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# "Green Blood": A phenomenological study of long-term Girl Scout volunteers

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Recreation Administration in the Department of Exercise and Sport Science

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## ABSTRACT

Linda Oakleaf: "Green Blood": A phenomenological study of long-term Girl Scout volunteers

This study examined the role of Girl Scout volunteering for women. I used three guiding questions: 1) why women engaged in volunteering, 2) whether they considered it leisure, and 3) how they negotiated constraints to volunteering. Research was conducted through interviews with 12 long-term Girl Scout volunteers. Phenomenology provided the theoretical standpoint for the analysis, and constant comparison of the data resulted in several themes. All participants had daughters in their troops, and connected their volunteering to the responsibility to care for their daughter. Participants benefited from volunteering, which motivated them to continue. Most participants adopted a role identity as Girl Scout volunteers. Participants experienced volunteering as serious leisure, with all of the advantages and disadvantages inherent in commitment to complex pursuits.

To Becky, who may not have bargained for the stresses of graduate school when she first promised, “For better or for worse.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking the chair of my committee, Dr. Diane Groff. I found her insight and her help to be invaluable. She gave unfailingly constructive criticism and timely support. I cannot believe that anyone would be able to write his or her thesis without those two ingredients.

In addition, I wish to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Deborah Bialeschki, Dr. Sherry Salyer, and Dr. Karla Henderson. In particular, Dr. Bialeschki helped to guide the original conception of my thesis. When chapters were returned to me bleeding red, I would first gnash my teeth and then go back to my text to make it better. I especially enjoyed the insight provided by Dr. Salyer. I feel that Dr. Salyer's vantage point from somewhat outside the field of recreation and leisure helped to ensure that my work has a chance of being useful beyond the field of recreation and leisure. Dr. Karla Henderson served ex-officio, but I felt strongly that her depth of experience and knowledge would help me and that it was well worth the time and effort I expended to secure her inclusion on my committee. As it turned out, I was right.

Of course, I owe the very existence of my thesis to the participants who took the time out of somewhat formidable schedules to speak with me about their Girl Scout volunteering. I cannot thank them enough. In addition, my Girl Scout staff liaison helped me to secure interviews but then helped me to understand volunteer roles with which I was not familiar. I greatly appreciated her cheerful and thorough help.

I also wish to acknowledge Emily Noonan, who was willing to dispense advice in some of the most unlikely settings. Her advice greatly influenced the final shape of my thesis.

My sister Susan Jacobson, herself a Girl Scout leader and a mother, also helped me to write my thesis. I frequently called Sue from out of the blue with what may have seemed to her to be somewhat obscure questions. She helped me to make sense of my findings. More importantly, she consistently expressed her confidence that I would indeed finish someday.

I especially wish to thank Rebecca Richendollar. My work would have greatly suffered without the skills of my first reader. However valuable, Becky's role as editor pales in comparison with the emotional support that she gave me. She stood by me through the whole process, even when things looked a little bleak. Nobody else would have purchased flamingos for the front lawn and provided them with signs that said, "You go, girl!" I highly recommend cheerleader flamingos as a motivational aid.

Finally, I wish to recognize the help I received from someone who is no longer with us. My mother, Patricia M. Oakleaf, passed away in 1998. It was not until I was almost finished with the process of writing my thesis that I recalled that my mother had also volunteered with the Girl Scouts, serving as an assistant leader when my sister was a Girl Scout and doing the same when I became a Girl Scout fourteen years later. My mother's voice often rang in my ears as I worked on this project. Mom had frequently admonished me, "You can't revise nothing." That echo from the past reminded me to get my nose back to the grindstone. I wish that mom had been here so that I could have quizzed her about her own experience of having her daughters in her troop.

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# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

Each year in the United States nearly half of the population gives away some of its labor free of charge. In 2001, 44% of Americans reported that they had volunteered within the past year. Women are more likely to volunteer than men (46% and 42%, respectively) ("Giving and Volunteering", p. 5). In 1950, one out of three women worked. By 1998 the rates had risen to three in five (*Changes in women's labor force participation in the 20th century*, 2000). This working has not adversely affected the rates of volunteering by women. If anything, the rates of female volunteerism has risen (Ladd, 1999).

The participants in this study were adult women who volunteered with the Girl Scouts. Participants were troop leaders who had volunteered with the Girl Scouts for at least three years. Girl Scouting is the largest organization for girls in the United States, with 986,000 adult members serving 2.8 million girls ("Girl Scouts of the USA 2003 Annual Report", 2003). Paid staff comprise only 1% of adult membership, leaving the agency highly dependent on volunteers. Many agencies, including the Girl Scouts, saw a decline in volunteers in the late 1960's and 1970's. However, the membership rate has recovered and is now at its highest point, even after considering population growth (Ladd, 1999).

For youth, membership in Girl Scouting is open only to girls, but adult men may become members and volunteer. The organization emphasizes the benefits that girls receive from observing women in leadership roles. As a result, men may not lead troops, although a man can serve as a co-leader if a female leader is clearly in charge. Men serve in many other

roles such as board members and volunteer trainers, and paid staff members. However, volunteers are mostly women, with comparatively few male volunteers.

To work with girls, volunteers must take workshops in which they learn about working with children and about the Girl Scouting organization. Rather than staff members, volunteers conduct most workshops. Leaders must take three required workshops within the first year they volunteer. Many leaders also enroll in optional workshops on subjects like outdoor skills and first aid.

## Statement of the Problem

Americans volunteer at some of the highest rates in the world (44%), exceeded only by the United Kingdom (48%) (Penner, 2004). Since volunteers generally do not receive compensation for their time, most of the benefits they receive are intrinsic rather than extrinsic. In the absence of extrinsic benefits, it is likely that intrinsic rewards explain at least some volunteer activity. Prior research has shown that volunteers are motivated by altruism when they volunteer (Shutt, 2004). In addition, studies show that the social benefits of meeting and spending time with other people also motivates volunteers (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

Although researchers have spent a great deal of time exploring the motivations of volunteers (Clary et al., 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004), almost all of this work has been done with quantitative methods. As a result, there is limited understanding of the meanings that volunteers attach to their volunteer work.

In addition to the lack of qualitative studies, very few volunteer studies focus on women, although some studies do include analysis of the differences between male and

female respondents (Gallagher, 1994; Lee, Piliavin, & Call, 1999; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). Specific exploration of the experience of women is needed because many of the factors that lower rates of volunteering in general may be more applicable to women than to men. For example, having a higher job status makes it more likely that a person will volunteer (Oesterle, Kirkpatrick, & Mortimer, 2004) and women are less likely than men to have high status jobs (Bose & Rossi, 1983; Davies-Netzley, 1998). Also, studies show that women are more affected by and more responsible for the care of children (Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001; Peterson & Gerson, 1992), and that having preschool age children in the home makes one less likely to volunteer (Oesterle, Kirkpatrick, & Mortimer, 2004). These factors represent potential barriers for female volunteers. Yet in spite of these potential barriers, women volunteer at rates slightly higher than men. This study sought to learn why women engaged in volunteering, and how women negotiate constraints to volunteering.

Some leisure scholars (Henderson, 1979; Parker, 1992; Stebbins & Graham, 2004) have argued that volunteer work is a leisure activity. However, studies outside the leisure literature frame volunteering as unpaid work (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Greenslade & White, 2005; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). This highlights a need to understand volunteer experiences more thoroughly. If leisure scholars are correct and volunteering can indeed be leisure, then those who manage volunteers solely as laborers may be mismanaging them.

## Phenomenology

Phenomenology provided the theoretical framework for this study. I wished to focus on the lived experience of participants. Phenomenology denies the existence of a dichotomy

between subject and object and thus validates the importance of the experience of the individual (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of volunteering in the lives of women who volunteer with the Girl Scouts. I used three guiding questions. The study sought to learn 1) why women engaged in volunteering, 2) whether they considered it leisure, and 3) how they negotiated constraints to volunteering.

## Definitions

Constraints - "Factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and to inhibit or prohibit participation in leisure activities" (Jackson, 2000, p. 62).

Leisure - "*Uncoerced activity undertaken during free time where such activity is something people want to do and, at a personally satisfying level using their abilities and resources, they succeed in doing" (Stebbins, 2005, p. 250).*

Long-term - Women who have volunteered with the Girl Scouts for three years or more.

Phenomenology - A philosophy and method of inquiry that "focuses on the question, 'What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' (Patton, 1990, p. 69)"

Role Identity - “Components of the self that correspond to the social roles [people] play (Grube & Piliavin, 2000).”

Serious leisure - "Systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1993, p. 23)"

Volunteering - “Uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no, or at most, token pay done for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer (Stebbins, 2004, p. 5) ”

## Researcher Background

As in any study, it is important for a researcher to be careful and conscious of bias. Although it is impossible to eliminate bias, the researcher can use various tools to mitigate the effects of bias. One way for a researcher to mitigate bias is to give the reader background and state explicitly the areas where the researcher is aware that bias exists (Creswell, 1998).

I had been a Girl Scout for almost a decade when I had a conversation with my mother. We were discussing what I ultimately wanted to do for a living. I said something contemptuous about how I refused to allow money to determine my final choice. My mother responded that Girl Scouting had ruined me forever by getting me used to doing a whole lot of work for free. That conversation stuck with me and formed part of my impetus for choosing this subject for my research.

I remained a Girl Scout until my senior year in high school. I earned the Gold Award, which is the highest award in Girl Scouting. As an adult, I spent a total of four years as a Girl Scout volunteer. In addition, I have worked for the Girl Scouts as a camp director off and on over the years. I spent several months as a full time professional Girl Scout before leaving to pursue my master's degree.

I do not have any children. This may be the most important difference between the participants and me. One study participant declared that she had heard of people who ran troops even though they did not have children, but that she had not met any. Her tone indicated that she was dubious that they really existed. At the time, I was mildly amused. Upon reflection, it seems to me that she was really articulating how central her daughter and daughters in general were to the Girl Scout volunteer experience.

Two of the participants had met me briefly at meetings five years ago. At the time, I volunteered with the council in this study as a trainer and a troop leader. After the interviews concluded, five participants asked me in some detail about my Girl Scout experience. One participant quizzed me about whether I had extensive Girl Scout experience prior to the interview. Identifying me as a Girl Scout seemed to legitimize me as a researcher with the participants. By checking my Girl Scout credentials, they seemed to be assuring themselves of common ground with me.

## Delimitations

This study focused on the experience of adult female volunteers with the Girl Scouts. As such, all participants were adult females. Another delimitation built into the study was that all participants were required to be long-term troop leaders who had led a troop for at least three years. I chose to interview only experienced leaders to ensure that the group

shared some experiences. In addition, all participants volunteered with the same Girl Scout council in the southeastern United States. Finally, the study interviewed participants at only one point in time. This enabled me to get a cross-sectional picture of the volunteering experience of participants, but did not allow me to see the development of participants' volunteering experience over time.

## Limitations

All but one participant had seven years or more experience. It could be that the most experienced volunteers were the most motivated to respond to calls to participate in this study. The limited scope of this study precluded searching out participants in the three to six year range more aggressively, and this affected the findings of this study. The responses of the participants with seven or more years of volunteer experience hung together well and approached theoretical saturation. However, the experience of the participant with the least amount of experience differed from the other participants. It is thus important to note that I only recruited one participant in the three to six year range

# CHAPTER II
# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research on volunteering has focused on the individual as a laborer and on volunteering itself as an economic product of (mostly) free labor. Often the literature has concerned itself with the motives of the volunteers, expressly seeking to assist agencies match volunteers with the appropriate task (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004). Little of the volunteerism literature has focused on female volunteers, although some literature that looks at gender differences between male and female volunteers suggests that female volunteers tend to be concentrated in tasks related to "women's work." For example, female volunteers are less likely to be in leadership positions, and more likely to do the person-to-person tasks that require a caring individual (Little, 1997; Tomeh, 1981; J. Wilson, 2000).

Outside of leisure journals, volunteering is generally conceptualized solely in economic terms as free labor (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Greenslade & White, 2005; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). However, some leisure researchers have argued that at least some volunteering should be considered leisure (Henderson, 2003; Nichols & King, 1999; Stebbins & Graham, 2004). Such researchers argue that volunteering shares many qualities with more conventionally understood leisure experiences. Volunteering is a "non-work" activity that is frequently pleasurable and/or satisfying that volunteers engage in during their free time of their own free will. When volunteering exhibits these defining qualities of leisure,

researchers can legitimately consider volunteering to be leisure. Indeed, researchers have found that some volunteers consider their volunteering to be leisure (Graham, 2004; Raisborough, 1999).

## Volunteering

Volunteering is typically defined as a freely given contribution of time to an individual, group, or community where the individual does not receive any financial gain (J. Wilson, 2000). With an economic impact of volunteerism in the United States estimated at $20.3 billion (Clary & Snyder, 1999), it is understandable that volunteerism has been the subject of much attention from researchers in many disciplines.

Functionalism is a common framework for studying volunteerism. The functionalist approach is concerned with the personal and social processes that cause behaviors (Katz, 1960). As such, functionalists are especially concerned with the underlying motives behind any given behavior. An important tenet of functionalism is that different people can and do engage in the same behavior while having different motives. In addition, functionalists purport that to sustain an activity like volunteering, volunteers must find a good match between the motivation and the situation (Clary & Snyder, 1999). For example, a volunteer who is motivated by social needs will only continue to volunteer if he or she is making friends while volunteering. Researchers generally agree that the motivation to volunteer is multivariate in nature (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; J. Wilson, 2000).

Functionalism concerns itself with volunteers' motives, but does not address the benefits they receive as part of their volunteering. However, Barlow and Hainsworth (2001)

found that motives and benefits were closely related. Generally, the motives that volunteers express closely parallel the benefits that they expect to receive from their volunteering.

Some volunteers may be motivated to volunteer because of having grown up in families where members volunteer. In particular, when mothers volunteer, they increase the likelihood that their daughters will volunteer regardless of socioeconomic status (Mustillo, Wilson, & Lynch, 2004). Almost 70% of adults who volunteer with their children themselves had volunteered with their parents as a youth ("Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service", 2002).

Unlike the short-term "helping" behavior of bystanders, volunteering is a planned action that involves forethought and deliberation (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Volunteers frequently state that they act based on altruistic motives (Batson, 1987; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary et al., 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; J. Wilson, 2000). Researchers have disputed whether or not "pure" altruistic motives actually exist (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). However, more current theory suggests that true altruism does indeed exist and can serve as a motive for human behavior (Shutt, 2004). Acting from a motive to help others does not preclude benefits to oneself, as when one gets intrinsic satisfaction from the act of helping (Smith, 1981).

Volunteering does serve egoistic needs such as career, social, and psychological needs (Clary et al., 1998). It may also meet physical needs. Lum and Lightfoot's (2005) longitudinal study of older adults found that volunteering slows the increase in self-reported levels of depression and physical illness and even decreased the mortality rate of the volunteers. Omoto and Snyder (1995) found that volunteers who were more motivated by self-oriented motives were more likely to stay actively involved with the organization.

However, those needs are not always or often the primary reason volunteers give for volunteering.

Most theorists envision volunteering as work, albeit unpaid. Studies often conceptualize volunteering as unpaid labor, and theorists outside of the leisure journals rarely seem to consider the possibility that it might be leisure. J. Wilson and Musick (1997, p. 266) expressed the justification for this:

> Conceptualized as a form of labor, rather than as an expressive aspect of leisure time use, it is easier to theorize that volunteer labor could be determined by the same kind of forces as those that determine any other kind of labor…

As a result of considering volunteering to be unpaid labor, many authors apply the results of studies on job satisfaction to volunteerism. Agencies often manage volunteers with the same methods employers use with their employees. Some suggestions for effectively managing volunteers include providing potential volunteers with job descriptions, having volunteers sign a contract, and giving volunteers frequent performance reviews (A. Wilson & Pimm, 1996).

## Volunteering and Role Identity

The role identity model of volunteerism suggests that when an individual engages in a behavior for long enough, the individual adopts that behavior as a part of his or her identity. This process happens for long-term volunteers who create and reinforce their self-concept as a volunteer through volunteering (Grube & Piliavin, 2000). Penner and Finkelstein (1998) found that incorporating volunteering for a particular organization into one's self-concept

seems to reinforce the individual's commitment to the organization. Grube and Piliavin (2000) found that volunteers' perceived expectations of others was the strongest predictor of role identity. In turn, volunteers for whom volunteering for an organization comprises part of their identity show an increase in their commitment to that organization and they are more likely to continue volunteering (Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; Grube & Piliavin, 2000).

Researchers have studied role identity with groups of volunteers such as blood donors and AIDS volunteers (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). To my knowledge, no researcher has studied role identity in volunteers from Girl Scouts or a similar organization. The role identity model uses quantitative measures, and so it was beyond the scope of this study but it is possible that some features of Girl Scouting are likely to increase volunteers' identification as Girl Scout volunteers. Girl Scout volunteers must agree to abide by the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law (Appendix A). Volunteers commonly recite the Promise with the girls at troop meetings. Volunteers wear uniforms and participate in investiture and rededication ceremonies where they dedicate or rededicate themselves to Girl Scouting. It would stand to reason that these public expressions of a Girl Scout ethos enhance volunteers' identification with their role as volunteers.

However, it is important to note that I was unable to find any studies on role identity in volunteers that clarify the correlation between role identity in volunteers and volunteers' commitment to an organization. Finkelstein, Penner and Brannick (2005) also noted that the lack of longitudinal studies made it impossible to determine whether long term volunteering caused a volunteer role identity or whether adopting a role identity as a volunteer caused long term volunteering.

## Female Volunteers

What literature that exists regarding female volunteers emphasizes the ways that the role of female volunteers seems to be connected to their role as women in society. Women who are mothers often view their volunteer work as an extension of the mothering role, especially when volunteering for organizations like the Girl Scouts or the PTA (Negrey, 1993). Volunteering with the Girl Scouts can provide an opportunity for parents to spend more time with children who are in their troop. In today's society, parents encounter a lot of social pressure to spend time with their children. Parents are likely to feel that they do not spend enough time with their children regardless of how much time they actually spend with them (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004).

For women, volunteering also seems to be attached to an ethic of care (Karniol, Grosz, & Schorr, 2003). Gilligan's (1982) concept of an ethic of care suggests that women, as the primary caretakers in society, place a greater emphasis on their responsibilities to take care of those in need. In contrast, Gilligan conceived men's ethic of justice to be abstract concepts like individual rights. Karniol, Grosz and Schorr (2003) studied adolescents and found that females tended to score higher on the ethic of care. Furthermore, regardless of gender, those who scored higher in the ethic of care were more likely to volunteer and to volunteer more hours.

## Volunteering as Leisure

Some leisure research argues that volunteering can be a form of leisure. Stebbins (2004) suggested that leisure volunteering takes three different forms: serious, project-based, and casual. Serious leisure volunteering is volunteering that necessitates a substantial

commitment of time and energy. Perkins and Benoit's study of volunteer fire departments found that volunteer firefighters met the criteria of serious leisure volunteering (2004). Project-based leisure volunteering also can involve a great deal of effort, but is devoted to a one-time or annual event such as planning a sports event. Finally, casual leisure volunteering by definition does not involve a great deal of commitment on the part of the participants, and is immediately intrinsically rewarding. Examples could include cooking hotdogs for a church picnic or taking tickets for a performance of the local community theatre (Stebbins, 2004).

Individuals may vary about whether they consider their volunteer time to be leisure, partly because some volunteer activity is perceived by the participants as being coerced (Karniol, Grosz, & Schorr, 2003). Individuals sometimes face considerable pressure to volunteer, and this pressure can have the effect of reducing the enjoyment of the volunteer activity (Little, 1997; J. Wilson, 2000).

Women who do for leisure may be affected by the same factors that often compromise women's leisure experiences. For instance, Larson, Gillman and Richards (1997) found that even when family members engaged in the same leisure activity together, they often had differing experiences of it. The study found that women's responsibility for family care negatively affected women's experience of family leisure activities. Another study by Miller and Brown (2005) found that women's male partners adversely affected women's leisure when they assumed the greater share of entitlement to leisure. As a result, women ended up needing to do a greater share of work in the household to compensate.

## Serious Leisure

The Girl Scouts estimate that volunteers who lead troops spend five or more hours per week doing so. Such a significant time commitment may indicates at least the possiblity that Girl Scout volunteers are engaging in serious leisure. Stebbins' (Stebbins, 1982; Stebbins & Graham, 2004) concept of serious leisure helped to promulgate the idea that volunteering could be considered a form of leisure. An activity must meet several criteria to be considered serious leisure. First, serious leisure pursuits must include a need to persevere in the face of difficulties. In addition, serious leisure pursuits require the participants to have specialized knowledge, training or skill. Serious leisure participants often have a "career" marked by stages of achievement or involvement. Participants also receive durable benefits such as self-actualization, feelings of accomplishment, belonging or lasting physical products. Serious leisure pursuits develop a unique ethos or subculture with a distinct social world associated with the activity. Finally, participants in serious leisure tend to identify strongly with the activity, often to the point where they introduce themselves in terms of the pursuit when conversing with new acquaintances.

## Constraints to Volunteering

The volunteer literature does not concern itself with constraints in the same way that recreation researchers do. Instead, researchers concentrate on finding out what factors correlate with a higher number of volunteer hours. In spite of the difference, many of the findings by researchers who examine volunteerism echo those of leisure scholars.

Finding the time to volunteer seems to operate as a major constraint for those who are employed. For instance, full-time workers volunteer less than part-time workers (J. Wilson,

2000). Increased hours spent working indicates a reduction in free time, but it is clear that this is not the sole factor affecting how much time one volunteers. The lowest rates of volunteering are found in those who are unemployed (Rotolo & Wilson, 2004; Stubbings & Humble, 1984). In addition, higher job status is positively correlated with the number of hours spent volunteering (J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). Finally, when considering the relationship between hours worked and hours available for volunteering, it is important to recall that people have other important claims on their time. People who say that they are "too busy" to volunteer are as likely to be referring to other responsibilities rather than work (Gallagher, 1994).

One of the responsibilities outside work includes the need to care for young children. The presence of young children in the home limits the number of hours spent volunteering. In their study of young adults, Osterle, Kirkpatrick and Mortimer (2004) found that the parents of preschoolers were about half as likely to volunteer as those who did not have children of this age.

The most consistent predictor of volunteering hours is the level of education a person has attained. Increased education increases the likelihood that an individual will volunteer (Rotolo & Wilson, 2004). This is related to job status, as higher status jobs often require higher levels of education. However, even in early adulthood when one may not yet have acquired a high status job, postsecondary schooling increases the odds that a young adult will volunteer (Oesterle, Kirkpatrick, & Mortimer, 2004).

Rather than concerning themselves strictly with correlates of leisure participation, leisure researchers have sought to understand the constraints to leisure. Researchers have identified three types of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural (Crawford,

Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Intrapersonal constraints relate to the characteristics of the individual and include things like stress and perception of ability. Interpersonal constraints are barriers that involve relationships between people. Interpersonal constraints include lacking a partner with whom to participate in an activity. Structural constraints are barriers that one faces from external forces in one's environment. Examples include having a lack of time or money (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1987). Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991) introduced a hierarchical model of constraints in which leisure participants negotiated sequential levels of intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. A later article by Jackson, Crawford and Godbey (1993) changed the model from being strictly hierarchical and added feedback loops.

One of the most commonly cited constraints is "time." However, the word "time" is problematic because by itself, "time" is not descriptive enough as a constraint. Instead, by "time" people sometimes are referring to prioritizing other things ahead of leisure and sometimes referring to structural constraints. In her response to Samdahl and Jekubovich's (1997) critique of constraint theory, Henderson (1997, p. 455) stated that "the real constraint isn't time but something else that's taking the time."

In a study of volunteering by rural women, Little (1997) found that female volunteers engaged in a complex juggling of priorities in order to volunteer. At certain times, participants prioritized volunteering over the needs of the household, but more women fit volunteering into and around the household schedule. Participants in Little's study did not make a sharp demarcation between volunteering and household tasks. Instead, participants frequently worked to satisfy both needs at once.

Raisborough (1999), who studied women in the Sea Cadet Corps, a uniformed youth organization, found that women privileged their serious leisure over other demands on their time. Raisborough also found that women prioritized volunteering over household tasks by leaving them undone. However, the women in her study displayed an additional strategy by which they found the time to volunteer. Volunteers managed their time by carefully refraining from relationships that they expected would take too much time away from their volunteering. Volunteers either refrained from heterosexual partnerships or else chose partners who were supportive of their volunteering.

## Phenomenology

This study used phenomenology as its theoretical framework. Phenomenology began as a branch of philosophy developed by Edmund Husserl in the early twentieth century. Phenomenology, as conceived by Husserl, was seen as a response to the increasing dominance of positivism and the scientific method as the only mode of inquiry (Levesque-Lopman, 1988). Phenomenology sought to bridge the gap between thinking and unthinking substance. "Instead of trying to explain minds in terms of matter, or vice versa, Husserl demanded that each experience must be taken in its own right as it shows itself and as one is conscious of it" (Stewart & Algis, 1990, p. 22). Phenomenology denies the existence of a dichotomy between subject and object and emphasizes that all consciousness is consciousness of something. That something (phenomena) can be a house or an idea, but in either case consciousness is inextricably linked to the thing itself rather than being apart from it (Sokolowski, 2000).

The value of phenomenology for a researcher is that it serves as a theoretical framework that privileges participants' lived experience (Levesque-Lopman, 1988). This study used the phenomenological perspective to focus on the subjective experience of female volunteers. Phenomenology is especially concerned with the lived experience of participants (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). As such, phenomenological researchers seek to learn what is central to the phenomena being studied (Donalek, 2004). Research done from a phenomenological perspective can allow participants to communicate their experience without the meaning being significantly altered by the researcher (Grover, 2004). Phenomenological research helps to empower participants by encouraging them to speak on their own behalf about their experience (Levesque-Lopman, 1988).

# CHAPTER III
# METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of volunteering in the lives of women who volunteer with the Girl Scouts. I used three guiding questions. The study sought to learn 1) why women engaged in volunteering, 2) whether they considered it leisure, and 3) how they negotiated constraints to volunteering.

The interpretive paradigm is consonant with an ethos of empowerment. An interpretive researcher does not seek out the one and only "truth," but acknowledges the multiplicity of subjective truths (Henderson, 1991). Centered on the participants' worldview, the paradigm allows the participants to attach their own meanings to things rather than have those meanings imposed by the researcher. The qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm helped me explore the individual experiences of the participants in detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

## Participants

Interpretive research that uses qualitative interviews may choose participants because they have particular access to some knowledge relevant to the study, or because they have some attribute in common (Henderson, 1991). All of the participants in the study were adult volunteer troop leaders with the Girl Scouts in a single council in the southeastern United States. To be included in the study, volunteers needed to have a minimum of three years of experience as troop leaders. I submitted a research proposal to

the Institutional Review Board for ethical review (Appendix B). Upon approval, I appealed to volunteers through the monthly newsletter sent to volunteers. Further appeals went via email listserv, and a copy of the letter (Appendix C) was displayed in the council shop, which is a high traffic area for volunteers. In addition, the Girl Scout staff member who served as liaison with me sent out an email to volunteers. The first twelve respondents who matched study criteria were included in the study (Appendix D).

Researchers use diverse strategies when faced with the question of sample size in qualitative research. "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know… what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources (Patton, 1990, p. 184)." Although the study was limited to long-term volunteers who had three or more years of experience, volunteers who responded skewed toward highly experienced volunteers. Volunteers ranged from 4 years of experience to 35 years. Participants had an average of 14 years of experience, and the median was 13 years. The responses of eleven participants hung together well and approached theoretical saturation. Analysis found that the final participant recruited into the study, who had the least amount of Girl Scout volunteer experience, differed in important ways from the other participants. However, the limited scope of the study precluded recruiting further participants. The fact that only one participant had between three and six years of experience constituted a limitation of the study.

I did not ask any demographic questions but during the interviews, all participants divulged that they were parents. Since all participants had four years or more of experience as a troop leader, and a daughter in their troop, each participant had a

daughter who was at least nine years old. Three participants stated that they had children who were in their early 20's. All participants appeared to be Caucasian.

## Interview Questions

While determining which interview questions should be in an interview guide, I engaged in a filtering process. I narrowed down the list of questions to ones designed specifically to address the study's purpose and the research questions. Throughout this procedure, I tried to be cognizant that one "must be vigilant lest their research reflect more about themselves and the establishment than it does represent authentically those whom they study" (Grover, 2004, p.89). The original interview guide is in Appendix E.

Two questions were added over the course of the study. One question was added about leisure, and one question was added about the participants' experience of Girl Scouting as a largely female organization.

Four of the participants laughed in response when asked about leisure. During the first set of interviews, participants talked a great deal about fun, but it was clear that the term "leisure" did not resonate for participants. As a result, I added the question, "What parts of your volunteering are the most fun for you?" To be sure that I was using the participants' language, I determined that I would only ask it after (and if) participants had talked about fun. As it turned out, each participant did use talk about fun without prompting.

One of my first two participants talked about Girl Scouts as a community of women. I knew that the volunteer base mostly consisted of women, and I was interested in learning how that affected the volunteers' experiences. I added a question to address this. The final interview guide can be found in Appendix F.

## Data Collection

I conducted face-to-face interviews of participants to learn more about the Girl Scout volunteer experience: why women engaged in volunteering, whether they considered it leisure, and how they negotiated constraints to volunteering. The interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes in duration, although most interviews lasted between 40 and 50 minutes. I maintained a journal throughout the process. After beginning the analysis, key informants were interviewed a second time to serve as a member check of the analysis.

I chose two key informants, based on their differing experience and the insight they displayed during their original interviews. I also hoped to find answers to additional questions I discovered through analysis. I spoke with Claire and with Abigail.

Claire had volunteered for sixteen years, just two years more than the average. She had seemed insightful during her interview. In addition, Claire was the sole participant who responded that volunteering with the Girl Scouts was not leisure for her. I wished to explore that issue with her. I also explained my findings and asked her to confirm or disconfirm my analysis.

Abigail had the least amount of Girl Scout volunteering experience of all the participants. Her ideas and opinions seemed to diverge from the other participants. In particular, she did not seem to have adopted a Girl Scout identity and I wished to explore that with her. I also talked with her about my other findings and asked her to confirm or disconfirm my analysis.

## Method of Analysis

I recorded all interviews and transcribed each interview verbatim within three days of conducting it. Once transcribed, the data was analyzed using constant comparison. Constant comparison uses three stages: examining the words of the interviewer and respondents to determine categories and their properties, comparing categories to each other, and re-examining the data, and further collapsing categories down into themes and checking for theoretical saturation (Strauss, 1987).

I conducted between two and five interviews each weekend over the course of a month, for a total of twelve interviews. After each set of interviews, I transcribed the data and began preliminary analysis before the next round of interviews. This preliminary analysis helped me fine tune the interview guide for subsequent interviews.

I coded the interviews using Atlas.ti software. The coding began immediately after the first four interviews were transcribed, but before the next set of interviews. Transcription and analysis during the weekdays alternated with interviews on the weekends over the course of a month and a half.

Atlast.ti allowed me to highlight segments of text and label them with keywords in a process called "open coding." Initial analysis yielded 102 codes. Based on connections found between the codes, codes were then collapsed into nine categories. I then examined and re-examined the categories until five themes emerged from the data. The software, Atlas.ti, figured in my analysis thanks to the capability of graphically displaying networks of codes. I used the software to assemble codes into networks first to form categories and then themes (Appendix G). The networks allowed me to view the codes and the relationships between codes visually. Having a visual representation of the

codes helped me clarify my ideas about the data. Visual depictions of the codes especially made the connections between codes more apparent to me.

I did not use Atlas.ti for my research journal, which was handwritten and not transcribed. Instead, I referred to the journal by going back and reading entries frequently throughout the process of analysis. Information in the journal reflected the ongoing process of analysis, and then helped shape the analysis. I also used the journal as a tool to reflect on my biases.

## Trustworthiness

The conventions of quantitative research expect that research should be replicable. Researchers must clearly report data and procedures to facilitate any efforts to replicate the study. Qualitative studies in the interpretive paradigm are not replicable, but they do need to demonstrate that the data has been collected and analyzed in a rigorous and reasonable fashion (Huberman & Miles, 1998). I accomplished this through member checks, a researcher journal, and colleague review of the coding scheme.

Key informants provided a member check of the data. I asked each participant to indicate whether she was willing to participate in a follow-up interview during which I clarified questions about the data and confirmed the analysis. As it turned out, every participant indicated that she was willing to have me contact her for a follow-up interview if needed. I chose two key informants based upon the insightfulness of their answers. In addition, the two participants were chosen for member checks based on particular information that might help me answer questions that had come up during analysis. Once chosen, I contacted the participants for a second interview. Each interview

lasted around twenty minutes. Offering an opportunity for participants to add any further insights helps to increase the credibility of the data (Henderson, 1991).

I kept a journal to record the entire process of conducting the research and analyzing the interviews. The journal contained observations and reflections about each interview and an informal record of the process by which categories were identified and selected. The journal also included reflections on my biases to the extent I am aware of them and my ideas about the study as they change throughout the process. Thorough documentation of the process of collecting and analyzing data is key to helping produce a full account of the research (Huberman & Miles, 1998).

The chair of my thesis committee helped to review the coding scheme and the conclusions drawn from the study. Between us, we sought agreement that my analysis was sound and rooted in the data. This systematic review checked for bias and error, and helped ensure that the analysis will be sound enough to stand up to scrutiny (Huberman & Miles, 1998). We particularly sought to find alternative explanations and disconfirming evidence related to what we were seeing in the data.

## Responding to Researcher Bias

My history with the Girl Scouts certainly helped inform my analysis. I hope that it also made me a bit more careful with my analysis. The participants seemed to accord me an insider status. That insider status was not always helpful to me. While I have had troops in both Illinois and North Carolina, in both instances I worked with the outreach program. One troop was located in a homeless shelter and another troop was located in public housing. The troops were very different from the traditional troops led by the

participants, at least in the way that the council administered them. As a result, I never attended service unit meetings. The service unit is the administrative mechanism volunteers use to organize themselves within their neighborhood. I had only the vaguest idea about what was involved with some of the tasks participants discussed, but they used shorthand because they assumed familiarity that I did not have.

I corrected for this by asking participants when it seemed appropriate, but also by asking the staff member who acted as my liaison. She helped me to understand details about different volunteer jobs if it was not clear from the transcript.

As part of my response to researcher bias, I looked for disconfirming evidence that would challenge my conclusions. The head of my committee assisted me in this endeavor. In addition, I maintained a journal in which I tracked my evolving ideas about my data.

Further, I held two phone interviews with key informants during which I took my analyses back to two different participants to ask them whether they thought they made any sense to them. I spoke with Claire and with Abigail. I found that collaboration extremely helpful in the process of forming and refining my conclusions.

# CHAPTER IV
# ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

I analyzed and interpreted the results in light of the research questions, 1) why women engaged in volunteering, 2) whether they considered it leisure, and 3) how they negotiated constraints to volunteering.

The study used phenomenology in the interpretive paradigm as a framework for understanding. Basing the study in the framework of phenomenology helped to focus the study on the participants' experience of being a Girl Scout volunteer. I sought to gain an understanding of participants' experience through one-on-one, in-depth interviews.

During analysis of the data, five major themes emerged. Three themes emerged related to the Girl Scout experience. Those themes were 1) Girl Scouting and Family 2) Benefits and 3) Girl Scout Identity. Two additional themes emerged, 1) Having Fun and 2) Managing Constraints.

## Girl Scouting and Family

All of the women in the study had at least one daughter in their troop. In five cases, participants had multiple daughters in multiple troops. That meant that for the participants, in some ways, Girl Scouting connected to caring for their daughters. Madeline's husband had an expectation that doing any Girl Scout volunteering meant

caring for her daughters. As a result, he was puzzled when she would leave the house, bound for a Girl Scout activity, but leave her daughters behind. Her husband would ask, "You're doing Girl Scouts again? When are you gonna take the girls with you?" and Madeline would reply, "We do our thing, but this is my thing."

The time that participants spent volunteering for the Girl Scouts brought both benefits and consequences to the family. Four women stated that they began volunteering with the Girl Scouts expressly because their daughters wanted to be Girl Scouts. Six participants said that volunteering with the Girl Scouts increased the amount of time they were able to spend with their daughter(s). They also said that Girl Scouting provided them with the opportunity to know their daughters' friends. In addition, two participants said that they were glad about the time they spent as a Girl Scout volunteer because it meant that they had been able to share experiences with their daughter that they otherwise would have missed.

For three women, having their daughter in the troop gave them a reason to work harder at providing a good experience for all the girls. However, two participants referred to all of the girls in the troop as their daughters. Rita said that "it was neat going to graduation at the high school and having essentially five daughters graduate at the same time."

Participants encountered some difficulties related to having their daughters in their troop. Six participants discussed the ways that they and their daughters were affected by the process of managing dual roles as both a leader and as a mother. Claire was able to compare the experience of having had her daughter in her troop with the new troop she started once her daughter had graduated:

> I think I didn't enjoy [being a troop leader] as much as I do now. Because at first you still got the mommy-daughter thing going on. Then you hit that point where you're the leader. You're responsible for more than that so you have to broaden that perspective a little bit. You lose some of the mommy-daughter thing, and your daughter hits an age where she doesn't really want her mommy there either. So, you go through some trying times with that.

Difficulties with managing their role as parents extended outside of the troop meeting. Five participants said that they had less time with their family because of the time they spent volunteering. Although three participants stated that their husbands were registered Girl Scouts who helped at least occasionally with the troop, another three participants stated that their husbands were jealous or did not understand their commitment to Girl Scouting.

Madeline said that her husband would ask her why she volunteered for the Girl scouts and she would respond, "Because I LIKE TO. I WANT TO. I NEED TO." She said that he did not understand. He would tease her by saying, "Here comes cookies. How many cookies you got this year? How long are they gonna be sitting here? How many nuts you got? Here comes the nut lady." She added:

> So I think he's looking forward to me not doing cookies and nuts anymore, but other stuff it's like, "Why do you keep doing that?" He accepts it and he knows it's something I like to do. He's just being a stinker.

For some participants, volunteering with the Girl Scouts was a family tradition. Five participants' mothers had volunteered with the Girl Scouts, and one participant's father had been her troop leader. Stella's daughter, who had grown up in her troop, now

is an adult Girl Scout with a Brownie troop of her own. Each participant whose parents volunteered with the Girl Scouts also said things that indicated that they identified as a volunteer and vice versa. Norma made that link explicit when she said, "My mother volunteered, my father volunteered. It's a part of what you need to do. You have to always give back."

## Benefits

When asked what motivated them to continue to volunteer, each participant cited benefits that they received because of being a Girl Scout volunteer. Each participant talked about the satisfaction that she received from working with the girls. Participants also talked about the fun they had. In fact, all of the participants mentioned fun during the interviews. Often, participants' fun was linked to the girls' experience. Claire talked about the fun she had because of the fun the girls were having:

> So I didn't have a bunch of kids around, and I didn't want a bunch of kids around. But I didn't mind borrowing them for a while. And it was fun. I remember sometimes working on stuff, like Try-It's with the Brownies and stuff. They'd get so excited about stuff. They'd come bouncing into meetings and they were just so happy to see you. It didn't matter what you were doing. You could have been gluing popsicle sticks together and just making shapes and stuff. They thought that was the coolest thing in the world because you were paying attention to them. They were doing something new, and that was exciting for them. And that was just so much fun doing that.

Participants mainly received intangible benefits, although Stella did receive a scholarship because of her Girl Scout volunteering. She stated that without that scholarship, she would have had a much more difficult time being able to afford college. Participants stated that they had learned a great deal from volunteering with the Girl Scouts. Two participants said that they applied what they had learned as a Girl Scout volunteer directly to their jobs.

Participants reflected on their own growth during the time that they had been volunteering with the Girl Scouts. All of the participants engaged in volunteer tasks that involved increasing responsibility over the course of their time as Girl Scout volunteers. Abigail, the least experienced leader, had only gone from assistant leader to troop leader and had not taken on any other roles, but she did state that she was considering becoming a trainer.

Jill explained the roles that she had taken on. Her path represents a typical example of the escalating roles participants took on over the course of their volunteering career:

> First, I was simply asked to drive. Then I became an assistant troop leader. Then that leader moved to another age level and I took over the troop and became a troop leader, I guess about eighteen months after I started. Then I just followed that same set of girls up. When I took "Troop Camper," which was required training, someone suggested I become a trainer. I said yes. I guess I've been a trainer now five or six years. [Now,] I'm service unit manager. I've only been service unit manager for about a year.

In addition to their personal growth, participants also discussed the relationships volunteers built with one another. Eight volunteers stated that they centered at least some of their social life on the people that they knew through Girl Scouting. Pearl said that the friends she made in Girl Scouting helped to motivate her to continue volunteering:

> First off, I like the people. The leaders. I like the people that I train with. We have a great time. I guess it's more of a camaraderie, as I'm getting older and my girls are getting older it's more of a group that I feel that they're definitely true friends where I can confide in them and discuss things with them… And it's a good sounding board, too, not only in scouting issues but in family issues they've been a great support system for me in certain situations. I know that I can count on them.

All of the participants stated that working with the girls motivated them to continue volunteering. Each participant expressed that the girls comprised a big part of what they got out of Girl Scouting, although they highlighted different things. Participants expressed a great deal of affection for the girls, sometimes referring to them as their "other daughters." All but one of the participants had been with the same group of girls since they were five or six years old. Abigail had moved, so she had not spent the whole time with the same group of girls. Participants spoke warmly about the affection they received from the girls. Rita was one of five participants who talked about the affection from the girls they worked with and what it meant:

> There's nothing quite like the feeling at the end of an exhausting day to have an eight year-old run up to you in the middle of Wal-Mart, saying "Miss Rita!" [They] yell and hug you and then be telling their parents, "This is my Girl Scout

> leader" and you know "We went to camp and we did this and she taught me how to do this thing and it was really cool" and you know, stuff like that….It's different even than your kids doing the same thing. There's nothing quite like having a half a dozen little girls clutch to your legs, just kind of, you know, worshipping you in a way….It's recharging.

Five participants related life experiences that they had as a result of volunteering with the Girl Scouts. Participants particularly talked about having had the chance to travel and meet Girl Scouts from around the world. Esther was able to travel abroad:

> I've been able to have experiences. My daughter and I were invited to go to Denmark last summer for an international scouting jamboree. And I had never been on a plane. My first plane trip was to London. It took a call to my doctor for medication, actually, because I was very unsure. For eight days, it was very interesting. I missed my family. I had never been away from my boys for that long before.

## Altruism

Altruism comprises a sub-theme of Benefits because for many participants, the act of giving was something that they got out of their volunteer experience. When reflecting on their time as Girl Scout volunteers, many participants in the study discussed the importance of the girls' experience. . As such, it seemed to constitute an important sub-theme related to what participants were getting out of their volunteering. I asked eight participants to relate the "most fun" parts of Girl Scouting, every one of them talked about how fun it was to watch the girls grow over the years. Stella responded:

> One thing I'm really enjoying is that I have fifth graders that are sixth graders now and just seeing them mature and the change and the giggling and the getting the breasts and talking about boys. I get such a thrill out of it 'cause I just see these girls growing up. It's kind of sad in a way, but I really enjoy that. And you hear them doing good in school and all that stuff and that makes you feel good, you know?

Participants cited the benefits of Girl Scouting for girls, that it was a safe place, that the program accommodates many different kinds of girls, and that girls left scouting with lasting friendships. Nine participants emphasized the importance of inculcating Girl Scout values in girls. Some specific things that participants stated that the girls in their troops were learning included good citizenship, how to get along with other people, and about the value of volunteering and being active in one's community.

Participants said that it was important to them to be able to provide girls with experiences that they might not otherwise have had. Eight participants mentioned such experiences, which included camping, rafting, and traveling. In particular, participants said that traveling with their girls was a chance to widen the girls' perspective. For some participants, this meant traveling abroad, but Claire was able to broaden her girls' experience just by leaving the county:

> I remember the first trip that we took, we went to Savannah. They were in the fourth grade and three of them had never left the county. One of them, her mother packed sheets and towels for her. We were staying in a hotel. 'Cause her mother had never left the county. That was a whole arena that was just totally alien. It wasn't until we were there and I saw the sheets and towels and I thought, "Man,

that was really a stretch for her, for the mother, to let her go." It was kind of awe-inspiring for me that she trusted me that much.

While we often think of altruism as freely chosen, five of the participants indicated that they were volunteering partly because they felt that they did not have a choice. They stated that they were volunteering because if they did not, nobody else would. On one hand, this may be a realistic assessment. Four participants stated that they had a difficult time trying to recruit volunteers. Madeline said that recruiting adults was "the hardest, least fun thing we do." Despite personal crisis, volunteers still felt they needed to focus on their Girl Scout volunteering. Rita said:

> This Spring actually a tree fell through my house. So cookie time, it's been interesting because I didn't have my computer to work on my spreadsheets or do any of that stuff. Well cookies were delivered and I still wasn't living in my home so I had to go back and forth every day to issue cookies to troop leaders and stuff. It was interesting, but if I had said, "Well, I'm not doing it. A tree fell through my house," nobody else would be there to do it necessarily.

## Girl Scout Identity

All of the participants indicated that Girl Scouting was important to them. Abigail, the participant with the least amount of experience volunteering with the Girl Scouts, said that Girl Scouting was important to her as a way to teach her daughters about the importance of volunteering. However, the rest of the participants seemed to tie Girl Scouting to their identity.

After I conducted all of the interviews, and had finished most of the analysis, I contacted Abigail. I wished to speak with her as a member check and to explore with her whether she maintained a Girl Scout identity. She said that she felt the main difference between herself and volunteers who considered Girl Scout volunteering to be a part of their identity was that she had different reasons for volunteering than they did:

> There are people who live or die for Girl Scouts, but it's not one of the major things that makes up who I am…If my daughters did not want to be scouts, I would not volunteer. I'll volunteer with what they're interested in. If [my son] wants to be on the football team, I'll go to a coaching clinic.

Some participants tied their Girl Scout identity to Girl Scout values. Georgia said that when she met other Girl Scout volunteers, she was able to become friends more easily because she felt like she already knew something about them:

> It's like being in a secret sorority that stretches worldwide. There are Girl Guides and Girl Scouts *everywhere.* It is so excellent cool to hook up with them. You have that instant [feeling that you] know what [their] standards for behavior in life are.

Most of the volunteers who participated in the study were highly experienced. Volunteers ranged from four to thirty-five years of experience. The average time spent volunteering was 14 years, and the median was 13 years. It is perhaps unsurprising that someone who has volunteered with the Girl Scouts for more than a decade would identify strongly as a Girl Scout. Jill, who had thirty-five years of experience as a Girl Scout volunteer, said:

> It's part of what I am. It's part of my make-up. Miss Jill is the children's choir director. Miss Jill's a Girl Scout leader. It's just me. The thing on the back of my car says "Girl Scouts." I buy green vans. It's my social life, in a lot of aspects. In fact, the friends I have, even when we go out with couples, it's another Girl Scout leader and her husband. So it's my social life and it's just what I do. Everything that I do potentially is a Girl Scout activity. You know, everybody that you talk to is potentially a Girl Scout resource.

Three of the participants, in a reference to Girl Scouting's green logo and uniforms, stated that they were so dedicated to Girl Scouting that they had green blood. Barbara attributed green blood to anyone who had volunteered long enough when she said, "I think once a volunteer has gotten to a certain point, you could say that their blood runs green and you know they ain't goin nowhere. They're gonna go the distance."

Five participants emphasized the importance of their Girl Scout volunteering not only to themselves, but also to their community. Helping others and doing something that the participants viewed as worthwhile seemed to be an important part of adopting an identity as a Girl Scout volunteer. Delia seemed to express a commonly held sentiment when she said, "I wouldn't take it on if I didn't believe in it."

For volunteers who tie Girl Scouting to their identity, leaving Girl Scouts may be extremely difficult. Even the idea of leaving Girl Scouting seemed to bother some participants. Without prompting, five participants imagined aloud what their life would be like without Girl Scouting. Georgia said:

> It's just, you know it's a big hunk of my life. I mean, if someone came in and said, "You can't be a Girl Scout anymore" it would leave a big hole and I don't

know right now what would move into that space that would be nearly as fulfilling as what I do.

Most Girl Scout volunteers are female, although men over the age of seventeen may become members and volunteer. Male volunteers were rare enough that two participants stated that they did not personally know any men who volunteered. As a result, society treats Girl Scouting as an exclusively female activity. Rita explained the absence of male volunteers:

> You know there are a lot of women involved in Cub Scouts who are Cub Scout leaders, so why are there not more men involved in Girl Scouting? It's a guy thing. They [think] it's just too feminine to be involved, but I don't know.

Since society considers Girl Scouting a female activity, ideas about appropriate feminine roles intersected with participants' identity as Girl Scout volunteers. Two volunteers stated that volunteers should run Girl Scouts like a business, but that women did not know how. Both participants said that women did not run Girl Scouts like a business because they got emotional. Norma, who owned her own business, said that when women got emotional, that got in the way:

> Coming from a business world, I'm used to having to deal with men. You're right out there, you say what you think, deal with it and move on. Women don't necessarily do that. With the Girl Scout volunteer experience, emotions come first and I find that aggravating.

Whereas Norma felt that the female character of the Girl Scouts made the organization less efficient, two participants stated that they felt that women were more

suited to accomplishing the administrative tasks necessary to providing the Girl Scout program. Barbara referred to this when she said:

> I can't imagine trying to do this with a bunch of men. I'm not a man basher, but there's so many details... Men, I'm not saying that they can't take care of details but I don't think that they have too much expertise in that. I think most men kind of focus on one thing at a time. They can't pull a lot of things together… I think the reason that men are successful in the upper echelons or whatever, the upper grade levels when they have the Boy Scouts is because they have women behind them that are really doing most of the planning and they really are just leading the pack meeting or the troop meeting. They have women usually that are typing everything up and making the phone calls and kind of needling them along. That's terrible to say but in many cases that's been my observation.

Georgia said that Girl Scouting was a break from having to deal with the "bullshit of dealing with the boys or the men," and two of the participants stated that they had closer friendships with other volunteers because Girl Scout volunteers were mostly women. Two participants said that women were more caring than men and that made them better volunteers, whereas four participants emphasized that Girl Scouting provides girls with strong female role models.

## Having Fun

Participants identified "having fun" as a benefit of volunteering. They also provided insight about how fun linked Girl Scout volunteering to leisure. Every participant talked extensively about the fact that she had fun as a Girl Scout volunteer.

Georgia said, “There’s just unlimited opportunities to grow and explore parts of yourself that you didn’t know about as a Girl Scout volunteer. And it’s fun. It’s a lot of fun.” Participants talked about fun activities that they enjoyed, and about the people who made their Girl Scouting experiences fun.

Participants did not seem to connect with the word leisure. When asked how they defined leisure for themselves, four of the participants responded by laughing outright. Jill’s leisurely moments happened when she was “sitting on the commode with the door locked”. To understand whether participants considered their Girl Scout volunteering to be leisure, it was necessary to first understand how participants defined leisure. Four participants stated that they had no leisure or very little leisure. All of the participants cited activities that they liked. Georgia equated leisure with learning. Seven participants equated leisure with relaxing while two participants equated leisure with freedom from responsibility. No participant stuck with just one of the traditional definitions in the field of recreation (time, activity, or state of mind). Instead, each participant incorporated at least two aspects into their definition of leisure.

After the first four interviews, it became apparent that the word leisure itself was problematic with participants. To get a better idea of the links (if any) between Girl Scouting and leisure, I added a clarifying question about the “fun parts” of Girl Scouting. I was only going to ask the question if participants themselves used the word fun, but it turned out that every participant did. As a result, eight participants were asked what was the “most fun” part of volunteering with the Girl Scouts.

When asked if they considered their volunteering with the Girl Scouts to have qualities of leisure, eleven participants stated that they thought that they did. Claire

responded with an unequivocal no. “I don’t think anything that I do with Girl Scouts could be considered leisure. It is a job. I do consider it a job.” However, when later asked what she thought people should know about volunteering with the Girl Scouts, she responded, “That it’s fun for me, even though I don’t always smile about it. I do consider it fun.”

After conducting all of the interviews, I selected Claire as a key informant to provide a member check of my findings. I was particularly interested in speaking with her because she had been the sole respondent who stated that Girl Scouting did not have any qualities of leisure for her. In this second interview, Claire said, “Leisure is sitting my ass on the beach for three days, and Girl Scouts ain’t that.” She maintained that Girl Scouting was fun for her, but a job. To find out whether the main issue was how she was defining leisure, I read Claire Stebbins’ definition of serious leisure. She responded by saying, “Well, if you’re going to define it that way, I could get behind that.”

Claire was not the only participant who seemed to equate leisure with relaxation. Although seven volunteers defined leisure as relaxation, for the most part they did not cite relaxation as a reason that they considered their Girl Scout volunteering to be leisure. However, two participants talked about relaxing with other leaders at leader-only events, and Pearl talked about a particular incident when she was able to relax with her girls. The rest of the participants talked about the fun that they had watching the girls learn, or the pride they felt for the girls in their troop.

## Managing Constraints

Participants surmounted many difficulties to volunteer. The number of hours participants volunteered ranged from two to eighteen hours per week. Participants consistently stated that the number of hours varied depending on the time of year. For some participants, cookie season greatly changed the hours they put into Girl Scout volunteering. Rita stated that the number of hours she spent volunteering jumped from four to twenty while the cookie sale was in progress. When it was not cookie season, the number of hours participants volunteered per week averaged out to around seven hours. The median was around four hours. Four participants stated that they actively avoided adding up the amount of time they spend volunteering with the Girl Scouts. When asked how many hours per week, Pearl laughed and said, "I don't even want to think about that, Linda. You're trying to scare me, aren't you?" She eventually stated that she spent about 9 ½ hours per week volunteering for the Girl Scouts. Georgia, who says she spends an average of ten hours per week volunteering, said:

> I have this great patch that has the white rabbit from Alice and Wonderland standing there with the stopwatch and it says, "Girl Scouts" whatever "Just one hour a week." That used to be a recruiting thing. "Just one hour a week! Just give one hour a week to your Girl Scout troop." Oh, man. On a week where I have a meeting, they're supposed to be here from three-thirty to five-thirty. They start showing up at three o'clock and they usually don't start going home until almost seven.

Ten participants discussed the difficulties of finding the time to volunteer while also managing the rest of their lives. In each case where participants stated that they

found it difficult to find the time to volunteer, they went on to talk about taking one of two paths. Either they prioritized Girl Scouting and used one of several strategies to make the time to be a Girl Scout volunteer or they chose to reduce their Girl Scout activities. Two participants discussed their plans to reduce the time that they volunteered for the Girl Scouts, in one case because of health problems and in another case because of taking on a larger role as a volunteer in another organization. In four cases, participants discussed the strategy of managing the time they spent volunteering with the Girl Scouts by taking on volunteer tasks that were less time consuming.

Participants used several strategies to make it possible to volunteer. Three participants said that they reduced other activities to manage their time. In fact, five volunteers stated that they had less time with their family. Barbara expressed regret because she felt like she had sacrificed volunteering with her church and volunteered with the Girl Scouts instead. Three participants said that they stayed up late or got up early in order to accomplish Girl Scout-related tasks. Participants cited other strategies, like using calendars and email. Delegating tasks to parents or other volunteers helped four participants reduce their load and make volunteering more manageable.

The home was commonly a site for Girl Scout volunteering, and this affected the strategies available to participants. The planning necessary for troop meetings, trips, and events all took place in the home. Abigail even said that she ended up with a "cookie mouse" in her home after storing cookies there. As a result, one strategy used by participants was to multitask. Claire said that when calculating the time she devoted to the Girl Scouts, it was difficult to separate out her volunteer time from other tasks like

laundry or volunteering for another organization because she frequently would combine tasks and do all three at the same time.

In particular, participants cited the difficulty of volunteering with the Girl Scouts while also working. Georgia actually left work so that she could spend more time volunteering with the Girl Scouts and other organizations. Madeline said that she worked three flexible, part-time jobs partly so that she could continue to volunteer. Claire simply set limits in her workplace:

> I really do get testy when work interferes with my volunteering because volunteering is my outlet. I swear it's the only thing that keeps me sane sometimes because it's the only thing I feel like I have control over. I have no qualms at all about saying, you know, "I have a troop meeting in a half hour, and I have to leave. Bye."

Barbara, who did not work outside the home, stated that she could not imagine how someone could manage work, family, and Girl Scout volunteering. However, five out of the eight participants who talked about work and Girl Scouting did so with the assumption that work was more important, and Girl Scouting would need to accommodate the demands of the job.

Participants stated that they carefully chose the Girl Scout activities that they were willing to take on. Rather than paid staff, volunteers do most of the recruiting, training, and administrative oversight of other volunteers. In addition to being troop leaders, ten of the participants had taken on other roles. Participants who took on those roles spent half or more of their total volunteer hours with the Girl Scouts doing tasks unrelated or only tangentially related to their troop. After getting some experience as a leader, eight

participants went on to serve on the service team, which is the administrative unit for the neighborhood. Four participants served formally as mentors for other troop leaders. All Girl Scout leaders must complete at least two workshops within the first year, and other volunteers teach those workshops. Six participants went on to become trainers. Participants stated that by choosing time-consuming tasks that they did not enjoy, they courted burnout. Volunteers who chose tasks that they enjoyed enhanced their experience as Girl Scout volunteers. Any time volunteers took on tasks in addition to leading their troop, they added to the number of hours they spent volunteering.

Esther said that she was willing to do "pretty much anything anybody asks me to do," and she also volunteered for the highest number of hours per week – eighteen. Other participants chose to limit their Girl Scout activities more sharply. Norma said that she did not hold any meetings in December, her busy time at work. Abigail, who volunteered the least amount of hours, only two hours per week, said that whenever someone suggested that she take on a task she did not want to do, she would decline simply by holding up her baby. Abigail said, "He's my little excuse. He just sits there. He's cute. He's a distraction. People look at him."

When Delia talked about the tasks she did besides leading her daughter's troop, she contrasted how enjoyable she found them with the fact that the same tasks had caused other volunteers to burn out:

> You know, as I found it being more and more rewarding I took on different positions that needed to be met because the community, it's always the same few people who are volunteering for the big jobs. And they're getting burned out and

some of them left and in order to get them to come back we enticed them by taking over some of their responsibilities.

In addition to burnout, participants also discussed other problems that adversely affected their motivation to volunteer with the Girl Scouts. Seven volunteers stated that they were frustrated with the organization. For example, five participants said that red tape and paperwork made it more difficult to volunteer and two participants stated that the organization did not value volunteers' opinions. In addition, two participants said that high staff turnover made it more difficult to get the information that they needed and sometimes interfered with the completion of long-term projects.

In spite of difficulties, three participants stated explicitly that their belief in the organization made it worth their while to continue. While talking about the difficulties, Stella expressed how the importance she placed on her volunteering helped her to stay motivated:

> …but I would say that it's very worthwhile and people who volunteer with the Boys and Girls club or anything, you realize how important that is. How much it's good for you, for your well being and how you feel and everything.

## Conclusion

Through the data analysis process, participants discussed varied reasons for volunteering with the Girl Scouts, and no participant cited only one reason for volunteering. Three themes emerged concerning the reasons that women engage in volunteering, Girl Scouting and Family, Benefits, and Girl Scout Identity.

Every participant had at least one daughter in her troop, so part of participants' Girl Scout volunteering connected to the task of caring for her daughter. However, ten of the participants took on roles outside of their troop. In those roles, they did not directly work with girls, including their daughters, but rather accomplished tasks that benefited the organization as a whole.

Even when not directly working with their daughter, participants enjoyed other benefits. Participants tended to receive intrinsic rather than extrinsic benefits, with some exceptions. As Girl Scout volunteers, participants made friends, traveled abroad, learned new skills, and had fun. All of the participants stated that the benefits that they received as Girl Scout volunteers helped to motivate them to continue volunteering.

All but one participant seemed to identify strongly as Girl Scout volunteers. This may be connected to the length of time someone has been a volunteer, as the sole exception was also the participant who had volunteered for the least amount of time of anyone in the study – only four years. Three participants identified so strongly that they stated that their blood ran green. Identifying as a Girl Scout volunteer may make it more difficult to quit. Unprompted, five volunteers talked about how difficult it was for them to imagine a life without Girl Scouting.

The variety of responses by participants about their definition of leisure complicates the question of whether participants perceived volunteering with the Girl Scouts to be leisure. Eleven participants stated that they felt that volunteering with the Girl Scouts had qualities of leisure. However, participants seemed to connect better with the idea of fun rather than leisure. All of the participants said that they had fun as a volunteer.

Participants persisted as Girl Scout volunteers in the face of various difficulties. Participants juggled family, work and volunteering for other organizations to spend an average of around seven hours a week volunteering with the Girl Scouts, with a median of around four hours. The most important strategy seemed to be simply prioritizing Girl Scout volunteering and then simply getting it done. Once participants decided to prioritize Girl Scouting, they used various strategies. Participants' strategies included the use of time management tools, carefully choosing the tasks they were willing to undertake, and even staying up late or getting up early to get things done.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of volunteering in the lives of women who volunteer with the Girl Scouts. I used three guiding questions, 1) why women engaged in volunteering, 2) whether they considered it leisure, and 3) how they negotiated constraints to volunteering. Phenomenology provided the guiding framework to understand the lived experience of 12 women who had volunteered with the Girl Scouts. The results of the interviews showed that their volunteering experience became entwined with self-identity, and that they experienced their volunteering as serious leisure. This chapter will discuss these findings in the light of existing literature and will also discuss implications for practice and for further research.

## Girl Scouting Role Identity

For all but one participant, being a Girl Scout volunteer meant taking on a Girl Scout identity. A few volunteers identified so strongly as a Girl Scout that they said that their blood ran green. Studies have shown that volunteers who took on a volunteering role identity were more likely to maintain long-term volunteer activity (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Although those studies failed to clarify any causal relationship between long-term volunteer activity and role identity, the experience of the

participants in this study may serve to illuminate how the process might work. The only participant who did not exhibit a Girl Scout identity stated that she volunteered solely for the benefit of her daughters, and that whenever they wished to quit Girl Scouts, she would simply stop volunteering. In contrast, other participants discussed how difficult it would be to leave Girl Scouting. This study did not determine how Girl Scout identity formed in the first place. However, a strong Girl Scout identity may make it more difficult for a volunteer to quit.

## Serious Leisure

In addition to adopting a Girl Scout identity, participants experienced their volunteering as serious leisure. Stebbins (Stebbins, 2004) conceptualized serious leisure volunteering as a way to understand the differences between casual short-term experiences and long-term intense pursuits. To qualify as serious leisure, volunteering must have the following qualities: the need to persevere, a volunteering career, special knowledge or skill, durable benefits, a unique ethos and an identity that incorporates the pursuit (Stebbins & Graham, 2004).

Serious leisure volunteers engage in long-term pursuit of complex tasks. As such, they frequently encounter tasks that they do not like or situations that are unpleasant. To engage in serious leisure volunteering, a volunteer must persevere in spite of this. Most participants in my study stated that they had a difficult time managing to volunteer and work at the same time. Studies showed (Stubbings & Humble, 1984; J. Wilson, 2000) that people who work full time are less likely to volunteer than people who work part time. However the time spent at work is not the only factor, because people who were unemployed had the lowest rates of volunteering (Rotolo & Wilson, 2004).

Participants did not talk about time in isolation, but rather discussed the strategies they used to manage their time. When managing their time, participants chose one of two courses. Either they reduced the amount of time they spent doing other things, or they reduced the amount of time that they spent volunteering with the Girl Scouts. Choosing between shifting responsibilities or reducing volunteer hours was not a one-time, static choice. Participants often employed each strategy in turn over the years. As stated by Henderson (1997), "time" is not a sufficient descriptor for a constraint. For the participants in the study, time concerns reflected changing priorities and circumstances.

Participants who prioritized their Girl Scout volunteering said that other aspects of their lives suffered. Participants stated that when they prioritized Girl Scouts, they did so at the expense of family, church, and housework. Participants in this study who prioritized other things ahead of Girl Scouting continued doing Girl Scout volunteering, but reduced their total hours. They cut out the parts of volunteering they liked least, and/or retained volunteer roles that were less time consuming.

Another feature of serious leisure volunteering is that volunteers have a career path during which tasks become more complex and volunteers gain more responsibility. All participants in the study had followed a career path. Abigail, the volunteer with the least experience, had not advanced far in her career, because she had only risen from an assistant leader to troop leader. However, it could be that she simply had not been volunteering long enough to have an advanced career.

Unlike casual volunteering, in which volunteers need little knowledge or skill, the complex tasks associated with serious volunteering necessitates a larger knowledge base. Within the first year of volunteering, Girl Scout volunteers must complete at least two

workshops. Many volunteers go beyond that basic requirement and take additional training. Volunteers who conduct the workshops must go through a "train the trainer" workshop and serve an apprenticeship. In addition to the formal training that all participants received, participants stated that they had learned things through their Girl Scout volunteering. For example, some participants stated that through Girl Scouting they had learned about how to manage people.

The durable benefits gained from serious leisure volunteering are usually intangible but can also be tangible. Benefits can include self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of accomplishment, improved self-image, self-expression, social interaction, or lasting physical products of the activity (Stebbins, 1982). Each participant in this study articulated some of the benefits that she received as a Girl Scout volunteer. Participants cited fun that they had, friends that they made, and relationships that they built with the girls as important benefits that they received.

Omoto and Snyder found that "the opportunity to have personal, self-oriented and perhaps even selfish functions was what kept volunteers actively involved" (1995, p. 683). Barlow and Hainsworth (2001) found that the benefits expected by participants paralleled their motivations to volunteer. The participants in this study focused on the benefits they received from volunteering when asked to relate the reasons that they continued to volunteer. When asked why they continued to volunteer, each participant responded by citing the benefits they received as part of the reason that they continued to volunteer. These benefits included socializing with other volunteers, gaining satisfaction from helping girls, and learning new skills.

Based on norms, values, and beliefs common to the group, a unique ethos helps serious leisure volunteers build a subculture around their chosen pursuit (Stebbins, 1982). Girl Scout volunteers must agree to uphold the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law (Appendix A). In addition to the formal values that volunteers agree to uphold, a subculture has built up of Girl Scout traditions and informal norms and expectations that volunteers have for each other.

The final quality of Girl Scout volunteers that connects to serious leisure is that they adopt an identity that connects to the volunteering that they do. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, all but one participant adopted a Girl Scout identity. The participant who did not adopt a Girl Scout identity instead took on an identity as a volunteer.

The participants in this study clearly exhibited each of the qualities of serious leisure volunteering. One feature of serious leisure volunteering is that it involves sustained effort and perseverance. Those qualities are not commonly associated with leisure, but their presence provides serious leisure volunteers with access to benefits that only come with sustained effort over time.

## Implications for Practice

Agencies that use volunteers are rightly concerned about how to acquire and maintain a good volunteer corps. Training volunteers is more expensive than retaining them. For example within the first year a volunteer for the Girl Scouts must be recruited, submit to a criminal background check, and take three workshops. Although the Girl Scouts use volunteers extensively for recruitment and training, staff members manage

those volunteers. In addition, staff members develop all of the training and recruitment materials and the organization bears the cost of making and distributing such materials. With an average of fourteen years of experience, the volunteers in this study represent an important resource for the Girl Scouts.

Agencies that are interested in recruiting women as volunteers should consider addressing potential constraints that they might have. For instance, women are more likely to provide the majority of childcare within a family (Peterson & Gerson, 1992). If including children in the volunteering activity is not possible, then volunteers with young children need to arrange for care. Agencies can consider providing childcare, but including children in volunteer activities may be a better solution. Six participants in this study stated that they enjoyed having the opportunity to spend more time with their daughters through their Girl Scout volunteering. Organizations wishing to promote joint parent/child volunteering opportunities may wish to emphasize that children who volunteer with their parents are more likely to volunteer as adults ("Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service", 2002). Agencies may wish to reach out to potential volunteers who are similar to the participant in this study who stated that it was important to her that her children witness her volunteering. She said that she wanted them to learn the importance of being involved in their community.

The participants in this study strongly identified themselves as Girl Scout volunteers. Studies have shown that people who incorporate their role as a volunteer into their self-identity are more likely to continue to volunteer with that organization (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Participants in this study said that they could not imagine what their life would be like without volunteering. The very thought of

a life without Girl Scout volunteering seemed to be painful. The challenge for organizations, then, is how to get volunteers to identify with the organization. Originally, I thought that my participants' strong Girl Scout identities might relate to the structure of Girl Scouting. Members begin their first year with an investiture ceremony and then follow that up with a rededication ceremony at the beginning of each year. Like the girls, the adults wear uniforms and recite the Girl Scout Promise. I discussed this theory with one of the key informants, who seemed dubious. It was much more important, she said, that volunteers feel that their work is meaningful.

Re-examination of the data supported her interpretation over mine. For the most part, participants did not mention any of the trappings of Girl Scouting at all. Instead, they talked about the fact that they continued to volunteer when things became difficult because they felt that Girl Scouting was a worthwhile organization. Participants emphasized that they were important to girls not only through the direct services they provided to their troops but also indirectly when they trained or managed other volunteers.

Practitioners should consider ways to increase their volunteers' identification as volunteers within their particular organization. Social ties, a sense of history, and most importantly a sense that the work they do is important all contribute to volunteers' identification with an organization. Practitioners should emphasize the organization's mission and the ways that volunteers affect the community as a whole. In addition, agencies may help to facilitate role identity by giving volunteers items (bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc.) that publicly recognize them and identify them to others as agency volunteers.

Organizations should also consider the possibility that some volunteers consider what they do to be leisure or that their volunteering has many of the characteristics of leisure. Agencies may be reluctant to encourage the idea of volunteering as leisure because of concerns that it may hamper service delivery. However, serious leisure volunteering, which encourages sustained effort in the face of difficulties may be a worthwhile model for some organizations to follow. Volunteers who exhibit self-interested and even selfish motives tend to volunteer longer than volunteers who express only altruistic motives (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). As much as possible, practitioners should satisfy those motives by providing intrinsic benefits to volunteers. The benefits articulated by the participants in this study included providing an important service, meeting social needs, the acquisition of skills, and having fun. Framing volunteering as serious leisure can help organizations provide such benefits and thus encourage their volunteers to maintain ties to the organization.

Managing for serious leisure also means that organizations should ensure that volunteers have the opportunity to advance in a volunteering career. Providing a range of volunteer tasks helps volunteers manage their time and still maintain contact with the organization. Volunteers can choose tasks that are less time consuming when they need to, and they can become more involved in the organization when time and shifting priorities allow. Participants in this study stated that they appreciated the chance to learn new skills as they took on tasks of increasing importance and complexity. Volunteer organizations will also benefit as volunteers' skills increase through experience. Furthermore, as participants see their work increase in importance to the organization, they may be more likely to identify with their role as a volunteer.

## Implications for Future Research

The strongest finding in this study related to the existence of a Girl Scout role identity for participants and the importance that participants placed on Girl Scout volunteering in their lives. Since the participants in this study were long-term volunteers, this finding supported studies about volunteer role identity and volunteers' commitment to one particular organization (Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). However, no studies were found that clarified the relationship between role identity and long-term volunteering. Specifically, the studies on role identity failed to conclude whether role identity caused long-term volunteering (or vice versa) or if another mediating factor caused both. The cross-sectional and qualitative nature of my study meant that it also failed to illuminate the causal relationship, if any, between role identity and long-term volunteering. A longitudinal study that examines changes in volunteers over time would help to clarify this relationship.

For staff in organizations interested in retaining volunteers, understanding how and why volunteers leave may be critical. The participants in this study had chosen to continue to volunteer with the Girl Scouts on a long-term basis. However, the design of this study did not facilitate understanding of those individuals who ceased to volunteer for an organization. Research that focuses on the individuals who choose to leave an agency would help increase understanding of reasons that organizations fail to retain volunteers.

## Conclusion

In summary, the focus of my research was the lived experience of women who volunteered with the Girl Scouts. All participants had daughters in their troops, and so their Girl Scout volunteering connected to the responsibility to care for their daughter. Participants enjoyed many benefits through their volunteer activity, and the benefits they received helped to motivate them to continue. One of the strongest findings of this study was that some Girl Scout volunteers adopt a role identity that relates to their Girl Scout volunteering. Their blood "runs green." In addition, participants experienced their volunteering as serious leisure, with all of the advantages and disadvantages that come with long-term commitment to complex pursuits.

## APPENDIX A:
## The Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law

### The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

### The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**APPENDIX B:**
**IRB Form**

**University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill**
**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**
**Adult Subjects**
**Social-Behavioral Form**

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**IRB Study # EXSS 05-019**
**Consent Form Version Date:** 10/02/05

**Title of Study:** Women as volunteers: Understanding the female experience

**Principal Investigator:** Linda Oakleaf
**UNC-Chapel Hill Department:** Exercise and Sport Science
**UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number:** 919-962-1222
**Email Address:** *oakleaf@email.unc.edu*
**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Diane Groff
**Funding Source:** None

**Study Contact telephone number:** 919-962-1222
**Study Contact email:** oakleaf@email.unc.edu

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**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge that may help other people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Deciding not to be in the study or leaving the study before it is done will not affect your relationship with the researcher, the Girl Scouts, or the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

**What is the purpose of this study?**
The purpose of this research study is to learn about why women engage in volunteering, how they negotiate constraints to volunteering, and what kind of role volunteering plays in their lives. Participants will be female adult volunteers with the Girl Scouts.

You are being asked to be in the study because you have indicated an interest in participating, and you are a female adult volunteer with the Girl Scouts.

**How many people will take part in this study?**
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 10-20 people in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**
Interviews will last somewhere between 30-60 minutes. Participants who wish to be contacted later for follow-up will be interviewed for an additional 20-30 minutes.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
Participants will be interviewed in a location of their choosing, either in their homes or at a public location such as a coffee shop. The interview is expected to last between 30 and 60 minutes. Participants who wish may be contacted for a follow-up interview that should last between 20 and 30 minutes. During the interview you will be asked questions about your experience as a Girl Scout volunteer, such as "Why do you volunteer?" You may decline to answer any question at any time. All interviews will be audiotaped. The tapes will be destroyed once the data analysis is complete.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. There is little chance you will directly benefit from being in this research study.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved with being in this study?**
Although every effort is made to keep research records private, there is still a small risk that your privacy may be compromised.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
All interviews will be transcribed and stripped of any identifying data. All tapes will be destroyed once the data have been analyzed. Before being transcribed, tapes are kept in a locked cabinet in the principal researcher's home. Only the researchers will have access to these tapes and transcripts. No subjects will be identified in any report or publication about this study.

Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
It will not cost you anything except your time to be in the study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research subject?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

**Subject's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____
Signature of Research Subject Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Subject

_____ _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

_____ I AM interested in being contacted by the researcher for a follow-up interview.
**(Please fill out contact information below).**

_____ I am NOT interested in being contacted by the researcher for a follow-up interview.
**(Please do NOT fill out contact information below).**

**Contact information for follow-up interview:**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

I prefer to be contacted via: _____ Letter _____ Telephone _____Email

## APPENDIX C:
## Appeal Letter to Potential Participants

Linda Oakleaf
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Exercise & Sport Science
CB#: 8605
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3185
919-260-3614
oakleaf@email.unc.edu

Dear Volunteer:

This year, adult female Girl Scout volunteers will have an opportunity to participate in research. The research will expand understanding of volunteering, especially as it relates to women.

I became involved in Girl Scouting as a girl, eventually earning my Gold Award. Since then, I have volunteered with the Girl Scouts off and on as a leader and a trainer. However, I am not currently a volunteer and this research is not being conducted by the Girl Scouts or on the organization's behalf. Both the Girl Scouts of WNCPC and the participants will get a summary of the research.

Participants will be interviewed to learn about their experience of volunteering. The interviews are expected to last between 30-60 minutes. Participants who indicate an interest may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. That interview is expected to last 20-30 minutes. The interviews will be conducted at the location of your choice.

This is your chance to help researchers understand how volunteering affects you, how you fit it into the rest of your life, and why it is you choose to spend your time as a Girl Scout volunteer.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me via the email address or telephone number listed above. We will then arrange an interview at a time and location convenient to you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Linda Oakleaf

## APPENDIX D:
## Participants

| Pseudonym | Years Volunteering | Hours per week* |
|---|---|---|
| Abigail | 4 | 2 |
| Barbara | 11 | 4.25 |
| Claire | 16 | 4 |
| Delia | 7 | 3.5 |
| Esther | 18 | 17.5 |
| Georgia | 15 | 10 |
| Jill | 35 | 7 |
| Madeline | 12 | 11 |
| Norma | 9 | 4 |
| Pearl | 12 | 9.5 |
| Rita | 14 | 4 |
| Stella | 15 | 4 |

Note: Some participants stated that their volunteering averaged between two numbers. For example, Barbara stated that her volunteering averaged between 3 ½ and 5 hours per week, so is listed here as 4.25 hours per week.

## APPENDIX E:
## Original Interview Guide

1. How long have you been volunteering with the Girl Scouts? How did you get into Girl Scout volunteering?
2. How much time do you spend per week on your volunteer work? What tasks does that include?
3. Tell me about your role as a Girl Scout volunteer.
4. How has that role changed over time?
5. Why did you become a volunteer?
6. Why do you continue volunteering?
7. How would you define leisure?
8. What qualities of leisure (if any) do you find in your volunteering?
9. Do you have any children involved in your troop?
    - If yes, how does that affect your experience as a volunteer?
10. In an average week, how much time do you spend doing things related to your Girl Scout volunteering?
11. Tell me about things that make it more difficult to volunteer.
12. How do you overcome those difficulties?
13. What does your volunteer work mean to you?

14. Tell me something you feel people should know about your experience as a Girl Scout volunteer.

## APPENDIX F:
## Final Interview Guide

1. How long have you been volunteering with the Girl Scouts?
2. Tell me about your role as a Girl Scout volunteer.
3. How has that role changed over time?
4. In an average week, how much time do you spend doing things related to your Girl Scout volunteering?
5. Why did you become a volunteer?
6. Why do you continue volunteering?
7. How would you define leisure for yourself?
8. Would you say that volunteering with the Girl Scouts has qualities of leisure for you?
9. Do you have any children involved in your troop?
    - If yes, how does that affect your experience as a volunteer?
10. Tell me about things that make it more difficult to volunteer.
11. How do you overcome those difficulties?
12. Girl Scout volunteers aren't all women, but they're mostly women. How does that affect your experience as a Girl Scout volunteer?
13. Which part of volunteering is the most fun for you? (if they have talked about fun)

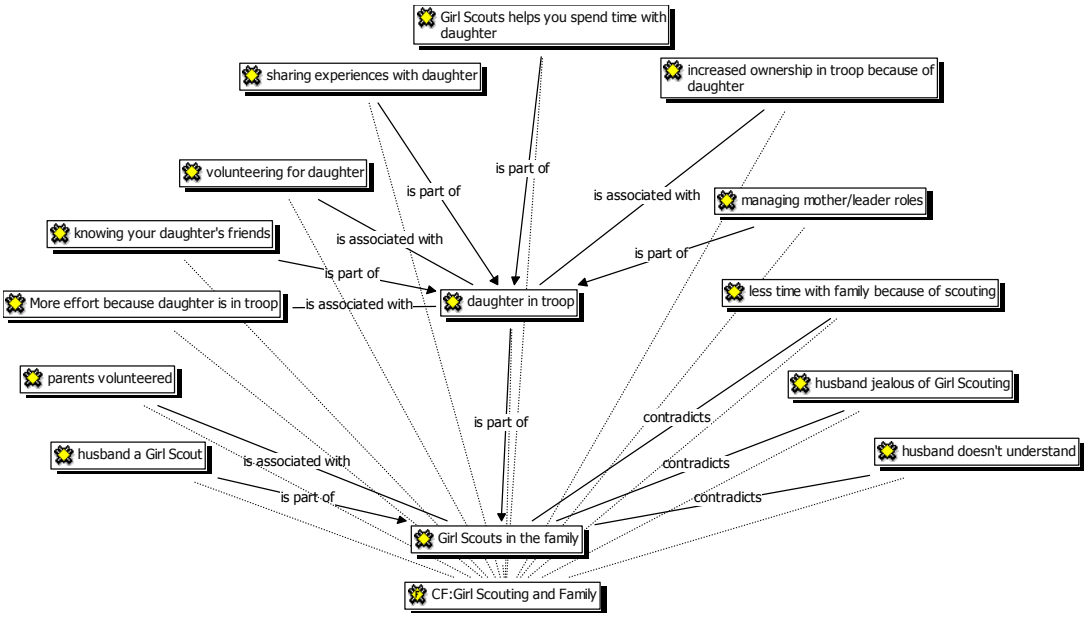
14. What does your volunteering mean to you?

15. Tell me something you feel people should know about your experience as a Girl Scout volunteer.

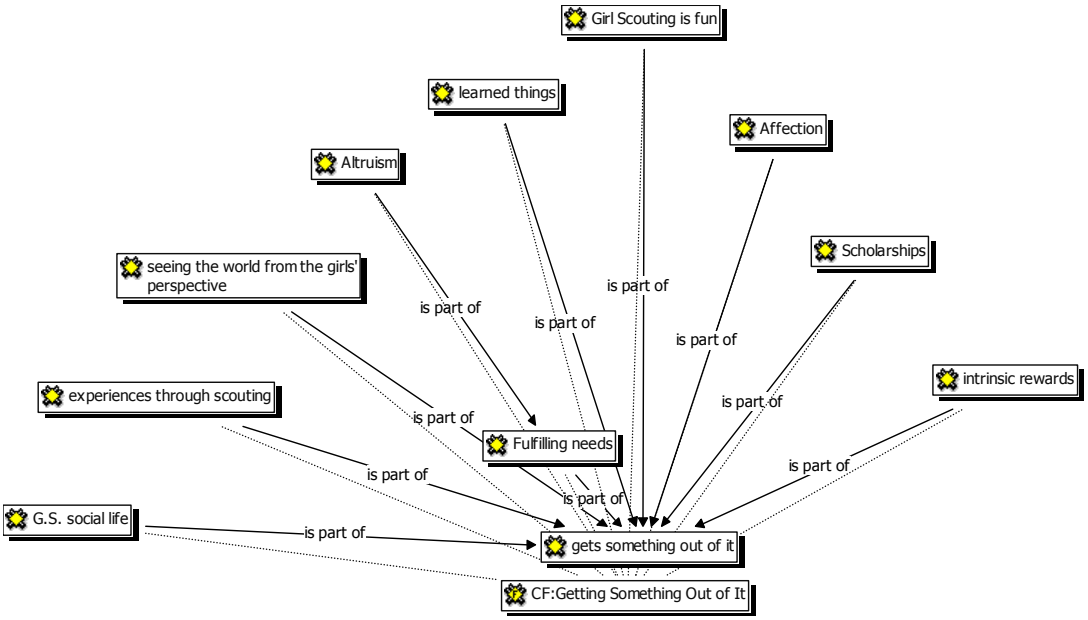
16. Is there anything that you've thought about while we've been talking that you would like to add?

**APPENDIX G:**
**Network Views (from Atlas.ti)**

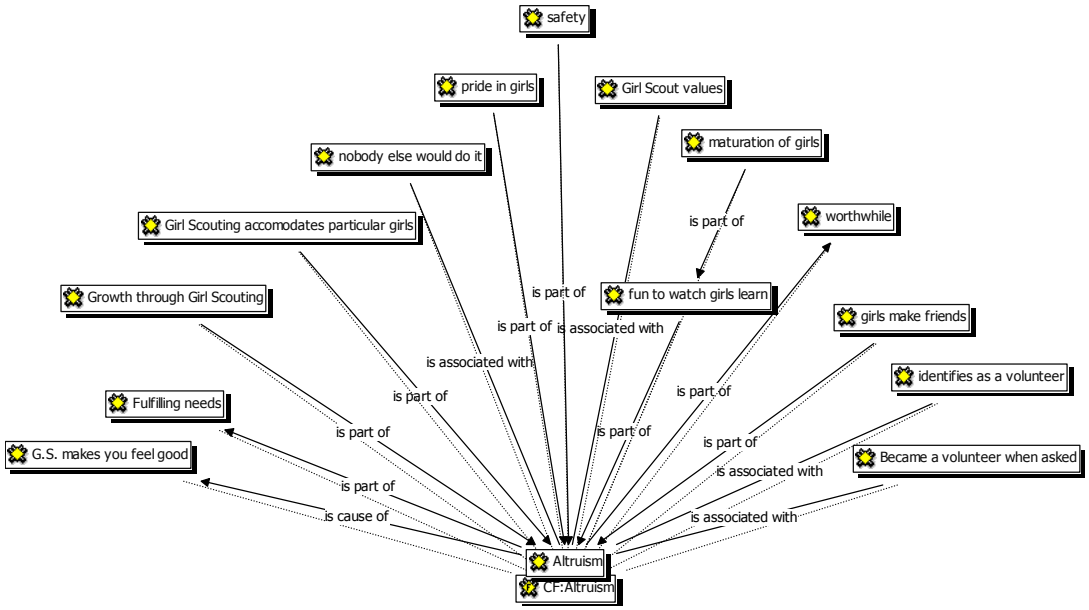
**GIRL SCOUTING AND THE FAMILY**



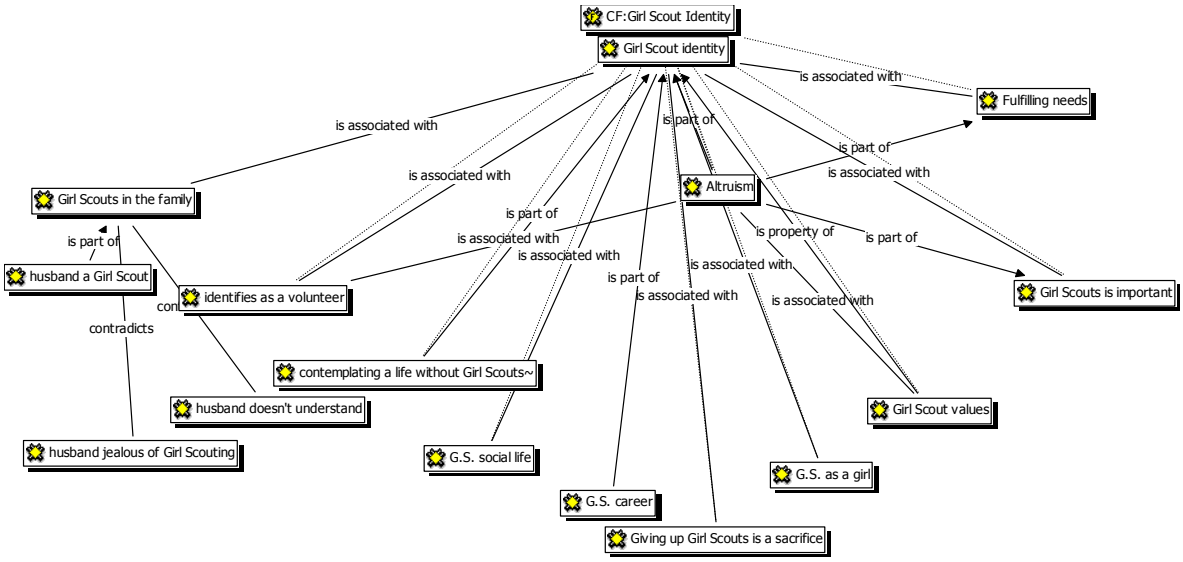
# BENEFITS


Girl Scouting is fun
learned things
Affection
Altruism
Scholarships
seeing the world from the girls' perspective
is part of
is part of
is part of
is part of
intrinsic rewards
experiences through scouting
is part of
is part of
Fulfilling needs
is part of
is part of
G.S. social life
is part of
gets something out of it
CF:Getting Something Out of It

# ALTRUISM


safety
pride in girls
Girl Scout values
maturation of girls
nobody else would do it
worthwhile
Girl Scouting accomodates particular girls
is part of
Growth through Girl Scouting
fun to watch girls learn
girls make friends
is part of
is associated with
is part of
is associated with
identifies as a volunteer
Fulfilling needs
is part of
is part of
is part of
is part of
G.S. makes you feel good
is part of
is associated with
Became a volunteer when asked
is cause of
is associated with
Altruism
CF:Altruism

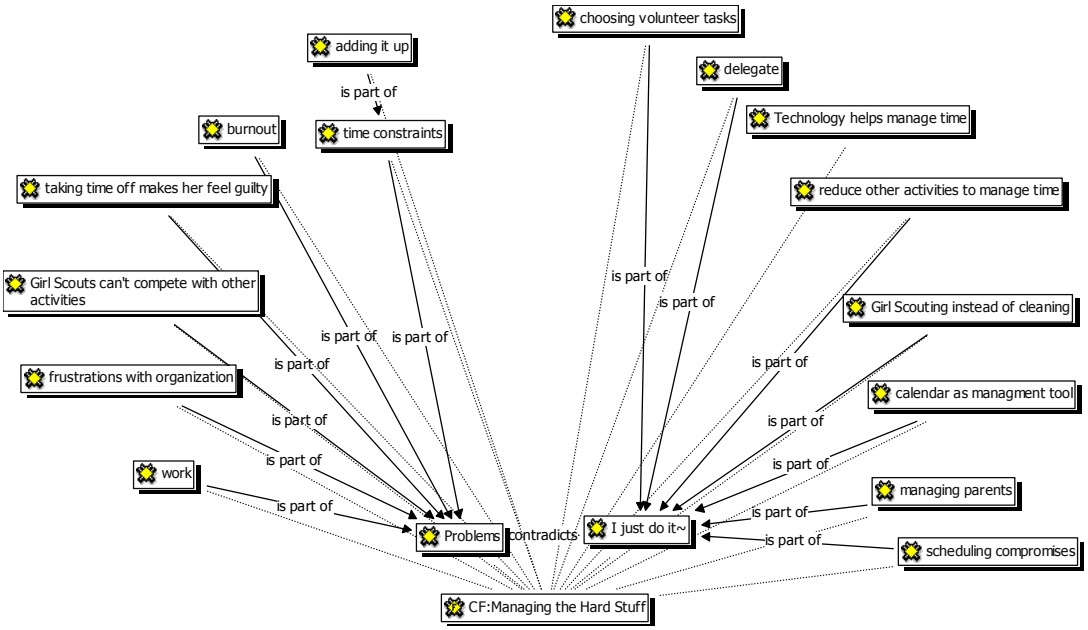
# GIRL SCOUT IDENTITY



# HAVING FUN

Girl Scouting is not leisure
leisure is freedom from responsibility
leisure is activities
Not much leisure time
relaxing with other leaders
contradicts
contradicts
is part of
leisure is relaxing
leisure is learning
contradicts
is part of
contradicts
is part of
laugh when asked about leisure
contradicts
Girl Scouting has qualities of leisure
CF:Leisure

# CONSTRAINTS



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