“Finding Joy in the Act of Giving:” Volunteering Amidst Tensions of Altruism and Egoism

by

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Abstract

Volunteering is an action commonly assumed to be altruistic and beneficial to society; one such benefit is the assumed potential of volunteer work to create community ties. This study uses the gift exchange framework to conceptualize volunteer work as a gift of one's time and energy to explore the potential of volunteer work to build community Within the theory of gift theory, the reciprocation of gifts builds ties; yet, when volunteering is seen as an altruistic action, there is little room for reciprocity. This study uses qualitative methods to address the gap in the literature on volunteer motivations regarding how volunteers engage with ideas of altruism and reciprocity within their accounts of their work. The sociology of community and individualism contextualizes the findings that volunteers both adhere to and contest a cultural ideal of altruism within their motivations, level of commitment, and expectations of reciprocity.

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Introduction

Volunteering is an interesting phenomenon in that it is commonly thought of as an altruistic action – the giving of one's time and energy in the service of another with no payment. Additionally, volunteering presents the possibility for connecting with people outside of our usual circles, and, optimistically, for building community. I use the gift exchange framework to figure volunteering as a gift and subsequently, examine its potential for community. Within gift exchange theory, the reciprocation of gifts builds and maintains social ties (Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Mauss, 1990). However, understanding volunteer work as an altruistic action leaves little room for reciprocity to function. Within the literature on what motivates volunteer work, a binary is often proposed between altruistic and egoistic, or self-focused motivations. Although studies on volunteer motivations find a mixture between self- and other-focused motivations, there is little research on how volunteers respond to the tension between self- and other-focused motivations. To understand how volunteers understand their work in regard to ideas of altruism and community, I pose two research questions. First, how do volunteers account for the tensions between self- and other-focused motivations in their work? Secondly, how do volunteers understand their work in relation to ideas of reciprocity?

I use the framework of the gift exchange to examine volunteering as a gift, which allows me to look at both how volunteers conceive of their giving action and how it may create social ties. To get at both of these understandings, I employ a qualitative analysis of volunteers' accounts of their work, which I access with an interview method. In accounting for their work, volunteers encounter two tensions: between self- and other-focused motivations, and between the perception of volunteering as a personal choice and as an obligation. Volunteers simultaneously adhere to and contest a cultural ideal of altruism, producing these tensions in their motivations,

level of commitment, and ideas of reciprocity. I situate my findings within the sociology of community and individualism to understand how volunteers' complex relationship with altruism influences their perception of whether volunteer work can create community.

As social scientists note the rise of individualism and subsequent decline of community and social connection in North American social life (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991) volunteering could hold the key to connecting us with people unlike ourselves and creating new layers of community. However, volunteering is not so simple an action as to be optimistically heralded as a builder of community. It is essential to look at the ideas volunteers carry into the volunteer relationship to understand the potential volunteering holds. I put forward a move beyond a binary conceptualization of self- and other-focused motivations. As people rarely act only in their own or only in others' interest, it is useful to work towards a more actual understanding of how people engage in an action so commonly conceived to as simply altruistic.

Literature Review

Framework: Volunteering as Gift-giving

The act of volunteering can be understood as a gift of one's time and energy (Bellah et al., 2008; Elisha, 2008; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991). The idea of volunteering as a gift is found in both sociological literature on community (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991) and in anthropological literature on the gift exchange (Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015); both areas acknowledge the potential of gift-giving to build and sustain social relationships through commonly held understandings and practices of reciprocity. Mauss (1990) identifies expectations of reciprocity as the central principle of how gift-giving sustains ancient and contemporary communities. For Mauss (1990), "in theory [gifts] are voluntary in reality they are given and reciprocated obligatorily" (p.3). While Mauss (1990)

claims that this intrinsic obligation to reciprocate is understood and assumed by the giver, Komter (2008) defines the gift exchange as objectively conforming to the principle of reciprocity, but from the perspective of the giver, subjectively feeling to be an altruistic activity (p. 39). In this definition of the gift exchange, the giver's motivation and ideas of altruism are as important as processes of reciprocity. The gift exchange framework allows me to look at volunteers' perception of their motivations and how their work connects to broader ideas of community through ideas of reciprocity. With this framework, I can question the tensions between self- and other-focused motivations and speak to the issue of growing individualism and shrinking community (Bellah et al, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991).

Reciprocity

Within the gift exchange framework, there is the issue of reciprocity in the volunteer relationship. Reciprocity is central to how gift exchange establishes and maintains social ties (Cheal,1986, 1988 in Komter, 2005; Mauss, 1990). The sociology of community also understands reciprocity as central to community, as Putnam (2000) discusses "networks of reciprocity" which constitute our communities (p. 184). However, volunteering is a gift that does not easily lend itself to reciprocity. In volunteer situations, there is little opportunity for the helped group to reciprocate with an equal, or greater, gift, and this unbalances the gift-exchange relationship (Elisha, 2008; Komter, 2005; Mauss, 1990). Elisha (2008) uses Simmel's concept of deep-lying incommensurability to illustrate the inequality between those who "have the power to give and those who are burdened with the obligation to reciprocate" (p. 156-7). Simmel (1950) claims that the first gift given has "a voluntary character which no return gift can have" (p. 392), explaining that an imbalance is inherent in the volunteering relationship.

The central problem of imbalance within volunteer activity is the possibility of dependency. Mauss (1990) understands the unreciprocated gift as making the person who accepts the gift inferior, such that "charity is still wounding for him who has accepted it" (p. 65). Stukas et al. (2016) note that "low-powered" groups may reject "dependency orientated helping" (p. 246). This observation is important for two reasons. Firstly, much volunteer work is done with "low-powered" groups and has the potential to exacerbate such power inequalities, especially when the volunteers are from a more privileged group (Bellah et al, 2008). For example, Tiessen (2012) found that volunteers in her study introduced a new set of power relations into the developing communities they were supposed to be helping that reflected their race, status, class, and gendered power and perceived wealth of resources (p. 14). Similarly, Elisha (2008) found that the Evangelical volunteers in his study lacked sensitivity to the dynamics of social power in the face of stronger cultural prejudices and religious aspirations (p. 156). As a result, the relationship between Evangelical volunteers and the people they served "takes shape within an established structure of social inequality, and evangelical standards of accountability reflect ever-present power dynamics" (p. 175). It is essentially impossible to volunteer outside of these power structures that invariantly influence the volunteer relationship. Secondly, Stukas et al.'s (2016) observation points to the cultural values that have emphasized the association between dependency and powerlessness, imbued the idea of dependency with stigma, and, individualized it as the fault of the dependent person (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, pp. 320-325; Wuthnow, 1991, p. 14). In Elisha's (2008) study of Evangelical activism, he describes a participant's understanding of his volunteer activity as an "inalienable gift that implicitly validated his moral authority and established his right to place conditions on further assistance" (p. 176), demonstrating the power imbalances that the volunteer relationship can create. When

volunteering is understood as creating an indebtedness in the helped person due to an inability to reciprocate the gift, it creates a relationship of dependency with all the negative connotations of our current culture.

While the volunteer gift appears to invalidate direct reciprocity, volunteers still engage with conceptions of reciprocity. Volunteers use the language of reciprocity to bring the volunteer relationship to an equilibrium, and they did so by referring to feelings of fulfilment they received from helping others (Wuthnow, 1991, p. 93). While ideas of "pure" altruism see emotional benefits as invalidating the altruism of the act (Carlson & Zaki, 2018; Haski-Leventhal, 2009), in this framework, the emotional benefit completes the reciprocity obligation. However, there are issues with this framework, mainly that it excludes the gift-recipient from the equation, for this reason, there is no true interdependent social relationships formed (Wuthnow, 1991, p. 292). What, then, explains this relationship between volunteering and community, or does one even exist? If volunteers understand their volunteering as a gift containing an expectation of reciprocity that can never be returned, it creates indebtedness and dependency. Putnam (2000) distinguishes between direct reciprocity, wherein the giver expects an immediate return gift from the recipient, and general reciprocity, which anticipates future reciprocity by creating a more trusting and caring community. Mauss' (1990) study of gift exchange more aptly fits this idea of general reciprocity, as he describes a constant circulation of gifts; as Laidlaw (2000) interprets it, the harm or poison of a gift – in this, the dependency associated with debt – should be "passed on harmlessly in an open-ended cycle of Lévi-Straussian generalized exchange which keep the poison in motion" (p. 629). Supporting the ability of general reciprocity to create community, Putnam (2000) cites studies which have shown that people who have received help are more likely to help others so that acts of kindness create a ripple effect (p. 122). Similarly, Malkki (2015) found that people reported that volunteering allowed them to see themselves "as a link in a longer chain" (p. 151). In order to understand the role volunteering plays in creating

community, it is necessary to look at how volunteers conceptualize the role of reciprocity in their volunteering practices, as well as how they account for their motivations.

Motivations for Volunteering

There is a vast literature characterizing the motivations of volunteers; central in this literature is a tension between altruistic and egoistic motivations, or other- and self-focused motivations. The literature conceptualizes the role of self-interest within volunteer motivations in two different ways: as dichotomous to pure altruistic motives or, conversely, as intrinsic to the act of volunteering.

Present throughout the literature is a binary between altruistic and egoistic motivations. "Pure" altruistic motivations are defined as acts undertaken with no other goal than increasing another's welfare (Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Wuthnow, 1993). Therefore, any amount of self-interest negates such altruism, supporting a tradition that claims there is no such thing as truly altruistic action (Smith, D. H., 1981 in Haski-Leventhal, 2009, p. 272) and creating a binary whereby self-focused motivations are opposed to altruistic, or other-focused, motivations (Carlson & Zaki, 2018; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Tiessen, 2012). This perspective is rooted in Nietzschean philosophy, which proposes that any benevolence done in the pursuit of self-interest becomes a negative obligation, causing the giver to feel pity for the recipient, that is both degrading to the recipient and destructive to the giver (Wuthnow, 1993, p. 352). Carlson and Zaki's (2018) study demonstrates this binary as they found that participants judged people to be selfish rather than altruistic when they acted pro-socially for self-orientated reasons. Tiessen (2012), in her study of volunteer/study abroad trips, used a binary framework that opposed "egoistic, self-orientated" motivations to motivations such as "social justice, solidarity, or the promotion of equal rights" (p. 2) to demonstrate the destructiveness of self-interested

motivations for supposedly altruistic actions. Tiessen (2012) claims that the self-orientated motivations these volunteers expressed pose an ethical issue, as the volunteering was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), whose mission is to help those who live in poverty around the world, not benefit volunteers from developed countries (p. 16). These studies demonstrate the prevalent binary understanding of self- and other-focused motivations, with self-interest understood as inherently damaging to the giving action, such as the act of volunteering.

Conversely, to the prevalent binary position, some schools of thought advance the idea that self-interest is, in fact, a necessary aspect of volunteering. Malkki (2015) cites the study by Maria El Said and Cana Patja (2011) which set out widely accepted principles of volunteer work, the first of which is that volunteering be personally rewarding (p. 148). Ghose & Kassam (2014) recommend emphasizing the self-beneficial aspects of volunteering to encourage the activity, based on their findings that self-interested motivations were positively associated with the frequency of volunteering. Much of this perspective grows out of the concept of utilitarianism, which sees altruistic behaviour as an outcome compatible with the pursuit of self-interest (Wuthnow, 1993). This framework was used by Tocqueville in his concept of “self-interest properly understood,” which he used to describe American social life. “Self-interest properly understood” explains how a self-interested individual could come to combine their self-interest and their community’s public interest (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000). Instead of characterizing volunteering motivated by self-interest as selfish, this perspective understands volunteering as simultaneously generous and self-interested, but not altruistic. Malkki (2015) sees volunteering motivated by self-interest as selflessness “not the celebrated (and troubled) selflessness of “altruism” or self-sacrifice but rather the partial and precarious selflessness of

escapism and the openness to stranger sociality" (p. 163). While this perspective carves out room for self-focused motivations within volunteering, it does so by discarding the idea of altruism. Yet there is a language of altruism that is part of the cultural framework of North America that influences our behaviours to the extent that having an ideal of altruism to emulate allows for possibility of such behaviours as volunteering (Elisha, 2008, p. 181; Wuthnow, 1991, p. 45; 1993, p. 356).

Much of the literature finds that volunteers express a multiplicity of simultaneous motivations, both self- and other-focused (Bellah et al., 2008; Elisha, 2008; Ghose & Kassam, 2014; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Penner, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Stukas et al., 2016; Tiessen, 2012; Wuthnow, 1991, 1993). However, this opposition between self- and other-focused motivations exists in the common consciousness such that volunteers are aware of and influenced by it (Wuthnow, 1991). In his national survey, Wuthnow (1991) found that people selected multiple arguments as a primary reason for their caring behaviour, however, in his follow-up interviews, people struggled to reconcile their motives into a single account. Wuthnow (1991) concludes that people feel pressure for their motives to be in some way "pure" – although not necessarily purely altruistic – and that multiple motives may make them mean less (p. 62). Volunteers thus engage with and struggle to account for self- and other-focused motivations. While many models of volunteer motivations have been proposed, (Carlson & Zaki, 2018; Ghose & Kassam, 2014; Komter, 2005; Penner, 2002), there is less literature on how volunteers understand and navigate the tensions created by ideals of altruism in their volunteer activity. This study seeks to address this gap by looking at how volunteers engage with ideals of altruism in their narratives of their volunteer work.

Individualism and Community

Individualism is a central cultural value in North America that has been increasingly of scholarly interest (Bellah et al., 2008; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991). Now, many social scientists see individualism as threatening community and social connection (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000). Wuthnow (1991) additionally identifies a seemingly binary opposition between individualism and altruism present in American social life. Bellah et al. (2008) quote Tocqueville to define individualism, “each one of them [the citizens], withdrawn into himself, is almost unaware of the fate of the rest. Mankind, for him, consists in his children and his personal friends. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, they are nothing” (preface). Bellah et al. (2008) see this type of individualism as inherently dangerous in disconnecting people from “certain basic realities of their lives, especially their interdependence with others” (preface). Similarly, Putnam (2000) finds that because increasing individualism has caused people to withdraw from their communities, we face a choice between values: individualism or community but not both (p. 354). However, immediately after posing this rhetorical choice, Putnam (2000) definitively answers “no.” (ibid.), adherence to the value of individualism does not preclude the possibility of community, for individuals form connections in their own self-interest, and those connections can benefit the larger community (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). Putnam (2000) grounds this proposing in the type of connections that he terms “bridging social capital;” bridging social capital requires people to move beyond their typical circle of interactions. To build bridging social capital and turn towards a community, we must connect with people unlike ourselves (Putnam, 2000, p. 411).

Before turning to examine the potential of volunteer work to build community, it is necessary to ask, what exactly is meant by community? Bellah et al. (2008) claim that

community "attempts to be an inclusive whole, celebrating interdependence of public and private life and of the different callings of all" (p. 72); the key word here is "attempts," signalling that community is a fragile construct that does not always live up to its ideal form. Amit (2010) conceptualizes community as a "titular" concept which is general enough to encompass a wide range of situations and is productively ambiguous (p. 358). She furthermore looks at "community" as a form of interaction rather than a categorical identity (Amit, 2010). Thus, just as Wuthnow (1991; 1993) studies altruism as a cultural ideal and language construct, and Bellah et al. (2008) look at individualism as a cultural value and language construct, I believe community operates similarly, as a cultural ideal people use in many different types of discourse.

Volunteering appears as an avenue through which individuals could build community bonds. Putnam's (2000) bridging social capital requires interaction with people unlike ourselves, which volunteering often provides. Furthermore, Bellah et al.'s (2008) idea of common responsibility and interdependence (p. 72) seems to be the essence of volunteering. Indeed, much of the literature on volunteering emphasises its ability to build community (Ghose & Kassam, 2014; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Stukas et al., 2016) or that a desire for community motivates volunteering (Bellah, 2008; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Putnam, 2000). However, volunteering is subject to the same individualizing trends that have weakened social bonds (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) notes that one-on-one volunteering is increasingly common (p. 128) whereas volunteering for community projects, which Putnam links to building social capital, is decreasing (p. 132). Similarly, it is more common for people to volunteer for their friends and family than with strangers (Bellah et al., 2008; Stukas et al., 2016; Wuthnow, 1991, p. 8). Furthermore, the problem with advocating volunteering as the solution to building community, is that volunteer activity tends to correlate with income, education, and occupation

(Bellah et al., 2008; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 205; Penner, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991); thus, as Bellah et al. (2008) points out, volunteers are more often part of the "overclass" and voluntarist communities run the risk of excluding those of the "underclass" (preface) or reinforcing marginalization by giving volunteers power over those of the "underclass."

Volunteers' understandings of these concepts of altruism and reciprocity within their everyday volunteer practices are a little-explored area of research which my study seeks to address by asking firstly, *how do volunteers account for the tensions between self- and other-focused motivations in their work*? Secondly, I ask, *how do volunteers understand their work in relation to ideas of reciprocity?*

Methods

I used an exploratory, qualitative research design to explore volunteers' accounts of their motivations and ideas of reciprocity. The little research on the tension between self- and other-focused motivations and volunteers' perceptions of reciprocity best suited an exploratory approach. A qualitative design allowed me to get at how participants accounted for their motivations and volunteer work, with respect to the interpretation of their meaning (Kvale, 1996, p. 124). I followed Bellah et al. (2008) and Wuthnow (1991) in my use of semi-structured interviews. Bellah et al. (2008) looked at individualism as a language construct and cultural value that influenced how people accounted for themselves, while Wuthnow (1991) looked at altruism as a language construct and cultural value that is spoken and interpreted (p. 354). Wuthnow (1991) conducted his qualitative study of caring behaviour based on the idea that motivations do not simply exist, they are talked about, allowing individuals to make an account of themselves to themselves and others (p. 50). I used semi-structured interviews to encourage

volunteers to create an account of their motivations and the perception of the volunteer relationship.

My data consisted of 9 semi-structured interviews with volunteers who worked closely with one individual or a small group of the same individuals for at least the past month. My sample consisted of six women and three men; the higher number of women in my sample matches the literature that more women than men volunteer (Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Putnam, 2000). Participants ranged in age from eighteen to fifty-one. Each interview lasted approximately 30 – 60 minutes and focused on participants' motivations for volunteering and how they perceived their work connecting them to others. As such, my interview guide contained two thematic sections; the first focused on volunteer's motivations and perceived benefit of their work, the second centered on participants' ideas of community and their perception of the volunteer relationship; I have attached my interview guide (Appendix II). With the participant's consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

I recruited participants using purposive sampling. I contacted nine community organizations regarding distributing my call for participants; four got back to me and agreed to email out my call. I chose organizations that involved one-on-one or small group volunteer programs and specified that participants must have been volunteering for at least one month prior, so that participants may have begun forming the kinds of connections with their volunteer recipient in which I was interested.

After transcribing my interviews, I referred to my interview notes for themes that I had noted during interviews, as well as the *a priori* themes I found in the literature (Jackson, 2001; Russel et al., 2003), such as self- and other-focused motivations and general reciprocity. I kept these in mind while reading the transcripts and coded for "in vivo" codes, terms participants used

that I found significant (Jackson, 2001; Russel et al., 2003). I then grouped these codes across interviews under broad themes, or “meta-codes” (Jackson, 2001) paying specific attention to contradictions or tensions within and between themes. I found two main tensions. The first, between self- and other-focused motivations, I expected based on the literature; while the second tension between volunteering as a personal choice and as an obligation or commitment, I did not expect, although I found support for such tension in Bellah et al.’s (2008) work. Once I had identified these tensions, I returned to the transcripts to locate the tensions within individual interviews and across participants (Jackson, 2001). While I expected motivations to emerge as a significant setting for these tensions, I was surprised by the importance of time in volunteers’ account, and this became the main example of the tension between volunteers’ freedom and commitment. The final step of my analysis was to link the themes I had noted to theoretical models from the literature (Russel et al., 2003).

I designed my study around the ethical principles of Dalhousie’s Research Board of Ethics and the TCPS2. I explained the study in my initial email, attached the consent form (Appendix I) to follow-up emails, and reviewed the study at the beginning of each interview to ensure participants could provide fully informed consent. After the interview concluded, I gave participants time to ask questions which often resulted in a discussion of my answers to interview questions or more information about the study and my research interests; in this way, I attempted to create a more equal relationship of knowledge sharing between myself and my participant (Kirby & Mckenna, 1989). I ensured the privacy of participants by anonymizing all the data and using pseudonyms; I gave participants the option to choose their own pseudonyms, which a couple chose to do. For the rest, I used a random name generator.

I occupied a dual role in regard to some participants, as I recruited from an organization with which I also volunteered. I informed these participants of my dual role and that in the context of the interview, I would act solely as a researcher. I made clear that my existing relationship did not compel them to participate and that anything they told me in the interview would be kept entirely confidential. Participants did not indicate any problems with my dual role.

Limitations to my research stem from the choice of qualitative methods, which do not allow me to make representative claims. Furthermore, the type of volunteering participants engaged in may have influenced their feelings of connection. For example, the majority of my participants came from one organization which paired a volunteer with a younger individual to mentor until they turned eighteen. Due to the close and personal nature of this volunteer setting, participants may have experienced stronger connections and reciprocity within the volunteer relationship than in other types of volunteering. To make stronger claims about the potential of volunteer work to create connections, multiple types of volunteer relationships should be studied Furthermore, it became clear over the course of my interviews that participants had difficulty speaking to issues of dependency within the volunteer relationship. Participants could not answer with any confidence what their volunteer recipients thought of them, as well they could not think of, or were perhaps unwilling to speak of, negative aspects volunteering such as power imbalances. Thus, to better understand the volunteer relationship, it will be necessary to look at it from the recipients' perspective.

Findings

Throughout their accounts, volunteers engage with ideas of altruism that both adhere to and contest a concept of pure altruism. In this way, they create two tensions; the first, between self- and other-focused understandings, the second, between personal choice and obligation to a

greater good. These tensions were primarily expressed in three areas: their motivations, level of commitment, and expectations of reciprocity. Within participants' expectations of reciprocity, they also encountered the possibility of disappointment, which they manage by reference to cultural ideals of altruism which exclude expectations of a return gift.

Motivations

In accounting for their motivations, participants encountered two tensions, the first between self- and other focused motivations; the second between the perception of volunteering as a personal choice and as an obligation. Self-focused motivations and the freedom of personal choice were both expressed through understandings of volunteer work as personally gratifying and instrumental to later life goals. Other-focused motivations were expressed as a desire for community and the obligation to volunteer was expressed through feeling a need to "give back."

Tensions between self- and other-focused motivations

Participants were aware of the binary between "selfish" and "selfless" motivations and took various positions towards the two poles. At one end, Nasir expressed the importance of maintaining the "spirit of selflessness" in society and in volunteering. In discussing someone who might start volunteering for self-focused motivations such as resume-building, Nasir explained, "so in the beginning, it might be like, this was not as altruistic, but what happens is that they actually come to derive so much happiness from that activity that it eventually becomes just for the sake of itself, and this is where it's a bit of a grey area because you could say that people volunteer still for themselves because it makes them feel happy." Thus, Nasir hit upon a key tension volunteers face, can volunteering because it makes one happy really be considered an altruistic action, as one is receiving a benefit and motivated by receiving that benefit? Nasir ultimately reconciles the tension by understanding this happiness as a by-product rather than the

intended end, saying you "paradoxically, wouldn't achieve that kind of happiness if you were doing it to make yourself happy." In explaining different motivations for volunteering, Donna similarly encounters this tension within her account, "if you're volunteering for the benefit of others, then, in the end, it's not, I wanna say selfless, but it's not really selfless cause you're getting some self-satisfaction in helping others. There is some satisfaction there; but, the commitment might be a bit more if you're doing it for the others rather than purely my own gratification." Both Nasir and Donna acknowledged that volunteering is personally gratifying but find that such a motivation taints the idea of a "pure" altruistic act.

Other participants additionally underscored the important role personal gratification plays in incentivizing volunteer work. Many participants embraced the idea of "selfish" motivations as harmless, such as when Heather claimed that, "sometimes, personal motivation doesn't matter quite as much as the end result." Janet explained that "you won't want to volunteer if it's not fun and enjoyable for you. You need that motivation." Mark also identified personal gratification as an important motivator despite its selfish connotation, saying "it actually doesn't hurt to be aware, I do this because it makes me happy. I think that's, unless you're a serial killer, that is a great motivation for doing anything." By situating personal gratification as necessary in motivating one to volunteer, participants supported Maria El Said and Cana Patja's (2011) finding that volunteering must be personally rewarding (Malkki, 2015, p. 148). Participants interpreted their motivations for volunteering through the lens of personal gratification. Whether they consciously framed it as a by-product, thus maintaining the purity of the altruistic action, or understood the gratification a necessary motivating force, they all described volunteering as something that made them feel good.

Another way in which participants accounted for their motivations was by relating their choice of volunteer work to their later life goals. “Probably my main motivator is that I think that I want to be a teacher, but I don’t know, so it’s nice to have these opportunities to dabble in that to see if I like it before I spend money on a program for a degree I might never use” explained Cassandra. She echoed sentiments expressed by Danielle, Tristan, Heather, and Nasir; although the volunteer work was not always instrumentalized in terms of career. Tristan noted that “I want to be a foster parent one day, so I thought it would be a good in-between step.” Interestingly, when I asked if there was anything I hadn’t covered, Nasir expressed the role his volunteer work played in grounding his “abstract” philosophy studies by allowing him to “apply certain ideas and just test out which are actually beneficial to people or are essentially useless, so if some philosophy helps me to live better, that’s important to me.” By instrumentalizing their work as an “in-between step,” participants understood their volunteer work in terms of what it could do for them, thus, expressing self-focused motivations.

Contrasting yet existing simultaneously with the self-focused motivations of instrumentality and personal gratification, participants also described a desire for community as a major motivating force in their volunteering. The sociology of community literature identifies a desire for community as a motivation for volunteering (Bellah, 2008; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 2015; Putnam, 2000). Many of the people I spoke to came to Nova Scotia later in their lives and identified volunteering as a way to become part of the community, as Donna explained, “when I moved here I needed to integrate myself and get to know the people and volunteering was one way to move around cause I tend to be quiet and reserved in nature.” Lilo described the active stance necessary to creating community as an adult, saying, “I knew that I had to be proactive and find my community. Like, can't sit around and wait to find my friends as an adult. It's kind of

hard. Right? So, it's like, you know, get out of the house, go out and see where you can kind of serve and help and make a community for yourself." Lilo went on to describe how volunteering had helped her feel like part of her neighbourhood community; she explained that when she next moves, she plans to immediately look for volunteer opportunities. Although these participants described using or *instrumentalizing* volunteer work as a way to build a community, it is in a more other-orientated way than when they discussed using volunteer work to test ideas that solely benefited themselves. Moreover, this instrumentalization requires the volunteer recipient to come to fruition. The self-focused benefits volunteers discussed motivating them to volunteer could be garnered independent of the recipient of their volunteer work, building a community, however, requires the active participation of both volunteer and recipient.

Volunteers figured community as something larger and beyond themselves that they could become a part of through volunteering, supporting Malkki's (2015) claim that people volunteer to "become a part of 'something greater then themselves'" (p. 152). When I asked Lilo to define community, she responded, "community means feeling part of something that's bigger than yourself or bigger than your day-to-day." The volunteers I talked to described their work as connecting them to a community larger than their typical interactions. While Putnam (2000) worries about the increase of one-on-one volunteering (p. 128), Tristan and Lilo described their one-on-one volunteering blossoming into larger feelings and experiences of community. Lilo explained, "I've been invited to learn more about the community 'cause though I'm paired with one person and we're mostly one-on-one, they've been very inclusive to include all the other volunteers […] And it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and it's just wonderful because I think it's like that thing you're always learning and it just feels good because as much as we all like our alone time or one-on-one time, but it's really neat to feel just part of something bigger than

yourself and that you're contributing to that." Taking a more abstract position and acknowledging capitalist and neoliberalism system, Tristan described how "volunteering adds another layer on it [community], which is, the transaction is less about financial capital and rewarding a very narrow focus of competencies. It allows you to build other capital, which you don't leverage in the same way, but you still access in ways that are beneficial to the community. So, the more, I guess, intersections and the more layers of that allow for a more complex and rich ecosystem within the work world or the labour world, I should say." Malkki (2015) found that people reported how volunteering allowed them to see themselves "as a link in a longer chain" (p. 151), a necessarily other-focused understanding of volunteer work. By understanding community as beyond themselves and their everyday lives and transactions, and by seeing their volunteer work as something that could connect them to that sense of community, volunteers expressed other-focused motivations.

Another way in which participants connected their volunteering to a sense of community was through pathways of general reciprocity, where the reciprocity one anticipates from their gift comes from creating a kinder community overall. Nasir illustrates this domino-effect of kindness when he describes helping peoples because "the hope would be, even indirectly, to inspire other people to do the same." Nasir's hope echoes the "imagined 'chain of help'" Malkki (2015, p. 151) finds motivating volunteers in Finland. Heather described how, because she had benefitted from community programs, volunteering with similar programs was "a good time to pay it forward." Interestingly, although Heather did not grow up in Halifax, she sees paying it forward here as "a continuation in a way." This transference of community suggests that volunteers may conceptualize community in more general, or "productively ambiguous" (Amit, 2010), terms than a fixed location. Danielle described wanting to be a mentor for the person she volunteered

with, just as many people had been for her growing up; when I asked her if she saw her volunteering as giving back or passing it along, she said, "yeah, cause like, there's just not enough of it." Danielle's answer follows the idea of general reciprocity in that she sees her work as giving kindness to a community which does not have enough of it. In this sense, volunteers do not see their work as benefiting just one person, but the community as a whole. Janet says that volunteering makes her "feel like I'm contributing to my community," rather than a single person. Such a perception is other-focused in the broadest sense of orientating volunteers towards the entire community.

Tensions between personal choice and obligation

Within the second tension, participants expressed their perception of volunteering as a free, personal choice through their motivations of personal gratification and instrumentalization. When asked to define what volunteering meant to her, Donna admits, "there is an emotional, there is a gratification. But essentially you can say if I'm not happy here, I'll go volunteer somewhere else where I will be happy and get that gratification." Donna contrasts volunteering to work and being reliant on a paycheque, whereas, with volunteering, the remuneration is personal gratification rather than money. Due to this type of remuneration, there is a freedom to come and go based on the gratification one receives. Within the instrumentalization of volunteer work, volunteers use their work as a space to test out ideas; thus, volunteers perceive their work as what Cassandra describes as a "low stakes kind of environment where it's like, I can go on my terms and leave whenever I want, and it doesn't cost me anything." Such as the role personal gratification plays, this instrumentalizing of their volunteer work gives volunteers the power to come and go based on how the work can serve them.

Contrasting the idea that volunteering is entirely a personal choice, based on how the work can benefit the volunteer, many participants simultaneously expressed feelings of obligation that motivated them to volunteer. Heather was the most explicit participant about her sense of obligation, repeatedly expressing the obligation she felt to give back. Even with a self-described lack of natural talent with and strong affection for kids, she described how she felt obligated to volunteer with programs that serve youth. Summing up her motivations, Heather said

> I feel obligated. I wouldn't say other people should, but personally, I feel like I should be giving back. And, once again, I took advantage of a lot of these types of programs when I was younger, and because I think they're valuable, I should help out with them, instead of just being like, 'oh, well someone else will do it, it's a useful program, but someone else will handle it.'

Cassandra described feeling a responsibility, which she explained with the quote: "Activism is my rent for living on the planet." Pressed to explain further, Cassandra came to the following conclusion, "it's kind of an interesting idea that people who, just for living here, especially since we're all like privileged enough just to be going to an expensive university, it's like, we might as well give something back, if we can." Nasir referenced the Baha'i principle of service as something he tries to move towards, explaining that "service is like the posture of sacrifice, so you're never doing something to just benefit yourself, it's always with the aim of bettering the world," later he explained that "ultimately, what I want to do is give back to society in some way." While Heather's feelings of obligation were individual in that she traced them directly to her own experiences, Nasir and Cassandra both reference larger ideas of human responsibility for living on the planet and a religiously-based obligation to better the world. This

tension between obligation and individual freedom is found in the sociology of community and individualism literature (Bellah et al., 20008; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 1991); the significance of this tension will be discussed further following its appearance in volunteers' ideas of commitment.

Level of Commitment

All participants commented on the level of commitment involved in their volunteer work; in their expression of this commitment, participants encountered tension between personal freedom and the commitment necessary to building community. Their view of volunteer work as a personal choice stemmed from a sense of ownership of their time which gave them the freedom to choose volunteer work that gratified them and suited their life goals. But there was also a commitment that emerged from their volunteer work and was essential for the idea of community that motivated them.

Almost all participants noted that part of their motivation for their particular volunteer position was that it was not a large time commitment. Nasir explained his decision to volunteer as follows, "it didn't seem like something that would be too difficult to also help out with, because it's not that great of a time commitment." Time was a key issue for volunteers; they expressed a sense of ownership over their time that gave them power. "You're volunteering your time, so you should be in control of how much of that time is volunteered, you know," Janet explained. Within these expressions, there is again the sense that volunteering is entirely a personal choice and that choice remains with the volunteer throughout the process. However, other volunteers expressed countering opinions on the commitment associated with volunteering. Nasir described his relationship with the kids he volunteered with as "almost like an older brother" which he explained as, "trying to make them understand that I really want to like, be

their friend, it's not like I'm just here to help them with this thing and then leave." Nasir expresses the long-term commitment aspect of volunteering that many other participants noted when discussing the ways through which volunteering could build community. Donna captured the importance of a long-term commitment when she said, "when you're building bonds, it doesn't happen overnight." Commitment is essential to the idea of community. Amit (2010) lists joint commitment as one of the key generative principles of community (p. 359). When asked to define community, Danielle said "an extended, like commitment and reliability." Later in our interview, when I asked Danielle what she got out of volunteering, she said that her volunteer recipient "teaches me responsibility […] And even when things are going on in my life, I have to remember that she still deserves to hang and to see me and that I need to put those aside and show her that someone is reliable." Danielle used the same terminology of "reliability" for her volunteer relationship as she did in her definition of community. While many participants expressed the importance of owning their time, thus configuring volunteer work as a personal choice, they also expressed feelings of commitment which figured as essential to building the type of community they desired.

That this tension emerged both in how volunteers accounted for their motivations and how they described their volunteer work, echoes the literature warning that individualism, which prioritizes personal choice and freedom, is a growing concern in North American society. Volunteering, it appears, is both subject to the individualizing tendencies of our current society and still connected to a larger idea of obligation and commitment to others. While it is clear that individualism and community are not exclusionary categories, as both exist in volunteers' accounts, the tension they create is one which participants were not able to fully resolve. Danielle describes how, having only volunteered in her current position for a few months, "it's

more of a commitment that I have to force myself to do, but I hope that as it goes on, it's not so much." Danielle sees time as possibly resolving the tension between the negative and positive sides of the volunteer commitment. Tristan described how, "if I'm very, very busy, I'll have more negative anticipatory thoughts about volunteering. Once I do it, it's fine, and then I'm reminded how great it is." When his time is stretched thin, and thus more valuable, the importance of controlling one's time is more important and volunteering feels like a reluctant commitment; the tension is momentarily resolved once he volunteers and feels "how great it is." However, the cycle then starts over; thus, the tension, for Tristan, is never fully resolved. Bellah et al. (2008) offer an ideal way of solving this tension, through the principle of individualism properly understood, freedom is understood as fulfilling our social nature and acknowledging our common responsibility to others (preface). Although participants did not fully enjoy this ideal solution, Janet got close when she said, "we're kind of like, hey, everybody's responsible for doing their part. So, you gotta figure out a way that you enjoy to do that."

Reciprocity

The ways in which participants accounted for the concept of reciprocity in their volunteer relationships illustrates further tension between self- and other-focused understandings. Many participants discussed the fulfilment, or personal gratification, they received from volunteering. For Cassandra, her personal benefit stems from "feeling accomplished, feeling like I'm contributing something" because "to see the impact that I was making, it made me feel good, warm inside, or whatever." This type of emotional remuneration, which almost all the participants discussed, mirrors Wuthnow's (1991) finding that many of his participants used the language of personal fulfilment to bring the giving relationship to a close (p. 93). However, the problem Wuthnow (1991) identifies in this type of narrative, is that it excludes the gift-recipient

form the equation, there are no interdependent social relationships formed as it is not necessary for the recipient to contribute anything to the volunteer's feeling of fulfilment (p. 292). Thus, this understanding of the reciprocity of volunteer work is self-focused and cannot truly be reciprocity in the gift-exchange sense of building social ties.

However, personal fulfilment is not the whole story for volunteers. While all the participants in my study reported receiving fulfilment from volunteering, when asked about what they got back from their work, many of them expanded to more other-focused ideas of reciprocity. Participants commonly cited experiences and friendship as a reward for volunteering. Mark said that “I think that's what the reward for volunteers is that you're getting experiences back. Whether you know it or not” and later, he defined community as “a group of people sharing experiences.” These responses indicate that Mark sees the “reward for volunteers” as community through experience. Most participants described the people they volunteered with as friends, exemplified by Danielle saying, “I think emotionally, mentally you get something back from it. If anything, you get friendships.” Lilo said, “I think the point of volunteering is connection and community and good feelings everywhere. Both ways.” When I asked her to explain what she meant by “both ways,” she described how “when you think about volunteering, you think about, I'm doing this for them, but really they are doing something for you too. And, again, it's more kind of emotional and stuff like that, or connecting, but it's- definitely, it's two way.” Many volunteers saw the volunteer relationship in this two-way exchange where the reciprocated gift was friendship or connection. These conceptions of reciprocity, which center around ideas of connection and community, require both the recipient and the giver to be active participants and are both other- and self-focused. Further, they show that volunteers see volunteer work as having the ability to create community.

Expectations of Reciprocity

Many participants discussed the potential of volunteer work to create community. Donna linked this possibility to the social aspects of volunteering, saying, “When you're talking to people, it's meeting people and wherever you meet people you have possibilities for [a] relationship. What type? It depends on the people.” Other participants, such as Lilo and Danielle, talked excitedly about the connection they had formed with their volunteer recipient. Danielle saying “and I'll look at her jumping around, and I'm like, it's crazy that like, I never knew you. And, now we hang out like every week.” While Lilo expressed her emotions towards her volunteer recipient, saying, “Oh, I love it. I feel like, I just feel like I'm walking on air. I look forward to it every week. Like that's huge; I think about the person all week long, cause you get to know them so well. Like you think: they would like this or I'm going to tell them this.” Tristan discussed the potential of volunteer work to form community in terms of people of privilege connecting with marginalized peoples, saying

> I think having relationships is what people really change their perspectives on. It’s not because they read an article usually, it's not because they saw something on Facebook, it’s because they’ve connected on a personal level to someone in their lives. So … part of like, I guess building inclusion and like making a better world, more just and more harmonious, is allowing for people with privileged to connect to in a way that's not just through media or capitalism, it’s like, they get to see firsthand.

Tristan taps into Putnam’s (2000) concept of bridging social capital, where, “to build bridging social capital requires that we transcend our social and political and professional identities to connect with people unlike ourselves” (p. 411). To build bridging social capital is the ideal potential of volunteering, and the participants in my study saw volunteering as having

this potential to a degree. However, Putnam (2000) acknowledges that social capital has a downside, where, because the “haves” engage in more civic activity than the “have-nots,” (Bellah et al., 2008; Komter, 2005; Malkki, 205; Penner, 2002; Wuthnow, 1991), strengthening the power of voluntary association may widen class differences (p. 358). Tristan recognize this danger, as he explains, “when people of privilege are volunteering and helping people get out of that situations, we're assuming that the experts in that situation are the people of privilege, in reality, it’s the people who are most marginalized or oppressed are the experts of their own experience.” He similarly notes how this setup places the responsibility on marginalized people to educate people of privilege and the potential of volunteer work to “reinforces the same in-equable structures that we already have.” Thus, volunteering may not create bridging capital in a way conducive to community.

Implicit in volunteers’ perception that volunteer work can create community is the potential for disappointment. When I asked Janet about where she saw her volunteer relationship going, she said, “I just hope our relationship continues in a positive way and we just enjoy each other's company and just be friends.” She hoped for the friendship other volunteers found in their relationships, yet, there is no guarantee that the volunteer relationship will result in friendship. When discussing reciprocity in the volunteer relationship, Donna noted that “I'd like to think there's some sort of equalness,” however, she later expanded, “In my case, it's definitely not equal, because of his mental limitations. I don't think it's equal at all. And I don't think it ever could be equal.” Donna expressed a sense of disappointment in her volunteer relationship as it did not live up to her expectation and main motivation that it would, “throw me off balance to get me out of a comfort zone.” Although many participants expressed a desire for community as a motivating factor for volunteering, they later emphasized the importance of not having

expectations. Lilo explained "I try not to have unrealistic expectations. Like I didn't go into it saying, oh, we're going to be best friends or anything like that." Nasir made not expecting anything in return a fundamental part of his concept of volunteering, saying, "it's like that posture of not, like you're saying, expecting anything in return and like almost, finding joy in the act of giving, without expecting anything." Other participants denied that the volunteer relationship had to be reciprocal at all; Janet said "It can be kind of that one way. If somebody is in need and I can help them out, just that act of helping them out is, is enough for me. And, if it's not a reciprocal effort, that's totally fine." Thus, it would appear as though we have circled right back to the concept of altruism: doing something with no expectation of return; yet, from the discussions of motivations, it is clear that participants are not acting with no thought or expectation of self-focused benefits. Thus, a cultural ideal of altruism influences their perception of their volunteer work so that the potential for the best outcome – in this case, community – must be paired with a lack of expectation. However, because altruism is an ideal and, as we have seen, volunteers do hold self-focused motivations, volunteering holds the potential for disappointment.

Conclusion

My research suggests that it is necessary to look at how volunteers account for their work to understand the complex issues of motivations, expectations, and disappointment within volunteer work. In attempting to answer my first research question, *how do volunteers account for the tensions between self- and other-focused motivations?* I found that volunteers encountered tensions between not only self- and other-focused understandings but also between personal choice and obligation. As a result of my second research question, *how do volunteers understand their work in relation to ideas of reciprocity?* I explored volunteers' perceptions of

how their work could create community or disappointment. As a result, I have argued that volunteers engage with cultural ideals of altruism in ways that both adhered to and contested that ideal. This dual engagement creates tensions in their motivations, level of commitment, and ideas of reciprocity.

In accounting for the tensions between self- and other-focused motivations, participants engaged with ideas of "selfish" and "selfless" motivations in various ways that suggested a lack of consensus regarding whether self- or other-focused motivations matter more. All participants expressed some degree of self-focused motivations or understandings of their work. Many participants expressed the necessity of self-focused motivations for participation in volunteering; however, others saw them as ruining a sense of "pure" altruism in volunteering. Further adhering the ideal of altruism, many participants warned against entering the volunteer relationship with expectations of reciprocity. Although in other regards, they expressed other-focused understandings of reciprocity and motivations which diverged from the ideal of altruism. My study helps expand the literature on volunteer motivations from a binary conception of altruistic and egoistic motivations to an understanding of how volunteers simultaneously adhere to and contest cultural ideals of altruism within their work. Further research should look at the impact of selfish, or rather, self-focused, motivations, and continue exploring the tension between self- and other-focused understandings of volunteer work. This tension is essential in understanding volunteer work's potential to create community or disappointment.

The tensions volunteers encountered between self- and other-focused understandings of their work, and especially between conceptions of volunteering as a personal choice and as an obligation, align with the sociology of community in demonstrating a seeming opposition between the two concepts yet not precluding the possibility of reconciling them. Participants did

view their work as having the potential to create community; however, this potential created contradictions between expressions of community-driven motivations and warnings against the expectation of reciprocity. Participants encountered further tension surrounding the commitment of volunteering. Participants placed great stock in controlling their time and the freedom that gave them in conceiving of volunteering as a personal choice, following values of individualism (Bellah et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000). Participants also recognized the importance of long-term commitment in forming community (Amit, 2010; Bellah et al., 2008). A desire for such community was a motivating force for many, but within the expectation of community there was potential for disappointment if the volunteer relationship did not fit volunteers' ideas of "proper" reciprocity. My study is important to the sociology of community in beginning to show how volunteers understand their work as having the potential to build community, yet also understanding the potential for disappointment and how volunteers circumvent this potential by referring to an ideal of altruism. Further research should focus on the actual ability of volunteer work to create community, possibly by looking at the giving relationship from the recipients' perspective. The potential of volunteer work to create community is an important area of study as individualism continues to shape our society; however, it is equally important to understand the ways in which volunteering could fail to build community, leading to disappointment for the volunteer and potentially worse consequences for the recipients of volunteer work.

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Appendix I: Consent Form

Faculty of Arts and

Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM

"Finding Joy in the Act of Giving:" Volunteering Amidst Tensions of Altruism and Egoism

You are invited to take part in research being conducted by me, Rena Vanstone, an undergraduate student in Sociology, as part of my honours degree at Dalhousie University. The purpose of this research is to explore how volunteers understand their motivations for volunteering and how volunteer work fits into their lives and ideas of community. Participants will be interviewed and asked about their experiences volunteering. I will write up the results of this research in a paper for my class, called the honours thesis.

As a participant in the research you will be asked to relate some stories of your experiences with volunteer work and answer questions regarding your experiences. The interview should take about an hour and will be conducted in a quiet location of your choice. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded. If I quote any part of it in my honours thesis, I will use a pseudonym, not your real name, and I will remove any other details that could identify you from the quote.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer, and you are welcome to stop the interview at any time if you no longer want to participate. If you decide to stop participating after the interview is over, you can do so until March 1. I will not be able to remove the information you provided after that date, because I will have completed my analysis, but the information will not be used in any other research.

Information that you provide to me will be kept private and will be anonymized, which means any identifying details such as your name will be removed from it. Only the honours class supervisor and I will have access to the unprocessed information you offer. I will describe and share general findings in a presentation to the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department and in my honours thesis. Nothing that could identify you will be included in the presentation or the thesis. I will keep anonymized information so that I can learn more from it as I continue with my studies.

The risks associated with this study are no greater than those you encounter in your everyday life.

There will be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research and you will not receive compensation. The research, however, will contribute to new knowledge on volunteerism and community, as well as prosocial behaviour. If you would like to see how your information is used, a final copy of my thesis will be posted online at https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/28089. If you would like to receive a copy in another form, please feel free to contact me and I will send you a copy of my honours thesis after April 30.

If you have questions or concerns about the research please feel free to contact me or the honours class supervisor. My contact information is rena.vanstone@dal.ca. You can contact the honours class supervisor, Dr. Laura Eramian, at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University on (902) 494-2523, or email leramian@dal.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation *i*n this research, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email ethics@dal.ca.

Participant's consent:

I have read the above information and I agree to participate in this study.

Name: ______________________________

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

☐ I agree to the interview being audio recorded

☐ I agree for my quotes to be used in the final written report

Researcher's signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction to Interview

Hello, thank you for participating in this interview. I'm excited to get started, but first, I wanted to tell you about the study and why I asked you for the interview. I am interested in the phenomenon of volunteering; why people choose to give their time and energy to other people and how they understand their volunteering in the larger context of community. I would like to ask you to tell me some stories about your experiences volunteering. However, I don't want you to tell me any private information about the people you volunteer with, this is about your experience and perceptions of your volunteering.

Before we begin the interview, I'll ask if you can sign this consent form. Do you have any questions for me? What are your preferred pronouns? I will use pseudonyms to anonymize your answers, do you have a pseudonym you would like me to use or should I choose a random one?

Opening Questions:

- Could you tell me a little bit about the organization you currently volunteer with?
- How long have you been volunteering at that organization?
- Could you tell me about how you got involved with your current volunteer organization?
- How long have you been volunteering in general?
- Could you tell me about how you first decided to start volunteering? [skip if this is their first volunteer position]

Motivations to volunteer:

- What do you think are your motives for volunteering?
- Do you think different motivations affect how one volunteers?
- How do you think volunteering affects you?
- How do you think the work you do affects the people you volunteer with?
- Do you see yourself as benefitting in any way from the volunteer work you do? (emotionally, socially – connections/ networking/ prestige)

Community:

- What does community mean to you?
- Do you feel a connection with the people you volunteer with? How so?
- Do you ever feel a lack of connection with the people you volunteer with?
- How do you see your volunteer work affecting the community you live in?
- What do you think is the point of volunteering? (in general)
- What do you think the people you volunteer with think of you as a volunteer? What makes you think that? Can you tell me about a specific interaction?
- How do you see your volunteer work fitting in with the rest of your life?

Experiences volunteering:

- Could you tell me about an average volunteer shift?

- Can you tell me about a positive experience you had volunteering?
- Can you tell me about a negative experience you had volunteering?
- Can you tell me about a time you had an awkward interaction while volunteering?
- What is your personal definition of volunteering?
- Could you tell me about why you volunteer? Has your perspective changed at all over the course of this interview/ new insights?

Closing Questions:

- Could you tell me about the other commitments in your life? (Work, school, etc.) How do they shape your volunteering or vice versa?
- Can I ask your age? (a general range is fine)
- Is there anything else we haven't talked about yet that you think is important to raise?

Appendix III: REB Final Report

ANNUAL/FINAL REPORT

Annual report to the Research Ethics Board for the continuing ethical review of research involving humans and final report to conclude REB Approval

A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

A1. Lead researcher contact	
Name:	Rena Vanstone
Email address:	rena.vanstone@dal.ca
For student research:	
Supervisor at Dal:	Dr. Laura Eramian
Supervisor email:	leramian@dal.ca

A2. Lead Researcher Status
Please indicate your current status with Dalhousie University: ☐ Employee/Academic Appointment ☒ Current student ☐ Other (please explain):

A3. Project Information	
REB file #:	2018-4653
Project title:	"Finding Joy in the Act of Giving:" Volunteering Amidst Tensions of Altruism and Egoism
Sample size (or number of cases) approved by REB:	10

B. STUDY STATUS

B1. Study progress (check all that apply)

☐ Participant recruitment not yet begun Reason (please explain):			
		During past year	Total since study start
☐ Secondary data use (no recruitment)	Number of records used:		
☐ Participant recruitment on-going	Number of participants recruited (by group):		
☒ Participant recruitment complete	Total number of participants/records:	9	9
☐ Data collection on-going			
☒ Study complete. Data collection complete. No further involvement of participants. Approved data analysis and writing may be ongoing. This report is the final report to close the REB file for this project.			
☐ Other (describe):			

B2. Study Changes
Have you made any changes to the approved research project (that have not been documented with an amendment request)? This includes changes to the research methods, recruitment material, consent documents and/or study instruments or research team. ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, please explain:

C. PROJECT HISTORY

Since your initial REB submission or last annual report:		
C1.	Have you experienced any challenges or delays recruiting or retaining participants or accessing records or biological materials? If yes, please describe:	☐ Yes ☒ No
C2.	Have you experienced any problems in carrying out this project? If yes, please describe:	☐ Yes ☒ No
C3.	Have participants experienced any harm as a result of their participation in the study? If yes, please describe:	☐ Yes ☒ No

C4.	Has any study participant expressed complaints, or experienced any difficulties in relation to their participation in the study? If yes, please describe:	☐ Yes ☒ No
C5.	Since the original approval, have there been any new reports in the literature that would suggest a change in the nature or likelihood of risks or benefits resulting from participation in this study? If yes, please describe:	☐ Yes ☒ No

ATTESTATION (this box *must be checked* for the report to be accepted by the REB)

☒ I agree that the information provided in this report accurately portrays the status of this project and describes to the Research Ethics Board any new developments related to the study since initial approval or the latest report.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Submit this completed form to Research Ethics, Dalhousie University, by email at ethics@dal.ca at least 21 days prior to the expiry date of your current Research Ethics Board approval.
2. Enter subject line: REB# (8-digit number), Last name, Annual (or Final) Report.
3. Student researchers must copy their supervisor(s) in the cc. line of the Annual / Final Report email.

RESPONSE FROM THE REB

Your report will be reviewed and any follow-up inquiries will be directed to you. You must respond to inquiries as part of the continuing review process.

Annual reports will be reviewed and may be approved for up to an additional 12 months; you will receive an annual renewal letter of approval from the Board that will include your new expiry date.

Final reports will be reviewed and acknowledged in writing.

CONTACT RESEARCH ETHICS

- Phone: 902.494.3423
- Email: ethics@dal.ca
- In person: Hicks Academic Administration Building, 6299 South Street, Suite 231
- By mail: PO Box 15000, Halifax, NS B3H 4R2