



RESEARCH BRIEF

CIVIC SERVICE RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWS PROGRAM

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Defining Civic Service: A Global Perspective

Civic service can be defined as an organized period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community, recognized and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant (Sherraden, 2001, p.2). Development of a global knowledge base on civic service will depend on common concepts and definitions applicable across different contexts (McBride & Sherraden, 2004). The notion of service varies across cultures; its forms and functions reflect the cultural, social, economic, and political context. The Center for Social Development's Civic Service Research Grants and Fellows Program (RGFP) seeks to develop a global knowledge base on civic service. Several research projects under the RGFP investigate the *meaning of service*. In this section, we share preliminary findings from our fellows' research related to the service role and the meaning of service in their area of study.

Dr. Anabel Cruz's research in Uruguay seeks to understand civic service, focusing on organizations that provide opportunities for older adults so they can remain active participants in society through civic engagement and long-term volunteerism. Preliminary findings indicate that the provision of "civic service" or long-term, intensive volunteer opportunities is an objective of few organizations that engage older adult volunteers. Results from a survey conducted with older adults (n=61) in Montevideo suggests less of a focus on service as a noun or opportunity and more emphasis on helping others (43%) based on solidarity. It is important to note that in South America the term "solidarity" implies working together for the common cause, helping others in an organized and effective way, and uniting as a group to defend rights and solve social problems (Tapia, 2004).

In Africa, Dr. Leila Patel and Helene Perold lead a team of national researchers who are identifying organizations sponsoring service and volunteerism programs across 5 countries in Africa (Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe). Methods adopted in this study include interviews with key informants in all 5 countries as well as focus groups. Preliminary analysis have been conducted.

The researchers found that in Malawi, there is limited understanding of the term "civic service." The term

"volunteering" is widely recognized and related to non-monetary gain. However, civic service has a strong government or state connotation in the Malawian culture. During focus groups and interviews, local researchers adopted the term "long-term volunteerism" instead of "civic service" to ensure the measures were culturally sensitive to the context and valid.

Variations in how one perceives civic service appear not only in different countries but also in different areas within the same country. For example, in Zambia, focus group participants from urban and rural areas expressed different views on the meaning of service. Rural respondents linked the notion of service to something that complements the work of the extended family, a notion that originates from the desire to help others. In contrast, respondents in urban areas tend to view service as a means or a tool to achieve social welfare.

The notion of civic service as work is strong in Dr. Maud Simonet-Cusset's research findings. In her study, she investigated the meaning of "service as work" by applying a sociology of work perspective to the study of service programs and volunteers in four educationally-based programs in France and in the United States. In each country two service programs in education were included: City Year and Teach for America in the United States; and Unis Cité's "service civil de solidarité" and AFEV's "volontariat étudiant" program in France. The core of her qualitative research consisted of 46 in-depth interviews.

Findings from these interviews demonstrate that in both countries, social and economic status seems to have an effect on volunteers' perceptions of and experience in the programs. While privileged youth were looking for a way to take a break and "do something useful for society" (France) or "give back to the community" (US), servers who lack financial resources stated they were actually looking for a job. Likewise, "stipend" is perceived and used as "pocket money" for servers with higher economic status and more like "wages or a salary" for volunteers with lower economic status. During the interviews, volunteers also discussed the notion of "sacrifice" as implicit in their role as a server. They suggested that the meaning of sacrifice is not necessarily the same for the privileged volunteer with the will and ability to do "something good" while he or she tests out a possible vocation, as it is for the volunteer of lesser means hoping to find a meaningful job.

Cultural Competence in Research

Cultural competency reflects a desire to go beyond an ethnocentric understanding of culture. This includes: (1) responding respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the cultural differences and similarities of individuals, families, and communities, while protecting and preserving the dignity of each; (2) understanding and appreciating the cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups; (3) the willingness and the ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs by working with persons from the community (Seib, Daltro, & Campbell, 2003).

One of the first steps in conducting culturally competent research is designing studies that consider respondents' unique histories, life experiences, and belief systems. Methodologies that lead to the exclusion of certain populations or contribute to biased results should be avoided or otherwise justified based on the research questions. Culturally-relevant data collection instruments are key. Failing to consider ethnic/cultural differences can result in inaccurate information being collected and erroneous conclusions being drawn from the population.

In order to improve cultural appreciation, researchers should consider ethnographic observation. Ethnographic or immersion activities can increase the understanding of different cultures (Seib, Daltro, & Campbell, 2003), thus, improving design and instrument development. It may stimulate ideas for alternative ways of measuring potential outcome variables. Anecdotal data, key informant data, and data reported by other agencies may be helpful if immersion is not possible.

Dean (2001) argues that culture as a phenomenon is constantly changing, thus, not easily defined or measured. Consequently, to achieve "competence" in the sense that is possible to "know" *all* the defined set of values, behaviors, and attitudes in a culture only serves to give a politically-correct tone to research. Instead, Dean calls for cultural awareness or "maintaining an awareness of one's lack of competence is the goal rather than the establishment of competence" (p.624).



Cultural Competency: Issues to Consider Before Beginning Data Collection

- How much is known about the population being investigated?**
- Have instruments and measures you plan to use been validated for the population being studied?**
- Is the research confirmatory or investigational?**
- How willing is the population to participate in the research?**
- How sensitive is the information being collected?**
- How will the information be used?**
- Have the barriers to participating in research already been investigated with the study population?**

Computer-Assisted Data Analysis

Adapted from: Fielding, Nigel (1993). "Qualitative Data Analysis with a computer: Recent developments". *Social Research Update*, University of Surrey, England. Available online at <http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU1.html>

Nigel Fielding (1993) suggests that the researcher should consider three factors in computer-assisted data analysis for qualitative research: the kinds of analytic work the software facilitates and the kinds of work for which it is unsuitable; the relevance of the features included in the software to the analytic procedures employed by different research traditions; and the extent to which segmental and conversational analysis is facilitated.

According to the author, it is important to know what sort of manipulation or presentation is required from the data, which can then be matched to the types of software that are available. Although written more than 10 years ago, the software packages reviewed in this article remain the market leaders in qualitative research.

Atlas-ti (<http://www.atlasti.com/>)

This is a sophisticated package with an impressive interface. Similar to NVivo, the emphasis is on inter-code relationships and theory-building, rather than straight code and retrieve. Objects like Excel tables, images, PowerPoint slides, formulas, and audio or video files can be embedded in primary documents, comments, and memos. Most objects can be activated and edited within ATLAS-ti without the need for explicitly opening the application that was used to create them. East Asian languages are supported. However, currently you cannot create Unicode labels for codes, memos, network nodes, etc. It is also not possible to use Unicode in text searches.

The Ethnograph (<http://www.qualisresearch.com/>)

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The Ethnograph allows the user to identify and retrieve text from documents. Likewise, searches can be done by using single code words, code words linked with 'and' and 'not', or speaker/section identifiers for detailed scrutiny of your data. The software has the ability to filter by face sheets (the characteristics of the document), identifier sheets (the characteristics of speakers), identifiers (specific speakers), or file codes.

HyperQual (<http://home.satx.rr.com/hyperqual/>)

The software is designed to assist in the analysis of text data from interviews, observations and documents. A special package for focus groups is available. SuperHyperQual is the latest version of the classic Mac HyperQual software for qualitative (text) data analysis. Currently, the program is available for Mac

OS X, Classic (by special request), and Windows. SuperHyperQual has been updated to include all of the old features as well as some improvements. The best feature of this software is that it allows researchers to maintain bibliographic databases for literature reviews linked to the data.

NVivo - NUDIST (<http://www.qsr.com.au/>):

NVivo can be used for a wide range of research projects, including: discourse analysis, grounded theory, action research, conversation analysis, ethnography, literature reviews, phenomenology, and mixed methods research.

NVivo uses flagging and text search to construct a possibly large and highly structured hierarchical database indexing into the documents to be analyzed. Fine interpretation of text or multimedia images; rich text, freely edited, to represent the richness of your data; detailed annotation and flexible record of interpretations; developing and testing your understanding of meanings; framing, filtering and focusing questions, scoping the enquiry; fluid linking to memos and multimedia data; visually displaying matrices or rich text reports; modeling the analysis and research findings.

Conferences

The 6th International Service Learning Research Conference, October 14-16, 2006, Portland State University.

"From Passion to Objectivity: International and Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on Service-Learning Research."

Abstract Submission Deadline: March 8, 2006.

Submissions are invited in a variety of formats, including emerging scholars, research agenda-setting, global issues, cross-national

showcases. <http://www.upa.pdx.edu/SLResearch06>.

The 17th Annual National Service-Learning Conference, March 22-25, 2006, Philadelphia, PA.

One of the largest gathering of youths and practitioners involved in the service-learning movement. Pennsylvania Convention Center.

<https://programs.regweb.com/metro/NSLC2006/registration/index.cfm?pagegridid=636140>

8th International Association for National Youth Service Conference, June 23-27, 2006, Montreal Canada.

Katimavik is sponsoring the next IANYS conference. The 8th global IANYS conference will have three parts: policy frameworks for national youth service and service learning, new directions in national youth service and a reflection on IANYS's mission <http://www.katimavik.org/IANYS/>

Civil Society and Human Security: July 9-12, 2006, at The Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand.

International Society for Third Sector Research Seventh International Conference.

<http://www.jhu.edu/~istr/conferences/bangkok>

The NCVO and VSSN Research Conference. September 13-14, 2006 University of Warwick, UK.

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) and Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) Researching the Voluntary Sector Conference provides a forum for discussing a whole range of voluntary sector themes including philanthropy and giving, public service delivery, civil renewal, active citizenship, public policy, ICT, funding and infrastructure. This year, the conference includes a special session sponsored by the Institute of Volunteering Research for "new" researchers. Submission deadline: Friday, March 10, 2006. http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/research_conference

ARNOVA Conference, November 16-18, 2006, Chicago, IL. The Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) has yet to post their call for abstracts. Reference their website for updates regarding the conference, <http://www.arnova.org>.

The 19th IAVE World Volunteer Conference, November 10-14, 2006, New Delhi, India.

Volunteering for Peace in Multi-cultural Societies, organized by: People's Institute for Training and Development (PIDT) in collaboration with: IAVE, India Chapter. The Conference will be organized around 6 major tracks: spirituality; human rights; environment; education and governance in multi-cultural societies; information communication technologies (ICT), media & advertising; and civil society intervention as volunteer Action.

[\(http://www.iave.org/2006/\)](http://www.iave.org/2006/). Paper Submission deadline: **June 30, 2006.**

Check out the new
VOSESA Focus @
http://www.vosesa.org.za/focus/vol1_n03/index.html

A quarterly bulletin on service and
volunteering in
Southern Africa.

VOSESA is also the co-publisher of
Service Enquiry which is available at
www.service-enquiry.org.za.

VOSESA

Research Reports and Conference Presentations

New Reports available online at the Center for Social development Website:

Dr. Maud Simonet-Cusset, “*In Between Occupational Work and Volunteer Work: Serving as a Teacher in France and in the United States*,” Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and Center for the Study of Philanthropy Paris, France.

http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/service/SRGP_GRASS.htm

R. Gantumur, Erdenechimeg Tserendorj, & Tumurbaatariin Bulganzaya. “*Study of the Effects of the National United Nations’ Volunteers Program in Mongolia*,” Centre for Social Development of Mongolia; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/service/srgp_mongolia.htm

Suzanne Pritzker & Amanda Moore McBride.

“*Service-Learning and Civic Outcomes: From Suggestive Research to Program Models*” (CSD Working Paper 05-12). St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development.

<http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/Publications/2005/WP05-12.pdf>

Conference Presentations:

The Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Points of Light Foundation, convened fellows and leading practitioners in volunteerism and service as part of the 2nd Annual International Roundtable on Service and Volunteerism in conjunction with the National Conference on Volunteering and Service, August 3 to 5, 2005 in Washington, DC. Fellows presenting included **Dr. Ebenezer Obadare and Chandra Bhatta** of the London School of Economics. Other presenters included: **Nicole Fleischer**, Director of the Carmel Institute for Social Studies, Israel; **Jean-Guy Bigeau**, Director of Katimavik, Canada; **Dr. Amanda Moore McBride and Lissa Johnson** from the Center of Social Development; **Dr. Rose Ekeleme and Liz Burns** from The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) representing Nigeria and Scotland respectively; and **Marta Estarellas**, Youth Development Specialist from the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC.

Dr. Cheryl Keen and Keith Morton presented a paper on. “*Reflecting on Experiential Education: Dynamics Under the Forms*,” 34th Annual National Society for Experiential Education Conference. Nashville, TN. October 27th 2005. The presentation examined the dynamics underlying the many forms of experiential education including what it looks, feels, and sounds like as well as the ways in which this dialogue can lead to individual, institutional, and social transformation.

In November 2005, **Dr. Maria Nieves Tapia** presented at the 5th Annual International Conference on Service-Learning, East Lansing, MI.. Her research is the first descriptive and exploratory research on Argentina K-12 community service-learning.

The ARNOVA’s (Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action) 34th Annual Conference held in Washington, DC, November 17-19 focused on “Nonprofits, Philanthropy and the Public Agenda: Linking Research, Practice and Policy.”

Three fellows presented on a panel entitled “*National Service in Comparative Perspective: Nature, Structure, and Civic Impacts*” led by Dr. Amanda Moore McBride. **Dr. Gesa Birnkraut** presented on “*The Voluntary Cultural Year in Germany: Perceptions and Potential*”; **Dr. Danielle Vogenbeck** on “*Social Networks and National Service: The Impact of AmeriCorps*NCCC on Four Nonprofit Communities*”; and **Dr. Ebenezer Obadare** on “*Rethinking Citizenship: The Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)*.”

Dr. Peter Devereux presented a paper on “*International Volunteers: Pursuing Security and Sustainability with Human Solidarity*” at the Security and Development in Marginal Communities: A National Workshop on Volunteering Abroad in the Asia Pacific”, November 24-25, University of Wollongong. This two-day forum brought together invited scholars and professionals who discussed key issues related to poverty alleviation, economic restructuring and the relationship to volunteering and working in Asia Pacific countries.



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 Teresa Matus, PhD
 Salah Mohamed
 Maria Nieves Tapia, PhD
 Ebenezer Obadare, PhD
 Leila Patel, PhD
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 Gantumur Radnaa
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 Maud Simonet, PhD
 John Stringham
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