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Volunteers in America: How Volunteerism and American Civil Society Shape Our Museums

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Volunteers in America: How Volunteerism and American Civil Society Shape Our
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By

Sarah C. Crocker

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Advisor: Dr. Christina Kreps
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the intersection of volunteerism, museum studies, and American civil society within two Denver area art museums. There is much current scholarship that focuses on the relationship between museums and community, yet does not often address the role of museum volunteerism within such a context. This thesis therefore also examines the intersection of community and museum volunteerism, presenting a starting point for future researchers to continue studying museum volunteerism within the context of civic engagement. This thesis finds that, while the ideology of American civil society plays a role in museum volunteerism, personal motivations are more likely to push an individual to volunteer. It also concludes that volunteers are currently less likely to see museums as civically engaged places than other institutions. Finally, this thesis presents possible actions to help museum staff and community partners create a more civically engaged museum volunteer corps.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a critical examination of volunteerism within American museums, using two Denver-area museums and their volunteer corps as case studies. It examines the potential influences of American civil society ideology on volunteerism at these museums, as well as the interplay of volunteerism and the current academic interest in museum-community partnerships. Finally, this thesis explores how these motivations are shaped by the relationships and social structures encountered throughout volunteers' experiences at their chosen institutions, and how social interaction affects a volunteer's continued attitudes and experiences at their museum.

This study was undertaken in order to answer the following research questions: (1) Are volunteer motivations connected to American civil society ideals? (2) What other factors influence volunteerism at these sites? (3) How are these volunteers connected or not connected to communities both in their museum, and outside it? As mentioned above, this thesis also examines connections between preceding scholarship on volunteerism and museum-community relationships. (4) Does previous research accurately depict volunteerism in American museums? (5) Are there any differences between the results of previous research on museum volunteers and of the findings of this thesis?

I undertook this research in part because of my own work as a museum volunteer. I have volunteered in many museums since my undergraduate studies, doing work that encompassed a wide range of duties and skill levels. This has included anything from polishing silver, cleaning floors, accessioning donated objects, leading tours, designing databases, and to creating flyers and marketing material for museums. These experiences took place in a similarly wide range of museums, from a local history museum with a paid staff of one, to a large metropolitan science center with a sizeable corps of volunteers and thousands of annual visitors. I have also interacted with a varied cast of museum workers throughout these experiences. This included staff, but also largely other volunteers, including retirees, students, and even busy professionals who had purposefully made time to volunteer and help their chosen museum. Over my years of volunteer work, I came to understand that volunteers are integral parts of a museum's support system, and even more so for small and chronically underfunded local museums than for larger, more well-funded institutions. Indeed, without volunteers to support museums in many different capacities, it is likely that a great number of smaller (and even, perhaps, larger) institutions would not exist.

I also realized that volunteers were especially motivated in their work, given that they were never paid and often had to seek out their volunteer positions on their own. Later, in my graduate studies, I gained interest in the intersection of community and museums. I began to research this subject along with volunteerism. While there is a great deal of research regarding volunteerism and volunteer motivations, as well as research regarding museum-community relationships, there is little attention paid to the

combination of the two. Volunteers were described as working within a number of contexts (including American civil society, a concept which is itself often embedded in the idea of volunteerism), but very infrequently were they studied working in museums, and American museums in particular. Moreover, authors writing about the intersection of museums and community rarely addressed volunteerism within this context. This thesis, then, seeks to help fill that gap. While this research can hardly claim to present the definitive work on volunteerism in the context of American civil society and American museums, it can add to the body of work on volunteerism and create an initial point of inquiry for future scholars.

This thesis argues that civil society can be a pervasive motivation for volunteers, in that the ideals of American civil society (such as egalitarianism, individualism, the importance of decentralized citizen-led initiatives, and community service) will influence volunteers' work within the museum. However, it is only a single factor in a multitude of motivations and relationships that influence volunteer participation. Other forces, such as personal motivations (e.g., love of art, or the personal desire for social interaction) and professional concerns such as volunteering in a career-related field), play an equally important role in shaping volunteer motivations and experiences. This thesis concludes that volunteerism is a complicated phenomenon that relies on a multitude of influences, such as a volunteer's personal background, personal interests, social relationships both outside and within the museum, and more to maintain itself. However, both subtle and broad differences in factors such as age, education, and "social taste" (as defined below by Bourdieu) can cause some volunteers to feel isolated from or in conflict with the broad

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volunteer corps at their museum. Finally, the research also points to possible reasons for the exclusion of volunteerism from the discussion of museum-community relationships, both from the perspective of volunteers (who likely do not see the civic potential of their museum work), and from the possible perspective of scholars and authors who may see this disconnect between volunteers and community, and conclude that volunteers are not currently accurate representatives of the surrounding community.

The scope of this research is restricted to a focus on the relationship between volunteerism and American civil society, and the presence of American civil society ideology in the volunteer programs of two local museums – the Denver Art Museum, and the Museo de las Americas. To provide background and direction for this research, relevant theories from civil society studies, anthropology, sociology, and museum studies were considered and will be discussed at greater length in the Literature Review.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu and in particular his book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984), has provided a large part of the theoretical background informing this research. In his work, Bourdieu argues that aesthetic concepts such as taste are greatly influenced by the social position one is born into - that a person's likes and dislikes are largely a result of their social class. For instance, a "working class" aesthetic is often very different from a "high culture" aesthetic, such as it might be expressed by a relatively high class individual's preference for ballet, gourmet dining, and fine art museums and their distaste for "lower class" forms of entertainment such as NASCAR, reality television, and fast food restaurants.   His focus on social relations and the development of "taste" as a marker of social distinction proved to be especially

relevant when examining various examples of dissonance and conflict within volunteer groups. Using his work as a lens, this research found that social and cultural attitudes, as well as related demographic information such as age, education, and economic stability, played a powerful role in directing volunteer motivations and shaping the relationships within volunteer programs.

The work of other social and anthropological theorists have also directed the focus of this research. This includes the social theorist Robert Putnam, best known for his book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), which examines the seemingly diminishing civic life of Americans in the late 1990s. Putnam presents a wealth of demographic information regarding the changes in civic life in the United States, such as the increasingly older individuals that dominate volunteer efforts. He ultimately concludes that many of these differences stem from generational differences, such as the advent of "individualizing" technology that discourages younger individuals from participating in a community setting that is not catered to their specific individual needs. Because of Putnam's findings, this thesis also examines volunteerism and civil society as it relates to age and age-related factors, such as education, financial status, and individual motivations for volunteering.

Other authors were included because of their particular focus on the history and ethnography (the cultural study) of museums. These authors often focus on museums as important community spaces for visitors and community members. Crooke (2007; 2011) studies the definitions of "community" that come into play within volunteer organizations, as well as on the intersection of community and museums. She also

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examines how such relationships affect a multitude of experiences within the museum space, including the intersecting identities of volunteers, staff, and community members. Bouquet (2012) stresses the importance of ethnography in museums and of the importance and validity of museums as sites for anthropological study themselves, rather than as storehouses for anthropological objects and other findings. She emphasizes the importance of examining the roles museums as active sites for the construction and perpetuation of different narratives and social relationships, often at the cost of other conflicting interpretations. The concept of ethnography itself, and ethnography in museums in particular, will be addressed later in this thesis. Michael Ames' book, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (1992), was also included for its history of museum anthropology, its conception of the museum as an authoritative and culturally powerful space, and its argument for the importance of self-reflexive ethnography conducted by anthropologists in museums. All of these theorists and others mentioned in the second chapter argue that museums are uniquely situated to take advantage of their history as centers of knowledge and learning to foster more civically engaged endeavors within the community.

However, these studies focusing on the relationships between museums and community rarely, if ever, mention volunteerism in museums. This is unexpected, given the frequent conflation of volunteerism with civic values and community involvement (Putnam 2000:120-121). Why wouldn't volunteers be considered in the museum-community relationship along with other community members? They certainly are not paid staff, nor are they generally compelled to participate. They frequently work in the

museum in such a manner that makes their presence visible.   Volunteers at both the Museo de las Americas and the Denver Art Museum are often the first museum representatives to greet visitors as they enter the museum space. Depending on the environment of the museum, they may often do work that is integral to both the administrative and creative operation of the museum, such as helping to catalogue collections or maintaining a museum's social media presence. At any rate, the vast majority of volunteers within a museum are drawn from the community, and are especially motivated to work with the museum, given that they specifically chose to work in a museum and with their given museum in particular.

The concept of "community" as it will be used in this thesis extends beyond shared physical space (though this is still an element worth considering) and into a common sense of fellowship and joint responsibility towards the larger group. Community has the potential to reach beyond barriers created by differences in class, education, ethnic background, and other circumstances; it also has the potential to be defined and even restricted by these same factors. On the surface, volunteers would appear to be ideal representations of how museums and communities can come together. Why, then, are they mentioned so infrequently in scholarship on museums and the community?

There are a number of potential explanations for such an omission that this thesis examines. First, volunteers may appear to work more towards the interests of the museum and its subject matter (be it art, history, anthropology, or otherwise) than in the interests of a larger community. For instance, a volunteer at the Denver Art Museum

may spend most of her time interacting with museum visitors in the form of museum tours that concentrate on the art housed within the museum. Her efforts as a volunteer are more focused on the missions of the museum – promoting art and art history, educating the public – and less on what could be considered a more community-oriented approach, such as organizing within the larger Denver community so that community members are involved in the development and implementation of museum programs. Though she is an unpaid volunteer, her work may be too deeply embedded in the museum (and not more outside the environment of the DAM) for her to be considered a representative of that community.

Volunteer programs may also be too exclusive. That is, they may present too many barriers to participation for such programs to be considered civically engaged. More simply put, not everyone can participate in a volunteer program. Though Crooke argues that community is by definition exclusive (Crooke 2007:62), that exclusion must stop at a certain point in order for new members to join and continue the existence of that community and its values. This thesis argues that volunteer programs are themselves small communities. Volunteer programs at some museums may ask too much of new participants for it to be accessible to a wide range of community members. These barriers can include time commitments. Volunteers may be required to work a certain number of hours, or to commit to a certain amount of training. This may be difficult for individuals with demands such as full-time jobs or full-time academic enrollment. Financial demands can also be a barrier, as some individuals cannot afford to work for free. Finally, social differences play a role because individuals who are not members of

the social group that dominates a volunteer program may feel that they will not be able to fully access the benefits of volunteerism at their museum. Social differences in particular proved to be important factors in determining a volunteer's interactions with their chosen volunteer program, and will be discussed at length later in this thesis.

Finally, volunteers themselves may not see their role as related to their community. Instead, their participation is more dependent on personal interests and social ties *within* their volunteer program or organization rather than with the wider community outside of the program. The possibility that their work can be extended beyond the museum walls and into a wider, more diverse community may not be apparent to volunteers, especially if they are used to a model of volunteerism that is largely focused on serving the internal workings of a museum. The research conducted for this study points most strongly to this explanation, as volunteers rarely discussed civic or community-minded reasons as motivations for volunteering. Instead, they tended to focus on more personal motivations, such as individual interest in art and their desire for social interaction. Simply put, the volunteers do not see or present themselves as representatives of the community. This has relevant implications for further work in the field of volunteer studies, particularly given the current interest in museum-community relationships. These particular circumstances and their relations to the research at hand will be discussed later in this thesis.

This project includes data collected at two museum sites within the city of Denver: the Denver Art Museum and the Museo de las Americas. The Denver Art Museum (DAM) is a fairly large museum, with approximately 200 active volunteers

(volunteers who work at the museum at least once a month), while the Museo de las Americas is a considerably smaller institution, with approximately 20 active volunteers. Both museums will be described in greater depth in Chapter Three. These field sites were chosen because their volunteer programs operate under the influences of different institutional environments and volunteer communities, namely in terms of size and resources available to each institution. Yet, both museums are considered to be organizations that focus on art and culture, with the Museo de las Americas focusing on Latino art and culture, and the DAM focusing on a broader range of artworks and cultural heritage. A comparison between two similar types of museums helps to illustrate the effects that museum structure, size, and administration (among other factors) may have on volunteers, and vice versa. Their mutual status as art museums and as potential places for the staging of "high culture" values (such as "fine art") also makes them primed to explore Bourdieu's work regarding social taste and social distinction between classes.

In regards to the gender pronouns used in this thesis, I tend to use female pronouns when referring to volunteers. This was intentional, and was employed in order to reflect the largely female volunteers corps at both the Museo de las Americas and the Denver Art Museum. In general, the great majority of volunteers tend to be women, as evidenced both by my research and experiences at the museums involved in this thesis, as well as previous research completed by scholars (Hettman and Jenkins 1990:298; Howlett 2002:42; Putnam 2000:121; Snyder and Omoto 2008:25).

It will be useful to pause here and briefly define some terms which are used throughout this thesis, but whose meaning may not be immediately obvious to readers not

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trained in anthropology or related disciplines. "Civil society" refers to the manifestation of the interests and will of citizens through institutions, organizations, and communal action. Civil society is distinct from the government or business sectors, though all such sectors are often connected in the course of a individual's or community's activities. "Civic engagement" is then the individual or communal act of participating in civil society. Civic engagement can take many forms, and can include such actions as voting, taking political office, organizing events or efforts with fellow community members, or volunteering. Civic engagement within American civil society generally takes the form of "bottom-up", citizen-led initiatives. It also simultaneously encourages individual autonomy and community participation. The particulars of American civil society will be further explored in the second chapter. Other anthropological terms, such as "ethnography" and "participant observation", will be defined the anthropological theory subsection of Chapter Two, and in Chapter Three.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter provides a survey of relevant theoretical work as it pertains to this research. This includes research from the fields of anthropology, sociology, civic engagement, and American history. This chapter provides the historical, cultural, and intellectual context of volunteerism within American museums. The third chapter describes the research design and methodology that directed the active research portion of this thesis. It outlines the procedures employed during the this process, especially the semi-structured interviews that provided the bulk of the data.

The fourth chapter will present and analyze the data collected during the interview process. This will include demographic information, collected in order to present a general portrait of the volunteer corps at each institution. Questions pertaining to demographic information focused on age, education, and time spent volunteering at either the Denver Art Museum or the Museo de las Americas. Further questions in the semi-structured interviews were intended to explore the motivations and influences that affect volunteers at their museum. These responses are then analyzed in light of the research questions proposed at the beginning of the introductory chapter. The fifth and final chapter summarizes the findings of this research and provides an overview of the conclusions of this study. It will illuminate avenues of inquiry for future scholars to pursue, in order to further study volunteerism in American museums.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

This chapter surveys the relevant research and theoretical work that provides the framework for this study. This includes the historical origins and development of ideas concerned with civil society, museums history, American history, and volunteerism as it is situated within the context of American civil society and American museums in particular.

Volunteers are "broadly taken to mean anyone who carried out any task for the organisation in an unpaid capacity" (Howlett 2002:45). They are individuals who freely give up their time and devote their knowledge and energy towards assisting an organization. These organizations include museums that represent a wide range of interests, including art, science, history, and community-based concerns. Within the scope of this research, such museums focus on art and "culture", both in a general sense in the case of the DAM, and to Latino art and culture in the case of the Museo. Howlett's particular definition includes trustees and board members in addition to more "front-line" volunteers who directly participate in the day to day operations of a given institution. This research, however, concentrates on "front-line" volunteers that work at an institution such as docents, office assistants, and gift shop volunteers.

The popular image of volunteers, supported by previous research data, is that of middle- or upper-class white women, often middle-aged or older. This archetypal volunteer is generally well-educated (with at least one college degree) and has a significant amount of time on her hands (Hettman and Jenkins 1990:298; Howlett 2002:42; Putnam 2000:121; Snyder and Omoto 2008:25). Such education and free time lend themselves to the pursuit of volunteerism. Volunteerism can appeal in the ideological sense to an individual who has had the time and education to consider the implications of their work on the civic stage and otherwise. Age also appears to be a dominant factor with regards to an individual's attitude towards volunteerism. Namely, older volunteers are more likely to have volunteered when younger, and to be more focused on motivations relating to service and community. Younger volunteers, by contrast, are more likely to focus on career-related motivations. More and higher levels of education associated with greater age are also associated with higher rates of volunteerism (Snyder & Omoto 2008:18-19).

Other studies are concerned with developing and maintaining volunteerism within other populations, most notably among adolescents and young adults, as well as the interactions amongst various age groups and cohorts (Johnson et. al 1998; Marta and Pozzi 2008; Marta et. al 2006; Rotolo and Wilson 2004). While this does not refute the studies cited in Howlett and elsewhere, these writings indicate that volunteers can be more diverse and come with a larger variety of influences and motivations than initial public perception may indicate. Certainly, museum and other non-profit workers may recognize that a more diverse array of volunteers may benefit their institution by the

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influx of difference experiences and approaches to volunteer work. That said, these differences between various, sometimes seemingly opposed groups - such as old/young, affluent/not affluent, educated/uneducated, retired/employed, and so on - can produce conflict. Such conflicts became apparent during the research and will be discussed in later chapters.

The monetary value of volunteering alone serves to present just how beneficial such a resource can be to museums and other institutions. Houle, et. al estimates that there are about 15 billion hours of formal volunteering in America, with an approximate value of $182 billion (2005:337). Howlett estimates that the monetary value of British volunteerism constitutes anywhere from £13 billion to £40 billion contributed to the GDP (2002:42). Clearly, a healthy volunteering program, staffed by unpaid volunteers doing work dependent on a variety of skill levels, can save a museum a considerable sum of money.

Of course, the financial benefits of a robust volunteer corps do not fully encompass the value volunteerism can present to an institution. What about the less tangible values offered to the volunteers, to the museum, and their community? How should one address the benefits of self-esteem, of social interaction, of community-building? First, we should understand that volunteerism is fundamentally a motivated phenomenon, as defined by Mannino, et. al. (2011). They argue a volunteer's motivations will dispose him or her to push through barriers to participation in order to volunteer. Furthermore, these motivations will both push people towards particular types of actions and volunteerism, and will encourage their volunteerism over an extended

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period of time despite the cost to them in terms of money, time, and intellectual, emotional, and physical effort (Mannino et. al. 2011:129; Snyder and Omoto 2007, 2008). Though it may seem obvious, it is important to emphasize the pivotal role of motivations throughout a volunteer's tenure at a museum or other organization, both in terms of initial interest and a volunteer's continued experiences.

Volunteer motivations can be sorted into two broad categories: "selfish" motivations that directly benefit the volunteer her- or himself, and "altruistic" motivations that directly benefit others besides the individual volunteer. Mannino, et. al. created a similar category of "individual" and "group" – focused motivations. They also present three possible perspectives to use when analyzing volunteer work - a *functional perspective* that explores what purposes, needs, and goals volunteering serves for an individual, such as what they are attempting to accomplish and gain from their service; an *identity perspective*, which focuses on the ways in which volunteerism helps construct an individual's self-identity, such as a volunteer who offers her or his time in because "my family has always volunteered"; and a *community perspective*, in which connections to community may help to create and encourage volunteerism, both as an initial context for a volunteer and as something that may be built over the course of a volunteer's tenure (Mannino, et. al. 2011).

Within a functionalist context, personal, self-focused motivations appear to be some of the most widespread and powerful incentives for volunteers (Snyder & Omoto 2008:11-12). "Personal" motivations are those that originate within the volunteer and serve to further goals previously established by the individual. Research indicates that

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the more a volunteer's experiences fall in line with their personal motivations - that is, the more their service fulfills their desires and expectations that led them to volunteer in the first place - the greater the likelihood that they will report satisfaction with their experiences. More satisfied volunteers tend to stay longer at their chosen institutions and complete more work (Snyder & Omoto 2008:14-16).

Personal choice and responsibility have been major facets of volunteerism since its early American history. Even today, there is a strong connection between individualism - both the mental orientation towards it and the actions that indicate an individual has taken on community and personal duties for him or herself - and volunteerism. The more strongly individual a community is, the more likely it is that the same community will have a higher incidence of volunteerism. Though such a situation seems contradictory, it is supported in previous research (Snyder & Omoto 2008:20).

Of course, a deeper exploration of these classifications reveals nuances that complicate the apparent simplicity. What of volunteers who motivate for a mosaic of reasons, some "selfish" and some not? How should one classify volunteers whose motivations ultimately benefit both themselves and their community, such as individuals who gain increased "social capital" that simultaneously encourages civic engagement?

"Social capital" is, broadly, the networks of social relationships amongst people that enable a given society to function in what is considered to be an effective manner. This research focuses in particular on Pierre Bourdieu's definition of social capital, which defines social capital as the combination of both actual and potential resources linked to a network of institutionalized relationships. Bourdieu paid particular attention to the

advantages given to those who possess social capital, and to the deliberate social constructions intended to increase and create social capital (Bourdieu 1986). To properly negotiate these more complex factors such as the influence of social capital, we should break down volunteer motivations into more discrete categories.

Such categories are explained by Houle et. al, whose categories of volunteer motivations include *values* (altruism and concern for others), *understanding* (volunteerism presents opportunities for learning and personal growth), *career* (increasing job prospects), *social* (volunteerism occurs because of external social motivations and expectations, such as social pressure to become a blood donor), *protective* ("whereby one volunteers to reduce feelings of guilt about being more fortunate than others, or to escape from one's own problems") and *esteem/enhancement* (in which volunteerism enhances self-esteem and self-acceptance) (Houle, et. al 2005:337-338).

To these, it was necessary to add three more related, though distinct, categories: *civic engagement, education,* and *social interaction*. Volunteers interested in civic engagement will offer up their time in order to be more engaged with the community, to "give back" through their efforts (however distinct this process of return may be in the volunteer's mind) in order to assist or improve various aspects of their community. Though closely related to the altruism mentioned in the description of the "values" function, this motivation allows for a specific focus on the community and the benefits such participation may provide for both the volunteer and other groups and individuals.

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Education is also related to another pre-existing criterion, in this case "understanding". However, within the context of this thesis, the "education" motivation is taken to mean relatively compulsory service required by educational programs. This includes community service required by any number of high schools and scholarship programs, as well as internships that are part of a college degree. For instance, a college-aged volunteer may be at a museum simply because her or his degree requires it as a condition for graduation. Compulsory volunteering may also occur as part of a mandate to perform community service, such as one that might be required by a judge as part of a formal punishment for an individual's wrongdoing and their subsequent judgment within a legal system.

Social interaction refers to the need for interaction with other individuals in a social setting. If a volunteer fulfills this motivation, they may state that they joined a volunteer program in order to "get out more", or to "find friends". This motivation may be an initial factor pushing a person to volunteer, or it may be a factor that comes to prominence after some time spent in a volunteer program. Social interaction may also be fulfilled by interacting with staff members and museum visitors.

Do any of these motivations hold precedence over the others? Hettman and Jenkins contend that volunteers are largely motivated by social interest. Rather than addressing purely personal concerns, "social interest" is attention towards the concerns and interests of others, a decidedly more altruistic focus (Hettman and Jenkins 1990:299). Houle, et. al. concludes that volunteers will prefer tasks that work towards fulfilling their individual needs. More positive volunteer experiences can occur if these

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needs are recognized and encouraged, a point that is reinforced by other authors (Houle, et. al. 2005:343; Snyder & Omoto 2008:14-16).

Given the relatively wide array of motivations, as well as differing academic opinions, it is likely that volunteers in this study will present a range of motivations that inform their work. Both modern American society and the individual forces operating within it are the result of a long history, both within and outside of the museum environment, that influences a volunteer's life and subsequent motivations. Museum volunteerism can therefore originate in a complex network of motivations that result from a volunteer's position in contemporary society and take influence from the history of civil society, volunteerism, and museum practice (to be discussed in more depth below). Museums may be viewed in a multitude of ways that affect a volunteer's perception of their workplace and their motivations. A museum may be a community space that fulfills a volunteer's altruistic goals, or it may be seen as a place where volunteers can fulfill their personal interests in the museum's subject matter. It may be an environment in which a volunteer can further their career-focused goals by working with staff and materials in their field of interest. A museum could even be a place of punishment for a court-ordered community service volunteer, required to serve in the museum as fulfillment of an order handed down by a judge.

Civil Society and Volunteerism

Because field work for this research was done within the United States, it is important to consider the impact of American culture and and civil society values on

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volunteerism. Civil society ideology draws upon ideals of community contribution and small group power in directing events. American civil society also traditionally values individual liberty – that is, the individual's ability to independently determine their own course and actions (Snyder & Omoto 2008:20). Volunteerism is part of (though not unique to) American history and society. It was often integral to the establishment of early European colonial and frontier settlements throughout the North American continent, from assisting neighbors with agricultural duties to establishing volunteer organizations that served the entire community, such as volunteer fire departments (Snyder & Omoto 2008:25).

Civil society is not necessarily synonymous with democracy, though the two concepts developed in tandem. It is therefore important to clarify that "civil society", when discussed in this research, refers specifically to the Anglo-American civil society that gave rise to the ideals of pluralism, individual agency, and the individual's responsibility towards contributing to the "greater good". It is a unique combination of individual freedoms and a person's responsibility to their society, individual and community, altruism and self-interest (O'Connell 2000:472; Putnam 2000:25).

In a theoretical civil society, individuals freely contribute their time and abilities without coercion or force. The concept of civil society embraces a wide variety of participants operating within diverse frameworks and situations. American civil society in practice is a balance between personal civil liberties and individual responsibility to the well-being of a community (O'Connell 1999:10-11). Civil society does not encompass the entire operating system of a country or community. It must function

alongside the forces of the state (government) and the commercial market. None of these forces are able to function independently – one force may be (and often is) shaped by the other two. For example, volunteers may mention financial or political factors that influence their decision to volunteer. A person may volunteer for a political campaign because of their political and social beliefs, and also as a means for personal and even financial gain (such as to further a career in politics by building social connections and gaining familiarity with the political process).

The ideology of civil society may come into conflict with other ideologies and systems. For instance, both the state and commercial realms restrict the individual liberty of a citizen for what are deemed necessary purposes. State and federal laws forbid citizens from embezzling money in order to protect the financial status of the government, though such a law would restrict a given person's individual liberty. Commercial markets may restrict a person's choices in other ways. Someone may not be able to pursue their interests to the full extent of their liberty because of obligations imposed by commercial structures such as employment, taxes, the need for goods to be acquired on the market, and so on. It is therefore necessary to recognize that American civil society does not occur in a vacuum. Neither, then, will the experiences of the volunteers involved occur in a vacuum where individuals are free to do as they please.

Historical Context and Development of American Civil Society

American civil society is rooted in the ideals generated by the thinkers of the European Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was a set of values and worldviews rather

than a discrete collection of specified, agreed-upon beliefs (Outram 2006:29). There are many intellectual paths to follow within this tradition, some of which may even contradict each other. That said, these numerous intellectual paths often agreed on a broad set of principles that shaped much of subsequent thought and action and helped to develop American civil society.

Some of the core values that were developed through much of Enlightenment thinking were freedom, democracy, and reason. Kant writes that "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity" (Kant 1991: 54). This immaturity is not caused by a lack of intellectual acumen, but by the lack of courage to use one's own thought and reason without the guidance of a higher force such as a monarchy or the Christian church. Enlightenment thinkers like Kant urged the use of this courage, the growth beyond the need for a guiding personage or body. This autonomy and the ideal of Kant's Enlightenment is a direct ancestor to the American civil society, which strongly encourages individualism, freedom, and public service as administered and maintained by the people (Ludwig 2007).

Hegel proposed a major change in civil society ideology when he presented it as a separate "system of needs" that referred to individual interests and private property (2003:239). He connected the emergence of civil society with the emergence of modern capitalism, writing that the individualistic tenets of both connected the two. Because it is also the realm of capitalistic interests, civil society can be rife with inequality and conflict - an observation that is perhaps more reflective of the reality of civil society in the contemporary United States than of the ideological rhetoric that accompanies civic

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efforts. Hegel wrote that the solution to this inequality was the installation of an authoritarian state to maintain ethical order (2003:282).

Alexis de Tocqueville contested Hegel's championing of authoritarianism, however. De Tocqueville made a careful and more nuanced distinction between political society (the state) and civil society (the people). He argued that civil society exists as a counterbalance to political society, unfettered individualism, and the "tyranny of the majority" (2003[1840]:116). Unlimited freedom of association, de Tocqueville wrote, can be dangerous to society and in particular to a young nation (2003[1840]:114). He makes it clear that these two societies - political and civil - must exist in harmony. One side must be strong and supported in order to check the excesses of the other. A successful civil society must find the balance between the needs of the individual and those of the community.

De Tocqueville acknowledged the importance of cooperation and association within the early American republic. He wrote that "As soon as common affairs are treated in common, each man notices that he is not as independent of his fellows as he used to suppose and that to get their help he must often offer his aid to them" (2003[1840]:120). Thus, he further developed earlier Enlightenment ideals of individualism and intellectual autonomy. Here, individuals must band together for mutual support and betterment into a civil society. Such communities of individuals must also create a balance against the pitfalls of an occasionally flawed but still necessary political society. De Tocqueville wrote that "The free institutions of the United States and the political rights enjoyed there provide a thousand continual reminders to every

citizen that he lives in society. At every moment they bring his mind back to this idea, that it is the duty as well as the interest of men to be useful to their fellows" (2003[1840]:122). The existence of a healthy civil society depends upon the support and effort of individuals for the benefit of the entire group.

Marx further develops the concept of civil society by investigating its relation to power, economics, and social structure. He declares that civil society is the "base" where production and social relations take place, whereas political society is the "superstructure" (in other words, a society's culture, institutions, political systems, roles, rituals, and state). Civil society and the "base" represent the working class, while political society and the "superstructure" represents the interests of the dominant class - the bourgeoisie (Edwards 2004:10). Capitalism is a force used by the dominant class to control the working class and civil society. Marx concludes by refuting Hegel's idea of the benevolent, controlling state and political society, arguing that it does more harm than good. The state will disappear once the working class takes control of society - making it a more purely civil society.

Gramsci does not conflate civil society with the socio-economic "base" as Marx does. Instead, he places civil society within the political superstructure, where he describes the vital role that civil society plays in creating a cultural and ideological basis on which the hegemony of capitalism can flourish (Ehrenberg 1999:209-210). In Gramsci's model, civil society has more power than it is accorded in Marx's work. It is not simply subject to the forces of political society or other influences, but has a active and forceful role in shaping and maintaining society. While Gramsci does not conclude

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that the influence of civil society is always positive, he reacted against Marxist theory and echoed de Tocqueville's arguments when he granted more power to civil society.

While it has a rich and complex history within the intellectual and social spheres of European thought, civil society as part of American culture has its own unique history and influencing factors. O'Connell points to the early English and Puritan heritage of the American colonizers as one such factor that led to the development of the Early American concept of civil society (O'Connell 1999:28). British law, carried over into the colonies, as well as the Puritan emphasis on rights, due process, and other protections of personal and property rights established the ideological heritage of contemporary civil society in the United States. Practical, survival-based pressures also exacted considerable influence on the unique development of American civil society. A cohesive, mutually supportive community was vital in an unfamiliar and often times hostile environment (de Tocqueville 2007[1840]:205; Snyder and Omoto 2008:25). A Puritan man might own his own land and be considered the sole owner of his possessions, yet he was also expected to participate fully within his community, such as attending church and assisting neighbors with agricultural tasks. Alexis de Tocqueville points to the arrival and subsequent influence of Puritan culture in North America as one of the major events in the development of what was to become American civil society (2007[1840]:205).

Moreover, this land did not present the colonists with the same pre-determined hierarchies and restraints of their European homeland. Many settlers were determined not to be ruled by an individual king, emperor, or czar. For them, America represented a new start, the potential for a new community in which power was placed in the hands of

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the citizens themselves rather than a single, often self-serving individual (O'Connell 1999:29). For many of the European colonists, the land presented new opportunities to develop a society that they believed would function more effectively and fairly than those of their homelands across the Atlantic Ocean.

Within the United States of the twentieth century, civil society took on an enhanced, if not entirely unfamiliar, import. Several noted volunteer organizations were founded in this era, including the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis, and the Lions Club, all of which are still active today and continue to promote volunteer efforts throughout the nation. Volunteerism went from being a primarily religious and social venture (a role that developed in the eighteenth century), to one that was more professionalized and codified in the twentieth century. The Industrial Revolution and approaching twentieth century produced more wealth for some, as well as creating new pathways for philanthropy and volunteerism. These included community foundations like the above-mentioned Rotaries and Lions Clubs, as well as the creation of a "community chest" to benefit individuals within a community, and the eventual creation of Volunteer Manager and Coordinator positions within institutions (Putnam 2001:121; Snyder and Omoto: 2008).

The increasingly desperate financial and social situation of the 1920s and 1930s pushed for increased volunteerism. Volunteers of America, founded in 1896, writes that its members worked to provide food, shelter, and employment assistance to those affected by the Great Depression (Volunteers of America 2012). President Herbert Hoover believed strongly in volunteerism, both as a vital component of a functioning democracy

and as an aid to economy (Myers-Lipton 2006:161). Some may view Hoover's financial ideas with suspicion, as many blame his administration for exacerbating financial difficulties which led to the Great Depression of the 1930s. However, volunteerism had clearly begun to gain prominence as a result of the financial straits of the Great Depression, especially as a way to address social issues that arose from the crisis and decreased government involvement (a process that would be echoed later on in response to the rise of neoliberal economic policies, discussed later in this chapter).

Both world wars further encouraged people to become volunteers, both at home and on the front. During World War II, Volunteers of America offered lodging and food for service members on leave, as well as affordable housing and child care for those working in the defense industry. The organization also ran a number of community salvage drives, collecting scrap metal and other materials that could be donated towards the war effort (Volunteers of America 2012). During the Cold War conflict with the Soviet Union, from 1946 to 1991, democracy and civil society were held up as the antithesis to Soviet Communism. This is a notable juxtaposition given the communal tendencies inherent in American civil society, particularly early American society. Later, this contrast would be employed in U.S. foreign policy to justify multiple counterinsurgency efforts throughout the world (Paley 2002:473).

Not all Americans have viewed volunteerism in the same positive light cast by Volunteers of America and other organizations. Some have focused entirely on the individualistic nature of American society and have deemed volunteerism to be un-American or even dangerous to our society. Mandatory volunteer service, such as that

required to obtain a degree or to complete court-ordered community service, is seen as forced service, an intrusion in private motivations that is akin to moral indoctrination and even punishment (Ralston 2000).

Non-Americans have also offered critiques of volunteerism, particularly volunteer efforts that are the result of missionary efforts. Such religious-based volunteerism and, indeed, Western altruistic motivations may be readily seen as an extension of colonialist tendencies. Ivan Illich, along with Paulo Friere, Edward Said, bell hooks, and numerous other critics of altruistic missionary volunteerism, see these aid efforts as attempts to subjugate and dictate the behavior of indigenous peoples through a veil of providing moralistic aid (Illich 1968). Altruism becomes authoritarianism, a way to control and subjugate others through the mask of volunteer aid.

While foreign volunteer aid is readily susceptible to critique, the large majority of rhetoric surrounding American volunteerism is positive (Mannino et. al 2011:128). Apart from the followers of Ayn Rand, it is difficult to find critiques of domestic volunteerism. Americans' reactions to American volunteerism are typically supportive, both throughout the course of history and, as will be seen in the interviews conducted for this study, in contemporary settings as well.

Today, civil society is often characterized by a constantly shifting set of values which may be shaped to fit each group's particular cause (Paley 2002:471), however much this may conflict with the projected altruistic ideology of American civil society. As stated earlier, modern American civil society is more realistically characterized by its combination of individual self-interest and the desire to serve one's

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community (O'Connell 2000:472). These goals are not always mutually exclusive. Like the complex and varied models of society put forth by the anthropological theorists discussed below, the motivations behind volunteerism and American civil society are more nuanced than a cursory glance would reveal.

Robert Putnam in particular provides an expansive survey of American civil society, volunteerism, and altruistic tendencies in the 20th century. Putnam writes that older generations (that is, fifty or older) are more civically engaged; this may be due in part to the attention devoted towards civic service in the early half of the twentieth century, in response to World War II and the rise of the Communist Soviet Union. For example, Americans who were active during the Second World War were strongly encouraged to "do their part" in order to support the war effort and their compatriots overseas and at home. Such attitudes were certainly present earlier - service organizations such the Lions Club International and Rotary International were founded in the early 20th century. However, such encouragement towards volunteerism intensified and remained a integral part of many individuals' lives as they matured. These volunteer tendencies may have played an important role in defining the identity of some volunteers, especially those who continued to volunteer throughout the course of their lives (Snyder and Omoto 2008:25).

This World War II generation was especially civic minded, an attitude that carried forth throughout that particular generation's lifespan. This included an increase in civic engagement in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as a boom in civic engagement (as measured by membership levels of organizations Putnam considers to be engaged in the local civic

life of a community, such as the above-mentioned Rotaries and Lions Clubs) during the 1980s. This period is considered to be the peak "joining years" of the Word War II generation as they began to retire and encounter increased leisure time (Putnam 2000:21).

Civic engagement was often seen as a drive that was an integral part of the American character and political system, in contrast to the social and ideological principles of Fascism, Totalitarianism, and Communism that had been or were then dominating other societies across the world. The 1960s also followed as another civically engaged decade, particularly with younger Americans, who made up a large part of the Peace Corps, and who also helped to foster a widespread and politically active youth counterculture. During this era, Putnam notes that positive regard for politics amongst members of the American public was at 36% (2000:65) - a relatively high measurement that has not been matched since.

Putnam's general thesis is that American civic engagement has decreased since its peak sometime during the 1950s and 1960s. He notes the falling rates of voter turnout, membership on public committees, and running for public office, among other factors, as being indicative of this trend. Where demographic information has remained the same or even improved, Putnam often finds a factor that points to decreased levels of interest in civic life. This includes the rising membership numbers of large national organizations, such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP); while these organizations may be gaining members, Putnam concludes that they are more like especially large mailing lists than an involved civic organization such as the Rotaries and Lions Clubs of

years past. The interests of such groups is focused on a more national and impersonal level. On a smaller scale, Putnam also notes the increasing numbers of people who bowl in America, yet places such information beside the decreasing numbers of people who join bowling leagues - the "bowling alone" phenomenon of his book's title (Putnam 2000:66).

Putnam considers a range of factors when examining the potential causes of decreased civic participation throughout the twentieth century. He eventually discards such explanations as women's increasing presence in the workplace, as well as the "re-potting" hypothesis - the idea that the frequent mobility of many people in American society - such as moving away from families and communities of origin, often many hundreds or thousands of miles away - may disconnect individuals from any community, similar to how frequently moving a plant from container to container may irreparably damage its roots. Such factors are certainly of note, but do not seem to account for the major shift in American civic engagement. Instead, Putnam focuses on the rising influence of "individualizing" technologies, namely technologies that cater to the growing leisure time of many Americans. Such technologies most notably include television and the internet. Putnam even suggests the rise of "virtual reality helmets" as a progression of what he argues are individualizing, even isolating technologies that run counter to a number of civic values (Putnam 2000:180-181).

Putnam also discusses the concept of social capital and its relation to civic engagement in American society (2000:26-27). This is especially relevant, as Bourdieu's concept of social capital (particularly as discussed in *Distinction*) was another major

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theoretical influence in this research. Putnam describes his conception of social capital as "civic virtue", a trait that requires a wealth of reciprocal social relationships to function properly (2000:175). He also makes a distinction between the private and public faces of social capital, factors which easily influence the shape and intent of social capital and its use in civil society. Private social capital is defined as benefiting personal interests - for example, an individual may seek to exploit and boost her private social capital through networking with colleagues and other individuals in her professional field. She may gain employment through social networking with said colleagues, thus benefiting in a personal and financial manner through her private social capital (Putnam 2000:23).

Social networks that rely on the movement of social capital also require rules of conduct in order for participants to gain the most from their mutual relationships. Reciprocity, both specific - "You did this for me; therefore, I will do this particular thing for you" - and general - "I will do this for you, with the expectation that I will gain social capital and you will eventually do something beneficial for me" - is a vital factor in social networks, as well as "trustworthiness", which acts as a kind of social lubricant used to get things done within social networks in a more timely and efficient manner than without it. Putnam also further categorizes different "sizes" of social capital, which require different levels and kinds of engagement for the participants involved. For instance, the kind of social capital required to effectively participate in familial circles is often very different from the social capital necessary to move through the world of a online community (Putnam 2000:143).

While social capital can do much for increasing benefits to individuals and groups, it can also have a dark side. Putnam cites examples in which groups can build considerable social capital and deep, frequently meaningful relationships amongst themselves, all while damaging relationships with others outside of their immediate group. Such examples include gangs, communities of people who frequently invoke the "not in my backyard" response to new and perceptually threatening presences in their neighborhoods, and the financial and social elite of American society (the "1%", as characterized by the recent Occupy Wall Street movement). Members of these groups are ably situated to exploit the social capital within their circles, but often do so at the expense of those outside of their immediate group. This is particularly relevant to Crooke's examination of civil society and civic values. She notes that communities of people must often exclude people by their very nature. In other words, in order to create a cohesive group based around a given set of values and ways in which members can interact with the world around them, others must be denied entry, either consciously or unconsciously (Crooke 2008:173). This is what Putnam describes as "bonding" social capital, in which social capital is created and employed to strengthen ties in an already existing group. Of course, such efforts can narrow the identity of the group and self, creating an environment that, in an especially bad case, can create ethnocentrism and sectarianism. Contrast this to "bridging" social capital, which may not be as strong (at least initially) as bonding social capital, but which can expand both the self and community and create more expansive social and civic networks. Putnam argues that

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many groups can bond in some dimensions while simultaneously bridging in others, though such situations are not automatically a given (Putnam 2000:343).

Putnam pays particular attention to the efforts of volunteers, arguing that it is an especially visible form of civic engagement and is therefore a valuable tool for evaluating the civic engagement of a given society at a particular point in time. Of course, there is a careful distinction to be made between "doing with" and "doing for". As Putnam writes, "Social capital refers to networks of social connection - doing with. Doing good for other people, however, laudable, is not part of the definition of social capital" (Putnam 2000:118). Volunteerism and philanthropy are also not the same thing. There is a significant difference between offering one's time and effort, particularly in a way that requires the physical presence and effort of a volunteer, and simply donating a sum of money to a given cause. Volunteerism, in contrast to various forms of philanthropy, is far more effective in building social capital and creating a more dense and supportive social and civic network (Putnam 2000:140).

What demographic factors, according to Putnam, push individuals to volunteer? Education appears to be a major factor; the more education a person receives, the more likely they are to be civically engaged in multiple ways, including volunteerism (Putnam 2000:121). Higher education is, of course, also tied to a number of other factors, such as race and ethnicity, financial stability, and age. Specifically, someone is more likely to volunteer if they are white, middle- or upper-class, and older (especially if this individual is old enough to have retired). Furthermore, though Putnam does not mention this in his chapter devoted to volunteerism in civil society, it is possible to draw parallels between

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the likelihood of an individual to volunteer and their social status. The above-mentioned factors that are amenable to volunteerism – higher education, higher income, being a member of a particular racial or ethnic group – are also tied to the upper social strata that Bourdieu argues dominates social life and discourse (Bourdieu 1984). The tastes and aesthetic choices of a particular class that dominates a volunteer program is likely to have a noticeable effect on the direction of the program and the demographics of its members.

Furthermore, involvement in other social networks is a ready predictor of increased volunteerism. Individuals who are active in other social networks, such as churches and local politics, are more likely to volunteer. People who are also socially active within their communities – "schmoozing", as Putnam calls it – are also predisposed to volunteerism. Such people also tend to have been volunteers throughout their lives – Putnam writes that "adult volunteers and givers are particularly distinguished by their civic involvement as youth" (Putnam 2000:124).

Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Volunteerism

This research takes an anthropological approach to the study of American museum volunteerism. Such an approach focuses on the importance of historic and cultural context, ethnography, and participant observation. Ethnography has been one of the most powerful and widespread methods used within anthropology since the early 20th century. Broadly, ethnography is an attempt to explain actions and ideas, worldviews and visions, that may seem inexplicable - to "grasp the texture of a particular lifeworld" (Bouquet 2012:108). More simply, it is the scientific study and description of a particular

culture or community's way of interacting with each other and the world around

them. Participant observation is a data collection method in which the researcher

becomes closely involved with the individuals and communities concerned through

participation in their cultural environment over an extended period of time. Participant

observation is at the heart of ethnography, both of which are vital components of

anthropological study (Bouquet 2012:17; Tierney 2000).

While anthropologists have provided a great deal of theoretical context and

direction for this thesis, other disciplines such as sociology have also provided valuable

insight for this study. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical work has also helped

to provide a great deal of information and theoretical groundwork affecting the focus and

direction of this research. These include issues of power, contestation, and struggle

discussed in Bourdieu's work. Bourdieu argues that the struggle for power characterizes

society, social activity, and social interactions (Bourdieu 1989 Kloot 2009:471). Not

only does he argue that the way an individual wields language communicates her or his

perception of power and authority in a given relationship or situation, but this same use of

language may be employed as an active tool to demonstrate or even change an

individual's power relationships (Bourdieu 1989:20; Bourdieu 1991:68). For instance,

volunteers at the DAM or the Museo, for instance, may demonstrate their knowledge of

art and art history by using "correct" terminology and pronunciations. Volunteers who

are not sufficiently educated in either the intellectual field or the social mores of their

volunteer network may use "incorrect" terminology and pronunciations in their work. A

more sufficiently embedded volunteer – that is, one who is deeply embedded within the

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intellectual and social landscape of their museum and volunteer program, as well as its historic and cultural context – may correct the less-versed volunteer, thus demonstrating both their knowledge and potentially higher (and more valued) social standing within the program. In this sense, language both represents and is used to reinforce and build relationships based on power and social activity.

In line with this argument, any information omitted or only referred to in passing during the course of the research was also of interest. For instance, an interviewee may self-censor an anecdote by only alluding to certain particulars or even outright refusing to discuss them; such an incidence may indicate that they feel as if they don't have the social or cultural capital to fully realize their story. Of course, identifying this censorship is easier said than done, given that it may be internalized or accepted as part of the social milieu (Bourdieu 1991:138). Still, an awareness of this potential effect of power on language and expression is highly useful in regards to this research.

Social capital is another factor that arises in Bourdieu's work and is also of interest to this research. Individuals do not always consciously act in order to gain social, cultural, or financial capital. That is to say, the explicit intent to gain social capital (or "social standing", "prestige", "dignity", or other such linguistic and cultural indicators of social capital) is not necessary for a volunteer or other individual to act in a given manner. The volunteer who corrects another volunteer for using "incorrect" language may not be doing so in order to demonstrate their higher levels of education and social standing. They may simply act in order to share information, or to save the other volunteer from embarrassment. Though they may indeed increase their social capital

through that interaction, it is not their conscious desire to do so. Bourdieu ultimately concludes that human behavior and action is the result of the desire for dignity and recognition, a desire that can only be fulfilled by participation in society and does not require the conscious drive to gain and exchange social capital (Wacquant 2006:218).

This desire for dignity involves submission to others' scrutiny, but also allows the individual to gain the reassurance and recognition offered by these same others. Thus, it is overly simplistic to say that an individual works solely towards the attainment of power, or of capital, or of any discrete goal. This is relevant to the research at hand, given that volunteerism, with its focus on unpaid and freely-given work, does not easily lend itself to the attainment of power or of economic capital. It does, however, have the potential to help volunteers achieve social capital - the sense of dignity and social acclaim the Bourdieu argues is so essential to many societies.

Bourdieu's emphasis on cultural and social capital signified a departure from existing Marxist theory, which concentrated on *economic* capital without giving much thought to the potential influence of social relationships within social spaces or "fields" (Bourdieu 1986; Kloot 2009:471). While it is likely that economic concerns can play at least some part in the array of volunteer motivations, it is equally unlikely that financial issues will prove the sole factor in a given volunteer's drive to offer up their time and skill. A volunteer may have the reserved income to offer their free labor to a museum, but that alone does not guarantee that a person will become a volunteer. Such an individual would also need further motivation, such as personal interest, social pressure,

personal history, and so on. Bourdieu's focus on cultural capital encourages consideration of *all* factors playing into volunteer experiences.

According to Bourdieu's theory, social agents (such as volunteers) act according to their "feel for the game", with "feel" being, roughly, *habitus*, and the "game" being the *field*. Bourdieu conceived of habitus as the dispositions (that is, the different ways of thinking, perceiving, and acting) that have been developed in response to objective social structures. Thus, objective social structures have been absorbed into a given individual's disposition. The basic framework of a society is often an integral factor in how a person relates to her or his world. Society is expressed through personal dispositions, which do not often work at a conscious level. Instead, habitus is characterized by how entrenched it is within a social agent's mind and experiences (Bourdieu 1977; Wacquant 2005:316).

A "field" is a structured social space with its own unique rules, organization, "schemes of domination", etc. - much like a museum. It would be helpful to consider museums as their own fields, which must be considered on the basis of their own given rules and relationships, rather than on externally-imposed structures of other fields. Moreover, consideration should be given to the notion that volunteers move amongst different fields, such as that which encompasses the museum, their jobs, their social lives, their academic careers, and so on. This research is then concerned with what happens when volunteers transition between and amongst these fields. Do the rules and perceptions that make up a given field negate another, or do volunteers create a new field or way of bringing two or more conceptual fields together?

Given the nature of habitus and Bourdieu's concept of the field, it is vital to consider the social structures that, according to Bourdieu, will have played a major role in the creation of a person's disposition; in the case of this research, we should examine whether the American social structure, based as heavily as it is in civil society ideology, plays a major role in the development of a volunteer's disposition.

Bourdieu's concept of "taste" as discussed in *Distinction* is especially relevant to this work, as it discusses taste in the form of cultural consumption, including museum visitation. The parallels between taste (as it is discussed with regards to an individual or group's relation to a museum), and with the experiences of volunteers *at* museums are obvious and relevant. Volunteerism can be interpreted as another form of consumption, especially when it is undertaken with particular regard towards an individual's personal interests and tastes . How someone interacts with and views culture and traditional bastions of "culture" such as museums will affect both their experiences with the museum and with other individuals. Conflicts in taste and cultural consumption may produce conflicts amongst volunteers, whether or not such tension is acknowledged or even consciously undertaken.

Bourdieu writes that the high culture values (the "tastes") of an elite ruling class dominate a society. These tastes of the ruling class becomes the standard, the ideal by which other tastes are measured and judged. People from lower and less powerful classes are encouraged to adopt these tastes and discard the seemingly crass and disgusting aesthetics appropriated to the lower classes. People who do embrace these "lower" aesthetic values are seen as crude and tasteless. Others who originate from a higher

social strata should, according to Bourdieu, feel an almost visceral intolerance, a revulsion, when confronted with the aesthetics of a lower class (Bourdieu 1984).

Bourdieu writes that such tastes are ingrained within a person very early on in their life, and that they are linked closely to social origin and educational level (Bourdieu 1984:1). It becomes difficult to discard these social tastes and, thus, it becomes just as difficult for an individual to achieve upward social mobility. Upper social classes have access to increased cultural capital (in addition to social and economic capital). Ultimately, Bourdieu argues that this system of tastes and cultural capital is a system of cultural hegemony that keeps the ruling class in its primacy over other classes and tastes (Bourdieu 1984:228).

Volunteers can be easily affected by this sense of taste and social strata both when choosing where to volunteer, and how they conduct themselves once they have begun volunteering. Bourdieu specifically states that "art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences" (1984:7).

The Denver Art Museum and the Museo de las Americas are places for the creation, consumption, and exchange of both art and culture. Volunteerism within these places can be a specific act of participating within that cultural aesthetic, especially with regards to how it may or may not be considered "appropriate" to one's social station and social aspirations. This particular framework is very useful in terms of evaluating the reasons for a volunteer's interest and participation in a given field - why would someone volunteer at the DAM in particular, or the Museo? Why would they choose an art

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museum, and not a history or science museum? Why would a person decide to volunteer at a museum in the first place, instead of at another organization? Such differences can be examined through this lens, with a particular focus on social strata and the cultural aspirations and hegemony of volunteers. This can even be used to examine the differences and potential conflicts amongst volunteers that may arise during their times as volunteers at their chosen institutions.

Museums in the Context of Civil Society and the Anthropology of Museums

Museums have a long history as civic institutions. In addition, they have been framed as sites for the anthropological study of museums themselves since the 1990s. This framing of the museum as a unique site worthy of research in its own right extends to both the concept of "museums" as a whole and also to the large array of people that come into contact with the museum as its surrounding "community". These historical and social precedents have come together to create the current climate of museum practice and study in the contemporary United States.

In one of its earliest incarnations, the concept of the museum had its origins in the private collections of high-ranking individuals in European society of the 17th and 18th centuries. Now commonly known as a "cabinet of curiosities", these antecedents of the modern museum were repositories of objects intended to reflect the personality and accomplishments of an individual. An affluent member of society might use a cabinet of curiosities to show their expensive travels to "exotic" regions, or their wide network of social connections, both of which would readily contribute to their collection. The

viewing of these objects was very restricted in terms of class and social connections, particularly considering that these were the private collections of individuals with high social status (Ames 1992:16; Bouquet 2012:82).

Gradually, such collections expanded and became more readily available to members of the public. However, these early museums still restricted access based largely on social class and academic standing. For instance, the British Museum, while theoretically open to the public from its inception as a museum, for many years required potential visitors to apply for one of a limited number of tickets issued daily. Tickets could be denied if the applicant was deemed somehow "unworthy", e.g., by having low social standing. Once inside, a small group of visitors (usually no more than ten at a time) were ushered through the building following a set path. Visitors rarely had more than half an hour to tour the vast collections of the museum.

Early American museums took their cues from this European precedent established by the British Museum and other institutions. The Charleston Museum, acknowledged as one of the earliest American museums, is one such institution. It was founded in 1773, but first opened to the public fifty-one years later in 1824. The early years of the museum were instead associated with prominent members of South Carolinian society, as well as individuals known for their scientific renown (n.d., The Charleston Museum). Such restrictive museum practices were not unique to history and science museums. Early American art museums such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art also followed these practices even after the advent of the public museum (Conn 2010:204).

These practices were to be found not only in exhibits and interactions with the public, but also in the architecture of the museum, which continues to influence visitors even today. Both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art were built with long corridors that were meant to be walked along in a continuous or near-continuous rate, and often in a predetermined narrative order. The physical space did not lend itself to lingering, or to extended conversation and association with fellow visitors. The construction of these museums and many like them thus did not allow for easy community gathering and association (Conn 2010:204-206).

Later museum developments did begin to show a more positive inclination towards the public and the surrounding community of the museum, however. Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum, later known as Peale's American Museum, has strong ties with modern museums in terms of public access and appeal. For instance, Peale charged admission to his museum, opening it to whoever could pay the fee. He broke with the tradition of restricting museum access to the educated and the privileged, though the admission fee did admittedly skew visitor demographics to the middle and upper classes. Peale believed that museums should at least be partially run on public funds and appeal to members of the public through its exhibitions. However, he was not in favor of completely free access; Peale wrote that admissions would prevent the museum from becoming overrun and "abused" by the full social and financial range of potential visitors. Peale's American Museum was also structured to draw parallels with economic institutions, in contrast with the more intellectually-minded institutions both in early America and abroad. Cases were often made to look like shop windows with the

objects inside, therefore drawing parallels to consumer goods. Exhibits and the museum in general were advertised to the public in popular newspapers and magazines of the day – one of the earliest examples of museum marketing (Conn 2010:210; Ward 2004:103-104). Peale's museum not only set a precedent for cultural institutions that were seeking to attract and appeal to a wide range of community members; it also set the stage for the museum as an economic venture.

While the economic role of museums developed, its social and cultural impact became more marked. The museum was transitioning from a private or state-managed space, to a more shared, communal space - though this transition was (and still is) often a slow and circuitous process (Ames 1992:21; Black 2010:129; Bouquet 2012:79; Conn 2010:223). Class distinctions were still in effect within museums, though they were not as formally enforced as they were in previous years. For example, the "public" was often depicted as uneducated and unsophisticated in literature and imagery, unworthy of the previously exclusive intellectual space. They were characterized as unable to fully appreciate the museum and the meanings contained within, employing the intellectually stagnant sense of "wonder" instead of the academically prized and supposedly more active sense of "curiosity" (Bennett 2006:265). Members of the public were, in short, believed to be incapable of fully appreciating the museum from their naïve, uneducated points of view (Bouquet 2012:86).

As museums opened to the public and increased their reach, their ability to present, reinforce, and construct cultural and social narratives grew. The museum-going public had little actual say in the construction and presentation of this information,

regardless of whether or not they believed they had a hand in the operations of their museums. Museums were centralized, authoritative sources of knowledge, managed by curators and scientists. There was little in the way of civic participation from all but the most well-regarded and socially prominent community members. Instead of allowing the public to take an active role in museum-related tasks, curators and other museum administrators were more interested in civic improvement, or civic "experiments" designed to educate and improve their visitors (Ames 1992:11; Bennett 2005:534). Museums thus became sites for public education and improvement for certain sections of the public, such as the working class, families, and children, to name only a few groups.

Indeed, not only were the museums passive sites for this experimentation, they were used as tools for the same purpose. Museum staff could manage the space and the objects contained within for predetermined and highly managed purposes, educational and otherwise. The authority of the museum could also be leveraged into these same concepts, building upon the many years of association between museums and intellectual and social power. The long history of museums as academically and socially prized sites within the community could then be actively and consciously used to bolster these civic experiments. This is an attitude that arguably continues today. Modern children's museums, for example, are explicitly created and run for the purpose of educating (or "improving") children. Their position as museums gives them more potential authority, especially if they are associated with long-established institutions in the community. The methods may have changed from those of 19th and early 20th century museums, but many

of the current methods of museum exhibition, programming, and management share strong ties with the civic experiments of earlier museum professionals.

In keeping with the theme of museums as authoritative centers of knowledge and learning, museums of this era were often used to construct and reinforce civic and nationalist narratives, particularly museums that focused on historical and anthropological subject matter (Ames 1992:21; Bouquet 2012:60). The establishment of a museum within a city or town was regarded as a point of civic pride, indicating that the area (and, by extension, its people) were worthy of housing a center of learning and a prestigious storehouse of scientific and cultural knowledge. Museums and the objects housed within were used to create civic and cultural narratives for communities both small and large (Conn 2010:28; Shelton 2006:70). Museums could also be used to establish cultural narratives for larger nations, as well as racial and ethnic groups. Colonialist exhibits were presented to establish non-white people as exotic "others", worthy of consideration as scientific subjects to be studied and classified, but rarely as fellow individuals and cultures to be considered as equals (Shelton 2006:69). Members of the public who viewed these exhibitions were reassured of their place within a constructed cultural and ethnic hierarchy.

Meanwhile, the idea of the "civic citizen" was coming to prominence. It encouraged the idea of the nation and the civic community as a form of social association, one that could take precedence even over an individual's family. Individuals were encouraged and expected to participate in civic life for the betterment of their larger community. Social policy began to concentrate on the importance of this civic citizen

and put the civic community at the heart of many following policies (Bouquet 2012:90; Crooke 2007:70).

These developments in museum theory and practice are accompanied by a field of study that has been gaining prominence since the 1980s - museum anthropology or, more specifically, the anthropology of museums. The fields of anthropology and museum work have previously overlapped within the space of the museum. Anthropology was originally funded and hosted by museums, and anthropologists were often integral members of a museum's research staff. Eventually, however, anthropology began to move into the academic realm, moving away from museums and initiating a period of alienation between anthropology and museum work that would continue for many decades (Ames 1992:39-40). The anthropology of museums - that is, the study of museums and museum practice in an anthropological light - would not gain traction as a field of study until the 1980s and 1990s (Shelton 2006:74). Anthropology, as it is practiced today in museums, is situated in a unique point of study, especially in contrast to the academic realm of universities and colleges. Where academia is relatively insulated from the demands of its surrounding communities, museums are embedded in the community. They are subject to the changing forces and demands of the community, more integrated with the lives of those involved in the community - as Michael Ames says, museums are more "democratized" than universities (Ames 1992:41).

Museums were often used as tools not only to push agendas of civic improvement and education, but also to control subjects that could otherwise be considered troubling to the established worldview of the society in which the museum was (and is)

situated. They have historically been used to subordinate unruly issues in science, history, anthropology, art, and other disciplines. By collecting and assembling the material representations of these issues - for instance, the material culture of an "othered" culture or ethnic group - and placing them within the controlled environment of the museum - in glass cases, discussed and dissected through text and displays - these same issues are conceptually and even literally brought under control. By changing the terms and relationships of an object's use and context, museums can exercise power over them (Ames 1992:23; Bennett 2005:524). The overall context of these uses is also important, especially considering who is given charge of building and reinforcing the current context of an object or exhibit. Museums are not merely storehouses for objects; indeed, they have never been, as the above history shows. Nor are they passive reflectors of previously established cultural and civic narratives. Instead, they actively help to construct and reinforce these narratives, creating new interpretations, new relationships, and new realities (Bennett 2005:534).

Museums have the potential to be powerful taste-makers and mind-setters within communities both large and small. They do this not merely by presenting and expressing a community's or society's values and worldview, but also by constructing and validating them. This is helped in great part by museums' previously discussed position as intellectual and cultural authorities. Museums may do this work directly, by actively promoting these worldviews, or indirectly, but subordinating and controlling contrasting worldviews (Ames 1992:22). In doing this work across a range of contexts, museums help to establish cultural superiority and prestige, articulate a range of identities

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(personal, cultural, and national), and present a social and cultural ideal that may or may not be possible for the museum-going public to ever fully realize - perhaps more for some visitors than for others (Bouquet 2012:79-80; Bouquet 2012:88; Bennett 2005:532-532). Ultimately, museums are not just passive spaces, repositories of objects, history, culture. They are active, charged places that have the power to influence how its visitors see, think, and act upon a variety of subjects.

Though museums have a long and often troubling history as sites for the authoritarian creation of cultural narratives and attitudes, they also have an encouraging future as places for civic dialogue. People who have been traditionally denied agency may use the museum as a site for presenting their own voices and stories. This is in line with the trend towards the decentralization of the access to knowledge and the creation of exhibits and object-based narratives. Museums are increasingly seen as places where community members can interact with objects and the museum itself on a more even plane; where the museum is not just a realm of instruction and civic improvement handed down by authorities, but where civically engaged citizens can organize and actively shape the life of their community both within the museum and beyond its walls (Crooke 2007:111).

However, this is not an approach that is universally implemented, even at the most progressive institutions. Through their mandate to preserve collections and hold them in the public trust, museums are often inclined to be more conservative (Ames 1992:7). Collections managers are hardly encouraged to take risks with objects that have been determined to hold great cultural or intellectual significance. Such caution with

regards to collections may transfer to caution in matters of education and community efforts. If a particular practice has been established as acceptably successful, why change it? Certainly, change may require resources such as staff, time, and funds that a museum may not be able to spare.

Curators, coordinators, and other museum staff must also balance the need for civic participation with the need to manage the museum and direct its programs according to a unified plan. It can be difficult for staff to give up this authority and allow community members to have more say in the management of the museum - an exercise in trust, and one that has been historically underutilized by museum professionals in relation to members of the public (Black 2010:136). Such difficulties arise not only from the historical precedent of more complete control established by earlier museum professionals, but by the difficulty of finding a balance between civic participation and effective staff management and museum administration.

Staff members and community participants alike may find themselves wondering where such lines lie. How much control should staff or other professionals have over a project? When is it appropriate for community members to cede agency to museum staff, who may have more training and knowledge? When should staff members give control to community members? Who picks the subject for an exhibit or a program? Who manages it, and how? Such questions are further complicated by the unique situations and communities that are part of a museum's milieu. Each museum finds itself in a distinctive context, and must therefore answer the particulars of such questions on its own.

Some modern museums have attempted to address such issues of community interaction and appeal by allowing professional administrators to have more management power within their institutions. Such policies are generally undertaken with the intention of making the museum more responsive to the majority populations that visit them. These policies and practices are often created less with academic means in mind, than with attention paid to market forces and "social-engineering policies" that are designed to benefit the museum financially. Museums are then also increasingly subject to the forces of consumerism that dominate both contemporary life and, increasingly, the cultural and non-profit worlds (Ames 1992:11; Shelton 2006:76). However, this consumerist focus, while appealing in terms of marketing and profits, does little with regards to community involvement. Merely changing who holds the power, from museum professionals to professional administrators, does little for members of the community and their stake in the museum.

Along with an increasing focus on consumerist agendas, museums have had to deal with further economic and political forces that have shaped the current state of the museum and its position in relation to visitors and surrounding communities. The rise of neoliberal cultural and economic policies, with the attendant decrease in funding and government support, has especially affected cultural institutions. Neoliberalism, which has become widespread throughout political systems of the last 30 years, calls for decreased government involvement and increased economic liberalization. This political orientation focuses on free trade, open markets, and increased support of the private sector. It shifts support away from state-funded sources, instead assuming that more

community- and individually-based efforts will be as effective as previous policies. Volunteerism has been brought forth as a way to provide this support, and as a way to "fill in" the gaps in these programs left behind by neoliberal economic policies. It has also been introduced both as a way to provide cost savings, and as a method with which to create more relevancy and connections with community (Crooke 2007:63-64; Crooke 2011:180; Snyder & Omoto 2008:2).

Museums in particular have been asked to fill in this gap, to help increase community connections in an environment that has increasingly led to community breakdowns and loss of support for individuals and communities alike. Museum professionals have been encouraged in the use of their institutions as social tools to alleviate these issues and build bridges within their civic communities (Crooke 2011:180-182). The efforts of museums in response to neoliberal cultural policies belies their potential within communities both large and small. Museums have the power to form, express, and solidify social relationships within and across many communities, be they "thin" (based only a few connections) or "thick" (built upon a multitude of shared characteristics and histories) - though such measurements are not indicative of how meaningful and impactful such communities are for their participants (Bouquet 2012:130; Crooke 2007:57). Though neoliberal social policies have hardly helped the museum in terms of funding or staffing, and may leave institutions in need of community support without any framework for how to build and maintain that support, such situations do present a silver lining - community members are more able to become involved through

volunteerism in their museums, though under noticeably more limited conditions than in the past.

At this point, it would be prudent to point out some of the limitations of the concept of "community". Such a concept is intrinsically vague - community is ultimately intangible, bound up in symbolism, meaning-making, and identity. Furthermore, "community" is not necessarily all-inclusive (Crooke 2007:60-62). Indeed, as it develops within a given context, community must necessarily define itself by establishing boundaries, by defining what it is *not* - similar to nationalist and colonial exhibitions shown in 19th century museums that helped societies and nations define themselves in opposition to a strange or exotic "other". For some to be included, others must then be excluded. In a similar light, "community" may not mean the same thing to every participant. For example, the community of volunteers formed at a museum can be a strongly positive motivator for some volunteers (Tate 2012:276) but, as this thesis will show, volunteers who do not fit the established demographic of their volunteer program may be excluded (often unintentionally) from that same community. While some may see community and civic action in a positive light, others have had more negative experiences within their communities, and still more may have a more nuanced vision of the concept than either extreme would suggest (Crooke 2011:183). For this reason, the concept of "community" must be investigated by each institution as it relates to its particular context.

Despite these limitations, museums still have the potential to encourage increased focus on civic dialogue with an eye towards increased visitor and community

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engagement. This relationship between communities and museums has certainly been the focus of much recent scholarship on museums (Bennett 2005; Bennett 2006; Black 2010; Crooke 2007; Hirzy 2002; Karp 1992; Tate 2012). Authors rightfully recognize that museums are poised to facilitate engagement with community members, and to allow communities to have a larger stake in the development and maintenance of exhibits, programs, and other museum ventures. Some have utilized Oldenburg's conception of the Third Place, as borrowed from Homi Bhabha, as a framework for viewing and analyzing the museum in a community-focused context. The "true" Third Place, according to Oldenburg, must posses certain qualities, such as easy accessibility, free or inexpensive participation, a welcoming and informal atmostphere, a neutral environment, and the presence of both regulars and new individuals (Oldenburg 1989:22-42). However, other scholars have questioned the application of the concept of the Third Place to museums, noting that the reality of museums often does not adhere closely to the ideals espoused in theories of the Third Place. For instance, museums often restrict access to their space through admission fees, making free or inexpensive access difficult to achieve. Ultimately, the diversity of visitors and experiences available at a museum may make an uncompromising implementation of the Third Place concept infeasible. Rather, museums are perhaps better served through an adaptation of the model, in which institutions may take their cues from the Third Place concept without strictly adhering to its original form (Simon 2010; Tate 2012:273).

Many of these same authors also emphasize the importance of making civic engagement "an accepted and natural way of doing business" (Hirzy 2002:10) within the

museum, ensuring that it is a practice that is integrated into the daily practice of museum work, rather than a token effort. Such an undertaking requires active, conscious reevaluation of museum practices by staff members and other involved parties (Black 2010:138). Many scholars advocate for an ongoing series of conversations amongst all those involved (including, of course, community members) directed towards examining and changing the museum into a civically engaged institution (Ames 1992:5; Bennett 2005:525; Black 2010:130; Crooke 2011:183; Hirzy 2002). What "civically engaged" means is dependent on the individual situation of each institution and its constituent community. Such definitions are most effectively and most meaningfully reached through a civic dialogue involving all partners in museum and community (Black 2010:132).

In concert with their potential as civic stages, museums also possess the ability to actively shape narratives and experiences in the museum, while they also present spaces primed for dialogue and interaction across the community (Bennett 2005:538; Hirzy 2002; Tate 2012:270). Such a progression from authoritative administration to a more open, civically engaged model is not necessarily an easy process, especially given the more centralized, authoritative approach taken by many past museum administrations. As stated above, museums and other cultural institutions have previously been slow to change and take on new practices. Instead, museums need to actively work towards this state by creating spaces that are inclusive of multiple viewpoints and experiences. Museums focused on civic engagement should also work to engineer spaces that encourage community members to interact with the museum and its subject matter in an

active, engaged manner. Just as previous museum practices have required the thoughtful and conscious manipulation of space and relationships within the museum environment, so will increased and more meaningful civic interaction require the same deliberate effort. Indeed, museums have a duty to fulfill this potential and help to enact real change in their surrounding communities, however such communities are defined (Black 2010:131).

An integral component of such a process, as well as of the anthropology of museums, is self-reflexive study. Anthropology, for better or for worse, originated as the study of the "other", of seemingly "exotic" cultures and peoples that must be studied and understood, then placed within a given worldview. However, this is not so much the case anymore, certainly not within more recent anthropological work and within the anthropology of museums in particular. Anthropologists studying both themselves, the contexts of their anthropology, and communities in which they are themselves participants can now use the tools of their profession on themselves and their environments. One such tool is ethnography. Ethnography seeks to understand not just the current lifeworlds in front of the research, but its context, the history of a culture, its path to the present, and its visions for the future (Bouquet 2012:114). In museum anthropology, this seeking is turned inward, for museums are not only often deeply integrated into the life of the community, but the ethnographers themselves are often part of the museum world itself. Museum ethnography studies those embedded in the museum (both professional and more casual) as anthropologists have previously studied

the "the Natives" (Ames 1992:10). Museum staff, volunteers, visitors, and others are themselves the subject of study and scrutiny.

Moreover, the physical space of the museum and the objects contained and presented within are likewise worthy of interest, especially *how* objects are arranged within the museum and the social histories of such material culture (Ames 1992:10; Ames 1992:44). How objects are presented can say much about the culture within which that same museum is situated. Indeed, museums can be considered a microcosm of the culture in which they are situated (Shelton 2006:77), or even a microcosm of the particular community related to the museum. As stated above, museums have an active role in shaping action and perception. The anthropological study of museums, then, is the opportunity to see culture as it is being formed, presented, questioned, stretched, negotiated, and re-made many times over (Ames 1992:47).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the backgrounds and methodology that informed the approach to the thesis research. The research questions focus on the motivations of volunteers and on the connections between their volunteerism and their relationship to communities both within and beyond their museums. These questions include: (1) Are these volunteer motivations connected to American civil society ideals? (2) What other factors influence volunteerism at these sites? (3) How are these volunteers connected or not connected to communities both in their museum, and outside it? Finally, this thesis also examines connections between preceding scholarship on volunteerism and museum-community relationships. (4) Does previous research accurately depict volunteerism in American museums? (5) Are there any differences between the results of previous research on museum volunteers and of the findings of this thesis?

Primary data collection occurred at the Denver Art Museum and the Museo de las Americas. Data was gathered from twenty-nine total participants. Interviews were conducted with twenty-three of those participants who volunteered at the Denver Art Museum, with about 200 active volunteers (an "active" volunteer defined as one who volunteers at least once a month at their museum). The remaining six volunteers worked

at the Museo de las Americas, which at the time of the interviews had about 20 active volunteers.

The first field site involved in the research is the Denver Art Museum (DAM). The DAM is a large art museum with over 356,000 square feet of space, a constantly-changing rotation of temporary exhibitions, a nationally-recognized educational program, and a large and highly organized volunteer program. At the time of the research interviews, there were approximately 200 volunteers in service at the DAM. The DAM is partially funded through the Science and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a regional tax district that provides funding for scientific and cultural institutions through a .01% retail sales tax that provides over $38,000,000 USD to over 300 Denver-area institutions. The DAM is considered a Tier I organization, one of five major regional institutions that receive the most funding from the SCFD (Science and Cultural Facilities District 2007).

The DAM is a large, well-funded, and highly organized museum with an extensive volunteer program. It is recognized on a national scale for the depth and breadth of it collections, as well as for its educational and community-based programming, such as its "Untitled" events held on the last Friday of every month, in which the museum draws visitors through an informal evening of talks, activities, music, and refreshments. The education department within the museum is active in its own programming and is well known for its family programs, such as their summer camps, in-gallery activities, and the Family Backpack Cart, in which staff members help families check out activity backpacks that take families to a given gallery and contain activities

intended to help children and families engage with the art there (Denver Art Museum 2014a). Given its size, resources, and scale, the DAM is a major potential resource for scholars and community members alike. The DAM is located in the southern end of the downtown neighborhood, adjacent to other major cultural and historical institutions such as the Denver Public Library, the History Colorado center, and several municipal buildings including the state capitol. It was initially founded as 1893 as the Denver Artists' Club, by a group of local professional artists. In 1917, its name was changed to the Denver Art Association and, six years later, to the Denver Art Museum. It was initially housed in a series of venues, including a public library, municipal buildings, and even a downtown mansion. Eventually, the museum gained its own building on the 14th Avenue Parkway in 1949. The 1950s saw the addition of children's galleries to the museum. The museum continued growing, adding a new building in 1971 (designed by architect Gio Ponti), and the well known Hamilton Building in 2006 (designed by Daniel Libeskind). The museum was founded with the intention that it be a public and educative institution (Harris 1996 22-37; Denver Art Museum 2014b).

Volunteers at the DAM are a highly visible and organized force. Volunteers are organized into different councils, including a Guest Services council, a Docent council, and a Flower council, among others. There are also a number of volunteer officers that interact directly with museum staff, including a Volunteer President who acts as a go-between for the volunteers and staff. The Volunteer President is expected to relay the concerns of the volunteers and the general status of the volunteer program to staff members, as well as to the museum's board of trustees. They are effectively the "voice"

of the volunteers, their representative amongst professional museum workers. DAM volunteers may also choose to lead a certain council.

Visitors to the museum are typically greeted by volunteers stationed at the main entrance. These volunteers are part of the Guest Services council, the largest and one of the more accessible volunteer opportunities at the DAM. In general, volunteers must be able to work a minimum amount of time at the museum, they must be able to transport themselves to and from the museum. While volunteers are not required to change their roles or to take on more complex duties such as those of a docent, many choose to do so. Such changes therefore require even more time and effort.

The docent program in particular presents more barriers to interested participants. Docents must have volunteered for an extended period of time – in the past, at least two years, though volunteering commitments and training times have occasionally changed over the history of the volunteer program at the DAM. Docents must also undergo extensive training in the content of the galleries before they can lead tours throughout the museum. They also must frequently take on further trainings as new and temporary exhibitions are added to the museum. Experienced docents can even train incoming volunteers and docents themselves. Furthermore, some volunteers may take on extra projects. These were occasionally discussed during the interview process with DAM volunteers and included the organization of a volunteer symposium, the development of lesson plans and other materials, or training volunteers at other institutions (as one volunteer did at both domestic and international museums).

The Museo de las Americas, the second field site, was chosen to contrast to the large and well-funded institution of the DAM. The Museo de las Americas is a relatively small museum focusing on Latino art and culture of the Americas. Like the DAM, it is also located within the city of Denver, approximately two miles south of the DAM. It is located in the Santa Fe Arts District, an area known for its numerous small galleries and museums. The area is host to the "First Friday" arts event, in which the Museo and other galleries and museums are open for free on the first Friday of every month. The Museo is considerably smaller than the DAM, with one main gallery consisting of three large rooms and an entrance area. One small additional gallery hosts a permanent exhibit of objects from its core collection, per an agreement with a major collections donor.

In both promotional material and through discussion with museum staff, volunteers are presented as valued contributors to the operations of the Museo, much as they are at the DAM. However, they are not subject to the same large and organized management model employed at the DAM. Because the Museo is so small and the full-time staff is relatively few (at the time of the interviews, there were five full-time staff members), volunteers are subject to less rigid hierarchies and may access different levels of opportunity and influence than they would at the DAM. While volunteers at the DAM are typically restricted to working with visitors or in what are essentially social and administrative support positions within the institution, Museo volunteers may choose to take on more responsibility. They may work directly with the museum's collections, including handling collections objects and assisting with cataloging and research (or even undertaking cataloging and research projects without direct or constant staff assistance).

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They can also work in a more direct capacity with museum visitors, such as through leading tours and assisting with educational duties such as teaching and administration, or by assisting with social media duties for the institution.

Volunteers at the Museo are also integral members of the exhibitions team, helping to prepare the museum's galleries for upcoming shows under the direction of an exhibitions staff member. Where the DAM has a team of paid staff who prepare gallery spaces between exhibits, the Museo relies heavily on volunteers to paint walls, assemble exhibit components, and even mount objects under the supervision of a trained staff member.

The Museo's volunteer and internship webpage encourages volunteers to work with the museum in order to develop familiarity with Latino culture and community, as well as for professional development (Museo de las Americas 2011). The museum hosts a number of events and programs that focus on Latino culture, including talks, performances, and regular social gatherings such as the museum's Spanish Happy Hour. Furthermore, given the ability of volunteers to gain access to duties normally closed to them - such as exhibitions work and collections management - it is easy to see why someone could view such work as a possible career-advancing opportunity.

I worked extensively with both institutions both prior to and during the course of research for this thesis. This included a year-long paid position within the DAM's education department, which was primarily focused on interactions with families as they moved through the museum and used its educational offerings. This position, situated as it was within the public space of the museum, also meant that I frequently interacted with

volunteers in the same space. This meant that I was often able to have casual conversations with the volunteers on a range of subjects including new exhibits, opinions on artworks, ways to interact with museum guests, and personal experiences both in and outside the museum. I also interacted with volunteers in some of the behind-the-scenes spaces of the museum, including common areas such as the break room, where volunteers typically gather for lunch and coffee breaks throughout the day. This room was especially useful, as I often used it to conduct interviews. Both I and many DAM volunteers chose to condcut interviews there, given that it is simultaneously a well-known and comfortable place, yet offers a degree of privacy that would not have been available in other areas of the museum.

At the Museo, I completed a nearly year-long period of service, initially as part of an internship requirement for the Master's degree in Anthropology at the University of Denver. I continued to work at the Museo after my internship was over because of a desire to continue supporting the museum. During my experiences both at the DAM and Museo, I had seen the differences that volunteers could make in the day-to-day and long term operations of their institutions. I had also noticed that volunteers at the Museo tended to be given more tasks and more freedom to complete them than volunteers at the DAM, a point that attracted me to work there and which will also become relevant later in this thesis.

The bulk of data collection came from semi-structured interviews with volunteers. Semi-structured interviews are especially useful when the researcher will not be able to interview someone more than once. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer is

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able to follow leads and relevant points of conversation that occur, but structures the experience according to an interview guide. An interview guide, in which the interviewer takes the time to articulate the research goals and the topics and accompanying questions needed to fulfill those goals, allows for a structural "backbone" that can accommodate new and interesting information that may arise during an interview (Bernard 2011:158). This tactic was especially helpful in uncovering understandings and points of view which would later prove to be not just interesting, but vital in developing the central conclusions of this thesis. For example, I had not anticipated that volunteer perceptions of their insitution would play such a major role in the development and maintenance of volunteer relationships and motivations at a museum. Neither had I anticipated that volunteers would be as aware of these circumstances and fine distinctions as they proved to be. Semi-structured interviews allowed for me to quickly adapt to these developments. It also allowed me to gain a better understanding and respect for volunteers throughout the research process. While I had never thought of volunteers as unthinking, the flexibility of this format allowed me to fully grasp the depth and breadth of their understanding, and of their reactions to their individual situations.

Interviewees were recruited largely through mass e-mail communications that were approved by the then-current volunteer coordinators at either museum. Because I had previously worked with both institutions and had the opportunity to interact with volunteers face-to-face, interviewees were also occasionally recruited using in-person means. A recruitment email (see Appendix C for a draft recruitment email) was sent out to volunteer e-mail lists that had previously been set up at each institution. These e-mails

were approved by the volunteer coordinators at both museums before they were distributed. If volunteers expressed an interest in participating in the thesis research during day-to-day interactions at either museum, I worked to arrange an interview at the volunteer's convenience.

As stated earlier, data was gathered from twenty-nine total participants. Twenty-three of those participants were volunteers at the Denver Art Museum, which at the time of the interviews had a volunteer base of approximately 400 volunteers, with less than half of those volunteers considered "active" (that is, volunteering at least once a month). The remaining six participants were volunteers at the Museo de las Americas, which at the time of the interviews had a base of about 100 total volunteers and about 20 active volunteers. It should be noted that, while fewer total volunteers were interviewed for the Museo as compared to the DAM, the relative ratio of interviewed volunteers to total active volunteers is comparable between institutions.

Each interview began with five questions intended to collect demographic data. This data was used to gain an initial understanding of the demographics of the volunteer corps at each institution and of the volunteers being interviewed. These questions were as follows:

1. What is your birth date?

2. What is your educational level?

3. What is your current employment status?

4. How long have you been volunteering at your museum?

5. Do you volunteer anywhere else?

The data gathered from these questions was then collected and assembled into a series of clustered column charts in order to compare data across institutions. The majority of DAM volunteers involved were interviewed in or near the museum at the discretion of the volunteer being interviewed. All Museo volunteers were interviewed off museum property, both because the Museo has limited space available for interviews, and because the schedules of both researcher and volunteer participants often meant that interviews had to take place outside of regular museum hours.

The collected interview data includes demographic information including birth date, educational level, employment status, number of years volunteering at the museum, and the total number of institutions that interviewee was volunteering at. Other questions were left intentionally open-ended in order to encourage more in-depth responses from participants. The prepared questions (see Appendix B) were intended to gain an understanding of the individual respondents' motivations for volunteering, their conception of their place within the museum hierarchy, and how they believe that they do or do not affect the museum and its operations.

Using demographic information collected in these interviews, I was more equipped to pinpoint the background of these participants, and how this background influenced their experiences at their chosen museums. When combined, such information also helped to build a general portrait of volunteers at a museum based on age, education, and level of involvement both at the museum and with volunteer organizations in general.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person. All interviews were recorded and transcribed before data analysis began. As semi-structured interviews, these sessions were conducted according to a previously drafted set of questions (see Appendix B). However, I made it clear that these questions were by no means the only avenues of discussion available during the interview, and that both parties could explore topics and issues that were deemed relevant to the overarching topic (O'Reilly 2005:116). While interviews stayed largely on topic, the less restricted format of the interviews served both I and the volunteers well, as described above. Such an interview format allows both researcher and interviewee to more organically explore points of interest that arise during conversation (Bernard 2011:158).

Participants were required to sign a consent form ensuring that they fully understood their role in the thesis research and how their data was to be used (a blank consent form may be viewed in Appendix A of this thesis). Participation was completely anonymous and voluntary. If at any time interviewees wished to withdraw their participation, they were able to do so without any kind of penalty (though not volunteers decided to not participate after agreeing to an interview). The data of participants who decided to withdraw from the research project would not have been used.

All interview audio was recorded onto a digital audio recorder. Interviewees were made aware of this and signed the consent form indicating their consent to be recorded before the interview could proceed. Recordings remain solely in my possession and will be discarded within two years after the completion of the thesis. The digital files of these recordings are kept on my personal computer, as well as a backup hard drive. Both

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computer and hard drive are password-protected. Barring the unlikely event of a lawful subpoena that requires this information to be shared, all raw data is only accessible to me in my capacity as a researcher. If the interviewee did not agree to be recorded, as happened once during the entire interview process, I took detailed notes during the interview, assuming that the interviewee agreed and noted as such on the consent form.   For reference, please see Appendix A for a sample informed consent form.

Finally, I made all reasonable arrangements to ensure that interviews took place in an area where the interviewee would feel comfortable giving candid and honest responses. While it was not possible to find private places to conduct these interviews, they were conducted in areas that were familiar to interviewees and were not in earshot of others whose involvement of the interview could influence the volunteer's responses. For DAM volunteers, this location was typically a common break room, as described above. Museo volunteers all chose to meet me off-site, away from the museum. This tendency to choose locations away from the museum was not investigated, as it did not lend itself to the focus of the thesis. However, it may be that volunteers chose sites because of the small size of the museum and the subsequent closeness of staff members. Simply put, they may not have felt that they could be fully candid in such close quarters. Volunteers at the Museo were also more likely to be working at least part-time, and attending school. It was often easier for me to travel to locations closer to their work or study in order to interview them. In general, interview locations were chosen at the discretion of the volunteer.

Qualitative data gathered during these interviews was analyzed through the use of content analysis, and specifically through coding and the development of category systems. Content analysis is "an objective coding scheme" often used by scholars to analyze and interpret qualitative data. The data contained within this collected research must be examined and made comparable in order to gain a fuller understanding of the information – content analysis is one such way to make sense of the information amassed during data collection (Berg 2008:238). The author is able to make inferences about the situation of volunteers and museums through analysis of text - in this case, through analysis of interview transcripts (Weber 1990:9).

While reviewing the raw data, I identified meaningful segments within transcripts and survey responses, and then assigned them to a relevant category. Earlier in this paper, Houle et. al's concept of six major categories of volunteer motivations was discussed. These categories are: values, understanding, career, social, protective, and esteem/enhancement (Houle, et. al 2005:337-338). Three additional functions – civic engagement, education, and social interaction – were added to these categories. These eight functions served as the main categories into which a volunteer's motivations were grouped and analyzed. After coding, I was able to compare the numbers of meaningful segments within each category amongst and between museums and volunteers. I was also able to distinguish between responses related to initial volunteer motivations and later ones, to compare and examine whether or not these motivations may have shifted over the course of a volunteer's service.

Again, it is important to reiterate that volunteers' motivations are unlikely to fall exclusively within a given category. Rather, it is anticipated that many, if not all, of the volunteers are subject to multiple influences and desires which shape their motivations and subsequent volunteer experiences within their chosen institutions. As a result, their motivations fall into multiple categories. As their experiences within the museum continue and as they are subject to an increasingly wider range of factors within their environment, the complexity of these motivations (and therefore the number of categories said motivations fall into) will likely increase.

As the thesis research involved human participants, Internal Review Board (IRB) evaluation and clearance was necessary. No physical harm was anticipated, and the risk of emotional or social discomfort (such as embarrassment when answering uncomfortable questions) was relatively low. Indeed, volunteers almost never expressed any form of discomfort when answering questions, apart from a few instances when discussing mild interpersonal conflicts in their experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents data collected during the interview portion of this thesis. In addition, this chapter also presents an analysis of this data, designed to answer the research questions focused on volunteerism and museum-community relationships, as previously outlined at the beginning of Chapter Three. The analysis will also address the contrast between existing research on volunteerism and the findings of this study.

Volunteer Demographics

As stated earlier, twenty-three DAM volunteers were interviewed, out of an estimated 200 active volunteers ("active" being defined as at least one instance of volunteering at the museum per month). Six Museo volunteers participated in this thesis, out of an estimated 20 active volunteers. Each interview began with a set of questions designed to collect demographic data about each participant. This data included information on age, education, employment status, and experience both at their museum and at other organizations. After collection, this data was organized into a series of clustered bar charts.   These charts are collected below.
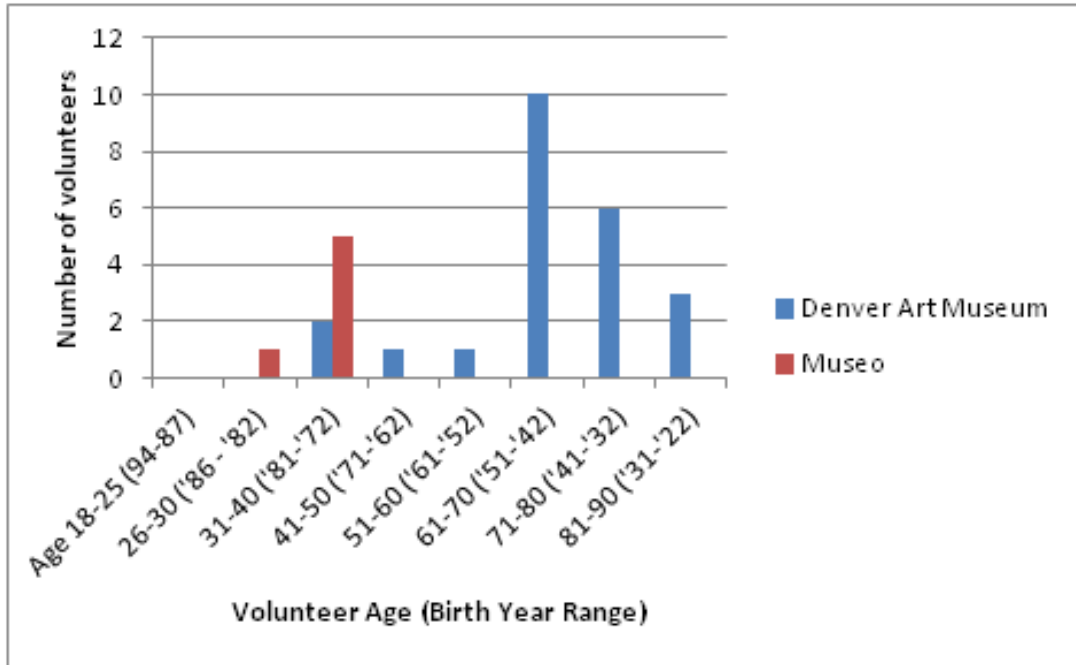
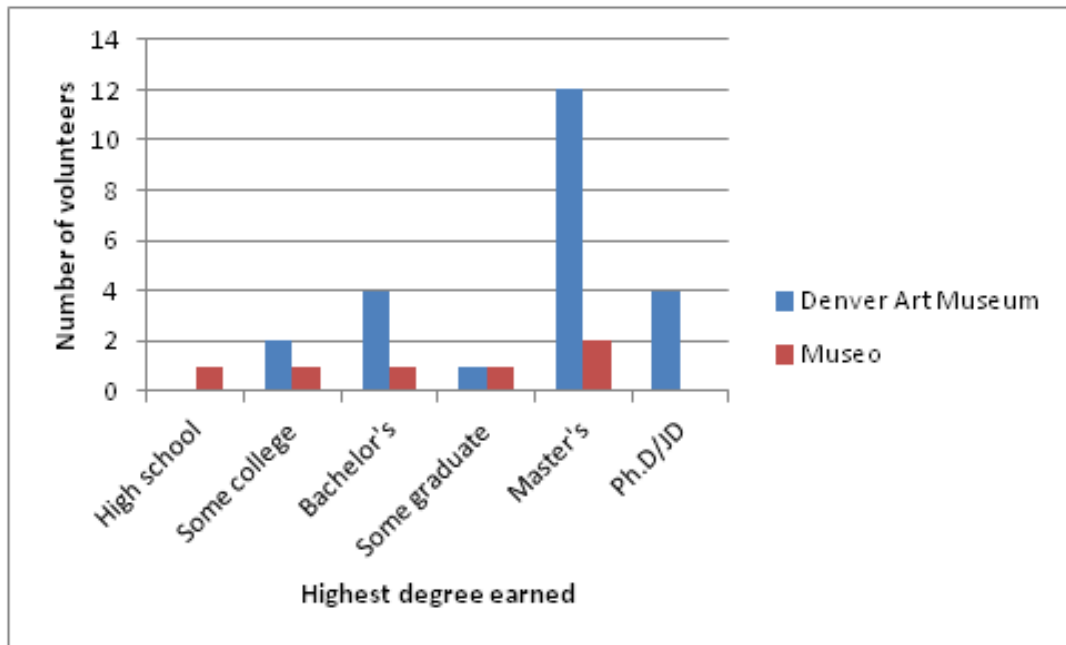*Fig. 1 – Volunteer age compared between institutions*

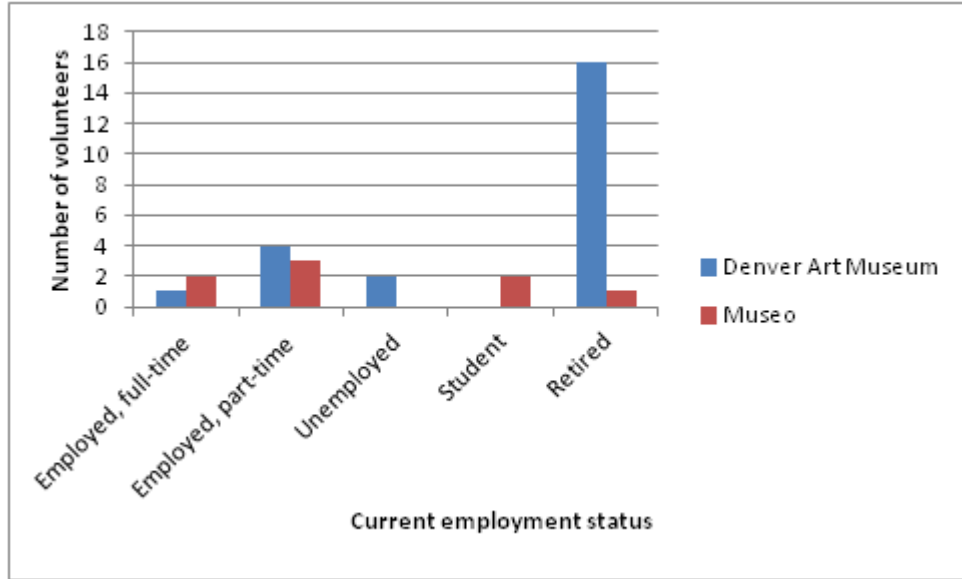*Fig. 2 – Volunteer educational attainment compared between institutions*

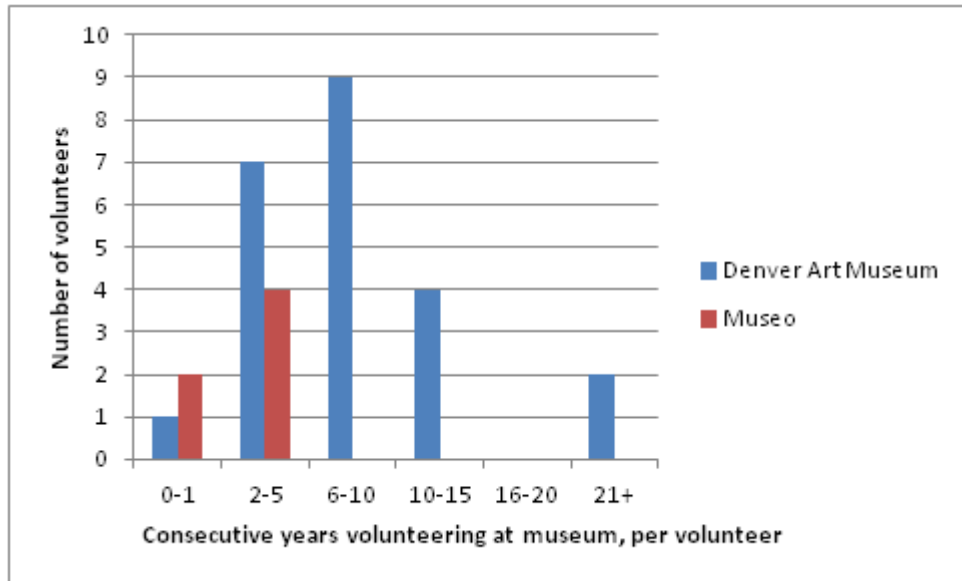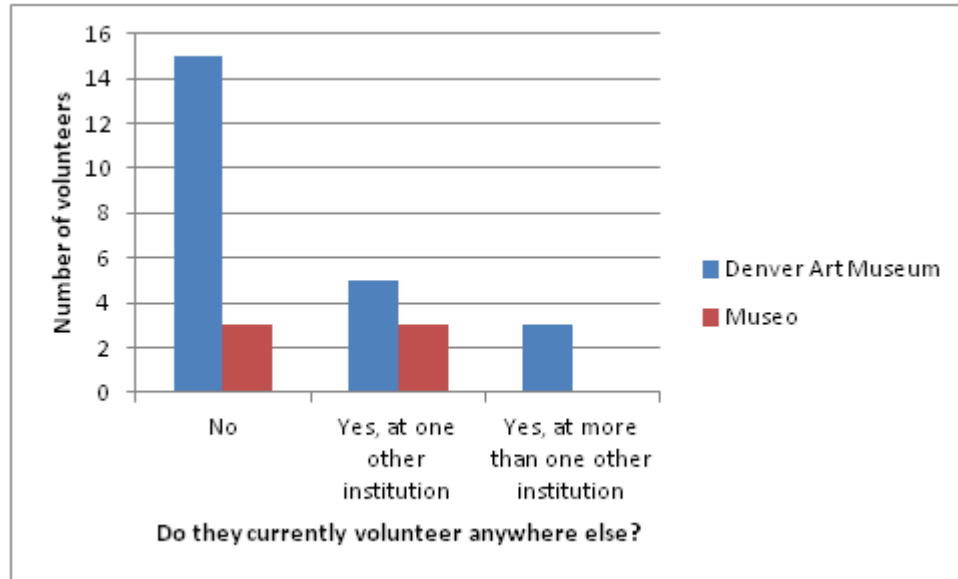*Fig. 3 – Volunteer employment status compared between institutions*

Fig. 4 – Number of consecutive years volunteering at museum per volunteer, compared between institutions

Fig. 5 – Number of volunteers who volunteer at other organizations, compared between institutions

Volunteers at the DAM tend to be older (that is, fifty and above), retired, and are more likely to have attained higher degrees such as a master's or doctoral degree. They have also on average spent more years volunteering at the DAM, and are less likely to be volunteering elsewhere. Their older age helps to shape and illuminate many of the other demographic trends at their museum: older volunteers are more likely to have been retired for some time, after having long educational and professional careers that allow them to obtain advanced degrees and recognition in their chosen field. Having been retired for a number of years, older volunteers are also more likely to have accrued more experience as a volunteer than younger individuals. In general, older volunteers are also more likely to have volunteered throughout their lifetimes and to have started volunteer

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work when young (Synder and Omoto 2008:18), a point that was occasionally mentioned during interviews with DAM volunteers.

This data speaks to both demographics of the volunteer corps at the DAM and to the common perception of volunteers at museums and other institutions. Said one volunteer who worked at both the DAM and the Museo, "[The volunteer program at the DAM is] basically old, white, middle-class/upper middle-class, female. Largely women, largely a certain demographic and a certain age group. And that has been the context for many, many decades in museum volunteership." This demographic trend towards older, white, more affluent, and female volunteers has been observed in previous research (Hettman and Jenkins 1990:298; Howlett 2002:42; Putnam 2000:121; Snyder and Omoto 2008:25).

In contrast, the Museo de las Americas volunteers interviewed for this thesis tended to be younger (that is, generally in their twenties and thirties), employed (either part time or full time), and less advanced in terms of education and degrees earned. At the time of the interviews, Museo volunteers had achieved fewer advanced degrees or were in the process of obtaining college level degrees. They had also accrued less time as volunteers, often volunteering for less than five years at the Museo. DAM volunteers were more likely to have volunteered at their museum for six years or more, with some interviewed volunteers exceeding twenty years of service at the DAM.

Volunteer Motivations

After demographic data was collected, I then proceeded to interview volunteers regarding their motivations for both volunteering in general and for volunteering at their particular museum. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed for phrases and keywords that would fulfill the criteria for a particular motivation. As stated earlier, these motivations were drawn in part from Houle, et. al. and include: *values* (altruism and concern for others), *understanding* (opportunities for learning and personal growth), *career* (increasing job prospects), *social* (volunteerism occurs because of external social motivations and expectations, such as social pressure to become a blood donor), *protective* ("whereby one volunteers to reduce feelings of guilt about being more fortunate than others, or to escape from one's own problems") and *esteem/enhancement* (in which volunteerism enhances self-esteem and self-acceptance) (Houle, et. al 2005:337-338). Three more categories that were found to be necessary to this thesis and therefore added to the list of potential motivations. These were: *civic engagement* (offering up volunteer effort in order to contribute to their community; "giving back"), *education* (students are compelled to volunteer in order to fulfill degree or scholarship requirements), and *social interaction* (an individual volunteers in order to build or enter a social group, to "get out more" and to meet friends and other "like-minded people").

The frequency of these responses are presented below, distinguished by institutional affiliation. A motivation was counted only once per interview, even if it was mentioned multiple times by the volunteer concerned. Multiple motivations could be (and frequently were) mentioned by volunteers, and are reflected in the data below.
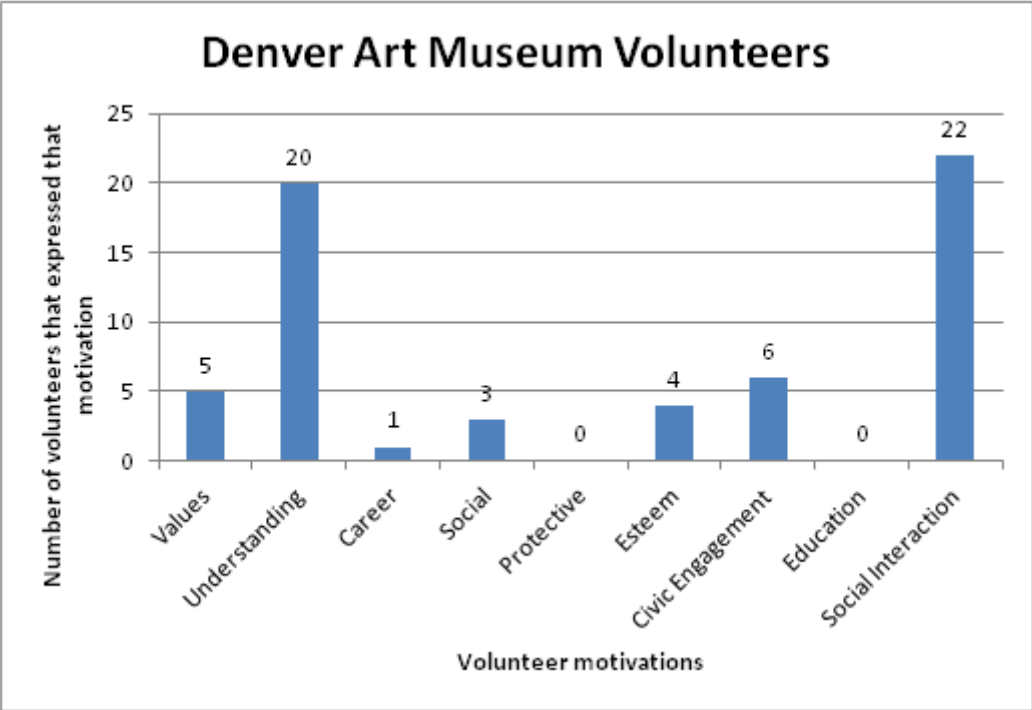
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Fig. 6 – Frequency of volunteer motivations at the Denver Art Museum

Fig. 7 – Frequency of volunteer motivations at the Museo de las Americas

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At both museums, "understanding" was one of the most prominent motivators. Nearly all of the volunteers mentioned that they wanted to work with their particular museum because they had a desire to increase their knowledge and experiences. For the DAM, this learning was almost entirely focused on the artworks or, occasionally, the architecture of the building itself (especially the distinctive Hamilton Building, the construction of which in 2006 brought hundreds of new volunteers - one volunteer who worked with the effort to recruit more people into the program estimated the number of new volunteers to have been about four hundred). Older volunteers were more likely to be interested in artworks displayed in the European and American Art galleries (restricted to European art completed before 1900 and American art completed before 1945), as well as Pre-Columbian artworks. The Modern and Contemporary galleries, housed in the Hamilton Building, were less popular. Volunteers who were interested in these galleries were generally younger (that is, less than fifty). One relatively younger volunteer noted that her interest in these galleries set her apart for other volunteers at the DAM, noting that her age was a likely factor in her focus.

Volunteers at the Museo were also interested in the art within the museum, particularly given that the Museo is explicitly presented as a museum that focuses on the art of Latino cultures. However, they also expressed interest in the museum's focus on Latino culture beyond artistic expression. Many of the interviewed Museo volunteers also began their participation at the museum because of its Spanish language programs, such as the monthly Spanish Happy Hour program, in which guests and volunteers converse in Spanish within a casual gallery setting. Two Museo volunteers specifically

stated that they wanted to work with the Museo because of their own Latino heritage. Said one: "I don't know much about my own culture. So, seeing all the people get together for [events like Spanish Happy Hour], it's kind of inspiring.... It inspired me to do a little bit more."

Social interaction was by far the most popular motivation for DAM volunteers, being mentioned by all but one interviewee. DAM volunteers either mentioned an initial desire for social interaction or noted the increased importance of social connections after they had volunteered at the museum for an extended period of time. Initial social motivations (that is, an interest in social interaction that pushed a volunteer to begin participation) generally occurred after retirement, when former social relationships with a basis in work relationships began to shift and fade, as well as when volunteers often had adult children that had moved away or moved on to develop their own family lives. Many volunteers also noted the increased effect and import of the volunteer social network after they had been working with the DAM for an extended period of time.

Only half of the Museo volunteers interviewed mentioned social interaction, and then did not describe a network of social relationships that were as complex or involved as those expressed by the DAM volunteers. Volunteers generally attributed this to the demands of their careers and academic lives, which tended to dominate their lives more than that of DAM volunteers. Museo volunteers did express more motivations based in the "values" and "career" categories, with a slight relative lead in "civic engagement". Overall, Museo volunteers were more ready to discuss the ideological and even political implications of their work. One volunteer said that "I'm Latino, and I

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wanted to do something that helped young Latinos feel empowered to have a voice…. I view Museo de las Americas as a critical vector for connection with young people because of [the museum's] educational focus".

Being generally younger and in the midst of their academic achievement and career progress, half of the Museo volunteers noted that they began volunteering in part to further their careers. This took the form of gaining experience and knowledge that they thought would aid them in the future, especially with regards to academic focuses on art, art history, and anthropology. Volunteers at the Museo also noted the practical effects of their work; for example, a volunteer who had worked in the museum's collections could add "collections experience" to their resume, a valuable skill to possess as an emerging professional the museum field. Only one DAM volunteer interview merited a "career" motivation, and it should be noted that she was one of the youngest volunteers at the institution and the youngest DAM volunteer to be interviewed for this thesis. She was also, by her own admission, one of the most active volunteers at the museum and the most willing to interact with a wide range of people.

Mannino, et. al. (2011) provides another valuable frame of reference for analyzing volunteer motivations at the DAM and the Museo, as discussed previously in the Literature Review. Briefly, they contend that three perspectives can be used to understand volunteer motivations. The functional perspective focuses on what volunteering accomplishes for the individual volunteer - does it fulfill a volunteer's goal or give them purpose? The identity perspective focuses on how volunteering helps to construct a volunteer's identity (such as when a volunteer states that they have always

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volunteered, or that volunteerism has been an important part of their family life). Finally, the community perspective focuses on how connections to a community can encourage volunteerism, both initially and over time. The identity perspective was perhaps the least-discussed of the three perspectives. A small number of volunteers stated that they identified as volunteers or that they have a strong family history of volunteerism that influenced their decisions to join both the DAM and other volunteer efforts. However, this was not a forgone motivation for every volunteer and did not appear to be necessary for a volunteer to find meaning and purpose in their work.

The community perspective was stronger, especially if one accepts that "community" includes the communities volunteers build within their programs, and is not restricted to a wider, more inclusive definition of community. The results as shown above reflect this acceptance of both definitions of community. Many volunteers, especially those working at the DAM, stated that the relationships they built with other volunteers were meaningful and were a major factor in their continued participation. The DAM volunteer corps in particular was focused on this, with many groups of volunteers taking long trips together (such as when volunteers mentioned a group trip a number of volunteers took to New York City, a considerable distance from Denver) and working together in both the day-to-day operations of the museum and, occasionally, some involved long-term projects. Volunteers on the DAM's Guest Services Council were also frequently interested in interaction with museum guests; however, these interactions were short-lived and were focused around basic information such as current and upcoming exhibitions and wayfinding throughout the buildings. Certainly, the desire for interaction

and community building beyond the volunteer corps was there, but the opportunities volunteers had for interacting with museum guests were limited. However, the sense of belonging and community within the volunteer corps was generally strong.

Finally, the functional perspective was frequently mentioned during interviews. Volunteers at the DAM nearly always stated that they volunteered there because they wanted something to do, especially something that was intellectually engaging and catered to their established interests in art and culture. Younger volunteers (that is, under 50) at both the DAM and the Museo were also more likely to volunteer because they felt that it would be a useful experience for them with regards to future job and graduate school applications. Volunteers also frequently offered their time because they felt fulfilled and engaged by their work, thus fulfilling a function that aided in their satisfaction with themselves and their volunteer work. Both the importance of the functional and community perspectives are borne out by the importance of understanding and social interaction for volunteers, as shown above.

There were no dramatic changes in volunteer motivations over time, for either DAM or Museo volunteers. While peripheral motivations may have come into play over time - increased interest in a certain art genre, increased interest in the museum field - very few volunteers interviewed marked these newfound interests as noteworthy or seminal occasions. Indeed, many of the noted changes in a volunteer's motivations were expansions upon her or his original motivations, namely an interest in art and culture, as well as expanded learning and increased sociability. Volunteers who interviewed for this thesis generally went into their programs knowing what they wanted out of the

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experience and with a relatively sophisticated understanding of how they expected the museum and its environment to operate. While the volunteers as a whole were open to new experiences and in fact often expected to grow both intellectually and socially, their initial motivations remained the core of their experience.

However, there were differences in volunteer motivations between both museums. The most notable differences between groups of volunteers came down to differences in age. Older volunteers were more apt to focus on personal interests as predicted by Snyder and Omoto, though they were not more focused on civic interests than other volunteers, in contrast to the work shown by Putnam, as well as Snyder and Omoto (Putnam 2000:259-260; Snyder and Omoto 2008:12). Younger volunteers were also interested in personal motivations, though they were more likely to focus on community and political values. The old/young dichotomy also encompasses a number of other important factors, such as education, income level, motivations, and the number and accumulated impact of life experiences in general, as explained below.

Analysis

Older volunteers were generally more educated, more affluent, and were more likely to have had a wealth of life experiences to draw from in their volunteer work. Older volunteers often had fewer and less intense concerns than younger volunteers, such as concerns about careers, education, and childcare. This is not to say that older volunteers' work was any less meaningful, nor does it mean that older volunteers were totally free of outside concerns that affected their work. However, older, retired

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volunteers, typically took a more relaxed, socially-focused approach. While some took on leadership roles within their institution, it was due more to personality and individual motivation rather than a desire to increase their professional visibility or add to their résumé. For older volunteers, their work at the museum was largely a leisure and social activity. Younger volunteers tended to focus on goals that were more oriented towards professional, civic, and intellectual development (though social goals and personal interests were also noted). Volunteer roles were taken on to add to a résumé, to gain experience relevant to their career and academic goals, or to learn more about the subject matter of a museum or gallery in preparation for further advancement in their field.

Younger volunteers were also more apt to point out difficulties in their volunteer programs. While no volunteers interviewed presented an overall negative view of their institutions, there were occasional concerns expressed regarding both the professional and social environments of the volunteer program at hand. Younger volunteers more frequently and candidly discussed these issues. When younger volunteers did note motivations based on social life or community engagement, they tended to focus more on the civic and political implications of their involvement, rather than on more the more personal social benefits expressed by older volunteers.

Mid-life concerns, such as career and family, also frequently came into play for these younger volunteers. This typically translated into a less lengthy tenures as volunteers as someone moved on to more demanding and time-consuming positions, such as a paying job or a growing family. Moreover, it is more likely that younger volunteers will come into the position with intentions towards gaining experience and connections

that will aid a future career, thus anticipating their eventual removal from volunteer service as new career and personal demands dominate their time. One DAM volunteer, for instance, wanted to fill an anticipated employment gap with experience that would still appear to be well-spent to a future employer. This volunteer was especially active, helping to organize large professional and semi-professional gatherings of volunteers (both from the DAM and other organizations) as part of a volunteer symposium. While this same volunteer professed a dedicated interest in both the artworks and the museum itself, she made it clear that volunteerism would eventually give way to her career and family demands.

Other volunteers, particularly at the smaller and more accessible Museo (at least in terms of collections and programs access), also volunteered at least partially to gain skills necessary for future work in museums or other related fields. It is relevant to note that volunteers at the Museo tend to work for shorter commitments of time, offering their service for a matter of a few years. Volunteers at the DAM, in contrast, tend to volunteer for periods of time that span not only years, but decades. Two DAM volunteers who interviewed for this thesis had in fact been volunteering for upwards of 40 years at the time of the interview. Other and previous DAM volunteers (who were not available for interview) have even volunteered for fifty years or longer.

Such circumstances do not mean that the volunteers at the DAM and the Museo are unaware of their position within larger frameworks of culture and society. At least two separate volunteers spoke of the national and international implications of volunteerism, including differences between volunteer programs in the United States and

in Europe. One related the story of an encounter with European tourists on a hiking trail. Upon learning that she was a volunteer, the tourists were concerned about the number of paying jobs that were "lost" to the unpaid labor of American volunteers. This volunteer took their point seriously, but countered in the interview that volunteerism was both an important component of her everyday life and of American culture in general. She acknowledged the importance of volunteerism within multiple historic and cultural contexts.

Volunteers also acknowledged the importance of volunteerism to early and modern American culture. One DAM volunteer presented her own views on the potential impetus for American volunteerism and its unique origins in early colonial American history, saying

...I think that's where it comes from, is because we were all pioneers, so to speak, in this country. And most of us came here to be farmers. Some of us, obviously, probably the first ones came to be merchants. But there wasn't that much government already established to help people. Or any other function of society to help people, so we had to help each other. So we didn't ask for pay from our neighbors to go help them. I think that's where volunteerism comes so easily for Americans. I think that's where it comes from.

Other volunteers, particularly DAM volunteers that had been with the museum for 30 years or more, acknowledged their importance to the history of the museum, and to its continued operation. Volunteers in general recognized their position in the history of

both their museums and the wider fields of museum work and American society, showing that they are well aware of the various contexts in which they operate.

While volunteers demonstrated the ability to be conscious of their historic and cultural contexts as volunteers, how did their motivations and ongoing work relate to the ideals of American civil society? To review: civil society is perhaps most broadly viewed as the "third sector" of a society, distinct from (although strongly connected to) government and economy, that allows citizens to actively participate in their society. For the purposes of this thesis, *American* civil society is defined as having these essential characteristics that make it unique and influential within the realm of American volunteerism: a focus on local communities, a focus on the individual and his or her participation within the community, and an emphasis on the individual's responsibility to participate in a meaningful way within that community This operates both for the betterment of the individual, and for the betterment of the local and national community itself. (O'Connell 2000:472; Putnam 2000:25; Wiarda 2009:145).

Certainly, volunteers pursued the individuality of volunteerism to a noticeable extent. Volunteerism is, by definition, an individually motivated and chosen phenomenon (Snyder and Omoto 2008:2). One of the most popular volunteer motivations by far was the "understanding" motivation, which encompasses a volunteer's desire to learn and grow intellectually. This is a motivation that, amongst the volunteers interviewed, was spurred almost entirely by personal, individual interest in the museum's content, such as specific artworks or more general art genres.

Another notable aspect of volunteer motivations in relation to civil society was the interest in sociability and community amongst the volunteers. While volunteers largely did not show interest in relationships with museum visitors or the community surrounding the museum (though some DAM volunteers briefly mentioned that idea of "giving back", while one Museo volunteer was especially invested in working with the Latino community through the museum), they did express an interest in building relationships with their fellow volunteers. Volunteers at the Museo similarly mentioned the importance of social interaction and internal community-building with other volunteers, though they generally do not have the resources to put on large parties or make extended trips that DAM volunteers have. Such social relationships play an important role in increasing an individual's sense of belonging at their respective museum and its community of volunteers. Indeed, it appears that volunteers were building their own community or sub-culture within the museums, complete with their own practiced and codified ways of communication and interaction. Acceptance into the community is based on mutual interests (art, history, culture) and is reinforced through shared actions as volunteers, such as interacting with guests, organizing events, and participating as volunteers the museum environment.

Such communities allow for members of the volunteer corps to create social ties that hold meaning and encourage volunteers to return and continue their work for months, years, and even decades (in the case of long-term volunteers at the Denver Art Museum). Such micro-communities are sometimes formally arranged, as in the case of volunteers working with associations such as Alianza de las Artes, a group at the DAM that is

focused on Latin American art and often holds lectures and presents events and travel opportunities. However, Alianza, though mentioned by multiple volunteers during the interview process, is also open to other DAM members. Thus, while it holds some importance for DAM volunteers and offers an opportunity for them to interact with other volunteers, staff, and DAM members, it is not strictly a volunteer-organized association. More informally, volunteers have created community through their frequent interactions with each other, both in and outside the museum environment. Volunteers may hold parties at each others' houses, travel together, visit attractions together, or even (and especially) enjoy the regular interactions with other volunteers while working at the museum. Such community-building instances allow for volunteers to build the networks of support and familiarity that characterize community.

However, just as community is built by establishing parameters and including certain members, it is also defined by the exclusion of others who do not fit the criteria (Crooke 2007:62). This was mentioned multiple times during the volunteer interviews, particularly by volunteers that work at the DAM. Many volunteers who did not fit the mold of a "typical" volunteer in their program felt left out of what appeared to be a rich and potentially fulfilling community life for other volunteers. At the DAM, this was most frequently expressed by younger volunteers, who felt set apart from the already established community dominated by older, longer-term volunteers. While no volunteer explicitly excluded another volunteer on the grounds that they were demographically, educationally, or socially "different", such circumstances appear to have arisen unintentionally, through the dominant demographics of the group. Younger DAM

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volunteers often stated that they felt excluded by the other volunteers as a consequence of their age, relatively fewer life experiences, and motivations for volunteering. As stated previously, younger volunteers were often more interested in the professional and civic implications of their work, while older volunteers tended to focus on the social aspects of the volunteerism. This conflict often helped to decrease younger volunteers' satisfaction with their work and their sense of belonging within the group. Such levels of dissatisfaction could even lead volunteers to decrease their involvement or even cease their volunteerism entirely. One individual interviewed for this thesis stated that this was one of the factors that led her to decrease and eventually end involvement in the volunteer program at her museum. However, she stated as much without animosity and admitted that it was one of a network of factors that influenced her decision. Still, this indicates that the volunteer micro-community within a museum holds a great deal of power to both enrich and impoverish the volunteer experience at a museum, depending on a volunteer's acceptance into the group.

Community and the drive to help others certainly plays a role at both museums, but less emphasis is placed on helping a larger local community outside of the museum. Volunteers at the DAM can be very supportive of each other in times of difficulty. For example, a volunteer who suffered an extended illness found great support in the volunteer group - others would take on vacant shifts and would frequently check in and inquire about her health and social state. When this volunteer returned, others in the volunteer corps made sure that her initial duties were not overly stressful, and that she had plenty of time to rest and recover while participating in the program. That said, at

the time of the interview, there were no similar projects or programs designed to benefit members of the community outside of the volunteer corps. Indeed, it may have seemed strange to many of these volunteers, who are so used to the museum as space focused on arts and culture rather than public aid, for the institution to implement such a program. While these motivations are certainly part of civil society, they do not reach as far through the community as the ideal would have it. Community-building and civic duty are present to an extent, but generally only within the micro-community of the volunteers and their museum.

Autonomy – specifically, the ability to work independently within the museum on projects that required some skill, as well as trust on the part of museum staff – was another aspect of civil society that became visible during the data gathering portion of this thesis. Again, this is an important aspect of American civil society, as the importance of action on the local and individual level necessarily requires independence of thought and action. Individualism and action in civil society are interrelated phenomena (Ludwig 2007; Snyder and Omoto 2008:20), though others point out that unchecked individualism is ultimately an opposing force to civil society and civic values (DeTocqueville 2003[1840]:114-116; Putnam 2000:27). Certainly, a somewhat less individualistic, but more community-focused approach is vital to the American concept of civil society. How, then, does the importance of American community and civil society play out in the micro-communities of American museum volunteers and their ability to work individualistically and with some degree of autonomy?

The most striking difference between museums regarding the autonomy of volunteers is based largely on the size of the museum and its staff. Smaller museums, such as the Museo, typically have a limited number of staff and resources. This means that volunteers are easily drawn into work that requires greater responsibility and autonomy. At the Museo, small budgets and limited staff numbers mean that volunteers are often trained to work directly with collections, programs, and other museum departments. Such situations also mean that volunteers work more directly with staff in a less hierarchical environment. For example, a volunteer at the Museo who has been working nearly autonomously with collections can talk to a staff member about the situation of the objects with some earned authority based on their experiences in the Museo's collections.

In contrast, volunteers at the Denver Art Museum generally have little to do with collections work, as there are enough resources for the museum to hire professional collections staff. A volunteer at the DAM may certainly express an opinion about objects in the galleries, but it is clear that DAM volunteers have little contact with actual museum objects or other aspects of professional museum work such as developing programming for visitors or designing and installing exhibits. This example also extends to other areas of museum management and operation, such as research, exhibitions, maintenance, and marketing.

Conflicts with American Civil Society Ideology

Though volunteerism at the DAM and the Museo show an engagement (intentional or not) with civil society values, aspects of both volunteer program and museum volunteerism may diverge from these same values. As discussed, civic values certainly play out within the volunteer corps of museums. Volunteers offer up their free time without any expectation of compensation. They frequently help each other and the museum for the good of the museum and its mission, as well as for the good of their peers and the volunteer program. The community support within the volunteer corps of the museum was stressed multiple times at both museums. Certainly, their willingness to become volunteers at all stems from a unique American context that has encouraged volunteerism from the country's beginning.

Beyond that, however, there are a number of other factors that differentiate museum volunteerism from the "ideal" expression of civil society. Of course, it is almost impossible to replicate a theoretical ideal in real-world conditions. Civil society does not exist in a vacuum. It must deal with all of the complexities that result from its intersection with government, economics, and the personal factors that volunteers bring to their work. Taking that into consideration, there are dissonances within the intersection of museum volunteerism at the DAM and the Museo with civil society ideology that are of interest to this thesis.

First, issues of power and hierarchy within the museums often disrupt the egalitarian ideals of civil society. This was more apparent at the DAM, given that the museum is more heavily staffed by professionals and therefore leaves little room for volunteers to participate in museum life outside of their prescribed roles. For example,

while nearly all of the DAM volunteers stated that they felt acknowledged by staff and that they believed their opinions and concerns would be taken into account, none wholeheartedly believed that they had any true decision-making power in their museum. One volunteer went so far as to describe the "formal corporate structure of the museum", noting that such a structure makes it difficult for volunteers to advance far in terms of power and influence. This volunteer went on to describe the DAM as a three-tiered system, with the "corporate organization" of staff members on top, followed by the formal volunteer organization (such as the councils and leaders like the Volunteer President), and finally the "everyday" group of volunteers that show up to work and interact with staff members and the public on a regular basis. Volunteers interviewed for this thesis acknowledged that they were at the bottom of such a hierarchy and, while their opinion was acknowledged, it did not necessarily mean they had an influence on final policy.

Older volunteers were not especially troubled by this. One volunteer at the DAM stated that "I've had my opportunities to be higher up and more visible. Been there, done that!" Another said, "I don't feel that my voice is not heard, but I'm really not expecting my voice to be heard." Many DAM volunteers specifically did not want the responsibility and stress that comes with such power. Many more had not even considered volunteerism as a means to gain power in any real or significant form. The notion is simply not a part of the basic idea of volunteerism for many of these individuals. If someone truly wanted to work for a museum and have an immediate effect on its policy and direction, they would be more likely to choose more formal

employment with the institution, if such an option were available. Board members are perhaps the one notable exception to this rule. However, none of the volunteers interviewed at either museum had ever served on the board of their respective museum, nor did they aspire to do so.

While they were not specifically interested in power or influence, some volunteers were indeed very active in the continuing development of the DAM's volunteer program - some of the interviewed volunteers are holding or have held leadership roles within the program, such as that of the aforementioned Volunteer President. Some took on roles that required coordination of a volunteer symposium, while others became developers of volunteer training that required a major investment of both time and intellect. That said, slightly over half of the DAM volunteers who were interviewed expressed little to no interest in achieving power in any form or effecting direct and lasting change on the program. This is partially due to their high satisfaction with the program, having seen little or no reason to change fundamental elements of their volunteer work.

This reluctance to seek out power can also be traced to their past careers and their current status as a largely retired corps of volunteers. Many of the DAM volunteers interviewed range from middle to upper class, are highly educated, and have held positions in which they were the primary decision makers for a number of major projects (anywhere from stay-at-home mothers who made many decisions about their family life, to lawyers and professors with active and demanding careers). Many now want to leave the decision-making (and its attendant responsibility and stress) to someone else. When asked, a number of DAM volunteers specifically stated that they wanted to enjoy their

retirement without the stress of a leadership position. One said that "I'm just interested in doing my tours. I don't feel that I want to get into decision-making for the museum or the program. I'm just content keeping it limited like that." Another stated that "...I'm happy to just be in the background right now."

One volunteer further observed that a drive for influence and power was not necessarily compatible with the volunteer experience, saying "I've seen many people hope to have the same influence in their volunteer activities that they might have enjoyed in their careers. And those people, I think, have enjoyed volunteer work less." This is in keeping with Snyder and Omoto's work stating that volunteers whose motivations do not match up with their experiences are generally less satisfied and less likely to continue in their positions (Snyder and Omoto 2008:16). A volunteer who enters such work seeking power and influence will be unlikely to find it at the DAM; their experiences would then likely be more frustrating and less satisfying.

Other conflicts with the egalitarian ideals of American civil society arose during the interview process. For instance, while most of the volunteers serve with the same general rank, acknowledged and implied differences in hierarchy do exist. Some volunteers may go further than their standard duties and offer their time as officers of the volunteer association, such as Volunteer President. As mentioned above, the Volunteer President "speaks for the volunteers" by working directly with the board and other high-level staff members to ensure that volunteer concerns are acknowledged and addressed if possible. They may also gain more ground within the hierarchy by taking on more involved roles, both in terms of time and effort. For example, many volunteers

interviewed at the DAM acknowledged that becoming a docent took a considerable

investment of time (an investment, it should be noted, that requires a formal time

commitment and weeks, if not months, of educational training). In order for that

volunteer to be successful and enjoy their time as a docent, they also needed to enjoy not

only the intellectual process of learning about the artwork, but the interpretive and social

processes required to interact with museums guests (who may or may not be familiar with

the material being discussed). One volunteer said that "I really love [volunteering as a

docent at the DAM], and one of the things that I don't like is when people say "Oh, isn't

that nice! You've found something to keep yourself busy." And they don't understand, it's

my passion."

Another DAM volunteer reiterated this point, adding that the ability to work with

a range of visitors is also vital to success as a docent: "Talking with people. That's got to

be one of the things that I think any docent should have as a, um, you know, as a must-

have under list of things of being a docent. You have to be able to talk with the public,

with anyone. Even that one person that's in your group that just wants to upstage you,

because they just have to, they just have to act as if they know everything." This

increased effort and criteria for enthusiasm and passion directed towards art the museum

environment added barriers to the museum experience. The requirements for docent

training also created more difficult conditions for joining what was generally viewed by

DAM volunteers as a somewhat exclusive group.

In contrast, the Museo did not have such extensive volunteer structures in

place. As a small institution, it only required a single staff member to coordinate the

volunteers (at the time of the interviews, the volunteer coordinator was also the education coordinator for the museum; as of the time of this writing, the Museo has hired a separate volunteer coordinator). No formal volunteer organization is in place, such as a volunteer council or a volunteer representative, though the smaller size and less formal relationship between volunteers and staff makes direct discussion of issues easier. The need for a "go-between" such as a volunteer president is less necessary when the interaction between volunteers and staff is so closely intertwined both conceptually (as when volunteers and staff work together to manage collections or assemble an exhibit) and within the small physical space of the museum, where volunteers may simply walk across a room or upstairs to confer with staff.

Ultimately, the power structures and hierarchies at the DAM and, to a less marked extent, the Museo contradict the more egalitarian ideals of civil society. While having community leaders or more motivated members of a community do not negate the core values of civil society at play within the volunteer program, it appears that hierarchies within the museums and within the volunteer programs themselves limit the abilities of volunteers to engage with their museum in a civic manner. Volunteers who must regularly report to staff members or other volunteers do appear to think of their situation as one that can be used to affect wider social or civic change within communities inside and outside of the museum.

However, this does not account for the entire picture. While civil society ideals certainly play a role in volunteer motivations - indeed, it can account at least partially for the prevalence of volunteerism within American museums in general - it typically takes a

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backseat to more personal motivations, as evidenced by the data collected during this thesis research. While individualism is present in American civil society, it does not account for the whole of civil society ideology, which also emphasizes service intended to improve both the community and the situation of one's fellows. It must be balanced with community service and a focus on the welfare of others in the community in order to create an effective civic balance.

Was this balance achieved by the volunteers involved? Within the museums cooperating with this study, individual improvement and the importance of individual interests in the subject of the museum was an especially prevalent factor that pushed volunteers to offer up their time and effort. Some even tied their individual interests and their volunteering to deeper insights about themselves and their beliefs. One volunteer spoke with great focus on the importance of "passion" and "belief" in regards to their volunteerism. Another DAM volunteer said that "volunteering is not only about giving something to the group that you're giving your time to, but it's about what you can glean from it that makes you better as well. And so at those times, those organizations were giving me a lot of insights into things that were important to me and helping me kind of develop the woman that I am today."

Some volunteers, for example, did offer their time at other organizations, including churches, soup kitchens, and schools. Some others volunteered with groups that have strong political and civic-minded associations, such as Planned Parenthood and the Boys and Girls Club. When discussed, the motivations for volunteering at these institutions were more wide-ranging – these included outright desires to serve their

community and people who were more disadvantaged than they were, or who volunteers at least felt could benefit from their contribution. While personal motivations still played a major role (volunteering at a school in which one's children were enrolled, for example), other motivations took on nearly equal, more altruistic roles that more easily align with the values of American civil society.

Even Museo volunteers, who were somewhat more focused on civic motivations, brought personal experiences to bear on these inclinations. Earlier, one volunteer was quoted as saying "I'm Latino, and I wanted to do something that helped young Latinos feel empowered to have a voice." This is a valid and powerful motivation, but one that is still steeped in the personal – personal experiences, identities, and the drive to help those within one's own group. Overall, volunteers were more focused on personal motivations such as "understanding" or "career", rather than more altruistic motivations such as "values" or "civic engagement". Where volunteers did focus on more classically altruistic factors in their volunteerism, a deeper examination of those motivations exposed a personal core, such as the desire to feel that they are doing good works or helping their own immediate communities.

This is not to say that volunteers exclusively ignored the interests of their community or even of communities outside of their immediate group, as in the case of the volunteer that worked at a soup kitchen, or another that helped to create audio books for the visually impaired. As expected, community-focused concerns were an aspect of volunteer motivations, but were only that – an *aspect* of a wide and varied network of motivations. If volunteers were focused on community, they were more apt to

concentrate on the micro-community of their particular volunteer corps or a more immediate community based on cultural or ethnic identity, such as the previous example in which volunteers supported a fellow volunteer who was recovering from an illness. While such motivations may also fall into the "social" category of volunteer motivations, they clearly hold great significance for the volunteers involved. However, these benefits are still exclusive and do not include members of the larger public or even other volunteers who do not "fit in" by dint of demographics or aesthetics. These community-focused motivations are often too restrictive to fully satisfy the altruistic ideals of civic engagement; they serve their micro-community of volunteers, but not necessarily a larger community beyond that volunteer program.

This dissonance between volunteer motivations and civil society ideals likely has something to do with the perception of museums as authoritative spaces by the volunteers themselves. Though there is a strong push within the museum field to refocus the museum as a community space, this mindset has not necessarily transferred to non-professionals. Many of the volunteers interviewed did not explicitly describe the museum as a community space (though a minority did describe their work as "community service" or "serving the public"). Rather, as previously discussed, the museum was largely a space to fulfill personal interests and needs. The social role of the museum was not civic or community-focused so much as it was focused on individual interests and drives. Volunteers did describe the importance of their social interactions with other volunteers, but did not express interest or even acknowledge the potential of museums for larger issues of community organizing and participation. In contrast,

volunteers worked in other, more obviously service-oriented organizations readily acknowledged the civic value of their work.

Why is there a divide between these two types of volunteering? The non-museums are explicitly viewed as places where volunteers can offer up their time in more apparently altruistic ways (though one can argue that a volunteer's feelings of accomplishment and self-worth are more personal, less altruistic motivations). A soup kitchen or other charity is obviously a place where one can serve the community, and has been presented as such for generations. Museums, on the other hand, are still viewed largely as places of personal learning and reflection, rather than as venues for interacting with and serving the community in the same sense as one would through a charity. While this point of view is certainly changing – witness the number of programs at either museum that push the focus towards community building as much as the art, such as the Museo's Spanish Happy Hour or the DAM's Untitled events – there are still visitors and volunteers who have not made this shift in perception. When a volunteer does not see the potential relationship between museums and the civic ideals discussed throughout this thesis, the opportunity for civic action does not seem possible. They often do not think of the museum as an institution whose potential for political and civic-minded action rivals that of more straightforwardly civic organizations.

This is in contrast to Ivan Karp's assertion that museums are indeed integral parts of a civil society, though Karp's conception of museums is admittedly an ideal rather than a specific reflection of a given reality (Karp 1992:4). While this thesis does not refute Karp's point entirely, it is important to note that the volunteers in this situation do

not collectively see their work as an opportunity for civil action. If they do see such museums as places for developing community, it is only in the sense of developing a circle of friends and like-minded people - not inherently a negative motivation (and certainly not in practice, as the interviews and personal experiences with volunteers attest), but neither are such motivations civic-minded. That said, museums with a younger overall volunteer corps seem to be more in line with Karp's ideas. The Museo volunteers were more likely to discuss their work in terms of civic duty and community, such as the interviewee who stated that he volunteered there because he felt that he owed it to his community and especially to children and young adults who shared his Latino heritage. Through the course of this thesis research, it became clear that older volunteer corps are less likely to see the civic potential of their museum, or at least are less likely to engage with that potential in a lasting way; perhaps, as such volunteers age out of the program, the DAM may see more volunteers who are primed to work with the museum as a place for civic engagement.

Bourdieu and Distinction

Volunteerism may also present contrasts to civic values in the form of class distinctions. As discussed in the Literature Review, Bourdieu and his seminal work, *Distinction*, was expected to present a unique and useful lens for analyzing volunteer relationships and potential conflicts. *Distinction* is concerned with the consumption and interpretation of cultural content across social strata, and devotes some time to studying arts institutions such as museums and how they both construct and are used to construct

social tastes. Volunteers who specifically choose an art museum may be doing so out of a sense of taste that is considered appropriate to their social station – that is, a social station connected to affluence, high social status, and an interest in the "high arts" typically associated with the museum environment. Moreover, conflicts that arise within volunteer programs, especially between volunteers of different social situations, may be illuminated by Bourdieu's work and by the tensions produced through the interactions of these different social strata.

One of the most striking issues that arose during interviewing and analysis was the pressure exerted by social class. Volunteers approached their work in numerous different ways, many of which could be assigned to their social origins and to the forces of taste associated with their class. These different approaches can be broadly split into two categories associated with age and, by extension, social strata. The first category of young volunteers (fifty or younger) was related to factors showing that these volunteers were relatively less prosperous and often found themselves in the middle of academic and career paths. Younger volunteers approached their work differently than older, financially well-off volunteers who had largely completed their education and careers. Sometimes such approaches were different in noticeable ways - as when younger volunteers discussed their work in terms of career development or civil society, while older volunteers more often talked about their work with regards to personal intellectual and social development. Other approaches were more subtle, such as how volunteers wished to interact with visitors (one younger volunteer at the DAM said that she thought she was more comfortable working with teenagers than other volunteers, a

situation she described as unique within the volunteer corps). Such volunteers thus found themselves in different social classes and, as a result, often experienced the social tensions created by the intersection of classes and tastes as described by Bourdieu. While practically no hostility was described, the tensions that resulted from this interaction were often apparent and could make some volunteers feel unwelcome.

These tensions are especially visible when interviewing volunteers who were the exceptions to the demographic rule at their institution – that is, volunteers who were outside of the social class of the dominant group in their program. These volunteers often said that they did not "fit in" at their museum, that they experienced a cognitive dissonance when coming into contact with the existing values and aesthetics of their volunteer program. One DAM volunteer said that "Sometimes the personal gratification between the other volunteers isn't always there. I don't know if that has to do with the fact that I'm considerably younger than everybody. And that may be, I'm in a different stage of life than what that core group really is. And so that may just be an age thing as well." Another pointed out that "[The DAM volunteer corps] was basically old, white, middle-class/upper middle-class, female.... And they're certainly appreciated, immensely. But I think it made it difficult for people who were not of that type to a find any niche to fit in, or satisfaction." While this did not necessarily mean that younger volunteers left their work completely, it often meant that they eventually scaled back their participation or at least expressed less satisfaction than volunteers who did fit with the established demographic. The consequences of this interaction between differing social groups and the different aesthetics that accompanied them produced tangible results. These younger

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or otherwise "different" (in terms of class and aesthetics) volunteers reported feeling left out of the social and intellectual life of the museum.

That said, these same volunteers would occasionally find that the same differences that set them apart socially and intellectually from the majority of their group would also put them at an advantage. For instance, changing attitudes towards modern and contemporary art in the leadership of museums can put younger volunteers who are interested in such art in a position where they are able to gain more prominence and do more active work than if they were in the more popular (amongst the rest of the volunteer corps) galleries housing, for instance, European and American art of the 18th and 19th centuries.

One DAM volunteer pointed out that "…we're at a museum where the shift has been, with the new director, has been modern and contemporary, towards moving forward with the exhibitions and things that are happening, that are more modern and contemporary driven – it puts me in a great spot, because people look to me and say, "… can you explain this to me? I don't know anything about this. Can you give me some insights as to how to talk to a group?" This volunteer pointed out that this gave her multiple advantages within her program. She was often the "go-to" person for modern and contemporary art, helping other volunteers understand and interpret exhibitions and artworks, therefore wielding influence regarding how her colleagues viewed the art before them, saying "I'm kind of helping to spearhead the interest [in modern and contemporary art at the DAM]."

This same volunteer was also frequently called upon to lead tours with younger college or high school-aged visitors because "[older volunteers] may not feel that they can relate to college kids. I'm probably better equipped, although I'm significantly older than college-aged." She concluded that this gave her a broader reach with visitors and supplied her with a unique skill (interacting with teenagers and young adults in an educational setting) that would aid her when she attempted to re-enter the job market. While being set apart from the majority of the volunteers in a program generally appears to decrease a volunteer's satisfaction, that same difference in tastes and experiences may also give them unique and valuable experience to offer to their museum.

While no one in the older, higher class, and more numerous section of the volunteer corps at the DAM expressed any of the revulsion or visceral dislike of younger volunteers' tastes, it also became apparent that many of the younger volunteers who found themselves in predominantly older volunteer corps learned to keep their views to themselves. Some of this contrast was lessened by the self-selecting nature of the museum - people who volunteer at the DAM or the Museo have already identified themselves as people who are interested in a particular kind of art and culture. It is not as if someone who prefers cheap beer to fine wine, or NASCAR to opera has suddenly appeared in the midst of a volunteer group that tends towards appreciation of commonly accepted "high culture". Rather, the differences are more subtle, but still noted (nearly always by the younger volunteers who felt out of place, and not the older volunteers who more effectively fit in with the majority of the program and could afford not to notice the difference) and acted upon. Again, it is important to stress that there was very little

outright conflict. No one was intentionally rude or hurtful and all volunteers (including young ones) were generally reluctant to produce hard-hitting critiques of their programs or the people they worked with. Still, this was an important factor that significantly affected how younger volunteers experienced their time at the museum.

These are general trends, not hard and fast rules for individual volunteers. Some older volunteers still worked, while younger volunteers may be relatively free to pursue the more leisure-oriented approach to volunteerism. This was not necessarily a topic of conversation during interviews with younger volunteers, though it is important to remember that some of the older volunteers began their work at the museum when they were in their twenties and thirties. Of course, one also has to consider the different economic climates across the decades - for instance, it may have been easier for a young stay-at-home mother to volunteer in the 1960s and 1970s in terms of financial security, especially if they were financially secure, as opposed to a young mother attempting to volunteer today.

Robert Putnam and Bowling Alone

Do the volunteers in this study represent Putnam's point of view as discussed in *Bowling Alone*, in which volunteerism and civic engagement in general is on the decline, having become the realm largely of older, more affluent and well-educated volunteers? In some cases, yes. As discussed at great length throughout this thesis, volunteers at the Denver Art Museum were largely in line with the demographic observations and predictions made by Putnam and other scholars. They were generally

older (that is, most were into their retirement years and were older than 50), had achieved higher levels of education (many had at least completed some level of graduate school, while a noticeable number had earned doctoral or law degrees), were financially stable, female, and white. Younger volunteers who had not reached retirement age were the exception rather than the rule within the DAM volunteer corps.

However, there were some departures from Putnam's ideas. Some volunteers at the DAM were outside of this general rule, being younger, less financially stable, people of color, male, or some combination thereof. As previously pointed out in this thesis, though these volunteers were motivated and ready to engage with both the content of the museum and other volunteers in the program, they often felt left out of the core social and intellectual life of the program. Such dissonance fell most often along the lines of age, financial stability, and education (such factors often being deeply intertwined). Putnam's description of falling volunteerism and civic engagement amongst younger generations is not necessarily disproved here. However, some factors that are not apparent in Putnam's investigation (which was largely built upon pre-existing demographic information and social sciences research) appear, centered around younger individuals who continue to choose volunteerism.

Why is this of interest. First, younger individuals who are motivated to volunteer despite considerable obstacles (such as ongoing education, demanding careers, and the work of raising school-age children) encounter yet more obstacles within their chosen program, particularly if they do not fall in line with the pre-existing demographic of a well-established program. While this thesis can only comment upon the experiences of

younger volunteers who are already motivated to try and volunteer - for obvious reasons, younger (and older) individuals who chose not to volunteer at all were not available for interview and therefore could not comment upon Putnam's thesis - it does show that, once in the museum, these individuals experience additional difficulties not always present for other volunteers. These difficulties were almost entirely unintentional on the part of other volunteers and staff, yet they presented some powerful obstacles that eventually created friction and sometimes led younger volunteers to leave their positions or scale back their participation in their program.

Again, at least some of this difficulty can be viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's *Distinction*, already discussed above. Clashing "tastes" or values were frequently brought into play in the interaction between younger and older volunteers, brought on by generational differences tied to yet more differences in social, financial, and aesthetic orientations. These differences in taste can bring about these barriers and cause those who are in the minority (here, younger volunteers) to feel unwelcome - not through any conscious effort of volunteers or staff, but simply through differences in social backgrounds and values that are not easily articulated in everyday social settings. Not only are there initial barriers to volunteering, but there are continued and ongoing barriers that remain even after volunteers enter a program. It appears that the volunteers who dominate both this program and many other programs throughout the United States are (unintentionally) pushing demographically different volunteers away. At least some of the decline in volunteerism amongst younger generations may have something to do with these differences and the opposing forces thus created.

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Younger volunteers may simply not feel welcome in a program that does not include them, however unconsciously this occurs or however welcoming and well-intentioned other volunteers and staff may be. While Putnam's general thesis regarding younger volunteers may be correct – younger generations are less likely to volunteer, and are less likely to do so for an extended period of time – he does not acknowledge some of the social and institutional difficulties that may discourage these volunteers from their work. Instead, he chooses to lay the blame largely on the push for increased individualism in American society, beyond its balanced role in civil society. However, this thesis indicates that, as valid as this claim may or may not be, it is not the only factor discouraging younger individualism from offering up their time as volunteers.

While DAM volunteers largely fell into line with Putnam's demographic profile, how did volunteers at the Museo de las Americas compare to Putnam's predictions? Contrary to expectations, they often contrasted with his collected data. Volunteers there were generally younger (under 50, with the majority of volunteers in their twenties and thirties), in the midst of their educations and careers, and typically held fewer degrees than volunteers at the DAM. Volunteers there were also slightly more likely to be male or Latino though female and white volunteers were still in the clear majority. The inclusion of Latino volunteers is most readily explained by the focus of the museum, which was specifically founded to exhibit the art and culture of Latino people of the Americas. However, this does not easily explain the other deviations from data as described in *Bowling Alone* and other works outlining the demographics of American volunteers. Why are volunteers at the Museo deviating from this data, and is this

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information worthy of further investigation by future scholars? Why were they more likely to be younger than 50, non-white, and male? What about the museum and its volunteer experience encouraged people in the midst of their careers and busy lives to devote even more time to a museum? While it is not within the original scope of this project, the results of this thesis and the circumstances of volunteerism at the Museo should be able to point out certain areas that are worthy of further investigation by future scholars.

Perhaps one of more noticeable factors inherent in this situation is the size of the museum, both physically and in terms of staff members. The Museo is a relatively small museum, with three small galleries and less than ten full-time staff members (during data gathering, the museum had approximately five full-time staff members). This may make the museum more accessible, in that there are fewer barriers to initial and continued participation. Furthermore, it is more easy for volunteers to become involved in work that is central to the museum and its mission. Volunteers interviewed for this thesis reported that they were able to work with the museum's collections and complete research for the museum. Other volunteers who were not interviewed also helped with paperwork, volunteer management, and social media for the Museo. Such tasks would be difficult for a volunteer to engage in at a large institution such as the DAM. A large museum with a similarly large, valuable collection and a substantial staff will not encourage or allow volunteers to work with sensitive materials. The DAM has professionally trained conservators and collections managers on staff – why allow untrained volunteers to

handle the artworks and other objects in their collections, especially if those objects have great monetary or historic significance?

Of course, this is not to say that the objects and operations at the Museo have no value; on the contrary, they are just as valuable and important as cultural and art subjects, regardless of differences in insurance estimates and size of the museum. However, limited size and staff often means that volunteers must step in where standard museum practice would normally require a professional hand. Thus, you have volunteers at the Museo working in collections and exhibits to document, research, and handle objects to further the museum's operations and mission. While such a situation may not fall in line with official or professional guidelines, it does allow volunteers to engage more fully and, frequently, more meaningfully with the museum. This appeared to be especially attractive to young, mid-career volunteers who were interested in gaining experience in related fields, such as anthropology, art, Latino culture, and museum work. Two of the interviewed volunteers explicitly stated that they continued to volunteer at the Museo because they enjoyed more substantive access to the museum and its collections.

The focus and social environment of the Museo may also have affected the composition of its volunteer corps. As stated earlier, the Museo is focused on Latino art and culture. Obviously, this is more likely to attract Latino volunteers who wish to focus on their own culture. Perhaps the restricted focus and interest in more modern Latino art has attracted younger volunteers (though the Museo has a substantial collection of pre-Columbian and otherwise historic Latino art, it is also well known for its exhibitions featuring modern artists and cultures). At the DAM, older volunteers generally showed

interest in the more "historic" collections housed in the museum's North Building (otherwise known as the Ponti Building). Indeed, a younger volunteer at the DAM stated that her interest in the museum's modern art collection was a rarity. It could be that a similar interest would be more apt to flower at the Museo, and also within a volunteer corps that is overall more inclined to an interest in contemporary art and culture.

Finally, the physical location of the museum may also be a factor. The Museo is located in the Santa Fe Arts District, home to many small galleries and art museums, as well as establishments that typically appeal to younger individuals, such as small restaurants, shops, and craft breweries. In contrast, the DAM is located in a central location that is flanked mainly by other large museums (the Clyfford Still Museum and History Colorado, for example) and other cultural and government buildings (including the central branch of the Denver Public Library and the Colorado Judicial Center). While there are a number of smaller shops and restaurants in the area, the atmosphere of the neighborhood may not be appealing to younger individuals due in part to its more formalized, less walkable neighborhood. That said, this is one of the weaker explanations and would benefit from examination by future scholars.

With all of the above factors and potential motivations at the Museo, however, this does not guarantee that volunteers will be active within their communities as a result of their interest in the museum. An increased tendency towards civic engagement and an awareness of their roles as a volunteer and the civic potential of the museum does not automatically mean that a volunteer will be the model of civic engagement as indicated by Putnam. Outside of their sphere of the museum, they are not fated to be more

altruistic, to have robust and varied social contacts, or to be especially active in community life (such as volunteerism elsewhere, political service, and membership in service groups). Indeed, their situation as emerging professionals with busy personal lives may make it difficult for them to devote time to further civic efforts.

Volunteers who fit the profile of their museum (both within the DAM and the Museo) were certainly more likely to be active within the micro-community of their volunteer corps. Volunteers at the Museo were more inclined to civic engagement and were more likely to view the museum as a place for serving and interacting with a community (in the Museo's case, the Latino community). In that sense, volunteers were engaged in the community-building, locally-focused aspects of their work. However, this concern was not extended to a wider community (for instance, to Denver metro-area residents, or those in the geographic area with a general interest in the arts or museums). That said, it should be stated that the same factors that make the Museo attractive to younger, more potentially civic-minded volunteers can also make it more difficult for these same volunteers to build connections with communities beyond the immediate one formed at their museum.

While smaller museums such as the Museo offer increased opportunities, to participate, these same opportunities are not always conducive to civic participation. A volunteer who has the opportunity to work in collections may be enthusiastic to do so, particularly if such duties align with her interests and career path. Collections work, however, does not obviously lend itself to community engagement, especially if the volunteer is one of only a few people working with the collections and is therefore

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occupied with a great number of tasks devoted to the basic maintenance and management of the collections. Volunteers in collections and other departments throughout the museum may simply be too busy assisting with the day-to-day operations of the institution to do more work engaging with the community. They may also not have or feel like they have the authority to present such an effort, even if they conceived of one. Though volunteers at the Museo had more duties and operated on a more egalitarian scale than volunteers at the DAM, Museo volunteers still had a clear conception of their role specifically as volunteers who assisted staff rather than directing them (even in a limited scope).

Ultimately, this thesis indicates that Putnam may be mistaken regarding the demographic makeup of volunteer corps, at least as it applies to museums and in particular to smaller museums that are more attractive to younger, career-focused volunteers. Certain environments may be more conducive to a younger volunteer corps, such as smaller institutions and more (though not unlimited) access and influence. However, Putnam may still be correct regarding the tendency for volunteers (and other members of society, in various capacities) to move away from more civically engaged work. This may be due to some of Putnam's conclusions, such as the advent of individualizing technology (though no direct evidence of this was uncovered during the data gathering portion of this thesis), or it may be due to other factors not fully explored in *Bowling Alone*, such as increasingly busy personal and professional lives that make it difficult for younger volunteers to expand their focus and may make older volunteers less

interested in community service when they finally reach retirement age and have a

substantial amount of personal time at their disposal.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that volunteerism and volunteer motivations are subject to a range of factors. The ideology of civil society and civic engagement, while often revealed to be an important factor in volunteers' motivations, is only one of a mosaic of factors that push a volunteer to offer up their time and effort. Indeed, volunteers who participated in this study were more likely to begin volunteer work in response to personal motivations, such as personal interest in the museum's collections or programs, or a desire to take part in the social environment of their chosen volunteer program. While there were observed exceptions to this standard, such as the increased propensity of younger volunteers to work in response to civic ideals, it also became clear that volunteers who did not fit with the standard demographic of the program often felt that they could not fully engage with the opportunities available through volunteerism. Finally, there appeared to be a disconnect between the work of scholars who focus on the potential and practice of civically engaged museums, and the volunteers themselves, who were not immediately inclined to view museums as civic spaces. This chapter will summarize these findings, and then present potential solutions and avenues of inquiry for future scholars to pursue.

First: do the ideals of American civil society have an effect on volunteers' motivations? Yes, but to a limited extent. As discussed in the analysis chapter, volunteers tended to focus more on personal motivations for volunteerism, such as "understanding" (a need to learn and gain new knowledge and experiences) and social interaction (in terms of its benefit both to the individual and the volunteer corps as a whole). More civic-minded motivations, such as "values" (altruism and concern for others) and "civic engagement" were less frequently mentioned. The "values" motivation was more prevalent for younger volunteers, who were in general more likely to frame their work in terms relating to civil society (such as wanting to "give back", or referring to their community and how they could affect it through their volunteerism). That said, even younger volunteers were more likely to volunteer based largely on personal motivations, including motivations that focused on advancing their educational and career prospects.

Power and influence were also broad factors that were examined in this thesis. Some questions in the semi-structured interviews were created to study a volunteer's perception of their influence at their museum. Did volunteers perceive that they were a noticeable force in their museum, having major impacts on how the museum was managed and maintained? Volunteers at either museum had some impact, in the sense that they believed staff members were receptive to their input, but their ultimate status as volunteers tended to muzzle this effect. Indeed, a great deal of this lessened impact had to do with the volunteers themselves. Many DAM volunteers stated that they thought it wasn't their place to offer up opinions and critiques of their museum. Some even went so

far as to say such actions were "inappropriate" to their position. They had a clear conception of the hierarchy in their museum, and were largely content with it. Nearly all of the older volunteers explicitly stated that, while they had no formal power within the institution, they did feel that their input (though apparently rarely given) was listened to and communicated with staff members. Younger volunteers (that is, volunteers under 50) presented a slight contrast, though they also did not feel that they had a great deal of impact on museum operations or policy. Volunteers, then, did not embody the more egalitarian, "bottom up", citizen-led focus that is part of standard American civil society ideology.

Volunteers who fell outside of the norms of their program were also more likely to feel that they could not fully participate in their volunteer community, especially if they were working alongside a volunteer corps that was generally older and more affluent. Bourdieu's argument that differences in social class and its accompanying social taste can create discord therefore holds true in this thesis. While no volunteers were hostile towards others and, indeed, many (often older) volunteers expressed a sense of belonging and satisfaction with the social life of the volunteer corps, it is clear that volunteers who fell outside of the demographic and social norms had difficulty fully engaging with other volunteers. This occasionally led to younger volunteers who felt somewhat dissatisfied with their experiences, and who wished that they could receive the same social and intellectual recognition that the volunteer corps gave to more "typical" members. That said, differences in taste and social standing could potentially lead to advantages, as when one younger volunteer found a cultural and educational niche in the

Modern Art galleries. As described in Chapter Four, this volunteer was one of the few members of the corps who were able to lead tours and other educational programs in the Modern Art galleries. Older volunteers were more likely to focus on European, American, and Pre-Columbian artworks. Not only did this "different" volunteer find a specialization, but she also fell into line with the current director's focus on contemporary art and thus gained recognition for her work. Still, it was clear that volunteers corps were equally capable of forming engaging, meaningful communities, and of unintentionally excluding others from those same communities. This is in line with Crooke's description of community as exclusionary by nature (Crooke 2007:62), and yet does not serve the museum well with regardings to fostering more engaged and diverse relationships amongst staff and community members.

While volunteers readily formed their own communities, they were less likely to cite ties with their community or a desire for civic service as motivations for their volunteerism. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of research regarding the role of volunteers in museum-community relationships, despite current interest in the subject of civically engaged museums (Ames 1992; Bennett 2005; Bennett 2006; Black 2010; Conn 2010; Crooke 2007; Crooke 2011; Karp 1994). There is little to no mention of volunteers in this context. Furthermore, the majority of volunteers interviewed for this study did not view their work in terms of civil society or as part of a joint museum-community environment. This is in contrast to work some volunteers had undertaken at other institutions and organizations; this work (such as volunteering at Planned Parenthood or helping to create audio books for visually impaired people) was specifically framed by

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participating volunteers as civically important, whereas the museum was more often described as a place for personal enrichment.

It is clear that there is a gap in perception between volunteers and scholars on multiple levels. One one level, authors do not generally mention volunteers when writing about the intersection of community engagement, civil society, and museums. This is surprising, given that volunteers are drawn from within the community and can potentially be seen as individuals who bridge the realms of museum and community. On another level, volunteers themselves do not appear to see or engage with the civic potential of museums. Volunteers involved in this thesis research were far more likely to be motivated by personal reasons rather than civically engaged ones. Why are there such gaps in perception, and what could be done to address them and therefore help to bring volunteerism into the conversation on civically engaged museums?

On the side of the volunteers, it appears that issues of volunteer perception and intention are paramount. Volunteers are clearly capable of recognizing and embodying the connection between volunteerism and civil society, as evidenced by the work multiple volunteers completed with other, non-museum organizations. They perceive these places as primed for civic engagement. When volunteers choose to work with these non-museum institutions, they enter into their volunteer service with the intention to serve that organization in a civically focused capacity. Museums, however, are not necessarily perceived by volunteers as sites through which they can achieve similar civic goals. Furthermore, volunteers who do recognize that museums could serve to encourage the ideology of civil society and foster civic engagement, do not necessarily *want* such a

volunteer experience. As previously described, one volunteer said that her work at a charity was specifically focused on the community, whereas her work at the Denver Art Museum was intentionally focused on her personal enjoyment and satisfaction. This observation is reinforced by the prevalence of the "understanding" and "social interaction" motivations described in Chapter Four.

Volunteers were community-minded to an extent, though they almost always chose to restrict their community-minded focus to fellow volunteers and, occasionally, other staff members. Given the limited numbers of these groups, volunteers therefore had or made little opportunity to interact with a wider community through their work with their museum. Volunteers who did work within larger circles did so in ways that were not necessarily accessible to general members of the community, such as through interaction with their museum's Board of Directors, or by organizing a national-level volunteer symposium which was not open to the general public.

The art museums in this study were thus largely viewed and utilized by volunteers for achieving personal goals and personal enrichment. This may be related to the museums' focuses on art, and on art's potential reputation as a cultural form that is largely based on personal insight and intuition. However, given the highly motivated nature of volunteerism, this same circumstance may hold true at other museums, such as history museums and science centers. A volunteer at a science center may work there because of a personal interest in science, rather than a specific desire to serve the public through the museum. Future researchers may focus on museums in other subjects, such

as science and history, in order to determine if these same conditions prevail in other museum volunteer programs.

If museum staff and scholars want to encourage more expansive civic engagement within museum volunteer corps, they may consider making such goals more transparent to volunteers. This could be achieved by emphasizing opportunities for civic engagement during initial and continued training, day-to-day interactions with staff, and by creating and encouraging volunteers to participate in civic projects. Thoughtful action and ongoing conversations and evaluation regarding the roles of staff, volunteers, and community members are frequently cited as important components of civically-engaged museums (Black 2010:139; Hirzy 2002; Tate 2012).

As citizen-led, "ground up" initiatives are an integral part of American civil society ideology, it may also be beneficial for museum staff to cede more power to volunteers. For instance, volunteers could be encouraged to develop and maintain programs in concert with museum staff. That said, it is likely that there will always be volunteers that wish to work at a museum for personal goals. Certainly, a number of volunteers interviewed for this study specifically stated that they did not want power and subsequent responsibility at their museum. Volunteer managers and museum staff should recognized the validity of volunteering for personal enrichment, and indeed recognize and encourage a wide diversity of volunteer motivations within their museum.

Volunteer managers and other museum staff may focus on achieving such diversity through initial and continued interactions with volunteers, including both those that have been newly recruited and those that have firmly established themselves as

volunteers within their chosen institution. Depending on the individual museum, volunteer managers may want to target different groups for a more diverse volunteer corps that could yield newer and more diverse ideas. Such targeted groups would deviate from the established volunteer corps on the basis of factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and education, among others. However, staff members involved in such an initiative would need to be careful of falling into tokenism, or of concentrating too much on recruiting a certain number or type of volunteers. Ellen Hirzy writes that "When audience development is the focal point and 'community' is a code word for race, class, ethnicity, educational level, or other demographic characteristics, a museum's efforts can seem token and patronizing" (Hirzy 2002: 16). Also, staff members are likely to be more effective when they are "making space" for volunteers to achieve civically engaged work; that is, when they are simultaneously encouraging volunteers, assisting them when necessary, and recognizing when it is beneficial for staff to "step back" and allow volunteers to work in a more independent capacity and with greater power. In general, a model of staff-volunteer interaction that encourages more transparency, more active staff support, a more diverse volunteer corps, and more opportunities for independent work may help volunteers to recognize the museum as a civic space.

However, these solutions only address one side of the gap between museum volunteers and civic engagement. What of the authors who have written extensively about the intersection of communities and museums, and yet rarely address volunteerism within this context? Why do they not discuss volunteerism as an avenue for civic engagement? Though it was beyond the scope and resources of this study to directly ask

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the authors themselves, some possible reasons for the omission may still be illuminated for future investigation. It may be that scholars recognize that volunteers have, either purposely or inadvertently, set themselves apart from community interests in order to participate with the museum. Again, volunteers were more often motivated by personal interests rather than civic ones, despite the fact that a number of volunteers clearly recognized the civic value of volunteering in other, non-museum related contexts. It may also be that many volunteer corps are too exclusive in order to be considered representative of their community, or for them to effectively act as liaisons between community and museum. Previous research, as well as this thesis, has demonstrated that volunteer corps are largely white, female, highly educated, and tend to originate from mid- to high-income backgrounds (Hettman and Jenkins 1990:298; Howlett 2002:42; Putnam 2000:121; Snyder and Omoto 2008:25). This thesis has also found that volunteers who diverge from the norms (both demographic and social) of their volunteer corps are more likely to feel excluded from the social and intellectual core of their program. If volunteer programs are too exclusive, it hardly makes them ideal candidates for the study of museum-community relationships.

That said, there is great potential for volunteer programs to embody the relationship between museums and community, and especially between museums and American civil society. In general, it appears that a more conscious approach to volunteerism within the context of civic engagement and museums would do well to serve both museums and communities. Those within power (most often, museum staff members and community partners) can follow the suggestions set forth by other scholars

(Black 2010; Crooke 2007; Hirzy 2002; Tate 2012) to engage in self-evaluation and ongoing conversations regarding the role of museums and, by extension, museum volunteerism within the community. As made clear throughout the field work and my personal experiences within both the DAM and the Museo, volunteers are intelligent, engaged individuals who could, if given the right resources and the right amount of guidance from museum staff, could readily make connections with the surrounding community.

There are a number of additional avenues that remain to be explored by future investigators. While this thesis has yielded interesting and valuable information, it was restricted to the study of two volunteer programs, both at art museums. Would the contrast between older and younger volunteers, and all the attendant contrasts and conflicts that arose, be present at other types of museums? As mentioned previously, it seems likely that many volunteers would be just as likely to follow their motivations to learn and build a social circle at a history museum or a science center, with older volunteers less focused on the civil society aspects of their work than younger ones. But would the subject matter and the culture of a historic or scientific discipline within a museum have a noticeable impact on its volunteers? If a volunteer is motivated to work at a museum through a love of science rather than art, are their relationships with the museum and engagement with the surrounding community any different? Do institutional cultures at a history museum or science center differ from that of an art museum, and to such a degree that it would affect the volunteer corps at each institution?

It would also be of great benefit to conduct a study similar to this one at further institutions, to see if the findings of this thesis hold true throughout many other museums. Unfortunately, it was not possible to investigate other volunteer programs, given the limited resources available. Hopefully, future scholars and researchers will also focus on this subject and devote their time and effort towards its study at more varied and numerous institutions. Whether or not volunteers and staff truly feel that museums are a part of civil society, it remains that they are integral parts of a community's landscape, as well as its cultural and intellectual life. Museums have been a part of the American cultural milieu for many generations now, and will likely continue to be for many generations more. Furthermore, wherever there are museums, there will almost certainly be a group of dedicated, passionate volunteers who will want to work for the museum for a variety of motivations. They, their museums, their communities, and the interplay of these individuals and spheres of influence, all deserve the attention and dignity of further study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Sample Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

This is a graduate project designed to gather information about volunteerism in American museums and motivating factors for volunteerism. This information will be used for my master's thesis. This is a completely anonymous interview. In reporting the results I will NOT use your name or any other information that could reveal your identity. Instead, I will use numeric codes or pseudonyms. Your honest responses to these questions are greatly appreciated as I attempt to understand American volunteerism.

I expect that the interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes, depending on how much information you would like to share.

Your decision to participate in this interview in completely voluntary. You have the right to participate or to refuse to take part in this study. You can stop your participation at any moment.

If you decide not to participate or to suspend your participation, there will be no penalty of any kind. You can refuse to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. There will be no compensation for your participation in this project. Your participation does not pose any physical or emotional risk for you, other

than some possible emotional discomfort at discussing personal or otherwise sensitive matters.

This project is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Christina Kreps. If you have any questions about the project, please contact me at (813) 420-1533 or scrock23@du.edu, or my advisor at ckreps@du.edu.

____ I certify that I have read the information about the project and that I am willing to participate.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Affirmation of the Investigator

I have carefully explained to the participant [and translator] the meaning of the above document. I affirm that to my best understanding, the signed participant understands the nature, expectations, risks, and benefits associated with participating in this study.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

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Appendix B - Sample Interview Questions

The interview will begin with a discussion of the interviewee's role in the research, including their rights and how the information gathered during this session will be used. The interviewee will sign the consent form at this time. As discussed in the research methods section, these questions will serve as a guide during the interview - if the participants wish to discuss a relevant topic that is not listed here, they may.

1. What museum do you volunteer at?

2. What is your birth date?

3. What is your educational level?

4. What is your current employment status?

5. How long have you been volunteering at this museum?

6. What are some of the main reasons that led you to become a volunteer, both in general and at this museum?

7. What tasks do you typically complete when you come in to volunteer?

8. Since you have worked at your museum, have your reasons for volunteering changed? Why or why not?

9. Do you think that you have a lot of influence or decision-making power in your museum? Why or why not?

10. If there was anything you would like to change about your museum, what would it be? Why?

11. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experiences as a volunteer?

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