be the most deserving (based on a middle class influenced set of standards). Volunteer-based organizations like Habitat for Humanity Canada therefore, frame the experience in such a way as to produce a warm glow and encourage the idea that volunteers are making a

difference (shaping the value of volunteering) while promoting their brand directly to this resource rich group.

While it is clear that the organization plays a critical role in educating volunteers and providing opportunities for volunteerism, it is just as evident that the organization works to be self-sustaining and is eager to frame volunteerism, the volunteer, the cause and the recipients of help. Volunteers argue that it is important that one does their research and know what kind of organization they are getting involved with. In fact, volunteers pride themselves on knowing something about whom they are working for. However, they rarely know the organization well and rely on information from the organization to keep them informed.

Organizations actively frame the work they are doing, and this framing is a part of the 'culture of volunteerism' that gives status and provides cultural capital to volunteers. Volunteerism is framed as altruistic, giving and an important and meaningful contribution to the community. The organization frames their work as causing real change in people's lives and make claims about how each contribution is making a difference.

Policies such as the 'sweat equity policy' and the 'hand up not a hand out policy' are extremely popular. Most volunteers cite these policies as examples of how the organization resonates with their values and beliefs. It is not surprising that policies based on middle class values resonate with middle class volunteers. It is through these kinds of policies that Habitat for Humanity demonstrates how deserving the recipients of their homes are. Recipient families are asked to demonstrate that they are a part of

the deserving poor – demonstrating that they work hard and are financially responsible. In many ways, what Habitat for Humanity does, is use middle class volunteers to lift working class people one by one into the middle class. In this way, their goal is to “stop the cycle of poverty”.

Habitat for Humanity has a stake in understanding volunteers and their potential donors because they make up the vast majority of their resource base. The organization influences the volunteer experience at every stage of participation - from joining a group through each element of a build. The organization shapes the meaning volunteers make from their work and encourages a culture of volunteerism where “every little bit counts” and social change is based on helping one family at a time and not through structural or governmental channels. While the organization uses a social change discourse, this too is a part of how they frame the issue of poverty housing and the work one can do to combat poverty one house at a time.

Chapter 6

Volunteerism and Taking Action: The Social Change Paradox

Introduction

Volunteering is one way that an individual can learn about social and global issues. Wuthnow (1991) argues that volunteer organizations can be a place where volunteers can turn their attention away from service and towards broader social justice issues. The academic literature on volunteerism, however, tends to treat consciousness-raising and learning through volunteerism as an enduring hypothetical possibility. Few studies offer evidence, particularly qualitative evidence, that volunteers learn about social issues or become educated around ideas of social justice. If consciousness-raising is possible through volunteerism, then it is important to theorize the ways that consciousness-raising is occurring, how volunteers perceive this change and the impact it has on their participation in social change activities such as activism.

Volunteerism (like with Habitat for Humanity Canada) presents a unique opportunity for exposure to social inequalities, both locally and abroad, and increases in social awareness, sympathy and support. One might expect that volunteerism could act as a catalyst, increasing awareness of global and local housing issues, and galvanize future political involvement with poverty or housing-related causes. The desire to explore the relationship between consciousness-raising and volunteerism produces two related research questions. First, can the volunteer experience with Habitat for Humanity Canada provide a consciousness-raising experience? This question helps address the need for qualitative research as some of these questions have only been statistically addressed as qualitative that has been called for by volunteerism scholars (Brown, 2005a; McGhee, 2002; Stebbins, 2007).

The ways volunteering and the process of consciousness-raising intersect are unclear in the literature. Some (for example, McGhee and Santos, 2005) find volunteering abroad to statistically raise participants' awareness of social issues. How volunteers learn about social issues, whether they come to the activity with plenty of knowledge about the social problem they aim to help alleviate, or come to learn more about a social issue is unclear in the literature. In addition, there is confusion in the sociological literature regarding the relationship of consciousness-raising to volunteerism in that, while consciousness-raising is thought to be knowledge gained that leads to activism or inspires people to participate in social change, volunteers claim they also gain knowledge and are inspired to take action but, volunteer action instead of political action.

Therefore, while consciousness-raising leads to activism (social change), learning within volunteerism appears to lead to more volunteerism and not inequality-challenging social activism. This, in essence, is the social change/volunteerism paradox. In this type of volunteerism, the action taken is an apolitical helping behavior, which focuses on alleviating particular people's struggles *within* the system. Therefore, I argue, volunteers are faced with a social change/volunteerism paradox and rarely go through the full consciousness-raising process.

Second, and in order to address this emerging understanding of social change in volunteerism – how do volunteers approach and reconcile the social change/volunteerism paradox? The Habitat for Humanity Canada website claims that volunteering will “be a life-changing experience” and other scholars have found that

there are long-term impacts on participants. Given the two groups being studied here, this question explores how the possible changes experienced by volunteers in their respective settings emerge and are articulated by participants. Of key interest, are the ways that volunteers understand their participation in relation to social change and the ways volunteerism may (or may not) act as a catalyst to activism. In the volunteer arena, the value of the volunteers work is bolstered by a dialogue of social change, social responsibility and helping. This discourse has incredible value to both volunteers and the organization because it influences how they see their work and how it is valued in their communities (despite its apolitical nature).

Three broad themes emerge regarding how volunteers are changed by their participation and how they choose to take action. The first theme that emerges is one of personal change and growth. Volunteers discuss how their participation changes their perspective and provides an opportunity for personal growth. This section engages with and provides an opposing view to Musick and Wilson's (2008) argument that studying human development and perspective changes is problematic, and that it is difficult to find strong evidence to support the idea that volunteers experience personal growth and development.

Second, I develop an argument that, particularly for Global Village participants, as far as poverty is concerned 'seeing is believing'. That is, while they may not be following through to activism, there is the potential to learn a great deal about poverty and other social issues and volunteers seek out this opportunity to learn. In addition, there is a particularly strong response to Global Village experiences when volunteers are exposed

to extreme poverty often for the first time. This shock or new knowledge is a part of what Habitat for Humanity Canada claims will impact the volunteer and they use this to prompt further giving.

Last, I give a typology or stage theory of participation that defines a series of levels of social change action that cover everything from the non-participant to the activist. When examining the ways that people come into contact with the non-profit or NGO sector, a number of different levels of participation emerge. Five stages of participation are evident in this data – (1) the non-participant, (2) the financial donor, (3) the volunteer, (4) the advocate for the cause and (5) the advocate for change (activist). There is evidence that volunteerism can be a consciousness-raising experience and leads to activism – in certain circumstances. It is also evident that those who become advocates for the cause do not necessarily become political, as the organization they volunteer with can influence how they take action. Given the organization's desire to channel volunteers back into volunteerism, most people who do move from being advocates for the cause to advocates for change do so through social networks or because they have previous experience in social activism.

In this chapter, I argue and give evidence that volunteering can be a consciousness-raising experience that can result in participants becoming activists. However, for most volunteers, volunteering is an educational experience that leads to personal growth and knowledge rather than marching and letter writing. Furthermore, there are a number of stages (or types of participation) that range from non-participation to activism. Certain types of participation such as advocacy and activism

have been conflated and integrated when they represent separate stages of participation and have different references and points of engagement with and within the political system. Overall, what becomes clear when talking to volunteers is that they are often changed or educated during their experiences but, in this case, are involved in an apolitical realm. Therefore, they are not generally involved in structural change. Volunteers learn about social issues. However, when they decide to act on this knowledge what they most often do is stay in the volunteer realm and help individuals rather than become activists involved in the political system (in the pursuit of structural social change). In doing so, they are caught in a volunteerism/social change paradox where volunteerism provides cultural capital, class status, and individual level help (to recipient families) but also upholds middle class values and, in some ways, reproduces the status quo.

Volunteerism, Social Awareness and Consciousness-Raising

Volunteering is a learning experience that can result in changes to participant perspectives as they incorporate ideas of social justice and options for social action. Overall, what becomes clear when talking to volunteers is that they are often changed or educated during their experiences, but such changes and education occur in, an apolitical realm. They are not generally interested in structural social change. I argue, therefore, that activism does not occur for volunteers at the moment where they are “angered” and ask “what can I do?” (as Musick and Wilson 2008 argue). On the contrary, many volunteers are doing this, however, what they decide to do is to stay in

the volunteer realm and help individuals rather than become politically involved. Overall, volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada work within the class system to help individuals of a particular group and do not seek changes that would alter opportunity structures or influence the root causes of inequality. Instead, volunteers help while working within the system to (primarily) improve recipient living conditions.

The idea of consciousness-raising grew out of the women's movement in the United States in the 1960s. Consciousness-raising groups were formed with an aim of bringing women together to better understand oppression and to discuss and analyze their lives without male interference or the presence of men (Brownmiller, 1999). Sarachild (1973) argues that the purpose of consciousness-raising is to get at the most radical truths of the situation of women and then take radical action. She notes that there is often an incredible amount of enthusiasm and energy generated through consciousness-raising and for the idea of getting at the truth and truly understanding what is really going on. Therefore, learning the truth can lead to action and action can lead to further truths (Sarachild, 1973). Most women's groups at the time "raised consciousness" through meetings and discussion (Brownmiller, 1999). Sarachild (1973), however, notes that there is not a single method of consciousness-raising and that it is not the method of consciousness-raising that matters most, but instead the entire process should be focused on results (that is, radical change).

The idea and concept of consciousness-raising has been taken up in a number of ways since the women's movement and Sarachild's (1973) work. In the volunteer sector, Musick and Wilson (2008) find that consciousness-raising and education are

possibilities in volunteerism. However, volunteers tend to define for themselves whether or not they are activists. There often needs to be a distinction made as to where volunteerism ends and activism begins. Musick and Wilson (2008: 22) find that many volunteer scholars make the distinction between volunteerism and activism when volunteers are “angered by the unfair treatment of others and want to do something about it”. For much of the volunteerism literature, consciousness-raising (as a concept) has been taken up as a catch-all of social learning and doing so is problematic when considering the relationship between social change and volunteerism found here. Most activism is defined by direct engagement in one form or another with the political system and not through activities such as volunteerism in a poverty-focused NGO that maintains an apolitical stance. In order to engage the discourse of social change in volunteerism, one must acknowledge that there is a social change/volunteerism paradox where (despite a strong dialogue of change and development) volunteerism fosters individual aid but little structural change.

With the exception of joining a political organization, volunteers follow all the steps of a classic consciousness-raising experience on a Global Village trip. However, when they ask what they can do to foster change, the answers are not politically focused; instead, they are volunteer focused. When volunteers ask what they can do or how they can “take action”, they are directed to more volunteerism. This reproduces a discourse of social change within volunteerism despite little political action or social change occurring. In essence, while volunteers (and organizations) focus on social change and helping, their work reproduces patterns of inequality that support a

hierarchical class system (because the work takes place predominantly on a case-by-case basis). Therefore, broadening the term consciousness-raising to mean any learning about social issues loses a key part of its meaning.

Consciousness-raising by definition is focused on results and social change and therefore, cannot be used as a general term for volunteer learning especially when that learning does not lead to social change. In this case, learning about inequality results in more helping behaviour and very few volunteers go through a full classic consciousness-raising experience. That said, there is a delicate balance to be maintained as volunteering does hold the potential to be a consciousness-raising experience and start a process that leads to later activism and therefore, cannot be rejected outright as the dynamic of learning and further engagement is at the heart of both activism and volunteerism. However, it needs to be utilized critically while considering its relationship to volunteerism and social change.

I argue instead that learning goes on at an important nexus of ideas for volunteers. It can be motivational (they seek it), filled with meaning (with class-focused expectations of results and change) and can lead to important new social connections (social networks). Wrapping all increases in social awareness and education around social issues into the concept of consciousness-raising and allowing it to function as a catch all of social problem learning is problematic. Doing so diminishes the value of results in the process. Instead, the learning and awareness that goes on for volunteers need to be explored to see what action, if any volunteers take. This thesis begins to theorize the relationship between volunteerism and social change and finds that what

emerges is a social change/volunteerism paradox where a discourse of social change is met with an activity that most often reproduces the status quo (more volunteerism).

The purpose of consciousness-raising during the women's movement as described by Sarachild (1973), was to expose radical truths about the situations of women in order to take radical action. Consciousness-raising brings awareness and educates people so that learning the truth can lead to praxis (Sarachild, 1973). In the case of volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Canada, members of both programs were asked to reflect on their participation in terms of their learning and awareness and if this fostered a change in their actions or mobilized them in any way. Volunteers were also asked to speak about the type of results they feel volunteerism can foster and produce.

There is some evidence that volunteering can lead to activism. McGehee and Santos (2005) found that volunteering as a part of travel may provide the opportunity for a consciousness-raising experience. Volunteer participation has been shown to lead to longer term engagement with development activities as well as later advocacy (International Association for Volunteer Effort, 2009). Habitat for Humanity Canada takes an apolitical stance and tends to focus on helping. Accordingly, its volunteers engage the social change paradox by only becoming advocates for individual level change (usually by advocating for the work of the organization) and embracing an 'every little bit counts' attitude.

Morris (1973: 256) describes an overseas experience as having its greatest impact through sensitizing travelers to problems they "never saw, or largely ignored, before"

and this leads to more civic involvement upon their return. In terms of volunteer-abroad experiences, Wearing (2002) finds that a short time abroad can fundamentally change volunteer's values and awareness about issues. Work that takes place within the developing world often shapes perceptions of 'poverty' (Simpson, 2004). It also moves away from simply observing others and towards a desire for interaction and exchange (Wearing, 2002). Although the projects are short term, they are often intense experiences that have a lasting effect on participants (McGhee and Santos, 2005). Like other forms of volunteerism, most volunteer travel does not have an overt political mission.

The motives of international volunteers are complex, blending altruistic ideas with "opportunities for challenge, adventure and life-change" (Hudson and Inkson, 2006: 317). Habitat for Humanity Canada's Global Village program, like other international volunteer organizations, makes claims about the long-term effects of international volunteerism, despite the short-term nature of its volunteers' experiences. Overall, work in tourism and travel finds that people describe their travel as life changing (as do many Global Village volunteers). Brown (2005a: 491), for example, found that participants feel "the impact permeates beyond the vacation trip itself" and some participants report changing educational paths into poverty relief-focused career paths while others became annual volunteer-tourists (Brown, 2005b).

While consciousness-raising may not be the best way to describe the learning that goes on and the raising of awareness that volunteers report, it is clear that volunteering is a realm where people learn about social issues and generate new ideas

about helping and social responsibility. International volunteers, in particular, relate that their trip influenced them to do more volunteerism but also, that it can be difficult to know what to do. Most seem to be reconciled to the idea that helping on a case-by-case basis is the best option available to the average citizen. They navigate the problem and consider the ways they can help. In this way, they engage with and work to negotiate the social change/volunteerism paradox.

Changing Ideas about Poverty

As Habitat for Humanity Canada is a poverty-focused NGO, what participants understand about poverty when they begin volunteering and how they reflect on those in need after participation is of particular interest. Most volunteers come to the program with their own understanding of poverty and most state that their experiences volunteering have educated them about poverty-related social issues or have changed their ideas about what kinds of people lived in poverty. One of the ways volunteer participation can impact their ideas and attitudes is through a deeper awareness of poverty living conditions.

The vast majority of volunteers talk about how volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Canada has helped them understand housing needs and the overall impacts of poverty on families, including a new understanding about how distant poverty seems in relation to their own lives. Volunteers express that it is hard to understand the concept of poverty because it is often hidden or in areas that are not regularly visited (by predominantly middle class volunteers) both in Canadian society and abroad. While

members of both groups discuss changes to their ideas of poverty or the “deserving poor”, the Global Village group is more consistent in their expressions of change and offer narratives of greater impact. When comparing these two groups, it is evident that volunteering abroad has a lot of potential to raise awareness about extreme poverty and the daily challenges of those struggling to improve their quality of life.

Global Villagers and Poverty Awareness – Is Seeing Believing?

While many Global Village participants are aware of trends in the global economy or follow the world news, there is great diversity in how much people know about what is going on in the world in terms of poverty relief and human living conditions. The result is a range of awareness - from those who simply want to travel to those who do a lot of reading, to those who are quite involved with international issues. One Global Villager, Megan, gives a typical response when she says,

I had a very limited view of what poverty was just from reading and television and things like that. It enlarged it and made it more real to find out people live on 180 US dollars a month and that they live in mud and twig houses with mud floors and so it really changed my view of poverty. I figure I am poor and broke but I'm wealthy by comparison.

For most Global Village participants, simple exposure to living conditions in other countries is an impactful experience.

Eliasoph (2011: 232) finds that when volunteers work with people from other social groups they must adjust their approach to interaction and question some of the beliefs they have about the other group. Therefore, rather than learning to create a feeling of togetherness by drawing on gut feelings, shared feelings, comfort and nature,

participants sometimes learn how radically different their tastes are, which causes them to question their own feelings of comfort, and to be unsure of what counts as “natural”. Global Village volunteers are in a unique situation in that they are working within their own social group in many ways (generally, middle income white Canadians) while being immersed in a foreign culture. This results in many points of revelation for participants.

One of the key elements of a Global Village trip is the motto “seeing is believing”. For many people, there is an element of experiencing poverty first-hand and being immersed in the ways that poverty can be an assault to the senses. As one Global Village leader, Daniel, summarizes about his trip,

I’ve always known there were a lot of poor people out there. It’s just; you get to experience it firsthand. So, I guess indirectly the concept has always been out there but when you experience it first hand and see the impact you can have and the changes you can make – just to experience it and to see the benefits from donating the time and effort.

It is common on trips for teams to be taken on a tour of the area to learn about the housing needs of the region or country. For example, in El Salvador, the team was taken to areas of temporary housing established after the mudslides of Hurricane Mitch. The team observed (during the tour) many people living in extreme poverty and emergency housing conditions. For many, this tour of the area is one of the hardest moments of the trip but it also serves as motivation to “get building”. As one Global Village participant, Frank, describes his feelings,

It just made it real to me, I guess. You want to take pictures and stuff to bring back as a memory but you can’t because as human beings it strikes you as so in front of you there – that it is so heart wrenching. So, it affects you on a human level now as opposed to just reading stats or basing it upon someone’s opinion.

These tours have shock value and are a part of describing (on the part of Habitat for Humanity) the housing problem faced by many of the low income and slum areas of the world. When in Kenya, for example, on their final day participants are taken up to the top of a hill where they can overlook the Kibera slum, the second largest slum in the world. This hike “rounds out” the participants’ understanding of the need for housing and the need for more poverty relief resources. As intended, these tours increase awareness but also fulfill some of the participants’ desires to “be shocked” or “be shaken” by the experience. This is a part of why they pursue the Global Village trip experience.

Most Global Village participants agree that experiencing the poverty of developing countries first hand and the way that it reaches your senses can be deeply impactful. Coming to understand your surroundings as being dangerous to you or your health is one of the biggest lesson participants take home – for example, understanding the daily impacts of an unclean water system and how living with unsafe water changes how you shower and brush your teeth, or how you need to protect yourself from mosquitoes and other insects. The most common injuries to volunteers on Global Village trips are slips and falls, primarily because the structure and layout of roads, paths and villages are so foreign to most participants. For example, one team leader fell into a hole (meant for a new well) in a field while playing with local children in Ethiopia, something that would have to be marked or covered in Canada. Two Global Village participants describe the sensory aspect of their fieldwork it in this way:

I don't know if it's life changing but, it was a real, let me put it this way – eye opener. The whole trip, especially getting down in the midst of the people and

getting really, really down in in the midst of the people, like, smelling it. Wow, smelling it! (Donna, Global Village Program)

It's not the same when you actually smell it and feel the heat and it changes it completely. You're not seeing it on TV anymore. You're meeting people, these are actual people you can touch and that you hug and that you grow attached to. It really changes the approach for me. (Raymond, Global Village Program)

The experience of extreme poverty, often for the first time, by volunteers is something that both the volunteers and team leaders work to manage, as it can be an emotional and sometimes stressful experience.

Another way that volunteers sometimes express this concept is in trying to relate to family and friends upon their return home. For many volunteers, it is frustrating to share the experience and enthusiasm gained for different causes on a trip only to find it to be received by an indifferent audience. As, Marcus, a Global Village volunteer explains of his experience,

The first time I came home, you know – I had pictures and I got stories and I talked until I was blue in the face but, nobody really got the picture and I finally came to the conclusion that the only way that they will is to do it.

As a result, his approach is to do one trip a year and to take someone new with him each time to experience it. He takes it upon himself to become an advocate for the cause.

There is some evidence that this enthusiasm and newfound awareness does slowly start to fade as people integrate back into daily life. There are many repeat volunteers who discuss how the trip “fills them” up each year and that they need a constant or annual “reality check”. As one woman, Glenda, a Global Villager describes,

I do know that things are really different when we come back from El Salvador - you saw everything differently. It compels you but, it wasn't sustaining enough. I

felt that way for a couple of years, I think in that case, we needed to be going on another trip to get that feeling again, almost a need to rush to get this done, which I think you kind of lose over time.

Maintaining the enthusiasm produced through volunteering, or capitalizing on the moments directly after the volunteer experience, is something the Global Village program is much more involved in than the National program. Information about volunteering or donating to your host country usually arrives within a month of your return home.

One of the reasons I would have expected Global Village trips to offer a strong possibility of consciousness-raising is because they hold many of the characteristics in their social interactions that were described by Sarachild (1973) when discussing women's consciousness-raising meetings. First, Global Village trips offer time in the evening to discuss and reflect. Second, much of what is discussed is with members of your own social group as teams are, in many ways, fairly homogenous. Third, leaders encourage reflection and the understanding of local conditions and local Habitat for Humanity staff are eager to share the needs of the region. As with Brownmiller's (1999) groups, participants are asked in a non-threatening environment to reflect on and analyze their lives. This time is repeated each day as people learn and observe and there is plenty of opportunity to discuss "truths" and inequalities.

This creates an atmosphere poised for consciousness-raising. Team members become educated and passionate about what they have seen each day and each new thing that they find challenging or shocking. These ideas are then taken up within a group with participants of a similar background who also understand this perspective.

These reflections and the ways that participants perceive the needs around them are then viewed through this group lens where each person expresses their observations and ideas so that they can subsequently learn from others. The team leader, who is experienced and often facilitates these discussions, is called on to talk about other contexts and what kinds of change the volunteers can be a part of. Often, the volunteers become aware, allow their pride to grow as to what they are doing, want to do more, and want to share this new enlightenment with others.

In many ways, these volunteers follow all the steps of a classic consciousness-raising experience on a Global Village trip. The catch is, when they ask what they can do to foster change – the answers are not *politically* focused – they are *volunteer* focused. They are told to sign up for another trip or donate money to the region. The volunteer organization benefits from their desire to help and there are almost no political or structural benefits to their volunteerism. When most volunteers ask what they can do to ‘take action’, they are directed to more volunteerism. This reproduces a discourse of active social change within volunteerism, despite the very little political action or social change occurring as a result. In essence, while volunteers (and organizations) focus on social change and helping, what they are often doing is reproducing similar patterns of inequality and negotiating and renegotiating with the social change/volunteerism paradox.

This highlights the ways the concept of consciousness-raising is problematic for volunteerism. Consciousness-raising occurs for a select few who retain a focus on overall results (as discussed by Sarachild (1973)). The result of consciousness-raising is social change or changes that alleviate or alter some form of inequality. While

volunteerism has the potential for the participants to learn a lot and gain a raised awareness about certain social conditions or issues, this awareness is channeled into a social change type activity focused on helping – volunteerism. The leap to activism for most of these volunteers is never made.

Do Volunteers Become Activists?

There are strong links between activism and volunteerism and in a number of ways, they are deeply connected. Activists are often volunteers for organizations (or smaller groups) with political agendas and some volunteers view their donation of time as a way to foster small-scale social change. Beigbeder (1991) argues that there is a distinction between charity and voluntary service because volunteerism has a more ‘activist’ approach. In particular, there is evidence that those who volunteer are interested in supporting and directly involving themselves in social change. In terms of the field of non-profits, Drucker (1990: 3) states that “the non-profit [sector] exists to bring about change in society”. While Habitat for Humanity Canada focuses on changing the image of affordable housing in Canada and the Global Village program works to make safe, affordable houses around the world, they work towards change one house at a time. This type of change is on an individual or small group basis. It is not revolutionary or radical and it often does not usually involve government or politicians but often, for participants, it represents a choice to focus one’s life on community service and social responsibility.

Participants are aware that this is a different kind of change and that they are contributing to a slow evolution of ideas and social responsibility. The amount of change that can be fostered, some volunteers express, is underestimated by the public. As one local volunteer notes, “a lot of people would be surprised what a dedicated group of volunteers can do in a few years’ time”. The possibility of change is highly motivational for many participants and defining their participation as “change making” is a factor in how volunteers make meaning around their work. However, many participants are also aware that one house at a time, while honorable (and certainly life changing for the recipient family), is only a small contribution to the overall problem of poverty housing.

Volunteers speak enthusiastically about the impact of their work and about the change an affordable home can have in the lives of recipient family members. Statistics related to affordable housing and its correlation to the success of the family members are often cited by volunteers as evidence of their impact. However, it is important not to conflate the idea of helping on a case-by-case basis (volunteerism like with Habitat for Humanity Canada) and activism (engaging the problem politically). While both have a sense of “taking action for good” or maintain the goal of improving people's lives, Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers rarely engaged politics. The discourse of change and the idea that one is “making a real difference” (even if it is on a smaller scale) is real in volunteerism. It is a part of the culture of volunteerism and generates status for the volunteers.

People come into contact with the non-profit sector and NGOs in a number of different ways. Levels of participation can be mapped out to represent stages or

categories of participation but each stage also incorporates different level of commitment and ability to create social change. I develop this typology because it lays out different points of contact with the system of giving that ranges from no participation to activism. In addition, it expands and challenges the work of Musick and Wilson (2008) as it places the point of activism much further down a continuum of participation than volunteerism (though there may be overlap). Five stages are evident from this data – (1) the non-participant, (2) the financial donor, (3) the volunteer, (4) the advocate for the cause, and (5) the advocate for political or systematic change (activist). Each category is expanded with examples from the Habitat for Humanity Canada case below.

I. The Non-Participant

The non-participant is perhaps the most straightforward. This is someone who has not engaged or had contact in any way with the non-profit or NGO sector. Most people, however, do not fall into this category because of the plethora of opportunities to donate money to a range of causes. For example, even in small ways (a dollar here or there) many people contribute financially as a minimal form of participation. There are some however, who do not donate time or money and are not an advocate in any way for a cause and these people are described here as non-participants because they are not participating in a system of change, helping or giving.

2. The Financial Donor

Donating money to or supporting an organization financially is one of the first ways people can become involved. It requires little time and personal effort, in many cases a tax receipt is available (a government incentive) and it can produce the “warm-glow” effect (Andreoni, 1990) that one gets from giving to others. It is often easier to find a way to get involved by donating money through fundraisers and websites than to get involved in other ways. As one Global Village volunteer, Marian, says,

You start off by writing cheques but you want to do more than that and it's difficult to find an avenue to do that.

If one wants to participate further through the donation of time, it can be difficult to find opportunities to volunteer. This is especially true of internationally based giving. One of the reasons the Global Village program is growing and popular is that there are very few short-term volunteer opportunities available and even fewer available with a strong reputation for safety and financial responsibility. Simply put, the demand well exceeds the supply. With some organizations, donating money is the only way to get involved. It is common for participants to be volunteers with one organization and give financially to another depending on what type of giving was available. For example, Valerie, a Global Villager describes how she is involved in giving money and volunteerism,

I would say Amnesty International is something I support. The credit banking and that sort of thing too but to say activism, actually going out other than money ... hmm... Habitat, that sort of volunteering maybe, other than giving out money and supplies and arranging to take things to Mexico and to just people and we went to orphanages and dropped off money because I know that is what they need.

People can be at different stages with different groups, which can result in categories overlapping or happening concurrently. However, the donation of money is one way to

support particular causes or groups by supporting an organization and for many, this is a first step towards engaging with this system or fostering social change.

3. The Volunteer (Time Donor)

Volunteering, or the donation of time, represents a higher level of personal commitment as time is a finite resource and, for many, more difficult to give. As well, unlike financial donation, it is viewed as “doing something” and therefore is seen as a more active approach to change, which in turn also leads to more social status. This follows Cobb’s (2003: 23) understanding of volunteerism as action where “a responsible citizen helps address concerns and finds effective solutions to poverty and injustice”. With volunteerism, the focus shifts from giving to acting.

Most participants spoke strongly about social responsibility and the need to take action when being socially responsible; many also spoke of volunteering as “one of many routes to change”. The majority of participants are unwilling to regard their volunteerism as a form of activism. For many volunteers, they describe not being involved in “marches” or a political party so it “didn’t count” as activism however, most people felt there is a political undertone to their participation. This confirms Musick and Wilson’s (2008) assertion that volunteers do not consider their work activism until they define it that way for themselves. For many participants, being a volunteer did not align with what they understood to be activism. For example, as one Vancouver volunteer, Roger, explains,

I don’t know if volunteering is a subset of activism or if they are on an equal footing but I like the framework. It seems to me, it’s just a different channel to achieving

the goals of social activism. I would never in a million years go march at a G8 summit – it doesn't mean that I don't believe in the issues around economic well being and excluding groups of people or whole societies from the benefits of stable economics. I just don't think burning police cars is a particularly effective way of getting what you want so, I would rather invest my time and energy into something that is a little more close to home but, also has a spillover into the global community.

Being radical, marching in the streets or protesting at a major event like the G8 or G20, are main points of reference made to activism. Belinda, a Global Village volunteers gives a common example when she describes her participation as “small ‘p’ political”. She feels it has some political meaning for her; for example, she has also signed petitions and wrote letters to the Prime Minister’s and Minister of the Environment’s offices, but she is uncomfortable describing herself as an activist. Many volunteers agree with Staggenborg (2008) that activism is viewed as being against the stream or at least against main-stream and they do not feel that working with Habitat for Humanity Canada is “alternative” enough to constitute being called activism. In fact, in many ways Habitat for Humanity Canada promotes and works within the system far more than against it.

Moreover, there is a range of activities that are expressed as being activism including letter writing, marching, protesting, and political volunteering. Some participants feel writing letters make one an activist while others feel it had to involve marching. Each person has his or her own definition of what work would have to be done to ‘qualify’ or identify as an activist and this rarely includes volunteerism.

Volunteerism offers an alternative to activism for those who have become disenchanted with the formal or government driven approach to change or who do not want to be politically involved. There is an understanding among some of the volunteers

that governments are ineffective in dealing with social issues, both in Canada and in other countries. For some, Habitat for Humanity Canada and volunteering is an alternative way to initiate change one person or family at a time. This approach is often taken by those who believe members of government are either not listening to their constituents' needs or not doing enough. This is an image supported by Habitat for Humanity in the mass media (Hackworth, 2009). There is, for some, a general disenchantment with government politics. As two Global Villagers describe,

I get several emails a week from politically related groups and from Obama events and I have supported Obama in his election campaign and to be honest with you, right now, I would rather support Habitat than any political group. (Lorraine, Global Village Program)

Because voting with my vote for the conservative or for the liberal and all that it's the same, you know, they promise one thing, they come in and do the opposite and it's pointless. It's totally pointless. (Roy, Global Village Program)

For some, there is a sense that the way to help those in need is not through government because governments are “not working” and that working with Habitat for Humanity Canada is an alternative way to make a difference in one's community.

4. The Advocate for the Cause

As volunteers become more involved and more educated about a cause, the effects of their raised awareness regarding housing needs becomes evident and they often move on to become advocates for the cause or the organization. Especially for Global Villagers, a newly developed awareness of the need combined with heightened enthusiasm leads to a desire to advocate around the organization, the experience and the necessary resources. In this phase, there is a shift in commitment towards the

overall cause and involving others. This is a variation on Musick and Wilson's (2008) findings that people who moved from volunteering to activism defined commitment differently and were no longer thinking in terms of their time but in terms of their personal investment in the cause. I would argue that becoming personally invested in the cause (particularly in the NGO case where volunteering can appear much like active social change) does not necessarily mean that participants have moved into a more political or activism focused realm. There appears to be an in between phase where one can advocate and be heavily involved but this is contained to their personal networks, the organization and the community, and does not engage the formal political system.

Many volunteers take advocacy for the programs and for the ways they would like to see people helped seriously. Some people are known for their work in their community and are 'go to' people for getting involved. Others take a different approach, as one retiree, Louis, explains,

Do I go around with a Habitat flag and banner and say 'get on board'? No. I just quietly tell them what it has meant to me. There are things that I speak out against but we don't belong to any protest groups. I think that kind of mellows out with age. With the hardening of the arteries comes the softening of the heart.

Promoting the cause and gaining support in the community happens in many ways and people choose their approach to educating others and encouraging support for the cause. As will be discussed in *Chapter Seven*, the volunteers' personal networks, along with resources from the organization, often work together when volunteers become advocates for the organization.

5. The Advocate for Change (Activist)

It is clear that the most politically active volunteers feel that volunteerism is a part of the consciousness-raising process particularly around the issues of poverty and adequate affordable housing. A small minority of volunteers talk about the ways they have now become activists in Canada for these causes (affordable housing, poverty, etc.). According to Musick and Wilson (2008), people become social activists when they become aware about something unfair and decide to act; they coined this becoming “issue-oriented”. Instead, I argue that choosing to act does not necessarily make one a social activist. There are ways to act that are non-political by design (as with volunteering for a local sports team might be). Becoming aware of the issues often leads to increased action or participation but not necessarily *politically focused* participation.

To enter this category, individuals have to move from volunteering and advocating for the cause to engaging with the formal political system in order to pursue structural or political change. Some of the participants from each group are involved in Canadian politics of some form. Some are involved in letter writing; others followed the G20 and G8 summits closely, while others engage in protests against city policies or marching against nuclear energy. These are just some of the ways Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers are politically involved. Still, others express a desire to be more involved with both the Habitat for Humanity Canada organization and different marches and protests but they live rurally; for these participants, there are fewer outlets for them to be more politically active. Overall, many of these volunteers feel that being

involved in Canadian politics or looking at political debates and issues is a part of a socially responsible lifestyle. As one local volunteer, Andrew describes,

As someone said, why is going to the grocery store a political thing for you? Yes, you know, like boycotting grapes a few years ago and all that sort of thing and not buying produce from South Africa when apartheid was there. The same with Chile and Pinochet.

These types of comments are common from volunteers who are involved in active political participation. Usually they revolve around the ways they try to act out their political values with their purchases, being more 'green' or joining groups to do things like participate in a rally or formal protest.

One group that comes to Habitat for Humanity Canada with clear intentions, seeking ways to be involved with change, are those already involved in activities with the peace movement. Those who have been involved in the peace movement had often already been introduced to activism through marches and other events, and are now expanding their community participation. As one Global Village volunteer, Lorna, replies when asked about volunteerism and activism,

Peace marches and activities. When I first went to Peru, when I first had a passport, years before I went to Nicaragua I realized the connection between the sharing of resources and peace and justice and they were inseparable. There had to be peace in the world.

Some volunteers that have also been involved with movements such as the peace movement tend to use a more change focused vocabulary, be more issue-oriented and are more politically involved through their own networks outside of those they maintained through Habitat for Humanity Canada. In fact, more politically minded

volunteers complain about how Habitat for Humanity Canada does not provide them with political guidance.

There is also variety in the ways that people participate around the cause of poverty housing but it is often not the only issue they have taken up. As Josef, a Global Villager describes,

I am starting to get more engaged I would say. Maybe that is like an element of being involved with some of these issues, like social housing, women's rights, those kinds of things. Like this week was the first week of the G20 stuff. I went out and really tried to capture the message of what people were saying. So, I am weighing in sometimes and kind of being analytical about it a little. I went to a rally on Monday.

For others, their participation in Habitat for Humanity Canada programs had made them involved in local politics for the first time. As Christine, a Global Villager says,

It's definitely an issue for me now with the upcoming mayoral election we have in Toronto. So, I am attending debates about social housing kind of informing myself about the process in Toronto and what services are available. So, starting to get more engaged in that and lobby the candidates to really put together stronger policies around that.

Participants like this already have a diverse set of experiences in the political system and while it is a minority who express their desire to use the Canadian political system for change, the ways that these volunteers understand their work as activism are even more diverse.

Musick and Wilson (2008: 517) argue that the same activity can be labeled as different things depending on the political and economic interests of the actors and that organizations take advantage by “drawing attention through the strategic use of social labels like ‘volunteering’ and ‘activist’”. These volunteers are clear in that they are either engaging with the political system or they are not. Volunteers who are activists are

often activists for a number of causes or larger issues such as poverty, women's rights and environmental conservation.

There are two notable exceptions in the National program where volunteers have gotten quickly involved with local politics. First, are those who have been involved with the executive board when lobbying for resources such as land with cities or for building permits in already developed areas. Second, are those who mobilized when Habitat for Humanity Canada faced resistance to building homes in certain communities. For example, in Airdrie, Alberta (a bedroom community 30 km North of Calgary) in the spring of 2010, the local Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliate applied to build a series of townhomes on a one-hectare, city-owned lot that had been empty for 19 years. Local residents opposed the development (on the grounds that it would cause more traffic) and collected 600 signatures and planned to picket the work site (White, 2010). The opposition was accused of being "anti-poor" and was overwhelmed by volunteers and members of the local community who came out to support Habitat for Humanity Canada's plans. Habitat for Humanity Airdrie quickly raised enough money to build the town houses in what was one of their most successful donation drives in history (White, 2010). However, these incidences appear to be isolated and historically they have not produced long-term committed activists for the cause. In any case, when they do occur, they demonstrate how quickly and forcibly volunteers and communities can be mobilized on certain issues.

Overall, National program volunteers tend to get more involved with local politics and governments but Global Village and National program volunteers both have

strong feelings about activism and the role of social responsibility for volunteers. Across the board, the Global Villagers found it more difficult to find links to governments or places to cause political change outside of the NGO system. In the case of Habitat for Humanity Canada, the organization is looking for their volunteers' ongoing support, such that when volunteers want to "do more" they are often encouraged to take up advocating or leading within the organization as opposed to finding alternative political avenues for structural change. In the Global Village program, when volunteers ask "how can I do more?" the organization often responds – do another trip. In this way, they foster their own development but do not encourage further poverty or housing-focused political action. Whether or not this is common within the NGO sector in general requires further research. For both groups, consciousness-raising, education, awareness and opportunities to participate are all critical steps to becoming involved as an activist.

Conclusion

For volunteers, there were many kinds of learning and gaining awareness with varying degrees of effectiveness. For Global Village participants, in particular, it is evident that experiencing extreme poverty and engaging with local people from other countries and cultures can be incredibly impactful. There is plenty of data to indicate that there is value in first-hand experience and that 'seeing is believing'. It is also clear that volunteerism can result in changes to ideas, altering of perspectives, the fostering of human development, and personal growth. All volunteers discuss ways that they have grown, developed or changed. In fact, it would be difficult to argue that volunteerism

has the potential to be a consciousness-raising experience if we do not allow for the strong role that education and an open-awareness can play in the experience. Many volunteers come to volunteering because they are actively seeking more knowledge and an experience that will change their perspective or help them reevaluate their priorities. Experiences in the Global Village program, in particular, influence participant perspectives and the understanding of poverty level living conditions changes participants.

There is no doubt that knowledge of poverty (or who lives in poverty) changes through the experience of volunteering for many participants. While these changes may be difficult to measure, it would be remiss to disregard the evidence presented by the volunteers here and in other studies (for example, Brown, 2005b; Wearing et al., 2010; Zavitz, 2004) that indicates attitudinal changes volunteers experience can have ongoing effects in their everyday lives. Most volunteers are not well educated about ideas or theories of development and this is particularly important given that development is often linked to politics, government funding and decision-making. Further research is required to better understand the possible links between “development” and “activism”, and how volunteers could be further mobilized and begin to act as stakeholders or activists in this area.

Therefore, I develop a series of categories to demonstrate how individuals become involved or move from causes to politics, and to express the complex ways they move back and forth over time and with emerging issues and causes. What really counts, in terms of consciousness-raising however, are not methods but the results

(Brownmiller, 1999) and it is evident that those who become advocates for causes do not necessarily have to become political as the organization has some influence on the ways volunteers can take action. Given the organization's desire to channel volunteers back into volunteerism, most participants who do become activists, do so through their social network and not through the organization. In this way, consciousness-raising does not capture most of the volunteer experience, as volunteers do not tend to follow through to activism. If the result of consciousness-raising is activism, the result of volunteerism (most of the time) appears to be more volunteerism. Gaining awareness through volunteerism, does not mean that volunteers will become mobilized and move into activism. Volunteer participation, largely, begets more volunteer participation.

Chapter 7

Volunteerism and Social Capital

Introduction

The concept of social capital has been used extensively in the volunteerism literature to explain volunteer participation. This has been done predominantly through Putnam's work (2000) where volunteerism and the social capital developed through volunteerism is understood as an indicator of the state of civil society in the United States. However, the volunteer literature does not fully address the critical influence that social networking can have on volunteerism. Most studies focus on the kinds of activities people engage in, their motivations (with a focus on altruism) or a simple understanding of social capital that asks whether someone in their network recruited them. Despite being an under theorized area in the literature, social networking plays a critical role in volunteer participation. I argue that using a qualitative approach allows the details of how social capital is generated, utilized and varies across individuals to emerge.

Analysis of social networks can be used as a tool for linking micro and macro levels of analysis as the macro implications of small scale interactions can be explored (Burt, 1980; Burt, 1982; Granovetter, 1973). Therefore, understanding the relationship between social networks and volunteerism and expanding the role of social networks as they have been used up until now can help to more accurately capture the dynamics of the volunteer case. Traditionally, social networks have been predominantly understood as social capital for volunteer-based organizations. That is, using a social resource model, they can be leveraged by organizations to recruit more participants or donations in one form or another. While this does occur to some extent, it does not fully

represent the relationship between social networking and volunteerism observed in this study. Social networks are used in a variety of ways by both individuals and organizations, and how they are used, especially by organizations, has changed over time.

In the case of social networking, there are important points of comparison between the National program and the Global Village program. Given that the two programs are based within the same organization and they use the same foundational principles to guide their work, there are similarities in how volunteers meet and network and the types of camaraderie they experience. There are, however, important differences in how they operate and how networks develop and sustain themselves. The largest point of comparison between the two groups is perhaps how participants network and the social factors that influence and encourage relationships between volunteers. Variables such as leadership, informal time spent together, access to contact information and the intensity of experience all deeply impact the development of social networks.

One of the most important questions to ask when considering volunteer networks is whether the networks are useful to the volunteers. The networks of Habitat for Humanity Canada often produce social capital for participants. They act as a support system for volunteer values. As well, there is an increase in cultural capital for the volunteers among their personal social networks as the act of volunteering is understood as a positive contribution to the community and therefore, gives the volunteer status.

Networks are also useful in the development of human capital. Volunteerism is one way to strengthen a job or university application, gain referees and to prepare for the experiences and demands of different fields and positions and exploring what one's interests might be. Moreover, one of the most basic ways that volunteer networks are used is to increase personal networks and make friends. Of importance, for this study, the question is asked whether volunteer networks become political and while it is clear they have that potential – most are not. Most volunteers do ask what more they can do but they are caught in the social change/volunteer paradox and tend to be directed into more volunteerism. Unless they come to volunteerism with activism experience or meet someone very involved in local activism, they do not tend to create groups that are focused on social change.

This findings chapter broadly addresses the findings of the final research sub-question as to whether Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers form social networks with other volunteers and what role these networks play. First, social networking for volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada is addressed in order to understand how networks function for each of the two groups. Next, this chapter explores the ways cultural, social and political capital is built in these networks, the ways that people utilize their social resources, and how their networks influence fellow volunteers and community members.

Social Networking and Volunteer Resources

Over the past three decades, social capital in its various forms and contexts has emerged as one of the most salient concepts used by the social sciences (Lin, 1999). Social capital theories emerge out of a desire to better explain social action. It is a particularly useful concept as it allows for the actors to be seen as socialized and their actions to be governed by social norms, rules and obligations while acknowledging that social contexts shape, constrain and redirect choices. At the same time, social capital has also been able to integrate ideas generated by economist that view actors as having independent goals and as acting independently (often in self-interest) (Coleman, 1988). In this view, social capital is productive and makes “possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible” (Coleman, 1988: 598). Coleman (1988) relies heavily on a version of social capital that closely parallels the concept of financial capital and these ideas do not capture some of the factors observed in the volunteer case which is heavily influenced by the norms and values associated with giving and help.

Lin (2001: 19) describes the premise behind the concept of social capital as “rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns”. Lin (2001) offers four explanations for why social networks enhance the outcomes of actions – *information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement*. First, *information* flow is facilitated by social ties located in strategic positions providing an individual with useful information. Second, members of one’s social network may have *influence* in that their words may carry weight with others or influence the decisions of those around them. Third, the social ties of one individual may be viewed as *social*

credentials, that is, these ties may be viewed as indicators of the actor's accessible social resources. Last, social relations are "expected to *reinforce* identity and recognition" (Lin, 2001: 20). Social capital theories of action, therefore, often focus on the ways social capital can be instrumental and expressive in ways that cannot be accounted for by other forms of personal capital such as economic or human capital.

Social capital is "the advantage created by a person's location in a structure of relationships" (Burt, 2005: 4). The concept represents a metaphor about advantage and this advantage is visible when certain people or groups of people do better or are more successful at something than their equally able peers (Burt 2005). Human capital theories usually explain different outcomes between people or groups based on their differences, for example, some being more intelligent, attractive or skilled. Alternatively, social capital theory posits that people are connected to each other and are dependent on exchanges with others and one's position in this structure of exchanges can be an asset to the actor in its own right (Burt, 2005).

The notion of social capital has been used extensively in the volunteerism literature to explain volunteer participation (predominantly through Putnam's (2000) work) in relation to the decline of social capital and, therefore, civil society in the United States. Social capital theory focuses on the role of social networks, norms and trust and their particular role in facilitating collective action (Selbee, 2004). Social capital is important because it is seen as the basis of the democratic process and the "maintenance of a vigorous civil society" (Putnam, 2000: 19). Voluntary organizations represent one type of social organization that individuals can use to access or acquire

social capital. From this perspective, volunteering is one of the many activities that is dependent on the social capital of its community, which allows it to be used as an indicator of the health of civil society (Coleman, 1988). This perspective is limited however, in that it does not address the many ways social capital is useful to volunteers and its role in maintaining ongoing participation with an organization.

In 1995, Robert Putnam published *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* in the *Journal of Democracy*. The article was widely read and became a seminal piece of research in the area of volunteerism as it laid the foundation for thinking of volunteerism (particularly in organized groups) as a touchstone of civil society. He begins with the thesis that “the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (not only in America) are ... powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement” (Putnam, 1995: 66). While it is a theory about civil society, civic engagement and democracy, volunteerism becomes foregrounded in that it is one of the areas where Putnam (2000) claims American society is experiencing a decline in participation (along with local clubs and religious organizations) and this decline has an impact on society and levels of civic engagement.

Putnam (1995) makes the distinction between two kinds of social capital: bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding occurs when you socialize with people who are like you in some way (same religion, age, race, etc.). Bridging social capital is the type of capital built when you socialize with people who are not like you. Putnam (1995) claims that while both kinds of social capital strengthen each other, it is the bridging kind that is

needed to create peaceful societies. Consequently, he claims, the decline in bonding capital inevitably becomes a decline in bridging capital, increasing social tensions.

I was unable to replicate many of Putnam's claims because he concentrates far more on organizational forms of social capital and pays less attention to interpersonal social networks (a criticism also made by Fischer (2005)). Informal connections are an important part of the volunteer experience and deserve more thoughtful research. Volunteers are most committed when they work with people they like and who appear to share common values and informal networks become important when discussing ongoing volunteer participation. International volunteerism, in particular, is an often overwhelming experience and the intensity of socialization helps form strong bonds among volunteers. In addition, Global Village leaders are key to this process of networking and bonding as they initiate contact (usually through email), and are trained to encourage an inclusive and friendly atmosphere (to foster team bonds).

Volunteers, however, while often having certain characteristics in common (such as class in this case) but are not a homogeneous group. They often came from a diverse set of ethnic backgrounds and are of all ages. There is a threshold of commonality (usually in terms of class and values) that enhances the experience and allows bonds to develop but also links people who are diverse along other variables. In addition, after the volunteer experience, one cannot underestimate the power of the common experience in bonding among volunteers.

In many ways, this type of volunteerism fosters both kinds of social capital Putnam (1995) describes – bridging and bonding. Volunteers find camaraderie in their

social group and among those on their team because of shared purpose and shared values. However, there is also clear evidence that the volunteer teams are diverse in other ways. To claim, as Putnam (1995, 2000) does that there is a lack of contact with a diverse set of people and there is a decline in both types of social capital, would not capture the diversity of both the volunteers and the recipients. In addition, it does not capture other things (besides race) that the volunteers may or may not have in common.

In addition, I argue that organizations that may impact civic engagement come in many forms. Volunteer organizations vary in their approach and their level of political engagement. Structurally, organizations tends to rely less on volunteer social capital as they become more established and when the organization's reputation, credibility and media presence are readily recognized. Having strong pre-existing structures means that volunteers can participate without knowing anyone else who is participating and the system supports their participation. In this way, Habitat for Humanity Canada's National program is more formal in their social structure and relies on more structured social capital.

In contrast, the Global Village program (being much newer) relies more heavily on the social capital of its volunteers and volunteer leaders than the National program. Volunteer leaders give more than just their time. Often, they also enhance the program through the use of their social capital and interpersonal skills. The Global Village program relies heavily on the informal ties made among volunteers and between the volunteers and the organization. Even within Habitat for Humanity there is a diverse

range in organizational type that is not captured well by Putnam's (2000) framework (which tends to focus on community organization such as Rotary Clubs).

For Putnam (2000: 16), social capital refers to “networks of social connection – doing with”. It is, he argues, separate from the idea of “doing good” (Putnam, 2000). These ideas are not often separated in the volunteerism literature given its focus on altruism. Social capital refers to the quality and quantity of people's network connections. The basic idea of social capital is that a person's family, friends, colleagues and associates are an important asset that can be called on when needed (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Putnam (2000: 134) describes this reciprocity among social network members calling on each other when in need – the “touchstone of social capital”. Though older, Bourdieu's (1986) theory of social capital focuses on the dynamics between individuals and the ways social capital can be *utilized*. Therefore, this study relies on Bourdieu's conception of social capital to question the ways connections were valued and leveraged by participants.

Bourdieu (1986) uses the concept of social capital to refer to the ways agents make connections with each other and can utilize these connections to obtain various goals. Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked in a network of relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu, 1986). How much social capital any given agent possesses depends on the size of their network and how much capital (symbolic, cultural, and economic) members of the network have. Essentially, knowing many people means the individual will likely have a greater number of opportunities for social interaction, which will subsequently become

social resources for the individual. Using this conception of social capital, a combination of Bourdieu's (1986) and Burt's (2005) ideas that emphasize exchange and opportunities for interaction, volunteer networks can be examined both for their economic resources (which the organization is interested in) and for their social resources.

Bourdieu's (1986) conception of social capital is more compelling because, in contrast to Putnam's (1995) version, Bourdieu maintains that interactions are taking place on a field of power. Putnam's (1995) functional approach does not address the complex ways that power influences the social interactions of volunteers and their ongoing actions. Social networks are resources for both the volunteers and the organization and having broader and deeper networks with people with varying levels of social, cultural and economic capital can be powerful. This, combined with the cultural capital acquired through volunteering makes volunteering an excellent way to demonstrate and gain capital.

Wilson (2000) found that people who had extensive social networks and experience volunteering and/or membership with multiple organizations are more likely to volunteer. Wilson (2000: 224) argues that more studies are needed to examine the links between social resources and volunteering and that it may be that for volunteers "social ties generate trust, and trust makes it easier for us to step forward and donate time". Social networking, in general, has been studied with volunteer recruitment and volunteer motivation as the focus. This study moves beyond understandings of volunteer networks as simply useful for recruitment as there is evidence that volunteer

networks enhance the experience and volunteerism can build social capital for participants.

Dekker and Halman (2003) suggest that social networks and building social capital are the relatively unintended benefits of being involved in the voluntary sector. I argue, however, that they only appear that way due to a culture of volunteerism that encourages a focus on altruism. Selbee (2004) argues that this approach to social capital can be problematic given that the details of how social capital is generated and used, and how and why it varies across individuals is not addressed in the volunteer literature. I argue that in using a qualitative approach, some of these details and variations can be explored.

Social resource theory argues that both the external and internal social networks of the social activist are key to a movement's success (McGhee and Santos, 2005). The resource mobilization perspective focuses less on why people want change and more on how people organize and use their resources (Fireman and Gamson, 1979). In this approach, resources are seen as central to collective action and resource availability being keys to its success (Staggenborg, 2008). Mobilizing structures affect the formal and informal ways people engage in collective action and political institutions.

Social resource theory is somewhat flawed when applied to the study of volunteers. In particular, one of its key elements, trust, does not consistently predict the likelihood of volunteer participation (Wilson, 2000). Fireman and Gamson's (1979: 36) argument that social resources must be understood in relation to other processes and that future research need to focus on "how organizers raise consciousness of

common interests, develop opportunities for collective action, and tap constituents solidarity principles” still holds today. How volunteerism translates into social capital building for participants in each context represents an important point of comparison and offers a more in-depth understanding of how both structures and interactions influence networking when considering volunteer networks.

Understanding volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Canada as an opportunity for building social capital means understanding the way social networking is integrated into the volunteer experience and promoted by the organization. Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers come into contact with many new people and how useful their new networks are, whether they may become political, and whether any of these experiences also translate into ongoing social capital for participants is examined here. The fourth research question that emerges, drawing on social capital theories, is: Do Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers form social networks with other volunteers and what role do networks play in their volunteer involvement? This question is exploratory in nature as volunteerism scholars are just beginning to emphasize some of the ways volunteer networks may influence the volunteer experience.

The academic literature is contradictory and conflicted on the role of social networks for volunteers. This is in part due to the methods used to study volunteerism over the past few decades. While “being asked” is repeatedly listed as one of the main reasons people started volunteering, this is often due to the quantitative nature of the data collected (looking for categories). It also represents a more traditional understanding of volunteer organization participation where one imagines a neighbour

leaning over a fence asking someone if they would like to join him or her at the next local meeting. As both volunteerism and technology have evolved, so have the roles and uses of social networks within the volunteer experience.

Midlarsky and Kahana (1994) argue that few volunteers learn about opportunities through the media but are made aware of opportunities through face to face interactions within their social networks. This was only somewhat true for Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers. While a few of the Global Village participants are asked to join a team with a friend, the vast majority of participants find their opportunities with Habitat for Humanity Canada (both in the Global Village and the National program) using the Internet and through the volunteer (and donation) recruitment campaigns of the organization.

These volunteers tend to act more like the activists noted in previous studies (Jasper, 1997; Omoto and Snyder, 1995), who are motivated to get involved through exposure to media and Internet based campaigns than through information delivered through their social networks. The role of the Internet in volunteerism, especially the ability on the part of participants to research organizations and opportunities with NGOs, is greatly underestimated and nearly absent from the literature. Therefore, new factors such as branding, web design and Internet accessibility are influencing the 21st century volunteer experience and need to be addressed more fully in future research.

Keck and Sikkink (1998) argue that the volunteer movement's social networking is based around values. To an extent, this is true. Volunteers in both groups are

particularly happy to meet others who appear to share the same values of community and social responsibility that they do. As two volunteers comment,

People are typically fairly common with respect to their ideals and their values but when it comes to their personalities they are all over the place. (Alison, Global Village program)

You also realize some volunteers are not angels. They put in lots of time and effort but they come with all sorts of characters right? Some are irascible, some are happy; it's all sorts, right? You do see a different element of people's characters right? But, underneath it all, they are still driven by their intent regardless of their personalities and then, certainly at the board level, you have people who are very thoughtful, who are good business leaders and thoughtful about terms and conditions and activities that need to take place to make it all come alive. It's a great mix right? You see all sorts of people from all parts of life really. (Sheila, National program)

While volunteers are happy to meet people with the same values, this alone is not enough to keep them committed. Volunteers are most committed when they also like the people they are working with and when they feel they have excellent leadership. However, bringing together people with similar values around community and giving back does promote an atmosphere of friendly camaraderie where volunteers find support for their values.

Some (for example, Dekker and Halman, 2003; Wilson, 2000) claim that networks are critical and meeting other volunteers is one of the predominant reasons volunteers come to volunteerism. Camaraderie is most commonly cited as a motivation in the literature as findings demonstrate that people go looking for others with their values and seek camaraderie in their volunteer work. For most people, their feelings of friendship and comradeship are most strongly expressed *after* a very good experience where they have had a pleasant time and met people with whom they strongly

connected. While this is motivating for volunteers, it is far more influential in motivating ongoing volunteerism with newfound friends and colleagues than the first time they participated with the organization. Camaraderie appears to be something that grows and develops over time along with the volunteer's social networks and is not as important upon the initial uptake with the organization. Therefore, while camaraderie plays a key role in motivation, it is far more important for ongoing volunteer motivation than initial motivation and has a broader role than how it is generally understood in previous studies.

McGehee (2002), in her quantitative studies of alternative tourism and social movements, concludes that there is a need to approach the social networks of volunteers qualitatively in order to understand what social networks do for volunteers and how they work. This study seeks to address this gap. In the Habitat for Humanity Canada case, both groups have informal networks but they are managed in different ways. When examining social networking and the social capital of volunteers the context becomes a strong influencing variable. Volunteers were asked about whom they had met, whether they had made friends and if they were social with other volunteers outside the Habitat for Humanity Canada context.

The Organization and Social Networking

There are a number of ways that the volunteer organization influences the networking of volunteers. First, the organization is interested in building their own relationships with volunteers to foster trust and encourage future donations (of time or

money). Second, the organization can promote volunteer interaction and frame the ways volunteers relate to each other and their broader community. Lastly, they can be directly involved in linking volunteers to opportunities or helping volunteers work together or be in contact with each other over time.

The organization has a stake in promoting strong ties to its work and building networks with and between volunteers. The mechanisms that link the volunteer to their organization and generate trust have only been briefly explored (Wilson, 2000). Organizations want to appear trustworthy to their volunteers to encourage the repeated donation of time and money. In other words, when the volunteer feels they can trust the group they are more likely to donate and to become a reliable and continual resource. One of the ways that Habitat for Humanity Canada does this is through promoting their reputation (branding) but also through the careful planning of volunteer time and the development of volunteer leaders. As an organization, they recognize that the desire for volunteer camaraderie can be very motivational and, therefore, they work to provide an enjoyable experience. For example, Habitat for Humanity Canada employees (especially those on site such as foremen and construction aids) are trained to be patient and to encourage inclusive participation so that all volunteers mix and work together on different projects.

Resource mobilization and political process theories have a strong focus on pre-existing organizational structures, resources and political opportunities when explaining the origins of movements (Staggenborg, 2008). As well, this approach tends to focus on mobilizing structures, framing efforts and the opportunities that affect the maintenance

and outcomes of the movement (Staggenborg, 2008). Some of these ideas can be readily extrapolated and understood in the case of volunteerism and, in particular, the Habitat for Humanity Canada case. Holistically, they question whether or not the organization relies on the social capital of volunteers for success or whether the reputation of the organization is what motivates and fosters volunteerism as well as volunteer networks. The answer for Habitat for Humanity Canada is that both are critical at different points of the organization's development and the two groups, the National program and the Global Village program, have different needs and are at different stages of growth that force them to use their volunteers' social resources differently.

As an organization becomes more established, has a positive and well-disseminated reputation (and brand) and has a well-developed media presence (as with the National local affiliate program) it appears to rely less and less on the social capital resources of volunteers. The organization itself becomes the entity that is known in its community and that people recognize and trust (it has status). Through the participant observation process, it was clear that many people volunteering with their local affiliate (unless they were there on a corporate build day) were there of their own accord and had sought out the opportunity for their own reasons. Some participants are unemployed (or no longer employed) and looking to do some work or keep busy (this is also the case with many retirees). Some simply put in volunteer time based on their values and ideas of community, while others are putting in the 40 hours required by their high school. Very few are there because they are asked to be. Most are there because the National program is a good fit for them and their needs (as discussed in

Chapter Four) and because of its reputation and visibility in the community. Habitat for Humanity Canada is an NGO that repeatedly comes up in discussions of volunteering. Therefore, this branch of the organization is not relying heavily on the social capital of their volunteers but more on the cultural capital of their brand, which strongly resonates with middle class prospective participants. In essence, the organizational structures are more important and should be the primary focus because the cause and the organization are well established.

In contrast, the Global Village program (in many ways) is still in its infancy and therefore, the success of the program relies heavily on the social networks of volunteers. The administration in this program is much more involved with the volunteers and interested in their social networks. First and foremost, the Global Village program is in contact with their volunteers at each step of participation and each volunteer is supported with their trip preparation, while they are away and with any reintegration or remaining administration when they return. As well, the Global Village program relies heavily on what they call 'repeat offenders' - those Global Villagers who come back often to further participate and join trips. The program has a great deal of 'repeat business' and it is important to maintain contact with volunteers across the season or years that they are not taking a trip so that when they are ready to spend time helping abroad, Habitat for Humanity Canada and the Global Village program come to mind.

There are a number of ways that the Global Village program accomplishes this. For example, there is a seasonal electronic-newsletter that is emailed to update past

participants and inform them of upcoming volunteer opportunities. These always feature one or two of the recent international builds. The Global Village website also provides resources online that correspond to the pamphlets and other promotional materials that are used in presentations to schools, churches and clubs. The alignment of materials and consistency in key messages makes the promotion of the Global Village program as easy as possible. Experienced volunteers also deliver these messages and materials as promoters and advocates, as explained in *Chapter Six*.

One additional way that the Global Village program is different from the National program is that there are two programs competing for volunteer resources. The first is the Canadian Global Village program and the second is the Habitat for Humanity affiliate overseas. Both use similar methods, though the international affiliates often send out electronic newsletters in response to regional disasters or for seasonal giving such as during the Christmas season. For example, Habitat for Humanity El Salvador sent a follow up letter asking for monetary donations immediately following the trip, but also sent four emails during the final two weeks of December asking previous volunteers to consider them in their holiday giving.

The key stakeholders in the Global Village program who make the program possible both through their time and efforts, but also through the program's reliance on their social networks, are the Global Village volunteer leaders. In many ways, a part of the donation that leaders make to the program is the use of their social capital and interpersonal skills. Leadership training encourages all leaders to use their personal and community networks to fill their teams and "get the word out". As well, leaders are

trained to be good networkers so that each team has a strong bond and the leader is at the heart of developing the team's social network. Leaders, in turn, are asked to pass on this knowledge to their teammates so that they can learn to fundraise for their trip (for example) or encourage friends and family to join the team.

Upon a team's return, it is often the team leader who maintains contact among members of the group and who organizes team reunions. It is not uncommon for team leaders to have summer barbeques with members of multiple teams getting together. Some team leaders develop a following, and when they do a trip, are able to recruit solely from their "alumni" – previous members of their teams. As one Global Villager, Catherine, describes when talking about the people she met on her trip,

You build relationships, which is very interesting because you are like-minded people. Marty is the fellow I did my very first build with. He has led about 17 trips I think. He's a power leader and he's so inspirational and he has an alumni meeting every year so all the people that were on builds get together. You meet new people you meet the same people but you all have the same kind of interest and then, I don't know, it keeps you somehow connected.

This is an important part of how the Global Village program builds trust in its networks (a key part of mobilizing their resources). The team leaders are the lynchpin of the Global Village program.

Granovetter (1973: 1374) argues that leadership can have an important influence on social ties and networks and that "trust in leaders is integrally related to the capacity to predict and affect their behaviour". In addition, this trust in leadership relies heavily on personal contacts who can, "from their knowledge, assure him that the leader is trustworthy, and who can, if necessary, intercede with the leader" (Granovetter, 1973: 1374). In the case of Habitat for Humanity Canada, volunteer leaders have a critical role

to play and certainly uphold Granovetter's (1973) argument that people prefer to have their leadership recommended from those within their networks. It is common for volunteers to become "leader loyal" that is they often took multiple trips with their favourite leaders and often help recruit people into their former leaders trips. This "referral system" often contributes to a sense of confidence in the group's leadership. To push Granovetter's (1973) assertion further, however, I argue that the organization (especially in this case with its strong public reputation) can also play this "referral" role and it is the organization's confidence in their volunteer leaders and the volunteer leaders' preparation also helps to build trust in leadership.

The organization must maintain an awareness of how its volunteers are networking so they can understand how the volunteers perceive their work in order to frame the experience. One of the important ways that Habitat for Humanity Canada frames its volunteers and encourages networking is by promoting the idea that there are "values of volunteerism" that members of the group share. Therefore, camaraderie is a part of the frame that defines the experience. Keck and Sikkink (1998) find that international activist networks have some things in common including the centrality of values or principled ideas and the belief that individuals can make a difference among others. It appears that volunteer networks rely on similar principles and that the promotion of these principles is done in part by the volunteer organization, which works to establish strong feelings of camaraderie both between the volunteers as well as between the organization and the participants.

These ties are based on the idea that the values of volunteerism are foremost for the participants and that “we all have that in common”. Volunteers speak clearly and repeatedly about the type of people they meet doing builds. Global Villagers, in particular, are often thankful to be placed with “like-minded” people or those with similar middle class values. As two volunteers explain when asked what types of people were on their team,

All kinds... but again, there is some semblance of wanting to help your neighbour or some desire to give back, some commonality of purpose, I think, whether it is local or a Global Village trip ... for most people there is a kinship, a commonality that holds you together, even though you haven't seen them for a year or two. (Lisa, Global Village Program)

I think in general the people have a higher level of social awareness ... they tend to be more left wing than me. They tend to be more caring, wanting to make a difference and see what they can do. (Allister, Global Village Program)

These characteristics are brought up repeatedly when people describe those now in their volunteer networks. The “values of volunteering” or ideas of social responsibility are foregrounded in the networks to bring people together from a variety of backgrounds and Habitat for Humanity Canada works to promote this commonality.

One final way that the organization can be helpful in developing volunteer networks is that most established NGOs maintain large databases containing past and current participant information. Sometimes volunteers can use this system to find people that they worked with, be in touch with other volunteers or create groups based on past projects. For example, one volunteer contacted her local affiliate to see if she could reach out to someone she worked with to come and work with her again. The volunteer coordinator helped them get in touch and do another build together. As well,

the Global Village coordinators sometimes help keep former team members in touch when someone has moved or they are looking to send photos or other items back to their host country. These databases, therefore, can be useful to both the organization and the participants in maintaining social networks and acquiring social capital.

Comparing Networking in the National and Global Village Programs

Because the National and Global Village programs are based within the same organization, they use the same foundational principles to guide their work. Because there are many points of overlap between the two programs there are a multitude of similarities in how volunteers meet and network and the type of camaraderie they experience. There are, however, important differences in how networks develop and operate, particularly how the volunteers spend their time together locally or abroad.

One element that members of both groups have in common is that volunteers had a desire to network and share with their communities. While this takes different forms, members of both groups express interest in spreading the name of Habitat for Humanity Canada and sharing their experiences with their social groups, such as at their church or school, or as part of a fundraiser, among other options. For the Global Village group, this is often something done by team members to share their trip with their family and friends or with those who had donated money to help cover their costs.

The program also encourages these types of “show and tell” gatherings because they promote future trips or the recruitment of social groups into closed trips¹⁶.

Getting out into the community to share the Global Village experience is something many people seek because the trip has such a profound impact on them and they want to recruit others to do a trip or simply educate their community on what is being done and what they could do to help. As Global Villager named Greg responds when asked about talking with his community,

That is something I really enjoy. I have done a number of presentations with Habitat El Salvador to church groups and to Rotary and to anyone who will listen. I get all kinds of pleasure out of that. If you, kind of, awaken those thoughts in someone else and get them interested in going down and discovering for themselves. It's like a conversion almost. It's heavy stuff but I really enjoy doing it. It's so pleasurable to see somebody where the light bulb goes on to what is actually going on around them relative to other people.

The language of change is deeply embedded in the way Global Villagers talk about their presentations and discussions with community members. In many ways, those who make the presentations are intent on creating an educational experience for others and showing them the need and then, how to get involved. Importantly, volunteers involved in these presentations are working at the fourth stage of participation outlined in *Chapter Six – The Advocate for the Cause*. They become a part of the current volunteer system and encourage others to take action in this way too.

The National program relies far more on the accomplishments of the program, the statistical successes of the affiliates and the ways that being involved can be enjoyable than on the emotional response of the audience. National program volunteers tend to

¹⁶ Closed trips are trips that are not advertised to the public because the group taking the trip can provide sufficient numbers to fill a team (approximately ten to fourteen people). These types of trips are common with school and church groups.

use their networks to help get others involved instead of simple recruitment presentations. For example, volunteers may go to their employers and encourage them to offer paid community service days or to do a team building day on a local site with their employees. This is one way that Habitat for Humanity Canada's National program fundraises but, it is also how they gain volunteers as some of the people who come out for a one-day corporate build return and donate more time. As well, volunteers sometimes use their networks to procure items or services that the affiliate needs. For example, on one of the construction committees I observed (those who make the decisions about materials and plans because they have experience building homes), members of the group offered to seek out trades people they knew and that they thought would donate some time. This is an especially important use of volunteer networks because there are some things (particularly in developed countries where buildings have to meet a number of safety codes and standards) where professionals such as electricians and plumbers are required to ensure that the work is aligned with building standards. Being able to access the professional networks of these volunteers allows the affiliate to save money and makes it more likely the professional will donate their services because they are being personally asked or trading favours.

The local volunteers tend to form their social attachments over time and the strongest volunteer networks are present when volunteers work regularly at the Re-Stores or when they are a part of an administrative board. This could be due to simple repetitive exposure to those they are working with – for instance, board membership changes every three years. Moreover, most volunteers in these positions express

strong feelings of teamwork and having common goals that give them a basis to initiate social gatherings outside of volunteer hours. There are also some board members that have made friends with the people they volunteer with and who they see socially. In general, in the National program, long-term, regular volunteers are the most likely to form networks particularly if they habitually work with the same group of people. For example, if they are a part of a group that builds every Tuesday and Thursday or a board that meets monthly.

In contrast, Global Village team members tend to become quite deeply bonded to one another over a short period of time and their shared experiences help them develop social networks that appear to endure after the trip. For many participants, the team members and team leader are a key element that make the trip enjoyable and help them handle the challenges of the work. The interview process is one of the ways that the program works to ensure a good “team fit” before adding members to the team. Prospective recruits have to demonstrate open-mindedness, a willingness to work on a team, an ability to take direction and a desire to approach evolving situations with flexibility. This interview process, completed by the team leader with each team member before being selected to the trip, is given some credit for the screening of team members. As Martin, a Global Village volunteer explains,

The Habitat Global Village trips, like, they interview you and I guess the people they are looking for, you know, to put a team together that is strong and will work. Our team was just across the board of people who participated and it was amazing to me to see the variety.

The interview process has an important role to play in how volunteers join teams because the teams are as different as the people who lead them. For example, some

leaders incorporate daily prayer while others do not; what's important is that these interviews allow both the team leader and prospective volunteer to decide if there is a fit between the two.

One of the consequences of the interviews is that people are generally grouped based on their expectations and values and this helps develop a feeling of camaraderie in a way not seen in the National program. As one Global Village team member, Josh, explains,

With these activities - they bring you in touch with like-minded people. People who sort of have the same interests and beliefs that I do and, I learn a lot from that and I make contacts with some of them that are enduring. I still got – I still keep in touch with a fellow from my first build. My first build wasn't in El Salvador, it was in Honduras and I still keep in touch with him and met him actually down in Guatemala last fall. We were both leading teams down there and it happened we were both staying at the same hotel, if you can imagine. So, meeting like-minded people and being energized by them is also something I really get along with.

For first time Global Villagers, it is common to be apprehensive about spending so much time with strangers. For most, however, these feelings quickly retreat as they get to know the people they are traveling with and as the team leaders foster team building type activities.

Another point of contrast between the National program and the Global Village program is that the Global Villagers have the additional experience of becoming close to the recipient family and local workers. Despite language barriers, team members often become friendly and increasingly curious about the families receiving the houses and their living situations. Many team members report staying in touch through Facebook and e-mail as well as through regular post. For example, team members talk about sending cards and letters to day workers and recipient families including pictures of the

team and pictures of children (often families have no other means to obtain photographs of their children, pets or home). Getting to know people of a different culture, finding commonality and working together over time, help develop some small international networks. As two Global Villagers describe,

We met some people through Habitat who were strangers but we met them and we got to know them and also some of the people that we were building homes on the site. Yes, we ended up building quite a relationship with these people. (Cameron, Global Village Program)

For me the fact that we took the time and went down there just meant everything to these people – who are these people - because they have a perception of us that we have no worries or cares in the world. I mean we're living way up here some place and I think just being there is encouragement to them – people working as equals too, sure, right down in the trench. (Mary Jane, Global Village Program)

Habitat for Humanity's policy of worksite equality and allowing the local culture and expertise to be foregrounded helps encourage these relationships and break down some of the racial and cultural barriers that can impact the site. Volunteers are encouraged to defer to the local people, their ideas and decision-making and to ask questions. All of these processes lead to a more open environment and encourage connections between those who want to make them.

In both programs, there are those who are not interested in getting to know the people they work with or, in the Global Village case, feel they do not fit in well with other members of the team. Overall, most people are friendly and interested in making friends. Even when friendship is not achieved, most people feel that they can be in contact with former team members (in the Global Village case) if they are visiting the region where someone lives or just to catch up. As well, team leaders serve as a

common contact point and are encouraged by the organization to keep in contact for years following the trip. In many ways, the organizational structure influences the networking opportunities and the attitude with which volunteers approach their colleagues.

Are Volunteer Networks Useful?

One of the most important questions to ask when discussing volunteer networks is whether the networks are useful to the volunteers. The simple answer is that they are useful. However, as noted above, the networks develop in a number of different ways and volunteers experience them in a variety of ways. The networks observed produce social capital for participants. They act as a support system for volunteer values and they have the potential to become political.

As noted in *Chapter Four*, the social meaning of volunteerism and the cultural value given to the donation of time (and those who give it) results in the development of cultural capital for volunteers. This cultural capital is developed in two ways. First, volunteers themselves have a hierarchy of status around the amount of time given and sacrifices made by their fellow volunteers. As well, there is an increase in cultural capital for the volunteer among their personal social networks as the act of volunteering is seen as a positive contribution to the community that gives the volunteer status. Volunteers become known in their community for the work they do. As a Global Village leader, Susan, notes,

I took all green people on our trip. Every single person had not been involved with Habitat at all and two leaders came with us the second time and I brought a friend

with me too and he was so enamored with it. It's very well known, how much work I do and I'm associated with the name now.

This type of giving becomes a part of the volunteer's identity and a part of what they are identified with in their social circles. The cultural capital of volunteering is one way that volunteer participation influences the volunteer's personal social networks. Volunteers are more likely to be seen as respectable members of the community who give back and act on their values. They are seen as making a sacrifice in order to improve something in society. Therefore, volunteer experience and the donation of time, is often given plenty of cultural capital (especially when it takes place in the international context) which benefits the volunteer.

A second way these networks can be useful is in the development of human capital. Volunteerism is one way to strengthen a job or university application as well as a way to gain different work experience. For example, some of the younger participants on the Global Village trips wanted to know if they would like internationally based work, if they could handle the culture shock and if doing work (or a degree) in international development would suit them well. Volunteering represents a low risk way to "try out" positions, get to know organizations and increase the possibility of meeting someone who could later help you find a position in the area. As one Global Village volunteer, Pierre, comments when asked about the type of people he met while working to build a house abroad,

Interesting people ... Most of them I keep in touch with. There is a big percentage at a crossroads – looking for change – at a point in their life – figuring things out and wanting to figure things out or find a new direction - a big percentage of them, maybe 20-30 percent.

Many people took Global Village trips to produce change in their lives and this took many forms. One way was to use it for human capital building if considering changing jobs or industries.

Beyond the skill and résumé building functions of volunteerism, Global Village leaders and Habitat for Humanity Canada, staff members have provided references and have passed on links to available jobs. While many organizations claim that they do not necessarily hire employees from their volunteer pool, it is the case that many organizations do hire excellent long-term volunteers into staff, administrative and managerial roles. The Global Village program, for example, prefers their coordinators to have Global Village building experience because they regard it as an asset when hiring. Informally, networks with other volunteers may lead to job opportunities. While none of the volunteers in this sample had used networks in this way, there is great potential for this kind of networking among volunteers and certainly, those with the similar interests (such as on construction committees) may share ideas and opportunities.

One of the most basic ways that volunteer networks are used is to increase personal social networks and to make friends. While some volunteers seek out friends, others do not, and there are a number of factors that influence whether or not working with Habitat for Humanity Canada would likely produce new social acquaintances, the fact remains that many people did. This is especially true of the Global Village program and the National program's administrative boards, where friendships and socializing beyond the volunteered time was common.

This desire to make friends links back to some of the motivations for volunteerism, in that, many volunteers seek out socializing opportunities and see volunteering as one way to socialize in the community. While volunteers from the National Program expect to enjoy their time with their fellow participants, they are less likely to discuss making friends. For many in the National program, the simple interactions of building are sufficient to meet these needs. As Elaine, a local volunteer explains,

First of all, the people I am volunteering with are a great group of people. They are good quality people and it's nice to be around them. To some extent, there is a social benefit, which comes out of it as well, which is important.

In contrast, members of the Global Village teams do not tend to anticipate the extent to which social time can affect their experience. While very few first time Global Village volunteers anticipate enjoying time socializing with their teammates, all participants describe this as a positive feature of the trip and most made friends.

This enjoyment of socializing with other volunteers is partly due to the camaraderie (as described above) that many people feel is a key part of the experience. In fact, many of the volunteers, particularly in the international group, feel this is the most important benefit of their participation. While camaraderie is often thought to be primarily achieved because the volunteers have many common values and therefore support each other's values and ideas of volunteerism, participants (in both groups) appear to enjoy the change and challenge of working with new people and coming into contact with a variety of people and a diverse group of individuals.

Another way to view volunteer networks is to ask if they become political, and while it is clear that they have the potential to be political - most are not. There were a few members of each group, local and international, who were actively involved in the Canadian political system. As noted in *Chapter Six*, volunteers have very different definitions of what being political means or what constitutes activism. There are, however, some instances in large Canadian urban centers, where opportunities exist to become involved in local, provincial and national politics and participants become involved in because of contact with and invites from fellow volunteers. For example, one group of Global Village volunteers on the West coast got together to march in an anti-poverty rally in Vancouver; their efforts were coordinated by someone they had met through Habitat for Humanity Canada.

Most networks are not political predominantly because most volunteer networks see volunteerism as an equivalent way of “doing something” or “being involved”. Especially in the Global Village program, where networks tend to be stronger and longer lasting, there is a sense that it is difficult to understand the issues without experiencing them and that, all levels of Canadian government are not doing what needs to be done to address poverty. The idea that it is best to be “on the ground” and helping, rather than protesting at home or abroad, is fairly pervasive. This attitude is not surprising given that this is the method they have chosen to “take action”. Volunteers believe in their choice of action.

Finally, it is important to ask (when considering volunteer networks) whether volunteers *want* to build networks or desire them to be useful. While the volunteers

observed and interviewed here often report enjoyment and a desire to socialize, this is rarely a primary motivation and is not generally, what they hope to achieve through their efforts. The making of friends, sharing of camaraderie and having easy interactions with staff members encourages repeat volunteerism and deeply impacts the experience. However, these acts are not at the forefront of how volunteers understand their volunteerism. While there are plenty of opportunities to develop human, social and cultural capital, these are seen as “extras” or “bonuses” and not the primary focus of the volunteer experience. Very few volunteers are focused on these benefits when they start volunteering and while they are seen as “perks of the work” they are not viewed as “good reasons” to participate. Therefore, while camaraderie and socializing with other volunteers and developing cultural capital in the community are benefits of volunteering, and are an important part of the experience, volunteers tend to give them low value when asked about their worth. This reaction is a part of the culture of volunteerism and influences how people respond to questions about volunteering. Participants tend to focus on the altruistic nature of volunteerism (a side that holds far more status and cultural capital) and most shy away from talking too openly about personal rewards despite their critical influence.

Conclusion

Volunteers build social networks with other volunteers and their experiences as volunteers are a part of what they share with the community and their personal networks. The volunteers observed and interviewed here feel that they could develop

friendships and colleagues among the people they work with, and many, especially in the Global Village program, express the value of meeting fellow volunteers and the enjoyment of working towards a common goal. Camaraderie, therefore, develops in both programs, but it is something understood more as an experience than a primary motivational factor. Most people do not anticipate how the feelings of camaraderie that develop over time can enhance their volunteer experience, but most do acknowledge their effect on the overall experience.

The largest point of comparison between the two groups is perhaps how participants network and the social factors that influence and encourage contact and relationships between volunteers. Variables such as leadership, informal time spent together, access to contact information and intensity of experience all deeply impact the development of social networks between volunteers. The strongest networks are found between long-term regular volunteers in the National program and team leaders in the Global Village program. The Global Village program offers many opportunities for social networking that are simply not available to the average volunteer in the National program. In the Global Village program, the volunteers are meant to feel a part of the international Habitat for Humanity family. They are encouraged to get to know each other and remain in contact after the trip. Team leaders facilitate the growth of their own networks and work to encourage return participation (especially on their next trip).

All of these variables are in part guided by the volunteer organization. Habitat for Humanity Canada plays an important role in establishing and maintaining social

networks in both programs. The organization is involved in managing networks and maintaining a volunteer database because helping volunteers create and maintain strong networks is advantageous to the organization's goals and continued operations. Volunteers with strong links to the organization report more positive experiences, advocate more for the cause and tend to donate more time. As well, volunteers with well-developed personal networks in the community can become resources if they can generate donations or help fill Global Village teams.

Networks are also useful to the volunteer in that they can be used as social capital and can provide opportunities to engage more politically with poverty-related issues. For some volunteers, becoming involved with Habitat for Humanity Canada helps them meet others who later introduce them to other causes or opportunities to engage in Canadian politics. For the majority, these networks offer support for their idea of social responsibility and the middle class-based values of this kind of volunteerism. The culture of volunteerism does not tend to emphasize the benefits of volunteering and therefore, it is not surprising that despite overwhelming evidence that volunteering can produce social, cultural and human capital, volunteers tend to focus on altruistic reasons for volunteering as these hold more status and are more socially acceptable.

Chapter 8

Reflections, Practical Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

Becoming a volunteer and engaging in the volunteer realm is a complex social experience that has been described and theorized in a number of different ways. In this study, the Habitat for Humanity Canada case is used to capture data on a very modern volunteer experience where volunteers are mostly recruited online to participate in short-term and project-based work both in their own communities and abroad. A comparative qualitative design is used to compare the domestic and international programs of the organization and to allow the role of context and the voices of participants to emerge.

Theoretically, volunteerism does not have an overarching social theory that guides and drives research in this substantive area. This can lead to an impression that research in the area is scattered or unfocused. However, there is ample social complexity and diversity within the field to warrant sociological study and volunteerism can be readily studied from many perspectives leading to interesting debates and new ideas. The volunteerism literature has slowly evolved to include a multitude of activities, motivations and approaches. However, many gaps still remain. This study contributes to the volunteerism literature by engaging with the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) as it pertains to social status, class distinction, cultural capital and social capital. His theoretical approach provides a foundation for exploring the ways volunteerism is used by volunteers and the organization to establish and reinforce middle class values, enhance one's social position and build social networks. In addition, this research expands the volunteerism literature

as I begin to theorize the important role the discourse of social change maintains in volunteerism (the resulting social/change volunteerism paradox) and its place (and value) in the culture of volunteerism.

This final chapter consists of four parts. First, I present the contributions of the research and reflect on the way they expand the volunteer literature. Second, considering how this research was conducted with the alternate goal of providing useful information to the organization, I note some of the practical implications of the research. Third, I examine the scope and limitations of the study and last, as with any project of this size, new research questions emerged and therefore, I give recommendations for future research.

Reflections on Objectives and Methods

This thesis is based on two main objectives, namely, the desire to look at some of the emerging trends in volunteerism including the new and modern ways that volunteers are participating and the ways volunteerism manages a discourse of social change. Volunteering has always, to some extent, been about contributing time to foster social change – in other words, wanting to see something done differently and giving time to make that happen. However, a deficit exists within the volunteer literature, as the relationship between social change and volunteerism is under theorized. Therefore, this study is driven by an overarching research question that asked how the poverty-focused volunteer experience can be understood within the

current volunteerism literature and then, how can this understanding be expanded by examining the domestic and international context.

To do this, I apply concepts and ideas from Bourdieu and maintain a focus on the role of social class and the undercurrent of social change in volunteerism. Of particular interest, is the question of how the volunteer experience is influenced by the interaction of the volunteers' beliefs, social class and ideas of social change? By utilizing ideas of class, class distinction and social and cultural capital from Bourdieu's work, the role of class, the culture of benevolence (or volunteerism) can be explored in a new way. What emerges is a culture of volunteerism that is deeply influenced by middle class values where social change ideas are common but structural change is not – resulting in the volunteer/social change paradox.

Therefore, this study expands the volunteer literature in a number of different ways. First, I engage the emerging trend of international volunteerism by examining the role of context and how this type of volunteering integrates into the culture of volunteerism. Second, I expose the need to consider class and social position when studying volunteers and explore how all of these affect one's social and cultural capital. A person's background influences the meaning they make from their volunteerism, including their attitudes and motivations. Applying Bourdieu's ideas of class distinction, I find that volunteerism and community giving are one way of demonstrating one's values and social class. Volunteers acquire cultural capital and enjoy social prestige and social position from their participation (as volunteerism is widely regarded as a positive form of civic and social engagement). This study moves beyond a simple description of the

‘warm glow’ feelings of volunteering to look at the culture of volunteerism and the role cultural capital and class identity play in the volunteer experience.

Third, these contributions highlight the need to explore the ways poverty-focused organizations shape the volunteer experience. The volunteer organization influences every aspect of participation. Volunteers take pride in researching an organization and talk enthusiastically about how important it is that an organization fit with their values and ideals. Habitat for Humanity Canada strives to be inclusive and frames the work in ways that appeals to their volunteer base. Every aspect of the participation is framed to encourage the mentality that “every little bit counts” and that volunteering matters. These attitudes are part of what makes up the culture of volunteerism.

Fourth, I move away from a discussion of consciousness-raising or education as a hypothetical possibility to argue that there is ample qualitative evidence to suggest that volunteerism is deeply linked to the idea of social change and a part of what people seek is a learning experience. The social change discourse that permeates the volunteerism literature and volunteer experience has rarely been addressed directly but, in this study, I reconsider the concept of consciousness-raising in relation to volunteerism. Volunteering can be an educational and sometimes challenging experience. Volunteers express personal growth, a desire to ‘do more’ and to get involved. However, their efforts and their raised awareness are nearly always channeled into more volunteerism leaving them to reconcile the social change/volunteerism paradox. The social change/volunteerism paradox is the result of this type of volunteerism’s use of a social

change discourse while engaging in helping behaviour on a case-by-case basis that engages very little with the structural causes of inequality.

There has been an enormous increase in the demand for and popularity of volunteer abroad projects. The resulting explosion in organizations seeking to join this movement demonstrates the need to develop a critical sociological literature that addresses this trend in volunteerism. International volunteerism, when one utilizes their discretionary time and income to travel abroad to assist others in need (McGehee and Santos, 2005), is a prestigious activity that results in status for the participants. The international context, with its intense social interactions and greater socio-economic distance between volunteers and recipients, allows patterns in both the domestic and volunteer experience to be highlighted as the context allows patterns, ideas and a culture of volunteerism to be observed and discussed.

Habitat for Humanity Canada provides an ideal case for exploring these ideas and understanding the role of context. Through a qualitative comparative design, I am able to look into the details of each program and examine and the many interactions between participant and organization. In doing so, I am also able to move outside the categorical response options that dominate quantitative research and have shaped the development of the sociological literature around volunteerism.

Putnam's work (1995; Putnam, 2000; Putnam et al., 1993) has become so associated with volunteerism as a practice that a piece of work such as this would be considered remiss not to consider how it relates to Putnam's claims about the role of volunteerism in society. In using the work of Bourdieu to focus on the cultural and class

meanings associated with volunteerism, and in utilizing his version of social capital, there are many points of tension between the two visions of volunteering. However, this returns to the argument I make above that volunteerism is not governed by one theoretical perspective and has no overarching theory and therefore, can be approached and explored, with varied results in a variety of ways.

A tension remains because Putnam's (1995; Putnam, 2000; Putnam et al., 1993) work takes a functional approach to the examination of civil society and the role of volunteerism, while Bourdieu's approach, in which interactions are taking place on a field of power, alters the conception of volunteers that has dominated the sociological literature up until now. Instead of focusing on volunteering's purpose, I am interested in the meaning of volunteerism and the culture of volunteerism. In doing so, I am able to look at the role of class in the volunteer experience and critically explore the ways middle class values are influencing and organizing the Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteer experience.

Wilson (2000) argues that while there have been tremendous advances in the study of volunteering over the last quarter century, they have been driven, particularly in the United States, by a desire to understand the productive inputs and outputs of the public household. The sociological literature is filled with studies that relate the distribution and correlation of volunteerism to education, occupation, income and group membership, for example, but needs to expand to include a cultural analysis of volunteerism, the value of volunteerism in society and the ways power and status

influence the experience. This will allow for a fuller picture of volunteering and will offer a deeper analysis of the value of and the values that drive volunteerism.

Within volunteerism, the culture of helping and modest self-interest has in some ways influenced how the volunteerism literature has developed. In some ways, volunteering has not been subject to critical analyses that would expose volunteers as negotiating with issues of class, gender, sexuality, race, etc. both with their peers and in those they help. However, while I have focused on class here, all of these stratifying variables are present and the data could have been examined using a critical feminist or race perspective, for example. Like any other social activity, volunteerism operates on a field of power and therefore, in using the work of Bourdieu (1984) some of these relationships and power and status dynamics are highlighted here.

The volunteer organization emerged (as the study progressed) to demonstrate its important and enduring role in the volunteer experience. Volunteer organizations frame their issues as well as their approach to change in order to draw in and then maintain their volunteer or personnel resources. As important a role as it played, the organization did not feature strongly in previous volunteer literature with (with the exception of Putnam's (2000) concerns regarding organized civic engagement). Therefore, it was not expected to have such an important influence particularly in the realm of social identity and social networking (as found here).

An organization's success depends on a number of factors including its reputation, credibility, social and financial responsibility. Prospective volunteers need to identify with the cause, the method of administration and the method of help (the

delivery of services). Habitat for Humanity Canada thrives, in part, because they use and promote policies that reflect middle class values and these resonate with their volunteer and donor base. Despite being originally based on a Christian ethos, I argue, that Habitat for Humanity Canada has moved towards a middle class value set that is seen as more practical and more inclusive.

Particularly popular policies include the use of Re-Stores (in lieu of donations) to fund administrative costs, and the organization's sweat equity policy. The sweat equity policy was exceptionally well-liked because it allows recipient families to demonstrate their own commitment to the middle class values that drive the organization and gives them the opportunity to provide evidence that they too are hardworking and responsible and therefore, worthy of Habitat for Humanity Canada's help. This policy frames the recipients and helps to portray them as part of the 'deserving poor'. In reality these policies are difficult to implement and recipient families piece together hours and workers in order to 'earn' their home.

Overall, like social movements organizations, a volunteer coordinating organization can intensify the experience by framing themselves, the work and the recipients. The organization had an important and ongoing role to play and this role is not purely administrative or practical. Understanding the role of the organization is critical to understanding the framing of volunteer work and the culture of volunteerism.

Volunteers are interested in understanding the organization they are working with and look to Habitat for Humanity Canada to guide their experience and make responsible decisions at an organizational level. Importantly, volunteers also want to

know that the recipients of the house are deserving of help. In order to demonstrate their deservingness house candidates must demonstrate both personal and financial responsibility and demonstrate that they intend to uptake the middle class standards set out by the organization (around home ownership). In many ways, the recipients of help are asked to meet the demands of middle class volunteers and demonstrate they are a part of the deserving poor.

Given that volunteering of this type is done by, predominantly, middle class volunteers, it is not surprising that the experience is designed to meet middle class expectations of helping. By helping those “less fortunate” or “in need”, volunteers make themselves distinct from that group. Accordingly, the work of helping or giving is given social status within the volunteer’s community. The volunteer enjoys a ‘warm glow effect’ but also enjoys increased cultural capital as the result giving back and volunteering. Volunteering maintains a strong reputation in society and is viewed positively by the volunteers themselves but also their families, friends and communities.

Volunteers are seeking opportunities to act on values of social responsibility and class. Therefore, value identities are on display, encouraged and built through the volunteer process. It is important to note that these value identities are deeply tied to middle class values such as hard work and personal financial responsibility. As volunteerism produces cultural capital, it can also be used to maintain a favourable self-assessment and be seen as an act of distinction. This status is bolstered by a discourse of social change and the ideas that the work is fostering ‘real change’ and working to increase the amount of affordable housing.

Part of what attracts participants to volunteerism is the idea that they can “make a difference” or “be the change”. These ideas of social change are common and are fed by a discourse and promoted by the culture of volunteerism that focuses on framing the volunteer experience as producing “real change”. While there may be little structural change being pursued, few volunteers move toward more political means to change unequal opportunity structures. This discourse and way of framing the work is a part of what give volunteering status. The idea that one is helping and causing social change holds great value and gives a level of social status to those who volunteer. While change is achieved on a case-by-case basis, this change is discussed, promoted and emphasized in ways that encourage more volunteerism and giving and ideas of social change become conflated with ideas of helping because this discourse is part of where volunteering gets its prestige.

The organization does play a role in directing volunteers to opportunities for social change but they tend to be volunteer opportunities and not activism. There are some NGOs where this is not the case.¹⁷ However, many groups, (in an attempt to stay neutral and maintain public support) do not promote political action. In this way, organizations like Habitat for Humanity Canada are socially conservative. Volunteers then, are encouraged into particular ways of helping and when they do get involved in politics it is usually because of informal network contacts with other volunteers; for example, meeting up with a fellow volunteer at a rally or event.

¹⁷ Many NGOs have an explicitly political agenda to the work they do and what they are promoting. Groups such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International do work with volunteers in active and politically focused ways.

In terms of development, participants are less clear about what development is and the ways they could get involved with community development or international development initiatives. This is the area of volunteerism most linked to formal political channels such as governments at the federal, provincial and municipal level. Yet, it is clear that most volunteers are interested in learning about poverty but not necessarily about the structural ways it is produced or alleviated – the volunteerism/social change paradox. In this way, volunteers are involved in reproducing the same inequalities that they are working to reduce given their choice to work with a poverty relief organization. This situation is also influenced by the fact that when volunteers want to know what they can do about what they have learned they continue to work within the volunteer system. Often volunteers are enthusiastic about promoting and aiding social change but do not know what to do to get involved or help. Habitat for Humanity Canada responds by telling them to donate money or continue to volunteer. Their enthusiasm is directed but it does not tend to be directed into political channels.

Five levels of volunteer participation or involvement emerge each with its own understanding of social action. These are: (1) the non-participant, (2) the financial donor, (3) the volunteer or time donor, (4) the advocate for the cause and (5) the advocate for change. While they appear to be separate stages, many volunteers participate with different organizations at different levels; for example, someone might be politically involved with one group and be a financial donor with another. Habitat for Humanity encourages participation at stages two through four but does not generally call on participants to advocate for structural or political change.

Becoming involved with fellow volunteers (and possibly activists) is just one way that social networks and social capital are used in volunteerism. One of the major contributions of this study is to update theory on social networking and move beyond networking as simply a primary motivational factor to something that has different influences at different stages and can be used as a resource to volunteer organizations. Volunteers utilize, build and maintain social networks and context is a strong influencing variable in the importance of networks.

Cultural, social and human capital are all acquired through the volunteerism experience. The positive reaction of the public towards volunteers, in general, is based on their perceived altruism and the highest regard is given to international volunteers for the sacrifice of their time, their money and the challenges that they face while donating time. Human capital including hands-on skills (such as building or administrative experience) is useful but human capital based in interpersonal skills should also be acknowledged in terms of increasing experience with teamwork, balancing competing priorities and developing leadership abilities. Social capital is gained, especially on international trips, when there is time to socialize and discuss the work being done. Overall, including Bourdieu's ideas of human, social and cultural capital, captures many of structural influences on the volunteer experience and helps to explain the culture of volunteerism and its perceived benefits.

In exploring the relationship between social change and volunteerism, this study captures an element of the culture of volunteerism that Putnam's (1995, 2000) work does not. In acknowledging the status and capital volunteers acquire through their work

and the ways that volunteerism, particularly international volunteerism can be an act of class distinction and we (as sociologists) can begin to examine the social change/volunteerism paradox. Volunteerism can be a realm of civic engagement that while utilizing a discourse of social change, predominantly, maintains the status quo. It is a high status alternative to activism that, through a shift in the type of opportunities available, allows volunteers to engage in helping people in their communities (or abroad as it may be) on a short term, ad hoc basis under the guise of social justice and social change. Volunteerism can be educational, increase awareness and bring diverse groups of people together. This may, as Putnam (1995, 2005) claims, build social capital and promote peace but, in the case of Habitat for Humanity Canada what it normally does is allow people to help, give back and engage in their community – very few move on to more political and social change focused activities. I will disagree with Putnam (1995, 2005) that this a decline in civic involvement because these volunteers are engaged in their communities however, the relationship between social change and volunteerism and civic participation will need to be exposed to some ongoing theoretical development.

In conclusion, I feel it is important to note a couple of methodological reflections. It was impossible to predict the way that the culture of volunteering itself would influence data collection. Participants are hesitant to discuss the ways they benefit from participating, as they do not want to appear too selfish or self-focused. There is a lot of cultural capital to be gained from volunteerism but this is due, in part, to the ongoing perception that it is predominantly about self-sacrifice and altruism and people are keen

to maintain the impression that they are involved for the 'right reasons'. In addition, interviewees had to be encouraged to move away from scripts and vocabulary about volunteerism offered by the organizations and let their own opinions and ideas flow freely.

It is also difficult to challenge people to think about the type of change that they are fostering and to delve into what they believe the impact of their work will be. Volunteers enjoy speaking to the way a house can help a family and the statistical significance of home ownership for family success but, are often uncomfortable when asked questions regarding politics, the ways the government can help those living in poverty, etc. Participants often seemed to be actively reconciling the social change/volunteerism paradox in the interviews and on worksites. Questioning who needs (or deserves) help, where donor dollars go and the 'real' impact of the work are controversial topics for volunteers and it is obvious there are not clear and easy answers.

Interviews and observation, therefore, had to rely more on rapport than originally anticipated and many probes had to be used to encourage participants to speak openly about what they think the 'right' reasons are as well as what can be accomplished in the community and gained for oneself. It is perceived as acceptable to want to change your perspective or seek education around an issue but being too self-focused is considered to be done in 'poor taste'. Despite these challenges, the data captures both sides of the experience, contributes to the sociological literature and should be useful to the organization.

Practical Implications

Given that Habitat for Humanity Canada is a willing and enthusiastic partner in this research, seeking insights that would enhance the volunteer experience and improve their relationship with volunteers, it is appropriate to discuss some practical recommendations that emerge from the analysis. While there are many suggestions and ideas gathered during data collection (as to how to update or enhance each program), four main recommendations emerge, which I believe, given the research presented here, offer the most impact. These are: (1) focus on both recipient and volunteer benefits when recruiting (and trying to retain) volunteers; (2) emphasize a common goal for each group/day/site; (3) leverage volunteer 'down' or 'informal' time; and, (4) support and encourage volunteer leadership.

First, volunteer recruitment and retention is critical to organizational success and having strong policies and procedures around recruitment can influence how volunteers get involved and what motivates them to stay. By emphasizing both the benefits to the volunteer as well as to the recipient, some of the possibilities for both parties are acknowledged. As individuals often join a team or a work site because of a complex mix of motivations it is helpful for volunteers to know up front what they get out of the experience and, specifically, whom they are helping. Offering small details about the chosen families for each home (for example) can help volunteers can feel a connection to the recipient(s), even when they recipients are not present or involved in the work. Simple details like, how many people will live there, at what ages, what do they do for a living, among other variables, are very helpful and for many volunteers, very

motivational. Volunteers are helping communities on a case-by-case basis so the more they can know about the case and understand about the family the more engaged they are.

The Internet has become the primary way potential volunteers research an organization and find ways to volunteer and get more information. Making opportunities to volunteer, including detailed information like dates, shifts, project involved, among other details clearly available helps potential volunteers find their fit. As well, allowing easy access to the local volunteer coordinator or Global Village leader via e-mail or telephone encourages volunteers to make connections early so that they can make an informed decision based on a relationship developed with someone personally. In addition, having the opportunity to speak or correspond with someone directly increases the delivery and detail of information available to volunteers. Volunteers like to feel that they are well informed and they that they know about the need or cause and what each type of volunteer opportunity entails.

Second, there is an important and sometimes overlooked role for the common goal. Volunteers find having a goal each day to be useful in helping them find purpose on the worksite, to understand the work they are doing, to give them something to talk about with each other, to generate some enthusiasm for the project, and to foster a feeling of accomplishment. These goals do not have to be complex. In practice, they could range from a specific building project being completed to leaving the worksite clean. In the Global Village case, this could mean taking the necessary water breaks, no one getting a sun burn or ensuring you communicate with each person you work with

today (even if you do not speak the same language). These small goals encourage a lot of positive energy and camaraderie and could be easily outlined in the morning safety meeting or during group breaks.

Third, though related to the previous recommendation, I recommend the organization be continually thoughtful about how to improve and utilize volunteer time during the days, times and spaces where volunteer work is not performed. For example, in the National program there are structured coffee breaks and lunch hours and, in the Global Village case, there are evening hours as well. Global Village leadership training could include capacity building time and material directed at how to use this time to foster team building. As well, given that engaging at meals and team meetings is especially important on Global Village trips, participation in these should be emphasized as critical to team success. This “down time” is key to building camaraderie and enhances the overall experience.

In the National program, I suggest two small changes that would help the volunteer experience: first, when possible, have someone donate lunch (for example, once a week) so that volunteers can eat together; and second, provide a sitting area where volunteers can rest and interact. Currently practiced by some affiliates, these two recommendations are both simple and effective way to get volunteers eating together, talking and participating with each other in informal ways. For example, sites that offered picnic tables where volunteers could eat together were friendlier, livelier and generally more social. Participants at these sites often discuss when they will be

back, try to connect with other volunteers and arrange more volunteerism when given the opportunity to interact in these ways.

Fourth, recognize and promote great volunteer leaders. As was noted previously, volunteer leaders are the lynchpin of the Global Village program. They provide recruitment, administrative support, customer service, people management and many other services to the program. They are also key to enhancing the volunteer experience because a great leader can help ensure a great trip for all participants. Leaders encourage respect, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity and help set the expectations of the individuals who join a team and get involved internationally. This model needs to be routinely updated and great team leaders should be encouraged to share their experiences including challenges in the field so that others can learn some of the more subtle elements of working with a Global Village team. For example, little policies such as eating with a new person at each meal, mandatory participation in team meetings, designating different people to different jobs each day and sometimes, managing expectations so that people do not always work where they want to but work where the help is needed could all be shared among leaders.

The National program would benefit greatly from looking at the Global Village leadership program and finding a way to use more volunteer leaders. Having great leadership on a local site is also of critical importance and is something that is often overlooked at smaller affiliates. Local tradespeople such as electricians and plumbers are not always interested in teaching and including volunteers in their work and volunteer leaders can use their experience to fill this gap or negotiate between volunteers and

tradespeople. As well, a number of programs collaborate with local cooperative programs such as technical colleges in order to bring in steady labour. It is important that the leaders of these programs maintain an active awareness of Habitat for Humanity Canada policies in order to provide the necessary leadership for all volunteers on site otherwise, having alternate leadership on site needs to be considered. This helps ensure that the work is spread evenly, that the site is friendly and inclusive, and the experience is good for everyone.

Scope and Limitations

For this study's contributions to be considered worthwhile, its limitations must be noted and placed in proper perspective. The data were gathered with the aim of contributing to the existing sociological literature by providing in-depth, qualitative and sociological understandings of volunteerism, both locally and abroad. As well, the findings were collected with the hope of contributing rigorous study to an area (international volunteerism) that has received very little attention academically and is currently expanding in the NGO field.

As noted in *Chapter Two*, due to the size and nature of the sample, caution must be exercised when making claims. I attempted to remedy this limitation in a number of ways. First, multiple methods allowed for both formal and informal data gathering, which resulted in a collaborative approach between myself, the organization and the volunteers. This style allowed my strengths as well as the strengths of participants to be viewed and used to their full advantage. It also allowed for the triangulation of evidence

and volunteer accounts could be readily understood (or not as the case may be) as congruent to their actions. In turn, this approach generated accounts and opinions that I believe were reliable and representative of the current experiences of volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Canada in their two programs.

Numerically, it would have been helpful to expand the observation experience with both groups so that more regions of Canada were included (in the case of the National program) and more countries were included (in the case of the Global Village program). The nature of the study, however, focused on the volunteers and their ideas and therefore, which region work took place in did not emerge as an important variable (except in the case of rural versus urban when considering activism opportunities). In order to address this concern, interview participants were recruited from all regions of Canada where Habitat for Humanity Canada works (and anywhere Global Village participants had visited) and there is diversity and variety in the overall sample, making me confident that concerns of region influencing the results have been addressed.

Owing to time constraints and the realistic understanding that a doctoral dissertation is an exercise in both academic and personal growth, the project developed, changed and evolved over time. My growth throughout this project, as I become a more experienced volunteer and observer, cannot be discounted and any shortcomings in this work or throughout the project are entirely my own. Though carefully undertaken, the somewhat exploratory nature of this project encourages an open-mindedness and flexibility in both the data collection and summarizing of the findings. The result is that there were several dissertations that could have been produced given the amount and

overall richness of the data collected, however, the ideas I present represent what I believe to be the modern complexity of volunteerism and the relationships and fluidity between the fields of volunteerism, social class and social change.

Emerging Questions and Recommendations for Future Research

This study was guided by questions that emerge from previous literature and set out to explore multiple elements of the volunteer experience. The specific case, the comparative design and the Canadian context along with practical considerations such as time and money resources have limited the many directions one could have taken. Therefore, over time, new research questions emerge along with topics and subtopics that could be addressed in future research.

When considering motivations, as occurring in a complex web that includes both self-focused and other-focused ideas, there are a number of questions that emerge. First, how this web is formed (through socialization, experience, etc.) requires exploration. As well, some of the additional factors that influence how individuals form their set of motivations needs to be addressed. For example, are motivations impacted by different styles or types of volunteerism? What is the influence of knowing others involved? What is the influence of knowing someone who would benefit from the help?

The role of life stage also emerged within the Habitat for Humanity Canada case as a possible factor in 'who volunteers'. As there appears to be an important place for retirees and seniors in the volunteerism culture, future research should consider the role of retirement and this point of life change, including whether social and cultural

capital are built and utilized the same way later in life. What are the implications for the community if they are used differently or have a different value?

Additionally, I would argue that there needs to be careful consideration given, by those who study volunteer motivation, to separate the ideas of initial motivation (what induced participants to start or join) and what motivates ongoing participation (continuing to volunteer or take trips). Throughout this study, volunteers reflect on their participation and involvement, and were asked about motivation many times; overall, the reasons they continue to volunteer are different from their initial ideas about what volunteering would be. Theorizing this transformation and examining this in multiple contexts would be useful to the understanding volunteerism more generally.

In terms of understanding volunteerism as it relates to social status and cultural capital, the societal and social benefits gained from volunteering also need more attention. My argument introduces the idea (using Bourdieu's work) that class plays an important role in developing volunteer identity, this topic that could use more research, in particular, the ways social status and cultural capital might vary by class. The perceived value of volunteering in each social class needs to be explored so that the influence of class in volunteering can be better theorized. For example, is volunteering a particularly useful form of human capital for any particular group? Is volunteering an act of distinction in the upper classes or do monetary donations provide a greater act of distinction?

Questions also emerged out of the idea that the links between volunteerism, development and politics have not been well explored. As community or international

development was one area where volunteer groups and politics clearly overlap, it would be beneficial to understand the ways organizations approach this link to the government and the different ways it could be leveraged. For example, when governments match citizen donations for a cause, such as after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, how are organizations chosen and what power does this give them (cultural capital) in the future? As reputation is very important in the third sector, these ideas require further exploration. As well, when an organization is politically focused (such as Amnesty International), how do they mobilize volunteers and channel them towards their work? Comparing political and apolitical organizations and their approach to volunteers would expand the sociological understanding of volunteerism and its relationship to social change.

The social networks of volunteers and the social capital volunteers build in the field are an important resource in the third sector. There is an emerging role for technology, including the ways that volunteers use websites to research the organization, volunteer opportunities and to later reconnect with peers. Therefore, there is a need to better understand branding, reputation, web design, and Internet accessibility factors in the modern volunteer experience. As well, there is (most likely) an important role to play for online social networking sites, which has not been examined sociologically but is almost surely being explored by the organizations themselves.

Conclusion

Being a volunteer means many things and studying volunteerism opens the door to understanding the third sector, a culture of giving and a discourse of social problems and social change. This study seeks to examine the volunteerism of participants with Habitat for Humanity Canada and contribute to the sociological understanding of volunteering – a complex human phenomenon. Just as importantly, however, it is conducted with a desire to return this information to the organization and its volunteers. For these reasons, both the sociological contributions and practical implications of the work are presented here.

In this substantive area, it is important to avoid doing sociology for sociologists when there is a need for research in a field that rarely has funds available for evaluative and informative studies. This study therefore, is approached with both the sociologist and the volunteer in mind, with a belief that multiple goals are achievable with thoughtful planning and teamwork. G. Thomas Gale perhaps best demonstrates this approach in a quote that summarizes both my sociological and volunteer experiences –

‘a pessimist, they say, sees a glass of water as being half empty; an optimist sees the same glass as half full but, a giving person sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty’.

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APPENDIX A**LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT****A Study of Canadian Volunteer Experiences at Home and Abroad with *Habitat for Humanity Canada***

Student Investigator:
January 4, 2010

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Purpose of the Study

You are invited to take part in this study about Habitat for Humanity Canada volunteers. I am doing this research as a part of a PhD program in sociology at McMaster University. I am hoping to learn if volunteer participation with Habitat for Humanity Canada provides a consciousness-raising experience and, if so, how a raised awareness affects volunteers' behaviours and beliefs. More specifically, your participation will add to our understanding of the role of consciousness-raising and social networks in the volunteerism experience and help us to understand the meaning volunteers make from their participation, their motivations for volunteering and how this experience changes their ideas about volunteerism, development and poverty.

What will happen during the study?

As a participant, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will last approximately one hour. This interview will be one-on-one and will be designed to resemble an extended conversation. We would meet at a mutually agreed upon time and location and the interview would be audio recorded with your permission. You will be asked questions about your volunteerism with Habitat for Humanity Canada including questions like, what attracted you to volunteering? Has being involved with volunteering changed you? What aspects of volunteering did you find the most challenging?

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There is a chance that the questions will raise issues that you feel strongly about or may make you emotional. You may also worry about how others may react to what you say. You do not need to answer any questions you would prefer to skip. You are also free to stop the interview at any time. The steps I am taking to maintain confidentiality are described below.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating. However, by participating you may be furthering our understanding of Canadian volunteers.

Who will know what I said or did in the study?

Your participation in this study is confidential. In reporting my results, I will not use your name nor any identifying information. However, we are often recognizable in the stories we tell and the references we make. Please keep this in mind though the interview.

All recordings and notes taken related to this study will be kept in a secure place where only I will have access to them. Since I intend to continue research in this area after I complete my PhD, I would like to hold on to your data, but will do so only with your permission. If you would prefer that I destroy any data you have provided once this particular project is completed, I would be pleased to do so.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to be part of the study, you can withdraw at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the study. If you do decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have this study completed by approximately the summer of 2012. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please include your email below and this summary will be sent to you.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or require more information about the study itself, please contact me.

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board, and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Leslie Cove of McMaster University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant: (Printed) _____

Date: _____

Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

- *I grant permission to be audio recorded:*
Yes: ____ No: ____
- *I would like to be emailed with a study summary:*
Yes: ____ No: ____

Email Address: _____

Please select one:

- *I have no objections to your keeping my data and using it in your future research.*
- *I would prefer that you destroy any data I have provided once this project is complete.* _____

APPENDIX BRecruitment Notice for *Habitat for Humanity Canada* E-Newsletter

**Department of Sociology
McMaster University**

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERISM**

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study of volunteerism and working with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*. I am trying to understand the motivations for volunteering and whether volunteering raises awareness and grows social networks.

I am looking for volunteers in BOTH the local and Global Village programs.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to: participate in a one-on-one interview lasting approximately one hour to talk about your participation with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*.

You would be answering question like:

- What attracted you to volunteering?
- Has being involved with volunteering changed you?
- What kinds of things did you learn while volunteering?

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Leslie Cove
Department of Sociology
at
289 396 0185
Email: covelj@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, McMaster University
Phone: (905) 525 9140 Ext. 23142 email: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background

Age?

Country of Birth?

Highest level of education received?

Participation

How and when did you make the decision to volunteer with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*?

How long have you been volunteering?

Have you volunteered in other ways in the past?

Did you volunteer on your own, or with others?

Why did you choose domestic/Global Village program?

Would you encourage others to participate with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*?

Do you think of your volunteering as leisure?

In the future, what would you see as a reason why you would stop volunteering?

Motivation

What first attracted you to volunteering?/ How did you get involved with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*?

What keeps you volunteering?

What are the benefits of volunteering?

Meaning

What does volunteering mean to you?

Has being involved with *Habitat for Humanity Canada* changed you?

How did being able to do this make you feel?

Do you feel a responsibility towards this type of work?

What does development mean to you?

Consciousness-Raising

What kinds of things did you learn while involved with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*?

Were you involved in any kind of activism prior to volunteering?

Are you involved in any kind of activism now?

Do you think of yourself as an activist? Why? Why not?

Do you think of yourself as a global citizen?

What does being a global citizen mean to you?

Has volunteering educated you on any social issues?

Social Networking

Was there anyone who encouraged you to get involved with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*?

What kinds of people did you work with on your build?

Did you like/dislike the people you met?

Are you still in touch with people you met on your build?

If yes, in what way? What kinds of things do you do together?

If no, why not?

Life Change

Do you think volunteering with *Habitat for Humanity Canada* has been life changing?

In what ways?

What about your future do you feel the trip changed?

Has it changed your view of poverty?

Development?

Experiences

What do you think are the major challenges facing volunteers?

Was there anything about the experience you found surprising?

Was there anything about the experience you loved?

Was there anything about the experience you really disliked?

If you could change your experience in any way what would you do?

Do you think you will volunteer in the future?

Why? Why not?

What kinds of organizations would you like to be involved with? Why?