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Religiosity, Parental Support, and Formal Volunteering Among Teenagers

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Sociology

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by

Isaac Paintsil

May 2019

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Dr. Joseph Baker, Chair

Dr. Paul Kalmonick

Dr. Leslie McCallister

Key Words: Formal Volunteering, Individual Religiosity, Collective Religiosity, Parental Support (encouragement, and formal volunteering).

## ABSTRACT

### Religiosity, Parental Support, and Formal Volunteering Among Teenagers

by

Isaac Paintsil

Few countries can boast of having the culture of formal volunteering seen in the United States. In explaining this phenomenon, many empirical studies have found religiosity significant in predicting behaviors among young adults, adults, and the elderly. However, teens (13 – 17 years) have not attracted much attention from researchers, though they possess the time and resources most needed to volunteer. Using data from the National Study on Youth and Religion (NSYR) Wave 1, this study examines the relationship between formal volunteering and teens' individual (religious salience and religious experience) and collective religiosity (religious tradition, church attendance, and religious youth group participation). Parental variables and teen demographics are also tested using a three-stage ordinal logistic regression. Regarding individual religiosity, the results suggested a significant relationship between teens' religious experiences and formal volunteering. In addition, parents can induce formal volunteering by encouraging their teens to volunteer and participate in religious youth groups.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my sister, Sandra Ayivor, who set me off on this journey, and to

Don and Patti Coble

Haley and Kelly Wherry

and

Daryl and Jan Summerford.

Thanks for all the love and support.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Volunteering has become a generic term used for many types of helpful activities. It is therefore pertinent to clearly define what one calls volunteering to avoid erroneous interpretations. Volunteer work can be formal or informal (Wilson and Musick 1997). Formal volunteering refers to the unpaid time that an individual contributes to charitable activities of an organization, while informal volunteering refers to help, or assistance given directly to an individual: not through a formal organization and not to household members (Reed and Selbee 2001). Though different, these two types of volunteering are complements rather than substitutes (Taniguchi 2012).

#### *Benefits of Formal Volunteering*

Formal volunteering is a core value of American culture and for decades there has been a conscious effort to institute it in schools because people who volunteered while in school are more likely to volunteer after school (Haski-Leventhal et al. 2008, Malin, Han, and Liauw 2017). In addition, formal volunteering is associated with positive outcomes in volunteers (teen and adult), beneficiaries of formal volunteering (organization and people), and the broader society (community and economy) (Casiday et al. 2008; Wilson 2012).

#### *Benefits to Individuals*

“While no one wonders why someone may assume gainful employment, many ask why one would volunteer” (Haski-Leventhal et al. 2008, p. 11). Though formal volunteering is often done with noble intentions, there is a pearl of common wisdom that the giver also benefits from the act. Researchers have noted that formal volunteering has a positive impact on health (both

physical and mental), socioeconomic status, and personal development of the volunteer (Wilson 2012).

*Health.* Though Fujiwara and Kawachi (2008) found no association between formal volunteering and depression, most studies have suggested that volunteers reported fewer depression symptoms (Hong and Morrow-Howell 2010). Brown et al.'s (2008) study on spousal loss found that bereaved individuals who engaged in formal volunteering experienced a faster decline in depression than those who did not. The association between mental health and formal volunteering has been reported to be stronger in volunteering for religious causes and among elderly people (Musick and Wilson 2003). The evidence indicates that formal volunteering increases one's sense of purpose and networks created help individuals deal better with stress. It increases life satisfaction and self-esteem of volunteers and the larger number of friends they make reduces the likelihood that they will be alone in times of difficulty, especially after retirement (Meier and Stutzer 2008). Compared to mental health, the relationship between volunteering and physical health has not received much attention from researchers. While Burr, Tavares, and Mutchler (2011) found that frequent volunteers were less likely to be hypertensive, Jenkinson et al. (2013) reported that it had no relation to physical health. A longitudinal study by Brown, Consedine, and Magai (2005) reported that individuals who reported volunteering had lower rates of mortality five years later than those who did not. In addition, Jenkinson et al. (2013) found a lower risk of mortality (risk ratio: .78; 95% CI: .66, .90) among volunteers after a meta-analysis of five cohort studies.

Though positive health benefits are associated with volunteering, it is difficult to suggest causation. A study by Borgonovi (2008) reported that after considering reverse causation (the fact that healthy people may be more likely to volunteer) the positive association between

volunteering and happiness was causal, but the association between volunteering and health was not.

*Socio-Economic.* The literature on the benefit of volunteering on socioeconomic status is not conclusive. In the United States, it is believed that volunteering can increase one's chances of getting into college and employment (Wilson 2012). This belief could be one of the influences in volunteering among high school and college students. Govekar and Govekar (2008) reported that through formal volunteering, some volunteers gain training and qualifications they can use in later employment. Formal volunteering increases social networks and human capital, both of which are important in gaining employment, but there are not many empirical studies that link the two (Wilson 2012). An online survey of two hundred and sixty-five unemployed people between the ages of 21-29 reported a positive relationship between formal volunteering and reemployment, as well as the length of unemployment after six months (Konstam et al. 2015). In addition, Hackl, Halla, and Pruckner (2007) found positive wage effects of formal volunteering in Australia. However, a study in Britain reported that formal volunteering has a weak link with employability outcomes (employment, job retention, and progression). Formal volunteering assisted employment for only older people and only when done once a month (Paine, McKay, and Moro 2013).

### *Benefits to Society*

*Economic.* Sports tournaments such as the World Cup and Olympics, among others, rely heavily on volunteers to provide various services to participant and fans. In the United States, volunteers have become increasingly important due to the continual cutbacks in public expenditure by successive governments. Without volunteers, many social services and programs

would not be able to function properly because they cannot afford the labor force they need to operate effectively (Hotchkiss, Fottler, and Unruh 2008).

In a study across 37 countries, the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies (2011) reported that 140 million people volunteered yearly, occupying 20.8 million full-time jobs and contributing \$400 billion to the global economy. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2010), 63 million Americans volunteered in 2017, to a total of 7.8 billion hours. Based on the Independent Sector's (2018) estimated national value of each volunteer hour (\$24.69), the value of formal volunteering services is pegged at almost \$193 billion (1% of GDP). Voluntary organizations are key players in the American economy and have been referred to as the third sector, after the state and the private sector (Anheier and Seibel 2013). Their role in employment and providing services has greatly reduced the government's burden of ensuring the welfare of the populace. In addition, non-profit organizations help individuals gain training and skills needed to succeed in the labor market (Wu 2011).

*Community cohesion.* As impressive as these figures are, they are an underestimation of the importance of formal volunteering because of the many intangible benefits it has on the society. In his work about the dwindling civic engagement in the United States, Putnam (2000) referred to formal volunteering as “the most promising sign of any that I have discovered that American might be on the cusp of a new period of civic renewal.” Using the definition of Adler and Goggin (2005), civic engagement involves the many ways “an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future” (p. 241). So close is the relationship between the two variables that they are often conflated, though civic engagement is broader (Martinez et al. 2011). In a survey of youth, The Corporation for National and Community Services reported that volunteers were more likely

to be engaged in political discussions and believe they can make a positive change in their communities. In addition, about 80% of Ameri Corps alumni reported increased confidence in working with both local and state authorities in improving their communities compared to those who registered but did not join. Moreover, these volunteers had more civic obligations and hence were more likely to vote and be part of a jury (Spring, Dietz, and Grimm 2006). Overall, young people who volunteer are not only more likely to engage in civic duties but also maintain participation in later life (Wu 2011).

Strong, safe and cohesive communities are necessary for nation building. Volunteering more than sports increases social bonds by bringing together people from different demographic backgrounds for community development. Community members strengthen their social networks through such activities, increasing social trust and a sense of solidarity and reciprocity in the community (Wu 2011). Putnam (2000) reported a negative correlation between crime and people with membership in volunteering organization. The more volunteers in a community, the safer it is because they are more likely to form groups like “Watchdogs” and engage in activities that deter crime.

### *Formal Volunteering Trends*

Formal Volunteering has a storied history in the United States, but over the decade there have been new forms of volunteering that have come up.

Industrialization with its specialization and division of labor is accompanied by different forms of volunteering. One of these growing phenomena is episodic volunteering. Unlike the older-style of formal volunteering where people contributed high amounts of time and committed to a cause or organization, this new trend involves fewer amounts of time and little commitment

(Holmes 2014). An example is micro-volunteering which provides tasks that can be done anywhere, anytime and on the volunteer's own terms without registration and long training sessions (Jochum and Paylor 2013). Volunteer's preference for episodic volunteering was noticed by (Taylor, Malinson, and Bloch 2008, p. 407) in a study held at an animal shelter. Volunteers who signed up at the shelter insisted on volunteering for specific tasks and within specific time schedules with the flexibility to cancel and reschedule. It gives busy people the flexibility and comfort to volunteer without open-ended time commitments. Data from interviews with both episodic volunteers in the tourism industry supported this assertion (Holmes 2014). Though passionate about the activities they partake in, episodic volunteers had different motives from regular volunteers. The common theme for such people was that "it fits in with my lifestyle."

Globalization has made the world smaller and connected, leading to an increase in international volunteering. Unlike other forms of volunteering, volunteers must bear some financial costs to volunteer internationally. An analysis on the 2005 U.S. Current Population Survey showed that Whites, men, young people and people who do not have full time jobs are more likely to volunteer internationally (McBride and Lough 2010). Moreover, a study by Lough (2013) from 2004 – 2014 supported the above findings. Young people were followed by those aged 45 to 54 years in volunteering frequently. Household income was instrumental in international volunteering, with about 30% of volunteers living in households earning incomes of \$100,000 or more. Most of these volunteers volunteered through religious organization There are currently many non-profits, especially faith-based organizations, that recruit college students annually to volunteer abroad in countries hit by floods and other disasters (Smith et al. 2013).



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study seeks to examine how parental modeling, religiosity and other demographic variables influence formal volunteering among teens.

#### *Parental Modeling*

The literature on parental modeling focuses on two ways that parents influence formal volunteering behaviors in teens: parental encouragement, and parental reinforcement (parents' volunteering and providing opportunities to volunteer).

#### *Parental Encouragement*

The social learning theory (Bandura and Walters 1963) is critical in mapping the relationship between parents and teens' formal volunteering. The theory postulates that learning is a cognitive process that occurs purely through the observation of the behavior of others. Bandura suggested that the use of verbal reasoning and observational learning are pertinent in shaping the behaviors of children. The family is the first and primary agent of socialization in every society and, therefore, is expected to teach, encourage and expose teens to the values that society holds dear (Hardy, Carlo, and Roesch 2010). Other studies found that induction (positive reasoning and explanations) in parent-child interactions, such as "...other family members like you better when you share things with them," develop behaviors necessary for later engagement in formal volunteering (Carlo et al. 2007). Parents making time to have such conversations with their children on such prosocial behaviors increase the likelihood of internalizing the values that promote volunteering. However, other studies attribute parental warmth as a moderator in the relationship between induction and teens' formal volunteering (Hardy et al. 2010). Parental

warmth enhances the parent-child bond, hence an attempt to talk children into volunteering is more likely to be successful if the bond is strong.

Wilson (2000) reported that teens are more likely to engage in volunteering when parents help them have a positive outlook on such behaviors. By attaching rewards to helpful behaviors, parents consciously or unconsciously encourage and reinforce volunteering attitudes and behaviors (Bower and Casas 2016). This does not suggest that all rewards lead to an increase in children's appetite to volunteer. Although social rewards (i.e., expressions of gratitude, love, and affection, or positive attributions that focus on children's competence in performing prosocial behaviors) are significant in reinforcing helpful behaviors and values in children, material rewards are not (Carlo et al. 2018). Research indicates that using material rewards to reinforce helpful behaviors and attitudes is likely to decrease teen volunteering. Irrespective of the values and attitudes the material reward is meant to reinforce, it is followed by a shift from internal attributions essential for volunteering to a focus on the external reward (Carlo et al. 2018; Eisenberg and Valiente 2002). In other words, children may not see themselves as helpful individuals but attribute the motivation of their helpful behavior to the reward they are getting. In the absence of such material rewards, such children were less likely to help (Fiorello 2011).

### *Parents' Volunteering*

Notwithstanding the role of words in shaping teens' behavior, the adage "Action speaks louder than words" stands tall. From hobbies to careers, there are enough empirical studies to support the claim that children do what they see their parents do (Hughes and Devine 2019; Stritch and Christensen 2016). Another way parents model teens' formal volunteering is engaging in volunteering themselves because it reinforces a positive perception of such behaviors in their children. Consequently, adolescents whose parents volunteer were reported to

be 12% more likely to volunteer and 10% more likely to volunteer frequently (Gibson 2008). In addition, Gonzalez (2010) suggested that parents' volunteering had a positive relationship with adolescents' formal volunteering. The author used a nationally representative dataset from the National Study on Youth and Religion (NSYR) at baseline and three years after to analyze the impact of parents' formal and informal volunteering on adolescents' formal and informal volunteering. The author's analysis of six hierarchical models showed that though diminishing from baseline, parents' formal and informal volunteering had a significant relationship with teens' volunteering and according to Perks and Konecny (2015), this positive effect continues well into adulthood. The consensus seems to be that people who live with parents who volunteer are more likely to volunteer (Nesbit 2013).

Interestingly, Stritch and Christensen's (2016) findings suggested that a mother's formal volunteering behavior had a stronger influence on teens' formal volunteering. After examining data collected from first-year undergraduate students at a public university in the USA, Stritch and Christensen (2016) reported that when male and female students were modeled together, only mothers' volunteering had a significant and positive relationship with students' frequency of volunteering. When they separated the sexes, both parents volunteering had a positive relationship with volunteering in male students, but only mother's volunteering was significantly and positively related to the frequency of volunteering among female students. Conversely, a study by Roerig (2014) on the influence of maternal behaviors on children's prosocial behavior found no relationship between mother's volunteering and children's volunteering and surprisingly a negative relationship between mother's philanthropy and prosocial behaviors in children. This is an area in the literature that needs more investigation.

### *Providing Opportunities*

Teens, no matter how sincere their desire to help others, may not be able to if parents do not give their consent and provide the means to volunteer. Schools and churches are the two organizations within which most teens have their first formal volunteer experience. In the United States, many high school students are required to volunteer several hours before graduating and churches recruit mostly teens in clean-up exercises in communities (Cloyd 2017; Donihoo 2017). Without downplaying the relevance of these organizations, it is necessary to note that parents are the ones who enroll their children in such organizations in the first place. If parents do not attend church or do not attend services with their children, it may be difficult for the church to recruit their children. In addition, a study by Hill and Den Dulk (2013) showed that the type of school children attend is a predictor of volunteering. In their analysis from wave 1 and wave 3 of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), teens who attended Protestant high schools significantly out-volunteer their peers from other schools (Catholic, secular, public, and home schools) and were five times more likely to volunteer than those in public schools. Moreover, parents are responsible for transporting their children to places where they volunteer and picking them up. If parents do not have the resources (time, car and money) to do this, children will not be able to volunteer. However, these dynamics need more empirical investigation.

## *Religiosity*

Religiosity is a multifaceted phenomenon. The sociological study of religion was given a new focus when Stark and Glock (1968) postulated five areas in which religiosity is confined: belief, practice, experience, consequences, and knowledge. Van Tienen et al. (2011) remodeled these five areas into individual religiosity and collective religiosity. Religiosity in the current study will focus on these two dimensions. Collective religiosity involves the traits of religiosity practiced in the public eye and often requires involvement in a religious community. These include religious affiliation/ membership and attendance. Individual religiosity, however, is private and can be manifested in the absence of a religious community. It includes private prayer, beliefs, and supernatural experiences.

### *Collective Religiosity*

The statistical relation between collective religiosity and volunteering has mostly been positive (Andreoni and Payne 2013; Bekkers and Schuyt 2008; Van Tienen et al. 2011). Earlier researchers focused mainly on religious attendance, overlooking the importance of other religious variables in influencing volunteering (Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis 1993; Park and Smith 2000; Wuthnow 1991). However, studies over the recent decade have continually investigated how denominations (Bekkers and Schuyt 2008; Driskell, Lyon, and Embry 2008; Van Elk, Rutjens, and Van Harreveld 2017), church groups and distinct religious beliefs (Atkinson and Bourrat 2011) influence volunteering. How the literature associates these variables with volunteering is discussed below.

*Religious Attendance.* There is no conflict in the literature on the impact of religious attendance on volunteering. Both cross-sectional (Andreoni and Payne 2013; Merino 2013;

Yeung 2017) and longitudinal studies (Johnston 2013; Kim and Jang 2017; Meißner and Traunmüller 2010) show a positive relationship between religious attendance and volunteering, as do studies on both adults and teens (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011; Gibson 2008). The following reasons are provided in support.

Church attendance offers one of the most important determinants of volunteering: being asked to volunteer (Merino 2013). Individuals who attend church services are more likely to be asked to volunteer than non-church attendees (Paik and Navarre-Jackson 2011). This is because helping one's neighbor is a value enshrined in many teachings in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scriptures. Volunteering, therefore, more than other pro-social behaviors provides a ready and inexpensive opportunity for religious people to realize this moral value (Donihoo 2017). Furthermore, churches announce volunteer opportunities and recruit members because it relies heavily on volunteers in the running of its ministries and its ability to make spiritual and social changes in the congregation, community, and the world (Donihoo 2017; Yamasaki 2015). A 16-year panel study by Johnston (2013) showed that an increase in church attendance over an individual's life course is associated with an increase in involvement in formal religious volunteering, and this involvement makes it more likely that the volunteer will move into formal secular volunteering. In addition, a youth survey reported that 64% of youth who volunteer attended church regularly- generally defined as once a week (Spring et al. 2006).

Formation of a religious network that can foster helpful behaviors either through encouragement or coercion. After analyzing data from the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS), Lewis, MacGregor, and Putnam (2013) reported that having a strong network of religious friends accounted for 50% of the effect of religious attendance on formal volunteering. In addition, Chambré's (2010) analysis of empirical data from the Independent Sector and

Americans' Changing Lives reported that formal and informal social interaction was a key mediator in the relationship between church attendance and formal volunteering.

*Religious Affiliation.* Another area of collective religiosity linked to volunteerism is religious affiliation or tradition. Steensland et al. (2000) in their study of American religion, were the first to formulate the classification system for respondents who had a religious affiliation used in this study. The six groups were Catholic, Black, Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Jewish, and Other. Paxton et al. (2014) found that the impact of religious attendance on formal volunteering, though positive, was not equal across religious traditions. The distinct beliefs and practices of religious traditions determined levels of formal volunteering among religious people.

Hill and Den Dulk (2013) on formal volunteering found that teens who attended Protestant high schools significantly out-volunteer their peers from Catholic, secular, and home schools. Mainline Protestants have been reported to volunteer more than Catholics (Arrunada 2010; Bekkers and Schuyt 2008; Bekkers and Wiepking 2011). This could be because historically Catholic leaders saw volunteering as a threat to their authority and therefore discouraged it (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994; Uslaner 2002). However, Catholics are reported to be more likely to formally volunteer than evangelical Protestants (Driskell et al. 2008; Prouteau and Sardinha 2015). Evangelicals tend to volunteer more within the church than outside the church (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006). The activities they engage in within their community are mostly those directly related to evangelism.

Another area of religiosity research has overlooked is the relationship between contextual religiosity and formal volunteering. Focusing on religious affiliation, both Lam (2006) and Woodberry (2012) showed that the number of Protestants in a country or region has a positive

impact on volunteering. Ruiter and De Graaf (2006) reported in a study across 53 countries that religious context measured by average church attendance in a country has a positive impact on volunteering among both religious and non-religious people. The researchers suggested that due to social interactions with religious people, non-religious people in a religious context are more likely to volunteer than non-religious people in a non-religious environment. Though the findings suggest a relationship between contextual religiosity and volunteering among non-religious people through a network spillover hypothesis, this notion has been controversial (Lim and MacGregor 2012).

Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, and Pelzer (2010), in a methodological comment on Ruiter and De Graaf's study, suggested that the significant and positive effect realized hinged on unusually high religious attendance and volunteering rates in three African countries: Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. In response to this criticism, Ruiter and De Graaf (2010) replicated their earlier study with a new data set and a more rigorous method for dropping cases. After dropping 23 influential cases among all 96 country-wave combinations, results supported the earlier findings.

Nevertheless, Lim and MacGregor (2012) found conflicting results in a study on the network spillover effect of religion on volunteering suggested by Ruiter and De Graaf (2006). The researchers used three different data sets to test this hypothesis on national, community and personal religious context. On the national level, results showed a strong curvilinear relationship which led Lim and MacGregor (2012) to suggest that national religious culture, rather than the network spillover effect, is responsible for the relationship between national context and volunteering. On the community level, they found that average church attendance was either unrelated or negatively related to volunteering depending on an individuals' level of attendance.



Conversely, the relationship between religious intimate social networks and volunteering supported the spillover hypothesis. MacGregor's analysis of Faith Matters; a nationwide panel study conducted between 2006 and 2011, showed that people who rarely or never attended religious services are more likely to volunteer if they have religious friends.

### *Individual Religiosity*

Some researchers have ascribed the reduction in formal volunteering rates to a decrease in religious volunteering, which has in turn been attributed to a decline in church attendance in the United States (Chambré 2010; Doniho et al. 2016). It is however interesting to note that church attendance has reduced at a faster pace than formal volunteering and specifically, the reduction in religious volunteering. This pattern suggests that that a decline in collective religiosity (mainly church attendance) does not directly translate to a decline in formal volunteering (Van Ingen 2008; Van Tienen et al. 2011). Though people may not attend religious services, it does not necessarily mean that they have abandoned other religious practices and beliefs which are instrumental for formal volunteering (Van Tienen et al. (2011). However, researchers have not paid much attention to how such individual aspects of religiosity can influence formal volunteering (Van Tienen et al. 2011). In addition, the studies that exist have contradictory findings. While Paxton et al. (2014) reported that individual religiosity (mostly prayer) influenced formal volunteering, Van Tienen et al. (2011) did not find any significant effect.

Although religious organizations remain the primary organization through which most people volunteer, annual data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows a gradual reduction in religious volunteering from 36% in 2007 to 33% in 2015. Interestingly, the logical assertion that

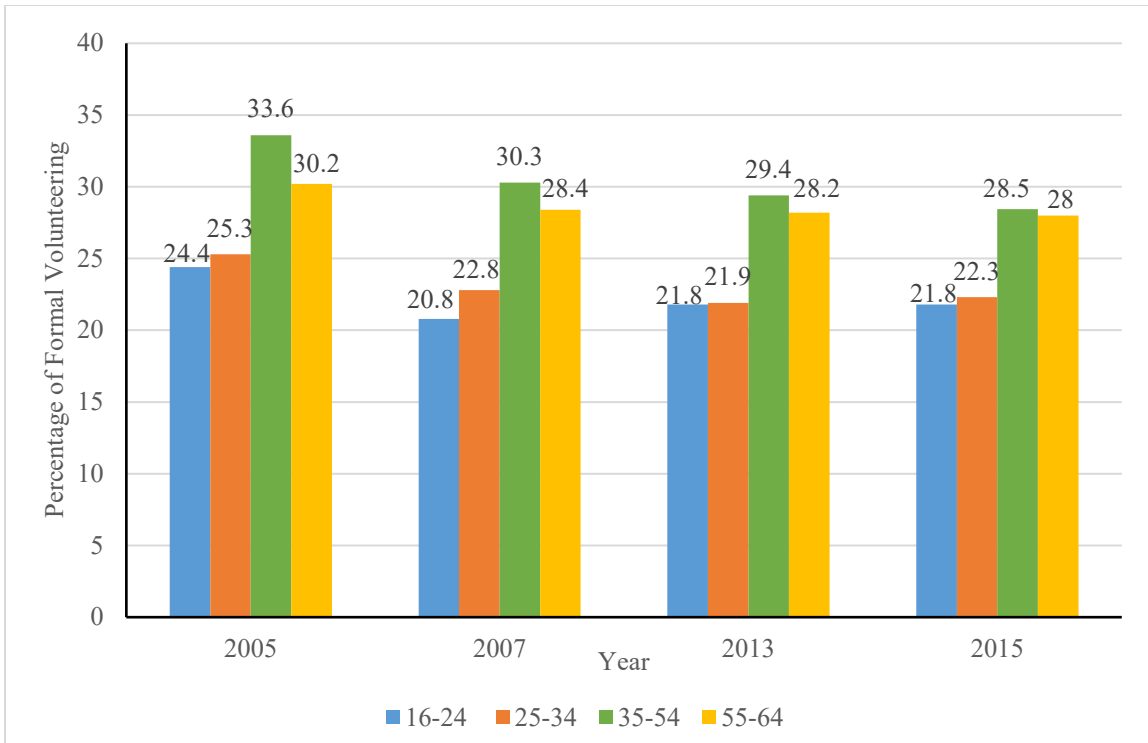
these volunteers may have moved to other areas is not supported, as volunteering for educational purposes and community work has remained steady at 26% and 13% respectively.

### *Demographics*

Formal volunteering has also been found to be associated with age, gender, race, income, and education (Musick et al. 2000; Wilson 2012).

#### *Age*

Omoto, Snyder, and Martino (2000) found a curvilinear relationship between age and formal volunteering; teenagers and younger adults volunteer more as they age, it stabilizes in adulthood, and falls as people grow older (Figure 1). Wilson (2012) explained these dynamics by using the life course perspective, which assumes that behavior, though rooted in the past, changes with a level of predictability across an individual's life course. The author postulated that early life stage volunteering is influenced by the family of origin, schools and mandatory volunteering. Midlife volunteering starts when individuals settle into adult roles (steady jobs, marriage, and parenting) and is based on the relation between work and family responsibilities, while later life volunteering is influenced by gerontologist advice and an increase in free time after retirement.

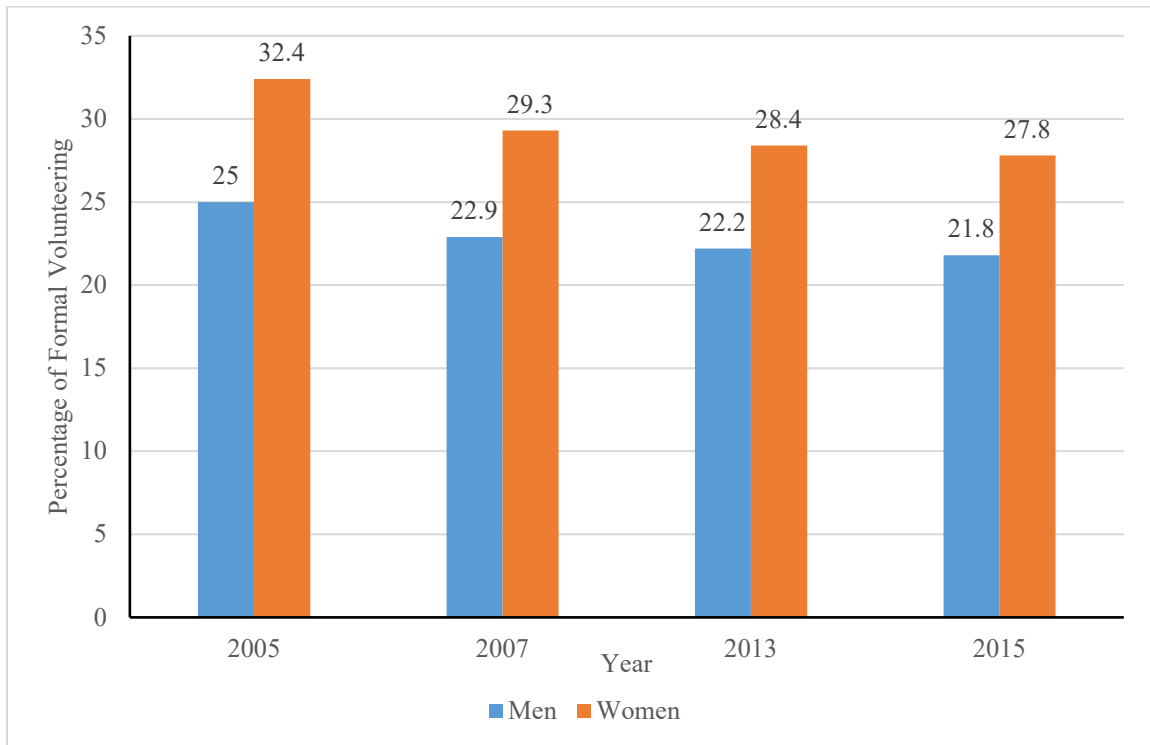


**Figure 1: Formal Volunteering Rates in the United States by Age groups**  
 Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, volunteering in the United States news release 2006, 2008, 2014, 2016

### Sex

The relation of gender to formal volunteering varies across countries, but in the United States, females volunteer more than males and are more likely to use it as a substitute career (Gibson 2008; Gonzalez 2010). Moreover, studies on 8th to 12th graders found females more likely to formally volunteer compared to their male schoolmates (Child Trends Databank 2018). The most recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) found that 27.8% of women volunteered during the previous year, as opposed to 21.8% of men (Figure 2). This remained true across categories of age, race, education, marital status, parental status, or employment status. However, males who did volunteer were on average spending slightly more time volunteering than women (52 vs 50 median hours). The sexual division of labor is evident in volunteer activities men and women engage in. Men were more likely to engage in general labor

(12.3%) and sports (9.3%) while a female volunteer was most likely to collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food (12.9%) and teach (10.6%) (BLS 2015).



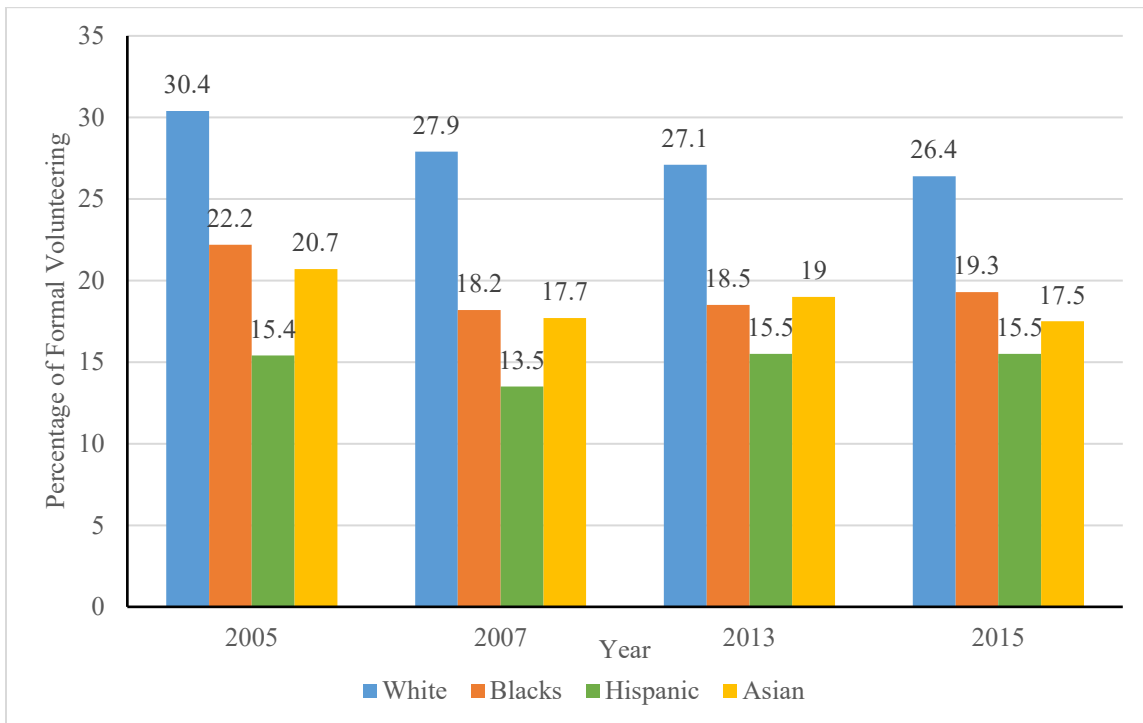
**Figure 2: Formal Volunteering Rates in the United States by Sex**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, volunteering in the United States news release 2006, 2008, 2014, 2016

### *Race*

Though Taniguchi (2012) found no net race effect on volunteering, most US studies reported that Whites volunteer more than Blacks, with Hispanics and Asians less likely to volunteer than either group (Foster-Bey 2008; Musick, Wilson, and Bynum Jr. 2000; Wilson 2012). See Figure 3 for details. Musick et al.'s (2000) study found Blacks as more likely to help friends and neighbors (informal volunteering) and more likely to volunteer in religious organizations. The authors pointed to class differences, in terms of income and education as responsible for the difference in formal volunteering between Whites and minorities.

Gonzalez (2010) gave a more nuanced depiction of the association between race and volunteering when he reported that Asians and Whites were more likely to volunteer formally than Black and Latino adolescents, who in turn were more likely to volunteer informally than Whites and Asian adolescents. In addition, Hispanics in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade were found to be less likely to volunteer than Blacks and Whites (Child Trends Databank 2018). Rotolo and Wilson’s (2011) study on volunteering across the 50 states finds race heterogeneity to be negatively related to volunteering. In other words, as racial diversity increases, volunteering decreases. States with high race homogeneity (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Iowa) reported the highest volunteer rates, while the most heterogeneous states (Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Maryland, and New York) were among those with the lowest rate. Homogeneous societies have a high level of social trust and a shared responsibility which positively influences volunteering, especially informal volunteer



**Figure 3: Formal Volunteering Rates in the United States by Race**

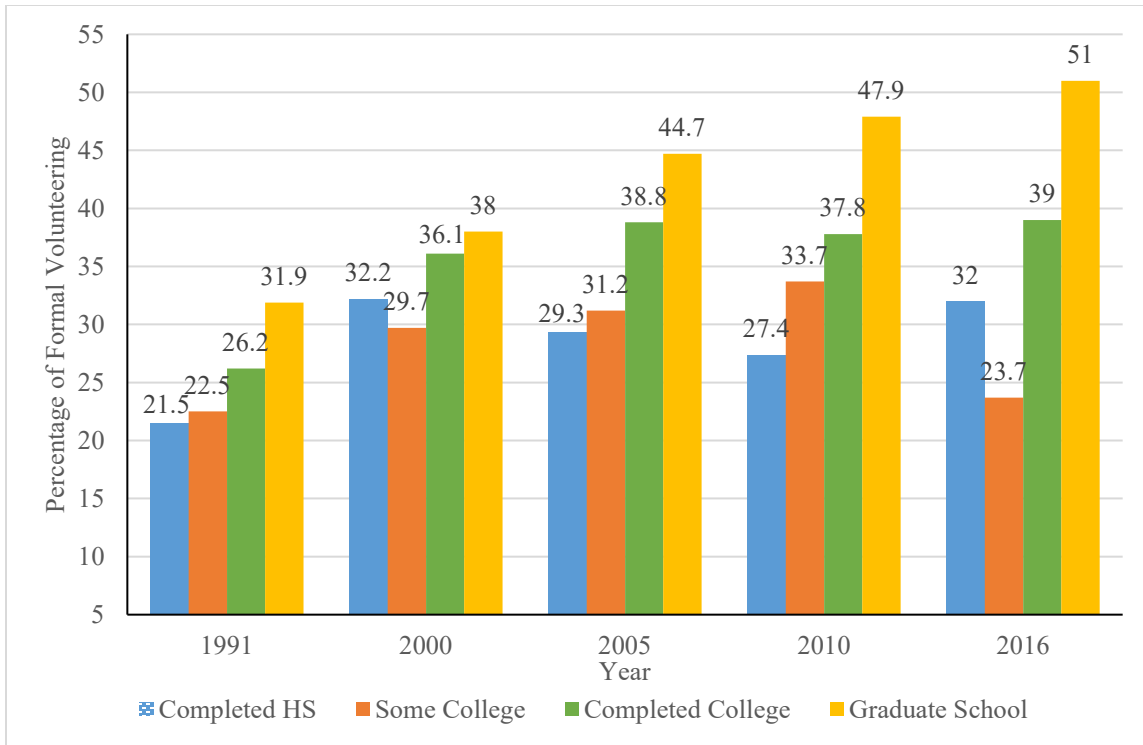
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, volunteering in the United States news release 2006, 2008, 2014, 2016

### *Socio-Economic Status*

Though volunteering is concerned with giving up time without pay, most researchers suggest that a higher socioeconomic status, which is often measured by looking at an individual's education level, income and occupation, is related to high levels of formal volunteering (Wilson 2012). This relationship is influenced by the increase in leisure time, social capital and awareness of volunteer opportunities that a higher socioeconomic status affords (Eubanks 2008, Musick et al. 2000; Moore, Warta, and Erichsen 2014; Paik and Navarre-Jackson, 2011; Taniguchi 2012).

Lee and Brudney (2009) found, however, that the relationship was hyperbolic as middle-income people volunteered the most. Education increases the likelihood of joining an organization because of the presence of many social groups on campuses. It has almost become a norm for social groups on college campuses to engage in formal volunteering at least once and some universities require Greek organizations to volunteer to maintain their charter (Moore et al. 2014). Almost 90% of Americans who volunteered in 2015 had at least a high school education and 42% of them had a bachelor's degree and higher (BLS 2016). The impact of education on formal volunteering is however not uniform across social groups as most studies assumed (Wilson 2012). By comparing the social origins of college-educated individuals, Brand (2010) found that underprivileged graduates, who had a lower propensity to graduate, volunteered more than college graduates from a higher social class. In contrast, a study by Rotolo and Wilson (2011) reported that though individual education was positively related to secular volunteering, the education level in an area reduces religious volunteering without increasing secular volunteering education.

The positive relationship between individual's education and formal volunteering is replicated in studies relating parents' education to teens' formal volunteering. Twelfth grade students are more likely to formally volunteer if parents have a college education (Gibson 2008). See Figure 4 for details. For example, in 2014, 19% of eighth-grade students with both parents having less than a high school education volunteered at least once a month, compared with 38% of eighth-grade students with both parents having a graduate degree (Child Trends Databank 2018). In addition, Gonzalez (2010) reported that adolescents from families with higher incomes and more parental education were more likely to volunteer formally, while those whose parents had lower income and less education volunteered informally. However, Gibson (2008) found no relationship between parents' education and informal volunteering and Zaff et al. (2008) reported that it was significant for Black males and White females, but not Black females and White males. In general, teens from families with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to formally volunteer (Planty and Regnier 2003).



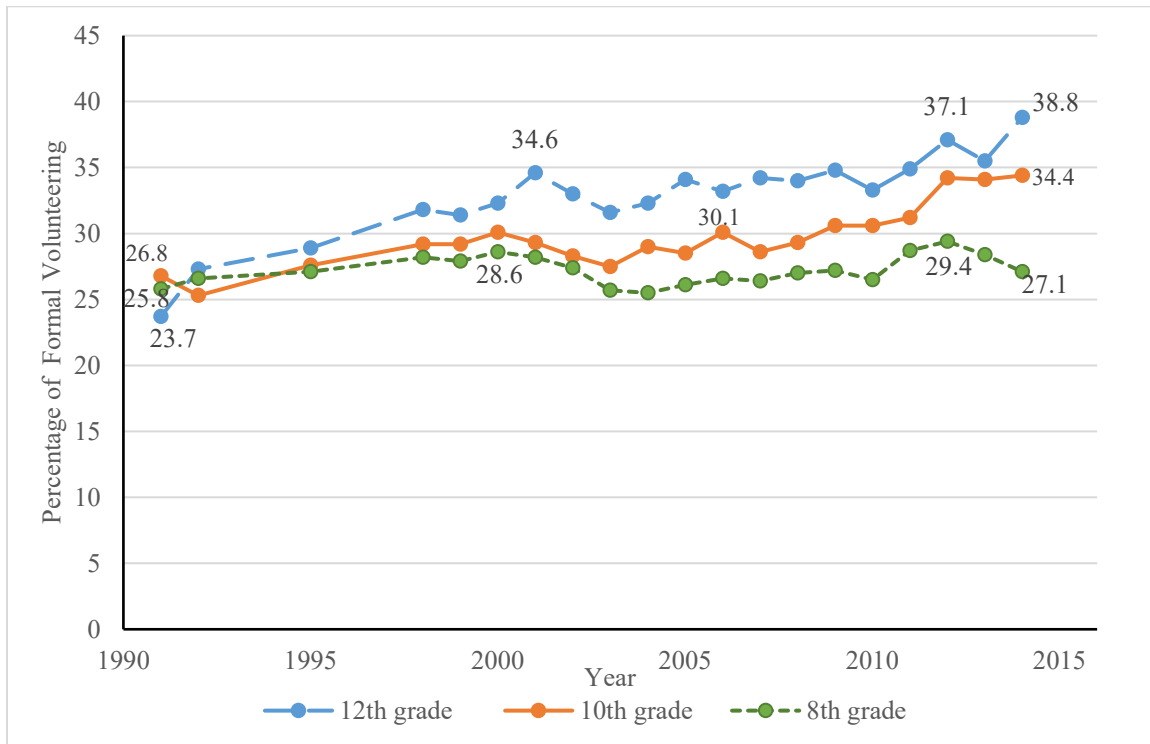
**Figure 4: Formal Volunteering Rates Among 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students by Parents Education**  
 Source: Child Trends, Monitoring the Future: A continuing study of American Youth 1991-2016

### *Formal Volunteering Among Teens in United States*

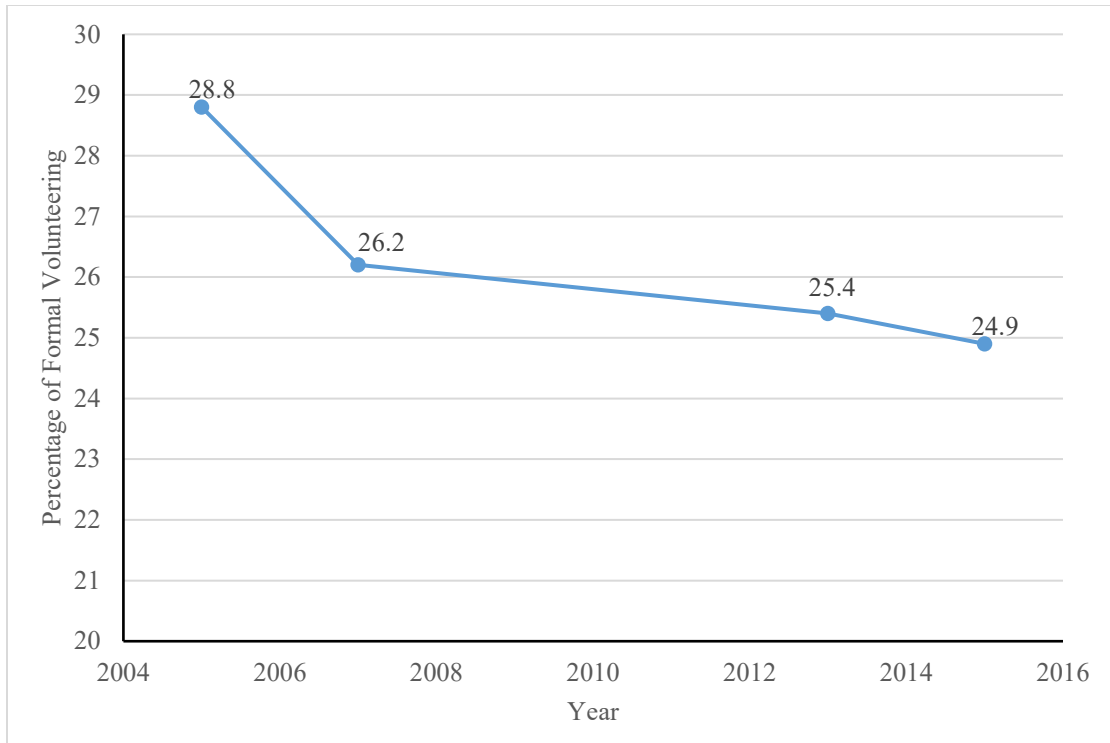
An accurate assessment of trends in formal volunteering require data collected over several decades. One of such scarce studies shows an upward trend in formal volunteering rates by young people from 1991 to 2005. In this annual survey, high school seniors who participated in community affairs or volunteer work at least once a month rose from 24% in 1991 to 35% in 2001 (Child Trends Databank 2018). Hitherto, the formal volunteering rates remained stable around 23%. With a dip in 2003 and 2010, researchers reported its highest rate at 38% in 2014. This surge in formal volunteering was evident among 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. See Figure 5 for details. The increase has been attributed to the policy of mandatory community service in some high schools in the United States and the strategy of highly educated parents encouraging teens to pad college applications with such credentials to secure entry into desired colleges



(Porterfield and Winkler 2007; Syvertsen et al. 2011). Though formal volunteering among high schoolers has increased over the decade, total volunteering rates in the United States has reduced (Figure 6) Nevertheless, in the United States teens volunteer the least and studies on an adolescence sample (12 – 18), showed that older respondents volunteered more than younger respondents (Child Trends Databank 2018).



**Figure 5: Formal Volunteering Rates Among 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students**  
 Source: Child Trends Monitoring the Future: A continuing study of American Youth 1991-2016



**Figure 6: Formal Volunteering Rates in the United States**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, volunteering in the United States news release 2005-2016

### *Purpose of Study*

My objectives are two-fold. First is to investigate a gap in the literature on religion and formal volunteering. Other than church attendance, which has been thoroughly investigated, I will focus on how teens' church affiliations, attendance of religious youth groups, religious salience, and having a religious experience can influence teens' formal volunteering.

Secondly, I examined how parental demographics can influence teens' formal volunteering. The variables used were parents' volunteering, encouraging teen volunteering, education and financial status can influence volunteering in teens. It is pertinent to note that the lowest age in most volunteer statistics on teens is 16 years, therefore findings on teens (13 – 17years) in this study extends existing literature on teens.

### *Hypothesis*

Based on the objectives discussed above, the following hypotheses were tested:

H 1: Education of parent is positively related to teens' formal volunteering.

H 2: Parents' financial strain is a negative predictor of teens' formal volunteering.

H 3: Parents' volunteering is positively related to teens' formal volunteering.

H 4: Parents' encouragement is positively related to teens' formal volunteering.

H 5: Religious youth group participation is positively related to teens' formal volunteering.

H 6: Religious experience is positively related to teens' formal volunteering.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Data*

The data used for this study came from the main sample of the first wave of the “National Study on Youth and Religion (NSYR Wave 1). The NSYR Wave 1 is the first part of a three-stage nationally representative longitudinal survey of 3,290 English and Spanish-speaking teenagers. The NSYR wave 1 included 80 oversampled Jewish households leading to 3,370 completed NSYR cases (ARDA 2018)

Lilly Endowment Inc. funded the project which was directed by Christian Smith, Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame and Lisa Pearce, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (University of Notre Dame 2018). The survey was conducted from July 2002 to April 2003. The researchers used a random-digit-dial (RDD) method which produced random representative telephone numbers of all household telephones in the 50 states in America. Parents were surveyed before their teens and researchers asked to speak with mothers first, believing that mothers were better qualified to answer questions about their families and teenagers (Smith and Denton 2003).

The NSYC Wave 1 file was obtained from the Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA). Before any analysis was done, the data was cleaned by proofreading the data worksheet with the original data. All study variables had less than 1% missing data. The SPSS “identify duplicate procedure” was used to identify any duplicate cases. In addition, descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies were used to identify any inconsistencies across variables. Dichotomous variables were recoded with 1=the category of interest and 0=not. In the process,

some dummy variables were created, and other variables combined for analysis. Already existent dummy variables in the data set were checked to ensure they covered the number of cases. Since the study requires bivariate analysis involving categorical variables, chi-square was used to ensure that expected values in all cells were greater than 5.

### *Measures*

#### *Dependent Variables*

The dependent variable for this study is formal volunteering among teens. This was measured by responses to the question: “In the last year, how much, if at all, have you done organized volunteer work or community service?” Responses were collected in four categories (1 = Never, 2 = A few times, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Regularly). The distribution approximates a normal curve (M = 2.10, SD = 1.01).

#### *Independent Variables*

*Teen Demographics.* Gender was a dichotomous variable with the respondent been either Male (0) or Female (1). Race of teens was recoded into four different categories; White, Black, Hispanic and Other, and age was measured from 13 to 17 years (M = 15.02, SD = 1.40).

*Parent’s Demographics.* Two socioeconomic variables were used in this study: Parental education and Parental financial status. Parental education was measured with two variables: mother’s education (M = 6.53, SD = 2.54), and father’s education (M = 6.67, SD = 2.07). Both variables were originally coded on a 12-point scale from Elementary (1) to No School (12). No School was recoded as (0) and the rest maintained from Elementary (1) to Ph.D. (11).

Parental financial status was measured using four dummy variables: Breaking Even ( $M = .31$ ,  $SD = .48$ ), Some Savings ( $M = .37$ ,  $SD = .46$ ), a Lot of Savings ( $M = .10$ ,  $SD = .29$ ), and Indebted ( $M = , SD =$ ) created from parent's response to if their family was "in debt" (1), "just breaking even" (2), "have some savings and assets" (3), or "have a lot of savings and assets" (4).

Parents' volunteering was measured by the question "In the last six months have you (or your spouse/partner) done any volunteer work?" The respondent had to answer either for themselves or on behalf of their spouse. Responses were collected was collected as a binary variable with Yes (1) and No (0) ( $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .49$ ).

Parental encouragement was measured by a parent's response to the question "How often, if at all, have you encouraged [your teen] to do volunteer work or community service?" Scores ranged from "very often" (1) to "not at all" (4). This was reverse coded so that higher numbers represented parents who encouraged their teens often ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).

*Religious Variables.* One of the most basic and widely used survey measure for individual subjective religiosity is the importance of respondents' faith. This study used teens' response to the relevance of religious faith in their daily life through five original categories (1 = Very Important, 2 = Important, 3 = Somewhat Important, 4 = Not Very Important, 5= Not Important at all). This was reverse coded so that higher numbers represented teens who placed more emphasis on their faith ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).

In addition, a religious variable targeting teens' supernatural experience was created by combining three different binary variables which asked if teens had experienced any of the following: a moving or powerful spiritual worship, what they believe to be a miracle from God,

and a definite answer to a prayer from God. The new variable was coded, Yes (1) and No (0) ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).

Two behavioral religiosity variables were used in this study. The first, church attendance, was measured from responses to the question: “In the last year, how often, if at all, have you attended a religious Sunday school or other religious education class?” Scores ranged from never (1) to more than once a week (7). This was reverse coded so that higher numbers represented teens who often attended church services ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 2.09$ ). In addition, religious youth group participation was a binary variable based on the question: “Are you currently involved in any religious youth group?” Coded as No (0) and Yes (1).

The religious affiliation of teens was measured by teens’ response to a question about the religious tradition they identify with. Eight dummy variables coded as “No (0) and Yes (1) were created from their responses: Evangelical Protestant ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = .46$ ), Mainline Protestant ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = .30$ ) African-American Protestant ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = .32$ ), Catholic ( $M = 1.76$ ,  $SD = .43$ ), Jewish ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = .18$ ), Mormon ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = .14$ ), Other religion ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = .13$ ), and no religion ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = .33$ ).

## *Analytic Strategy*

### *Preliminary Analyses*

The association between the dependent variables and independent variables is conducted using bivariate analysis. ANOVA tests was used to compare the mean differences between the dependent variable and religious salience, church attendance and religious traditions, while a contingency table was used for parents' financial situation and the other religious variables (supernatural experience, religious youth group participation). On the ANOVA tables, a Tukey post hoc test was used to examine which of the mean differences between the categories was significant and an eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) effect size was used to know how much of the variance in teens' formal volunteering was explained by the predictors. A Phi test was used to calculate the effect size in the contingency table.

### *Primary Analyses*

A three-stage ordinal regression model was used to test the significance and the effect of the relationship between predictors and teens' formal volunteering. In the first stage, demographic variables (age, race, sex, fathers' education, and mothers' education) was tested. In the second model, parents' volunteering, encouragement, and financial situation was added to the earlier model and the full model included religious variables (religious salience, church attendance, religious experience, and religious tradition).



## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### *Bivariate*

Table 1 displays the descriptive characteristics of the respondents. The mean age of teens was 15 years ( $SD = 15.10$ ). Males and females were equally represented, but more than half of the teens were White (66%) and religious (86%). Though a national probability sample, 30% of teens had never attended a church and 12% reported not belonging to any religion. The three Protestant traditions made up 53% of the sample with Catholics being 24%. The mean education for parents was some college education.

Table 2 shows the correlation figures between the dependent and independent variables, significant at  $p < .01 (**)$  and  $p < .05 (*)$ . Parental encouragement had the highest correlation with teens' formal volunteering ( $r = .247, p < .01$ ) and teens' formal volunteering was positively related with church attendance and religious youth group participation.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

| <i>Variables</i>          | <i>n</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Teen Volunteer</b>     | 3363     |                | 2.10        | 1.01      |
| Never                     | 1131     | 33.6           |             |           |
| Few Times                 | 1163     | 34.6           |             |           |
| Occasionally              | 656      | 19.5           |             |           |
| Regularly                 | 413      | 12.3           |             |           |
| <b>Age</b>                | 3369     |                | 15.02       | 1.41      |
| 13                        | 651      | 19.3           |             |           |
| 14                        | 650      | 19.3           |             |           |
| 15                        | 713      | 21.2           |             |           |
| 16                        | 680      | 20.2           |             |           |
| 17                        | 675      | 20.0           |             |           |
| <b>Sex</b>                | 3370     |                |             | .500      |
| Female                    | 1670     | 49.6           |             |           |
| Male                      | 1700     | 50.4           |             |           |
| <b>Race</b>               | 3349     |                |             |           |
| White                     | 2213     | 66.1           |             | .474      |
| Black                     | 578      | 17.3           |             | .378      |
| Hispanic                  | 385      | 11.4           |             | .319      |
| Other                     | 173      | 5.2            |             | .221      |
| <b>Fathers' Education</b> | 2486     |                | 6.67        | 2.70      |
| No school                 | 5        | .2             |             |           |
| Elementary                | 72       | 2.9            |             |           |
| Some HS                   | 142      | 5.7            |             |           |
| GED                       | 11       | .4             |             |           |
| HS Grad                   | 616      | 24.8           |             |           |
| Some Vo-Tech              | 31       | 1.2            |             |           |
| Vo-Tech diploma           | 143      | 5.8            |             |           |
| Some college              | 402      | 16.2           |             |           |
| AA                        | 214      | 8.6            |             |           |
| BA/BS                     | 489      | 19.7           |             |           |
| MA/MS                     | 254      | 10.2           |             |           |
| PhD                       | 107      | 4.3            |             |           |
| <b>Mothers' Education</b> | 3123     |                | 6.53        | 2.54      |

|                               |      |      |      |      |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No school                     | 4    | .1   |      |      |
| Elementary                    | 76   | 2.4  |      |      |
| Some HS                       | 187  | 6.0  |      |      |
| GED                           | 12   | .4   |      |      |
| HS Grad                       | 776  | 24.8 |      |      |
| Some Vo-Tech                  | 32   | 1.0  |      |      |
| Vo-Tech diploma               | 150  | 4.8  |      |      |
| Some college                  | 638  | 20.4 |      |      |
| AA                            | 381  | 12.2 |      |      |
| BA/BS                         | 549  | 17.6 |      |      |
| MA/MS                         | 262  | 8.4  |      |      |
| PhD                           | 56   | 1.8  |      |      |
| <b>Parents' Volunteering</b>  | 2062 | 61.3 | .61  | .49  |
| <b>Parents' Encouragement</b> | 3355 |      | 3.43 | 1.17 |
| Not at all                    | 234  | 7    |      |      |
| Not very often                | 417  | 12.4 |      |      |
| Sometimes                     | 1130 | 33.7 |      |      |
| Fairly often                  | 805  | 24.0 |      |      |
| Very Often                    | 769  | 22.9 |      |      |
| <b>Parents' Income</b>        | 3296 |      |      |      |
| Indebted                      | 734  | 22.2 | .22  | .42  |
| Breaking Even                 | 1024 | 31.1 | .31  | .46  |
| Some Savings                  | 1225 | 37.2 | .37  | .48  |
| Lots of Savings               | 313  | 9.5  | .10  | .29  |
| <b>Church Attendance</b>      | 3357 |      | 3.26 | 2.09 |
| Never                         | 1013 | 30.2 |      |      |
| A few times a year            | 576  | 17.2 |      |      |
| Once a month                  | 388  | 11.6 |      |      |
| A few times a month           | 359  | 10.7 |      |      |
| Almost every week             | 187  | 5.6  |      |      |
| Once a week                   | 601  | 17.9 |      |      |
| More than once a week         | 233  | 6.9  |      |      |
| <b>Religious Salience</b>     | 3363 |      | 3.44 | 1.13 |
| Not important at all          | 237  | 7.0  |      |      |
| Not very important            | 378  | 11.2 |      |      |
| Somewhat important            | 1078 | 32.1 |      |      |

|  |      |      |      |     |
|--|------|------|------|-----|
| Very important                             | 1025 | 30.5 |      |     |
| Extremely important                        | 645  | 19.2 |      |     |
| <b>Supernatural Experience</b>             | 1753 | 52   | .52  | .50 |
| <b>Religious youth group Participation</b> | 1258 | 37.5 | .37  | .48 |
| <b>Teens Religious Tradition</b>           | 3370 |      |      |     |
| Evangelical Protestant                     | 1045 | 31   | 1.69 | .46 |
| Mainline Protestant                        | 347  | 10.3 | 1.90 | .30 |
| African-American Protestant                | 400  | 11.9 | 1.88 | .32 |
| Catholic                                   | 819  | 24.3 | 1.76 | .43 |
| Jewish                                     | 114  | 3.4  | 1.97 | .18 |
| Mormon                                     | 72   | 2.1  | 1.98 | .14 |
| Other religion                             | 88   | 2.6  | 1.97 | .16 |
| No Religion                                | 410  | 12.2 | 1.88 | .33 |

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*Table 2. Intercorrelations between Formal Volunteering, Demographics and Religious Variables*

| Variables              | 1      | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | 10 |
|------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| Teen Volunteer         | 1      |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Age                    | .102** | 1       |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Fathers' Education     | .158** | .031    | 1       |         |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Mothers' Education     | .154** | .016    | .537**  | 1       |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Parents' Volunteering  | .150** | -.023   | .326**  | .315**  | 1      |        |        |        |        |    |
| Parents' Encouragement | .247** | .045**  | .152**  | .146**  | .309** | 1      |        |        |        |    |
| Church Attendance      | .026   | -.014   | -.052** | -.058** | .024   | .005   | 1      |        |        |    |
| Religious Salience     | .086** | -.037*  | -.033   | -.048** | .069** | .110** | .213*  | 1      |        |    |
| Religious Experience   | .148** | .040*   | .092**  | .073**  | .140** | .094** | .165*  | .417** | 1      |    |
| Youth group attendance | .175** | -.050** | .088**  | .084**  | .197** | .154** | .146** | .372** | .354** | 1  |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

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

Tables 3 and 4 present a one-way ANOVA analysis of the effect of church attendance and religious salience on teens' formal volunteering respectively. On church attendance, there was a statistically significant difference between teens' church attendance and formal volunteering at  $p < .001$  for the seven categories ( $F = 9.932$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = .000$ ) with a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ). The Tukey post hoc test revealed that formal volunteering was significantly higher among teens who attended church more than once a week (2.36) compared to those who never attended church (1.9901), attended church a few times a month (2.0195), and once a week (2.0083). Formal volunteering was also higher among teens who attended church services a few times a year (2.292) and once a month (2.173) compared to those who never attended church services in the past year. Taken together, these results suggest a bimodal relationship between church attendance and formal volunteering with high or rarely attending teens most likely to volunteer.

Table 3. *One-Way Analysis of Variance of Teens' Formal Volunteering by Church Attendance*

| Categories            | Means                | df | $\eta^2$ |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----|----------|
| Never                 | 1.99 <sup>ad</sup>   |    |          |
| A few times a year    | 2.292 <sup>nbc</sup> |    |          |
| Once a month          | 2.173 <sup>n</sup>   |    |          |
| A few times a month   | 2.02 <sup>ad</sup>   |    |          |
| Almost every week     | 2.160                |    |          |
| Once a week           | 2.008 <sup>ad</sup>  |    |          |
| More than once a week | 2.362 <sup>nbc</sup> |    |          |
| F Stat for ANOVA      | 9.932**              | 6  | .02      |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; (two-tailed tests,  $\eta^2$ —eta squared

<sup>n</sup>: Significant difference from "Never" (Turkey post-hoc test,  $p < .05$ )

<sup>a</sup>: Significant difference from "a few times a year"

<sup>b</sup>: Significant difference from "a few times a month"

<sup>c</sup>: Significant difference from "once a week"

<sup>d</sup>: Significant difference from "more than once a week"

Table 4 shows a statistically significant difference between the religious salience and levels at  $p < .01$  for the five categories ( $F = 7.787$ ,  $df = 4$   $p = .000$ ) with a small effect size (eta squared = .01). Teens who saw their faith as extremely important (2.28) had the highest mean and a Tukey post hoc test revealed that formal volunteering was significantly higher among such teens when compared to other levels of religious salience. Interestingly, there was not a statistically significant difference between any of the other four categories. These results show that religious salience influences teens' formal volunteering, but faith must be extremely important to see an effect.

Table 4. *One-Way Analysis of Variance of Teens' Formal Volunteering by Religious Salience*

| Source               | Means              | df | $\eta^2$ |
|----------------------|--------------------|----|----------|
| Not important at all | 1.953 <sup>a</sup> |    |          |
| Not very important   | 2.064 <sup>a</sup> |    |          |
| Somewhat important   | 2.036 <sup>a</sup> |    |          |
| Very important       | 2.117 <sup>a</sup> |    |          |
| Extremely important  | 2.28 <sup>c</sup>  |    |          |
| F Stat for ANOVA     | 7.787**            | 4  | .01      |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; (two-tailed tests)  $\eta^2$ —eta squared

<sup>a</sup>: Significant difference from "Extremely important" (Turkey post-hoc test,  $p < .05$ )

<sup>c</sup>: Significant difference from other four categories

Table 5 shows a one-way ANOVA analysis of the impact of religious traditions on teens' formal volunteering. There was a statistically significant difference between religious tradition and formal volunteering at  $p < .01$  for the 8 traditions ( $F = 14.351$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p = .000$ ), with a small effect size (eta squared = .03). Mainline Protestants (2.239) volunteered more than Black Protestants (1.973) and except for Black Protestants (1.973) and Non-religious teens (2.227), formal volunteering was significantly lower among teens of "other religion" (1.868) compared to

the other religious traditions. Jewish (2.640) and Mormon (2.704) teens also had significantly higher levels of formal volunteering when compared to Evangelical protestants (2.067), Mainline Protestants (2.239), Black Protestants (1.973), Catholics (2.155) and Non-religious teens (2.227).

Table 5. Means for Teens' Formal Volunteering by Religious Traditions

| Religious Tradition    | Means                   | df | $\eta^2$ |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----|----------|
| Evangelical Protestant | 2.067 <sup>jmn</sup>    |    |          |
| Mainline Protestant    | 2.239 <sup>bjmn</sup>   |    |          |
| Black Protestant       | 1.973 <sup>pjm</sup>    |    |          |
| Catholic               | 2.155 <sup>bjmn</sup>   |    |          |
| Jewish                 | 2.640 <sup>epbcn</sup>  |    |          |
| Mormon                 | 2.704 <sup>epbcn</sup>  |    |          |
| Other religion         | 1.868 <sup>epcejm</sup> |    |          |
| Non-religious          | 2.227                   |    |          |
| F Stat for ANOVA       | 14.351**                | 7  | .03      |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

Notes: \*\*p < .01; \*p < .05; (two-tailed tests).  $\eta^2$ —eta squared

<sup>c</sup>: Significant difference from Evangelical Protestant (Turkey post-hoc test, p < .05)

<sup>p</sup>: Significant difference from Mainline Protestant

<sup>b</sup>: Significant difference from Black Protestant

<sup>c</sup>: Significant difference from Catholic

<sup>j</sup>: Significant difference from Jewish

<sup>a</sup>: Significant difference from Mormon

<sup>o</sup>: Significant difference from Other religion

<sup>n</sup>: Significant difference from Non-Religious

A cross-tab analysis between teens' formal volunteering and religious youth group participation, supernatural experience, and religious tradition was computed and is displayed in Table 6. A chi-square statistic tested the significance of the association and the results showed a statistically significant association between religious youth group participation ( $\chi^2(3) = 111.110$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supernatural experience ( $\chi^2(3) = 84.927$ ,  $p < .001$ ), parents' volunteering ( $\chi^2(3) = 81.483$ ,  $p < .001$ ), breaking even ( $\chi^2(3) = 8.665$ ,  $p < .005$ ), Lot of savings ( $\chi^2(3) = 11.198$ ,  $p <$



.005), Indebted ( $\chi^2(3) = 10.915, p < .005$ ), and teens' formal volunteering. The strength of the association between all variables and teen volunteering was very weak ( $\phi < .2$ ). Overall, more than half of teens who participated in a religious youth group (76.6%), had a religious experience (73.2%), had a parent who volunteered (64.1%), had parents with some savings (73.8%), and had parents with a lot of savings (71.7%) reported having volunteered in the past year. Notably, most teens who reported not participating in a youth group, and not having a religious experience had higher levels of non-volunteers ((40% and 41% respectively) when compared to teens who participated in a religious youth group and had a religious experience (23% and 27% respectively) in the last year. In addition, most teens whose parents reported not volunteering in the past year had never volunteered. Among the parents' financial variables, teens whose parents had a lot of savings had the highest level of teens who volunteered regularly (15%) and were less likely to have never volunteered (26%) in the past year. Interestingly, teens whose parents were indebted, had the highest rate of non-volunteering and teens whose parents were breaking even had the lowest rate of regular volunteering.

Table 6. Contingency Table showing Teens Volunteering by Religious youth group participation, religious experience, parents' financial situation, and parents' volunteering.

| Predictors                          |     | Teen Volunteering |              |                  |                     |                  | Chi-Square  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---|
|                                     |     | <i>f</i>          | <i>Never</i> | <i>Few times</i> | <i>Occasionally</i> | <i>Regularly</i> |   |
| Religious youth group participation | Yes | 1259              | 294 (23.4%)  | 458 (36.5%)      | 297 (23.6%)         | 207 (16.5%)      | $\chi^2 (3) = 111.110^{**}$<br>$\phi = .156^{**}$<br>$n=3355$ |
|                                     | No  | 2096              | 833 (39.7%)  | 702 (33.5%)      | 357 (17%)           | 24 (9.7%)        |   |
| Religious Experience                | Yes | 1749              | 468 (26.8%)  | 636 (36.4%)      | 388 (22.2%)         | 257 (14.7%)      | $\chi^2 (3) = 84.927^{**}$<br>$\phi = .159^{**}$<br>$n=3289$  |
|                                     | No  | 1612              | 662 (41.1%)  | 526 (32.6%)      | 268 (16.6%)         | 156 (9.7%)       |   |
| Parents' Volunteering               | Yes | 2058              | 582 (28.3%)  | 728 (35.4%)      | 451 (21.9%)         | 297 (14.4%)      | $\chi^2 (3) = 81.483^{**}$<br>$\phi = .156^{**}$<br>$n=3352$  |
|                                     | No  | 1297              | 546 (42.1%)  | 431 (33.2%)      | 205 (15.8%)         | 115 (8.9%)       |   |
| Parents' Financial Situation        |     | 3289              |              |                  |                     |                  | $\chi^2 (3) = 34.482^*$<br>$\phi = .101^*$<br>$n=3352$        |
| Indebted                            | Yes | 730               | 277 (37.9%)  | 242 (33.2%)      | 118 (16.2%)         | 93 (12.7%)       |   |
| Breaking Even                       | Yes | 1023              | 367 (35.9%)  | 365 (35.7%)      | 187 (18.3%)         | 104 (10.2%)      |   |
| Some Savings                        | Yes | 1223              | 383 (31.3%)  | 422 (34.5%)      | 260 (21.3%)         | 158 (12.9%)      |   |
| Lots of Savings                     | Yes | 313               | 82 (26.2%)   | 110 (35.1%)      | 74 (23.6%)          | 47 (15.0%)       |   |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

Notes:  $**p < .01$ ;  $*p < .05$ ; (two-tailed tests)

$\Phi$  – Phi Coefficient

### *Multivariate*

Table 7 summarizes the results from three-stage ordinal logistic regressions. On variables with a reference category, an odds ratio (Exp B) of one indicates that there is no difference between the comparison group and the reference group. An odds ratio greater than one indicates that the comparison group has higher odds for teens' formal volunteering than the reference group, while an odds ratio below one shows that the comparison group has lower odds of predicting teens' formal volunteering compared to the reference group. Standardized coefficients were calculated using the SAS system (Allison 1999)

Model 1 was made up of demographic variables (Age, gender, race, fathers' education, and mothers' education) and accounted for just 2.5% of the total variance in teens' formal volunteering. Being female, White, and having parents with more education was significantly and positively associated with teens' formal volunteering. Specifically, females ( $\beta = .077$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were 30% more likely than males and Blacks ( $\beta = -.100$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were 38% less likely than Whites to volunteer. This satisfies the first hypothesis because mothers' education ( $\beta = .102$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and fathers' education ( $\beta = .113$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a positive effect on teens' formal volunteering. The more educated a teens' parents are, the greater the propensity that the teen would volunteer. Fathers' education was the strongest predictor in the model. Though this effect reduced in subsequent models, the effect remained significant and positive.

Model 2 saw the addition of parents' financial situation (Breaking even, some savings, and a lot of savings), parents' volunteering, and parents' encouragement to the demographic controls. The results did not support the prediction that parents' volunteering and financial strain had a positive and negative effect on teens' formal volunteering respectively. However, the

fourth hypothesis was satisfied because parents' encouragement ( $\beta = .238, p < .01$ ) had a significant and positive association with teens' formal volunteering. Teens whose parents encouraged them to volunteer had 45% higher odds to volunteer compared to teens whose parents did not encourage them to volunteer. Though the effects of the demographic variables reduced, being female, White, and having parents with more education remained significantly and positively related to teens' formal volunteering. Parents' encouragement was the strongest predictor in this model and remained so after the addition of religious variables in model 3. Model 2 explained 11.4% of the variance which was approximately 9% above the demographic variables.

In Model 3 religious variables (church attendance, religious youth group participation, religious salience, religious experience, and religious affiliation) were added to model 2 (demographic controls and parental variables). Hypothesis 5 examines the effect of religious youth group participation on teens' formal volunteering and consistent with my prediction, religious youth group participation ( $\beta = .134, p < .01$ ) was significantly and positively associated with teens' formal volunteering, as well as being the strongest predictor among the religious variables. Teens who attended a religious youth group were about 65% more likely to volunteer compared to teens who reported not being part of such groups. Moreover, religious experience ( $\beta = .114, p < .01$ ) was positively related to teens' formal volunteering. Teens who had either experienced a moving or powerful spiritual worship, what they believe to be a miracle from God or a definite answer to a prayer from God had 51% higher odds to volunteer than teens who had not had such an experience, hence supporting the sixth hypothesis.

On religious traditions, Catholics ( $\beta = -.090$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and Jews ( $\beta = -.083$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly and negatively related to teens' formal volunteering when compared with non-religious teens. Catholic and Jewish teens were 31% and 57% less likely to volunteer compared to non-religious teens respectively. Overall, 15.7% of the total variance in teens' formal volunteering was accounted for by the full model (demographic controls, parental variables, and religious variables).

Table 7. Multiple Stage Ordinal Logistic Regression Models predicting Teens' Formal Volunteering

| Predictors                                | Teens' Formal Volunteering |         |       |         |         |       |         |         |       |
|---|----------------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
|   | Model 1                    |         |       | Model 2 |         |       | Model 3 |         |       |
|   | b                          | $\beta$ | Exp B | b       | $\beta$ | Exp B | b       | $\beta$ | Exp B |
| Age                                       | .144**                     | .113    | 1.155 | .133**  | .104    | 1.142 | .144**  | .113    | 1.155 |
| Female                                    | .280**                     | .077    | 1.323 | .240*   | .066    | 1.272 | .177*   | .049    | 1.194 |
| Race <sup>a</sup>                         |                            |         |       |         |         |       |         |         |       |
| Black                                     | -.479**                    | -.100   | .620  | -.525** | -.050   | .591  | -.622*  | -.130   | .537  |
| Hispanics                                 | -.092                      | -.016   | .913  | -.066   | -.012   | .936  | -.143   | -.025   | .866  |
| Other                                     | -.119                      | -.014   | .888  | -.170   | -.021   | .843  | -.142   | -.017   | .867  |
| Fathers' Education                        | .076**                     | .113    | 1.079 | .062*   | .092    | 1.064 | .049*   | .073    | 1.051 |
| Mothers' Education                        | .073**                     | .102    | 1.075 | .051*   | .071    | 1.052 | .047*   | .066    | 1.048 |
| Parents' Volunteering                     |                            |         |       | .132    | .036    | 1.141 | .020    | .005    | 1.020 |
| Parents' Encouragement                    |                            |         |       | .369**  | .238    | 1.446 | .335**  | .216    | 1.398 |
| Parents' financial situation <sup>b</sup> |                            |         |       |         |         |       |         |         |       |
| Breaking Even                             |                            |         |       | -.011   | -.002   | .989  | .000    | 0       | 1.000 |
| Some Savings                              |                            |         |       | -.137   | -.036   | .872  | -.135   | -.035   | .874  |
| Lots of Savings                           |                            |         |       | -.006   | -.001   | .994  | -.040   | -.006   | .961  |
| Church Attendance                         |                            |         |       |         |         |       | .016    | .0184   | 1.017 |
| Religious Saliency                        |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.004   | -.003   | .996  |
| Religious Experience                      |                            |         |       |         |         |       | .413**  | .114    | 1.512 |
| Religious youth Group Participation       |                            |         |       |         |         |       | .506**  | .134    | 1.658 |
| Religious Traditions <sup>c</sup>         |                            |         |       |         |         |       |         |         |       |
| Evangelical Protestant                    |                            |         |       |         |         |       | .188    | .048    | 1.207 |
| Mainline Protestant                       |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.074   | -.012   | .928  |
| Black Protestant                          |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.280   | -.049   | .756  |
| Catholic                                  |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.377*  | -.090   | .686  |
| Jewish                                    |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.839*  | -.083   | .432  |
| Mormon                                    |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.337   | -.026   | .714  |
| Other religion                            |                            |         |       |         |         |       | -.007   | -.001   | .993  |
| Model stats                               |                            |         |       |         |         |       |         |         |       |
| Nagelkerke R2                             | .025                       |         |       | .114    |         |       | .157    |         |       |
| -2 log Likelihood                         | 575.840                    |         |       | 5310.78 |         |       | 5407.0  |         |       |
| $\chi^2$                                  | 13.171                     |         |       | 5       |         |       | 45      |         |       |
| N   | 3342                       |         |       | 2199    |         |       | 2181    |         |       |

Source: "National Study on Youth and Religion Wave 1.

Notes: \*\*p < .01; \*p < .05; (two-tailed tests); b - unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  - standardized coefficient,

<sup>a</sup>: White is reference category.

<sup>b</sup>: Indebted is reference category.

<sup>c</sup>: Non-religious is reference category.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### *Discussion*

Though formal volunteering has increased among high schoolers (Figure 5), it has continually reduced when teens enter college. Consequently, this study seeks not only to add to the literature on formal volunteering, but also to provide policymakers and industry players relevant information for their decision making and implementation.

To further examine the decline of formal volunteering in the United States, the current study sought to examine the association between teens' formal volunteering and parental and religious variables. Using the first wave of the "National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR Wave 1), I examined how parental variables (parents' education, financial situation, formal volunteering and encouragement) can influence formal volunteering among teens. I also assessed the importance of religious tradition, collective religiosity, and individual religiosity and other demographics (age, sex, and race) on a teens' propensity to volunteer. Analyses were made on teens from 13 – 17 years, augmenting the literature on teens' formal volunteering which starts from 16 years.

Results from the study suggest that the positive effect of individual education on an individual's formal volunteering (Eubanks 2008; Tanuguchi 2012) also exists between parents' education and teens' formal volunteering. The more educated a mother or father is the more likely the teen is to volunteer (Child Trends Databank 2018) even though the effect size was small in this study. Though it appears reasonable to predict that parents' volunteering plays a mediating role between parents' education and teens' formal volunteering, that may be erroneous

since parents' volunteering was not significantly associated with teens' formal volunteering. There is a need for more empirical studies to understand the dynamics between the two variables.

In contrast with Eubanks (2008) and Tanuguchi (2012), the study did not find any association between parent's financial situation on teens' formal volunteering. It is, however, relevant to note that unlike other studies, I did not use parents' actual earnings to measure financial situation, but rather a creation of dummy variables from a categorical variable measuring parents' financial situation. Findings further suggest that parents can increase formal volunteering by encouraging their teens instead of volunteering. Though parents' encouragement has been related to formal volunteering (Bower and Casas 2016; Wilson 2000), the variable used in this did not specify on the type of encouragement (verbal advice, provision of opportunities or social rewards), hence further studies are needed to better explain the dynamics between the two variables. Consistent with past studies (Wilson 2012), Whites and females were more likely to volunteer than Blacks and males. This study did not, however, support the same relationship between Whites and other ethnic categories. Analysis showed no significant differences between Whites and Hispanics and Others.

Numerous empirical studies report that religiosity predicts higher levels of formal volunteering (Andreoni and Payne 2013; Bekkers and Schuyt 2008). The current study examined this relationship using collective religiosity (church attendance, religious youth group participation, and religious affiliations) and individual religiosity (religious salience and religious experience). Though both cross-sectional (Andreoni and Payne 2013; Merino 2013; Yeung 2017) and longitudinal studies (Johnston 2013; Kim and Jang 2017; Meißner and Traunmüller 2010) reported that church attendance has a positive effect on formal volunteering among adults, this study found no significant association between church attendance and teens' formal volunteering



after adding control variables. However, there was a positive effect of religious youth group participation on teens' formal volunteering. This means that unlike adults, attending church services is not enough condition in influencing formal volunteering if teens are not involved in a religious group. Participation in such groups present teens with opportunities to be invited to volunteer, know people who volunteer and be influenced by their peers. The most surprising result from the study had to do with religious affiliations. Findings showed no association between five of the seven religious traditions and teens' formal volunteering, and though the association with Catholic and Jewish teens was significant, they were less likely to volunteer when compared to non-religious teens. Therefore, regarding public religiosity, the study suggests that religious youth group participation is most essential for teens' formal volunteering.

The positive relationship between religious salience and formal volunteering among adults and young adults (Van Tienen et al. 2011), was not replicated in this study. Though teens may not be old enough to have a psychological commitment to their faith, and hence have it influence their social conduct, their religious experiences proved instrumental for formal volunteering. Notably, the effect of religious experience on teens' formal volunteering was stronger than parents' encouragement. Engaging in prayer and receiving supernatural assistance may encourage compassion and the desire to assist others (Loveland et al. 2005). These findings, though not conclusive, stress the need to include individual or private religiosity in theoretical explanations of formal volunteering instead of the exclusive focus on public religiosity.

### *Limitations and Future Direction*

Though this study expands the literature on teens' formal volunteering, there are some limitations that must be considered. First, though the all the bivariate results outlined were significant, they had a very weak effect size. The unexplained variance could be because there are other variables that influence teens' formal volunteering that were not accounted for in this study or that significant findings were due to the large sample size.

Data from self-report surveys can be riddled with bias which affects the validity of the responses and analysis made on such data (Van de Mortel 2008). Social desirability could be an issue when measuring religion and volunteering through a telephone interview. Respondents may overstate their religious beliefs and behaviors. This can also be true with the question on parents' financial situation. In addition, teens (13 – 17 years) may not be able to recall events accurately or misinterpret survey questions.

The findings from this study calls for a deeper investigation into the relationship between religion and volunteering, especially since attending religious service was not a statistically significant predictor of teens' formal volunteering. In addition, novice findings on the strong effect of parents' encouragement and religious experiences on teens' formal volunteering should be of interest to researchers. More studies are needed on current data sets to test the strength of such variables on teens' formal volunteering.

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