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## WHO CARES? TOWARD AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF VOLUNTEER WORK\*

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**John Wilson**  
*Duke University*

**Marc Musick**  
*Duke University*

*We construct an integrated theory of formal and informal volunteer work based on the premises that volunteer work is (1) productive work that requires human capital, (2) collective behavior that requires social capital, and (3) ethically guided work that requires cultural capital. Using education, income, and functional health to measure human capital, number of children in the household and informal social interaction to measure social capital, and religiosity to measure cultural capital, we estimate a model in which formal volunteering and informal helping are reciprocally related but connected in different ways to different forms of capital. Using two-wave data from the Americans' Changing Lives panel study, we find that formal volunteering is positively related to human capital, number of children in the household, informal social interaction, and religiosity. Informal helping, such as helping a neighbor, is primarily determined by gender, age, and health. Estimation of reciprocal effects reveals that formal volunteering has a positive effect on helping, but helping does not affect formal volunteering.*

In their “mapping of work’s diverse forms,” Tilly and Tilly (1994) distinguish four regions of work: the world of labor markets, the informal sector, household labor, and volunteer work. They define volunteer work as “unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial, or friendship obligations” (p. 291). Volunteer work, unlike the labor market and the informal sector, is uncommodified; unlike household labor, it is freely undertaken. Thus, volunteering is identified as a type of work—“human effort that adds use value to goods and services” (p. 291). This view is consistent with recent studies of volunteering that broaden the definition of “productive activities” to include labor (much of it

done by women) often dismissed as “unproductive” because it is unpaid (Herzog et al. 1989). It is also consistent with the view that volunteering is simply one of several kinds of productive activity, distinguished in that it has “a market value greater than any remuneration received” (Smith 1981:23). In other words, the map conceptually separates volunteering from altruism. The contribution of altruistic values or motivation to volunteering becomes an empirical question rather than a theoretical assumption.

Thinking about volunteer work as a productive activity steers the investigation toward the “inputs” needed to do it. One of our principal aims in this paper is to identify these resources and show how they are related to volunteering. Our other principal aim is to broaden Tilly and Tilly’s (1994) definition of volunteer work to include the myriad informal ways of “helping out,” such as running errands for an elderly neighbor, that should also be treated as productive activity. This informal volunteer work is done primarily by women, and it receives little recognition. Our analysis includes both formal volunteering and informal helping but does not treat them as if they were the same. To

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achieve some conceptual and theoretical parsimony, we refer to both as “volunteer work,” but we distinguish them by their level of formality.

### A SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY OF VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteers give their time freely for the benefit of others. This brief characterization does not deny that benefits may accrue to the donor; nor does it rule out altruistic motives. However, this definition does not require us to establish a “return” on the gift or a “right” motive. “The essence of volunteerism is *not* altruism, but rather the contribution of services, goods, or money to help accomplish some desired end, without substantial coercion or direct remuneration” (Smith 1981:33).<sup>1</sup>

Our theory of volunteer work is based on several premises.

(1) *Volunteer work is a productive activity.* It is much like any other form of work (paid or unpaid), rather than a simple act of consumption or a leisure time pursuit with purely expressive goals. Many volunteers (e.g., firefighters) eventually become paid employees (Pearce 1993:35). A market exists for volunteer labor, much like the market for paid labor. As in any labor market, admission to and performance in this market is conditional on “qualifications.”

(2) *To a varying degree, volunteer work involves collective action.* This is less true of the informal volunteering we refer to as “helping,” and this difference plays an important part in our analysis. However, much formal volunteer work is undertaken on behalf of a collective good, such as clearing litter from public spaces, where the benefits are not confined to those who actually pay. The pursuit of collective goods poses free-rider problems.

Studies of collective action demonstrate that social networks are essential for overcoming free-rider problems (Marwell and

Oliver 1993:102). This is also true of many instances of volunteering. How long will you pick up litter in your neighborhood if you do not see anyone else doing it and your solitary effort has little impact? How much longer would you do this if the clean-up campaign were an adjunct to an organization to which you belonged or was part of a fund-raising effort by the school which your child attends? Clearly, your decision to volunteer is affected as much by what other people are thinking and doing as by what you are thinking and doing.

Social networks, or social ties generally, are resources for collective action (McAdam 1989; Oberschall 1993). These resources are a form of “social capital.” While human capital is lodged in individuals, social capital comes from the relations among individuals (Coleman 1988:S98). Social ties, including friendship networks and organizational memberships, supply information, foster trust, make contacts, provide support, set guidelines, and create obligations. They make volunteer work more likely by fostering norms of generalized reciprocity, encouraging people to trust each other, and amplifying reputations (Putnam 1995:67). They go a long way toward eliminating the free-rider problem.

(3) *The volunteer-recipient relationship is an ethical one.* It is “ultimately mobilized and regulated by moral incentives” (Scher Vish 1995:5). When asked why they volunteer, people often speak in terms of ethics: “I feel it is important to help others”; “I feel compassion toward people in need”; “I can do something for a cause that is important to me” (Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1992:243). Of course, such statements may simply be the “vocabulary of motives” people use to account for behavior inspired by ulterior purposes, such as advancing their careers (Smith 1981:25). Nevertheless, volunteer work means that people *give* their time to others. We have no right to dismiss as rationalizations of material interests people’s statements of commitment to ideals of justice, fairness, caring and social responsibility (Wuthnow 1991). Most social exchanges are guided by value imperatives that provide motives for behavior other than naked greed (Parsons 1951:37; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1323).

<sup>1</sup> We deal here only with nonspontaneous and repeated volunteer activities. We do not attempt to describe or explain spontaneous helping behavior, such as stopping to give assistance to an automobile accident victim. These forms of altruism probably have different antecedents.

Rather than invoking ethical values to account for behavior on an ad hoc basis (i.e., people volunteer because they think volunteering is a good thing), we conceptualize values as usable resources, or capital. "The term 'capital' as part of a concept implies a resource or factor input that facilitates production, but is not consumed or otherwise used up in production" (Coleman 1994:175). At the individual level, capital refers to work-relevant skills and material resources (e.g., tools, transportation, credit) that individuals bring to jobs. At the relational level, capital is any aspect of social organization that constitutes a productive resource. At the cultural level, capital consists of attitudes, knowledge, and preferences (that may be embodied in objects and practices) to which the word "taste" is often applied.

It is not self-evident that culture is capital. Cultural capital, unlike economic capital, is not recognized as having been produced or accumulated, but is treated as natural, as when we attribute taste and refinement to "breeding."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, culture is indeed acquired, sometimes unwittingly. Like any other form of capital, it can be "invested" to yield "social profits" in the form of symbolic goods, such as titles, honors, and club memberships. These "social profits," in turn, yield social esteem, which is denied to those who lack cultural capital.

Bourdieu's (1986) writings, which have influenced many sociologists' thinking about cultural capital, have dealt almost exclusively with the *aesthetic* component of culture (i.e., learned competencies, such as the appreciation of good wine). This view over-emphasizes the cognitive and neglects the moral component of culture—"moral references such as honest, truthful, fair, good,

peaceful, and responsible are altogether absent from Bourdieu's semeiotic analysis" (Lamont 1992:185). "Taste" should refer not only to musical selection, but also to ideas of fair treatment and responsible conduct.

Cultural capital makes it easier to acquire and consume symbolic goods. Symbolic goods are not themselves values but they express values. The possession of symbolic goods enables people to "act out" their values, to demonstrate their "good taste." While we recognize volunteering as a form of work, we also recognize it as a form of consumption. This is not a contradiction. Volunteer work involves both the production of a good or service and the consumption of a symbolic good. Thus, tutoring in a literacy program has both real and symbolic value—the student learns to read and the tutor "acts out" her identity as a caring and compassionate person (Wuthnow 1991:89). It is leisure as work; it is work as leisure. It expresses simultaneously the value of useful leisure and meaningful work.

Before we can conceptualize volunteer work as a symbolic good, we must expand the definition of cultural capital to incorporate the moral component in culture, thus connecting the idea of cultural *capital* with more conventional ways of thinking about culture as *rules* (Peterson 1979:160). If appreciating fine wine is considered a mark of elite status, why isn't being a good citizen also evidence of elite status (Lamont and Lareau 1988:158)? Doesn't charitable work demonstrate one's "taste" for volunteering (Verba, Scholzman, and Brody 1995:353)? Might not volunteer work be regarded as honorable work, bestowing status, in the same way that being a member of the "right" club confers prestige (Daniels 1988:19)? Thus, robber barons legitimate their fortunes by giving them away. Today, elected officials preach the message that volunteer work is a patriotic duty, reminding Americans of the distinction of being a caring people (Beebe, Snyder, and Mortimer 1994)—and most Americans are highly receptive to the message. Three out of four believe "helping people in need" is "essential" or "very important" to them (Wuthnow 1991:10). Volunteer work is "a way of dramatizing that one is a good and decent person" (Wuthnow 1994:241). This culture of benevolence is an

<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu (1986) developed the idea of cultural capital to help account for the educational and occupational advantages the upper classes enjoyed over the lower classes, which could not be explained entirely in terms of intelligence or genetic endowments. Equally important were manners, dress, speech, and aesthetic discrimination. Bourdieu expanded this idea to embrace a wide range of consumption activities, from eating to sports, and showed that different social classes have different culture preferences, some preferences considered much more desirable than others.

important resource upon which to draw for volunteer work. Referring to this resource as “capital” seems entirely appropriate.

Bourdieu (1986:243) sees cultural capital as institutionalized “in the form of educational qualifications,” but this is a narrow measure of cultural capital. We need to measure how the culture of benevolence is learned. How do people decide who deserves help, who should provide it, and how it should be provided? As Daniels (1988:3–27) shows, knowledge about and a taste for “social housekeeping” are acquired in various ways—from parents, spouses, and secondary associations. This “volunteer calling” is absorbed as part of class and gender identities.

One way of judging people’s exposure to the culture of benevolence is to ask them how much value they attach to charitable work. In the data set we use, respondents were asked how much they think living the good life demands helping others. Although we use this item, we are aware that this question has a positive response bias problem. We therefore turn to a less direct but more institutionalized source of the culture of benevolence. We know that, historically, churches have promoted the culture of benevolence (Wuthnow 1990:3). We also know that religious reasons frequently are given for undertaking volunteer work (Wuthnow 1991:51). This suggests that the culture of benevolence is institutionalized in churches (more so than in workplaces or schools). If this is true, religious practice should increase the likelihood of volunteering (Hodgkinson 1995:31). We therefore treat religiosity as one indicator of the cultural capital necessary for volunteering.<sup>3</sup>

(4) *Our final premise is that different types of volunteer work are related to each other.* One purpose of our research is to discover what that relationship is. Wuthnow (1991:201) argues that formal volunteering, being more institutionalized, absorbs compassion and limits people’s other contacts with the needy. This suggests a negative relation be-

tween formal and informal volunteer work—the more one volunteers, the less one helps informally. On the other hand, some sociologists (Gallagher 1994) suggest that certain people have a general disposition to do good—hours devoted to formal volunteering are positively related to hours devoted to informal helping. If this is true, formal and informal volunteering should be positively related.

## MODELING VOLUNTEER WORK

It is well documented that volunteers tend to occupy “dominant statuses” in society (Smith 1994:247). We introduce few new variables to the study of volunteer work. Our goals are to clarify how these variables arrange themselves with respect to the dependent variable and how the types of volunteer work are connected to each other. We now describe a model for the estimation of formal volunteering; we then indicate how well this model is expected to fit the data on informal, helping behavior.

### *Exogenous Factors*

We treat *age*, *gender*, and *race* as exogenous factors not subject to change as a result of changes in the other variables in the model. We consider the possibility that there are unmediated, direct effects of age, gender, and race on volunteer work, but we believe these factors are important chiefly because they make a difference to other intervening factors in the model (i.e., their effect is indirect).<sup>4</sup>

Women consistently rate themselves (and are rated by others) as more empathic and altruistic than men (Greeno and Maccoby 1993:195). Culture allocates to women the role of maintaining the “public household” (Daniels 1988). Some studies show that women are more likely than men to have vol-

<sup>3</sup> Our tripartite division of capital into human, social, and cultural capital parallels that made by Verba et al. (1995:16), who ask why some people do not participate in local politics. They give three answers: (1) They lack the human resources, (2) they are isolated from networks of recruitment, or (3) they refuse to because they have no “taste” for that kind of work.

<sup>4</sup> The same assumption is generally made in studies of participation in the conventional labor force. Gender and race are important: “However, these individual differences are generally presumed to be specious, not indicators of innate differences in human capital. That is, it is assumed that economic success does not vary ‘naturally’ with them but is socially produced” (Shanahan and Tuma 1994:747).

unteered in the past year (Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1992:59). Others report that men are more likely than women to volunteer (Hayghe 1991). A third group of studies concludes that the gender effect is spurious because it disappears when controls for socioeconomic status are imposed (Herzog et al. 1989:S135; Smith 1994:248; Sundeen 1988; 1990). Gallagher (1994:573) found that men belong to more voluntary organizations but that they devote no more time to volunteering than do women. We estimate direct and indirect effects of gender and expect to find that women volunteer at higher rates than men once controls are imposed.

Carson (1989) documents a "long prestigious tradition of philanthropic activity that has existed in the black community" (p. 96). Recent ethnographic research reveals a pattern of reciprocity and mutual aid within the Black community that arises as a necessary adjustment to economic hardship (Stack 1974). However, empirical evidence on the impact of minority group status on formal volunteer work yields mixed results. Neither Carson (1989) nor Latting (1990:122) find race differences in volunteerism once socioeconomic status is controlled. Gallagher (1994) finds that Blacks "spend less time helping primary kin and volunteering, but slightly more time helping friends than do whites" (p. 573). Smith (1994:249) concludes that, once other variables are controlled, Blacks have slightly higher voluntary participation rates than do Whites (see also Auslander and Litwin 1988; for social participation more generally, see Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Palisi and Korn 1989; Williams and Ortega 1986). We test for the direct and indirect effects of race but do not expect to find direct effects.

Age is relevant for the study of volunteer work for several reasons. Age may be a measure of (volunteer) work experience. Some people make a career out of volunteering—"older volunteers are volunteers who have aged" (Gallagher 1994:569). A positive effect of age could also reflect life-cycle effects. For example, single and childless people have lower volunteer rates (Hayghe 1991). Other considerations suggest a curvilinear effect of age. Advancing years could lower volunteer activity if age is measuring a cohort effect (e.g., years of schooling) or if

it is measuring the effect of declining functional health. In our multivariate analyses, we test for both linear and curvilinear effects of age on rates of volunteering.

### *Human Capital*

One set of endogenous factors we consider describes "human capital." Human capital is a shorthand term for those resources attached to individuals that make productive activities possible. Variations in human capital are routinely used to explain individual differences in labor force participation, productivity, and rewards. Thus, the "rate of return" on education in the labor market can be precisely calculated (Coleman 1994:175). These factors should help explain volunteer work: Human capital qualifies a person for volunteer work and makes that person more attractive to agencies seeking volunteer labor.

Sociologists have not identified a finite set of individual resources called "human capital." What counts as capital depends on what is being produced. In studies of regular employment, education is frequently identified as capital because it is required for the successful performance of many jobs. Volunteer work should be similarly affected. *Education* is capital to the extent that volunteering provides "the opportunity to exercise and/or practice knowledge and skills that otherwise could not be used" (Clary and Snyder 1991:126). The positive impact of education on voluntary participation has been confirmed in many previous studies (Smith 1994:248).

*Income* is another possible measure of human capital. Income is often treated as an outcome variable (i.e., an effect of capital) in studies of conventional work. Furthermore, income does not fit the criterion of capital as being "not consumed or otherwise used up in production" (Coleman 1994:175). Nevertheless, we treat income as an indicator of human capital because, in association with education, it indicates "dominant status" (Smith 1994:247), which "qualifies" the individual for volunteer work. Wealthy individuals ( $\geq$  \$75,000) are three times more likely to be asked to volunteer than are poor individuals ( $<$  \$10,000) (Hodgkinson 1995: 44). Income also measures a person's stake in community stability (Sundeen 1988:548).

We use a measure of family income rather than the respondent's personal income to assess the impact of earnings on volunteer work because we believe family income is a better indicator of social status. This is a different way of thinking about the impact of earnings on volunteer work than is customary among economists, who assume that people with higher earnings will volunteer less because their opportunity costs are higher (Iannaccone 1990; Steinberg 1990; Weisbrod 1988:134). Contrary to these expectations, sociologists have consistently found a positive relation between income and volunteering (Clary and Snyder 1991:128; Hayghe 1991:20; Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1992:59; Pearce 1993:65; Smith 1994:248). (In our final analytical model, we combine education and income into a single measure of socioeconomic status because the two variables are highly correlated.)

Our third measure of human capital is *health status*. In the context of social exchange, good health is a resource; bad health is a constraint (Hogan, Eggebeen, and Clogg 1993:1450). The ability to do volunteer work, or to assist those in need of help, depends on one's physical capabilities. Our health variable is a construct that combines measures of chronic illness and functional impairment. While education and income are seen as indicators of socioeconomic status, functional health is conceptualized as a form of human capital that depends on socioeconomic status. In other words, health is an individual attribute or resource that can affect volunteering, yet it is the result of, rather than part of, other forms of human capital. In our analyses, socioeconomic status is measured at time 1 of a two-wave panel study, while health is measured at time 2, three years later and at the same time as formal volunteering and informal helping.

### **Social Capital**

People vary in how many social connections they have, what kind of social connections they have, and whether or not those social connections are organized. Social connections provide the resources—information, pooled labor, trust—that make volunteering more likely (Smith 1994:253). These re-

sources are social in that they are “embedded” in personal networks. They become visible only when an individual's relationships are examined (Lin 1995).

We have two indicators of social capital—*informal social interaction* and *number of children in the household*. People who report frequent conversations and meetings with friends and acquaintances are more likely to volunteer than people who rarely get out or who have few friends. McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic (1992) refer to this as the “contact frequency” (p. 158) hypothesis. Our second indicator of social capital is less direct. We assume that respondents who are parents of children still living in the household will have more social contacts and higher rates of social interaction than childless people because their children draw them into community activities. It is well established that the presence of children in a household increases volunteerism (Smith 1994:250).<sup>5</sup>

### **Cultural Capital**

One question in our data set directly measures *how much the respondent values helping others*. We also use *religiosity* as an indicator of cultural capital. Our theory predicts that religiosity prepares people for participation in volunteer work. Studies of religion and volunteering find marked differences between religious and nonreligious respondents (Wilson and Janoski 1995). However, neither differences in intensity of beliefs nor theological differences have been found to determine how much volunteer work is done (Cnaan, Kasternakis, and Wineberg 1993).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> These are imperfect measures of social capital. Informal social interaction measures only the *frequency* with which respondents contact others. It says nothing about the *range* of social positions occupied by these others, nothing about whether or not these others know each other, and nothing about whether these others are currently volunteering.

<sup>6</sup> In our data set, conservative Protestants, Mormons, and “others” report above average rates of volunteering, while Jews score below the mean. Only the differences between conservative Protestants and other religious groups are statistically significant. Most volunteer work done by conservative Protestants is for church-related groups.

Religious behavior seems to be a better predictor. We therefore model the effect of frequency of religious prayer (a private form of religious practice) and frequency of church attendance (a public practice). We treat prayer and church attendance, which are highly correlated ( $r = .45$ ), as part of a religiosity latent construct.

Our causal model treats socioeconomic status as causally prior to social capital and cultural capital. Previous research has indicated that more highly educated people have higher rates of informal social interaction than do less educated people (Curtis and Jackson 1977:173). We also know, however, that more highly educated people have fewer children than do less well-educated people. Because more children means greater access to social capital, and because more social capital means more volunteering, the indirect effect of education is to reduce the likelihood of volunteering. The effect of socioeconomic status on our indicators of cultural capital is less predictable: Higher socioeconomic status is associated with more frequent church attendance (Chalfant, Beckley, and Palmer 1994:350) but less frequent prayer (Stark and Bainbridge 1987:48).

### VOLUNTEERING AND HELPING

Little is known about the relationship between formal and informal types of volunteer work (but see Gallagher 1994). Formal volunteering is typically carried out in the context of organizations; informal volunteering (which in this context means helping friends, neighbors, and kin living outside the household) is more private and is not organized. Do these two types of volunteering have the same determinants? Are they complements or substitutes for each other?

Our major premise is that *obligations have a more powerful influence on informal helping than they do on formal volunteer work*. In formal volunteer work, people give more openly without a specific sense of obligation: "We feel . . . that it is important to help others in general, but we do not feel obligated to give a specific service to a specific individual" (Wuthnow 1991:95). In informal helping, the donor and recipient are likely to already have a relationship that entails obligations (Amato 1990:31). In this situation,

how much help is provided depends more on factors such as ability or opportunity. This explains why the amount of help children give their parents is so heavily influenced by how far apart they live (Spitze and Logan 1992:306). It also explains why patterns of inter-generational help are influenced so much by the needs of the recipient and the resources of the provider (Hogan et al. 1993:1454)

We do not wish to make too much of this distinction between the formal, voluntary nature of volunteering and the informal, more obligatory, nature of helping. Most formal volunteers are persuaded to volunteer by family members, coworkers, or fellow worshippers. Conversely, not all informal helping is motivated by a sense of obligation. Nevertheless, the distinction is real and theoretically important. Formal volunteer work typically contributes to a collective good (e.g., help out at the soup kitchen, clean litter from parks) that makes "society" better, usually through an organization. We expect human capital to be more important for such activities and we expect social capital to play an important role because collective action is required. How much people help informally, on the other hand, depends more on their ability to meet the demand. Parents do not "volunteer" to help their children out with baby-sitting. Based on these arguments, we anticipate several differences in the social foundations of formal and informal volunteer work.

#### *Race*

Whereas Blacks are as likely as Whites to do formal volunteer work, economic exigencies make informal helping more important among Blacks compared to Whites. We expect to find race differences in helping behavior after human capital is controlled because of the "bounded solidarity" of minority groups that inspires them to turn to each other for help rather than enter the market to satisfy their needs (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Stack 1974).

#### *Gender*

We expect to find only minor gender differences in volunteering, but the socialization of women into nurturing roles and the evidence that they perform more caring work than do

men leads us to predict that being female will have a positive effect on helping. Formal volunteering includes such heterogeneous activities that both men and women are equally likely to engage in it. Helping behavior, however, is more strictly gender-defined—it is a woman's job to hold families together (Argyle 1991:212). Gallagher (1994:573) finds that women are more likely to provide help than are men.<sup>7</sup>

### *Age*

As people age, they accumulate obligations, in part because the pattern of familial help is from parents to children throughout the life cycle. Obligations tend to peak in the middle years when both one's children and one's parents are likely to make demands. With increasing age, people are less likely to have elderly relatives to care for. Although Amato (1993:256) and Gallagher (1994:571) find age negatively related to helping, they do not control for health. We expect to find a curvilinear relation between age and helping.

### *Human Capital*

We theorized that various individual attributes function as resources for volunteer work. The more private and informal nature of helping diminishes the importance of socioeconomic status.<sup>8</sup> Functional health will be more strongly related to variations in help-

<sup>7</sup> More generally, “. . . women have been found to play a greater role both in maintaining kin networks and in providing help to those in the networks,” owing to “socialization related differences in nurturance and to differences in time availability” (Spitze and Logan 1992:293). This pattern may reflect women's greater “stake” in the next generation because they are more likely than men to need help from someone other than a spouse in later years. Also, women may have more skills in this less formal area of helping.

<sup>8</sup> Education should have less impact on helping because neither skills nor knowledge gained from schooling are necessarily of benefit. Income also should not be important. We say this despite the powerful argument that low-income families are more likely to exhibit helping behavior than are middle-income families because low-income families must depend on kin and friends for help (e.g., child care) that middle-class families can afford to buy (Soldo and Hill 1993:198).

ing than it is in formal volunteering—people with an obligation will help if they can.

### *Social Capital*

Helping is more private, volunteering more public; helping is more casual, volunteering more organized. We do not expect social capital to have the same impact on helping and formal volunteering. Helping (outside the household) is likely to be diminished by the presence of children in the household because children create more pressing obligations, whereas we expect the presence of children in the household to have a positive effect on formal volunteering. We also expect informal social interaction to have a greater effect on formal volunteering than on helping because such interaction indicates the individual's embeddedness in a network of friends and acquaintances.

### *Cultural Capital*

Abstract values of benevolence do not discriminate between help provided to strangers and help provided to kin and friends, or between organized help and casual help. We assume that people who define the good life as helping others will be more helpful. Given the wording of the question, we expect the relationship with helping will be stronger than the relationship with formal volunteering. We expect to find a difference in the impact of religion on volunteering and helping. Because formal volunteering is more a matter of choice than is helping, we expect religiosity to have a greater impact on volunteering than on helping. Our results should correspond with those of Wuthnow (1994), who finds that church attendance is positively related to volunteering but not to “helping a relative or friend live through a personal crisis” (p. 241).

We assume that volunteering and helping are related. We agree with Smith (1994:255) that participation in one kind of culturally approved activity encourages participation in others. In this case, volunteering and helping should be positively related. Gallagher (1994) finds that “[t]otal hours spent helping friends is a significant predictor of both hours of volunteering overall and hours of charity work, while hours of volunteering is



a significant predictor of hours of help to friends" (p. 575). We model for reciprocal effects and assume they are positive.

Because we specify a causal relation between forms of capital and volunteer work, we are concerned with the time order of behaviors. For instance, we predict that high levels of social capital *lead to* more volunteering. However, such a positive association could also be interpreted as showing that volunteering is a way to make friends and accumulate social capital. To deal with this problem, we use two waves of data. The volunteering and helping measures are taken in the second wave of data collection, whereas all other variables (except health status) are measured in the first wave. Because we include the first wave measures of volunteering and helping in the model, we are conducting conditional change analysis (Finkel 1995).

## DATA AND VARIABLES

The data are taken from a panel survey titled *Americans' Changing Lives*, which used a multistage stratified area probability sample of persons 25 years of age or older who lived in the contiguous United States (House 1995). Blacks and persons over age 60 were sampled at twice the rate of Whites under 60 to facilitate comparisons by age and race. (We used a weight variable to adjust for these oversamples.) A total of 3,617 respondents were interviewed for the first wave in 1986, while 2,867 respondents were available in the second wave during 1989. Of the 750 individuals who were not surveyed during the second wave, 584 were living but did not respond and 166 had died. Respondents were surveyed in their homes by interviewers of the Survey Research Center. The first wave had a response rate of 67 percent. Non-respondents did not differ from respondents by age, race, or other known characteristics. Missing values on the dependent variables reduce the number of cases used to 2,854.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Our data were made available by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The data for *Americans' Changing Lives* were originally collected by James S. House. Neither the collector of the original data nor the consortium bears any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

## Variables

**Volunteer index.** Respondents were asked whether they did volunteer work at any time during the last 12 months. They were prompted with the following options: (1) church, synagogue, or other religious organization; (2) school or educational organization; (3) political group or labor union; (4) senior citizen group; and (5) other national or local organization. The index was constructed by summing the types of volunteer work the respondent reported.

**Informal helping index.** This index was constructed by summing the types of help given in the last 12 months by the respondents to friends, neighbors, or relatives who did not live with them, in the following areas: (1) Provide transportation, shop, or run errands; (2) help with housework or with the upkeep of their house, car, or other things; (3) do child care without pay; and (4) do any other things.

**Volunteer hours.** This variable measures the number of hours spent doing formal volunteer work during the past year. Midpoints were assigned to category choices (less than 20 hours, 20–39 hours, 40–79 hours, 80–159 hours, 160 hours or more), with 0 hours to those who did not participate and 200 hours to those in the top category.

**Informal helping hours.** This variable measures the number of hours the respondent spent helping others during the past year. Midpoints were assigned to category choices (less than 20 hours, 20–39 hours, 40–79 hours, 80–159 hours, 160 hours or more), with 0 hours to those who did not participate and 200 hours to those in the top category.

**Human capital.** *Education*, defined as years of schooling completed, ranged from 0 to 17 years. *Family income* was defined in 10 intervals and ranged from \$5,000 to over \$80,000. *Functional health* is an index using six items indicating various types of functional impairments. Index values ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates the most severe functional impairment and 4 indicates no functional impairment. *Chronic illness* measures the number of chronic conditions (0 to 10) the respondent experienced during the previous year. Possible conditions included: arthritis or rheumatism, lung disease, hypertension, heart trouble, diabetes, cancer,

foot problems, stroke, broken bones, and incontinence.

**Social capital.** *Informal social interaction* is measured by an index based on two items: (1) how often during the typical week the respondent talks on the telephone with friends, neighbors, or relatives; and (2) how often the respondent gets together with friends, relatives, or neighbors. A standardized scale was constructed by taking the arithmetic means of the two items. The index ranged from  $-3.074$  to  $1.35$  (mean =  $-.007$ ). High scores indicate high social interaction. *Number of children in household* ranged from 0 to 7.

**Cultural capital.** *Values helping* is based on an item asking respondents to agree or disagree with the statement "Life is not worth living if one cannot contribute to the well-being of other people." This item ranged from 1 to 4. High scores indicate respondents agree with the statement, low scores mean disagreement. *Church Attendance* is based on responses to the question "How often do you usually attend religious services? Would you say more than once a week, once a week, 2 or 3 times a month, about once a month, less than once a month, or never?" Responses ranged from 1 to 6. High scores indicate more frequent attendance. *Prayer* is based on responses to the question "When you have problems or difficulties in your work, family or personal life, how often do you seek spiritual comfort and support—almost always, often, sometimes, rarely or never?" This variable ranges from 1 to 5. High values indicate more prayer.

**Background variables.** These include *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female); *age* (measured in years); *race* (0 = White, 1 = Black)

## RESULTS

Table 1 reports the percentage distributions for volunteering and helping activities and hours devoted to volunteering and helping in the past year.

The percentage of respondents mentioning at least one formal volunteer activity is 48 percent, close to that reported in a Gallup poll conducted in 1988 (Wuthnow 1991:6). Informal helping behaviors are more common than formal volunteering—only 16.1 percent report no helping behavior.

**Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Two Characteristics of Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping: Americans' Changing Lives Survey, Second Wave, 1989**

Characteristic	Formal Volunteering	Informal Helping
<i>Total Hours Spent Last Year</i>		
0	52.0	16.1
10	16.1	18.7
30	10.1	22.1
60	7.7	19.6
120	6.4	12.2
200+	7.7	11.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Mean	32.3	57.4
<i>Number of Groups/Helping Activities Last Year</i>		
0	52.0	16.8
1	26.1	20.6
2	13.4	34.7
3	5.5	27.2
4	2.5	.7
5	.5	—
Total	100.0	100.0
Mean	.8	1.7

The first step in our analysis is to estimate the effects of the independent variables on volunteering and helping, using OLS regression. Table 2 reports the zero-order correlations and the regression coefficients from the regression of formal volunteering and informal helping on the independent variables. The volunteer index and the informal help index at time 1 are entered as controls in the regression models.

Table 2 indicates considerable stability in volunteering and helping across the two waves. If a person volunteered or helped in the first wave in 1986, the chances are good that that person volunteered or helped in the second wave in 1989. This relation provides a baseline for the analysis that follows.

Education, number of children in the household, informal social interaction, valuing help, and church attendance all have positive effects on formal volunteering. For informal helping, the variables showing significant positive effects are being female, education, functional health, informal social

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients and OLS Coefficients from the Regression of Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping on Selected Independent Variables: Americans' Changing Lives Survey, 1986 and 1989**

Independent Variable	Volunteer Index ( $t_2$ )		Helping Index ( $t_2$ )	
	Correlation Coefficient	Regression Coefficients <sup>a</sup>	Correlation Coefficient	Regression Coefficients <sup>a</sup>
Volunteer index ( $t_1$ )	.63***	.547 [.54]***	.23***	—
Helping index ( $t_1$ )	.24***	—	.47***	.289 [.36]***
<i>Background Variables</i>				
Gender	.03	-.014 [-.01]	.04*	.144 [.07]***
Race	-.03	-.048 [-.01]	-.06***	-.065 [-.02]
Age	-.09***	-.001 [-.01]	-.33***	-.013 [-.20]***
Age <sup>2</sup>	-.06**	-.000 [-.03]	-.03	-.000 [-.09]***
<i>Human Capital</i>				
Education ( $t_1$ )	.27***	.038 [.11]***	.25***	.023 [.07]***
Family income ( $t_1$ )	.20***	-.001 [-.00]	.20***	.004 [.01]
Functional health ( $t_2$ )	.13***	.042 [.03]	.22***	.062 [.04]*
Chronic illness ( $t_2$ )	-.05**	.024 [.03]	-.18***	.001 [.00]
<i>Social Capital</i>				
Number of children in household ( $t_1$ )	.14***	.062 [.07]***	.14***	.002 [.00]
Informal social interaction ( $t_1$ )	.18***	.048 [.05]**	.19***	.071 [.07]***
<i>Cultural Capital</i>				
Values helping ( $t_1$ )	.10***	.046 [.03]*	.06***	.076 [.06]***
Prayer ( $t_1$ )	.17***	.015 [.02]	.01	-.028 [-.04]*
Church attendance ( $t_1$ )	.28***	.059 [.10]***	.05*	.036 [.06]**
Intercept		-.705		.257
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.426		.285
Number of cases		2,846		2,846

<sup>a</sup> Parameter estimates are followed by standardized coefficients (in brackets).

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed tests)

interaction, valuing help, and church attendance; prayer is negatively related. The negative coefficients for the age variables indicate that informal helping declines with age, and the rate of decline increases as people get older.

Figure 1 depicts our structural equation model. Age, gender and race are treated as exogenous variables, socioeconomic status is allowed to determine health and the social and cultural capital variables, and formal volunteering and informal helping are measured at time 2. The coefficients shown are the maximum-likelihood estimates of the

model based on matrices provided by PRELIS. We used PRELIS to generate a matrix of polychoric correlations and an accompanying matrix of asymptotic variances and covariances. With these matrices as input, we then estimated the models using the weighted least-squares fitting function in LISREL VIII, which is asymptotically distribution-free (Joreskog and Sorbom 1988).

We first constructed measures of volunteering and helping by combining the volunteer index with the volunteer hours measure and combining the helping index with the helping hours measure. We created these

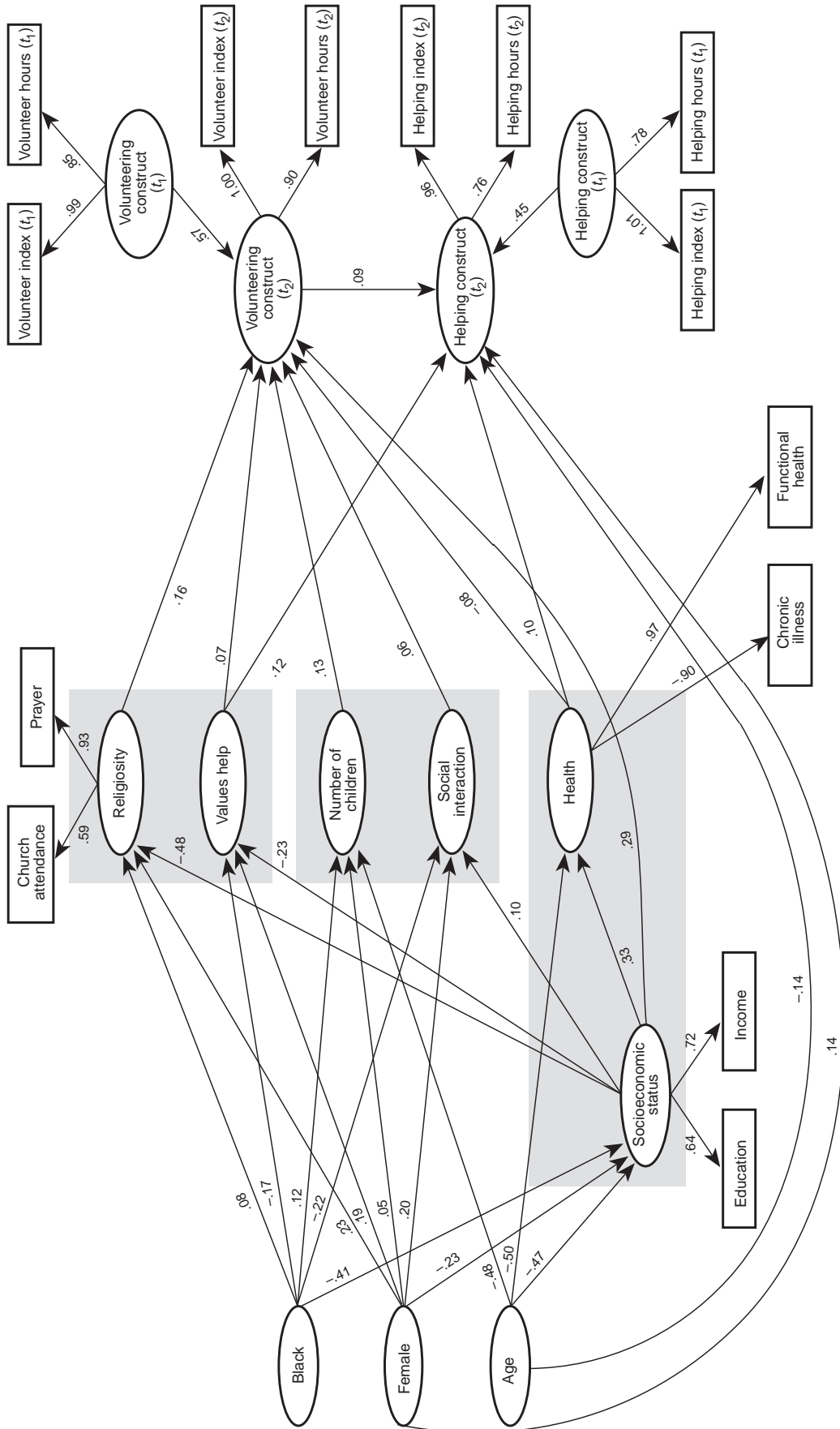


Figure 1. LISREL Model of Instrumental Variables Related to Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping (Standardized Coefficients)

Note: All paths shown are significant at  $p < .05$  or better.

constructs for both wave 1 and wave 2. We also used the high correlation between income and education to create a latent construct for *socioeconomic status*. We used the high correlation between prayer and church attendance to create a latent construct for *religiosity* and we used the negative correlation between functional health and chronic illness to create a *functional health* construct. Lambda coefficients for these constructs are shown in Figure 1.<sup>10</sup>

We next fit structural equation models to the data using our theory and the preliminary results reported in Table 2 as guides. Figure 1 reports all the paths estimated that were significant at .05 or less using a two-tailed test. The final model represents a modification of our original design in the following respects. Although previous research on race and formal volunteering had produced mixed results, our zero-order correlations suggested a negative impact of being Black on volunteering. We therefore tried estimating a model in which a direct path from race to volunteering was included. The model would not converge and therefore we fixed this path at 0. As there was no zero-order correlation between gender and formal volunteering, we also fixed this path at 0. However, it was possible to fit a model that included direct effects of race and gender on informal helping (see Table 3). We also tried fitting a model with both linear and squared versions of the age variable. However, the model would converge only when the squared term was excluded.

Overall, the final model fits the data very well (adjusted goodness-of-fit index [AGFI] = .96). An examination of specific

paths helps us understand better the causal structure that underlies volunteer work.

### *Exogenous Factors*

Both volunteering and helping are to some degree structurally determined (i.e., they are influenced by statuses that are difficult to alter). Older people are less likely to engage in either formal or informal volunteer work. The age effect on formal volunteering is entirely indirect (Table 3), probably because of cohort and life-cycle effects. Older people reported less education and were less likely to have young children in the household at the time of the survey. The negative effect of age on helping, on the other hand, signals either an impaired ability to perform obligations or a decline in those obligations. Older people are less likely to help because they are more likely to experience health problems. Even net of poor health, however, older people are less likely to report helping behavior (Table 3). Because this cannot be attributed to a lack of social contacts (informal social interaction is unrelated to age), we could attribute this result to a decline in social obligations. For example, older people may baby-sit less as their grandchildren reach adolescence; also they may no longer have parents alive who need looking after.

Women are more likely than men to engage in volunteer work, especially informal helping. Table 3 shows no direct effect of gender on formal volunteering. Although women reported slightly less education than men and lived in households with less income (and for these reasons would be less likely to volunteer) they were more likely to have children living with them, visit and talk with friends, attend church and pray, and believe the good life demands assisting others—all factors conducive to volunteering. Women take different paths to helping and volunteering. Not only is there a direct effect of gender on informal helping, but women are more likely to attach value to helping others, which encourages helping behavior. On the other hand, because women have low socioeconomic status, their health is worse, and this makes it more difficult for them to help.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> We also tried to estimate models using number of children and informal social interaction as indicators of a latent construct for social capital, but the indicator variables are weakly related and the construct would not cohere. We also estimated a model in which the “value helping” item was included in a three-item religiosity construct with church attendance and prayer. While the three item construct held together well, the structural equation model using it yielded a chi-square of 2,609.13 (d.f. = 140). We then estimated a model separating the “value helping” measure from the religious behaviors. The second model loses 4 degrees of freedom, but it is a significantly better fit (difference in chi-squares = 771.61).

<sup>11</sup> Our analyses suggest women are inhibited from volunteering because they are more likely

**Table 3. Standardized Weighted Least-Square Coefficients for the Structural Equation Model of Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping and Selected Independent Variables: Americans' Changing Lives Survey, 1986 and 1989**

Independent Variable	Volunteer Construct ( $t_2$ )			Help Construct ( $t_2$ )		
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total
Volunteer construct ( $t_1$ )	.57***	—	.57***	—	.05***	.05***
Help construct ( $t_1$ )	—	—	—	.45***	—	.45***
Volunteer construct ( $t_2$ )	—	—	—	.09***	—	.09***
<i>Background Variables</i>						
Gender	—	.03***	.03***	.14***	.01	.15***
Race	—	-.07***	-.07***	.00	-.06***	-.05***
Age	—	-.11***	-.11***	-.14***	-.10***	-.23***
<i>Human Capital</i>						
Socioeconomic status ( $t_1$ )	.29***	-.12***	.17***	.08	.01	.09*
Health ( $t_2$ )	-.08**	—	-.08***	.10**	-.01**	.09**
<i>Social Capital</i>						
Number of children in household ( $t_1$ )	.13***	—	.13***	.01	.01***	.02
Informal social interaction ( $t_1$ )	.06***	—	.06***	.01	.01***	.01
<i>Cultural Capital</i>						
Values helping ( $t_1$ )	.07***	—	.07***	.12***	.01***	.12***
Religiosity ( $t_1$ )	.16***	—	.16***	.02	.01***	.04

Note: Number of cases = 2,854; chi-square = 1,837.52 (d.f. = 136); goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .97; and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = .95.

\* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$       \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed tests)

Blacks are less likely to volunteer than are Whites, but the effect is entirely indirect (Table 3) because they have less human capital and lower rates of informal social interaction than do Whites. These factors offset the positive effects of religiosity and the greater likelihood that they have children living in the household. There is no direct ef-

fect of race on helping behavior. Blacks attach less value to helping, but this is net of religiosity. The model suggests that Blacks' lower rate of helping is not a result of their lower economic status and being forced to look out for themselves. It may reflect, instead, cynicism about norms of reciprocity articulated at this level of generality. In other words, outside of the religious context,

than men to be in families with low incomes. Our measure is family income, not respondent income. Women in one-adult households earn less than men in one-adult households; husband-wife households, by definition, produce an equal average income for men and women. When these family types are pooled, the one-adult families produce the sex difference in family income. Does the relationship between income and volunteering hold when respondent's income is the measure? Based on the models in Table 2, we ran regressions using respondent's income. The metric is the same as family income; most respondents not in

the labor force are coded in the data set as having no personal income. Results show that respondent's income is not related to formal volunteering ( $b = -.013, p = .136$ ) or helping ( $b = -.000, p = .969$ ). These results seem to rule out the idea that volunteer work is determined by opportunity costs. However, the fact that men and women contribute differently to family income raises the possibility that the impact of joint income may vary by gender. In a second set of models, we included a cross-product interaction term between gender and family income to test for this possibility.

norms of reciprocity need to be specified (i.e., who is going to benefit) before minority groups will support them.

### *Human Capital*

Socioeconomic status has a strong positive direct effect on formal volunteering ( $b = .29$ ) but no direct effect on helping ( $b = .08$ ). We anticipated that socioeconomic status would also have an impact on other resources needed for volunteer work. High-status people report higher rates of informal social interaction and thus greater access to social capital than do low-status people. However, they are no more likely to have children living in the household. They enjoy better health, but health status turns out to be negatively related to volunteering. The negative relation between socioeconomic status and religiosity indicates that education and income have a secularizing effect that limits access to this form of cultural capital.

The effect of socioeconomic status on informal helping is negligible. Not directly related to helping, socioeconomic status is positively related to health, which is positively related to helping. However, high-status people are less likely to value helping, a reminder that a culture of benevolence and high social status do not necessarily go hand in hand. High-status people may more subscribe to values of self-help or they may emphasize government solutions to problems over solutions that rely on private, voluntary efforts. The overall effect of these cross-cutting relationships is a total effect of socioeconomic status that is positive but weak (Table 3).

Health status has a weak, negative effect on formal volunteering that is difficult to in-

terpret. At the zero-order level, chronic illness is negatively related to volunteering and positively related to functional health. But neither health measure is significantly related to volunteering once controls are imposed (Table 2). The negative sign for the latent construct in the LISREL model (Table 3) could be a result of our estimating the effect of health on volunteering and helping (themselves related) simultaneously. The impact of health status on helping is positive, which makes more sense in light of our theory. Helping and volunteering are “sharing” the health resource between them. It may be that healthier people volunteer less because they help more.

### *Social Capital*

Number of children and informal social interaction are positively related to formal volunteering but not to informal helping. This finding is surprising. We were concerned that informal helping involves frequent contact with friends, neighbors, and relatives, thus causing endogeneity problems in the analysis. Because informal social interaction at time 1 and helping at time 1 are positively correlated, we expected they would be correlated across waves, even with controls imposed. But this is not the case. Perhaps social interaction boosts helping only when they occur simultaneously. This is suggested by the fact that the zero-order correlation between informal social interaction at time 1 and helping three years later is .16 compared to .23 when these behaviors are measured simultaneously. Note that the model is estimating the effect of informal social interaction at time 1 on any change in helping between time 1 and time 2 (because we control for helping at time 1). It is not that informal social interaction is unrelated to helping because it is at time 1. How much people interact at time 1 does little to alter the amount of help they give at time 2 over what they were giving, as a result of their informal social interaction three years before.

### *Cultural Capital*

We predicted that cultural capital would increase the likelihood of doing volunteer work. However, we were more confident of

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Based on the assumption that women earn less than men, we expected that the effects of family income would be greater for women since they receive the benefits from higher family income but are less likely to suffer the higher opportunity costs of large personal incomes. The parameter estimates for the interaction terms (volunteering [ $b = .035, p = .006$ ] and helping [ $b = .031, p = .029$ ]) confirm that for women, volunteer work is indeed more affected by family income than it is for men. This suggests that the opportunity costs and status effects of income offset each other for men, but not for women.

the effect of religiosity on volunteering than on helping, based on the contingent nature of volunteer work and previous research suggesting that variations in helping were not related to variations in religiosity. Results confirm our expectations: Religiosity is related to formal volunteering but not to helping. Just as striking, the behavioral measures of religiosity are more strongly related to formal volunteering than is a value-commitment to volunteering. Value commitment to helping is more strongly related to helping behaviors than it is to formal volunteering, although both connections are weak.

### *Formal and Informal Volunteer Work*

In testing for reciprocal effects between volunteering and helping, we found that the path from helping to volunteering was not significant and that the fit of the model improved greatly if we fixed this path at 0. The relation between these two activities is not mutually beneficial—an increase in volunteering increases helping, regardless of any effect helping has on volunteering. The reverse is not true—helping has no impact on formal volunteering once the influence of formal volunteering on helping is taken into account. The indirect effects of the capital indicators on helping shown in Table 3 indicate that they influence helping through their impact on formal volunteering.

## DISCUSSION

The theory guiding our analysis is that entry into the volunteer labor force requires three different kinds of capital—human, social, and cultural—and that different forms of volunteer work draw on different kinds of capital. Although the role of many of these factors in encouraging “voluntary participation” is well known (Smith 1994), ours is among the first studies to attempt to assess their separate impacts on formal and informal volunteer work simultaneously and to estimate the reciprocal effects of different kinds of volunteer work.

In conceptualizing the determinants of volunteer work, we adopted the perspective that, like other forms of work, volunteering demands resources. We suggested a tripartite conceptualization of these resources,

building on research into more conventional labor force participation and research into the determinants of collective action, such as social integration and “mobilizing beliefs” (Schervish 1995:12). Our theory is a “supply-side” equivalent of theories that describe the incentives that organizations offer to attract members (Clark and Wilson 1961). Just as people bring human capital to the marketplace for volunteer labor, recruiting organizations offer material incentives—tangible rewards to individuals in return for their contributions. Thus, people who bring job skills (e.g., nursing) can be rewarded with assignments drawing on those skills. Just as people use social capital to find volunteer work, organizations offer solidary incentives—interpersonal rewards of various kinds—to obtain commitment. Because most volunteers are recruited by friends, relatives, and associates, an organization can offer more opportunities for social interaction and community in return for unpaid labor. Just as people exploit their cultural capital to obtain volunteer opportunities, so organizations offer purposive incentives in the form of symbolic and expressive “goods” that articulate the organization’s values.

The test of our theory concerning the resources required for volunteer work enables us to draw a number of conclusions:

First, although the origins of volunteer work run deep in core social statuses like age, race, and gender, the effects of these statuses on volunteer work are largely indirect. Rather, they determine how much of the capital important to volunteer work people can accumulate. Although formal volunteer work does not appear to be strongly gendered, the fact that women report helping others at a higher rate than do men (net of the other factors in the model) provides strong support that nurturance and care for others is deeply embedded in sex-role definitions.

With respect to race, lower volunteer rates for Blacks compared to Whites are largely accounted for by Blacks’s lower rate of social interaction, which offsets the positive effect of religiosity. Blacks also may volunteer at lower rates than Whites because they are less likely to be asked (Hodgkinson 1995: 45). These data provide little support for the



theory that “helping out” is more prevalent in the Black community because of economic exigencies. Nor are Blacks more likely to subscribe to norms of helping than are Whites. Hogan et al. (1993) also report less help by Blacks and speculate that “the ability of black families to support kin in need may have deteriorated as a result of the cumulation of economic and social disadvantage among a sizeable segment of the black population” (p. 1450). Although Blacks experience socioeconomic deprivations, our data fail to demonstrate a direct effect of these deprivations on helping behavior. Our data indicate that Blacks, being poorer, experience more illness and are less able to provide help than are Whites.

Second, human capital variables, which many researchers have linked to volunteer work, are connected in complex ways. The fact that socioeconomic status is related to formal volunteering but not to helping seems to rule out the possibility that high status people are more likely to have “internalized abstract prescriptive norms that they should help dependent others” (Latting 1990:124). If it were so, the impact of socioeconomic status on volunteer work would be the same, regardless of the type of volunteer work. Most probably, high socioeconomic status people volunteer more because they have more verbal, writing, and social skills, which gives them more confidence to reach out to others—and makes them more desirable as volunteers (Verba et al. 1995). The fact that socioeconomic status has a positive direct effect on formal volunteering but a negative direct effect on religiosity—a powerful inducement to volunteering—suggests that the social foundation of formal volunteering is religious, while the social foundation of informal helping is secular. This finding also supports our contention that the cultural “resources” needed for volunteer work are not gained exclusively from educational qualifications. We need to take seriously the idea that other forms of cultural capital are important. For example, does it make sense to think of religious training as an equivalent to schooling except that the symbolic goods in this case involve work on behalf of others? More studies are needed of how people serve apprenticeships for volunteer work, what kind of moral and practical education is re-

quired, and who the teachers and role models are (Staub 1995).<sup>12</sup>

Our third conclusion is more tentative. We hypothesized that formal volunteer work, being public, would have different roots than the more private form of volunteering, helping others. The differential effects of the social capital variables confirm this view—social ties contribute to formal volunteering but not helping. Also as expected, different degrees of religiosity are associated with different degrees of volunteering, but they are unrelated to the amount of help provided. This finding is consistent with research summarized by Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventris (1993:342). More religious people are no more likely to offer help than are the less religious. Religiosity does, however, increase the likelihood that help will be provided through “institutional” channels—“[R]eligious organizations tell people of opportunities to serve, both within and beyond the congregation itself, and provide personal contacts, committees, phone numbers, meeting spaces, transportation, or whatever it may

<sup>12</sup> We cannot estimate separate models for different kinds of volunteering and helping because the number of respondents reporting any one subtype is too small. Also, we cannot distribute the hours measure across different types of volunteering and helping. To investigate the possibility that there may be at least two different spheres of formal volunteering, we split the formal volunteering index into church-related and non-church-related volunteering because church-related volunteering was more common. This yielded two dummy variables. One contrasts those who volunteered for church-related causes ( $N = 756$ ) with those who did not volunteer at all ( $N = 1,628$ ). The other contrasts those who volunteered for secular groups ( $N = 906$ ) with those who did not volunteer at all ( $N = 1,628$ ). Using logistic regression, we estimated the same model for both dependent variables—the model consisting of the church attendance, frequency of prayer, value helping, education, and family income variables. The results were similar, except that prayer was positively related to church-related volunteering but not related to secular volunteering. Education had a more powerful effect in the secular model (odds ratio = 1.24) than in the church-related model (odds ratio = 1.125). Surprisingly, church attendance was more strongly related to secular volunteering (odds ratio = 1.915) than to religious volunteering (odds ratio = 1.279).

take to help turn good intentions into action” (Wuthnow 1994:253).<sup>13</sup>

We assumed that helping, being more obligatory than formal volunteering, would be more affected by enabling factors like age and health. This is also true. We attribute this difference not only to the more obligatory nature of helping, but also to the more collective nature of formal volunteering. In structural form, formal volunteering resembles other types of collective behavior and is explained by some of the same factors. Helping, although perhaps motivated by similar values and norms, is structured differently. A more rigorous test of the proposition that volunteering is contingent whereas helping is obligatory must await data that permit the disaggregation of volunteering into different types. This would enable us to tie “supply” factors like capital to more specific types of volunteer behavior. Data are also needed on the demands on the individual for help from kin and friends to better measure the strength of obligations.

Concerning the relation between volunteering and helping, we posited a general disposition that formal volunteering would be associated with and would encourage informal helping—and vice versa. This is not strictly true. Although there is no zero-sum relation between volunteering and helping, the effect seems to be one way rather than reciprocal: Volunteering encourages helping, but helping does not affect formal volunteering. Informal help networks structured around kin and neighbor relations do not translate into volunteering in more public forms of “housekeeping.” If anything, the reverse is true: Involvement in more organized,

public altruism fosters informal, more interpersonal, helping. This, in turn, means that the social factors that boost formal volunteering also have a positive effect on the chances of helping others on a more informal basis. Perhaps volunteering is a place to make friends. These results seem to run counter to those of Wuthnow (1991), who argues that the more institutionalized forms of volunteer work tend to drive out less institutionalized helping.

*John Wilson is Professor of Sociology at Duke University. His primary research focus is on volunteering and social participation, particularly in connection with religion, work, family, and ideas of citizenship. He is author of Playing by the Rules: Sport, Society and the State (Wayne State University Press, 1994).*

*Marc Musick recently received his Ph.D. in sociology from Duke University and is currently a Postdoctoral Trainee in the Research Training Program on Psychosocial Factors in Mental Health and Illness at the University of Michigan. His dissertation focuses on the relationship between social support reciprocity and mental and physical health among the elderly. He is also interested in the relationships between productive activity and well-being, and between religion and health. In collaboration with the Duke Exploratory Center for Minority Health Promotion, he studies the impact of stress and social support on the physical and mental health of African American elderly.*

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<sup>13</sup> Another interpretation of this lack of relation between religiosity and helping has to do with another surprising finding in the data. Informal social interaction, measured by frequency of contact with friends and neighbors, is not related to helping in this model. This is surprising given the degree of overlap between these two measures. At time 1 informal social interaction is positively related to helping at the zero-order level, as is church attendance (but not prayer). Informal social interaction and both indicators of religiosity are positively related at the zero-order level (and with a number of controls imposed [Bradley 1995]). Perhaps informal social interaction and religiosity cancel each other out.

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