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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

WHY BLACK COLLEGIATE WOMEN VOLUNTEER: A PERSPECTIVE ON MEANING MAKING THROUGH SERVICE WITH THE COMMUNITY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Nashira Amina Williams

2019

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This dissertation, written by Nashira Amina Williams, and entitled Why Black Collegiate Women Volunteer: A Perspective on Meaning Making through Service with the Community, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Valerie Patterson

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Maria Lovett

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Benjamin Baez, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 25, 2019

The dissertation of Nashira Amina Williams is approved.

____
Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Science and Education

____
Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2019

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DEDICATION

Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain,

And the itsy-bitsy spider went up the spout again.

Hyndrix, you are the sunshine of my life, and I dedicate this dissertation to you. You have filled my life with a love once unknown and helped me become a better person.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

WHY COLLEGIATE BLACK WOMEN VOLUNTEER:

A PERSPECTIVE ON MEANING MAKING THROUGH SERVICE WITH THE COMMUNITY

by

Nashira Amina Williams

Florida International University, 2019

Miami, Florida

Professor Benjamin Baez, Major Professor

Studies explain that participating in community service enhances relationships, positively contributes to one's purpose, and provides life satisfaction with a specific focus on retention and degree attainment for those enrolled in college (Corporation for National and Community Service, 20007). The simultaneous increase of Black women attending colleges as universities increase outreach to drive community engagement does not align with the shift in the research of civic engagement that excludes the activity of young Black people and is counterintuitive to the historical underpinnings of political and educational transformations in the United States (e.g., Civil Rights Movement) (Hewins-Maroney, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of why current Black undergraduate women volunteer in their communities and how they perceive these volunteer experiences reflect on understanding themselves as Black women. Qualitative inquiry was used to explore the similarities and differences of how Black women make meaning of their experiences and understand themselves.

The 11 Black undergraduate women who participated revealed eight themes that contributed to their reason for serving their communities. Overwhelmingly, the participants felt a drive, usually before college, that motivated them to serve their communities to impact themselves and others in transformative ways. Their work in the community was not without hardships or barriers, but overcoming those barriers were also motivating to the participants to recognize their privilege and continue to serve. The university's role is something the participants were critical about as they had little connection to the university related to volunteering except for the marketing of service opportunities but contributed that to their peers.

As the institutionalization of service-learning and volunteerism in higher education has become a strategy to increase retention, the findings from the present study add to the limited research of volunteer engagement of diverse populations. The participants shared their criticism of volunteering within the university as well as the community broadly, and they confirm that intentional outreach and educational spaces should be dedicated to ensuring that the community work of students of all backgrounds is valued and that these students be given opportunities to engage in meaningful volunteer work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Researchers define volunteerism as contributions to society that do not result in monetary compensation (Beehr, LeGro, Porter, Bowling, & Swader, 2010; Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009; Gage & Thapa, 2012; Horn, 2012; Penner, 2002). The public purposes of both volunteerism and higher education have been linked throughout history and continue to be incorporated into the strategic plans of universities, most recently as community-based learning (CBL) initiatives (Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001). Currently, institutions of higher education have been challenged to create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for engaging in volunteerism in local communities to remain accountable to their public-service purposes (Offstein, Chory, & Childers, 2013; Shapiro, 2004).

Although the annual college enrollment for Black women has steadily increased, the significance of their engagement as volunteers through either university-supported service learning, student organization-related opportunities, or personal facilitation of service projects, has yet to be extensively studied. Bocci (2015) asserted that understanding the reasons why individuals volunteer their time is outdated and historically focused on a specific type of volunteer (e.g., wealthy, White, male, or expanding religion). The research targeting volunteerism in higher education must include the distinctions between service-program types, such as service-learning, activism, internships, and field education, because they are defined differently, do different things, and are not accessible to all (Jacoby, 2015). Thus, in the present dissertation a narrow focus of volunteering is appropriate.

In this dissertation, the terms “community service” and “volunteerism” are used interchangeably to include any on-going, sporadic, or one-time event that allows participants to provide strong and direct services to communities in need (Jacoby, 2015). Jacoby (2015) defined both “community service” and “volunteerism” as having a “primary emphasis on the service being provided, and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient” (p. 3). For Black women, volunteering meant historically serving in mostly Black communities, but considering the globalization of academia and social changes, communities in need now span from the local to the global (Cash, 2001). The current study explored how collegiate Black women make meaning of their service experiences as volunteers. I hope to contribute to an understanding of how Black college-going women volunteers derive some meaning of their community service experiences.

Context of the Study

In a 2018 study of volunteer activity, the Corporation of National and Community Service documented that Generation Y, the age range of the participants in my dissertation, (i.e., 20-35), volunteered at a rate of 26.1% (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2018). The Corporation for National and Community Service (2012) also published that fewer than 40 percent of individuals ranging from ages 15 to 25 felt a responsibility to improve society through activism. Despite the assertion that fewer than 40 percent of 15 to 25 felt a responsibility, the college demographic volunteered twice as much as the 18-24 aged individuals who do not attend college (26.7% and 13.5%, respectively). A study conducted in 2000 indicated that approximately 81% of first-year college students participated in community service. However, only a fraction of these students reported that they either felt community service was important or that they

valued community service (Jones & Hill, 2003). Jones and Hill (2003) found that college students' motivation for community service involvement is often attributed to their high school activity and peers, and it has a connection to their burgeoning sense of self. Students who committed to consistent service work throughout high school and were encouraged by family, teachers, or educational administrators were more likely to regularly participate in community service in college (Education Commission of the States, 2014). Yet, only two states require community service to graduate high school and several states have incentivized it.

Participating in community service activities has also been connected to the following personal impacts: a positive perspective on one's sense of self, the enhancement of relationships which help promote wellbeing and life satisfaction (Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development, 2007). A recent analysis of the college landscape revealed a 15.9% undergraduate enrollment rate for Black women (National Center for Education Statistics, US Department of Education, 2015). There is limited research considering volunteers who may have been marginalized before starting college or who may currently feel marginalized at their colleges or universities while in their volunteer capacity.

Jones and Hill (2003) asserted that students encompass socially constructed identities which influence their understanding, construction, and engagement in their community service activities. Community service in collegiate contexts is framed through a lens of "othering", implying that those who may serve as volunteers are new to the community or the issues in communities they are serving, and creating a disconnect from the "server" and the "served" (Doerr, 2015). Doerr (2015) added that "framing an act as

volunteering or service constitutes otherness of the community benefiting from that work" (p. 50).

One could potentially use the "othering" concept to delve into "wider social processes beyond its implications for social change." The concept of "othering" in practice as "others as recipients of service" model may be both isolating and objectifying to underrepresented students who determine that there is a need to provide education or correction of stereotypes about their community (Doerr, 2015, p. 50; Mitchell & Donahue, 2009). The personal and contextual frameworks which inspire collegiate students to volunteer, as well as their service experiences, can affirm a values system which might prove to be vital to their role in a diverse democratic society (Rockenbach, Hudson, & Tuchmayer, 2014). "Volunteering and service-learning allow students to encounter individuals different from them, which pushes them to develop better understanding and empathy. Analyzing and reimagining the connection between the individuals involved could permit more meaningful relationships to develop between them" (Doerr, 2015, pp. 50-51).

Self-control and motivation have a complex relationship whereby the physical mechanisms of both are interdependent (Harmon-Jones & Forgas, 2014, p. 1). Behaviors are the expression of underlying motivation or control of motivational urges (Harmon-Jones & Forgas, 2014; Wong, 2000). Lewin (1951) introduced goal-orientation as a motivation to obtain or maintain valued states, and he asserted that one would likely be more motivated to obtain or renew a valued state if there was a discrepancy between an anticipated state and the current state (Batson, Ahmad, & Stocks, 2011). Motivation is seemingly constructed, like perceptions and attitudes, by society and "often arises in

social settings where people work together to solve collective problems" (Walton & Cohen, 2011, p. 81).

Statement of the Problem

Higher education institutions have institutionalized service-learning initiatives and volunteer opportunities as retention strategies. As a result, the opportunity for volunteers to "positively engage in society, creating cohesion among diverse people and enhancing feelings of inclusion, self-validation, and belonging" has also assisted with socially integrating individuals into the collegiate community (Manguvo, Whitney, & Chareka, 2013, p. 121; Strayhorn, 2010). Student engagement, in general, has been theoretically linked to persistence as well as educational and intellectual gains (Strayhorn, 2010). The simultaneous increase of Black women attending colleges and an increase in university outreach to drive community engagement does not align with the shift in the research of civic engagement. The present research indicates that the activity of young Black people in higher education is minimal; thus, their involvement in college not only opposes this research, but it is also counterintuitive to the historical underpinnings of political and educational transformations in the United States (Hewins-Maroney, 2008).

Young adults are an increasingly targeted demographic for potential volunteers. However, adults work more extended hours and utilize their time volunteering with initiatives which are career focused, strategic, or episodic with a short-term goal-oriented focus (Belsie, 1997; Burns, Reid, Toncar, Fawcett, Anderson, 2006). "For many young people, service has thus become an attractive alternative to the passivity of the student role and the marginality of part-time paid employment" (Serow, 1991, p. 556). Continually, the act of volunteering is conceptualized differently across cultures,

socioeconomic statuses, between families, and among individuals (Evans, Taylor, Dunlap, & Miller, 2009). It would be even more helpful to acknowledge how volunteers make meaning from community service experiences concerning demographic information, and the volunteer's gender, sex, and values contextualized with aspects of social change and power, when considering insights about volunteer participation (Grube & Piliavin, 2000).

Black women have historically participated in civic engagement through leadership in grassroots organizing. This has often been framed as

> efforts to make visible and legible the plight of Black women and girls. The campaign to rescue them from political and social obscurity fits within the long history of Black women making the case that Black women's lives are worthy of study and that their struggles are worthy of social remedy (Cooper, 2017, p. 146).

Examples of the political and social engagement of Black women range from the collectivistic approach of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, whose efforts began the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956, to the summer of 2013, when three young Black women created the social movement, #BlackLivesMatter (BLM), that took center stage in the 2014 protests after becoming a rallying cry for injustice for crimes against Black bodies (Cooper, 2017). Hewins-Maroney (2008) concluded that one should consider the engagement of African American students to encourage members of the community to feel a sense of belonging.

Although race has been consistently excluded in civic engagement research studies, Manguvo et al. (2013) concluded that in addition to social integration, the African students in their research yielded additional human, cultural, and social capital from volunteering. Those students, as well as many minority college students, are less

likely to have inherited or acquired much social or cultural capital, and these factors can be imperative for collegiate success (Strayhorn, 2010). The finding that many Black youths support the notions of monetary benefits directed toward collegiate expenses in exchange for their volunteerism highlights the previous assertions about the need for economic capital (Hewins-Maroney, 2008).

In the most comprehensive study of Black women, the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 investigated the effects of gender, race, and ethnicity on participation in civic engagement and scholarship. The study found that of the 972 African American female students in the survey, 30.68% participated in community service (Dávila & Mora, 2007). Black women have made transformational changes to educational, social, political, and economic structures through significant levels of volunteer engagement traced throughout history (Gutierrez & Mattis, 2014). Past transformational influences of Black women discussed by Farmer and Piotrkowski (2009) included race work predating the Civil Rights movement that made activities such as protesting, boycotting, and marching expected behaviors of civic engagement for Black women. These examples, coupled with the differences in volunteerism across cultures, make it apropos to consider the reasons why Black women volunteer.

Volunteering enables individuals to personally and professionally enhance themselves, including increasing self-esteem and self-awareness (Oyserman, 2015). Chapman's (2007) study about volunteer motivation among African American women concurred with Oyserman (2015) finding that familiarization with one's self is necessary to serve others. "Volunteering may represent the outcome of a proactive search to meet the volunteer's own needs rather than a reactive response to an organization's request"

(Goodwin, Fisher, Hill, & Bendapudi, 2001, p. 1). Sociological approaches have used role theory to explain the alignment of self-concept and the internalization of the volunteer role (Biddle, 1979; Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005). Radford-Hill's (2000) research that explains how one's gender and sex as well as social change, values, and power shape how women make meaning of their roles in society is used to understand the women in my study. My dissertation highlights not only the racial composition of individuals but also parses out the ethnicity of the participants to consider how demographic information may be influential to the participants' service work or how participants make meaning of their volunteerism. My dissertation attempts to address the lack of literature on why Black women, in particular, are involved in volunteerism and adds the cultural influence of ethnicity to the need for continued research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand why current Black undergraduate women volunteer in their communities and how these volunteer experiences affect their sense of self as Black women. As the least civically engaged metropolitan area in the United States, Miami serves as a prime location to conduct a study such as this (National Conference on Citizenship, et al., 2010). The low ranking of Miami, Florida, since the initial study in 2010 by the National Conference on Citizenship et al. has not changed, as "18.7% of residents volunteered in 2018" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2018).

Specifically, I utilized qualitative inquiry with case study elements as I interviewed Black women at Florida International University. My study explores the similarities and differences among the collegiate Black women related to the meaning

they attached to the community service they performed. Additionally, the study examined how those meanings intensified, supported, or hindered their volunteer experiences or supported their understanding of self. The study also aimed to strengthen and enhance currently shared perspectives by filling the gap in the current literature.

Importance of the Study

"We need a rich history of service-learning if we are to collectively or independently develop a 'point of view' that will allow us to approach our work more deliberately and with less likelihood of doing harm" (Morton, 2011, p. 37). The expansion of literature and service-learning structures to include the voices of those who are not traditionally viewed as volunteers is important to the future of the field. Pedagogy on service, typically through service-learning classes, is moving toward including social justice but thus far has communicated Whiteness as a remedy for community misfortune, and racial minorities as needing help from those who are volunteering (Brekke, 2017). Bocci (2015) further warned against the pedagogy of service-learning, privileging Whiteness to the point that its normativity would lead to "assimilative, discriminatory, and/or exclusionary practices that reinforce oppressive socioeconomic power dynamics" (p. 5). The continued formative influence on students' volunteerism at their institutions, if not informed through counter research which includes race, could eliminate the positive outcomes that have already established the importance of the present study.

My dissertation found that practices at higher education institutions lead to a disconnect between the increased university outreach and how Black women commit to their community through volunteering. Universities have yet to contextualize the experiences of Black women who are serving their communities. There are important

implications for these Black women who may not be church-going or consider themselves religious but have had early involvement serving in their family churches. My dissertation recognizes that church is catalytic but not central to these Black women's service work which is not consistent with previous literature on Black women voluntariness. As universities are working to create service experiences, the connections that the participants in my dissertation make in communities where people look like them versus ones where they are the only person who is either Black or may have a cultural background different from others is essential for practice and research. Research nor practice incorporates the needs or hardships of college students as it relates to their service experiences or motivation to volunteer. This became a constant discussion point in my dissertation, and the participants explained how surviving hardships, overcoming barriers, and recognizing their privilege even as Black women motivated them to serve their communities.

Research Question

My study aims to explore Black college-going women's experiences with volunteerism in the Miami community. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are reasons Black collegiate women choose to volunteer?
2. How do Black collegiate women make meaning of their volunteer experiences?

Definition of Key Terms

Black refers to a person who is of African descent or with African ancestral roots. "The term Black has a long service in social, political, and everyday life and in its use to denote African ancestry is entrenched in epidemiological and public health language"

(Agyemang, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005, p. 1016). Black, addressing demographic characteristics, is an aid to this study because the term encompasses a wide range of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

Formal volunteering is defined as organized, structured service experiences with non-profit or community organizations.

Informal volunteering is defined as a less formalized and private way of serving—often it includes activities such as assisting in taking care of domestic tasks (e.g., babysitting, grocery shopping, or watching over the house) (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012).

Motivation is defined as the goal-oriented forces that "arouse, sustain, and regulate behaviors" whereby behaviors include "both the processing of information as well as overt, more molar behavior (Harmon-Jones & Forgas, 2014, p. 4).

Role is the contextually bound, expected behaviors of individuals who are members or serving in a specific position (Biddle, 1979).

Volunteer is defined as "an individual engaging in behavior that is not bio-socially determined (e.g., eating, sleeping), nor economically necessitated (e.g., paid work, housework, home repair), nor socio-politically compelled (e.g., paying one's taxes, clothing oneself before appearing in public), but rather that is essentially (primarily) motivated by the expectation of psychic benefits of some kind as a result of activities that have a market value greater than any remuneration received for such activities" (Smith D. H., 1981, pp. 22-23).

Volunteering and Community Service are defined as the conscious choice of certain individuals to seek opportunities to help others who are in need (Horn, 2012;

Omoto & Snyder, 2002). That service commitment must be undertaken willingly and that it must be mutually beneficial for the volunteer and the organizations (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Volunteer motivation is defined as intrinsic and extrinsic forces that are used to fulfill an individual's volunteering goals.

Summary

There was a need to interview Black women about their volunteer experiences given that there has been a yearly increase of this population across American institutions and a historical foundation that dictates Black women's leadership in several social movements stemming from voluntary actions is apparent. The socialization of Black women by society including Black male leadership ran counter to fully crediting these women with their influence on social change except for small acts of kindness or volunteering within the community.

Many of the women in the study described life-altering experiences through serving their community that contrasted with the confidence to affirm the impact of those actions. It reminded me of Cash's (1987) discussion of Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1965, leader Jo Ann Gibson Robinson:

> Mrs. Robinson remains generally hesitant to claim for herself the historical credit that she deserves for launching the [Boycott]. Although her story fully and accurately describes how it was, she, during the night and early morning hours of December 1 and 2 1955, who actually started the boycott on its way, it is only with some gentle encouragement that she will acknowledge herself as "the instigator of the movement to start the boycott." Even then, however, she seeks to emphasize that no special credit ought to go to herself or to any other single individual. Very simply, she says, 'the Black women did it.' And as you will see, she's right (p. xv).

The university is an important institution that could strengthen their practice and research to incorporate race and gender in volunteering studies and institutional culture. A university education is predictive of higher community involvement rates, and the university has a public purpose to be of service to its surrounding communities. The behavioral expectations of those who volunteer have been studied across fields to understand the motivational factors involved, but current empirical research regarding discrepancies in volunteer behavior and desires have focused on the conflict between the individual and the organization.

Chapter 2 will consider those studies on role which include inter-role conflicts or role ambiguity and incorporate others that begin to identify the nuances of personal meaning-making based on demographic factors (e.g., race and sex). The review of the literature that follows considers several motivation theories that have historically applied to volunteerism. Chapter 2 combines research from several different fields (e.g., nonprofit sector, higher education, and race work) to inform the reasons that collegiate Black women have volunteered in the past.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on volunteerism has predominantly highlighted volunteers who are affluent or middle-class, White, and habitually motivated by altruistic objectives (Slevin, 2005). Civic engagement is nourished by social culture and its level of performance, therefore, varies across groups of people (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009). Contemporary research of volunteerism in the field regarding leisure studies explored the experiences of a population of people in high socioeconomic classes. This masked the public understanding of how the intersectionality of identities (e.g., locale, race, ethnicity, and gender) may provide additional models for collectivistic approaches to volunteerism (Slevin, 2005). Perspectives regarding community service "vary across culture and socioeconomic status and vary from between individuals and families" (Evans, Taylor, Dunlap, & Miller, 2009, p. 11). Marginalized members of society, those who are oppressed by denied privileges and who are unjustly cast out or extinguished from society, utilize community service as a way to be included in conversations about issues that affect them and "to reduce poverty and other types of discrimination and inequalities" (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009, p. 197; Young, 2004).

Despite the lack of relevant research regarding the current topic, analysis of the subject can be found segmented throughout the literature. Several pivotal studies have revealed relevant information regarding the research topic. One dissertation (Chapman, 2007) focused on the motives of Black women who were members of the same volunteer organization. My dissertation does not require participants to hold membership in an organization to qualify.

One book investigated the complexity of differences in the identity of volunteers (Musick & Wilson, 2008), but the demographic information of participants was not considered intersectional. Thus, there was a synopsis produced regarding Black volunteering activity and female volunteering; but not Black female volunteering. One book, dedicated to the work of Black women's voluntary community work through associations, did not consider the current way Black women serve the community as my dissertation examines volunteering (Scott, 1990). A few articles highlighted differences among the volunteer population (Blake, 2009; Bocci, 2015; Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009; Mitchell & Donahue, 2009). However, my dissertation does not compare the service of Black women to other individuals with different backgrounds. There was no literature found that directly addressed the volunteering of collegiate Black women, but there was literature that revealed volunteerism trends of women, Black people, or college students in general.

The motivation of Black volunteers and how it differs from other racial groups has also not been thoroughly studied; Musick and Wilson (2008) cited Latting's (1990) study of volunteers at Big Brothers/Big Sisters as one of the few to highlight differences between Black and White volunteers finding "that the norms of altruism and social responsibility were consistently more salient for the Black volunteers than they were for their White" (p. 130). After the publication of Musick and Wilson's study, Farmer and Piotrkowski (2009) produced another manuscript with an emphasis of understanding the difference of volunteer motivation between African and European women. Other studies have pinpointed the service of Black volunteers but do not highlight their motivation, nor do the studies include Black women as participants.

The review of the literature is divided into three sections. The first section outlines motivation theory with focus on volunteerism. It elaborates on the following concepts: (1) altruism, (2) egoism, (3) functional theory of volunteerism, and (4) identity-based motivation. The second section focuses on role theory, the concepts of role conflict and ambiguity, and an introduction to a proposed framework to consider the interplay of all roles Black women hold in society when engaging as a volunteer. The third section discusses volunteerism trends of the group central to the research question: Black college-going women. The literature which intersects these identities with volunteerism is limited. Thus, a summary of the research on the volunteer experiences of the following demographics presented: (1) college-going adults, (2) women, and (3) Black people, were compiled to demonstrate this understanding.

Motivation to Volunteer

Lewin (1951) conceptualized goals by defining them as the force fields in one's life space that also contain ambition-oriented forces, which are the motives of an individual. Values can activate motivational forces that, in turn, can generate behavior or movement in someone's life. Conversely, motives are actual needs and are more comparable to Lewin's values rather than Lewin's motives according to the definition of motivation provided by Murray (1938) and his followers. Murray's perspective of motivation included both internal and external influencing factors. Herzberg's (1979) view of an individual's level of motivation expressed its dependence on the need to accomplish something, control, and have relationships with others. This framed the dominant perspective on the recent discussion regarding volunteering (Batson, Ahmad, & Tsang, 2002).

Penner (2002) suggested that organizations seeking volunteers should appeal to the target population and highlight their motives to recruit that group successfully. “The features of volunteerism are grounded in motivated forms of action—activities in which people freely choose to participate and to continue their involvement over extended periods of time, often despite great personal cost” (Mannino, Snyder, & Omoto, 2011, p. 129). Factors such as education, religion, employment, early experiences with volunteering, parental promotion of volunteering, as well as age and life-stage influences have been listed as predictors of adult volunteering habits (Slevin, 2005). It is important to note that the motives of one volunteer may evolve and may be different from others who may do the same service work.

The traditional theories of community service or volunteerism have emphasized a decision-making process that is “rational, purposeful, and intentional” and that is economically balanced with a sense of mutual benefits and self-interest (Offstein, Chory, & Childers, 2013, p. 89). Researchers have discussed students’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for serving in the community. External motivators often do not lead to sustained volunteerism, while internal motivators allow volunteers to serve on their own volition (Beehr, LeGro, Porter, Bowling, & Swader, 2010; Güntert & Wehner, 2015). Additional studies regarding college students’ motivation to participate in community service activities have provided a summation of motivation as altruistic, egoistic, obligatory, and self-identity formation (Jones & Hill, 2003).

An Altruistic Theory of Volunteer Motivation

Altruism is the act of someone selflessly giving resources purely for the sake of helping others (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Lee, Alexander, & Kim, 2013; Winniford,

Carpenter, & Grider, 1997). “Pure altruists, in complete self-abnegation, are driven exclusively by an effort to help others” (Sesardic, 1999, p. 463). Smith (1981) found altruistic motivation to be present in varying degrees within individuals who attempt to optimize the internal gratification of others without consciously needing mutual satisfaction. Typically, the individual who commits to the gratification of others is internally satisfied and motivated by the attempt to help (Smith, 1981). Researchers have summarized the classification of altruism as moral, intrinsic, and public service-oriented motivation— “representing an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives such as self-sacrifice, compassion, social justice, and civic duty” (Mesch, Tschirhart, Perry, & Lee, 1998, p. 6).

Two common assumptions of individuals who are altruistic are (a) altruism breeds behaviors that cater to self-interest and (b) altruistic behavior is first directed towards personal relationships then toward those who are less known or are strangers (Schenk, 1987). Additionally, Smith (1981) discussed that there were three analytical levels to altruism, which include; the individual level, the group level, and the societal level. Winniford, Carpenter, and Grider (1997) mirrored these three different perspectives of altruism concerning higher education— “the student (the individual level), student organizations (the group level), and entire college or university (the societal level)” (p. 138).

Societal impact is also emphasized by Monroe (1996), who presented altruism as a mutually influenced decision-making process whereby the volunteer has a connection to those in the community (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Murninghan, Kim, and Metzger (1993) asserted that reciprocal altruism is an economic system of long-term mutual

benefits which are established by the sum of smaller costs associated with giving and the more significant benefits for the receiver, followed by a return of the deed. Therefore, altruistic appeals or goals set by volunteer organizations are ineffective in maintaining volunteer activity or organizational development (Smith, 1981).

If, during its early development, altruism was positively emphasized or if punished for non-performance, individuals may have more often described themselves as altruistic (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Altruistic actions, according to an egocentric approach, are undertaken because of the perception that there will be direct or indirect gains for the individual who participates in these acts (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Altruism advocates agree with the notion that much of what we do for others or ourselves is egoistic. However, these advocates also believe that the understanding of motivation spans beyond the egoistic perspective (Batson & Shaw, 1991). “They claim that at least some of us, to some degree, under some circumstances, are capable of a qualitatively different form of motivation, motivation with an ultimate goal of benefiting someone else” (Batson & Shaw, 1991, p. 107).

Another branch of altruism emphasizes distress, or the relief of distress as the underlying foundation of altruistic motivation (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Relief of personal distress, as well as improvement of one’s social image to avoid social and self-censure, are more egoistic in nature. Therefore, some researchers concluded that altruistic people are not motivated purely by the well-being of others (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Hoffman (1978), however, argued that under certain conditions, people would help others despite the cost to themselves.

Hoffman's theoretical approach staged the altruistic development of children based on distress and concluded that children, over time, transform involuntary "empathic affect arousal" into helping actions toward others (Haski-Leventhal, 2009, p. 275). Also, Piliavin and Charng (1990) explained that over one's lifetime, the ability to assist others increases because empathy and social responsibility are developed as one ages (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). Exposing one to altruistic behavior bolsters the development of these ideas and modeling the actions of altruism may impact earlier development of these principles (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). Krebs and Van-Herteren (1994) asserted that understanding others is contingent upon the stage in which a person is in their life and their social responsibilities. Krebs' seven-stage model of altruism outlines how one gets closer to an altruistic end on a continuum. Although many do not reach the final stage of "universal self-sacrificial love," a marked description of Black women's work in communities (Harris-Perry, 2011), they may move from a beginning level of distress relief to the sixth stage where they have fully identified with the community or humanity (Krebs & Van-Herteren, 1994). The levels in between the beginning and final stages mirror the concepts that other researchers have shared about altruism (i.e., role or social obligation fulfillment, reciprocal altruism, social responsibility, and values-driven action) (Krebs & Van-Herteren, 1994).

Current research regarding altruism links the concept to empathy and ideas of the self. Often this empathetic concentration on altruism highlights an altruistic personality. This personality encompasses several characteristics, including compassion and generosity (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Additionally, concepts such as a "strong self-image, self-efficacy, inner locus of control, and a low need of appraisal" as well as "moral norms

and commitment to such norms, a sense of responsibility, and a low desire for free riding were also correlated to altruism" (Haski-Leventhal, 2009, p.278). Two arguments that connect empathy to altruism are (a) relief of secondary distress, because one relates to others, motivates them to help, and (b) a genuine desire to help may be developed through empathy (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

Altruism does not exist in an absolute state, and many researchers have found that there are self-fulfilling motives for seemingly altruistic actions (Smith, 1981). "For various reasons, whether because of personal vanity and pride or socioculturally induced constructions of reality, some people who perform altruistic acts refuse to admit the actual or probable presence of some self-satisfying (and hence selfish) psychic rewards directly resulting from altruistic action" (Smith, 1981, p. 24). Smith (1981) emphasized this point to conclude that the core of volunteerism is not altruism. Volunteerism is mainly regarded as freely giving resources without expecting direct payment.

An Egoistic Theory of Volunteer Motivation

The prevailing motivational theory for several decades related to helping behaviors centered on egoism, and it steered the research on empathic emotion leading to altruism (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981). Common arguments indicate that an act cannot be purely altruistic, and psychic rewards motivate even actions displaying a semblance of altruism that individuals may receive from helping someone else or reaching a valuable state (Rubin & Thorelli, 1984). An act that is egoistically motivated towards a common good is meant to serve a self-beneficial goal or is a happenstance of reaching that goal (Batson, Ahmad, & Tsang, 2002). "Pure egoists are

moved only by what they expect to advance in their own well-being, the well-being of others constituting for them absolutely no reason for action" (Sesardic, 1999, p. 463).

Upon reflection of the motives cited for action toward a societal good, Hardin (1977) concluded that egoism is the most obvious and "sufficiently pervasive and powerful to do the job" (as cited in Batson et al., 2002, p. 434). The ephemeral role introduced by Zurcher (1978) complements this notion, as it asserts that one may realize satisfaction by partaking in a temporary role when they are unable to meet these needs in their traditional societal roles. This ephemeral role can help researchers understand why volunteers enlist to help, what types of activities they commit to, and whether they have positive experiences from the volunteerism (Zurcher, 1978). Egoistically, these ephemeral roles are based on either compensation (substitution of action that will supply satisfaction not received in current societal roles) or retention (utilized to meet needs already satisfied in current societal roles consistently) (Zurcher, 1978).

Egoistic motives to volunteer are aligned with self-seeking opportunities to fulfill goals or gain something from the experience, as is the case of missionary work employed to spread religion. Thus, egoistic motives are often noted as extrinsic motivations (Winniford et al., 1997). These extrinsic motivations include differing levels of regulation determined by the volunteer (Güntert & Wehner, 2015). In addition to the management of extrinsic motivations, most researchers have found that egoistic motives for helping are categorized into two broad classes. "One class involves gaining rewards and avoiding punishments, the other, reducing aversive arousal" (Batson & Shaw, 1991, p. 110).

Self-beneficial actions are often referred to as instrumental motivations, and these can include career readiness, wage-earning, acquiring new skills, opportunities to build

bonds of friendship and socializing, and structuring a way to use leisure time (Mesch et al., 1998). As one becomes enlightened by understanding the long-term and possibly intangible benefits of their voluntary behaviors, they begin to regard the common good as instrumental to achieving the optimization of self-benefit (Batson et al., 2002).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, when applied to volunteerism, emphasized an egoistic approach to motivation. The hierarchy begins with the base level needs of an individual, our physiological well-being. The individual then shifts up, down, or stays at their current level depending on what needs require attention. After meeting physiological needs, individuals then consider more intangible needs such as safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Though volunteering is often seen as an opportunity to give, the self-actualization that it offers meets a need on the hierarchy (Winniford et al., 1997). Sometimes, however, volunteers of diverse backgrounds do not have the initial hierarchal needs met but still serve in the community.

Mounter's Expectancy Motivation Model suggests that three factors affect behavior, and behavior occurs when people believe they can attain a goal. The three components that affect behavior include "(a) the need for achievement and the capacity for taking pride in accomplishment; (b) the need for affiliation and the concern for one's relationships with others; and (c) the need for power and wanting to have an influence on others" (Winniford et al., 1997, p. 136). These behaviors fluctuate with each person and in each situation, and the theory is widely accepted to explain motivation in the workplace. Through the professionalization of volunteering, one could also apply these principles to community service.

A Functional Theory of Volunteer Motivation

The functional theory of motivation is derived from the field of psychology and concerns the underlying beliefs and actions of individuals including one's personal and social motives, needs, goals, and functions (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary et al., 1992). "From this perspective, volunteering is seen as behavior that results from different types of motives, or combinations of them, that can be fulfilled by being involved as a volunteer in a nonprofit organization" (Willems, et al., 2012, p. 884). Action is driven by the idea that involvement will serve an important psychological function (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

The functional approach to volunteerism identifies the motives, needs, and goals of the volunteers and serves as the foundation for what keeps them satisfied when performing service which, categorically, applies to volunteers, including those who volunteer for activist causes. It is important to note that volunteers may demonstrate the same behavior for varying reasons. The actions of the volunteers may seem similar, but the motivation fueling their purpose for serving can be completely different (Clary et al., 1992; Musick & Wilson, 2008). Considering formalized ideas of previous psychological theorists, the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) established six motivations for volunteering (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

It has been declared that volunteerism serves six essential unexhausted functions for those who give their resources to others. The first of these functions is a values perspective associated with altruism that implies that volunteers serve the community to act on a belief that helping others is important. Those volunteers express their values through their service behaviors and understand their service to others to be a true

expression of their values (Clary et al.,1992). Although one can actualize their goal to act consistently with their values by doing something other than volunteering, “the important thing is that the individual has internalized certain values, wishes to see them actualized, and takes pleasure in acting in such a way as to realize these values” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 58).

Musick and Wilson (2008) posited that volunteerism offers experiences for individuals to learn about myriad people, skills, and opportunities. Volunteerism provides physical and mental challenges that may enhance one’s life experience (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Some individuals wish to learn and understand others, organizations, or even themselves. Volunteerism, thus, leads to understanding (Clary et al., 1992).

Professional networking and refining the skills necessary for the job market are behaviors indicative of volunteers who wish to utilize service as a function of career exploration (Clary et al., 1992). Individuals who volunteer as an outreach component of their job or other association are also classified as serving with a career function focus (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Although some volunteers are wary of listing career-motivated functions of volunteerism, institutions and nonprofit organizations often advertise job-related training and resume building as reasons to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

The social function of volunteering enables individuals to act according to what is socially relevant amongst their peer groups, family, or an esteemed group of individuals (Clary et al., 1992). Many individuals volunteer because of their desire to fit in. (Musick & Wilson, 2008). In addition to “winning the social approval or meeting the expectations of people important to us,” the social function of volunteering includes expressions of solidarity within a group or service used at one time (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 60).

When a volunteer serves to enhance her self-worth or to boost their sense of importance, the volunteer is using service to fulfill the esteem function (Clary et al., 1992). These individuals use volunteer work to create a community where they can have a sense of belonging (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Lastly, the protective function of volunteering allows helpers to find relief from negative feelings about themselves by serving others (Clary et al., 1992). This function of volunteerism "has to do with enabling people to deal with their inner conflicts, feelings of incompetence, uncertainties about social identity, emotional needs, and the like" (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 62).

An Identity-based Theory of Volunteer Motivation

The decision to volunteer can be better understood by the values and perceptions of the individuals who partake in community work. Ganush and McAllum (2012) summarized volunteer work by asserting that "volunteering involves sustained identity investments by volunteers performed and realized in organizational settings" (p. 152). Social group identification is positively linked to intended identity-related behaviors, and action in social contexts is influenced by one's social identity (Lai, Ren, Wu, & Hung, 2013). Role theory has been considered to understand sustained volunteerism, and it discusses the internalization of the volunteer role. Piliavin, Grube, and Callero (2002) found that the internalization of the volunteer role means that the individual "adopted [it] as a component of the self, an 'identity'" (p. 472). Identity is the guide for volunteer actions of individuals who wish to act in concert to their self-concept (Finkelstein et al., 2005). Although research regarding volunteers and their retention is

abundant, studies regarding how societal or personal identities motivate individuals to volunteer are scarce.

The Identity Based Motivation (IBM) model provides insight into contextual identity-congruent motivation and actions and broadens the scope of previous research by including both positive and negative content and behaviors (Oyserman, 2015b). Overlooking all potential possibilities may be useful in limiting choices that could be beneficial to future chances and is central to IBM theory that “implies that people are likely to overlook possibilities for action” (Oyserman, 2015, p. 10). People may overlook possibilities and act in ways that undermine whom they would like to be in the future for several reasons. These reasons may include momentary identity saliency and whether a specific accessible identity can attain a meaning of importance from the difficulty experienced (Oyserman, 2015).

IBM theory is a predictive framework that asserts that people have preferences to act in ways that incorporate their essential identities, including racial-ethnic, gender, and class-based social identities (Oyserman et al., 2014, p. 220). The model asserts that identities are foundational to meaning-making and action. These identities, according to the IBM model, may include various, underdeveloped components that are incorporated with information constructed using circumstances. Hence, these identities may feel stable but are sensitive to situational elements (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). IBM theory, when used for interventions, can allow one to coalesce their probable future selves and their current selves as both psychologically relevant. One can also strategize regarding how to act in identity-congruent ways and one is energized by difficult experiences rather than viewing these difficulties as undermining goals (Oyserman, 2015).

There are three overarching claims to IBM theory, which include: dynamic construction, readiness to act, and interpretation of experienced difficulty (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Dynamic construction suggests that behavior is motivated by one's personal connection between one's current and future selves, then choices are made based on accessible identities (Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman, 2015b). Once an identity surfaces, unconsciously or consciously, individuals prepare to act in ways that are congruent to that identity. An interpretation of difficulty to work in identity-centered ways leads individuals to believe something is "difficult yet important" or "challenging but impossible". Each experience provides an opportunity for an individual to make meaning of the consequences of their actions (Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman, 2015b).

My dissertation found that a combination of the motivation theories was essential to understand behind why collegiate Black women considered volunteering. Although the participants relied on an altruistic perspective for their service, they proved through the responses that egoism, functional approaches to motivation, and identity-based motivation also influenced their decisions to volunteer. As women were answering reflective questions about how they understood themselves, the combination of the theories was uncovered.

Understanding of Self. The social world is refracted through the self, which acts as a lens that is realized and emerges through social forms (Woods, 1992). James (1890) asserted that the "self" embodies all that people can say belongs to them, and his distinction between the knower (self as "I") and the known (self as "Me") led to additional research on the conceptualization of self. Mead (1934) found that one's

response to attitudes of the other is the "I," while the "Me" is an attribute that one assumes based on the attitudes of others (Woods, 1992). Researchers have either emphasized the important behavior of "I" or the behaviors resulting from the "Me." However, both entities are present and part of the process or consciousness of an individual (Woods, 1992). "At one moment in our conduct, we are alert to external stimuli, and we respond to them. Almost immediately, we role-take, visualizing the direction of our conduct and the possible responses to it" (Hewitt & Hewitt, 1986, p. 130).

The concept of understanding one's self (i.e., personal identity) was described by Erikson (1980) as the simultaneous observations of one's congruency with society and the connection permanence in time, as well as, society's recognition of that individual's congruency. The conflation of identity and self that initially guided research has been changed and demarcated by the transformations in the psychological field (Oyserman, 2015b). Self-esteem, self-concept, self, and identity are often used interchangeably, but they are based on different concepts. One's regard for oneself is known as self-esteem and has a position in both identity and self-concept. Structurally, self-concept is multidimensional and composed of a variety of identities (i.e., past, present, and future) that compete against one another (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Identity is a broadly conceptualized element of self that connects the relationships to others through a social process (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Lastly, self includes the elements of self-concept with the additional understanding of "self-awareness or metacognitive experiences" and is socially constructed (Oyserman, 2015b, p. 1).

An understanding of self is formed without the influence of membership to a social group and includes one's traits, characteristics, and goals. Social identity incorporates similar components, but this identity is formed based on either the social role or the social group with which one engages (Oyserman, 2009b). "People led to see themselves in terms of their social identities respond differently than people led to see themselves in terms of their personal identities, providing evidence that the self is a shaper of behavior in the situation" (Oyserman, 2015a, p. 4). Schemas hold one's social and ideal understanding of self, social roles, and one's global concept of self (Kleine R., Kleine S., & Kernan, 1993). This self-schema outlines the related knowledge regarding how one should act when expressing certain elements of self (Kleine et al., 1993). "A schema represents knowledge derived from the integration and organization of past processing and is active in the categorization, interpretation, and comprehension of social events and behavior" (Crane & Markus, 1982, p. 1195).

The Relationship of Understanding Self to Behavior. People's sense of self dictates their actions and how they organize their possessions (Kleineet al., 1993). Societal roles and how individuals identify holistically are highly malleable and contextually situated. Thus, the individual may not understand the impact the situation may have on their behavior (Oyserman, 2009a). As one navigates through each situation, one's background is cued; that dynamically constructs the meaning of the experience. "As a result, while broad background identities are more likely to be cued than more narrow ones, any identity can be cued and any behavior – positive or negative, utilitarian, or symbolic, can become identity-linked" (Oyserman, 2009a, p. 277).

One must also consider the future self to make appropriate current choices per an understanding of self (Oyserman, 2009a; Oyserman, 2015). Kleine et al. (1993) explained that an understanding of self could be guided by ideal states. Contrarily, Biddle (1979) argued that the roles individuals undertake could be how they identify along with their race and gender. What is perceived as ideal for an individual is included in the concept of self (Greeno, Sommers, & Kernan, 1973).

Collegiate Volunteerism

In the 1990s, calls for action were directed towards American institutions of higher education to provide additional resources to its original public purpose, an incorporation of education and democratic citizenship to continue public happiness, through the signing of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2018; Jacoby, 2015; McBride & Lott, 2015; Rockenbach, Hudson, & Tuchmayer, 2014). The Act challenged the Commission of National and Community Service with supporting higher education service programs as part of a four-tiered initiative (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2018).

College attendance is a positive indicator of voluntariness (Marcelo, 2007). A gap exists "between those who attend and those who do not attend, and this reflects the differing advantages and opportunities that accumulate from childhood on" (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 169). In a study conducted in 2000, approximately 81% of first-year college students indicated that they participated in community service that is a requirement for participation and retention in many "student clubs, honor societies, and Greek letter organizations" (Jones & Hill, 2003; Neely, n.d., p.3). Additionally, colleges and universities also "directly strengthen the civic skills, motivations, and knowledge of

their students through the courses and extracurricular opportunities that they offer" (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 169).

Horn (2012) maintained that the promotion of prosocial attitudes that lead to volunteering is difficult because of the consumerism and individualistic behaviors that arise and are directed to students' accentuated egoism. Additional definitions of volunteerism accounted for these aspects with the definitional inclusion of charitable efforts, disaster relief of issues or short-term initiatives, and efforts toward sustainable actions to address deeply rooted structural problems (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Pollack, 1999). Collegiate entities have also distinguished volunteerism and community service from service learning (Furco, 1996).

Typically, community service in collegiate contexts is framed through a lens of othering, which implies that potential volunteers are new to the community or the community issues. This model of others as recipients of service may be both isolating and objectifying to underrepresented students who perhaps view a need to provide education or correction of stereotypes about their community (Mitchell & Donahue, 2009).

Dual, often competing, perspectives are shared by students who are either racially or economically privileged, given that they may be either excited for or afraid to do service with populations of people who identify differently than themselves. Some students, especially students of color, may have reaped the benefits of community service. To that end, these students may serve because of feelings of "empowerment or resistance," and Green (2001) reported that several students of color in her study felt a kinship with the individuals at their service site that they did not feel at their campus (Mitchell & Donahue, 2009, p. 176). Green (2001) also found that in a service-learning

course where students tutored at a local middle school, “many of the White students who participated advanced through some stage of White racial identity development,” while “many of the students of color went through a different process because, from the beginning of the project, they identified with the leaners at the site” (p. 20).

Another dichotomous relationship for diverse students committed to community service is that of responsibility versus privilege (Mitchell & Donahue, 2009). Although intergroup contact theory suggests that a reduction of prejudice occurs when different groups have contact under specific circumstances, peer groups serve as influencers for young adults who volunteer, and young adults often volunteer to do the same or similar activities as their peers (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Simply having contact with communities who identify differently does not serve as a reflective responsibility to change attitudes about supported communities they are supporting or to understand their privilege and class advantages (Allport, 1954). “The system of higher education functions to transmit privilege, allocate status, and instill respect for the existing social order” (Swartz, 1977, p. 545) and there are similar notions in volunteer work. Nenga (2011) pointed in the displays of cultural capital that White students used to distance themselves from those they served. Green’s (2001) study exemplified with a letter of aspirational college attendance, a nod to building cultural capital, mailed from a student served to a student of color who tutored her (Swartz, 1977, p. 546). Latting (1990) found the notion that Blacks in the study about volunteer motivation in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program “may have been inclined toward the social responsibility norm because they all were matched with little brothers and sisters of their own race,” however research has

indicated that the helping behaviors of Black individuals increases when those receiving the help are Black (p. 131).

Bourdieu's theoretical approach to the field of higher education centered around the concept of class stratification, and he argued that higher education legitimized the class struggles of society (Swartz, 1977; Sullivan, 2002). Naidoo (2004) contended that Bourdieu likens this ideology to a machine that sorts individuals based on status and reproduces them based on academic classification to maintain a social norm. Wilson and Musick (1997) positioned morals within the definition of cultural capital to expand its usage to volunteering. The definition of cultural capital as it pertains to volunteering values a culture of benevolence. This culture of benevolence applied rules to who was a good and decent person. Indicators of the cultural capital society necessitates that volunteers are valued by helping others and religiosity. However, religiosity was found to be related to "formal volunteering but not to helping" thusly excluding many from the culture of benevolence. The "behavioral measures of religiosity [were] more strongly related to formal volunteering than was a value-commitment to volunteering," and the value commitment was the strongest indicator of cultural capital (Wilson & Musick, 1997, p. 709).

Higher education is portrayed as a system that honors meritocracy. Marketing of a meritocratic system that realistically values the upper-class individuals more, based on the cultural capital with which these individuals enter college, is misleading and helps to cement notions of class structure as the status quo (Sullivan, 2002; Swartz, 1977). The distinction of cultural capital that volunteering provides and is also needed to volunteer framed the leisure dynamic of volunteerism that can be found in "particular fields of the

arts, culture, sport, and recreation (Harflett, 2015, p. 15)." Harflett (2015) argued that "cultural tastes and practices," often cultural barriers, were indicative of leisure activities with organizations who offered "middle-class cultural tastes" when studying a group of homogeneous volunteers of the National Trust (p. 15). With a suggested "relationship between cultural activity and volunteering possibly explained by middle-class young people using volunteering to signal social advantage to differentiate themselves from others," not only do people use their cultural capital to obtain volunteer opportunities, but organizations also frame the opportunity to volunteer and organizational values in accordance with a perceived "symbolic and expressive good" (Harflett, 2015, p. 7; Hudson, 2013). A case can be made that volunteering just for education-related purposes can "upset the status quo and disrupt the perpetuation of differential distribution of power, to begin the necessary transformation and leveling of an uneven playing field" (Gieser, 2012, p. 11).

Volunteering is the pragmatic response to helping in the community when nonprofit organizations lack resources. Conversely, the understanding of professional models of service that overwhelm the voluntary effort is still a determent from continued service commitment (Wolf, 1985). As students increasingly volunteer for community service opportunities with advanced organizational and technical skills, practitioners attempt to establish standards, foundational bases for practice and entry into the field, as well as form the milieu for the ever-advancing volunteer pool (Fisher & Cole, 1993; Howe & Strauss, 2007).

Society assists in shaping the personal and contextual frameworks that influence college students to volunteer. These service experiences can affirm a values system that

might prove to be vital to their role in a diverse democratic society (Rockenbach, Hudson, & Tuchmayer, 2014). The studies conducted regarding college students' motivation to participate in community service activities have provided a summation of motivation as altruistic, egoistic, obligatory, and for self-identity formation (Jones & Hill, 2003) as well as identifying forms of internal and external motivation (Rockenbach, Hudson, & Tuchmayer, 2014). Jones and Hill (2003) found that college student motivation for community service involvement was attributed to high school activity, their peers, and is connected to their burgeoning sense of self. Over 83 percent of incoming freshmen volunteered in their senior year of high school and a proportion of those decidedly committed to "very likely" serving in college.

In 2018, 26.1 percent of the Generation Y population (both college attendees and those who were not college attendees) volunteered to complete 474.6 million hours of service (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2018). Those who attend college will likely volunteer at a higher rate than their peers in the workforce because postsecondary institutions provide structure for volunteerism. Also, academically skilled students are more likely to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Students who committed to consistent service work throughout high school and were encouraged by familial and educational teachers or administrators were more inclined to participate in community service on an ongoing basis in college (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012; Musick & Wilson, 2008). High school activities are integral to creating a habit of volunteerism, and they provide young adults with a stronger pathway to future volunteerism (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Often, students who were marginalized as children used their childhood trauma as transformational experiences when building their capacity for compassion as well as strengthening their sense of identity and purpose (Jones & Hill, 2003). The research regarding volunteers who may have been or are currently marginalized at their institutions yet commit to doing service work is lacking. The model, in which one "does" community service to others, is one that has been adopted by most Americans, but this model of service demonstrates distance and compartmentalization. Other cultures have models that incorporate service into every aspect of life, individually and communally. The latter cultures' differing models of community engagement highlight a model that the individuals involved in service "are" the community service. The activities or projects associated with this perspective on community service (e.g., comforting those who may be sick, watching the children of the neighborhood, organizing activism or grassroots political effort) are not often reported as community service. Service is usually not announced because many of the volunteers believe their engagement in service collaborates naturally with the time commitments for their culture, family, or survival (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009).

The mutual transition into career readiness and workforce development at higher education institutions and community non-profit organizations make this research timely. Most of the critical analysis of volunteerism is recent, and few researchers have conducted studies that include the varied perspectives of volunteerism either conceptually or practically. My dissertation explored the university as an institutional influence for collegiate Black women and discusses the views shared by the participants in the study regarding their higher education institution.

Women Volunteers

Women have historically volunteered more than men. This assertion remained constant with the Current Population Survey (CPS) supplement in 2014 and the study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (2018). Comparatively, 33.8 percent of women volunteered versus 26.7 percent of men and committed more than 431 million hours to the community (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2018). Women and students with a higher socioeconomic status or more education volunteered more often than their male or lower socioeconomic peers (Rockenbach, Hudson, & Tuchmayer, 2014).

Farmer and Piotrkowski (2009) referred to women's roles as civic activists as often an invisible role, even though women make efforts to promote a healthier community. Societal structures have framed the volunteering commitments of women and determined the types of activities women are equipped to handle. Early in the twentieth century, the labor market limited how women could be employed; that prompted their engagement in volunteerism (Johnson, Foley, & Elder, 2004). Volunteerism was not viewed as competitive to men's wage earning, and the volunteer roles in which women were invested were often considered as extensions of their domestic duties. Women were, however, able to gain social networks and leadership roles within organizations if they identified as White and affluent (Johnson, Foley, & Elder, 2004).

The socialization of gender within the realm of volunteerism likely influenced the type of community service work women have most often perform or have not been stigmatized for doing. Care and nurturing are often quoted as ways for women to show

altruism, and they sought out those types of experiences (Musick & Wilson, 2008). However, as limiting past volunteerism possibilities were for women, opportunities are currently robust. Generally, volunteer activities conducted by women are still primarily in domain enclaves, (e.g., domesticated tasks) (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Many of the participants in my dissertation highlighted the notions in the research that women were impactful to their volunteering. My dissertation stressed that these women actively engaging with the participants to provide opportunities, befriend the participants, and often gave them familial connections to their community service experiences. Their engagement in volunteerism was also highlighted by the nuanced way that Black volunteers and Black women volunteers have historically developed their own communities through race work.

Black Volunteers

"Both the history of African Americans' socioeconomic progress and an assessment of what is needed to address barriers to future progress acknowledge the importance of civic engagement" (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009, pp. 197-198). The Black community embraced an engagement in the livelihood of service before the popularity of civic engagement in higher education enhanced. A cooperative approach to child rearing, aiding the sick, and working towards overall justice can be noted in the care of the Black community, dating back to the years of slavery (Blake, 2009). Institutions of social services, namely settlement houses, to improve Black communities were developed as former slaves were emancipated (Cash, 2001). These houses were deemed a "biracial solution" for racial reform, enlisted workers who "fought for better housing, public

health, kindergartens, and sympathetic treatment to juvenile delinquents, and led the progressive education movement" (Cash, 2001, p. 11).

Although those who identified as White on the CPS volunteered more often than other ethnicities, Blacks are the ethnic group with the second highest percentage of volunteerism. This percentage, 19.7 percent, increased by 1.2 percentage points since 2013 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). This difference exists perhaps because the discouragement of minority groups to volunteer is due to their isolation from "the system" (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 198). A formal model introduced by Costa and Kahn (2003) conveyed that individuals self-segregate when they participate in a heterogeneous society, thereby reducing the number of people who are engaged civically. Although volunteers conduct a comparison of costs versus benefits based on Social Exchange Theory, the extended economic or social benefits of serving with a diverse group of people are rarely considered (Costa & Kahn, 2003). When measuring how individuals in different communities utilized resources (i.e., time, money, voting, and willingness to take risks), they participated less often than those in homogeneous areas (Costa & Kahn, 2003).

Mindfully, the CPS was distributed to 60,000 people and did not consider a volunteer as someone who committed to informal forms of volunteerism (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). A collection of theories and early investigative processes found that when socioeconomic status is controlled, Black volunteers perform at the same or higher rates than their White peers (Slevin, 2005; Pearce, 1993). In a 2001 study regarding young adults' volunteerism, transitioning through college age decreased the gap of the rate of volunteerism between Whites and Blacks (Slevin, 2005).

One of the guiding hypotheses for the motivation of Black volunteers is that Blacks as well as other minorities compensate for the denial of opportunities within mainstream society by volunteering. Musick and Wilson (2008) contended that minority status interest in 'defending the race' creates a demand for volunteer labor in the Black community that is not present to the same degree among Whites. According to this argument, not only are Blacks more likely to be active on behalf of their community than Whites but also race will trump the interests of class (p. 198).

Another hypothesis for Blacks' motivation to volunteer posited that race and class consciousness of Blacks motivates them to participate in community service (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Slevin, 2005). Slevin (2005) wrote that multiple consciousnesses, or the interfacing of both race and class, transcend the boundaries of class because racism stimulated an entire community to action. This multiple consciousness was also foundational in W.E.B. DuBois conceptualization of Black women's role in their communities, often these women volunteer collaboratively to bring about greater impact.

Foundations of Black Women's Volunteerism

Black women, hemmed in by the racist-driven, dismal description of themselves in the late nineteenth-century, felt a great responsibility to the whole African American community (Scott, 1990, p. 19). Historically, Black communities lauded the women of the community as powerful and wise. The image of the strong Black woman is a prominent focus and is marked by "being a mantle that the nation, Black communities, and Black women themselves expect African American women to assume…having an irrepressible spirit that is unbroken by a legacy of oppression, poverty, and rejection" (Harris-Perry, 2011, p. 21). Researchers have conceptualized the activism of Black

women in communities both individually and collectively (Slevin, 2005). Cooper (2017) argued that these acts of service met the immediate challenges of the Black community but were incredibly gendered. These acts also created a noticeable gap in the intellectual works that Black women were able to produce such as historical affidavits and publications, in comparison to their male counterparts (p. 50). This "connected knowing" can also be found throughout feminist notions, and this "connected knowing," applied to the understanding of service to the community, explained the nuanced values or intrinsic emotional motives for serving.

Church attendance is a positive indicator of a likelihood to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008). "The church was so central an institution in the emerging Black communities that there was never a clear line between church-related and secular associations, but by the 1890s, as a generation that had grown up in freedom came of age, explicitly secular clubs began to be founded for self-education and community improvement" (Scott, 1990, p. 9). Active church membership was catalytic for African American women's volunteerism and organizations often provided volunteer opportunities (Blake, 2009; Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009; Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Understanding the common good, social justice work, and the need to be devoted to one's community can be viewed as requisites for any individual wants to connect with the community beyond the abstract (Rhoads, 1997). This was, perhaps, the precursor for the founding of the Black Women's Club Movement that encouraged voluntariness in the American Black community.

The Black Women's Club Movement picked up momentum in the 19th and 20th centuries with a foundational desire to uplift the race and emphasize a focus on the well-

being of children (Slevin, 2005). Several local and national Black women's clubs were founded to galvanize individuals to improve the welfare of the Black community and aid in its survival. More middle-class women participated in Black women clubs; however, they leveraged their efforts to the community to transcend the class boundaries and concentrate on the working, poor, and tenet-farming women of the community (Lerner, 1974; Scott, 1990).

Collective responsibility in the Black community that emphasized survival and resistance evolved, historically, through the motivation to aid others who were less fortunate (Slevin, 2005). Initial clubs were local federations that were philanthropic and assisted with welfare activities, given there was an absence of welfare institutions in densely populated Black communities (Lerner, 1974). Women in Black women's clubs founded kindergarten organizations, orphanages, day care centers, and senior living facilities. Membership qualifications for the clubs were not without criticism, as most members were women who held higher socioeconomic statuses and who often exuded patronizing behaviors to those of a lower class. However, these attitudes were not detrimental to the work the clubs were able to do at the time (Lerner, 1974).

The transformation of local clubs arose in the 1890s as women's multipurpose clubs began to emerge. These groups were meant to incorporate a multitude of activities, but they were immediately a major political proponent of anti-lynching movements. "The ideological direction of the organized movement of Black women [was expressed as] a defense of Black womanhood as part of a defense of the race from terror and abuse" (Lerner, 1974, p. 160). Thirty-six women's clubs unified in 1895 to form the National Federation of Afro-American Women under the tutelage of Mary Margaret Washington.

Similarly, the National League of Colored Women expanded toward national unity as well with Mary Church Terrell as the leader. In less than a year, these two groups were able to increase the number of new women's clubs by forming the National Association of Colored Women (Lerner, 1974).

Data used from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 tested the effects of gender and race/ethnicity on participation in civic engagement, and scholarship offered that, of 972 African American female students in the study, 30.68% performed community service (Dávila & Mora, 2007). The glimpse of formal volunteerism trends for African American college-going women serves as an essential starting point for research in the field, as many recent studies have not targeted the interconnectedness of those identities when reporting the statistics of volunteering. My dissertation considers formal volunteerism and the perspectives of Black college-going women who may not be members of affinity groups that are dedicated to serving the community. The present research will add to the literature and inform practice to expand upon the focus of research on Black women volunteers in the past.

Summary

A study of this nature is imperative to add to the dynamic of Black women intellectual, social change by both the researcher and the participants regarding how undergraduate Black women make meaning of the volunteer work they did or are currently doing in the community. Given that volunteerism is reframed as a lower level engagement with the community, it remains an accessible way to potentially build cultural capital, understand the community, and fuel personal development. The complexity of non-White, non-affluent, diverse engagement in community service has

not been given leverage to those who choose to participate in the work of the community. Therefore, interviewing Black women, with storied ancestry, aided in creating a historical connection while also nuancing the prevailing sentiments of differing cultures, power dynamics, and values.

Before emancipation, there were inclinations of Black women involved in the community, and these women spearheaded of community social reform and activism. They often endured discrimination to volunteer for the uplift of their communities. Relevant research discussed volunteer motivation, volunteerism among Black women and the collegiate-going population, and identity as it relates to the collegiate Black women's volunteer role. The lack of research on Black collegiate motivation to volunteer highlights a gap in the literature. The scarcity is also addressed by thought leaders who propose that domestication of Black women considerably limits the valuation of their narratives on the influence of the dissemination of the tomes. Jones and Hill (2003) asserted that students' socially constructed identities which are contributed to the community service experience influenced their understanding, construction, and engagement in those activities. My dissertation contributes to framing future conversation on critical perspectives of Black women as volunteers and contributes to the literature which considers the motives of volunteers who have not been included in previous research.

Chapter 2 considered the relevant literature and provided an understanding of how my dissertation will add to what has been discovered about the reasons why Black women volunteer. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study considering the

design, my role as a researcher, the site and context, the participants, as well as collection, analysis, and integrity of the data.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The popularity of civic participation throughout the United States in recent years has yielded more focus on community service goals. These goals lead to sustained volunteerism with students once they enter college, as Generation Y are not only more active but also seem to be more likely, through an early introduction to involvement, to be more active than the generations of the past (Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008). In an examination of motivation, Burns et al. (2008) found gender differences in motivation among four of the six volunteer motivations on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI)." Previous studies have highlighted how these students have had to "choose, negotiate, or subsume" part of their identities to highlight other aspects of their identity (Stewart, 2009, p. 265). Additionally, Black college students have a sense of self and "do not think of themselves only in the context of race and/or gender" (Stewart, 2009, p.267).

Farmer and Piotrkowski (2009) found that European American women who balance multiple roles invested more broadly in civic matters. Conversely, African American women were more engaged in activities stemming from protests or activism. Hewins-Maroney (2008) found that there is a simultaneous increase of Black women attending colleges and universities and also increased outreach to drive community engagement. These two instances do not align with the research of civic engagement that excludes the activity of young Black people. That research on civic engagement is also counterintuitive to the historical underpinnings of political and educational transformations in the United States and makes a case for "complex ethnic and racial

variations in civic engagement subcultures [as] an important and relatively unexamined area of inquiry" (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009, p. 208). My dissertation addresses the lack of research on why Black women volunteer and increases the understanding of how these individuals make meaning from those experiences in a way that has not been studied in prior research.

This study was undertaken to ascertain how Black college-going women experience volunteerism in the Miami community. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are reasons Black collegiate women choose to volunteer?
2. How do Black collegiate women make meaning from their volunteer experiences?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative design, which is marked by a rich, thick description of a smaller sample size, and is not used to generalize, indicate causal relationships, or assert ontological views of the observed phenomena (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Although qualitative researchers may discover patterns in the research, these patterns are not used to establish norms (Glesne, 2006). Qualitative inquiry was used to examine the reasons why Black college-going women are motivated to volunteer and the meaning they make from those experiences.

In qualitative research, the evidence is gathered through personal accounts of lived experiences, and phenomenological principles dictate that research is "valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). "At the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their

experience through language" (Seidman, 2013, p. 8). Interviewing in qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to gain insight and is most consistent with the ability to make meaning through language. It is typically used as the method of data collection (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2013).

The goal of the study was to find the commonalities among the participants while noting the differences that were nuanced in their perspectives. A modified analytic induction method of analyzing the data gave me the ability to do that and aligned with the decision to sample purposefully (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Through the modified analytic induction method, in-depth data collection and analysis were accomplished.

Research Design

Bogden & Biklen (2007) asserted that the connection between "phenomenological theory and inductive reasoning" and "techniques of participant observation and in-depth interviewing" are logical (p. 35). Further, Creswell (1998) asserted that individual interviews are a part of the data collection techniques for qualitative studies. It is through in-depth interviewing that the researcher can understand people and how they make meaning of their experiences. A semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol provides a reference point to guide the interview (Moustakas, 1994). The study in which Black women can share their experiences to add to the historical understandings of volunteer motivation and utilize more than statistical or numerical figures of volunteering is an attempt to value their worth.

A semistructured, responsive interview was conducted twice with the participants. The responsive interview, qualitative in nature, helped secure the trust of the interviewees because of the flexible questions, and "friendly and supportive" delivery (Rubin & Rubin,

2012, p. 37). A third interview was not conducted in accordance with Seidman's (2013) three-interview series; however, exploration of alterations to the guide are acceptable so long "as a structure is maintained that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives" (Seidman, 2013, p. 25). The initial interview for all participants was scheduled for the 90-minute time interval recommended by Seidman (2013), but the time proved to be enough for the entire interview protocol that was split into two sessions. Having the first two interviews on the same day is an acceptable alteration to the three-interview series. I worked in some capacity with nine of the 11 participants and had built a rapport with them over the course of a year or more. The customary rapport building that takes place in the first interview was not needed. Two gatekeepers identified the two women I did not know, but they were receptive to the interviewing process. The second interview I conducted was representative of the third interview in Seidman's series which took place typically less than a month after the first interview as Seidman also suggested as best practice.

Role of the Researcher

Utilizing a semi-structured qualitative interviewing method, the understanding of my role as a researcher was essential. Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicated that the researcher's "own attitudes might influence the questions they ask as well as how they react to the answers" (p. 72). Volunteerism has been a cornerstone to my childhood. My concept of community was deeply rooted in my extracurricular activities and home life. My parents established my values about working in the community and would supplement the work I was doing in academic spaces with opportunities to grow through volunteerism. Once I began attending college, the messaging from my parents still

prioritized race work, community building, and volunteerism; however, the university messaging began to become the most consistent framing for my active community service engagement.

The university officials who spoke to me about volunteerism and those with whom I volunteered alongside were often not Black when I was an undergraduate student at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in the state of Florida. However, my efforts to mentor, tutor, and plan service experiences in mostly Black populated areas of my college town aligned with my general expectations as a volunteer. Although non-Black administrators were setting the expectations for my role as a volunteer, the Black people I volunteered to help, created a kinship with me. Those Black community members were motivation enough to continue the service work in the community. As an undergraduate student, I did not reflect on the strength of my identity's connection to the community I was serving because often the reflection at the moment did not account for it or the university administrators were using best practices of service work that excluded mentions of Blackness as it interplays with volunteering.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that one must find a role in the interviewing process that is also accepted and understood by the participants. Working in a previous role as a higher education practitioner at Florida International University, I was able to appreciate my volunteerism retrospectively as an undergraduate student concerning my sex and racial identities. Through coursework reading on cognitive and social development, as well as the retention of underrepresented student populations, I have gained foundational knowledge on the perseverance of Black students but still found a lack of empirical evidence of community engagement for minority students and the

challenges of volunteering or giving back. In-depth examination of the conflict which may exist for a volunteer who has underrepresented identities at the university and may be engaging in communities where the individuals have similar or dissimilar identities are of interest and exploration.

As I continued to observe the demographics of students who enroll in the premier service organization in the office that provided opportunities to serve on domestically or internationally week-long service experiences (Alternative Breaks), the number of Black undergraduate women did not mirror the general enrollment for the institution. Those who engage in the office for one-day opportunities are also not reflective of the general student population percentage. Anecdotal reasons for non-attendance to experiences promoted by the university's student affairs branch dedicated to the promotion of service has driven me to research this topic. Contributing to the volunteer research and, specifically, to the actions of Black women, as there has been a surge of activism within the United States, is my intended outcome.

A new role within the Women's Center at the same institution has recently allowed me to focus on women and their outreach to the community regardless of racial/ethnic makeup, social issue, length engagement, or type of service. This study positions me to be aware of a narrow focus of women who serve that can assist in enhancing resources as well as communication to those in the community who are looking to engage individuals around social issues. It also gives me an ability to share and use some of the suggestions given by the participants in the study or the conclusions I was able to derive from their experiences to another population of professionals.

I have a vested personal and professional interest in the volunteerism trends of Black women, especially those pursuing their degree at an institution where they are a minority. I have connected with a network of volunteers who are Black women, and I have served alongside them throughout the year. It is interesting to see the various meanings that other Black women make of their service experience and what motivates them to be involved in the community. I was prepared to interview women who may have several similar identities as I to move past the anecdotal understandings of the function that service has in their lives.

There is potential with this study to challenge the norm of volunteerism motivation and create best practices which would connect this growing college student population of Black women to the community that may be in need. The college-going population is diverse, and I am not contending that the study should be a generalized principle to establish within all universities. Instead, I offer that the research is used as insight into how service functions for the women studied. I propose that practitioners begin to research these dynamics within their student body. A reflective journal helped me acknowledge my bias and member checking also assisted in making sure I accurately recorded participants' stories. Removal of all bias is impossible, as I identify with the cadre of interviewees with whom I spoke, but I documented those biases to help make decisions throughout the research plan.

Site and Context

Rubin and Rubin (2012) gave four reasons for choosing the site for the research study: (a) relevance to the research problem; (b) ability to gain access; (c) contrasting and tentative explanation testing is allowed; (d) helps to decide the applicability of findings

elsewhere. A summary of the site and context will be provided here with further details in Chapter 4. A study at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, Florida provided a research site that was accessible for me to conduct my dissertation. FIU is a minority-majority institution, 61% of students are Hispanic, within a majority minority city, but Black women are still a minority population in both contexts. The student population of 57,000 students, 13% of whom are Black, mirrored the Black student population at large Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) across the state of Florida (e.g., Florida State University and University of Florida.

Despite the small percentage of Black students, the seven percent of Black women within the 13% of all Black students, gave me the opportunity to interview a large number of students. Sixty-eight students were in the initial outreach for the study. As an administrator at the institution, I was able to get access to listservs and other professionals who could locate participants for the study. I conducted the interviews in the Center for Leadership and Service (CLS) office to provide additional resources regarding volunteerism in which many of the participants indicated an interest. By interviewing FIU Black women who encompass several different cultural understandings of Blackness, my dissertation expands on the research and tests the findings of other studies that I used as tentative explanations. Lastly, the inclusion of intricate knowledge of Blackness works to include more perspectives that could strengthen the generalizability of findings.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized, as it was the most appropriate approach for this study. Purposeful sampling requires an initial cursory explanation of the phenomenon to

be held up to the data as it is collected. The data were later modified as the researcher encountered cases which are not aligned with the formulated explanation to establish an interconnected relationship (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Regarding the current study, an acceptable population was limited to those who identified as women, Black, and were undergraduate students at FIU. It is crucial to emphasize Black is used for describing a person who is of African descent or with African ancestral roots; thus, in my dissertation, this demographic characteristic encompasses a wide range of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

These participants, those who have volunteered more than once in the past academic year, proved that when asked to recall their motivation to commit to service experiences had multiple recent and salient experiences while volunteering in the community. Additionally, efforts were made to find participants who may not have volunteered in the past year. Although no one from the sample of participants identified as someone who did not complete a service project, it was my opinion that by the definition of community service one of the participant's focus on helping members of her immediate family in the past year as well as engaging primarily in philanthropic endeavors did not align with the definition of volunteering in this study.

The total number of Black women enrolled at FIU in the fall of the 2017-2018 academic year was 4,515, approximately seven percent (Florida International University, n.d.). Black women who attend the northern satellite campus had precedence in the outreach, but I was able to enlist a variety of participants including two women on the campus and one online student. With 7,000 students, the satellite campus is located in a community, based on its zip code, where 10% of the general population attends college

(Location, Inc., 2015). The Black population there is comprised of 57.2%, and nearly half of the residents within the neighboring community are foreign-born and provide a nuanced understanding of how service experiences create meaning through a cultural lens. Conversely, the city of Sweetwater where the Modesto Maidique Campus is located, has a population of Black residents of 1.27% (Areavibes, n.d.).

As the participants were sharing locations of their volunteerism, many of them shared their service in the North Miami community or surrounding areas. Few of them shared experiences abroad or in areas away from either of the campuses. Most notably, none of the participants shared volunteer activity that occurred in Sweetwater and many invalidated the service work that they did on campus. As the interviews were completed, deriving this culturally nuanced importance of the service work and the consideration of the participants' upbringing as well as messaging about service throughout their lives from family, friends, and institutions were a focus.

The target population was developed utilizing the volunteerism or civic engagement office listserv of current and past volunteers. The list contained the names and contact information of current and former undergraduate students who volunteered in a service experience hosted by the department. Using both the online student organization platform, Panther Connect, and the institutional research office, I cross-referenced the general information (i.e., Panther ID/student identification numbers) collected from National Days of Service, Alternative Breaks, and other service events to determine the ethnicity/race of the volunteers. Students who fit the demographics of the intended study participants were listed for outreach.

Once the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted, IRB-18-0297, contact with students from the outreach list was made via email. University professionals with knowledge or experience or who may also have engaged student volunteers, such as the Women's Center, Multicultural Programs and Service, Student Government Association, Campus Life, and advisors in academic units were involved for the sample building once I reached out to the initial students on the list and still needed participants. Once an initial sample was engaged, I asked those on the list to identify other students who may qualify for participation in the study, to create a snowball sample. The snowball approach did not yield any key participants because when I asked each participant except one, no individual was recommended multiple times yet one disqualified participant encouraged a pivotal participant to do the interview. However, the information-rich interviewees, Patton (1987) purposed would occur with the inclusion of those suggestions was still accomplished, as many of the participants were a part of similar clubs/organizations or knew each other.

Research participants consisted of 11 Black women students at FIU; the first nine participants were those from the list of individuals who had signed up to do service in the past, while university administrators recommended the final two. The sample size of 10 was proposed for this study, which was following the recommended size of 10 (Creswell, 1998). However, as an effort was made to be more inclusive of women and the nuances of culture for the study, additional outreach was undertaken, and an eleventh participant established saturation for the study. That point of saturation determined the number of participants.

Although every effort was made to ensure a diverse group of participants in every aspect, all participants were classified as seniors. When looking for the final student, who established saturation, a senior was advised for inclusion in the study for consistency. Including only seniors in the study, although not by design, proved to yield a wealth of reflective knowledge and understanding about the connections they have made throughout their lives regarding community service. The diversity was met in the participants' age range (20-27), international standing, transfer status at the institution, primary campus location (i.e., Modesto Maidique or MMC; Biscayne Bay or BBC; online), and their majors. The participants' age range consisted of both Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994) and Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2015) populations. Participants also represented a diversity of Blackness or Black backgrounds as was desired for analysis, most of which were aligned with the definitions of cultures prominent in society except for "Jamerican," the participant's word for Jamaican parental upbringing coupled with African American/Black American cultural influences external to the family unit. The profiles of participants, including ethnicity, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Major	Transfer/ International	Race/Ethnicity	Main Campus
Ashley	20	Chemistry	Neither	Jamaican	MMC
Bernice	21	Psychology; pre-nursing classes	Neither	African American	MMC
Jane	27	International Business and Marketing	Transfer	Bahamian and Haitian	MMC
Lourdes	20	Psychology	Neither	Black Hispanic/Dominican	MMC
Maggy	22	Psychology and Women and Gender Studies	Neither	Haitian American	MMC
Marie	21	Psychology	Neither	Haitian	BBC
Marinella	24	Psychology	Transfer & International	Black from Curacao	MMC
Peggy	23	Business Management; Certificate in Entrepreneurship	Transfer	“Jamerican”	Online
Sarah	21	Biology	Neither	Haitian American	MMC
Viola	22	Psychology	Transfer	Haitian	BBC
Yolette	21	Psychology	Neither	Haitian	MMC

The research study focuses on the motivation of Black women who commit to service. Many who commit to service do not give back to the community in the formal way assessed by the institution of higher education as the literature suggested. Although the university volunteer center and other departments were great initial steps in accessing members of the community to participate in the study, many colleges and universities rarely track informal forms of volunteering and will not advertise those opportunities. Additionally, students who served outside of the university or with departments who do not use the volunteer centers to engage additional volunteers would not have a record of attendance with the department. Asking other professionals advised an additional number of Black women who qualified for the research. Although finding the participants was not an expected difficulty, enlisting students for the study proved to be much less complicated than expected. It became a community of participants and university professionals engaging around promoting the opportunity to work with the study.

Data Collection

The method for seeking interviews with the participants in the study was intentional in that access to programs that were hosted through the CLS office would mean that the students likely had either a relationship or brief communication with me as I was an employee in the office. This relationship or slight remembrance of my presence at an event would prove to help in securing participants for interviews and establishing rapport, and the two that engaged later were because of my connection with either their advisor or the faculty they supported in their peer mentoring role on campus.

The sequence of interviewing, coding, and reporting the results in a formally scripted synopsis has become a standard for qualitative inquiry (Packer, 2011). Yielding

direct quotes about “experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge,” the data from qualitative interviewing provides depth and detail that are not constrained by predetermination of factors (Patton, 1987, p. 7). It is the interviewer’s responsibility to frame the way responses are solicited in a manner which allows for the accurate and thorough perspective of the participant to be shared (Patton, 1987).

Participants in the study were emailed through their university email address and asked whether they wanted to participate in the study. They would provide their name under the date and time that they were available in the online scheduler, (i.e., Doodle) ensuring that they could also participate at the location written. The names were hidden from all other people except the researcher. Once they confirmed their availability, an email before the interview confirming the date, time, and location was sent with the attached written consent form for prior reading. The written consent was covered verbally in the first interview and participants were requested to sign it to continue with the research. Consent forms were kept in a locked filing cabinet with the field notes and researcher journal.

The 11 participants were interviewed and recorded twice. The first time they were interviewed for up to 90 minutes and sent the transcript of the interview before their second interview. The second interview took place no longer than one month after the initial one, and it was conducted to get confirmatory information and add to the understanding of what was shared in the initial interview. Transcription from the second interview was also sent via email for member checking. No participants requested for the original transcripts to be modified. The voice-recordings and other relevant electronic files were saved and stored in the online cloud storage attached to my student linked

email account which was only accessed through a password-protected computer at the institution or in my home.

I intended to interview the participants twice for 90 minutes; however, the first interview conducted set a standard that 90 minutes was needed for the interview scheme, and the additional meeting would be shorter and confirm and expound on the ideas shared initially. All interviews were in-person and on either the Biscayne Bay Campus or Modesto Maidique Campus. The participants were still students and had several activities they participated in on campus, (e.g., classes, club meetings, work), and no one requested an off-campus location for the interview.

Initial exploration of the data collected assisted in finding patterns beyond the demographic homogeneity of the participants. The patterns which are repetitively presented throughout the interviews will yield confirmatory research (Patton, 1987). "This involves testing ideas, confirming the importance and meaning of possible patterns, and checking out the viability of emergent findings with new data and additional cases" (Patton, 1987, p. 57). Initially, expected patterns based on literature included a possible connection to the necessity to seek opportunities to help the community based on familial upbringing or a sense of giving back to ensure others are uplifted.

Interview Scheme

Informal retrospective interviews were used for my study. These interviews required the interviewee to recall and reconstruct a past event (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Wallen & Fraenkel, 2011). Knowledge of the lived human experience gained through a retrospective understanding of individuals is an underpinning understanding of a phenomenon (Parse, 2001). As suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2012), in my study I

engaged in a conversational partnership whereby the researcher and participant actively shaped the discussion. The interviews intended to discover what motivates the study participants to take on the role of a volunteer in the community. The study subjects' responses were considered holistically for commonalities and differences.

The interview plan included phenomenological techniques considering the following themes of phenomenology: the temporal and transitory nature of human experience, concentration on participant's understanding, lived experience as the foundation of phenomena, and emphasis on meaning and meaning in context (Seidman, 2013). Patton (1987) presented depth interviewing as a process by which answered open-ended questions are recorded and followed with additional questions. Interviewing allows the researcher to understand another person's perspective for his or her outward behavior. Therefore, it is the interviewer's responsibility to frame the inquiry in a way that participants can answer "comfortably, accurately, and honestly" (Patton, 1987, p. 109).

The interview plan followed the informal retrospective interview process, asking interviewees to recall past events while follow-up questions from the interviewer were asked to connect the ideas shared before and provide additional understanding of some concepts (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2011). Recollection of past service events and why the subjects chose to engage in those opportunities at the time was central to the study. As participants were discussing early influencers and potential futures, additional questions were added to draw upon the research conducted. A possible schedule of open-ended questions was used to guide the participants as they told their stories. Open-ended questions were used to allow the detailed experiences of the participant to be relayed

"without being pigeonholed into standardized categories" (Patton, 1987, p. 15; Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009).

I followed a loose sequence of questions set by the example Patton explained (1987) why initial experience/behavior open-ended questions are asked towards the beginning of the interview. Opinion/value questions, those that "tell us what people think about the world or about a specific setting," followed to understand the meaning behind the choice to do service work (Patton, 1987, p. 118). Past, present, and intended behavior helped to understand how the volunteers were affected by their experiences and exposed the meaning being derived from their service experiences which worked in tandem with many of the opinion/value questions as they discovered connections between the service work and ideology.

Knowledge questions-used to convey factual points, and sensory questions--used to identify the stimuli of which the interviewee is the subject--were primarily used as follow up questions. Types of questions from those categories include the demographics of those being helped and important notes about the environment of the service site or other details. Demographic questions which captured an understanding of the participants` background were answered at the beginning to establish that the participant fit the study. However demographic questions are tied to descriptive information to avoid establishing a pattern of short responses throughout the interview (Patton, 1987). The final list of 25 questions are included as Appendix A. The protocol that was derived using on the questions of Chapman's (2008) study, as well as the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI), covered the following topical information: (a) general demographics, (b) volunteering history, (c) current volunteerism, acquisition, and documentation, and (d)

making meaning/connection to identity. Although the protocol was developed following the works of Chapman (2008) and the model of VFI, participants were not forced to answer in any way that would have deviated from their perspectives.

Those who consented to the study were able to choose pseudonyms to protect their identities. There were only a few who knew what pseudonyms they wanted immediately and those were recorded. After the saliency of the individuals who started them on their volunteering journeys was revealed in the first interviews, those who had not chosen a pseudonym were asked whether they wanted to pay homage to those that set them on the journey by using the name of those individuals. The participants who did not have a pseudonym used women's names that incorporated friends, guardians, mentors, as well as teachers in consideration of their affectual presence; however, the exact relationships are withheld to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity promised for the study.

Data Analysis

Before data analysis, the researcher transcribed the voice recordings through an audio text transcription service called Temi. These transcriptions did not punctuate, pick up the complete sentences of some of the interviewees, or the difference between a filler like "um" versus the conjunction "I'm" for some of the women, and they ended up being more inaccurate than accurate. I was prepared for that possibility, and all transcriptions were read once while listening to the interviews where needed to capture the correct wording of the interviewees. These, as well as grammar and syntax errors, were manually corrected. The professional transcription company Rev transcribed both transcripts for one of the participants because of her accent and another transcript of a participant due to

the time commitment. Field notes and reflective journaling that acknowledged my values were added to the transcripts as needed.

Field notes were taken when Sarah discussed the conversation with her professor about Monsanto as well as when Lourdes discussed the election in Florida which contained an amendment to grant certain ex-convicts the right to vote. At one point, the someone knocked on the door when I was interviewing Jane, so I included that in my field notes as well. When my first interview did not last the entire 90 minutes, I incorporated that into my field notes to incorporate a modified interview scheme. Lastly, I took several notes about the participants' desire to know more about documenting the community service for either graduation medallions or their resume. I assisted them all with how to complete the process.

The reflective journal was kept to record thoughts about how the potential roles I may have were prompted in the research and challenged or confirmed feelings as I continued to conduct the study. Keeping a journal allows researchers to observe not only their intentions but also highlight personal belief systems and bias (Ortlipp, 2008). "These emerging self-understandings can then be examined and set aside to a certain extent or consciously incorporated into the analysis, depending on the frame of the researcher" (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). Lourdes' discussion about prisoners and my role as an ex-convict's daughter, Ashley's admission that she was displaced and our relative closeness, as well as Viola's reluctance to talk about her family, were all elements that I reflected on in the journal to continue the study's intention.

A record for each of the 11 participants was composed and edited the initial time to capture the correctness of the interview while subsequent editing occurred if there

were any grammatical or syntax oversight. The record was then reviewed to organize, in a manageable way, for the construction of the study which was aided initially by the interview schema. Further review was needed after each interview to analyze the connections within the interview and across the interviews (Patton, 1987). "The case study is the descriptive, analytic, interpretive, and evaluative treatment of the more comprehensive descriptive data that are in the case record" (Patton, 1987, p. 148). Focusing on an inductive, emergent strategy so the data can change the course of the analysis is also imperative when considering narrative components which contribute to the essential themes (e.g., social interactions, type of activity, attitudes, plans, emotions) of the data when exploring the meaning made from these experiences (Waters, 2017). I used church, high school involvement, friends, and family as *a priori* coding because research has indicated these as indicators of service at the collegiate level. Before the interviews, the interview protocol was thematically focused in more general terms listed previously. *A posteriori* codes such as a reluctance to discuss service, the disjointed role the university has in the volunteering activity of the participants, and discussions about privilege were indicated throughout the interviews. I abstracted those "certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, subjects' ways of thinking, and events [that repeatedly stood] out" from the data to understand the essential and implicit meaning which leads to thematic analysis of the similarities and differences (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 1987; Waters, 2017).

My study approached data analysis within each interview initially and then across all the participants' interviews. "A qualitative study seeks to describe that unit in depth, in detail, in context, and holistically" (Patton, 1987, p. 19). Qualitative inquiry was used

to evaluate individual experiences, and the nuances of these examples are particularly valuable (Patton, 1987). I kept themes that were similar in multiple cases as well as those themes that were different than any others shared. A total of eight thematic categories were formed, and the participant descriptions used to answer the two research questions of the study.

All participants chose the pseudonyms. Some of the individuals did not know their pseudonym until the second interview. A study code was given based on the number interview that they were; the first interview was "1," the second labeled "2," until a pseudonym was established.

Data Integrity

Creswell and Miller (2000) asserted that validity in qualitative research is geared toward the accuracy and perceived credibility of the data per the realities of the participants. To assist in the soundness and credibility of data in qualitative design, one can use strategies such as recording rationale and decision in a reflective journal and organizing data in a retrievable manner to reanalyze in the event of challenged assertions (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

The participants in the study and the researcher are lenses which qualitative researchers use to establish the validity of their research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher decides the length of the interviewing schedule, the point of data saturation, and how to narrate the data. The participants assess the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). "Qualitative researchers routinely employ member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audits" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 124). Once each interview was completed, I would

transcribe the recording and send it to the participants. I would have them conduct member checking and alert me of any changes that they had before their second interview with the first recording and after the completion of the second interview once it had been transcribed. Member checking after the initial transcription yielded no responses to change the transcript, and when asked in their second interview about additions or changes they would like to make there were also no modifications.

In my role as a researcher, I identified a closeness to the cadre of women who participated in the study as well as a job on campus that allowed nine of the 11 women to already have a rapport with me. As I took field notes, I also realized that I should keep a journal. One of the first interviews I had was with Lourdes, when she spoke about the prisoners as changed people, I was affected and became emotional. I was emotional when Ashley shared her story about recently being displaced because of our relationship outside of my dissertation study. I became angry when Jane indicated that African American parents do not value education the way that Caribbean parents appreciate it. Journaling helped to give me an opportunity to express those emotions without impacting the questions asked in the follow-up interview. Keeping a journal assisted as the participants began to uncover meanings and motivations that were akin to my feelings; however, it was used mostly to assist in ensuring that follow up questions were not asked in a leading way.

Confirmatory examples added to the description and presented the details of the cases studied. Rigor and integrity are needed through the process of finding consistent examples of the patterns established through the interview plan. The same rigor and integrity are necessary for finding disconfirming cases— “examples which do not fit”

(Patton, 1987, p. 57). Active pursuit of circumstances which do not fit in the explanation was undertaken as a revision to the phenomenon was continued with each new case found that did not align with the relationship established (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). These disconfirming examples could potentially alter the finding or interpretation of the patterns which are initially analyzed and could set boundaries around the confirming instances (Patton, 1987). I intentionally sought out Black women who are unable to serve the community or unwilling to volunteer in their community. These Black women may have helped understand whether the literature on the college-going student's intensive schedules applied to all college students or if there were reasons not outlined by literature for inactivity in community service, but those individuals were uninterested in participating. College students are typically pressured and involved in several different competing opportunities (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Many of the women who did volunteer and had overwhelmed schedules of other obligations, were unable to schedule the two interviews for the initial duration of time planned and expressed their regret for not being able to help and sent supportive messages.

Instead, I received feedback from the participants about their criticism of volunteering and used Marie as a disconfirming case since her most recent volunteer work was mostly philanthropic and she had not had a salient service encounter with non-family members for almost two years. She was in the midst of working towards going through a process to join an immersion trip during the interview phase, but she decided not to complete within the timeframe of the two interviews. Several of the other participants, in contrast, gave examples of 9/11 Day of Service, health walks, and other

volunteering opportunities that they would be participating in during the month we were interviewing together.

All transcripts were stored with voice recordings, study codes, thematic codes, and analyses on a university-provided, password-protected, cloud storage accessed only through my student email address on password-protected computers at the university and my home. When transcripts were sent to students for member-checking, they were sent to their student-issued emails as attachments with no identifying components.

Summary

This study used qualitative inquiry, an interpretive approach, as the theoretical framework to enable the researcher to explore how Black women undergraduate volunteers make meaning from their volunteer experiences. The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the intersection of the meaning volunteerism holds for participants and their motivation to volunteer. This study interviewed 11 women in search of how they have journeyed in their lives through a lens of community service emphasizing the past influencers, the present volunteering action and motivation, and the impact of the messaging and personal reflection on both the present and future concerning their community service efforts.

Outreach to an initial sample of 68 women comprised of students who fit the criterion or may have met the criterion was conducted. A semester ended before the IRB approval and disqualified one participant who expressed interest because she enrolled in graduate school. The importance of having as many women participate guided the next steps to include an additional five suggested individuals who were not on the original list of 68 but were on lists elsewhere in the department or were identified by

staff. In the end, the 11 women of diverse academic, cultural, and university backgrounds reflected intensely on the meaning that service had in their lives during this study and allowed the researcher to; however, unintentionally, deepen the themes characterized by the homogeneity of this classification.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of my dissertation in the rich, descriptive characterization of a qualitative study. Using the methodology, I was able to interview women who shared their reasons for volunteering that was grouped into eight themes. These themes also describe how the participants in the study make meaning from their volunteering experiences because the reason they often volunteer also helps them to derive meaning from volunteer experiences.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

The purpose of my study is to explore why collegiate Black women volunteer in their communities and understand how they make meaning from these volunteering experiences. Chapter IV provides demographic information and core themes that occurred through the analyzing of the cases. Before the findings, the setting of the study is described to contextualize the information. A profile of each of the participants describing each participant's racial and ethnic background, collegiate activities, the participants' definition of community service, as well as the frequency of volunteering and a brief description of their community service experiences follow. The themes that emerged from the data are presented and discussed, concluding in a summary.

The Context of Miami

Historically, Black residents of Miami have immigrated here to escape the economic declines of Caribbean countries of origin and take advantage of burgeoning opportunities for a better livelihood (e.g., Bahamian economic, development of railroad by Flagler) or to flee political obstacles on neighboring islands (e.g., Cuba and Haiti) (Dunn, 1997). Although the first Black residents were Caribbean, Black Americans who had not immigrated from a Caribbean island, participated in the "great migration" at the beginning of the 20th century moving from North Florida and other southern states to Miami (Shofner, 1979). Black established towns/cities have flourished because of their enterprise and although the decline of early established communities such as Overtown began with the rise of highways and desegregation, several other Black communities sprouted throughout Miami, leading to the continued thriving of Black residents. The

American Community Survey (2017) estimated that the population of Black people (including those with more than one race) in Miami Dade County was 18.8% from 2013-2017, while Chirillo, Anderson, and Hess (2016) presented that 16.9 % of the over one million Miami Dade women residents are Black. Additionally, the Black immigrant population accounts for one in three Black residents, "the largest share" of Black immigrants in the United States (Ordonez, 2015). Dunn's (1997) assertion that "there are many shades of Black in Miami: ethnic shades, economic shades, religious shades, and political shades, among others" provides a lens for the profiles of the participants of the study as well as the understanding of the nuanced nature of research with Black participants in the Miami community (Dunn, 1997, p. 1).

Since 2013, Florida International University (FIU) has consistently enrolled approximately 4,500 Black women consisting of seven percent of the university population and more than half of the overall percentage of Black students on campus (Florida International University, n.d.). Michelle Obama's (2018) reflection of Blackness throughout her collegiate career provides an additional voice to how the Black community in Miami can mirror the Black community on collegiate campuses: "I was also coming to understand that there were other versions of being Black in America. I was meeting kids from East Coast cities whose roots were Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican. Czerny's relatives came from Haiti. One of my good friends had been born into a wealthy Bahamian family, and there was Suzanne, with her Nigerian birth certificate and her collection of beloved aunties in Jamaica" (Obama, 2018, p. 87).

Students at FIU have several opportunities to engage in community service throughout their tenure. Curricular service-learning courses are in many of the colleges

and schools on campus. While the Center for Leadership and Service (CLS) offers information on building service-learning courses and publishes the importance of them, there is no centralized facilitation of service-learning coursework at FIU. Through the Carnegie reclassification, departments such as CLS and The Office of Engagement have led the data collection of engagement initiatives in the community; however, they did not have a total number of volunteer hours that student completed publicized on office materials on their websites. It is recommended that a clearinghouse is established for data collection and analysis.

Students also have opportunities to serve through programming from the CLS, Registered Student Organizations (RSO), and the community at large. There is no mandate for community service or volunteering at FIU; however, there are several rewards for participation in service opportunities such as graduation medallions, scholarships, and award recognition. Although the options are limitless for students to participate in service with the community, the non-mandated service opportunities provided from multiple places on and off campus provides difficulty in producing a composite of the number of hours that students at FIU were engaged in community service. There are ways to individually capture those hours; however, the university does not have a way of holistically tracking student service hours.

Participant Profiles

Eleven self-identified Black women aged 20-27, who were collegiate seniors, participated in this research study. The criterion for participation required individuals to be FIU students, Black women, and have volunteered in at least one service project in the past academic year. These criteria were established to have a recent, salient service

experience that participants were able to reflect on during their interviews to provide rich, descriptive information. The criteria were also chosen to increase the likelihood that the individuals would have had many other experiences to draw from that led to a comprehensive understanding of how one can make meaning from volunteering. During the first and second interviews, demographic information about the participants was gathered and confirmed. A summary of the demographic information and overview of the participants was presented in Table 1. A profile of each of the participants, alphabetized by their pseudonym, was created from self-reported data and information from the interview process to provide context for understanding the findings.

The demographic information collected from each participant notably confirmed that they were all women who considered themselves Black. Participants also spoke of their Blackness as representatives of Caribbean backgrounds (i.e., Bahamas, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica) as well as the African American or Black American experience. All participants were considered seniors by classification, although the number of years, credits, and time at the university ranged greatly. Representation from the Biscayne Bay Campus (BBC), Modesto Maidique Campus (MMC), and Online/Virtual Campus are highlighted through the participants as well as seven distinct majors. Table1 has an outline of general demographic information for the participants in the study.

Seidman (2013) presented participant profiles as useful in framing the analysis and interpretation of a study while also sharing the interview data. Through participant profiles the reader can understand the context of the participant, clarifying her intentions as also "conveying a sense of process and time" (Seidman, 2013, p. 122). Additionally,

Seidman (2013) asserted that “crafting a profile in the participant’s own words… allows those words to reflect the person’s consciousness” (p.122). The participant profiles were completed from information assembled during the interviewing process and presented in alphabetical order.

Ashley

Ashley was a 20-year-old chemistry major who was enrolled in “some courses” at BBC but was predominantly at MMC for her coursework. She described herself as a determined and open-minded person who remains optimistic, although she may be “slightly headstrong.” It is important to note that when asked whether she considered herself a Black woman, she was adamant that Jamaican was first and foremost in that description of race/ethnicity. “Being raised in a Caribbean home, it is instilled in you that you’re not just Black, but you’re also Caribbean.” She spoke of prestige to that upbringing with an emphasis on the pride one has when raised in a Jamaican household. She has had situations during her primary schooling that led to stereotyping and has been considering Blackness beyond those stereotypes throughout her entire secondary schooling and even within her first couple of years of college.

Ashley gave an extensive understanding of the dynamics of growing up and going to school with other Caribbean people. “I grew up down here in Miami where I was the only Black person in the class, and I moved to a county north of Miami where my town was predominantly Black Caribbean, and I was one of 12 Black girls in a class.” She discussed that the contrast led her to believe that she was not Black enough or not in the correct ethnic group, so she entered FIU “wanting to be Black.” She quickly understood that the stereotypes people juxtaposed her mannerisms against to pass those judgments

were not a part of her identity and had since embraced whom she was as a person, also holding her peers responsible for the actions of their parents if they have reservations or borderline racist attitudes towards her.

Ashley had been volunteering for seven years beginning in her sophomore year of high school to “acquire 40 hours of service to graduate.” Her first volunteer experience was with a political organization she did not remember the name of where she passed out flyers. She now says that “was not even really volunteering” but her mother initially signed her up. After that project, she signed up to continue the work with the city through conferences and speaking engagements, and her eyes were opened “to how volunteering could change the community.” Ashley volunteered once a month at more than one place or more than one event because of the “opportunities from FIU” and “the overlapping of social issues.” Ashley also volunteered in order to not only do the work, “but get people involved, open people’s eyes to things that they can change that they stand for because volunteering is not just actions, it’s everything that comes before it and after it.” Her leadership within Alternative Breaks, a group that facilitates year-round volunteer experiences for upwards of 500 students, exemplifies her evolved “broader sense” of the definition of volunteering/community service that incorporates more complex understandings of many “sides” of service projects as she researches outcomes of the impact. She continued work with community organizations with a personal, familial connection such as health-related walks and conferences as well.

Bernice

Bernice and Ashley were both leaders in Alternative Breaks, a group that helps many students facilitate and complete volunteering throughout the global community. In

addition to her continued participation with that student-led group, Bernice was also the philanthropy chair for a Panhellenic social sorority on campus. These roles have contributed to her frequency of volunteering, as every month she worked with the student organization, an act she considered volunteering "because I'm not getting paid to do [it] and it's something that I do in my free time." She still focused on hands-on volunteer experiences in the community a few times every year and had the drive to do more. These layers of service were enlightened by her self-described "evolved" "personal definition" of community service at the age of 21:

> My definition of community service is anything that's helping the community. It's like going out into the community, doing something physically for the community, whether it be, doing marathons to raise awareness that way or painting houses, rebuilding houses, cleaning up damage from hurricanes.

Bernice had a drive to "make people feel better, whatever she decided to do," and that guided her choice of psychology with pre-nursing track as a major at MMC and experiences with community service. Bernice committed to volunteering at as many different places as she could but had returned to an opportunity if she enjoyed it. She credited her grandmother for introducing her to a service project when she was middle school aged for which she packed hygiene kits distributed to Haiti after Hurricane Katrina. Her volunteerism continued through high school as she volunteered as a camp counselor through connections with those who worked at a local community center. She highlighted the people she met through her experiences volunteering and noted that her first volunteerism was an opportunity through her grandmother's church. The church was characterized as "very philanthropic," and the church continued to provide her with new opportunities to serve alongside her grandmother and aunt.

Bernice not only pointed to her grandmother as an early encourager of her community engagement, but also spoke of her grandmother as a teacher of the journey of being a Black woman in America. “It’s obviously hard growing up and especially in Miami where it’s mostly Hispanic and Caribbean cultures here, and you don’t see a lot of African Americans, like American, like African Americans.” Although it has become easier in college because there is an increased presence of those who identify with similar experiences, Bernice has “never hid” from the fact that she has always considered herself African American. Although deeply reflective and reserved in our interviews, she described herself as laid-back, goofy, and friendly. She also mentioned she was an observant person who prioritized family in her life.

Jane

Jane at 27 years old was the oldest woman to participate in this study, and the last interview I conducted each round. She is a double major in international business and marketing at MMC who transferred from Miami Dade College “skeptically” but has been successful in her pursuits at the university. She considered herself “African American, but really Caribbean” because she was born and raised in America; however, her parents were from the Bahamas (mother) and Haiti (father). The journey to identity began with Jane’s reluctance to identify as Haitian until high school where other Haitian students made it comfortable to express her culture, and she rarely openly spoke about her Bahamian roots if there was not a presence of other Bahamians. With a secondary education in schools with a large White population, the FIU campus allowed her to be more attune to her culture through involvement with the Caribbean Student Organization (CSA) by participating in the parties, festivals, and learning opportunities they presented.

In addition to CSA, Jane was also involved in student organizations on campus that are geared toward her major (i.e., International Business Honor Society), helpful in building her network, and holds a leadership position as a peer mentor. Off-campus she continued to volunteer with different walks dedicated to awareness of health issues which were Jane's primary focus of volunteerism even as she volunteered weekly as a peer mentor and in the on-campus student food pantry on occasion. Balancing the opportunity to serve and the need to be employed was important to Jane and was modeled by the person who invited her to the first community service project she attended. Her tenth-grade teacher, who only worked part-time to balance her family life, extended an invite to Jane in her senior year of high school to work with children in the local Atlanta area where they were living at the time, alongside the church club from the school.

Jane's reflection of children who "were attached to us like brothers and sisters… made her really want to keep doing that." Her gap in volunteerism came with attempts to replicate the project once she returned to Miami. Although she had been invited to participate with the teacher and church club the following year, she had already returned to Miami and could not travel to Atlanta to participate nor could find similar local opportunities. At this point with the start of college, Jane took an extended break from volunteering until her last year at the local college she transferred from when she began volunteering every weekend mostly through awareness walks she would find online through volunteer opportunity websites. The seven-year gap of not volunteering or as Jane defined it, "doing something for your community…without expectation of money" ended with exuberance about working to "make people feel happy" and participating in two service projects the day of her college graduation. The evolution of her perspective

of the symbolic "prisoners cleaning up trash on the side of the road" that presented community service as punishment to something that she values as a way to give back and stay involved was unique to her experience in the study. Her reluctance has yielded to active engagement throughout her time at FIU.

Lourdes

Adamant about her description as a Black woman, Lourdes was the only participant who was also Hispanic. She considered her twelfth-grade year of high school as transformative in recognizing that people could be both Black and Hispanic. With roots from the Dominican Republic, it took a classmate's biting criticism of her passion toward the current headlines at the time and the Black Lives Matter movement to consider the complexity of her identity:

> I'm a light skinned woman so I could pass for Hispanic. I don't necessarily pass for Black, but I remember I ran home that day, and I checked my birth certificate, and it said Black on it. It's like this whole journey to figuring out, I'm Black, and I'm proud of it, and I'm also Hispanic too. And I'm proud of that too. It's not mutually exclusive.

It was also in high school that Lourdes began volunteering with a push from the rigorous programming mores of the International Baccalaureate program in which she was enrolled. After some prompting, Lourdes remembered volunteering during altar service from kindergarten to second grade but does not credit her enthusiasm for service to those first opportunities. Although she did not feel impassioned by those first acts of service, when prompted Lourdes concluded "I always like to think about something that stood out to me when I was helping somebody and something that really made that whole experience memorable for me" and shared multiple experiences from volunteering opportunities that highlight friendship, advocacy, and community building.

Her first experience “doing something she actually really liked” began her junior year in high school when she volunteered for a children’s camp through a local hospital. Although she did not work for the camp longer than a year because it was “really time-consuming,” most of the service she has done has been yearly, including her recent work with inmates in a reform program that she volunteered for weekly. She is still committed despite no longer being in the introductory course the semester prior, and has channeled the early passion with service into working at a lab that deals with “health disparities and cultural identities… a combination of psychology and sociology with medicine type of things where we study health disparities amongst minorities” as well as going on a service immersion experience the previous year.

As a psychology major predominantly at MMC, Lourdes celebrated a birthday five days after our final interview and turned 21. Despite volunteering once a week throughout the semester, she wished she could do more, hoping to go on another immersion experience and combining that endeavor with promoting the literary magazine she was a part of producing through the Honors College. However, balancing work and taking more time to be financially secure was a critical need. Over time she went from believing community service was “a chore because I wasn’t doing something that I cared about” to exploring the diverse opportunities through volunteering. She then understood community service as “more of a project where it has a start, middle, and end. I go through it, and I figure out where I fit in the equation and ask, “did I really make a difference?”

Maggy

As a double major in psychology and women and gender studies, Maggy attends FIU MMC and considers herself a liberal feminist who is active, marginally funny, adventurous and "a little radical." Her childhood in neighborhoods that were not "always the best" left her with an impression of having a service-oriented attitude. In particular, she spoke about the disaster relief in her neighborhood after Hurricane Katrina as foundational:

> I was pretty young, like 10, nine, so seeing them [FEMA and volunteers] come, like knowing that they don't have to do it. They're probably not getting paid and stuff, but they are here helping us and just being there for us. They were people with whom we could talk. They weren't just like 'oh we're here for our business, and we are leaving.' They were very social, and I liked that about them and seeing them every day inspired me to just be like one selfless act will not hurt you. Giving back just like they helped me. I want to do the same for somebody else.

Maggy contended that she is Haitian American racially and ethnically as she was born in Haiti and emigrated to America at the age of four years old. Although she once considered herself African American, she anecdotally felt a disconnect between the African American identity and a Haitian identity even hinting that African American and Haitian individuals were "kind of against each other. "Understanding that there is no classification for Haitian American throughout her schooling, she has identified as African American or Black despite the strong inclination to describing herself as Haitian American and stated, "there isn't really much of a difference, but to me it is."

Maggy's volunteering began with a women's group in church whereby she would participate in many philanthropic efforts to raise money for church needs and scholarships. Working throughout middle school and high school, ten years Maggy

estimated, she was able to acquire the number of required hours needed to graduate and remain active in high school. Since the eighth grade, her dedicated service continued through the Upward Bound program and the bay clean up initiatives they coordinated.

She now volunteers “a lot of free hours, but not as much as [she] used to” being a full-time student and a part-time employee. Although she is a member and a part of leadership for affinity-based student organizations (e.g., women’s rights, climate challenges, Multicultural Programs and Services office), she volunteered based on the network outside of the university. “Since I have been here at FIU, I don’t feel like I hear or have a lot of opportunities to give back to the community.” Maggy has evolved from defining community service as fundraising and giving money, the objective of her first works in the community, to understanding or determining for what money given to the organization should be used. This is accomplished through giving her time to the organization and knowing that money would be used efficiently and for “the right reasons.”

Marie

At 21, Marie studied at BBC as a psychology major and had experience taking dual credit courses in high school before enrolling at FIU. Self-described as open-minded and patient, she considered her community-oriented mindset a product of her rearing from a family born in Haiti. Marie also mirrored the understanding previously displayed by Obama (2018) in discussing her Blackness:

> Because I consider myself Black. I feel like most people would, but it has been brought to my attention. I mean in my head there’s more than one way to be Black. I don’t think there’s a fixed definition of it and I don’t think like me being a child of immigrants from a different country, predominantly Black, like African ancestry should change that definition

> just because it's a different upbringing or a different culture, different language.

Estimating that she had volunteered for over "five or six years combining the gaps," Marie was a participant in the study who spoke mostly of past community service and future endeavors in her interview. Contextually her co-curricular activities were limited because she "had to work around not just her school schedule but public transportation as well" since she did not have a vehicle to commit to events. Although she was not engaged in any current co-curricular activities or service projects at the time of the interview, her depth and breadth of past volunteering provided her with an understanding that volunteerism is "a part of her identity." Building self-confidence through the ability to serve the community for no cost and with few skills has been invaluable. Critical of the effect that some of the programs she was involved in had at the moment, she relayed a cautious attitude toward service where the job description required a knowledge set that she may not have had. She said, "I just have a strong feeling I'd be doing more harm than good to the community and the kids getting involved with them."

Marie personalized her service engagement and alluded to providing community service to her family unit although that is not included in the definition she provided when prompted about the recipients of service whom she believed should be "people I don't know." However, with a self-professed tendency to have worked with women in high school, she wanted to expand her perspective of community service through working with a large hospital in Miami, working to educate students at FIU through peer mentorship, and had been developing plans to go on a medical mission trip. She expressed that volunteering was important to her but also proclaimed: "I don't know what

I would do, like looking back, without those programs because…some kids that I met along the way definitely played a bigger role and had a bigger effect on me than I feel like the other way around."

Marinella

Although several participants had Caribbean ancestry, Marinella was the only international student who participated in the study. As a "Yu de Curaçao" or "child of Curaçao" translated from the Papiamento language, Marinella was resolute in stating "I'm proud to be a Black woman" in her interview. The saliency of labeling Blackness for othering spanned across the globe for Marinella, who chose African American or Black on forms and proudly informed others she was Black but has been privy to understanding the discrimination in Holland, the "motherland" of Curaçao:

> In Holland, I don't have any problem if you call me Black, and I'm proud to be Black, so if I go to Holland, I will be comfortable with [people saying oh yeah, you're Black]. But if it comes to you judging me [because] I'm Black, and that's why I can't get that position or I can't get this or I can't get that, you are putting me in a not comfortable position.

Although citizens from Curaçao typically continued their education in the Netherlands, Marinella decided to begin her collegiate career in New York at a community college before enrolling at FIU. As one of four transfer students in the study, Marinella frequented MMC and was a business administration management major. She transferred a year before the time we interviewed, she lived off campus approximately an hour away with an inability to travel without public transportation and was unable to participate in any co-curricular activities. At the interview, she had moved closer to campus and was able to join a business honor society, a religious organization, and volunteer in classrooms as a peer mentor weekly as well as in the community more

broadly. Marinella was open to doing more community service and ranked it "on a scale from 1 to 10, it's 10" because of the cost associated with everything else except volunteering and the "blessings" you will get from "doing something that will impact other people, that will affect other people, and that will make other people happy without asking for anything in exchange."

Although Marinella had a year of transition with no volunteering activity, she explained that she has been serving the community "technically [her] whole life." She spoke about volunteering at 5K events and food and wine festivals as well as highway cleanups and career fairs throughout the years which she began at the end of high school and had continued. As an international student doing a highway cleanup in New York, she reflected feeling "great because I could give back to the United States…I'm so thankful for the opportunity to study here, so I didn't even think about [it] I just joined them and went for the highway cleanup." The connection to service and country was not new to Marinella, as one of the first service projects she was a part of on the island of Curaçao was a country-wide beach clean-up. On World Clean Up Day, the residents of the island were grouped to clean up the island in a coordinated effort. "People were so nice to each other. If [something was] your task…. and I finished mine, I come to help you. I loved it because everybody was so calm, everybody was looking in the same direction… everybody wanted to achieve the same goals."

Peggy

Peggy transferred to FIU from a community college in New Jersey with challenges in course reciprocity, but her path towards a degree in business management and a certificate in entrepreneurship has since benefitted from her resiliency. As the only

online student in the study, Peggy spends time on both campuses respective to her co-curricular involvement. She led a small group of students as a microcosm of Alternative Breaks with more than 500 student participants, facilitated the social media for a transfer student honor society, joined an accounting group specifically for Black students, the dance team for an African student organization, and became a transfer ambassador.

When I asked a question about identity, Peggy described her racial identity as "Jamerican." A combination of her familial rearing framed by the island of Jamaica where both her parents were born and raised and her connection to the friends she had throughout her childhood, who were African American. This connection to those around her, teachers and peers alike, led her to begin her community service endeavors beginning in elementary school. Volunteering in the nursing home her mother was employed in throughout the time, but also working with the African American club to serve at a soup kitchen were foundational pieces that continued her proclivity towards volunteering throughout high school and college. Throughout that time her perspective expanded of what community service projects could include, and she viewed community service or "giving back if you have something that other people might not have, or you have the ability to do something that other people [cannot do]" as more than the expectation of working in the familiar nursing home alongside her mother.

Peggy's foundation for future endeavors was based on the importance of volunteerism. "It's very important to me because after I'm done with school, and I'm more established in my career I plan to open businesses." Further, her previous work in the community, typically monthly throughout college because of the inaccessibility of a vehicle, has framed volunteering as a community endeavor:

> I feel like it's a community thing, and it should be a community thing just because one person can do a lot, but you know, when people unite and come together it's a bigger difference. I feel like it's a community thing and it pretty much always be a community thing… they're all coming together despite their different ethnicities, different races and such]and doing things.

She has a goal of distributing "more of her money to other people, especially to Black women, Black girls" once she has received a portion of profit as she continued to reflect on the community at large and the lack of resources that this "vulnerable population" faces.

Sarah

Since middle school, Sarah has been volunteering but decidedly said that service in middle school was "nothing serious." Working with her sister to transcribe sermons of the pastor in a church, Sarah's definition of community service has evolved from a checklist of passive work that you would do to meet a requirement. She now has a definition of community service that requires "actively participating in your community by not just providing monetary goods but also your time and yourself in communities worldwide with a good feeling as compensation." Sarah ranked the importance of volunteerism to her as an eight on a self-imposed scale of 10 because although it was important to her, volunteering was more critical to those impacted by it.

Sarah's volunteerism was based on the time she had to commit to the events she was invited to so her frequency serving the community was sporadic albeit plentiful. The co-curricular student groups Sarah was involved with such as the Haitian student organization, a pre-health honor society, as well as a pre-health student organization, have assisted her in completing many service projects and provided her with myriad

opportunities to serve in the local, national, and global communities. Sarah contended that those actions mirrored a perspective of having to do service through events or organizations, but since her last immersion trip to Colorado she now believed that "little things like providing resources" can be done on your own and "that's considered volunteering."

Sarah, a student mainly at MMC, majoring in biology, has volunteered in Nicaragua, Tulsa, Oklahoma, as well as Allapattah in the Miami area, and saw each experience as a new challenge with rewarding outcomes. "I feel like I can do anything. I built a bathroom. Excuse me. I've been on a farm. I've herded cows. There's nothing to limit in volunteering." She believed that Miami was different from every other place she volunteered because of the "diversity and differences of personality," a challenging dynamic when she discussed the journey of her Haitian identity which at 21 also included being a Black woman:

> I feel like in seventh and eighth grade I had to really hide that [Haitian] identity. But then when I got to high school, when I was able to find people who were like me, it was a lot better. I feel like claiming myself as Haitian had become something that I feel like I have to do because I neglected a part of myself when I was younger.

Viola

When asked to describe herself, Viola almost sang a tagline of being "the short Black girl with a Haitian accent." As a 22-year-old Haitian American, Viola moved here at the age of three and grew up in neighborhoods that included Hispanic, African American, and Haitian neighbors who helped to mold her in the United States. Those same communities influenced her attitude of community service as she defined it as being the "smallest thing but just going out and [giving] like an hour or two of your time to

something that's bigger than yourself. We need to support someone or a service or an event that's happening. It's helping at volunteering events; that's helping with the little things at the end of the day." Her desire to be informed of the many layers of a volunteer project was evolved throughout the years and was due in part to her on-campus employment with the Women's Center that works closely with the CLS. Earning an award for service work at the college she transferred from, participating as a peer advisor, peer mentor, transfer ambassador, and a leader of a small immersion trip also helped her view of service evolve.

Viola was a transfer student from Miami Dade College, and this psychology major had most of her coursework at BBC. Although she was not an international student, Viola had a distinguishably heavy accent and was able to get involved in community service through persistence and mentorship.

> Women are the people who gave me an opportunity to volunteer and get that service. It was women of different backgrounds. I remember even at the daycare [her first service experience] the supervisor was Muslim, and I got to college, and the person was Haitian. These women showed women empowerment.

Those initial volunteer efforts exemplified Viola's resilience. The daycare near her home in middle school when her volunteering began denied her the ability to work there and the director would send her home every day she would show up. One day she allowed Viola to shadow and do small tasks with the role evolving into a camp counselor position her junior and senior years of high school.

Viola remembered needing five hours of service for her high school graduation requirement but accomplished many more hours than that and fostered a love for helping. "It's one thing that makes me truly happy; helping people, so yeah it's really dear to my

heart." Concentrating on what she called "the little things" such as recycling, Viola estimated that she volunteers "as often as she can depending on her schedule" and would commit to more if she could. The range of her roles as a volunteer in the past have positioned her to assist with conferences such as Black Tech Week but also positioned her alongside environmentalists to work on cleaning up the Biscayne Bay. Her breadth of experience was apparent throughout the interviewing process.

Yolette

Yolette described different experiences she has had in her volunteering history including work at homeless shelters, doing "environmental restoration," tutoring children or donating different supplies to children. This service activity began for Yolette consistently in high school through the Kiwanis or Key Club. However, she was inclined to believe that service to her community began much earlier. Although she was required to complete 100 hours of service in high school, Yolette surpassed that with the club viewing her involvement as a triple win since she enjoyed doing service, was able to stay after school, and could complete the mandate for hours.

As of late, like her start with volunteering, Yolette had been volunteering mostly in groups at different opportunities throughout the year trying to strike a balance with her time and working through her ability to travel without a vehicle. An active participant in several Black social affinity groups around campus, she was a member of the Black Student Union and a National Panhellenic sorority, a predominantly Black sorority which started as a professional sorority of Black women but has evolved from the 1922 inception to include undergraduate students. Defining volunteerism as "unpaid" and "giving your time or providing different efforts and kind of collaborating with other

people or organizations to make whatever that goal was to meet it," some of that understanding is framed for the 21-year-old MMC psychology major by the sorority of which she is a member. It was also reminiscent of the coursework material she has been introduced to on collectivist societies and family upbringing:

> [Volunteerism] is extremely important to me, and it's not just because my organization is a service organization, but also because I've realized how much I can't idly sit by and not do something. It's because I realize that everything is a collective effort. This idea of the community is the priority and then self.

Yolette saw these community first principles in her home where her parents were "prideful" Haitians, and she would, contrary to several other interviewees, identify as Haitian very early in her life. Watching her mother complete documents for her and her children where "other" was checked, and "Haitian" was written in impacted her understanding of Black culture. In college, she resolved that "when a person looks at us, you can differentiate and see different distinctive features, but at the end of the day we're all Black, and Haitian, Jamaican that's not a race that's more so an ethnicity. That still falls under the umbrella of African American." Contextualizing the past, Yolette was inspired not only by the members of her sorority "who banned together and stuck together for a common cause and a purpose…to improve the livelihood of all womankind…standing up to the Ku Klux Klan" and fighting for decency and accurate representation in Indiana, but also by the education she received about the history of Haiti and their battle for independence from family members.

Summary

The participant profiles work to introduce and give background information on each participant and frame how the study encompasses a variety of service ideologies and

ethnicities. Elements of the profiles were revisited throughout the interviews as we discussed the difference in role models and the difference in service as well as the educational environment. Participants drew on their past experiences and the role they presently have and have had in the community to answer many of the questions. Often the connections between one question and another could be found in the demographic information they shared in their profiles. Representing these data in a manner that conveys the complexity of race/ethnicity as well as the meaning-making experience for participants who define community service differently, who had varied pasts with volunteering, and who experience the university in myriad ways was essential.

All the participants had prior volunteer experiences before matriculating into college. Although Marie did not have a recent volunteer experience in the community that was not benefiting a family member, all were asked why they continued to volunteer and what they got out of volunteering. The participants were all members of organizations, some campus leaders, who experienced connections with others through those groups. The participants' reflections about the motivating factors of their volunteering led to some dynamic differences, similarities and nuances among those similarities. Each began volunteering because of the influence of either an individual or mandate, spoke of both the complexity and simplicity in why they volunteered and reminisced on the experiences connecting with those whom they have served. Only one of the 11 participants did not have any current community service activity; however, many of them spoke to volunteering intermittently based on the barriers they faced when trying to volunteer. All the participants were seeking future ways for continued involvement.

CHAPTER V
THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Exploration of the themes of my dissertation interviews yielded eight themes addressed among the participants. These thematic areas were discussed in chapter 3 as well as in the literature review. As I will describe later in this chapter, many of the motivating factors that past researchers pointed to were consistent in what helped get the participants started on their community service journey; however, with all but one participant being on the receiving end of service, the experiences are unique to the literature. It was imperative to ask additional questions about race and ethnicity to provide additional context to the motivational questions, and I found it imperative to ask about one's receipt of service as the literature discussed the necessity of Black women supporting their communities but did not discuss the needs of Black women. The themes are presented as they were significant throughout the interviews.

Volunteerism Began Before University Enrollment

Slevin (2005) spoke to the actions that predicted adult volunteering habits: education, religion, employment, early experiences with volunteering, parental promotion of volunteering, as well as age and life-stage influences. All the predictors were indicated in the response from the participants. Discussing the motivation of participants before college is essential as it also provides an opportunity to discuss the evolution of motivation over time.

When asked about their start in volunteerism, several of the participants mentioned experiences already serving their communities. These reasons differed across the participants and uncovered several different underlying explanations of early starts in

volunteerism. There were noted disconnects from the service work they committed to in the past and either their desire to help or their knowledge base for helping. Maggy spoke of influences from role models that led her to going to the initial meetings to give back but was unclear about why she was attending the meeting or what the meeting was about.

> At first, I didn't really know what I was getting myself into because somebody told me to just come [to] meetings, and you will like it. And I had a mentor, which was the reason I kind of really got involved, and she was like just go to the meeting because she was involved in it. (Maggy)

Maggy's support system at church still motivated her despite her misunderstanding of the activity in which she would be engaging. Although Lourdes was clearer about the intention to serve the community than Maggy, she was new to understanding the needs of the community.

> There was a discrepancy between me wanting to help and me actually understanding why people need help and why do I need to put my hand out there. Why do I need to do what I want to do and help people if I don't even understand what it's like to go through things like [that]? I hadn't been through things in my life (Lourdes).

Lourdes recognized that she "wanted to be somebody who makes a difference in the world and make a change, but when you're young, it is kind of hard." Bernice surmised even that she "wasn't fully aware of how much of an impact [she] could have," while Marie was able to get "the first taste of what exactly the meaning behind what she was doing" in high school:

Starting seemed to be the issue at hand for Lourdes in her youth, as well as Ashley who despite having access to volunteer opportunities "got stuck in the 'I'm not an adult yet setting:"

> That's what really pushed me to try to do as much as I can because one of the biggest things that we talked about is we want to do all these things but we're not being taken seriously, or we're not legally allowed to do these things. So how do you help, how do you volunteer in those settings and put your thoughts and put your two cents in to better the world in a way that you know could be beneficial?

Ashley's drive to be a doctor assisted in her understanding that she started to do service because "there was always an urge to help people." The opportunities were not apparent to her throughout her youth, but like Viola's statement on the start of her service work, "it was something that [she] liked to do." Peggy also worked in her drive to work in the community at a young age through a refined lens of one social issue. "It was just simple. What can I do to help people who don't have food? I wonder if I can help pack some meals and give them to them. That was my main concern. My main consideration was just being able to help." Marinella also decided that one of the first things she considered when volunteering at the beginning was that she "was not going to clean up or do service work for other people… she was doing it for herself and getting the feeling" she would get from doing it is a confirmation of Smith's (1981) finding that volunteers seek reciprocity in the satisfaction of giving to the community.

The drive to volunteer that the women discussed independently of each other was framed in a significant way by Yolette who also began her service work based on a personal drive to volunteer. It was a statement that summed the essence of the other sentiments precisely:

> I wanted to give back. I wanted to help others who couldn't necessarily help themselves. It wasn't responsibility, but it was a force. It was like [an emotional force] of I see this problem, and I would like to do something to help. Yeah. Like I would like to do something to help.

The participants were careful in giving responses that were congruent with a driving force to volunteer, however, many of the women expressed that there was not a responsibility to why they volunteered and wanted to ensure that compulsory volunteerism was not the reason they continued working in the community even when there were requirements for service at the start of their volunteering.

Each of the participants in the study began their service work when they were younger, yet all but three shared that they had to complete service because their school mandated them. Those three individuals did not attend high school in the state of Florida. Although Bernice did not discuss the school mandate of service at length, she did outline how she felt her service work in her youth was not a choice either since it was her grandmother and aunt keeping her active. Marie also spoke about her grandmother "basically raising little volunteers from the very beginning" when she considered that yearly her family would "send care packages… boxes of clothing, foods that wouldn't spoil, basic medical aid" to family members who were still in need of help. In the case of Ashley, Peggy, and Sarah, even if their family was not as hands-on as Bernice and Marie's who did the work alongside them, their mothers made sure to sign them up for service or invite them to serve on their jobs.

In Ashley's case, she began to volunteer earlier because of the combined need for service in her high school and the fact that her mother, "signed her up to do hours by giving out flyers for somebody running for school board." Peggy's mother worked at a nursing home, and instead of insisting Peggy sign up or taking matters into her own hands, Peggy's mother would let her three children know "they were going to have these volunteers today and if Peggy wanted to jump in too, she knew she could." Sarah

challenged her mother's belief of community service but recognized that although her mother did not like the idea of mission trips, she promoted Sarah and her sisters' involvement in the church as volunteers. "But that church though, my mom wanted us to volunteer there because when my dad passed away, they would send food to our house and…whenever my mom needed anything they were always there."

Ashley, Bernice, Lourdes, and Marinella enthusiastically explained that they were able to discuss volunteering with their family or mothers thoroughly. Marinella texted her mother often to tell her about her volunteering activity. "She's happy hearing that I'm volunteering even though she is praying for me to get a paid job." Ashley told her family "everything because they have been the people that I go to when something goes wrong." Ashley called her mother every day and saw the opportunity to engage with her mother, older and younger brother as a way to understand "different perspectives on how life works." That was imperative so she could "get a better, clear answer" that would take into account the "other side" of an issue including controversial topics.

Controversial topics were also identified as ways that Lourdes was able to broaden her mother's perspective of those whom Lourdes would volunteer to help. Coupled with being "proud" of Lourdes, Lourdes' mother has opened her mind "to things that before she would not really understand, or she as prejudiced against." The most difficult of those learning moments happened when the prison was locked down until almost midnight because of a recount. When Lourdes returned to her vehicle, she saw a barrage of calls from her mom "freaking out." She explained to her, "these guys are really cool" and "that it could be lockdown and I will have to be in there until the lockdown is clear" helped to build an understanding. Bernice also had an experience

volunteering with her sister at a hospital, but mostly discussed volunteering with her mom who would often quip that Bernice "did it for the shirts."

Both Marie and Yolette spoke about their parents knowing some of what they did regarding community service. Marie understood that her "mother was doing her own thing" but was supportive of the job interest shift toward social work. Having fewer instances of service than other participants may have been influential since Marie was providing fewer examples to her mother about the volunteer work. Yolette's father's side of the family glossed over the work she was sharing as community service only stating "oh, that's good." Her mother was different and was her "number one cheerleader who understood the reason why Yolette did it."

Contrary to other participants, Yolette found that her siblings focused more on school when she tried to talk about service with them and mentioned family in Georgia who were establishing a volunteering ethos with their children at an early age.

> They have the kids who helped them make the [blessing] bags, the kids are like four and six, teaching them the value of giving back and giving to others and volunteerism early. It wasn't necessarily instilled in me growing up, but it's always very inspiring and just heartwarming when you see others doing it for their children. But then also because I see someone else in my family, they value it just as much, and it's just like, all right, we're doing something.

Yolette was energized by the notion that her family was able to consider volunteering as pivotal to the early development of others. Importantly, Marie's, Sarah's, and Yolette's families were the only Haitian families in the study that were supportive of volunteering notions.

Jane, Maggy and Viola, all them of Haitian descent did not have a family dynamic that allowed for them to discuss community service openly and be understood. Maggy

competed with a language barrier to tell her mother about the volunteering she did; “my mom she doesn’t speak English, so when I want to tell her it’s going to be lost in translation… I just give her the surface of what I’m doing.” Maggy reflected about her mother’s would-be attitude in the event she would have told her about donating blood when she was sophomore or junior: “I would not tell my mom because she would kill me.” Seeking utility in the work that she does, Jane’s mother may ask what she is doing next, but that was tempered with her criticism in asking “why do you keep [doing it], you have not applied for any [scholarships]. You’re wasting your time.” Jane kept the rouse up about scholarship applications with her family admittedly knowing that she would not be applying to any.

That association with utility or work resonated with Sarah, Haitian as well, who said that her mother is a nurse and helps to run a mobile clinic that “offers free mammograms, dental cleaning,” so Sarah felt like her “mom always associates volunteering with her work, her job.” Sarah’s mom attended the church that helped the family get back on their feet and worked with them as well except for mission trips. Sarah was convinced that her mom thought those were “crazy.” Viola had difficulty talking to her family about volunteering. “With my parents, we’re not close… I don’t have a relationship with my parents.” She did point out that education was important to them, but when she has tried to explain her community service work, she was met with “Haitians don’t believe in that. You’re working, and you’re not getting paid? I don’t understand. How is this going to help you make money?”

Some of the participants who did not discuss the service work with their mothers were able to share with other family members. Often the siblings of the participants

helped to mold and shape service attitudes or were there to debrief the volunteering experiences. Peggy who did not talk to her mother about service lived with her sister in the residential hall at FIU. After a service experience, Peggy's sister would inquire "How'd it go? What'd you do? What happened?" Peggy would respond with funny moments as they had a similar baseline of understanding since they both volunteered with their mother at the nursing home. Sarah's family had a group chat called "Blessed Family" exemplifying how "religious they are," and she had a sister who was a missionary. Sarah reflected on that influence in her life as that was the same sister with whom she did her first service project. "I feel like I got [lifelong journey of volunteering] from her. She taught me how to go out there and not be scared. But her volunteering is different because her goal was to spread the word of Jesus it was kind of different than what I wanted to do."

Ashley admitted that her family was her major support group to whom she was obligated to detail her service work, while her friends were the "middle ground" of communication. Ashley felt she could "drag people" or be "harsher" about the people she was volunteering with and could "spill her heart out" or be as general as she wanted with her friends in comparison to the demands of her family. Lourdes realized that her volunteering was "personal to me, and it's something I do to like give back." When she did discuss it with her friends, she spoke of it "very highly because it was a cause that [she] really cared about and felt like it was something good that she was doing at the end of the day. I don't say it at first, but I explosively say it eventually."

Yolette's volunteerism was inspired by her best friend because "she was one of the first people [she] met that took volunteering really seriously." That was in high school

when she would see her friend volunteer “every weekend even without the aspect of it being required,” and she volunteered with a friend in college “but they had their own respective things that they may go out and do.” She recognized that you wanted to have friends who “shared the same things,” and Marie shared an example of a group of high school friends she would volunteer alongside. Although Viola did not share that she was able to do service with the friends in her life, she did explain that she debriefed the service opportunity with “really close friends.” These debriefs included the elements of the day and what was thought about certain people. Sarah and Marinella reserved those types of details for their significant others. Sarah would be “face-timing her boyfriend the whole time” when doing service, while Marinella volunteered with her boyfriend; “everything I do, he does.”

Messaging about service work did not necessarily change from the start of their service when they were young; however, the people delivering the messaging had. Ashley, Sarah, Marie, and Yolette noted no changes in the demographics of the people who were currently promoting or working with them to serve; a common distinguishable trait being that they were women—women of color for three of the four. Jane only mentioned one teacher as a motivator for assisting her to serve the community. With the lack of presence from that teacher after high school, her service information was no longer received from people as she preferred to find her opportunities online. A perceived disconnect was observed from that since Jane had the most significant gap between her initial act of service than the other participants in the study. Lourdes stated that there was a disconnect because her classmates, who were set to volunteer with her, “weren’t Black” in her predominantly Hispanic and White high school so she “felt like she was making a

difference but wasn't completely attached to the cause because it wasn't with people that understood her as much" upon reflection.

Viola, Maggy, Peggy, and Marinella revealed that their initial proponents of doing community service were Black. It has been a significant change for Viola who "viewed high school as predominantly African-American," and for Peggy who was connected in school to Black administrators and hadn't "really thought about it before" but recognized there was a change in the backgrounds of who spoke to her about volunteering. "I had the teacher whom I called my dad, and he's a Black man. My mom, a Black woman. And the advisor from African American Club, a Black woman. So yeah, it differs [from whom I converse with service about now]." Marinella's island was mostly Black and with more "light-skinned people," individuals who are essentially not Black but could identify as White, Asian, Hispanic, in the United States, she has received her information from fewer people who identify as being from Curacao and are "people from different places." Bernice started her messaging from within the family and now does not have the advantage of living in the same house lessening the number of instances where she could engage in conversations about community service with her family.

The Black women in my dissertation study all began to serve their communities before enrolling in the university. Regardless of the frequency of their service in the community, they were able to use their personal drive and the force that many felt to do hands-on work in neighborhoods, some even on a global scale. There were requirements for some of the participants to graduate high school, yet the women decidedly volunteered more than asked and did not view volunteering as obligatory. The conversations with parents or guardians varied throughout the participants' experiences,

however, they found role models and individuals to debrief their service encounters within their family. When families were not supportive, the participants relied on friends. These debriefs or reflections with family, peers, and others have been found to strengthen community service (van Goethem et al., 2014). The messaging from the time they started volunteering to now has not changed as much as the messenger. One such messenger that was consistent in research about Black women's community engagement was the church, but the church was no longer a motivator for the women despite their early reliance and volunteerism within the church.

Service Started in Church, but Volunteering in Church Is No Longer Service

Church has been a dynamic factor in the lives of the women interviewed in the study, but the research that found Black women contributed through the church to service works in the community was not necessarily consistent with the participants in the study. Their church attendance was a significant factor in whether they considered themselves religious or spiritual and all them either stated they did not attend church anymore or hadn't been in a very long time. Their impact of volunteerism within the church specifically was not something they credited to their volunteer history or burgeoning passion for working in the community as a volunteer, in fact, several of them were critical of the philanthropic approach to many of the service projects offered by churches they have attended. As Sarah stated in her initial reflection of the question whether there are church influences in her volunteering, "you don't have to be Christian to volunteer." Sarah continued with a notion that was shared among the other participants as well that researchers of service work identified as the White savior complex, "because usually

when you see volunteers [in the church], they are White…when you go on mission trips, they're holding the Black babies and kissing them and all that stuff."

While Viola described a disconnect from the older individuals that seemed to consume the congregation of her first church, she did share her favorite Bible quote (Solomon 54:6) during our interview. She never confirmed her church influence on the service work she does, but she indicated it was minimal. Maggy and Yolette described a history of maternal switching of denominations. Maggy was continuing to go to the same church her mother began attending until no one else in the family was going. When pressured by her mother to move from Catholicism to Baptism, Maggy determinately told her "I don't have to change my religion because you changed your religion." Eventually, her mother returned to Catholicism but not the same church Maggy attended at the time.

Similarly, Yolette's mother's influence of religion found her exploring Catholicism and Jehovah's Witness for a short time before no longer attending. Although Yolette's father's side was "heavily Catholic," her connection with her mother's side extended further than the holidays that she spent with her father. Yolette did not find the service attitude she was seeking in the church and noted to her mother that "everybody wants to get a portion and their check. Not saying the church is stealing. It's like why go through so many checkpoints to help a cause when you can just get as close as you can to help?"

Jane had the least activity with the church and could not associate any of her early service works or attitude, critical or positive, to spirituality or religion. Ashley was unaware of how religion manifested in her life when she was younger, the lifestyle she

lived was something she discovered later was "all part of a deeper meaning in religion" and "it didn't shape the way [she]volunteered or did service."

Marinella shared that religion did not have a role in the service she did, but also mentioned continuously receiving blessings in her interview as her gain from volunteering and resolutely stated that "she is a Christian." When Marinella was asked whether the church impacted her volunteerism, she retorted: "Not really, no. I'm saying not really because it didn't impact me. In the Catholic church, pretty much the job you have in the church or everything you do in the church is volunteering." Lourdes approached her work with the church with a similar understanding and began working in the church because of "boredom" during church service, "I was an altar server actually, like during high school as well. That was volunteer work. I forgot about that. But it's like, see; I'm not religious. I don't even think about that." There was a disconnect with the service work in the church and the community volunteerism that they considered throughout the interview.

Peggy reminded herself of those types of volunteer opportunities within her church that she worked in as a member of the Pentecostal faith. She and Sarah were the only participants who said that church "played a huge part in volunteering." Peggy mentioned an apostle leader who was a mentor for her over the years. Sarah thought "that it was really in the church that [you] volunteered, and you had to be Christian in order to do so." Those thoughts have since evolved, and although one of the first service projects she did was transcribing for the church, she had an understanding that "those [church] people love to put boundaries on things and what people can do."

Interviewing with a Mary Magdalene pendant on, Marie excitedly stated “I knew this topic was going to come up. I knew when you’re talking about service work or helping. Even if you’re not religious, you can’t really run away from, at least in the African American community, in the Caribbean community, you can’t run away from religion.” She specifically chose to talk about her grandmother’s prayers and teachings as influential but is not a “headstrong Catholic.” Similarly, Bernice credited her grandmother and her church for introducing her to volunteer work. However, her grandmother and mother clashed at one point when Bernice went to church service at her grandmother’s Christian church. Bernice is Muslim, and she did not receive permission nor was her mother notified before she attended. Although Bernice still volunteered throughout the years with her grandmother and aunt’s church, she never attended church services again.

Church remains emblematic to Black women as a source of power in the community. Although the church framed elements of family, friends, and religiosity, the women were overwhelmingly critical of its role in their framing of volunteerism and the current role in their lives. When I as a researcher would see a connection to volunteerism, such as Peggy’s recital of Matthew 6:1 and Lourdes’ work as an altar server, the participants reframed it as consideration of their lifestyle or for church membership. Religion and spirituality were expressed through the blessings one received from volunteering, but none of the participants discussed presently serving in or with their churches nor plans to serve alongside one. The participants instead were intrinsically motivated by the perceived and known impact they could have on a community.

A Desire for Transformative Impact to Community and Selves

Sarah was exact when she spoke about what she got out of volunteering, "Volunteering can be fun, you can have fun. You can laugh," and other participants described it as a "feeling" that they got when they volunteered that motivated them to continue serving the community. Ashley furthered: "Happiness. I think I'm happiest when I'm doing some type of volunteering because I'm fulfilling biggest need to help, and it opens me up to different stories." Lourdes liked the "feeling that [she got]," and "loved volunteering." Maggy said she got joy from it, and Marie "personally…just enjoyed it."

Juxtaposed to the conditions that these participants were volunteering in and accomplishing the goals set on a single day or through a single experience, personal satisfaction was sometimes not the conditioned response to why they volunteered. Egoism notwithstanding, participants shared experiences that were complex in the details, and when asked to share what the feel of joy or happiness is like, many of the participants could not relay those feelings in words. Those assertions were not synthesized into a common theme until Yolette spoke to the commonality of the sentiments in her acknowledgment of what she got out of volunteering:

> Like that personal satisfaction of I've done something. I did this, and I know I may feel unsatisfied because the problem is persisting. You know, I wish I could do more, but I've tried. I've played a part, and I'm assisting in helping this problem because once again it goes back to, you know, this isn't going to happen overnight. Like these things aren't going to change right away. But I've helped.

Peggy added in facilitating an understanding of this feeling by extending, "Yeah, it warms your heart and makes you feel happy to help people." Personal satisfaction,

different from personal accountability and impact on self, distinguished the perception of how the participants felt towards serving rather than tangible or intangible things they gained from their experiences (impact on self) or the feelings they had for their actions if not serving (personal accountability).

Personal satisfaction was also at the crux of how they viewed volunteering. When asked what they would like to share with the university/administrators, an entity that these collegiate volunteers do not engage with frequently, Lourdes spoke of volunteering as a “wonderful journey,” Viola said it was a “stress reliever.” These examples, Maggy summed were able to allow her to “feel good… I feel good about the services that I’ve done. It’s just making a difference, so that’s always inspiring.” Bernice understood that there may have been a delay on the personal satisfaction as volunteering helped to “solidify what I want to do in the future,” one in which Marie assured would be an “opportunity to be the best person they can” and “make up for the things that were lost” which could potentially “even the playing field for everyone.”

A common understanding of the reason participants volunteered in their communities was the understated desire to work in these communities. Described multiple times as a “want” rather than a “need” or another synonym of responsibility, the participants desire to work in the community was communicated anecdotally or expressed outright. The desire to volunteer coupled with some of the sentiments to be personally accountable to their image of self or even their usual routine in one case created a theme that was both deeply rooted in the personal drive of individuals as well as the way they could hold themselves responsible for their ethos. Yolette exemplified this by stating:

> Still having that drive to help others is one [reason], and then I feel like additional for me to continue [volunteering] is because if I say I'm this kind of person, it's not like a one and done type thing. I'm going to do it. And that's it. [Volunteering] is something that is a part of me. I have younger nieces, so I'm setting an example for them as well.

This egoistic characterization combined with altruistic motives, acknowledgment of wanting to help because it aligns with personal values was cited by many of the women, although all the participants did not share that there were others who would be looking up to their actions.

The desire to help manifested in two different ways. Two of the participants questioned the need to have a reason to volunteer in the community when asked why they volunteer:

> As simple as that question might be. It's like, why not? I never really had anything stopping me. I never had a really bad experience from it. I'm even thinking about doing the Peace Corps. I know I'm not getting paid or anything. It's just like, oh, it's my time. I feel like the older I get, and the more I get into my career, I know I'm going to have time, but I'm not going to have as much free time as I would like. I feel like I'm young, I'm fit. I can do more, so I should. (Maggy)

While age and stage played less of a role with Marie, she also challenged having a reason for serving the community. Her response poised herself as a member of the community.

> I generally see myself as part of the community. I might not know them, but I just have that strong sense of like I may not know that person. I may not know exactly what that person is going through, but that is still family. That is still my community member and if something's going on and I can help, why not help? (Marie)

In essence, she was a part of the community and could not see why helping her community needed a reason.

Although Viola did not ask "why not" in her responses about motivation to volunteer, she did state that "you don't need a reason to do good things, so I think that it's just kind of my reason is that I want to do it. Yeah, I want to." Bernice also recognized that "there's no incentive for her to actually do it," and she "really wanted to do it'. Bernice also reflected that perhaps it might have been "honestly out of habit because she's so used to doing it." Viewing volunteering as positive habit, described in leisure volunteering literature, was possibly developed to ensure personal accountability for the desire to help the community. Ashley shared examples of wanting to help that hinted at the habitual nature of volunteering:

> But for me, it's always just been wanting to help somebody do something, and that isn't always for me volunteering. That can be a classmate in school, that can be like someone who needs to borrow like $5 for lunch. I just always wanted and felt that urge to help. I'm a doer. I can't just sit back and just talk about helping all the time. At some point, I have to help, or I feel like I haven't actually done anything.

Often the participants would share informal ways of volunteering like Ashley as examples driving their desire to work in the community.

Several of the narratives involving transformative impact, discussed the impact on themselves from the work that they encountered as a volunteer. The importance of their work in the community contributed to introspective development throughout their collegiate careers, as Radford-Hill (2000) suggested where a part of a women's identity. Most poignantly, Ashley proclaimed, "I can't change the way you view Black women. I wish I could, but I cannot change the way you view Black women, and I'm not going to change the way I view myself… just accepting it." That was something repeated by Marie who also said "there is no fixed definition of what it means to be Black. And even

here at FIU, you have people who are Black, but from Jamaica, Black from Trinidad, people who are Black, born in the states, there are Black [people] from Africa or Europe." She was able to get "closer" to her "Haitian culture" and volunteering has helped her "understand different aspects of her Blackness." She has been able to "get a better understanding of what it means to be Black in America and get a better understanding and appreciate being Black in Haiti, growing up in a Haitian household, and incorporating that culture into my life as a Haitian American."

Using volunteerism to provide the answer to the question of who I am, was exemplified in the narratives from the participants as they overtly tied their volunteer work to their "purpose" and "life goals." Viola said that volunteering "showed her whom she was" and finding out "who she was" was "one of her life goals." Viola recognized that her need for validation in social settings in middle school from a past of being bullied evolved as she began to volunteer, and she had begun to understand herself and the people she was attracting with her actions. Sarah also noticed that she was inspired by "seeing myself through another person" because "representation matters and if you don't see people like you, you're not really going to be inclined to do it. I'm not going to be somewhere I'm going to feel unwanted."

Jane tied her understanding of who she was with "realizing her purpose" and "getting to know her values." Maggy also suggested that "knowing yourself before even volunteering is a big thing" because you'd be able to understand your "true reasons for doing it." She cautioned that "sometimes you do go, volunteer, where somebody has more than you, but you have to stay grounded in everything that you do. There's a purpose to everything, so find your purpose." Yolette reflected that volunteering "taught

me about myself… it’s just taught me how I cannot be complacent, again, I cannot just sit by and let something happen and not do anything about it.” Marinella discussed personal growth through volunteering; “I feel like I’m a person who loves to help people and I never asked for anything in exchange… volunteering didn’t make me the person I am right now, but I think volunteering helped me to be the person I am today.” Lourdes also credited her understanding of her “impatience” to a service immersion trip where she “did not handle it well and she learned a lot from really just trying to dive into the cause to go help because she genuinely felt she cared about it.” Musick and Wilson (2008) concluded that individuals take pleasure in being able to act in accordance to their internalized values often discovering other values through that actualization.

That perception of personal growth through volunteering was shared by Peggy who said that volunteering could “sometimes unlock a potential that you might not know that you had” because “when volunteering” she was going to do what she was asked to do. She was setting the role of volunteering apart from the expectations she has for herself as well as those the organization or other volunteers have of her. That realization that Peggy described as “self-reflection during that time and after, you’re like wow, I did this, and I saw that this was really important” was what Viola called the impact on self, self-awareness; it was the notion of “oh my gosh, I did that.” The self-awareness that Maggy explained was more aligned with understanding one’s privilege. “I need to go somewhere where it’s like I see people starting to understand what I have and to not take it for granted.” Ashley summed that she believed volunteering was “shaping her life decisions” and “volunteering these last seven years gave her time in an imaginary world to see herself doing it for the rest of her life. And she was able to experience at least for

seven years, different ways that she wanted to be as a person and figure out which one of those ways she wanted it to be."

Ashley, Bernice, Maggy, and Yolette discussed their future aspirations as it related to volunteering and working through their personal impact. Self-fulfillment and self-discovery were among the interests of what they wanted volunteering to help them do. Just stated, discovering one's self through connecting with others were the ideas shared by Bernice and Maggy concerning what they want volunteering to help them do. Maggy wanted the stories to help her "focus and open up and do something that's a little bit more and try to figure out what I want to do." Bernice had already witnessed the volunteering she did impact her personality from middle school where she identified as quiet girl to now by "helping her to come out of her shell and get more comfortable with people." She would like that to continue in the future; "I would say if it does anything for me to let me be more comfortable with different types of people." Ashley would like volunteering to "decide what she's going to do with herself and shape the way she communicated to others about everything." She mentioned a desire for a "rebirth"- "figuring out how I impacted the past and then I have to impact the present every day and then realize that my present is actually my future, but I'm just doing it now." The symbolism as mentioned above of progress resonated in Yolette's sentiment that she wanted to volunteer to "help further progress her as an individual."

Wanting to have "the person in her head match the person that's coming out" was not only a sentiment shared by Ashley who "didn't want to get rid of who she was as a person, didn't want to change how she physically looked. She just wants to enhance and accentuate the spiritual, physical, personality, mental and emotions parts of herself," but

Marie shared as well. Marie wanted to volunteer to "lead me towards a sense of fulfillment, life fulfillment." Juxtaposed to what her financial resources were and what she was able to offer to others, she stated: "you might not have been the richest human being, but you gave your time and what you had at the moment." Jane also mentioned volunteering to promote her self-discovery hoping that it would reveal to her:

> why she kept doing it… I feel like I'm doing it for a reason now that I kept going, but why do I keep doing this to myself? Basically, just know about me as a person. What really drives me to do certain things.

The task or goal-oriented approach to understanding motivation to continue to volunteer that Jane mentioned was also apparent with Sarah. Sarah shared that she would like to understand what drives her towards certain things for a more specific outcome:

> I'm hoping that through the community health fair and stuff like that, I'm figuring out like, okay, when I'm here I need to figure out why I want to do this. Like what is another reason, like a personal reason inside of me that I want to do this and I'm pretty sure volunteering will help me figure that out.

Sarah was the only participant who wanted volunteering to help her answer questions that would help her with her goal of completing a personal statement.

Marie credited volunteering for "part of her growth, mindset shift, and attitude." Although Ashley still wanted to be reborn, she also recognized that "volunteering allowed her to be the person that she sees herself [to be] in those experiences." Knowingly, she cannot volunteer every day, so she has been "trying to push that same self into who she is day to day and know it's the same person." Expanding self-concept was also something that Marie brought up in her interview when she discussed the opportunities that volunteering gave her as a leader when "she would have never put herself in a position like that in a million years." She was still working on it as a process

in "self-fulfillment" and stated, "that's something that part of the fulfillment process of reaching that aspect of where I want to be… being in a place in my life where I finally have some sort of confidence in myself and my abilities regardless of what environment I'm in or what I'm doing." Maggy "already understood herself" but recognized the potential to "grow in knowledge and liked learning no matter what it is."

Lourdes summed the experiences of the other participants who also shared that learning was a quintessential reason that they volunteered:

> I think just the learning that I gained from service. The best part about it, every new experience in service, I learn something completely different, and I think that's the beauty in it. You know, I always come in open arms and open mind. That's the best way to do it, I think. When you join things, you don't think you're going to like them, but you will learn so much from them. That's what makes them enjoyable.

The impact of an education that you can use to benefit the community, or as Maggy put it, "once you educate yourself on what you're doing and why you're doing it" is not relegated to only the classroom. Many of the participants highlighted their appreciation of learning such as Ashley who enjoyed, "the new point of view I gained after every experience, no matter from volunteering in my own community or, or like I said, traveling to Thailand, I gain a new experience even though I could be doing the same thing over and over again." Only two of the participants who shared gaining knowledge as a motivator recognized its immediate utility through examples from the past. Viola was a leader at the national day of service cleaning up Biscayne Bay, and she was able to learn about herself as well as the area:

> And I learn more when volunteering I learn different things about different people, and so the 9/11 day of service was really an eye-opener because that's when I got to facilitate. One of the biggest things was because I'd

> never done a 9/11 day of service, I never like really cleaned the beach or anything like that. So, even where the bay was, and I didn't realize there was so much trash.

Although Viola's experience of learning and quickly utilizing that knowledge was more of a local experience, Bernice was able to travel and learn something about a social issue and a faith practice that she immediately began using and working to connect locally to her Miami experiences with individuals:

> In Utah I got to experience different religious cultures, …they don't mind the term Mormon, but there was another term that they use, and I really cannot remember what it was. I got to see like what their mindset was, and I never really got that here in Miami because a lot of the people here in Miami experience more Christian beliefs. That's something that I would never have really experienced unless they would've gone to Utah. And yeah, I would say like learning new things, like learning more about the social issue that I'm working with is one of the bigger things.

The knowledge gained by exposure to individuals in the community has proven to be invaluable on the participants' desire to continue working in the community towards transformative impact.

Jane and Peggy did not provide a complexity in their desire to help the community; however, it was in their answer of the question that merely desiring to help the community was motivating. In Jane's circumstance, she began volunteering to get scholarships, but "now it's just because I like doing work and helping people." While Peggy's start to volunteering was not as reward seeking as Jane's they were aligned since Peggy also volunteered because she "just wanted to give back and just wanted to help other people." Peggy did add another element to the desire to give back as she began to consider the impact of one's actions.

"When you see the impact, you're like 'I can do more, or I can take this further.' I would say that gives me the drive to keep going and keep helping out" (Peggy). The personal attachment to the impact of others is a notion that is common amongst all the participants. Additionally, the participants drew upon that impact on others and talked not just about how it impacted their own lives in transformative, positive ways. Sarah noted, "meeting people and talking to them and hearing their stories, you learn about yourself through other people's experiences," and Lourdes explained that "we're always expecting to give back, but you don't know what you're going to gain from it. You can learn a lot, or you can love a lot, and it's always good." These two perspectives about the impact one may have were built upon by the other participants as well.

All the participants discussed enjoying volunteerism for the impact they could make in the community. Bernice liked "seeing the change for the better," and Jane stated that she enjoyed "just making people feel good." The participants ranged in their assessment of how community impact continued to motivate them to do service between seeing the change in the occurrence and focusing on the favorable valuation of their efforts from those they had volunteered to help:

> You see the impact. With certain volunteering things, you see the people whom you're helping, and they are just happy, so happy. Smiling, they want to thank you; they want to hug you. If they had anything to give you, they would probably give it to you. But once you see that, you're like, 'Okay this is good What can I do next? Who can I help next?' (Peggy)

Lourdes discussed this through an example of learning new things about legislative processes for ex-convicts to regain the right to vote, but she also shared a defining moment that impacted her viewpoint:

> I wish you could see these guys. They are amazing. It's like 105 men and like they're just so, I don't know, it's like something they're like better than some people I've met outside of prison. So that just says enough for them, and I don't know, I love them. They're awesome, you know? So that's, yeah, like they're amazing. I love them so much.

Lourdes' work with the prisoners had continued for almost two years at the time of the interviews, and she was able to share a love and caring that was not always applied to that population.

Marinella and Peggy discussed the impact on others a little differently. While including those that she volunteered to help-"you make the people happy, and they appreciate what you're doing," Marinella also discussed the impact she had on individuals who were not motivated to volunteer: "people who don't do community service take it as a motivation to start doing it." Peggy included the overarching social issue in the understanding of impact by stating "especially if it's a cause that you really care about, especially if it's a cause that's near and dear to me that makes it even more rewarding.

Those assessments were unique, although the personal gratification that one got from seeing the impact was not. "I think knowing when you see the changes, that's when people become more motivated" was something that Ashley said, but was also mirrored by the sentiments of Sarah who mentioned that through an immersion trip she realized that "volunteering also starts on the end of the person who wants the help." Additionally, Viola reflected that her motivation to "make people happy and try to put a smile on their face" has not changed much over the years neither has Jane or Ashley's desires to "help people" or "impact in a way that would really help the community."

As the participants thought about their futures, they positioned volunteering as assisting them with making more substantial impacts. The externalized impact and ability to make a difference in others' lives led many to discuss creating foundations to continue their work, eliminate social issues and impact communities globally. Jane, Maggy, Peggy, and Viola all mentioned starting business foundations or non-profits at some point to impact the community on a larger scale. Jane had a local idea to begin doing college fairs in her community of origin to provide more access to information about college matriculation. She admittedly stated that those dreams of "changing [her] community" extended beyond the city of her birth, "ultimately, I just want to change my community of different countries also like Haiti; my dad's from there."

Viola expounded on that idea of access and evolution of service aspiration when she shared her goal to open her university. "My end goal in life is to open a university and for my university to be known as a school that goes and helps out with stuff." Viola's goal evolved, however, from initial hopes of opening a foundation "for women" since "all [her] success stories were because of women giving her that chance." Maggy wants volunteering to help her "open my own thing, like my own business… over the years volunteering and going to college has opened my mind to things with which I want to get involved." She stated when reminiscing over the idea:

> I'm part of the LGBTQ [community], so at one point in my life, I wanted to open a volunteering thing where…I can do like free clinical exams for students or young adults so they don't have to feel like, oh 'they have to pay' since I'm a psych major. Because they go through a lot of things like suicide rate in the LGBTQ community is so high, and the big thing about it is they don't have someone mentoring them or talk to them because they feel scared or they feel judgment, or they just don't have the money to go. So, at a certain point in my career, I wanted to give back to people in my community. When I used to stay in the trailer, I knew what they go

> through, so I wanted to have an afterschool program where kids in that community can go to and just be safe and not get into trouble.

Maggy saw the connection that volunteering in the community had with either aspect of herself or her upbringing and had tangible ways she could create sustainable programs for transformation.

This hopeful impact toward a specific social issue was mirrored by Peggy who wanted to "do a lot for the Black community," and she was "hoping that volunteering through entrepreneurship would allow her to meet people and they can come together and build up our communities…start with wherever we're from or to start with wherever and expand that out." Lourdes stated, and others confirmed in their narratives, "…it's like social justice. That's really what I want out of volunteering… I want to leave knowing that something was made better. Someone's life was made better." Ashley and Yolette aspired that their work through volunteering would eliminate the social issue. Yolette hoped that the work she did could "help progress another social justice issue and community wellbeing" while Ashley wanted "it to finally come full circle and I want wherever field I get into, I want to feel like I have diminished that want to help in that field." Bernice also wanted to volunteer to help her expand her reach by helping to "set a plan to make bigger changes… I would want it to help me figure out how to initiate those changes." Sarah reflected when discussing community service with her sister that "these people are your equals" and that "small acts makeup into one big one" and framed how others thought of their work in volunteering.

Sarah did not believe she was leading a movement or a part of one and preferred to describe her experience as "behind the scenes" as did Marie. Yolette also concluded

that "a lot of times all it takes is just for one person to just do something and enact change." Maggy viewed the "Me Too" movement as an example of social movements and decided that her volunteer work was not scaled for that impact, so she did not think her volunteering was a part of a movement. Yolette's sorority had a social media page where they dedicated space to displaying pictures, so she mentioned that perhaps others would see her as figurehead of a movement, but "she didn't see herself as an activist." Ashley countered those statements by acknowledging:

> I think people sometimes have volunteered knowing that there's something they want to help change, but not knowing where their change would lead to. I think those are unconscious thoughts, knowing that if I do this, this person is going to do that, and that person will do this and make it a chain reaction. Because if you think about it, everything already is connected, but we are not fighting with it as connected.

Peggy added that people "look up to her in that way," and she would like to lead the movement "she has been thinking about for a while to help Black women regarding mental health, their hair, skin, and confidence."

That confidence was rare in the responses from the participants, who referred to their perception of a lack of skills to continue their volunteering work on a larger scale or through the development of a movement. Viola said she "did not know how… I do not think that within myself either." Bernice was inspired by Malala and the Parkland students and had thought about whether she could start one, but despite her work in the community she did not "know if she would ever do it but being confident enough to get to that point is something that interested her." Marie also asserted that she did not have "the influence or the resources to do much of an effect." Although the participants lacked a level of confidence that believe their work was scalable to social movements, they were

motivated by the ability to have experiences that exposed them to new people or places and learning something that made them critically think or act.

Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism

Positioned within an election year, although all interviews concluded prior to the historic number of women elected to office and understanding the abundance of social movements throughout the developmental and recent years of the participants' lives, questioning about politics and social movements seemed like a necessity for this study on volunteering. Bernice positioned my decision to do so best by stating:

> This past election has shown me that people have such strong and different beliefs. I'm not confrontational if we don't agree on something like agree to disagree, but some people may take it further and will continue to argue about it… I think my thing is just fear of arguing with someone and the leaving off on bad terms.

Bernice realized she wanted to create a "movement because solving social issues is so hard; reluctantly bring in the political side made her realize that: "it's going to take so much time. With a movement, I can get more people, like different ideas with me to eventually get there. I'd say a movement would help a lot."

The participants were split with their understanding of whether social movements or politics had any roots or were an aspiration of their volunteering focus. They also framed politics differently and those detailed understandings of politics, although creating clear connections to me in their narratives about volunteering, created a disconnect between the work they did in the community and that influence on politics or whether it provided a foundation to continue or found a social movement. It was, therefore, necessary to keep the coupling of social movements and politics as the

researcher continued to connect the discussions of the participants with notions of each dynamic.

Despite Viola giving an example of a service event where she was trying to get a candidate's name on the ballot, she said she did not "speak politics… politics is not something I'm passionate about or know much information about… if I have to stop and think about the types of volunteering events that I did do, maybe it does tie with political aspects. I've never thought about it in that light." Similarly, Ashley's first community service project was to assist a politician, but she was "not really that into politics." She recognized it was a way for people to get involved "because a lot of opportunities that come up that people know about volunteering is through the local government or state government, federal government…" It was Lourdes who transitioned the disparity in thought by asserting "they say if you faced adversity, then you're automatically political for the most part because these things affect you directly in any way. She had worked to counsel prisoners, and "before she heard that she had never really defined herself as political, but in a way, she guessed she was." That sentiment was a framing position for Terrell, National Association of Colored Women co-leader, who called for "proper, dignified agitation" as she understood her position as "a colored woman" in her world was a political position that uniquely designed her life of activism (Cooper, 2017, p. 69).

Marinella agreed that Holland's stigmatization of Black people and discrimination of those who travel there from Curacao was political. However, she did not see politics in her volunteerism nor was she familiar with the social movements that I gave as examples but sought to create a way "to impact more people and make more people involved in community service." Similarly, Jane did not see any political influence in her volunteer

work except for building awareness, (i.e., Huntington Disease Walk where she met the coordinators), but wanted to "build a movement so that it's reoccurring… maybe the people I talked to directly about the whole going to school thing." The reluctance and disinterest of some were only part of the reason that politics did not align with the voluntariness of the students' lived experiences, Maggy and Yolette positioned the political realm in a way that is unmoved or unchanged by the acts of volunteering even if it may affect them:

> I do feel like a lot of the things that can change is by laws, like these old White men only listen to laws that are strict and right there. Being radical and doing all of these extra things like starting rallies and all of this, it's not really going to help like go into government and change the laws because if it's facts, then you don't have any choice but to listen to it. If we're doing all of this to try to get their attention, but then like we're voting all of these people that are not like us, that don't have our struggles, that never understood because they had everything handed to them how is it going change? This is going to continue in the same cycle. (Maggy)
>
> Politics, to me it's more so of like, I imagine Washington DC, you know, the Senate, the House of representative, you have the judicial system and the legislative, the executive. And I've never been one to play politics because to me politics is, you know, we're going to stand and say we are for all. But then sometimes they're like, you know, little tidbits where it's not for all. People are not treated as equal, or they are not given the same resources and access as other people. And they were literally on the verge of dying, but then as soon as there's some kind of uprising, it's like, oh wait, no, that's not what we meant at all. To me politics [does not] look at how much do I really care but how much can I fake that I care, but I really don't care. And that's what it is. Like these old White men [are] sitting in the Senate arguing about different policies and bills that they want to be passed or don't want to be passed. But it's all; it's all wasteful to me because these things are still going on every day and you can't save them all. (Yolette)

This framing of politics and the lack of connection to social movements and political issues led me to restructure the questioning through my follow up. When I asked

intentionally about the connection of volunteering to awareness campaigns, the participants answered differently than when asked about if their volunteering had political elements.

When approaching the general topic of politics as it pertained to general awareness of issues where Jane saw the only political influence for her community service work, Bernice, Marie, Sarah, Peggy, and Yolette also aligned. Bernice again relented that even if she did not “try to make politics a huge thing when she volunteered,” “if you looked deep into it, it could be more political.” Marie positioned her political perspective by describing the need for positive spaces for Black boys, since upon reflection her “volunteering has revolved around girls” and generally “growing up in an area of minorities” she was able “to see the worst aspect of how people viewed that part of your identity [Black and Hispanic].” Yolette also related to that understanding when she recognized that politics were involved in her social life. She stated: “knowing as a Black person you can walk and live your life, but you’re going to have to understand that your White counterparts are always going to be ten steps ahead of you because of the access and the accessibility and the kind of the privilege that they have.” That disconnect from work in the community to politics, not apparent historically, may be due in part to the lack of thought pieces by Black women described by Cooper (2017) to make the connection throughout history.

Sarah was the first to recognize social movements as vital to her in service to the community. “Black lives matter bro, telling you it’s the truth” Sarah matter-of-factly said as she thought about the necessity of seeing one’s image among other volunteers when doing community service. She spoke about representation and the connection throughout

volunteering as well as career goals, Peggy also mentioned the mythological perception that "Black people don't like to help each other:"

> We've built our own communities… even if the news and television never know about it. If it's passed down by word of mouth, there's this organization, they're helping Black women, they're helping Black men they're helping Black people they're helping minorities they're doing stuff like that. It gets passed along, and eventually, somebody's going to recognize it, as they say, sometimes you're doing stuff and you don't even know who's watching.

Research confirms that Black women were pivotal to the uplifting of their communities through their race work.

Speaking from a perspective of privilege, that will be discussed later in the chapter, was often a quoted way that participants thought to lead movements and affect change more politically:

> It's just like I'm privileged. I need to use [my privilege] to speak for those that cannot. And that's what I believe in. So, like for example, like with these prisoners, they don't have a voice, but I do, and I can do something about it even if it's the tiniest little thing… the guys that I worked with specifically, they all committed first-degree murder, and one of them committed second-degree murder. But like they are changed, people. That's another thing that working there taught me. It's like people can change, you know, and like that's so important. For me to just be able just to go out there and tell people about it. That's already opening other people's minds to the fact that yeah, prison changes people. There are people in there that made mistakes, not bad people, you know, and that that's a difference. Because bad people, we don't want to associate ourselves with bad people. And that's why prison laws and stuff like that are so harsh because we just think that those people are scum, but they're not, they're just a person who made a mistake just like you and me, you know. (Lourdes)

> I don't personally see myself as an activist. Like I'm not on the forefronts of a social issue with my face on, you know, the page with my fist up. But I do deeply read, like connect with a lot of social justice issues, whether it is racism, whether it is colorism, whether it is homelessness and poverty,

> whether it's women's rights, like different things like that. But I feel as if, and this goes back to me saying college is a privilege, college is a privilege and it's kind of like a double-edged sword because you gain all this knowledge. But then with that knowledge, it's kind of like social responsibility and then that's when that catalyst of like I need to do something [is created]. (Yolette)

Lourdes' work with one of the most vulnerable populations, prisoners, and changing her own perspective of those individuals was an important first step to invest long-term in their success. Her sense of understanding of the mistakes not being the totality of their worth pushed her to incorporate a sense of social responsibility outside of simply volunteering. Yolette's perspective of social responsibility as one gains knowledge is perhaps why all the participants also mention learning and education as motivational to volunteering activities.

The participants intricately intertwined reasons that they volunteered through narratives that highlighted the desire to serve for altruistic reasons such as having a desire to serve and the fun that they have when volunteering as it impacted themselves. The participants also shared reasons behind their volunteering such as the learning and education they received and the transformative impact their actions had on their development and the impact it had on the community. Kahne and Westheimer (2003) found that most service-learning programs were devoid of education on politics "social movements, social transformation, and systemic change" offering instead the ability to focus on personal development and "volunteerism, charity" (p. 36). Thus, political and social movements were not necessarily the future that the participants see for their volunteer work; however, many are connecting the opportunities to a future sense of self and aspirations.

Volunteering to Help Build Connections

Marinella shared her thoughts on the connection between those she served and her purpose or goal of the community service. “When you do it, you’ll see that what you’re doing is really helping people. The fact that I’m helping another person that I’m getting things done from them which makes a connection.” Marinella emphasized that without that connection, it could be discouraging. Lourdes spoke to the connection that all the participants felt through their community service work.

> My favorite thing about volunteering is that Eureka moment when you see how we’re all similar, and why it’s so important to all help each other. You can learn so much, and you can gain so much from somebody else that you’re helping even though you’re helping them, you know. (Lourdes)

Bernice volunteered with a thought “in the back of her mind” to “make at least one connection” wherever she volunteers in order to “make new connections because two people who can be in the same community and encounter the same types of problems but have two completely different stories.” Yolette found that connection to the population she was serving “if I’m working with children, I have six nieces and nephews and a goddaughter, so I love kids.” She also felt a connection in combating a social issue, “but then if I’m working with an older group like feeding the homeless, there hasn’t been an opportunity to connect with people there, and it’s not that I’ve made personal connections…it’s a connection of the problem.”

Connecting with people and learning their stories was hugely impactful for Maggy, “we would actually sit with the people that we were feeding and just like talk to them…and hearing the people’s story and what its’ doing to them. Like I hear stories where people were like ‘this is my first meal and my last meal for today.’” Lourdes

reflected on the class she prepared to teach to inmates in prison about email and not having enough copies for the presentation and how that experience where she was tasked with counseling those men turned into a moment where their mutual connection ended with the prisoners trying to console her.

> When I sat back down, they were consoling me and just telling me, 'don't worry about it. We're here for you and all this stuff,' and like that's really when it hit me, that's when I realized I'm coming back, I'm not leaving. I was on the fence whether to come back or not because, specifically a class that I wanted to take this semester, conflicted with the Monday afternoon schedule. It is a commitment to go and not only because you're doing volunteering, but at this point like I've already made relationships with these people and for me to just leave them behind for my selfish benefits. It's like it feels wrong. After that happened, I told them, 'I literally love you guys. You guys are awesome. I can't believe you did that for me.' I don't even think anybody outside of prison has ever done that for me; put themselves out there for me and just support me like that. It's honestly like home in there. It's weird to say, I thought I would never say prison feels like home, but it honestly does in there with them. They're incredible.

Lourdes connected with prisoners in a way that was contrary to the way that society framed their potential interactions. She was able to connect in a way that was not only helpful for the real lesson but also for her emotional wellbeing.

Marie had purposefully made a familial connection with those she helped in the community, "whether it's a little girl that either reminded me of my cousin or me or an older woman with a very sassy attitude that reminds me of my grandmother." Sarah cautioned that the connection with recipients of service occurs when they welcome the help you may be providing with an example from her volunteerism with Neighborhood Help:

> They were making the video, and it was about his life. His medication was on the table, and I was telling them and the guys, I don't think you should put this in the video because his information is on these bottles. [Mr. L]

> said, ‘I don’t care let the whole world know, Neighborhood Help saved my life.’ I was like, ‘Mr. L. No, we cannot’. He’s like ‘all these White people in the house. I love it’. And I thought, oh my God, this guy is crazy. But seriously, if he didn’t want that, then he wouldn’t be able to receive that help.

Having the ability to connect and the individuals in the community wanting to connect made for the best combination when volunteering. It can be argued that a one-sided connection is no connection at all and could be less motivational than impact or education as mentioned earlier.

Life lessons were something that some of the participants received from those they served that they felt connected them. Different from general education/learning, these lessons were more personalized and often gathered through the experience of being present in the volunteering experience, challenged their upbringing or current stance on issues, and was not obtainable other ways. Sarah again mentioned her work in the communities needing health services with an understanding that she gained much more than the knowledge needed to be a health care practitioner:

> When I think about Mr. L, I think about his life and everything that has happened to him and would think if I was in his situation, I would be so stressed. He’s such a happy, positive guy and it’s like damn I want to be him. I want to be going through the worst in my life and be like, well I can’t stop now. I’ve got to keep going. He’s taught me like, okay, doesn’t matter what I’m going through, I’m going to keep laughing, keep smiling because at the end of the day, life is literally, so short, and it’s going to go by so fast. You have to enjoy the time that you’re here. And I learned that from Mr. L because especially like my family they’re serious, but like everything is like when something bad happens, it’s like, oh my God. Yeah. So, I learned from him, like to be positive … You learn things through these people from across the world. You would think you would never meet them. It’s like, wow.

Sarah's example of connections she made that led to a life lesson not shrouded in academic objectives or knowledge of the social issues is a perspective that is also shared by Maggy. She stated the connection she had with those in general on the service site led to overall guidance for herself or others:

> I kind of take everything that they say as a part of me, take it home or inform somebody else. Look what I learned from this wise guy. Look at the information he taught me or what happened or what's going to happen or what is currently happening now. We have these protected lenses like, oh my God, this great country. But then take off the lenses, let's actually see what's going on? Once I hear their stories and what they're saying, I take it with me because then I tried to educate myself on what they just taught me to understand further what they're going through and what happened to them. So, then knowledge is power, and I say this a lot: "ignorance is bliss' because the more, we don't know, we think like everything is great, but the more we know and the more we research and understand and learn from others, it's just like showing us like what America truly is; it ain't great.

Maggy, however critical of the overall the state of the nation, understands that the composite of the stories in the country has a significant influence on how she makes meaning from her volunteerism. This emphasis on the people met, and connections made with them continued with Marie's story:

> Because of the people I've met, and I want to put emphasis on the people that I've met because I've learned a lot of my life lessons through them. I spent most of my life taking public transportation in metropolis type of areas, and you're put in positions where you have to interact with people regardless of differences. I think that kind of played a role in encouraging that mindset as well… there's a lot of homeless people there too, and you can't just walk around and ignore it because you turn and it's right there. There's a homeless woman or man on the corner. There is another homeless woman or a man on the other corner. You can't just ignore it or avoid it. Since I was a dual enrollment student in my last two years of high school in the fifth building up on [local college] campus, you walk out, and you would have a few homeless men or women just sitting on the corner and again I'd say like ideally you're not supposed to because just

> for safety reasons they try to like discourage [you from interacting with them]... Um, maybe I got lucky, I don't know, but I don't, I feel like most of the people I met, like people kind of just go in with this really poor perception of people who are homeless. And I feel like when you do take the time to sit down and just conversate with them and listen to them, you realize they just hit a really low time in their life. And I had a lot of conversations with some people that I met even on the bus where it's like, I realize that that could have been me and my mom and my brother at one point. So, I don't know, again, you couldn't help but make it personal.

Connecting with people differently than others in the study, Marie personalized interactions and emphasized them in a way that placed the family at the forefront of the connection. She often mentioned that this person could have been a family member or reminded her of one.

Marie and Yolette emphasized the ability to connect with like-minded or similar people as motivating factors for continued community service efforts. Marie noted that perhaps there might be differences in" race or gender," but the "similar mindset" allowed for an "intimacy" of "just wanting to help the best way you can." This intimacy was in part because of Marie's ability to personalize experiences with individuals and compare them to family members. She stated: "finding like friends and family in these other people that I met complete strangers, and I couldn't help but have a connection with them, and I guess because I subconsciously just have gone my whole life in whatever I do with that mindset." Yolette described a mindset of those with whom she volunteered alongside and characterized them as "so nice and friendly, open-minded, not necessarily free spirits, but they're more so liberal and not as conservative with an understanding of social issues." Meeting people was a motivating factor for Sarah who discussed at length her opportunity to meet people in the "Whitest of the Whitest places like Tulsa,

Oklahoma" and those connections were continued through social media. All the participants did not discuss social media connection, but Viola did add that she gave other volunteers her "social media" to "keep in contact."

Peggy focused on the delight of the service project and the fun that the people around could bring on the project when trying to build a connection with others. "To me it's fun. I like it, especially if I'm around people who are fun. Like you know they're kind of excited to be there. That makes it fun." However, that superficial connection of people gave way to more of a connection to people when Peggy included helped to recognize the behaviors that would not be productive as she connected to others. "I haven't met anybody who was creating animosity or being rude volunteering so far but just feels like if you're in that space, it's all about community." Marinella also spoke about utilizing the volunteering experience to connect with the other volunteers on service projects in efforts to practice team building or "have experiences to work with other people to do team work because most of the time you meet with more people, and you strive to achieve the same goal."

Ashley was positioned in a student organization that planned service projects for multiple students, so she has had an "ongoing fight" with herself to recognize indirect service as volunteering since "pushing papers, moving things, and doing phone calls was for someone else to have direct service…so has had to always remind herself that she pushed this paper so someone else can do something so strong that this paper was the most important piece of it." Jane focused on the fact that she met people "every time she volunteered" and "could call them right now, and they'll remember her or email them for something" even though she did something new each time. If that personal connection

was not there with Yolette's community service work, she incorporated her connection to social justice in her pursuit to "keep doing something" towards "persisting problems."

When questioned whether the participants would encourage others to volunteer and connect them to the community through service, they all responded that they would mirroring similar reasons they personally had for volunteering. Peggy cautioned to "find things around [a certain interest you have] or make up something on your own" since there are many opportunities to be involved. Ashley considered volunteering something that everyone should do, but not to "look too deeply" at the bureaucratic processes that organizations employ with volunteers. Marie questioned the long-term effects of short-term involvement, however, suggested additional preparation for lasting change. Positioning privilege in the conversation, Lourdes and Maggy, made the case that volunteering would help to educate and provide context for individuals who serve. Reflection on how her own experiences volunteering led to open-mindedness, "my perception walking into something and then my perception walking out of something is going to be completely different," led Lourdes to promote volunteering as a way to have empathy or "put yourself in somebody else's shoes and see what they go through." Maggy asserted that often people live on "high horses" and need to be "stripped from everything that they have to show them that [they're] taking life for granted and [they] need to appreciate the little things sometime." That empathetic connection was one way of describing attitudes towards encouraging others to pay it forward and emphasized how they drew meaning from their acts of service.

Connections to people and the exposure you have in volunteering experiences were topical reasons that Bernice, Jane, Viola, and Yolette gave for encouraging others to

volunteer. Jane met people who became close friends after volunteering together, whereas Yolette tended to see the friends she attended service with as exponentially valuable to the service experience making it “interesting and fun.” Bernice touted that the stories you hear during your service work allow you to “learn so many different things that you would never have known before… it makes it more personal.” Viola noted that “meeting new people and [the] kind of service you will be doing is opening your mind to things you probably had never been exposed to [before].” Viola also offered that volunteering gives you “a good feeling” just as Sarah did when she encouraged through empathetic means participation in volunteer work:

> It has nothing to do with the person being inferior, but this person is your equal and you have the opportunity to help them. It’s a good feeling, and it’s good for the other person [that] this person came to help me and stuff like that. This could be me in any moment of life because I don’t know what’s going to happen to me… I’m going to help them as I grow… It’s a rewarding experience, and there’s nothing wrong with that.

Much of the literature on the community service activity of people posited a “minority” or “underprivileged” group as recipients of service, while othering the volunteer as an outsider of the community who could not connect with those they were helping. The information shared by the participants created a different narrative from the relevant literature about the background of a volunteer and the connections that can be made. Gathering more information about the critical understanding of the perceived experiences that the participants had in comparing volunteering in similar and dissimilar communities than their identities as Black women were included. Some participants didn’t see a difference in the community outreach they did regardless of the community.

However, some have poignant experiences that reframed their understanding of the support their neighborhoods received or the treatment they received as a volunteer.

Viola pointed at socioeconomic differences volunteering for a track and field event and the financial support to host the event was "different from" what had occurred in her community. Jane recognized that in her work in more diverse areas there were more resources, "the more diverse events had better service, like fresh stuff that was donated. It was more organized… it was a big event with tents," whereas the one experience she had in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Miami yielded "old, expired, melting, heat damaged" food items "that they were giving to your community." Marie noted that problematic situation in her volunteerism since:

> Most of those [volunteering] programs went towards specific communities that were impoverished or in terms of schooling didn't get the necessary recognition or funding that they need. And most of them were in areas that have high populations of African Americans and Hispanics.

And Bernice furthered that the resources in the predominantly Black neighborhood she once lived did not match the community she had lived in for much longer.

Bernice also connected the volunteerism she did in Atlanta at a "failing" school to her high school peers and spoke confidently of interventions that she and her fellow volunteers created for the professionals at the same school. Yolette similarly discussed working with her sorority to host a youth symposium and believed that the young Black students were "more receptive to what she had to say." Yolette's positive assessment of working with those who shared identities with her was counter to Maggy's assertion that "they kind of take you for granted knowing you" so "they expect you to do what you're not supposed to do" like provide extra food. Ashley also described working in the

community where people look like you provided a feeling that you were "working with family." As a nod to the saliency of one's identity deciding one's preferred actions outlined in IBM, she felt that there were "certain parts of me that can identify with whom I'm volunteering with." Still, Ashley would connect to those individuals more generally/broadly choosing to discuss southern food enjoyment rather than more loaded topics like microaggressions or racism which she thought would lead to "a lecture."

Maggy did not have such an inclination since while volunteering to canvass a neighborhood, she worked through the profiling of others. It was something she was familiar with because "being Black and a woman, you feel racism. It becomes a shade on you. I am around Hispanics who are so racist. It's like they'll try not to be racist, but then their comment, it's a backhanded compliment." She shared a story of being profiled when stepping out of her typical volunteering activity:

> I'm doing something good, but I'm in this White neighborhood. But then when I'm coming to somebody's door, and they're kind of on defense like why is [this] Black person coming to my door. There's not really a lot of Black people in this neighborhood. Being there showed me ain't much difference I can do. I'm going to do as much as I can. But it's like who am I really helping? I can't educate ignorance. That's something you should've learned in primary school. It's too late and your generations from me to try to educate you to turn and be like, oh no, like not all Black people are bad… I was the only Black person there. [The nonprofit] didn't know how to deal with it because I don't think they ever saw it for themselves or dealt with it themselves. It's like, 'oh okay, here you go, just be friendly, just smile and everyone's going to love you.' And then you go there, and they're looking at you up and down like what the hell do you have? Like what do you want?

As the only participant who had recalled being treated differently than others because of her skin while volunteering, she also recognized that the organization she was working with was ill-equipped to assist her.

Ashley did contend that she had a lack of awareness during her volunteering experiences and could not recall any profiling, and Bernice relied on friendly faces when volunteering in an unfamiliar place ensuring that she had not "ever volunteered completely by myself in a different culture." Peggy had heard a few side comments from the older population she volunteered in with her mom while growing up, and essentially said the same as Maggy when reflecting on the "predominantly White" nursing home; "they were back here in certain times, Civil Rights Movement and everything like that… there were some who would make comments about women, comments about Black people." Although Marinella worked with Black people in her home country, mostly "light skin" people in New York, and a diverse population in Miami she "felt like everybody still appreciated each other and nobody treated another like you are less than." Marie felt that people thought her age was problematic because that was largely the only difference when she was serving, and Sarah mentioned that the expectations of others based on her age or financial ability were pushed as she "lived up to above what was expected."

Although some of the levels of connection were described as limited (e.g., at the service site, similar motivations, or through networking), it was consistent throughout the interviews that the connections throughout the years of serving were invaluable. Viola talked about meeting Sabrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin, and said that through volunteering she was able to network. Marinella also mentioned networking through volunteering as a positive motivator. Jane would rely on the networking if she had to "throw an event or something to call [other past volunteers] to come out. Bernice talked about "the connections [she] made with people who helped her get her foot in the door

with a lot of different opportunities I've done." Networking and potential opportunities framed the conversation about how their volunteering related to working.

Only three of the women in the study did not have a job, but they did have jobs leading up to college. Marinella could not work unless it was on-campus because of her international student status, and she saw volunteerism as essentially on-the-job training, "because I'm not getting the opportunity to have a paid job on campus, I'm trying to do a lot of volunteer experiences so I can add them on my resume." Peggy did not have a job at the time of the interview but had balanced volunteer work, a part-time job, and an internship during high school. Marie thought a job while volunteering "would have been nice," but credited volunteering to helping her decipher what she was attempting to do later in her career:

> But I still wanted to keep that aspect of community outreach but still keep that public health aspect of it, and I was just trying to find a way to incorporate both of those two. So hopefully if I continue with social work, I would ideally want to stay in the medical field or maybe focus on mental health… I still love volunteering because it had a heavy emphasis on the helping aspect of it and focused on the community.

All the other participants in the study were working either on-campus or off campus, but the common understanding among the participants was that work requirements they may have had were not necessarily connected to the volunteering that they were doing simultaneously in the community. "Like my job is just my job that I have to pay for things and then the volunteering is just like separate." (Lourdes). Jane worked on the larger campus for one of the largest colleges but did not have any opportunities to volunteer with her job. She continued to find the familial ties to the work that she did in the community instead; "so I just stick to health because my granddad has

diabetes… my little cousins have autism, so let me go and help out." Maggy also questioned her volunteerism sitting at tables promoting events or awareness campaigns for women focused organizations on campus since "FIU is not in need, and she would like to give back to something that is more in need." Maggy's balance of full-time enrollment, part-time work, and an internship also mirrored Lourdes' situation at the moment. However, Bernice was just starting a new job and had a more difficult time balancing the needs of her commitments with work and volunteering. "That's why I haven't been able to volunteer as much as I want to… it's one of the reasons why like I haven't been super into going out in the community as well as school and my leadership position." Still, Bernice enjoyed doing awareness work and speaking to friends about service work to get them involved which was comparable to Viola's experience volunteering as a peer advisor and on the smaller campus of FIU where she was able to "network with people in specific majors."

Unique to the experiences of the other participants, Ashley and Yolette had a large charity or corporate social responsibility influence in their employment. Although Ashley and Yolette had heavy influences of volunteer attitudes or mores in the jobs they held, their work only aligned with the job and not necessarily the careers they wanted. Ashley worked off campus at a retail store where she created her leadership role in the sorting of donated clothing. Individuals who came into the store with donations would get store credit, and she would sort the clothing to go to different businesses or people. Although if "she didn't get paid for it, she would have done it anyway" because she was getting paid and could only do it when she was at work, she did not consider it volunteerism. She was mindful that considering that project volunteerism may create a

shift in her belief system, and she may begin to start seeking payment for volunteer work. I asked Yolette outright. If she still volunteered after getting her position or in addition to her work hours on campus. She had received her current job on campus facilitating the distribution of resources to food insecure students because of her consistent record volunteering with the department before the position opening; she had accrued 50 hours in one month. When asked if she put more into the work she did on campus, she whispered not to tell her supervisor because yes, she did, but did not consider that additional work volunteering. And although she held another work-study position with the institution tutoring children who do not speak English as their first language, she did not credit that to volunteerism either.

There were similarities among those who had jobs and those who didn't have jobs regardless of the work done in their position. Marie had "a bit more focus on or an idea of where she wants to go in terms of her career" because of volunteering. Lourdes credited a volunteer experience with helping her to understand her future was not necessarily in becoming a practicing doctor but perhaps remaining in the healthcare field through the "public health sector" since her immersion trip had her assisting the HIV/AIDS community in Los Angeles. Jane discussed having a future impact on the local area by "creating a day that brings awareness of higher education to the community because everyone I grew up with is in jail, pregnant, not in school working at Walmart… so I just wanted to bring awareness to the school."

Marie was reflective that many of the volunteer experiences and the people, "I want to put an emphasis on the people that I've met," have fostered a life-long commitment to integrate her time and job in the future. "I think I'm just going to spend

my whole life just like doing some community outreach…I want to make time to do it because I feel like I am where I am because of those experiences, and I'm going to get farther in life because I continue to go through those things as well." Jane mentioned representation and understanding the future for more than herself through her aspirational focus, and Sarah summed the connection of her goals to volunteer in the present with the future goals she has as well as the weight her work in the community held and perhaps how it will inspire in the future:

> When I joined C.U.R.E. for the medical mission trip, it was mainly because I needed to apply to medical school. When you're applying, you need 15 experiences. And I was like; I need another experience that's medically related because usually like my [immersion] trips are nonmedical, they're not anything medical related. I need an experience that's medical related. So that's why I decided to do the [student group] trip, which was super expensive. And then when I finished the trip I was like, listen, I'm going to come back. Doctors Without Borders. When I become a doctor, I want to be an obstetrician. And I'm going to be up in these rural areas. I'm going, come back to Haiti, just be delivering babies for free. I was so excited. I'm like, I'm going to set up a free clinic and here and here and here and do this. After that trip I was like, okay, this is something I definitely want to do. Especially in Nicaragua too, I worked in a women's health clinic for a day giving like these girls, like 13 years old, and they're pregnant, they literally have no idea and some of them we have to give them pap smears early. I saw a pap smear like on a 14-year-old because she was pregnant and like the doctor was worried about her risk for disease and stuff like that. It was just exciting. When I joined the trip, it was because I needed a medical experience on my CV. It is terrible, but it's the truth. And then when I was like in the actual trip, I'm like, okay, literally I'm going to be a doctor, I'm going to be the poster doctor for underrepresented communities. Okay. I'm going to have my own mobile health unit with my picture on it; I'll deliver your baby for free literally. So that was something that was super exciting.

The aspirational self as a developmental goal has been shared as a motivator; however, Sarah's example was specific to the occupational needs she may encounter in her future

career. Having the ability to connect with resources and do the work on a global scale proved to be something that she was consistently using to build her understanding of self.

Throughout the interviews, the participants discussed the connections they made with the communities they were working with and were expressive about how those connections helped them to understand the work that they were doing. Social issues were further understood through the lives of the individuals whom the participants were helping, and the participants learned lessons that they felt would carry them through life. Connections to people through networking and focusing on their career were also ways that the participants discussed the theme of building connections. Two of the participants were able to realize those connections in the current work, while the others anticipated a future of community engagement with their aspirational jobs.

Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers

A dynamic of being recipients of volunteer work in their communities growing up held particular importance to eight of the participants, many of whom spoke of tragic circumstances that facilitated volunteers helping to combat either familial issues or to provide additional resources to those in need. Jane was the only participant who had not been a recipient of community service in the past. Bernice and Maggy spoke of receiving aid after Hurricane Katrina. These volunteers struck different cords with each of them, although they both were young and welcomed the assistance. Bernice could not remember the effects of the volunteers but thought that perhaps her father was going to surprise her since he was in the military and the national guard were the ones to enter the neighborhood to assist. Whereas Bernice stayed in the house and navigated the disaster relief from the house as “a movie type thing,” Maggy approached the volunteerism of

others in a demystifying way. “It was showing me that, you know, you don’t always have to be a blonde Caucasian coming to help your own.”

Sarah shared a similar understanding about the type of person who volunteers which she realized through members of her mixed-race church coming to their family’s aid after her father passed away. Those members continued to support Sarah throughout her collegiate experiences as well. While Lourdes no longer received the support, she and her mother once did from the church she was a member of when she was younger. “I was like six or seven…when I was homeless. I know that we lived in a safe home with a family because through the church we were able to live with someone else, like during Christmas time.” She lacked an attachment to the experience of being homeless, although she has the memories of how the situation affected her mother who would relive it with her.

Christmas charity was a topic for Yolette as well, and she was also very young when she was a recipient of what I have gauged to be transactional community service. During the holiday season when she was between the ages of seven and nine, she was selected to receive a $100 gift card for gifts and to shop with a White police officer. Despite the anecdotal warnings about police in her community at the time, it was an enjoyable memory for her during the interview. Peggy’s perception of receiving service was offered as a way for her to pay it forward. “Sometimes I would have a friend; she was too shy to go get [coats, pairs of socks and gloves], so I went and got the coat for her.” Although she tied in her and her family responsibility to donating to those drives as well, she never partook in the resources for herself. Marie also made a connection to family in her realization that during difficult times she would rely on volunteers, who

were members of her family dedicating their time, energy, or money to assist the family with what they had been going through:

> When things did get hard, and you had another family member… or a friend just step in and just involve themselves in something that they really didn't need to, and they were willing to help and take on the responsibility that would do more harm or become more of a problem for them…they kind of became my hero in life.

Viola discussed human resources as her way of receiving service during the September 11th day of service event; however, she did not share recent acts of service where she was a recipient of a resource and relied on her description of what the researcher interpreted as service leadership instead of service receivership. Additionally, Marinella only mentioned tutoring or the casual support of her peers in her initial interview as ways she has received help but reflected throughout the time between her first interview and second interview and realized that she frequented the on-campus food pantry for which she was "grateful." "We went to [local grocery store], and we were walking, and we saw some of the things we see in the food pantry… I feel very great that I have the opportunity to go to the food pantry and get some food."

Similar to Marinella, Ashley shared a recent incident where she was on the receiving side of the volunteering relationship. Being displaced over the break between spring and fall school semesters drove Ashley to understand the homeless population more. She discovered that her mother was once living in a shelter acknowledging that the shame, she thought her mother would display, was met with understanding and decided that the resources given to her could potentially be reciprocated and she desired to assist those who were assisting her at the moment. "So, in my situation, my wants never changed even though I did need resources, my wants to help others never changed." Her

conclusive notion of the moment is reminiscent of all the women who shared about receiving help from others regardless of the volunteer be it, strangers or family, transactional or for someone else eventually, their belief of service thereafter only added to their motivation to continue. “It taught me a lot about receiving help and then using that, to want to give out help at the same time still. I’m grateful. I came back with an actual need to not change who I was but change the way I viewed everything and make myself more open-minded and inclusive to things that I just never considered.”

Several of the participants’ messaging about service at the beginning of their lives were born out of their recognition of hardship. Sarah’s hardship of losing her father in her youth was the only hardship of that kind shared in an interview among the participants in this study. Others were keen to describe understanding others, either in their communities or schools, that did not reflect their identities when recognizing hardships that led to understanding privilege as they began reflecting about why they volunteer. Yolette reflected about it generally by saying “even though you may not come from a really good situation, you still have privilege.”

Additional narratives of realizing or being socialized to understand the privilege that three of the women considered as they continued to volunteer follow:

> I think I want to say I’ve always been aware of the fact that people don’t have the same. People from other countries or even other cities, or there are households that don’t have the same experience that I do. I was always reminded of that with my grandma, my aunt and my mom about how we’re really fortunate for what we have in being able to live in this country. So, I was aware of that. (Bernice)

> My biggest memory growing up in that household, yes, it was hard, and it was difficult. But my biggest thing that I always remembered was that my grandmother always made it a point to remind us how, how lucky we were

> and that we shouldn't forget where we came from and that we do still have family and friends who are, who still need our help and who aren't as like in the best position as we are at the moment. It wasn't the greatest, but it could be a lot worse, and you shouldn't forget that. (Marie)

> I want to say just seeing people who didn't have was like wow. But there are so many people that do have. I felt like if everybody who does have something gave back, there wouldn't be a need for there to be so many people without. Because they're just too much wealth circulating or even if you're not wealthy, but if you have more than other people do. So even if it's just a little. That was my thing. Like I know I'm not rich, but I have more than a lot of other people, so I should help them in some way. (Peggy)

Bernice, Marie, and Peggy realized earlier in their lives that they had a privilege that continued to frame their community service. The reflection of privilege started in their homes but expanded to the general population and helped them to navigate the volunteer experience.

Adding a question about understanding personal privilege was something that I explored in the initial interview protocols as a follow-up conversation for those who indicated it in response to another question. In general, all the participants remembered indicators of their privilege, other peoples' privilege, or their own disadvantages in the service work they did. Lourdes discussed her privilege concerning a situation that was not tied to previous volunteer work; however, she stated that "specifically understanding my privilege came from volunteering." She provided that her privilege, much like Yolette mentioned, came from being able to attain an education at schools that were not in her neighborhood school's feeder pattern. That support as a child allowed her to understand that she was so "privileged even though she is Black, even though she is Hispanic, even though she is a woman."

Lourdes' realization was not only because of school, but also her mother's involvement. "There's been so many other things that I've been able to take advantage of because my mom just being there for me and providing for me and being supportive that other people did not have." Peggy reflected on "vacations she took every few years," "growing up in a two-parent household," and the perception that others have of her parents "spoiling her" as privilege growing up. Bernice credited the matriarchs of her family for helping her to recognize her privilege early in her childhood:

> We have gone through ['word of mouth' ancestral accounts of] discrimination; we've gone through so many things. But I know the privilege I have because I was able to go to decent schools, I've lived in communities that are safer than like other communities. I acknowledged that, and I've always acknowledged that because my grandma would always tell me, your mom, like, does everything for a reason, look at where you're living and look where someone else like you could be living. My great grandma, she lived in, Overtown and going to visit her and seeing the change of how the communities are. That's where I first acknowledged I have it like better than someone else does. I would say like my living situation is where I noticed.

The influence of Bernice's mother and grandmother were profound influences on realizing her privilege. Her grandmother overtly made sure Bernice knew, but Bernice was also able to witness family members living in places that were not as affluent as her neighborhood.

Viola noticed the privilege of others when volunteering in a city north of Miami Dade County and spoke about "a "really nice" community where the "houses were huge, and the area was beautiful" but having to return to her neighborhood which "was not the same." But those stark contrasts that existed also helped her to recognize her privilege going into neighborhoods that were less privileged than her area. Lourdes worked

through not only the schooling that was “hindering” her development but also living in neighborhoods that were “pretty bad.” She started seeing the contrast in opportunities that her friends in the neighborhood had compared to ones in her magnet high school. Sarah illuminated why that recognition of hardship while continuing to reflect on one’s privilege as an element of one’s future is important:

> Applying now to medical school, I’m using the M STAR, and you get to see how many or the distribution of the class. You get to see how many of them are Black, how many of them are Hispanic? So [when I saw] it was like one Black person. I’m like, ‘I’m not going here.’ I’m sorry I can’t do high school over again. That was stressful…I need to be surrounded by people who, you know, who feel the same as me. And that’s not saying that White people don’t, but it’s just I cannot do it again.

Sarah’s concern about being the one Black woman in her class was due in part from lacking the privilege of having individuals who look like her throughout the university setting. She recognized that the privilege of being one of many was something she wanted in the next phase of her life.

Quite distinctive than the average description of even women who volunteer, the participants in the study all recognized that they would do more service if they were able to balance it with their other responsibilities and were able to seek the investment long term in their additional volunteering behavior. This indication of balancing what they all found important, led the researcher to consider the barriers that they may have had preventing them from engaging in additional moments with the community and how they overcame them. Although Lourdes had not mentioned an apparent barrier, the other participants had.

Time or prioritization for volunteering was something that five of the participants mentioned they had to consider when deciding their volunteering activity. Both Jane and

Yolette talked about the overlap in the community service that they could participate in on a given day. Sarah pointed to time being a factor because she felt like "she was really busy with other things," those "things" or "coursework" were also what kept Maggy from exploring more volunteer opportunities. With graduation looming, she was unable to commit to "being on someone else's time," without the resource that several participants, including those mentioned above, discussed as a barrier to volunteering; personal transportation.

Maggy, Marie, Peggy, Viola, and Yolette all determined that the lack of personal transportation in Miami made volunteering difficult. Viola grouped money and transportation as barriers which Maggy hinted at as well during her interviews. Rather than a physical barrier, Sarah and Peggy were challenged by language barriers. For Sarah that was "because going to Nicaragua both times it's hard to get around without knowing Spanish." Peggy found that even if she was not serving globally like Sarah, "[Miami] was a very Hispanic area, and she was not fluent in Spanish enough to help somebody, "so sometimes that's a thing…" and there were some service projects she needed to know Spanish to assist. This acknowledgment of knowing the environment for Peggy was also a barrier for Marinella who "wasn't involved in many organizations on campus, so she didn't know about the opportunities to volunteer." It also proved to be an issue for Viola who recognized that transitioning from her high school to the local college framed Miami as "a new environment with new people, new faces," where she needed a mentor to assist her in getting involved in the community.

Viola eventually began leading and serving through the local college, but leadership or organizing service work manifested another barrier for some of the

participants: self-confidence. Sarah entangled her self-confidence in either a role or a skill that she did or did not possess; “some volunteer events that I organize, I feel like I’m holding myself back.” She shared about building a bathroom in Nicaragua:

> Definitely, skill is a barrier…even the first trip in Nicaragua, I was like, “Cement? Who am I? Cement is an occupational exposure that causes lung carcinogenesis; I don’t know who is going to be.” But I was like, “Okay, let’s do it.” And I can say I can build a bathroom; I can say that.

Sarah concluded, “So definitely skill on that trip wasn’t that much of a barrier because they were like, ‘You’re learning this now, and you’re going to do it by yourself.’”

Bernice also shared that working with her peers and planning immersion experiences for her peers built the self-confidence she needed to “get over the nerves” in the beginning. Limiting herself, Marie was able to overcome those thoughts by “being forced into leadership roles” and seeing others and “their confidence and trying to meet that goal…because it’s like they can see something in you, but if you don’t believe it then it defeats the whole purpose.” Other people’s beliefs were conversely the barrier that Ashley had to overcome. She found that as a leader on an immersion trip, “so many mindsets came together and [she] realized she wasn’t connecting with a lot of them,” but she concluded that experience meant that she needed to redefine volunteering when working with others “to know that I’m not losing sight of the vision.”

Research is limited concerning the challenges that volunteers have getting and staying involved in the community. The participants in this dissertation used their prior hardships as motivation to volunteer. Often the participants used the experience of receiving help from others as motivation to get involved or understand that their narratives about who can volunteer were shifting. The participants in the study continued

to have barriers as they pursued volunteering, but they overcame those barriers and helped to compare that with their volunteer work and what they gained from experience.

The University's Complex Role with Volunteerism

A noticeable gap in the learning/education motivation is formal coursework. When prompted by the researcher about their enrollment in "service-learning" courses or courses that made service mandatory, all but two of the participants had not participated in a class like that at FIU. Lourdes was introduced to working in prison through a class and she "knew beforehand what she was getting into. This would be a once a week class, and you'd be going to the prison. Every single class you'd have to do these assignments, you'd have to engage, you'd have to do this and then volunteering." Maggy also had a class with Dr. Burns where she had to complete 10 hours of "stuff, which they claimed was volunteering." Some courses the participants took did have service as an option for extra credit such as triathlon volunteering, voter engagement, experiments through the psychology department, as well as a first-year experience course offering the option.

Women in this study were leaders at the university in different clubs/organizations, were all seniors who had had upper-division coursework, and all were at the pinnacle of their collegiate career readying to graduate within a year. It was essential to understand how the university worked to foster their journey toward active engagement in the community and what it could further do to provide pathways toward continued volunteering.

The participants credited their participation in student clubs or organizations with helping to promote service. Bernice was encouraged by "younger people, students her age who are advocating more for service" at the university and Jane pointed that it was

not “the university itself, but the students and the clubs” who emailed her a plethora of opportunities to be involved. Marinella relied on the new business honor society membership in understanding opportunities to do community service. Sarah shared that her collegiate volunteering began when she worked at the CLS at FIU, but she gave little credit to the full-time staff within the department for fostering her participation. Instead, Sarah found a kinship with another part-time student employee and they “signed up for a lot of events together.” Maggy was critical of the clubs who are not “promoting volunteering rather [promoting to] come join this organization or be part of this program or go do this, but not really volunteering.”

Professors/Administrators

The reliance on other students to get information spoke to the disconnect all the participants had with professors or administrators at the institution. Most striking was Lourdes’ admission that she had not told the professor who introduced her to the prison project that she continued to go after the class was over. She said that “it is kind of hard for me to network with administrators and professors because I feel like they’re kind of detached. They’re at this podium, and everybody’s trying to reach for them type of thing.” She also recognized the faculty workload of her professor and how “faculty is really involved as well, and they have a lot going on for themselves, so it’s hard to sit there and talk to them and tell them about what you’re doing and what’s going on in your community.” Lourdes thought that could have been rectified by taking “time to get really up close and personal with people,” as Sarah agreed that she “wished she knew her professors better because if I knew them better, I’d be able to tell them how I view service.” Bernice also spoke to a lack of connection with administrators or professors; “I

don't feel like I have a connection, like a direct connection with them. If I did, know them by first name basis, I probably would… be like 'hey, this is what we're doing.'" Marie stated that the lack of opportunity or inquiry from the professors did not provide a space where she could discuss her service endeavors whereas the thought to discuss service with her professors "never crossed" Viola's mind "because what they were doing was not related to the subject."

Classes the participants took were ultimately used as a promotional tool for connecting their peers to service opportunities instead of dialoguing around community engagement. Marie challenged that in her response, "you would think it would be a topic of discussion especially since I've taken a lot of psychology classes and like social psychology classes." Jane thought the professors would not care and would juxtapose their research as an experience similar to her volunteer work, whereas Peggy was a fully online student because she was "unlucky" and got "really mean professors" when she was an on-campus student. Ashley said "I guess I have no problem advertising [service]… I didn't tell my professors, but they were there." Lourdes' research lab served as her network and "where she did most of her academic work," so "most people in the lab knew she volunteered in the at the prison and [she] would tell [those in the lab] about anything else she was doing."

Four participants had instances where they did communicate with either professors or university administrators about the service work in which they participated. Yolette relented that in reflecting with faculty "unless it's an assignment that you really have no choice…a conversation with administrators or my professor [about service], it's very vague. I'll explain what was done and briefly the organization." Marie spoke of an

administrator she considered her "advisor" who "introduced her to the peer mentoring position" as those with whom she would discuss service. An advisor was also an avenue for Peggy to reflect on her service but was limited in that they did not "really talk much about community service just mostly stuff like for the organization, but that was probably the closest." Sarah had the most instances of communication about service with either professors or staff that she could recall with detail:

> I did talk to my professor about one of my trips, but the only reason I did was that it was it was the second week of summer. My [immersion] trip was during the second week and not the first week, and it interfered with the first week of school, and I had to miss class, so I had to tell my professors… then when I came back, I showed him like everything that we did, it was my Oklahoma trip and all the pictures. And then another professor, I showed him what we did because he was from Tulsa, Oklahoma. I showed them pictures. That was my chemistry professor, Dr. G. I showed him the pictures. He's like, 'Oh my God, Little Lighthouse' like I know that place because he was from Oklahoma.

Sarah's reflection with her professor was centered in her acknowledgment of his background. The conversation did not extend to the applicability of the experience to her goals or major.

It was common for the participants to shy away from engaging with professors about their service work, and many did so for similar reasons that Framer & Piotrkowski (2009) discussed and communicated which is a reluctance to be a braggart about the acts they were committed to in the community or to regard speaking about those opportunities as praise-seeking. Ashley felt like she "was bragging and always going back to her home life, I was told never to brag." Ashley also reframed the reluctance to discuss her work in the community through the lens of those she volunteered to help. "I think one of the biggest things you have to think about when

volunteering is that the people you're volunteering for, they don't advertise that someone volunteers with them. They take it as someone who had the goodness of their heart to help me."

Maggy pointed at the praise-seeking behavior as well when she mentioned that she did not tell people at the university about her volunteer work and would discuss it if she understood that the individual was asking to do some volunteering as well:

> Some people search for like praise and approval of like, oh my God, it's screaming to the world, 'I volunteer here like everyone should know.' If you're going to do something just do it. If someone wants to know to join, then you tell them, but if you're just trying to go around telling everyone you do it, just so people could know that like, oh, you're very giving or then it's like then what are you really doing it for?... I already got the 70 hours that I needed [for a previous class]. I'm not going to continue writing forms to show that I'm doing more.

Completing additional hours for mandatory service and not recording them as well as inviting friends was common for the participants. Rather than engaging with professors, Peggy had a friend "back home" whom she would discuss the service day with "if he happened to call her on that day that she did something related to [service] the day before or after." Otherwise, she chose to share "a snapchat or a picture on social media," and on one such occasion a friend pointed out that Peggy had met a Dolphins player who signed her free shirt. Free shirts were used as an enticement to help recruit friends of Jane to do service with her. She let them know that they would be "missing out" and could potentially have a connection for later in the event you develop the health issue you were volunteering for at the walk. Maggy preferred to invite her friends to service projects as well and would stop inviting them when they did not confirm attendance but has "had some friends that were committed with me." Bernice had a friend

since middle school who knows “why I do [community service],” but she felt like the friend was “always not interested” while she found that more casual friends that she would encourage to participate on immersion trips did so.

To manage their service history and experiences, several of the participants would document the experiences informally on a piece of paper or formally on their resume or through Panther Connect formerly OrgSync, a web-based application that allows you to submit hours toward approval of recognition or rewards. Peggy, Sarah, and Yolette had documented their service through the Panther Connect interface or expressed interest in doing so immediately. During the interview, Sarah wanted me to stop and teach her how complete the documentation of her service, and that knowledge gap was consistent among others like Jane and Marinella who through interviewing at the CLS office gained that knowledge after the final interview. “I read something about if you make a hundred hours doing service work, you will get a medallion when graduating” (Marinella). Yolette, who had not been “logging in her volunteering hours into Panther Connect until recently,” had an additional obligation to share her service hours with her sorority; “my Sorority, for the centennial coming up, they want us to have about a million service hours: from every chapter, from every member. They created this system for us to input our service, so we have, and then you start to realize how like you, you forget.” Bernice tended not to document the service she did, but when she would document the time spent in the community as a volunteer, she did not include the hours, and neither did Marinella who included the volunteerism on her resume.

Resources Needed

A probe of what resources were needed to continue to serve was added in the second interview. These questions were an effort to mitigate the disconnect between the university administration and faculty and the volunteerism of the participants as well as weigh the hardships and barriers that they have had to overcome or identified. Lourdes, Maggy, and Marie thought that FIU was doing well in providing service opportunities to students and should continue. Lourdes would have preferred to have a “bigger network because when it comes to stuff like fundraising for certain service projects, you don’t know what’s around you to really get sponsors that support your cause,” and Marie would have wanted to see more opportunities to serve in the community on the university’s social media pages. Maggy wanted to build a network like Lourdes and said that taking advantage of networking opportunities was the responsibility of the person looking for the network.

When considered, social media, although a specific way of building awareness and promoting opportunity, was primarily a way to include an advertisement as a resource needed that the university could provide. Advertisement or awareness was something that many of the participants wanted, whereas Sarah asked for there to be “more dialogue about volunteering because a lot of times people have this preconceived notion about volunteering,” Bernice would have preferred “websites on where to find volunteer opportunities” like non-profits in the community. Further, she stated:

> Put on the monitors [in the Graham Center], like an advertisement for an upcoming service opportunity, and is connected with someone based on personal experience or something that they’re interested in. I think it could reach a lot more people than just hearing it from people because you will hear it from the same group of people and not everyone’s in the same

> circles, so it'll be harder. Advertisement, like random flyers going into classrooms and talking about it and having like a little panel, could help too.

Yolette, the other participant in a sorority, agreed with Bernice and noted that "if you're not always on Instagram looking at flyers, and you're not also on email lists that different people are sending out invites for volunteer events" then one did not have an "active network." The need for more awareness was contrary to Jane's assertion that FIU was "actually good about bringing awareness to volunteering, but it was in the same vein of thought shared by Marinella who said, "the more, the better."

Other tangible resources that students recommended the university provide included the clothing to volunteer in specific locations. "I know shoes are kind of extreme, but it would be nice. Or the gloves… yeah, those kinds of resources." Viola was unique with that focus on the day of resources for service projects but was aligned with Sarah when she said that people could be a resource. Sarah expounded on that by thinking of a mentor as a resource, "someone, depending on what volunteering" who can assist the volunteer. Peggy requested language courses that she did not have to pay tuition for because "it'd be nice if she learned more Spanish," whereas she and nearly half of the participants would have appreciated having transportation provided to the service projects in which they participated "even though there's a lot of community service opportunities right around the campus." Yolette even noted that FIU could forego that need for transportation by hosting their own day of service "where whatever expenses or costs needed to the host the volunteer site, [FIU] should cover for their student or alum."

The participants were all seniors at the time of the study, and three of them brought up the desire to have continued resources as a postgraduate of the institution.

Whether an invite to a day of service for Yolette or helping to build a skill needed like grant writing for further use after graduation that was important to Lourdes, engagement post-college was desired. Ashley also wanted assistance on how to "take steps to get involved in the community and get emails from the county to figure out who's doing what and what they need" which was the only resources she thought she needed post-graduation.

The participants had notable shifts in their journeys from pre-collegiate to collegiate volunteering. Many of them saw a shift of those who were encouraging them or assisting them in understanding their role as volunteers in the community and ventured to help me understand that it was essential to connect with those that were familiar with their identity or the context and identities of those who were being helped by their initiatives. Hispanic women were commonly the people at the university who encouraged them; Ashley mentioned one Hispanic man and one Black woman encouraged her, and when explained Marie's umbrella term of "women of color" meant women who were Black or Hispanic encouraged her. While Peggy's synopsis was expressed similarly in that Hispanic women and a White man encouraged her to volunteer in college, Yolette had a robust list of encouragers that included Black women and men, Hispanic women, and "some people who identified as Afro-Latino." Lourdes, who explained that a Black Canadian professor was a person of color who would typically help her get involved also explored race/ethnicity in community development through a "presentation before we went with the training" where she positioned "the historical background of Overtown and I-95." Lourdes reflected that initial understanding by stating, "when you realize that 95

was like completely built on top of Overtown and it completely destroyed, you know, these people like it's ridiculous to me. I didn't know that. It was eye-opening."

Communicating about volunteering through the interviews highlighted some of the differences in when the participants conversed about service to others and its meaning or the reasons that they volunteer. Ashley continued to see no perceivable difference in how she would discuss service with me, a Black woman, versus service with someone who shared none of her identities. Although Yolette perceived no difference in how she spoke to me about service, it was because unlike the other participants, "she was in a historically African American sorority and a lot of the service she does she engages with other Black women, and we as Black women are doing something for our community. That in itself is empowering." Yolette and the other 10 participants could foresee a difference in discussing community service with someone who did not share their identities. Bernice, however, understood that since she did not grow up around "a lot of African Americans in her community," she could "get kind of nervous around people who look like her who are not family." Those stereotypes and experiences from middle school framed her mindset, while her excitement would increase as she spoke to those individuals with nervousness subsiding.

Other than Bernice, the other participants who admitted that there would be a difference in communicating with others who were not Black women could not confirm the exact differences without the opportunity to do so. Maggy felt comfortable speaking to me but stated "if it was a Caucasian person speaking to me, probably half of the things I said I wouldn't have said." Lourdes called it a "privilege" and "felt she could actually

express herself which is not very common" when interviewing with me. She thought that speaking to someone with no shared identities would be different:

> I know that they don't understand where I'm coming from or where the people that I work with are coming from. There's a different approach to it. You can't expect for somebody be able to walk in your shoes. You kind of had to guide them to walk in your shoes. That's like the part of the saying that's never mentioned... And I think that's why often Black women get targeted as like angry because they, I feel like they go through the most plight throughout all or most of minorities without even adding like sexuality or any other intersectional thing. You know, Black women are women, and they're of color, so they pretty much go through the most things, so it's so much more labor to try and get any other person to understand what it's like to walk in their shoes, you know.

Lourdes prompted me to think of additional intersections the women may have had in their backgrounds, but I did not explore the other aspects of the participants' background as many of them shared the hardships of being a Black woman without further mention of other social identities.

So poignant was that understanding Lourdes discussed that Marie, when reflecting, asked: "why we didn't get a chance to touch too much about my experience volunteering as a Black person." With the least instances of volunteering experiences, the service shared did not give way to further questioning in that direction. When prompted, Marie did think she would have difficulty relating to men of any color who "have a hard time understanding why I would willingly give my time to help someone else." Marinella thought it would be different talking to someone other than a Black woman which "felt like home," but did not know "how different." Jane and Peggy questioned the kinship of the experiences that "White men or women" had with them. Jane posited that she would venture to say her Blackness was in question when being interviewed by others, and

Peggy proposed that she would "have to probably spend a lot of time explaining what I mean to them… it just feels better to me to talk with somebody who already knows; I don't have to explain."

The relative connection through identity was also manifested differently throughout the interviews in what Sarah and Viola summed as "representation." Empowered was the word of choice for Sarah when she discussed the representation of my research, who when around someone who may not look like her would not "feel inclined to share a lot about color and stuff like that." Viola, who wanted to go to graduate school for student affairs or higher education, noted that "we don't get those kinds of questions, we don't see a Black woman getting her doctorate or a Black woman who ask those kinds of questions about community service." Open to finding out what it might be like to have in interview with those who don't share an identity with her, Viola was inspired by "talking to another Black woman who came from a Caribbean background, whose parents were similar to hers who had multiple siblings, and both of us were at FIU…"

The family and friends of the participants had pivotal roles throughout their journey in community service rather than the staff or faculty that worked at the university. When asked what faculty should then know about the service work she does, Ashley said "I need them to know that the service that I do isn't just because I was interested in service, I need them to know that it was ingrained into who I am as a person and that's why I do it. Um, and there is no outside motivation."

Reasons for Criticism of Volunteering

Participants were asked what they liked least about doing community service work to engage in conversation that critiqued volunteerism and provide readers with an understanding of why one might disengage willingly from volunteering and understanding role conflict on an individual level. The discourse was broad with several replications and none of which compelled the participants to stop serving. Viola and Lourdes focused on the people whom they would work alongside as reasons for disliking the volunteering experience at times. Viola and Bernice called types of people Lourdes and Viola discussed as "disrespectful" people who "complain," while Lourdes asserted:

> People get prideful in their volunteering, and I don't really like that, and they want to get to the top, and they want to be like the best, and they just want to be recognized by everybody. And that's not why I'm here.

Although Lourdes did not indicate that those people who like to climb the hypothetical volunteering bureaucratic ladder or be recognized for their efforts volunteering were disrespectful at the service site like Viola and Bernice discussed, she indicated that their understanding of volunteering was disrespectful to the intent of the actions and the work in the community.

Ashley, Maggy, Bernice, Marie, Yolette, and Peggy found that the business practices of nonprofit organizations who run the volunteer opportunities were often to fault for what they liked least about volunteering. Ashley was troubled by the entire existence of the system:

> That innocence of learning [altruism through volunteering] and then having that applied to help others out, uh, as, as an adult and knowing that it's now overthrown by a business, by politicians, by a scam, by a scheme, by, you know, I scratch your back, you scratch my back. And I feel like that's not what volunteering is. It's not the reason why we do things, and

> it's not everybody, you know, not everybody has that mindset. Most people just think they're helping to help. So, knowing that that's not the only thing that is what I don't like about volunteering.

Maggy was more upset by the misalignment of the organization's stated values and their realized actions, a critique of trying to advertise cultural capital increase through volunteering, because:

> Some organizations where I volunteered for it and then listening to them and the way they talk about the people that they're helping. It's like, are you really helping? You're over here smiling in their face and as soon as they turn around, you're bashing them on how they look or how they speak or where they come from.

Marinella was displeased that she did not receive financial support from the volunteer work she committed to as Hewins-Maroney (2008) highlighted in the findings of Black youth volunteering actions and their desire to be compensated, but "understood that she was still able to pay her bills, so it wasn't a big deal." Lack of clarity in instruction and task once at the volunteer site, role ambiguity, were discussed by Bernice, Marie, and Yolette, who mainly did not appreciate not knowing what to do or having a clear direction to a goal on site. That could be exacerbated by the last two factors that were raised; the early morning hours expected of volunteers (Jane & Yolette) and volunteering in an unfamiliar or uncomfortable place (Peggy & Sarah). Peggy and Sarah both countered with an understanding that that discomfort would dissipate once they grew accustomed to the surroundings. The women continued to serve although there were role conflicts as not only the literature on Black women indicated they would, but also their own lived experiences before college alluded.

To Black Women Who Consider Volunteering When They've Had Enough

As an homage to Shange's (2010) choreopoetic work presenting the interconnected stories of the oppressive struggles and obstacles of African-American women, the narratives represented by the 11 women narrowly focus a community-oriented coming of age story. The dynamic for many of these women who are continuing to build the understanding of self through both educational institutions as well as local, national, and global communities is considered holistically and individually. As a conclusion to the interview, I asked each of the Black women to advise other collegiate Black women about the interplay of volunteering on the dynamics of Blackness, spirituality, politics, education, and community perspectives.

Breaking from the rewording and grouping that precedes in the thematic analysis, the sentiments of the participants to other Black women are quoted as closely to verbatim as possible to keep the intention of the words. They are listed in alphabetical order as the profiles that began and grouped based on the advice each of the women gave; learning about one's self and redefining one's self. Its own prose of journey to understanding, it is a befitting way to tribute the work of Shange (2010) and the words of the participants.

Bernice, Maggy, Marie, Marinella, Peggy, and Sarah advised the volunteering will help you learn about yourself: "You can learn a bunch of different things about yourself that you probably learn more things about yourself sooner I would say with volunteering" (Bernice). Bernice was the only participant who mentioned that volunteering impacts the pace of what one can learn about themselves. Maggy advised learning about yourself by exploring different social issues and emphasized that before volunteering you should understand whether you want to serve:

> That's why I say do it because you love it. You don't have to do every community service that's out there. Find something that interests you or you want to improve. And then by doing that you'll find the deeper meaning because then you will probably go into it. Maybe I thought I liked animals, and I really don't like animals, or maybe I thought homeless people are weird, but they're pretty cool. It's a learning experience; you learn about yourself within doing it.

Maggy's assertion that you can learn about yourself while volunteering was also something Marie discussed; however, she did not discuss the social issues as an exploration of self. Instead, Marie talked about being open to the experience and making an emotional investment in the growth you will have as a volunteer.

> Be openminded. How you see yourself today might not be the same tomorrow or in the [next] couple of years, and it's scary. It's nerve-wracking because they're going to be put in positions where you have to reevaluate your whole identity again because what you thought was one way turned out to be another, and that's just you are growing up. That's just growth, that's just life. And I think for you to get where you need to be, it's an important process that has to happen. As scary as it is…It's a beautiful thing that's going to happen. They might not be the best feeling at the moment, but it's what's going to take you to wherever you need to be even if that vision is unclear at the moment because I'm going through this process right now.

Marinella also shared the tenets of vision building and understanding oneself that Marie shared. Marinella focused on values building and paralleling your actions with those values.

> I think you will learn about yourself indeed. What you will learn is what type of person you are in the sense of, am I a person who values money the most, or am I a person who values the thing I'm doing, the action I'm taking and what I'm trying to say. It helps you know yourself better. People should do community service in order to know their selves better. Yes, I am pretty sure that it will change people. Yes. Positively.

Marinella focused on a positive change in discovering who you are through volunteer endeavors and gave a call to action to have more people do community service for self-discovery. Peggy focused on some of the less positive things people had said to her when she was volunteering and how she internalized that over the years:

> I would say you learn definitely a lot about yourself and you learn a lot about other people and how they might impact you, but also how you shouldn't let other people's ideas about you impact you, because people are going to say things. It hasn't happened to me at a volunteering or community service experience, but it might happen to somebody, because of every volunteer, every person there is not always the best. They're not always the best people…but you don't want to internalize that and really let it affect you. I've internalized a lot. I'm getting better at it now, but there have been times, things like I said, you walk in a room and people kind of stare at you. Or I've been to places, and a person was kind of just staring at my hair, just like bug eyes, just staring. I just want to be like, "What are you looking at?" It's definitely a journey to just see who you are.

Peggy's focus on the impact that other people may have on your development in your volunteering experiences was not unique. Peggy framed it voyeuristically; however, Sarah mentioned the same type of discovery in finding oneself as a mutual process.

> Be open. Don't let race be a barrier. Don't let color be a barrier. Just be open. Don't think about it too much. It is what it is, but just realize you're bridging that way ... you're setting the example that Black people do volunteer, Black people can volunteer, so ... and invite your friends, too, so you're not alone. Tell all the Black people to come. You see yourself through those people, Even the situations you've been in, you might see like ... for me, an example, you might go into a home, and it's like a single mom with three kids, and you're like, "Oh my God, this was literally my life growing up." You kind of learn about yourself. You learn about them, too. You have to make sure that you stay true to yourself and I don't know how to explain it, but you're not picking up other people's values or stuff like that. You're staying true to yourself when you do these things, and the reason why you're doing them is that it matches up with something that's inside of you. But yeah, sometimes the identities matchup, and you feel like, "Okay, I feel comfortable doing this." Or, "I'm meant to be here, I'm

> supposed to be here." Sometimes the identities don't match, and you're like, "This is so uncomfortable. This is like all these White people ... like no." But then sometimes you are kind of like, "This is good. Wow. Susan and me, we are so similar. Wow, this is crazy." Also, our own stereotypes about ... or my own stereotypes about White people are also broken. When you volunteer you realize that maybe Susan's stereotypes are broken with me and mine are broken with her. That's beautiful.

The reciprocity in discovering things about yourself and things about others to understand who you are was exemplified in the story that Sarah shared. She also discussed identity as a way to connect to others while volunteering in communities that are similar or dissimilar. Ashley, Jane, Lourdes, Viola, and Yolette built on the advice given by those who suggested volunteering as a way to learn about themselves and offered that community service could also assist in helping you redefine yourself.

After several rephrased questions, Ashley was able to offer a concise juxtaposition of volunteering regarding race and gender. She positioned her race and gender as fixed elements of her background that are there but not an identity she thinks about while serving:

> If you were finally intersecting every part of your life… every right answer and wrong answer, every left turn and right turn then you became who you already were. You just now have the identification and title and stereotypes that come with it to identify it as who you already were. As I said before, like with the social issues, it's under an umbrella of social justice. And everything you do is under an umbrella of you. It's not an umbrella under a Black woman that's from Jamaica, and you know, has siblings. No, it's just under me because being Black and being a woman is one of those things under my umbrella, um, and I can interchange them with what I want to identify as. I will always be a Black woman because the majority of the world is not blind, so I will always be seen as a Black woman… being a Black woman is always the most important thing to me.

Ashley discussed redefining who you are despite stereotypes and identity, however, recognized that being a Black woman is the most salient identity to her. Jane also shared how redefining who you are despite what others believed could help you build connections with others and help redefine themselves:

> I did some walks where I was the only Black person volunteering, and it's like sometimes they'll ask you things like oh, 'why did you do this? Why are you doing this disease? Because it's only known for Caucasian people.' So just giving that perspective, like making them view you differently and um, it's good for the culture, you know, even though you guys may have different political views too you're coming together.

Volunteering, as Jane stated, helps you redefine who you are through the perspectives of others. Lourdes countered putting yourself in situations of difference by stressing the importance of self-discovery to understand what you believe or enjoy, so you can find environments that would be safe:

> I think for sure find a safe space, find like-minded people. They don't really have to look like you necessarily because that's hard to find. But find people that share the same values as you. People that care about the same things that you do… You really had to dig deep and figure out [what you like]. That's why I say it's like a process because you're going to have to explore with whatever you have available and then whatever you start figuring out about yourself. I think it is all about just patience because I'm thinking back to the girl I was when I started my freshman year of high school. Scary, very scary, terrifying. It was so scary. I'm so scared for that girl, and it reflects in my service too because I wasn't contributing to causes that I genuinely cared about. I feel like I was very air-headed, and you know, I'm not ashamed to say that because I was 14 and I'm going to be 21 now. It's a huge gap in time. You have to be patient, and you have to be open-minded. Most of the experiences that I went through even in high school wouldn't have happened if I did open my mind to them at first.

Lourdes told her story of discovering who she was through her evolution from high school to college and advised that individuals are patient with the process since it could

be unpleasant. Reflecting on who she was and whom she became because of volunteering was something that Viola also discussed as she spoke to her personal growth:

> You grow as a person, so you kind of know who you are, and the things you like and the things you don't like. If they feed you, that's nice too. Then you get to try different food and different cultures. Of course, depending on the person who's going, it can be all populated with Blacks or Caribbean people, they don't share the same experience as you. But be comfortable in how much you are sharing because comfortability is key. If it's a bit diverse then add that into it, you know, tell them how it feels to grow up being Black or what do you believe in or how you don't think ... Even talk about social issues, too, and how do you feel about social issues? See what other people have to say about it, so kind of build that conversation as well, just kind of talk to them.

Viola and Jane had similar notions of redefining yourself by discussing who you are and your motives for volunteering with others at the service site. Viola expressed that you could also help to make the environment comfortable and perhaps even safe as Lourdes advised. Yolette focused on all the components of her background to summarize that one should use the elements of volunteering and the interest in social issues to redefine who they are and whom they want to be.

> When I volunteered, I may choose social issues that pertain to me, but then it's all underlying the umbrella of making a difference and impacting. My sorority is all womankind but for me as many people as I can reach. I may kind of jump from different social issues, and it may not always be impacting Black people. For a person that's kind of like going on a spiritual journey, it seems as if they need to find within themselves whether they're volunteering, you know, to better themselves or they're volunteering because they genuinely feel connected with these issues. Or are they volunteering because you know someone told them it was the right thing to do and this is what they're doing? If they begin reflecting on these different aspects of their life, whether it's political, whether it's themselves, or whether it's their identity, and it's like, okay, what do I do next? They need to figure out who they are…that's the first way to start. And then from there, it's kind of like you have to rebuild the blocks begin to write out the definition of what you want yourself to be.

The participants in the study understood that their volunteering experiences helped discover who they are and then redefine who they are or whom they wanted to be. The intersections of their background, (e.g., race, gender, and political associations) were elements that the participants either used to assist in educating others or worked to redefine based on the perspectives of others. Participants highlighted the growth in many different areas as a constant when volunteering and spoke to how volunteering is a personal process.

Summary

The participants were insightful in discussing the motivating factors that contributed to their volunteer work. They relayed the reasons they volunteer and how they made meaning from the experiences through eight themes that held nuanced and were often critical of holistic norms considered when volunteering. These themes were: Volunteerism Began Before University Enrollment; Service Started in Church, but Volunteering in Church Is No Longer Service; A Desire for Transformative Impact to Community and Selves; Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism; Volunteering Helps Build Connections; Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers; The University Has A Disjointed Role in Volunteerism; Reasons for Criticism of Volunteerism. The themes answered both research questions and led to considerable research on the dynamic.

Participants responded to questions about the reasons they volunteered resoundingly with experiences that they had before they matriculated into the university. Their high schools obligated these experiences for some, or they were heavily influenced by the individuals in their lives. Typically, those individuals tended to be their mothers,

grandmothers, or aunts. These individuals remained integral in the lives of the participants and would be the people that the participants communicated to about their volunteer work throughout their lives. Participants who would not discuss volunteering with their family members would do so with friends who have also been influential to their service work.

The literature pointed to the church as an essential institution for community engagement in the Black community with Black women as the key stewards of race work. Focusing on the church in this dissertation was a necessity. Many of the women had either forgotten their service work in the church until prompted or did not volunteer in the church. Despite a few assertions about being a Christian and religiosity, most of the participants did not go to church choosing to live through the practices of the biblical texts they learned when they were younger. Many of them were critical of the heavy promotion of philanthropic efforts that the church currently focuses on and preferred to help those social issues directly. The collective understanding was that although ten of the women understood church as pivotal to their lives, it did not impact the way they saw service nor was volunteering in the church considered volunteering now at this point.

The participants in the study frequently spoke about a desire to serve their community and impact the lives of others. It was often emphasized that this drive was not need-based and the only person holding them accountable for doing service was themselves. These efforts to work to eradicate social issues and assist in neighborhoods were isolated endeavors that were not necessarily scaled to the level of social movements nor had political influence. There was a split amongst the participants on whether their goals encompassed movement building in the future, but when politics was framed as an

issue in education and awareness, many of the women agreed that volunteering could help with that for not only others but for themselves as well. The transformative impact that they all agreed happened took place within themselves. They decidedly discussed their growth and perspective building when they were volunteering both before college and during their current enrollment.

Individual growth and perspective building happened in part because of the connections that participants were able to make in the community when volunteering. The participants connected with those they volunteered to help, and those interactions led to life lessons about positivity and accepting help when needed. The participants connected with others they volunteered with often becoming friends and engaging in volunteer opportunities together. Connections were made that were framed as networking that held potential to add to the lives of the participants later through internships or other opportunities. Connections were made to individuals by the participants who juxtaposed them to their only family. Although not stated throughout, I could analyze a connection to the holistic community as the participants learned and volunteered in areas they had either grown up in or knew nothing about previously.

The ten of the eleven participants opened up about the hardships they had as children and how that led them to recognize their privilege. Those lessons were deepened by their families to ensure that the participants understood the entire context of what they had in comparison to others. These hardships led to volunteer initiative and encouraging others to serve their community. Participants highlighted the inability to dedicate their entire time to volunteer work because of the necessity to be employed and engage in academic work. There were barriers including time, as indicated in the literature for

Millennial students, that participants had to overcome in order to continue their volunteer work.

University professionals and administrators have little interaction with the participants regarding service. The students found that the marketing and announcement of service opportunities at the university were adequate but were mostly spoken about by their peers. There was little messaging that was received by individuals who were not in clubs or organizations with the participants, and many of them found those individuals to have different identities than the people who initially helped them start serving their community. The university is seen as a disjointed institution that could assist with the role of volunteering, and resources could be provided to give participants additional support as they continue to serve the community even beyond their graduation.

Efforts to secure disconfirming cases, women who did not volunteer or could not volunteer, were unsuccessful. Instead, questions about barriers were asked as previously stated, and the participants also added the reasons they were critical of volunteer work. These criticisms were shared throughout the interviews but highlighted as an understanding that despite their criticism, the participants had not stopped serving. Their criticism was almost perceived as a rallying cry to volunteer contrary to misdirection or the role ambiguity they encountered. That is conducive to their conversation about hardship and overcoming barriers from the community or nonprofit standpoint.

Black Women Who Consider Volunteering When They've Had Enough is not a theme that answers either research questions; instead, it was an opportunity for the participants to share with other Black collegiate women who are on paths of discovery. These snippets of their interview were consistent with the reasons why the participants

themselves began volunteering in college and how they continued to use the resources, people, and time afforded to them throughout that journey to understanding what volunteering has helped them do and will help them do in the future. With a lack of available intellectual works from Black women and the scarcity of literature on why Black women volunteer, the researcher's inclusion of a nonthematic call to action was appropriate.

Higher education and the framing of service as something one does to outside communities in need has done a disservice to students who have not typically been included in the motivation research. Although universities are not able to account for all the idiosyncratic reasons that Black women volunteer, these women pointed out through their experiences that the university could foster different mores when it came to community service that assisted in making sure students were able to reflect on service openly through dialogue in and out of the classroom. The participants enrolled in the university already valuing community and the service that they had already provided it, and while in college the continued internal and external reasons for volunteering contributed to additional commitment in the community. Barriers, nuanced connection with dissimilar/similar communities, a need for resources as well as a reluctance to talk about volunteerism provided opposition to one's availability to volunteer, but it did not stop them from volunteering altogether. The university could harness the voices of family and friends that assist in the continual development of the students or create an atmosphere where volunteers can use their voices to help students navigate the meaning behind their involvement with the community without controlling for sex and gender as best practices once indicated.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

My dissertation endeavored to understand the reasons why a group of collegiate Black women volunteered. Millennials' proclivity to engage in the community coupled with the institutionalization and professionalization of volunteer work by institutions of higher education creates a dynamic for students. If cultivated critically and inclusively, this dynamic could potentially highlight the public purpose of the university, which is outlined in the introduction. Once the intersection of higher education and community engagement is explored, Black women as a critical student population could be used as exemplars from a historical perspective to understand how the act of volunteering and having community ties hold tremendous personal value for individuals. Exploring this intersection could also consider how the communities being served are not seen as "others." As Ashley pointed out the following:

> I think when people are doing service, the mindset that they want to have is that I am the community, so I have to believe that I'm helping myself. When I motivate others and when I'm out there doing what I'm doing, I'm doing it because I would want it to be done [for] me. I want to believe it's because you are the community.

Black women, historically dismissed in intellectual spaces, have rarely been the focus of study in research endeavors such regarding volunteerism despite confirmation of the necessity of their volunteerism as well as their enthusiasm and sense of responsibility for community uplift. Given this exclusion from the research, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of the topic.

Relevant literature regarding motivation and volunteerism concerning collegiate women, and Black women populations was shared. In the current United States' climate of activism, political influence, and corporate social responsibility, higher education has placed greater emphasis on service and learning to solve social issues through engagement with the community. Though volunteerism and community service are not often highly prioritized as community engagement initiatives for higher education administrators, they are relatively easy and accessibly ways to build a foundation for understanding the service attitudes and motivations of students. Dedication to a critical understanding of motivation and how the minority population makes meaning of service experiences should take precedence in conversations which strategize the service ethos of universities.

The lack of relevant literature meant the disparate information about motivation had to be researched separately from the volunteering experiences. The connection between motivation and action also included research regarding how one understands themselves. Radford-Hill (2000) contended the discussion of how an understanding of self is framed with sex/gender, values, power, and social change involved could be used to discuss differences and diversity.

The objective of my dissertation was to explore reasons why Black women volunteer and also to discover how they make meaning of their volunteer experiences, Ultimately, this objective was addressed by interviewing eleven women. Eleven undergraduate senior-classified women of diverse Black identities, majors, and backgrounds agreed to participate in two 90-minute qualitative interviews. Although the interviews were rearranged to include one 90-minute interview and one 60-minute

interview, participants aimed to thoroughly answer the interview questions which ultimately addressed the study's two research questions: what are reasons Black collegiate women choose to volunteer? and how do Black collegiate women make meaning of their volunteer experiences?

Interviews were conducted at FIU at either the Modesto Maidique or Biscayne Bay Campuses in the Center for Leadership and Service. A semi-structured interview schema consisting of 25 questions was used during the interviews and follow up questions were also utilized. Participants were asked to reflect on their volunteer experiences and involvement in the community. Member checking was also implemented by participants being sent their interviews transcripts after each interview, which was used as a validity measure. Journaling after interviews to help the researcher reframe the following interviews or conversations was also crucial to the validity of the study.

The robust responses of women highlighted a distinctive perspective of community service work. All participants were volunteering before they enrolled in college. They received support through obligatory academic and family expectations and, as well received role modeling in their friendship groups. Church, a motivator that has been highlighted in literature as pivotal for Black women, was instrumental at the start of the volunteering journey for the participants. Distinctive to this dissertation is the participants' dissociative outlooks regarding how church and community service connect. Many of the participants did not attend church and were critical of the church practices of which they once participated.

The participants felt a drive to serve their communities. The drive was internal and akin to wanting to make a difference in the community rather than needing to

volunteer. The participants also volunteer to see a transformative impact in different communities. This impact in the community coincided with the impact the service had on themselves. There was a reluctance to discuss this impact and the benefits received because of their service work. There was also a reluctance to contribute their service work to social movements or frame it using political language, although several of the participants aspired to lead or create social movements.

The connections participants made doing service included connections to those they volunteered to help and those they volunteered alongside at the service project. The connections represented networking opportunities, friendships, as well as inspirational futures. As participants connected with those whom they volunteered to help through a hardship, many of them had to overcome barriers to continue volunteering. Participants reflected on their previous personal hardships to understand their privileges, which motivated them to volunteer to help others. This penchant to self-sacrifice was a constant for Black women throughout history, and similar dedication, values, and reflections continue to motivate these collegiate Black women to serve their communities.

The university had a disjointed role in the volunteering experiences of the participants. The marketing of the service events was plentiful at the university among their peers. However, reflection on the events did not occur in structured, faculty-led ways that were similar to the participants' coursework. Among the eleven participants, two had a course which required community service be performed. The messages received from individuals at the university was the same the students received from role models earlier in their lives. However, the individuals at the university did not share the

same identities as the students. Participants have the available resources necessary which the university could assist in fulfilling for consistency in community work.

Volunteering was not without criticism for the participants, and many shared concerns for volunteering with disrespectful people and for organizations that lacked structure for the volunteer experience. Too much bureaucracy also threatened the volunteer experience, and the participants could not comfortably consider nonprofits whose practices did not align with their beliefs regarding volunteering.

Findings and Interpretations

The themes described in Chapter 4 richly described the study's findings in eight themes. The eight themes are as follows: Volunteerism Began Before University Enrollment; Service Started in Church but Volunteering in Church is No Longer Service; A Desire for Transformative Impact to Community and Selves; Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism; Volunteering Helps Build Connections; Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers; The University's Disjointed Role in Volunteerism; Reasons for Criticism of Volunteerism. These themes helped to address the study's two research questions which are answered in a further detailed description in this section.

Reasons Black Collegiate Women Choose to Volunteer

The first research question was: "What are reasons Black collegiate women choose to volunteer?" Responses to this research question were delineated and answered through the following themes: Volunteerism Began Before University Enrollment; Service Started in Church but Volunteering in Church is No Longer Service; A Desire for Transformative Impact to Community and Selves; Volunteering Helps Build Connections; and Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers Encourage Volunteerism.

As noted by Framer and Piotrkowski (2009), many cultures have models of community service which include aspects of both individual and community. This is also a notion of Radford-Hill's (2000) research which constructed a discussion on difference. The answer to the first research question was often a precursor to further discussion and assisted with answering the second research question. In short, the participants provided reasons for volunteering which encompassed all elements of the literature: altruism, egoism, functional, and identity-based. Although the interview protocol was based on the VFI, participants did not only share the functions that motivated their participation as volunteers, they also shared elements of leisure studies. These elements had foundations in cultural capital as well as identity-based motivation in the nuanced way connections were made.

Early Engagement in Community Service

Overwhelmingly, the Black collegiate women in this study completed service projects early in their lives. Most of them could not remember an age, but many of them reflected on beginning service in the church as early as elementary school, while all eleven participants completed service in high school. The early start to service yielded an additional three themes which were the reasons the participants signed up for a service project or remained active volunteers. Most often communicated as a reason for volunteering earlier in their lives was a desire which was supported by the women's role models at the time. Many of their role models signed them up for the projects or made sure they participated.

Personal satisfaction was the least salient reason the participants chose to volunteer. There was, perhaps, a reluctance to address the satisfaction they received from

volunteering because of the other reasons they mentioned that were either deemed more selfless or more developmentally focused. Therefore, a double consciousness posited that identity-related demographics guided the volunteer activity of the participants. However, it was during the interviews when the researcher learned that personal satisfaction was experienced through either having fun or connecting with others (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Slevin, 2005). The participants regarded reasons other than altruism as the "wrong reasons" to volunteer, however, they incorporated several elements of altruism in the egoistic, functional, and identity-based motives they shared.

Church Was Motivational Earlier in Their Lives

The lack of "religious" participants was contrary to how many of them started performing service. The church was catalytic for Black women, historically, as well. However, Black women in this study did not invest in the church as other than a catalyst for volunteering elsewhere, and they often implied that service within the church is not service at all (Scott, 1990). Cognitive and social development made many of them critical of religion, the institution of the church, and the process by which they help the community. Linking religiosity to church attendance, many of the participants stopped attending church, considered themselves spiritual with a foundation of religion. However, they believed the benefits reaped from volunteering were divine, and they considered volunteering as a sacred activity.

Declines in church membership demonstrated church began as a motivation to understand a servant attitude, but it progressively did not have the same significance. As Black women are often no longer vested in the activities of the church, their community alignment with the church as a focal point has lessened.

A Desire for Transformative Impact to Community and Selves

Prior to starting college, many participants mentioned that the desire to serve was the reason they volunteered. However, their continued service sprouted from their feelings of being personally responsible for serving communities in need. Social responsibility has been mentioned throughout the literature regarding Black women. This component of the literature was alluded to in the participants' accounts of personal responsibility, contrary to the double conscious notions expressed about Black women in the past. Transformative impact incorporates the effect on others with whom they served alongside or served to assist. There was no general applicable understanding about the scope or scale of the volunteering, but all participants assured that one must be willing to give of self to serve authentically. Oft-cited as selfish, the impact on their selves and their personal development was an overarching reason for many of them to volunteer during college.

The altruistic motivation for volunteering described a willingness to serve with no return (Sesardic, 1999). However, there were egocentric approaches to the altruism which the participants discussed. Impact on others as outlined by Monroe (1996) motivated the participants to continue serving. The reciprocal impact relationship between those they serve and themselves offered a greater reward for the participants than those they served, as Murningham et al. (1993) stated. The participants displayed the two empathic arguments of altruism: (a) motivation to help relieve secondary distress and (b) empathetic, genuine desire to help.

Volunteering Helps Build Connections

Participants discussed being motivated to do community service as a result of the connections their organizations made with the communities they served and their relationships with other volunteers. Many of these connections birthed stories and curated information that participants valued. They appreciated this information as much as the social issues of education and skill building, which they also received and cited as motivation to have experiential encounters with the community. Those were limited, as only three of the 11 participants did not have a part-time job. Two of which had been looking but were unable to secure. Quickly positioning their employment as separate from volunteering, all participants sought volunteering to engage outside of their student roles and job duties (Serow, 1991).

Aligned with extrinsic motivation, volunteering to make connections incorporates egoistic motivation. Winniford et al. (1997) shared that affinity and the concern one has for the relationship with others are factors of motivation that affect behavior. Additionally, influencing others through personal power helps to motivate behavior. The Functional Volunteer Theory also added that the networking many of the participants discussed was a part of the career function in the theory of six functions. The esteem function was present as participants used service to understand their self-worth (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers Encouraged Volunteerism

Personal drive and support were helpful to have as the participants recognized their privilege despite their hardships. Many of the participants discussed a lack of resources in their neighborhoods and home lives which distinguished hardship. However,

they were taught that those hardships were minimal compared to others. Recognizing their privilege early pushed them to give back through acts of service. Further, their privilege was not afforded to them based on their race or gender in the broader context of the United States.

The protective function could be seen here as it "has to do with enabling people to deal with their inner conflicts, feelings of incompetence, uncertainties about social identity, emotional needs, and the like" (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 62). Participants reflected on hardships as motivational, and several, when asked about barriers, did not discuss them even if they made those barriers clear in the responses they gave throughout the interviews. Protective of their needs as a participant, I understood through research that cultural capital needed to be built. It is t with the understanding of cultural capital that questions which directly asked about resources needed to continue.

How Black Collegiate Women Make Meaning of Their Volunteer Experiences

The second research question was: "How do Black collegiate women make meaning of their volunteer experiences?" That research question was answered mainly by A Desire for Transformative Impact on Community and Selves; Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism; Volunteering Helps Build Connections; Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers; The University's Disjointed Role in Volunteerism; Reasons for Criticism of Volunteerism. Although there were meaning-making reflections before college enrollment, these reflections for all participants lacked information or details which connected their service work to meaningful thoughts. Many participants could not remember their first service project or reminded me of their limited memory about the moments that they shared when they were younger.

Reflection Happens through Transformative Impact to Community and Selves

Transformative impact grounded the participants in the study because through the reflections regarding what they gained from volunteering, the participants connected with each other across majors, race/ethnicity, privilege, as well as past and future endeavors. The impact they made in communities helped them make a difference which, in turn, helped several of them develop the self-confidence and skills needed to continue volunteering and be successful in other realms of their lives. There were few instances of assumed direct impact. Instead, critical analysis was applied to their impact on others while they mainly admitted to receiving more from those exchanges than they assumed, as it contributed to their continual development.

Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism could have been considered a nuanced understanding of impact on others. However, most participants mentioned either not being politically inclined, they did not view their volunteerism through a political lens, or they succumbed to the understanding that personal experiences are political for someone who is both Black and female. Despite understanding that one person can effect change that leads to broader social justice initiatives, the participants did not view their volunteer work as scaled to compare to other social movements. They mostly have regarded these social movement efforts as aspirational. Impact on others led to a more superficial derivative of meaning from the volunteer work. However superficial, the connections to others strengthened their individual volunteer processes and thematically contributed to the process of helping participants understand the meaning of volunteering.

Self-development provided great depth to the meaning-making process for the participants. Participants discussed specific skills gained and the lessons they learned

which led to changes in their lives. They understood the perspectives people had for them as Black women were unmovable, however, they wanted volunteering to answer questions about their purpose. Volunteer activity became a personal exercise to understanding who they were, find their purpose, or develop the values they wished to permeate outwardly to the world. Self-reflection was often used as a way to understand their volunteering motives, habits, and future within the community.

Connections with Those While Volunteering Helped Foster Meaning

A connection to others in the community was accompanied by a caveat. The participants understood historical instances of discrimination but, until asked, only two mentioned personal discriminatory experiences. The others observed the differences sometimes at the venue in which they volunteered rather than in their own homes or based on the resources given to those in need who identify as Black, non-wealthy, young, or female. Discriminatory expectations were applied prematurely to some of the participants, and they strove to exceed these low expectations by performing service. Barring unequal treatment, the participants in the study also connected with their service sites about social issues when processing their volunteering impact. Also, other volunteers shared their own experiences which, primarily in Yolette's experience, were also Black women.

Family members were consistent in providing a deeper meaning for participants to volunteer, and in one case, the family was the predominant group she volunteered to help. Family members listened to the experiences the participants had at service sites and often provided critical perspectives which ranged based on age and often religiosity to the volunteer reflections of the participants. For many of the participants, their family

members initiated their volunteerism paths and remained a constant role model, shaping values which led to volunteerism at varying contact levels. For some of the participants, the family made attempts to dissuade them from further volunteering actions, comparing the participants' personal values to their observed familial values.

Friends were also contacted at varying levels and for different reasons but were all supportive of the participants. Over time the participants were less inclined to invite friends to volunteer with them if they kept declining invitations. Despite this, some participants found they could be open, honest, and build an understanding around their service with either like-minded people or people who had known them for a long period of time. For those without family to rely on to understanding motivation to volunteer, friends often became their immediate support systems.

The connection between employment and volunteerism resembled the role of the church in that the permanence of corporate social responsibility for some was still disassociated from volunteering. Further, the meaning of the volunteer work for all employed was not interlinked with current roles they played in their employment, as they saw the two separately. Volunteering, instead, served as an opportunity to skill-build and network for the future careers they aspired to have, and they recognized the meaning of their volunteering as a career readiness practice.

Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers Encouraged Reflection

Mitchell and Donahue (2009) contended that students of color may be recipients of service and may often use service to empower or resist. Many of the participants in this study have been on the receiving end of volunteer efforts and used that to frame either some of their initial attitudes towards volunteers or used it as inspiration to

continue volunteering. Some participants could not remember the details regarding the organizations who helped their communities or the participants themselves. However, those who could be reflective of their volunteer experiences often rediscovered them physically, mentally, and for a couple participants, emotionally.

Considering volunteerism as a part of identity was prevalent in the findings. Marie stated, "volunteering is a part of my identity," while many others had internalized their actions as volunteers (Finkelstein et al., 2005; Piliavin, Grube, & Callero, 2002). Volunteers recognize their hardships as reasons for their volunteering activity but made meaning of their volunteering by overcoming barriers while in college. Resiliency and dedication were often applied to pursing volunteerism despite the lack of time, money, or transportation for many of the participants in the study. The ability to volunteer meant it was ingrained in their mores, a developing system that was also impacted by their volunteer work.

The University Has a Disjointed Role in Meaning-Making

Learning is pivotal to making meaning from their volunteering experiences. They made meaning of not only the lived experiences of those they meet while serving, participants wanted to adjust their volunteering activities, education, and overall behaviors/habits based on the knowledge acquired about the populations served, the root causes of the social issues, and formal education. Their formal education, however, seemed to have a lack of reciprocity. Participants were confident in the university's ability to educate them and advertise community service opportunities. However, they were mostly unable to dialogue with professors, hadn't taken courses to engage with the

community, and preferred in some cases while necessitated in others to find and record their volunteerism without any assistance from university entities.

FIU has recently undergone a Carnegie reclassification process and Ashoka U designation; however, the women in my study did not view the university and administrators or faculty members as individuals that were guiding their personal success in outreaching to the community and creating positive change. Service-learning courses were lacking in the research or the activities that the students were asked to do in their service-learning courses were not viewed as volunteerism, but in Lourdes' case, her course with service components continued her volunteering activity. In order to impact policy and change the narrative about the work that is being done in the community, FIU should look at the most accessible way to contribute. Volunteerism requires not monetary contribution or formal coursework to contribute, yet there is no clearinghouse for opportunities or reflective area aside from the social media pushes from different departments within the institution.

Participants also thematically represented a reluctance to discuss their volunteer work. Consequently, this theme made the process of understanding their volunteer work difficult to externally process. Although the aforementioned theme made it markedly challenging to derive meaning from the volunteer work, an additional theme discussed that these students needed resources. Many of those resources satisfied Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs on the base level. However, volunteers were able to serve despite their lower hierarchical needs being met (Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997).

Volunteers intended to use the lessons learned to encourage others to serve their communities. The participants synthesized their work, its meaning, and the impact on self

and others when offered the opportunity to advise others or encourage others to do community service. A common understanding between the participants was a cyclical understanding of self, exploring self through volunteering, reflecting on the meaning of the experiences, and redefining what it means to be themselves. In many ways, the challenge of serving the community was accentuated by the thematic reasons for serving and supporting by the impact and people of their lives. This led participants to greater introspective knowledge of how volunteering has been meaningful for them.

Reasons for Criticism of Volunteerism Led to Deeper Reflection

Research of volunteer engagement has recently focused on the criticism of best practices and the connotation of volunteering (Evan et al., 2009; Jones & Hill, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2008). The participants found that they were able to think deeply about the intentions and impact of their service work. Often their criticism was grounded in their previous church volunteering, but primarily they discussed the conditions related to role conflict that Rizzo et al. (1970) posited. A couple of participants encountered conflict where the standards or values of the organization were maligned with the standards of the volunteer. Conflict also occurred as many of the participants did not have the resources necessary to volunteer as they wanted and needed to develop some skills to volunteer successfully. Several of the participants also described role ambiguity as criticism of the volunteer role. Having unclear directions, which is a large component of role ambiguity, was a big reason for the critical feedback shared by two of the participants.

It was imperative to gather information regarding the criticism of volunteering since I had no disconfirming cases. The examples given by the participants aligned with

the ambiguity and conflict which Biddle (1979) and Rizzo et al. (1970) discussed regarding role theory. These critiques and findings assisted in framing the implications for practice and recommendations for research.

Implications for Practice

Higher education professionals should consider seven critical factors as the study's results are considered. The first factor is to value the community service past of those who matriculate into the institution. Participants described their service work as a journey, "holistically" beautiful with "scary" moments, which included moments of action and reflection before their enrollment at the university. Regarding service documentation, it is customary to jot down the hours, the organization, and the date. Depending on the university, students are sometimes asked to write a reflection about their experience. However, the hours are given focus to reward the activity of the student and not necessarily based on a connection to the community. This method of record keeping does not provide a journeyed narrative towards understanding and is contrary to how leadership or other involvement is documented or discussed at universities. Universities should set up ways for students to understand the volunteering they do in a holistic manner. They should ask for reflection with service as is often done with other involvement categories.

Approaching the experience as a journey would help students to also combat their spiritual or religious journeys. Religious student development theory could also inform this implication for practice. However, the church has been an institutional lifeline for the Black community. Black women mainly provided these resources. The participants gave examples of "blessings" they received from serving, and they shared religious text about

volunteering. Nonetheless, they believed that since their church attendance was poor and the church was asking for more money, unlike when they volunteered in the community, they felt they could no longer rely on the church to volunteer. Instead, they turn to higher education institutions to assist them with working closely with the community. The university, though prepared to tell the participants about available service opportunities, could not assist them in making meaning from experiences with support from faculty and administrators.

The interaction between students and professors was almost non-existent in the study. A couple of students told a professor a story or two if they felt like the professor would be interested. Some of the participants shared their service work with close administrators at the university, but they all generally did not wish to talk about their service. Instead, they preferred to passively document their work on resumes or other online interfaces. When desired, connections to the classroom were sought after, such as the class in which Lourdes was enrolled or through the thoughtful conversation which Sarah had about Monsanto and the root social causes of economic disparity to health. However, universities such as FIU, which encourages community involvement, also needs intentional curricular opportunities welcomed by professors across fields to help students process their reasons for being engaged.

Universities should also consider community service more critically and be prepared to provide resources for collegiate students to participate. Often, universities facilitate large-scale service events and capture a large audience of people who would like to serve. However, if the social issue or impact on others is not aligned with what some participants deem meaningful, there could be a disconnect which leads to less

continued engagement. Universities should plan to offer more resources, whether it is transportation or connections to thought leaders, to students who would like to connect with the community through volunteering. For students who experience hardship, overcoming a resource barrier when they are already limited provides an opportunity for inactivity which the student nor the community can afford.

Units in the university who are positioned to help students developmentally through clubs/organizations or other programming should connect many of the ideas that students have about engagement to larger-scale social movements or political underpinnings. Many of the students were critical of what politics meant but created opportunities for not only themselves but for their communities, to change policy or political leadership and lead transformative change. Students who oversee clubs/organizations, attend affinity related groups, or engage with like-minded people driven by a social issue are not prepared to scale their service work to make a larger change or have not been able to build the confidence they felt necessary to be on the "frontlines" of a social movement. These sentiments are contrary to the young leaders who publicly condemn actions that these participants are volunteering to help eliminate.

Administrators should help students connect these entities and value the work they are committed to in the community which also includes the connections the students make in the community. They should also give audience to the voices of family, friends, other volunteers, as well as the community representatives being served before and after working in those communities. Valuing the connections and assisting with building more and stronger connections should not stop at graduation. There are ways to continue engagement with the community, especially at FIU where more than 75% of the students

remain in Miami. Care should be taken when placing importance on the possible connections, as participants have expressed their discontent with the exploitation of those they serve to help. Their preference for deriving meaning from the experiences was through the lessons taught by these individuals.

This holistic path to service could be reviewed by not only university individuals but also community leaders who could offer additional avenues toward synergizing the works students have done in the past. Lourdes endeavored to spend a year working with each volunteer opportunity. However, most of the participants enjoyed doing different service projects throughout the year. Asking students to document and reflect upon multiple service projects during a year may not yield insightful reflection. Therefore, acts of service which fostered an understanding of themselves, as well as those with measurable impact throughout their collegiate enrollment, should be used to document the service work formally. Connecting volunteer experiences to coursework or current activity would still be better fostered in classes. However, having one, centralized, university-provided resource to list and reflect on service has the potential to provide the university with a better understanding of how students discover themselves and their worlds through volunteer activity.

Recommendations for Future Research

A study which offers voice to diverse populations as a critical underpinning to the lack of empirical research that exists about those individuals in literature is positioned for expansion and further research. The last national study that listed the percentage of Black women who served was conducted in 1988, approximately 31 years ago. Although that study was quantitative, beginning quantitatively to engage conversation about a national

study is an important step to expand the study's sample size and generalizability. The close-ended questions of a quantitative study have potential to include more Black women who prefer not to "brag" about their service but would not regard a survey on their volunteering actions as gloating; recording hours was not met with the same criticism as verbalizing them to others.

Once those surveys were completed, the researcher conducted open-ended interviews with some participants who felt most open to discussing issues of race and community. Due diligence should always be applied to ensure researcher bias is limited, even though some participants may not be concerned with interviewers not sharing their identities while asking them questions about their personal volunteer experiences.

That bias was a limitation of this research study. The investment of the researcher when setting interview protocols and analyzing data could potentially encompass a research bias, given the researcher is a Black woman with a genuinely fostered commitment to the community. A reflective journal used to limit the researcher bias was imperative and helped to rewrite questions for the second interview which could have potentially been leading. Once those questions were rephrased, I felt the participants' responses were reflective of their intention, sometimes to my chagrin, such as when Jane commented that African American parents did not value education like Caribbean parents. I also shared parts of my story with participants as we continued our interviews and conversations. I gave them an opportunity to weigh in on the title of my dissertation and built in time to give them information regarding how to apply for the graduation medallion at CLS, which some indicated they wanted.

Additionally, the interviews were intended to be 180 minutes. Although the final interview time was approximately 150 minutes, that time, scaled to a national level, meant the study would be costly over a long period. It is important to note that shortening the time with Black women in a study such as this is ill-advised. Many of the women I studied have not had the opportunity to talk about their identity, especially their variation of Blackness, along with their volunteering experiences. Despite the formality of the space created, the participants discussed that this was one of the only opportunities they have had to share their service experiences, considering its connection to spirituality, religiosity, politics, current and past understanding of self. A researcher should not intentionally condense the interview opportunity for replication sake.

Solely including seniors as the sample population is another limitation. Although I planned to get a diverse sample population including classification, all 11 participants were seniors at the university. The last two participants who signed up to be interviewed were individuals suggested by administrators. Therefore, without the same information I had for the first nine participants, I could not control for their classification. Classification, notwithstanding, the reflective practices of the women during the final year of their collegiate career were deeply reflective across four or more years of work with the community while attending college. The richness of information and narrative over a longer course of time created data which included many levels of cognitive and social development.

A future study which utilizes a case study approach with women of different classifications would be another possibility. Though the study intended to include a variety of classifications, the sample became saturated with seniors. It would be

interesting to study how a freshman, sophomore, junior, and even graduate student understands the reason they volunteer and how they apply meaning to those experiences. Moreover, the cross-case analysis for the study could potentially yield more nuances around service based on age and stage and realized opportunities. A diversity of classification would be fascinating to study, but it should be controlled for a demographic variable. This would make for an interesting study. What would a study of all one ethnicity, international status, transfer status, age, major or campus, conclude about how Black women understand their volunteer work?

The cases involved give detailed descriptions of women in a unique landscape where they are a minority within a minority/majority university and city. These 11 women shared points of view from one Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Miami with 11 different perspectives of Blackness. Within their reflections, the participants elaborated on how the nuances of Blackness and their cultures are experienced differently, and the meaning ascribed to their volunteering yielded conclusions for their motivation to serve.

Enhancing the research by considering other identities that were not discussed at length in the interviews would be helpful in reflecting on these nuances of volunteering. Maggy talked about her LGBTQ identity as they applied to her future goals; however, intentional questions about the intersectionality of her identities did not follow. Other participants in my study did not indicate a connection with the LGBTQ community, but intentional questions about their identities when requesting demographic information could lead to a better understanding how they view themselves. Further research with Black women who also identify as a member of the LGBTQ community could indicate

additional resources, activist motivations, goals, or hinderances that other women did not include in my study.

Branching out to different university types would also be a study worth endeavoring. Perhaps a study at an HBCU situated in a mostly Black city would present a majority/minority scenario whereby the Black women in the study would be framed as a majority population. The nature of HBCUs could provide more context to community uplift and create synergy with the community in a way that was not present in this study. Ethnicity may also be more strongly highlighted in that study as Blackness is ever-present within the university and the outside community. Branching out to other types of universities could also include universities that mandate volunteering and service-learning from their student populations. These universities often have a formalized connection to coursework, students, and community which the study participants indicated they lacked in their experiences.

The final limitation of this study was explained by Atieno (2009) as ambiguities. Although definitions were given throughout the dissertation around socially constructed ideas like volunteering and Black identity, the construction of what those words mean could still be ambiguous:

> Ambiguities, which are inherent in human language, can be recognized in the analysis. For example, the word "red" could be used in a corpus to signify the color red, or as a political categorization (e.g., socialism or communism). In a qualitative analysis both senses of red in the phrase "the red flag" could be recognized (Atieno, 2009).

The participants were able to analyze their volunteering. However, several times they had to deconstruct the meaning of the very words that could be ambiguous in this dissertation. The dissertation provided multiple perspectives of Black women understanding why they

served their communities and the meaning they derived from those experiences. Findings of the study supported the previous literature on the subject, opposed the literature, or added to the literature based on the participant's distinct experiences.

Despite the subjective limitations of bias, lack of different classifications, ambiguities, and those perceived by the reader, the study left to interpretation its findings and generalizability. This study has the potential to provide further findings on themes that connect volunteerism to the meaning those experiences have for the study's participants or others. Additional research focused on Black women's motivation to serve in communities through volunteerism would be a significant addition to the gaps which exist in the literature regarding the topic.

Concluding Thoughts

The chapter focused on the interpretation and discussion of the findings in Chapter 4. The limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research were presented.

Endeavoring to answer what motivated Black women to volunteer and examine how they made meaning from those service activities, this dissertation examined those research questions through qualitative inquiry. The findings in Chapter 4 presented eight themes. These themes, through cross-case analysis, determined that the participants volunteered because they started volunteering early in their lives. Church service opportunities also contributed to them volunteering earlier in their lives, however, played a minimal role in their activity in college. Participants were also motivated by a desire to volunteer for transformative impact for themselves and others, as well as, the connections

they made with those they serviced. Lastly, the personal hardships they had to overcome as well as the current barriers they face encouraged them to serve their communities.

Participants used some of the same measures that motivated them to also make meaning of their experiences and express how volunteering began to coalesce with their understanding of self. As research indicated, overcoming barriers was needed for individuals to serve their communities, and they were able to meet that challenge by being resourceful. That was often outside of the university as there were resource needs for some of these volunteers the university did not fulfill, even though they marketed service opportunities well. The transformative impact that the volunteering had on these participants allowed them to be deeply reflective of the experience concerning who they were as people. This, coupled with the connections they had with others at the service site, made for transformational impact and discovering deeper, often hidden meanings of the service work.

Formal education/learning in the classroom was not apparent for the participants. However, they gained the knowledge of social issues, and community needs elsewhere. They also identified the professors and administrators as inaccessible to changes based on the service work they were doing. Many of the students who documented their service, however, chose to do so on their own regardless of university services in a conscious notion that it may assist in securing a job. When the family was accessible even during the early stages of volunteering, the family was engaged regarding how to continue to process the service work in which the participants partook. Friends were secondary to some participants' families, and the primary source for others since culturally service work was not encouraged because of its free labor definition. As recipients of service,

these participants are uniquely positioned in literature. Their moral compasses for service has been personalized, in that they also derive meaning from being critical of work that has positioned them as the constant receivers of service even when they are impassioned volunteers.

The voices of minority populations of collegiate campuses have traditionally been disregarded, but these higher education institutions should take heed to the developmental processes that different cultures use to connect their understanding of self to the work they do inside and outside of the classroom. If universities are positioning themselves to assist in restorative justice by prioritizing service in communities, those communities should be invited to participate in the conversation. This includes the students that may also come from them. Their varied pasts and striking diligence to continue volunteering despite setbacks and a lack of resources can lead to significant changes to practices throughout the community and institution. Opportunities to connect their volunteering and to develop a set of values that contribute to whom they are if given credence would likely lead to significant understanding and community building with these often-marginalized students.

This dissertation has been a practice in catharsis, and I have valued the voices of the participants who opened up about their lives sometimes painfully so for both of us. I teared up when they talked about struggles, and I laughed like we had known each other for a greater length of time. Many of the women who shared their stories were women I worked with daily, and I had not asked these questions throughout the years we had worked together. It brought us closer to discuss volunteerism in a way that was safe based

on the research criteria and relatable based on our demographics. Their voices will continue to inform my practice.

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Appendix A: Interview protocol

General

1. Confirmation of major, campus, general demographics
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. What co-curricular activities or organizations are you involved with in school or the community?

Volunteering History

4. How long have you been volunteering?
5. How important is volunteerism to you?
6. Describe some of the things that you considered first before deciding to volunteer.
7. What made you start volunteering?
8. What experiences come to mind when you consider your history of volunteerism?

Current Volunteerism, Acquisition, and Documentation

9. Have your reasons for volunteering changed since you started?
10. How often do you volunteer? Would you do more if you could?
11. Do you volunteer at more than one place or for more than one event?
12. Do you have a paid job or internship as you volunteer?
13. Do you document or tell professors/administrators at the university all of your volunteerism? Why?
14. What do you get out of volunteering?
15. What do like most about volunteering? Why?
16. What do you like least about volunteering? Why?
17. Would you encourage other people to volunteer?

Meaning Making/Connection to Identity

18. Do you feel a connection to those you are helping when you volunteer? Follow Up: Why do you continue to serve if you feel that connection or if you don't?
19. Have any of you ever been on the receiving end of voluntary help? Follow Up: Did those volunteers reflect the people in your community? Follow Up: How did you feel about their presence? How did you feel about them leaving?
20. Do you have any experiences volunteering in your own community or in a community similar to your own? Follow Up: Please describe that experience. Follow Up: Did you see a difference or similarity volunteering for your own community versus other communities?
21. How do you think volunteering helps you understand yourself?
22. What do you want volunteering to help you do?
23. What do you want volunteering to help you understand about yourself?
24. Do you believe that your current volunteering activity is reflective of what you tell university administrators or professors? Family? Friends? Follow Up: Why?
25. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix B: Participant consent form

ADULT VERBAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Why Black Collegiate Women Volunteer: A Perspective on Meaning-Making through Service with the Community

Hello, my name is Nashira Williams. You have been selected to be in a research study about how Black women understand who they are from the service work they do. The purpose of this study is to add or improve programs that colleges offer and add to what we know about service work. If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of 10 to 15 people in this research study. It will take no more than 4 hours to participate in this study. If you agree to be in the study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Have a one-on-one interview with me two different times. Each interview will take no more than an hour and a half. They will be recorded (audio).
2. Review the interview and my notes from the interviews to change or add things.

There is only a minimal risk to you for participating in this study because there may have been bad feelings about your past service work. It is expected that this study will help society by adding to the what has been written about service and understanding how service may add to the lives of people who have not yet been a part of this research topic.

There is no cost or payment to you. If you have questions while taking part, please stop me and ask.

Your answers will remain anonymous. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to know who you are as a subject. Research records will be stored in a safe way and only the researcher team will have access to the records.

You will be able to choose another name for the report or one will be provided for you. At the end of the study, the audio and notes written from your interview will be deleted.

If you have questions for one of the researchers conducting this study, you may contact Nashira Williams at 786-566-7394.

If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a participant in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at 305-348-2494 or by email at ori@fiu.edu.

Your participation in this research is not required, and you will not be punished or lose benefits if you do not want to participate or decide to stop. Do you consent to participate in this project?

VITA

NASHIRA AMINA WILLIAMS

2003-2007	Bachelor of Science, Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida
2007-2009	Instructor YES Prep Public School, East End Houston, TX
2009-2011	Master of Science, Higher Education Florida International University Miami, Florida
2009-2011	Graduate Assistant Center for Leadership and Service Florida International University Miami, Florida
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2014-2018	Assistant Director Center for Leadership and Service Florida International University Miami, Florida
2018-present	Elected Council Member Community Council 8 Miami Dade County Miami, Florida
2018-present	Interim Director, Women's Center Florida International University Miami, Florida