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# Predictors of Time Volunteering, Religious Giving, and Secular Giving: Implications for Nonprofit Organizations

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*Using data from the survey Midlife Development in the United States, 2004–2006, the present study examined characteristics associated with time volunteering, religious giving, and secular giving. Multivariate analysis, guided by the theory of volunteering, showed that education and income predicted time volunteering and both religious and secular charitable giving. Generative qualities (e.g., confidence in one's skills, desire to assist others) were significant predictors of time spent volunteering and secular giving, while religious identification was the strongest predictor of religious giving. Perceived social integration was a significant predictor of time volunteering and religious giving. Implications for nonprofit organizations that need to recruit more volunteers and donors, especially during economic downturns, are discussed, including personal invitations to volunteer based on knowledge of an individual's skills and talents, encouraging meeting attendance and promoting social embeddedness, and secular organizations' appeals to religious donors based on their religious motivations.*

**Key words:** *time volunteering, religious giving, secular giving, nonprofit organizations, social integration, social embeddedness, religious identification*

Many nonprofit organizations and groups depend on both volunteers' time and charitable donations to accomplish their missions (Independent Sector, 2001). The volunteer supplements to the Current Population Surveys, 2005-2009, found

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that each year more than 60 million volunteers provided a total of 8 billion hours of volunteer service to religious organizations, educational or youth services, social or community services, hospitals and other healthcare services, and a variety of other organizations, including civic, political, and professional, as well as international causes (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [USBLS], 2010). In 2009, among adults (25+ years) of different age groups, rates of formal volunteering were generally consistent, ranging from 24% to 32%, while the median number of volunteer hours ranged from 36 to 90, with volunteers aged 65 or older devoting more hours than their younger counterparts (USBLS, 2010). Volunteering rates tend to be higher among women than men, among whites than nonwhites, among those with at least a bachelor's degree than those with less education, among home owners than renters, and among those who belong to religious organizations than those who do not belong to them (Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], 2010; Independent Sector, 2001; USBLS, 2010).

In addition to volunteering their time, 70% of individuals and households made monetary donations totaling more than \$227 billion in 2009. This represented almost 75% of the total of \$304 billion given to religious, educational, health, and human services organizations and to organizations focused on arts, culture, humanities, international affairs, the environment, and animal welfare (GivingUSA, 2010). Religious giving was estimated to be \$107 billion, or 47%, of the total of \$227 billion donations made by individuals and households. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (Anft & Lipman, 2003) reports that regardless of their income, college graduates give at a rate two to three times higher than those with less education. Other studies also found that volunteering time and money often go hand-in-hand, and the sociodemographic characteristics of donors are similar to those of time volunteers (Apinunmahakul & Devlin, 2008; Bryant, Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003; Duncan, 1999; Freeman, 1997).

Recent surveys and other studies have found that during the current economic recession, nonprofit organizations have responded to increased demand for services and decreased funding from all sources (government, private foundations, revenue from fees for services, and individual donors) by

increasing the number of their volunteers (Accenture, 2009; Bridgeland, McNaught, Reed, & Dunkelman, 2009; Salamon & Spence, 2009; Urban Institute, 2010). Salamon and Spence (2009), in their national survey of nonprofit organizations between September 2008 and March 2009, found that almost half (48%) predicted that they would increase their use of volunteers in the coming year. The same survey found that during the current economic downturn, one of every three organizations reported increasing their reliance on volunteers, and nonprofit organizations can find some relief by using volunteers in hard times.

While volunteer rates have seen some increase, charitable giving declined. For the first time in more than 20 years, charitable giving decreased between 2007 and 2008. The dollar amount of individual/household giving dropped by 6.3%, and the amount of gifts (from all sources) to human service organizations dropped by 15.9% after adjusting for inflation (GivingUSA, 2009). However, contributions to religious congregations and other entities to support organized religious practices increased slightly (5.5% in current dollars and 1.6% adjusted for inflation) in the same time period. In fact, giving to religious organizations tends to increase in recession years (GivingUSA, 2009), while secular nonprofit organizations are likely to experience a more difficult time raising funds. Individual/household charitable giving in 2009 stayed the same as in 2008 (GivingUSA, 2010).

During tough economic times, nonprofit organizations, especially secular ones, may benefit from more strategically identifying and targeting those likely to volunteer or make charitable donations. Research attests to the importance of individuals' physical and mental health, as well as the societal and economic benefits they expect to receive in deciding to volunteer their time. Research also suggests that reasons or motivations for charitable giving (e.g., altruism, social responsibility, and tax deductibility) may be both similar to and different from those determining time volunteering, but only a small number of studies have simultaneously examined factors associated with time volunteering and charitable giving (Apinunmahakul & Devlin, 2008; Brown & Ferris, 2007; Bryant et al., 2003; Center on Philanthropy [COP], 2009;

Duncan, 1999; Lee & Chang, 2007; Rossi, 2001, 2004; Wang & Graddy, 2008). In addition, only Wang and Graddy (2008) distinguished between individual characteristics and motivations of those who engage in religious giving and secular giving, but they did not consider time volunteering. To better help non-profit organizations target their efforts, this study simultaneously examined whether the same or different factors predict time volunteering, religious giving, and secular giving.

### Theory of Volunteering and the Study Hypotheses

In examining the correlates of time volunteering, secular giving, and religious giving, this study was guided by an integrated theory of volunteering that is based on the following three premises: (1) Volunteer work is a productive activity that requires human capital, and a market exists for volunteer labor, much like the market for paid labor; (2) volunteer work is an ethically-guided work that requires cultural capital; and (3) volunteer work, to a varying degree, involves collective action that requires social capital (Wilson, 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1997a). *Human capital* refers to individuals' knowledge and skills, health status, and other tangible resources such as availability of the time, education, and income as prerequisites for volunteering. *Cultural capital* refers to people's internal desires and motivations for volunteering, because the ultimate motives for volunteering stem from moral incentives to self and others. *Social capital* refers to individuals' trust in others and in their own community as well as to their social embeddedness/connections, which are all likely to increase opportunities for volunteering through mutual trust, information sharing, and pooled resources. Although originally developed and employed to explain the determinants of time volunteering, the theory of volunteering has been used as a framework for both time volunteering and charitable giving behaviors.

#### *Human Capital*

In the present study, education and income were chosen as indicators of human capital. Higher education tends to increase a person's knowledge, skills, earnings, and social connections/networks. Income is also a proxy for certain knowledge and skills as well as an indicator of social

connections and economic status that can result in more opportunities or requests to volunteer. More important, type and level of income represent economic capacity to make charitable and other kinds of donations (Hughes & Luksetich, 2008; James & Sharpe, 2007; Lee & Chang, 2007). Tax deductibility associated with high income is also an important determinant of charitable giving (Brooks, 2007; Pitts & Skelly, 1984).

### *Cultural Capital*

Generative qualities and religious identification were chosen as indicators of cultural capital. Generative concern and commitment are good measures of individuals' sense of moral obligations, social responsibility, and self-interest that motivates volunteering, especially during mid- and late life (McAdams, 2001; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; Snyder & Clary, 2004). When asked about their reasons or motivations for time volunteering, middle-aged and older volunteers tend to express their desire to give something back to society and to benefit society and younger generations by sharing their experience and skills (Black & Kovacs, 1999; Larkin, Sadler, & Mahler, 2005; Narushima, 2005). An individual's sense of moral obligations and social responsibility, altruistic values, and empathy are also associated with charitable giving (Rossi, 2001, 2004; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007; Smith & McSweeney, 2007).

People also volunteer their time because of self-interest and personal gain (Chappell & Prince, 1997; Okun, Barr, & Herzog, 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 2002; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1997b). They recognize that personal benefits may accrue from self-development through understanding of and learning about social problems and people affected by them. Getting to know other volunteers can advance career goals by making business contacts or learning skills that may be useful for paid employment. Self-interest may be a reason for the increased number of volunteers during the current economic downturn. Older adults are less likely than younger ones to be motivated by career goals, but many middle-aged and older adults also volunteer because they want to remain active and connected with other people, to feel useful and productive, to seek a sense of purpose or meaning in their lives by doing good, and to escape negative feelings, such as guilt,

anxiety, and loneliness (Bowen, Andersen, & Urban, 2000; Krause, Herzog, & Baker, 1992; Okun et al., 1998; Omoto et al., 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1997b). In the present study, we were not able to separate self-interest from a sense of moral obligations and social responsibility as motivations for volunteering.

Religiosity and religious orientation are other aspects of cultural capital that may influence both time and charitable giving (Regnerus, Smith, & Sikkink, 1998; Wilson & Janoski, 1995). Level of religious service attendance, which varies by age cohort, is another significant predictor of religious giving (Wilhelm, Rooney, & Tempel, 2007). Theological belief also affects the level and type of donations. Those with more conservative theological beliefs give more to religious groups, while those with more liberal beliefs give more to secular organizations (Lunn, Klay, & Douglas, 2001). Religiosity and religious orientation appear to more directly influence religious giving than secular giving and time volunteering. Anft and Lipman (2003) found that after controlling for income, blacks give more than whites, and 90% of the donations made by blacks went to religious organizations.

### *Social Capital*

Both time volunteering and charitable giving are influenced by individuals' social capital, as represented by their trusting relationships with others, and number of memberships in professional and voluntary organizations and attendance at meetings of those organizations (Brown & Ferris, 2007; Wilson & Musick, 1997a). In the present study, individuals' perceived social integration (Keyes, 1998) was chosen as a likely reflection of their level of trust in others and in their community. The monthly number of meetings they attended was chosen as an indicator of social embeddedness.

Studies have shown that educational attainment, education-linked personal resources and skills, and occupational status, as well as political, economic, and cultural forces, shape both generativity and social well-being (e.g., social integration) (de St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2004; Dillon & Wink, 2004; Keyes, 1998; Keyes & Ryff, 1998; Peterson & Duncan, 1999). These studies also show that individual differences in generativity and social well-being are likely to predict degree and range of social involvement.

*Hypotheses*

Guided by the theory of volunteering and the review of previous studies, study hypotheses were as follows: (H1) Education (human capital) will be positively associated with both time volunteering and religious and secular giving; (H2) household income (human capital) will be positively associated with religious and secular giving; (H3) both generative qualities and religious identification (cultural capital) will be positively associated with time volunteering; (H4) generative qualities (cultural capital) will be positively associated with secular giving, and religious identification would be positively associated with religious giving; (H5) perceived social integration and the number of meetings attended (social capital) will be positively associated with time volunteering and religious and secular giving.

## Methods

*Data and Sample*

Data for this study are from the general population sample of the second wave of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS2, 2004-2006; Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [ICPSR], 2006). MIDUS1 (officially referred to as MIDUS), 1995-1996, assessed a number of social and psychological constructs among a national probability sample of 7,189 noninstitutionalized, English-speaking adults aged 25 to 74 residing in the 48 contiguous states, and whose household had at least one telephone. Select metropolitan areas were oversampled. For details of the MIDUS sampling design and methods and the interview formats (a computer-assisted telephone interview followed by a mailed, self-administered survey) see Brim, Ryff, and Kessler (2004). Of the general population sample that responded to MIDUS1, 453 respondents completed only telephone interviews and 3,032 respondents completed both a telephone interview and a self-administered survey. During MIDUS2, 1,805 individuals from MIDUS1 completed both a telephone interview and a self-administered survey. The final sample size was 1,800, because the data set did not provide any sampling weight for five respondents. The age range of the sample was 30 through



84. MIDUS provides extensive data regarding the respondents' time volunteering and religious and secular giving activities and human, cultural, and social capital characteristics.

### *Measures*

*Time volunteering (hours of formal volunteering).* Each respondent was asked, "On average, about how many hours per month do you spend doing formal volunteer work of any of the following types: (1) hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare-oriented work; (2) school or other youth-related work; (3) political organizations or causes; and (4) any other organization, cause, or charity?" The total number of hours spent volunteering was used as the number of hours of time volunteering.

*Religious and secular giving (amount of donations).* Each respondent was asked, "On average, about how many dollars per month do you or your family living with you contribute to each of the following people or organizations (if you contribute food, clothing, or other goods, include their dollar value): (1) religious groups; (2) political organizations or causes; and (3) any other organization, cause, or charity (including donations made through monthly payroll deductions)?" Donations to "religious groups" were counted as religious giving. Donations to "political organizations or causes" and "any other organization, cause, or charity" were counted as secular giving. Because the donor unit could be an individual respondent or his or her family, we compared the amount of giving by living arrangement (i.e., living alone or with spouse, living with adult children, living with parents). We found no significant difference in the amount of giving by living arrangement. Given the age of the sample (30+), it is most likely that the respondents themselves or their spouses, not other family members, were the donors.

*Level of education.* This was measured by an ordinal scale containing 12 gradations: no school or finished grades 1-6; finished grades 7-8; some high school; GED; high school graduate; 1-2 years of college; 3 or more years of college; degree from 2-year college; degree from 4- or 5-year college; some graduate school; master's degree; and PhD or other professional degree.

*Income.* This was the respondent's total household income in \$5,000 units.

*Generativity.* This was measured by 6 items, slightly modified from the corresponding items in the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = some; and 4 = a lot): (1) Others would say that you have made unique contributions to society; (2) you have important skills you can pass along to others; (3) many people come to you for advice; (4) you feel that other people need you; (5) you have had a good influence on the lives of many people; and (6) you like to teach things to people. The maximum possible score is 24, and high scores reflect a greater self-conception of contributions to the welfare and well-being of others (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .92$ ). As a self-report scale of generative concern, the LGS exhibited good retest reliability and showed strong positive association with reports of actual generative acts and themes of generativity in narrative accounts of important autobiographical episodes (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992).

*Religious identification.* This was measured by the sum of the scores of 7 items which were measured on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all; 2 = not very; 3 = somewhat; and 4 = very): (1) How religious are you? (2) how important is religion in your life? (3) how important is it for you—or would it be if you had children now—to send your children for religious or spiritual services or instruction? (4) how closely do you identify with being a member of your religious group? (5) how much do you prefer to be with other people who are the same religion as you? (6) how important do you think it is for people of your religion to marry other people who are of the same religion? and (7) how important is it for you to celebrate or practice religious holidays with your family, friends, or members of your religious community (Garfield, Ryff, & Singer, 2001)? The maximum possible score is 28, and higher scores reflected stronger religious identification (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Social integration.* This was measured by the sum of the scores from 3 items which were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree): (1) I do not feel I belong to anything that I'd call a community (reverse-coded); (2) I feel close to other people in my community; and (3) my community is a source of support. Social integration is the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to others and to

one's community (Keyes, 1998). The maximum possible score is 21, and higher scores reflected greater social integration (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .73$ ).

*Number of monthly meetings attended.* First, the total number of meetings of union/professional groups, sports/social groups, and all other groups was calculated. Second, in order to include respondents ( $n = 76$ ) who refused to provide information on meeting attendance, a categorical variable, the number of monthly meetings attended (1-10 times = 1; 11 or more times = 2; refused = 3; and no meeting attendance = 4—reference category), was created.

*Demographic characteristics.* These included (1) age groups (30-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; and 75-84—reference category); (2) gender (male = 0; female = 1); (3) race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic White = 0; all others = 1); and (4) marital status (widowed; divorced/separated; never married; and married—reference category). Tables 1a and 1b present sample characteristics for all variables included in the study.

### *Analysis Methods*

Univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted to examine sample characteristics and correlations among key study variables. Pearson correlation coefficients show that multicollinearity among the covariates was not a problem. We employed negative binomial regression analyses to test the hypothesized influence of the human, cultural, and social capital on time volunteering, religious giving, and secular giving, given the right-skewed dispersion of volunteer hours and gift amounts. Ninety-nine cases were excluded from the multivariate regression models—88 cases with any missing value in predictor variables, and 11 extreme outliers who reported \$5,000 or more in monthly religious or secular giving. The resulting final sample size for the hypothesis testing was 1,701. The MIDUS2 poststratification weight correcting for region, age, and education distribution was used for all analyses.

Since a small proportion of respondents refused to provide volunteer hours or gift amounts (see Table 2), a series of bivariate analyses were conducted to compare those who refused (the missing data group) to those who provided data with

Table 1a. Sample Characteristics ( $n = 1,800$ )

Variables	Percentage
<i>Age</i>	
30-44	24.6
45-54	29.2
55-64	22.5
65-74	14.1
75-84	9.6
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	43.9
Female	56.1
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	
Non-Hispanic White	87.6
African American or Black	5.5
Hispanic	4.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.8
Indian/Native American	1.5
Unknown	0.5
<i>Marital status</i>	
Married/cohabiting	70.4
Widowed	8.1
Divorced/separated	14.5
Never married	6.9

regard to their demographic and other characteristics. The refused group did not significantly differ in key predictors (education, income) from those who reported no volunteer hours, but they differed significantly from those who reported any volunteer hours. Based on the bivariate results, 0 was substituted for missing data on volunteering hours or gift amounts in multivariate analyses. Comparison of the regression results, excluding the missing volunteering/donation data, with the regression results from zero-substituted volunteering/donation data, showed no significant difference. Thus, the regression results that included the zero-substituted volunteering/donation cases are reported.

Table 1b. Sample Characteristics ( $n = 1,800$ )

Variables	
<i>Education (percentage)</i>	
No school or grades 1-6	0.7
Grades 7-8	2.4
Some high school	9.8
GED	1.8
High school graduate	31.4
1-2 years of college	14.7
3 or more years of college	3.5
Degree from 2-year college	6.9
Degree from 4-5 year college	15.0
Some graduate school	2.3
Master's degree	7.9
PhD or other professional degree	3.5
Median household total income	\$63,250
Generative qualities	16.81 (3.92) <sup>a</sup>
Religious identification	19.45 (5.57) <sup>a</sup>
Social integration	14.08 (4.05) <sup>a</sup>
No. of meetings attended (monthly)	13.82 (2.63) <sup>a</sup>

Note: a = Standard deviation of the mean ( $n = 1,800$ )

Individuals who are older may have more time for volunteering or more funds to give to charity. Because the sample includes respondents at different life stages, results for the entire sample, controlling for age groups, were compared with results for the 55+ age group only. No differences in significant predictors for volunteering and for charitable giving were found. Thus, the results based on the entire sample are reported.

Table 2. Volunteering and Giving Status

Variables	Percentage
<i>Volunteering/giving status</i>	
Both time and money	38.5
Time only	6.1
Money only	30.0
Neither time nor money	25.4
<i>Hours of time volunteering (monthly)</i>	
1-10	24.3
11 or more	17.1
Unknown hours	3.2
No volunteering	55.4
Median no. of volunteering hours among all volunteers	10.0
<i>Charitable giving</i>	
Religious giving only	16.1
Secular giving only	17.5
Religious and secular giving	27.7
Unknown	7.8
No charitable donation	30.9
<i>Amount of religious giving (monthly)</i>	
\$1-\$100	31.5
\$101 or more	13.2
Unknown amount	6.9
No donation	48.4
<i>Amount of secular giving (monthly)</i>	
\$1-\$100	38.5
\$101 or more	7.5
Unknown amount	6.4
No donation	47.6
<i>Median amount of donor's gift to groups (monthly)</i>	
Religious	\$200
Secular	\$ 29

Note.  $n = 1,800$ .

## Results

### *Sample Characteristics*

As Tables 1a and 1b show, the study sample was predominantly white. The sample's median household income was substantially higher than the national median incomes in 2005 (\$50,100) and 2006 (\$50,700) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007), indicating that this group was more affluent than Americans in general. Table 2 shows that 38.5% engaged in both time volunteering and charitable giving, 6.1% engaged in time volunteering only, and 30.0% made charitable donations only, while 25.4% of the sample did not engage in time volunteering or charitable giving. Of the 44.6% of the sample who reported time volunteering, 41.4% provided data on their monthly number of volunteering hours (median total hours: 10; range: 1-205). Please note that this rate of volunteering is higher than the rate shown in most UCBLs statistics (e.g., 24-32% in 2009, USBLS, 2010). The overall higher human capital status (i.e., income and education) of the MIDUS sample, as compared to Americans in general, may have been a factor for their higher volunteer rate.

Of the 68.5% of the sample who reported making charitable donations, 16.1% donated to religious groups only, 17.5% to secular causes only, 27.7% to both religious groups and secular causes, and 7.2% did not specify. Monthly amount of donation to religious groups (median monthly amount: \$200; range: \$1-\$24,000) were higher than monthly amount of donation to secular groups/causes (median amount: \$29; range: \$1-\$30,000). Table 3 shows that the correlations between the number of hours of time volunteering and the amount of religious giving ( $r = 0.14, p < .001$ ) and between the number of hours of time volunteering and the amount of secular giving ( $r = 0.12, p < .001$ ) were weak, albeit significant. The correlation between religious donation amount and secular donation amount was moderately strong ( $r = 0.35, p < .001$ ).

### *Hypothesis Testing: Multivariate Negative Binomial Regression Results*

*Time volunteering.* As the second column of Table 4 shows, with respect to the demographic variables, age group and race/ethnicity were not significantly associated with the number of

volunteering hours. Females were more likely to volunteer a greater number of hours, and divorced/separated (as opposed to married) respondents volunteered significantly fewer hours. When age group and other demographic variables were controlled, human capital indicators (education and household income), generative qualities (but not religious identification), and social capital indicators (perceived social integration and number of meetings attended) were significantly associated with the number of hours of time volunteering. Household income was significantly negatively associated with the number of volunteer hours, indicating that higher-income individuals were less likely than those with lower-incomes to engage in time volunteering. While the number of meetings attended was a significant predictor of volunteer hours, those who refused to provide this information did not significantly differ from those who reported no meeting attendance in their volunteer hours. The Wald Chi-square test results show that the number of meetings attended, followed by perceived social integration and generative qualities, had the largest positive effect on number of volunteer hours.

*Religious giving.* Data in the third column of Table 4 show that of the demographic variables, being in the 30-44 age group, as opposed to the 75-84 group; being female; having racial/ethnic minority status; and having any nonmarried status were significantly negatively associated with religious giving. When age group and other demographic variables were controlled, the human capital indicators (education and income) and the social capital indicators (social integration and meeting attendance) were also significantly positively associated with the amount of religious giving. Cultural capital indicators were also significantly related to religious giving. Religious identification had by far the most positive influence on religious giving (according to the Wald Chi-square test), while generative qualities were significantly negatively associated with religious giving.

*Secular giving.* The final column in Table 4 shows that age was the only demographic variable significantly associated with secular giving. Being in the three younger age groups, as opposed to the 75-84 age group, was significantly negatively associated with secular giving. After controlling for the demographic variables, the human capital indicators (education and



Table 3. Bivariate Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Volunteering hours		0.14***	0.12***	0.17**	-0.00	0.21***	0.10***	0.24***	0.27**
2 Religious giving			0.35***	0.15***	0.15***	0.07**	0.28***	0.14***	0.16***
3 Secular giving				0.19***	0.23***	0.08***	-0.00	0.09***	0.14***
4 Education					0.32***	0.17***	-0.09***	0.15***	0.14***
5 Income (in \$5,000)						0.08***	-0.06*	0.07**	0.08***
6 Generative qualities							0.16***	0.35***	0.21***
7 Religious identification								0.23***	0.13***
8 Social integration									0.19***
9 No. of meetings attended									

Note. Extreme outliers in terms of either religious or secular giving (\$5,000+ in monthly amount,  $n = 11$ ) are excluded from the analysis. Those who refused to provide data on number of meetings attended are excluded from the analysis of correlation coefficients related to the variable. \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

Table 4. Correlates of Time Volunteering, Religious Giving, and Secular Giving: Negative Binomial Regression Results

Variable	Time volunteering B (SE)	Religious giving B (SE)	Secular giving B (SE)
<i>Age (75-84)</i>			
30-44	-0.41 (0.26)	-0.64 (0.24)**	-1.23 (0.32)***
45-54	-0.16 (0.26)	-0.07 (0.22)	-1.09 (0.32)***
55-64	-0.17 (0.26)	-0.20 (0.21)	-1.04 (0.32)***
65-74	-0.30 (0.25)	0.24 (0.26)	-0.42 (0.36)
<i>Gender (Male)</i>			
Female	0.31 (0.12)**	-0.51 (0.12)**	-0.00 (0.14)
<i>Race/ethnicity (Non-Hispanic White)</i>			
All others	-0.21 (0.23)	-0.40 (0.17)*	0.16 (0.22)
<i>Marital status (Married/cohabiting)</i>			
Widowed	-0.08 (0.24)	-0.90 (0.23)***	-0.59 (0.34)
Divorced/ separated	-0.54 (0.20)**	-0.51 (0.17)**	0.03 (0.21)
Never married	0.04 (0.24)	-0.94 (0.26)***	-0.17 (0.21)
<i>Level of education</i>	0.07 (0.02)***	0.15 (0.02)***	0.18 (0.03)***
<i>Income (in \$5,000)</i>	-0.01 (0.00)**	0.02 (0.01)***	0.04 (0.01)**
<i>Generative qualities</i>	0.08 (0.02)***	-0.07 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)**
<i>Religious identification</i>	0.00 (0.01)	0.26 (0.01)***	-0.02 (0.01)
<i>Social integration</i>	0.08 (0.01)***	0.04 (0.02)***	-0.01 (0.02)
<i>No. of meetings attended (0)</i>			
1-10	1.65 (0.14)***	0.68 (0.15)***	0.76 (0.15)***
11+	2.07 (0.16)***	0.86 (0.20)***	1.01 (0.30)***
Refused	0.29 (0.43)	-0.18 (0.68)	-0.80 (0.40)*

Note. Likelihood ratio  $\chi^2$ : 1,811.57 ( $df = 17$ ),  $p < 0.001$  for time volunteering; 3,849.57 ( $df = 17$ ),  $p < 0.001$  for religious giving; and 2,134.25 ( $df = 17$ ),  $p < 0.001$  for secular giving.  $n = 1,701$  for all three columns, \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

income) were significantly positively associated with the amount of secular giving. Of the cultural capital variables, generative qualities, but not religious identification, were significantly associated with secular giving. Of the social capital indicators, only the number of meetings attended was a significant predictor. As opposed to no meeting attendance, any amount of meeting attendance was positively associated with secular giving, but being in the "refused" group was negatively associated with secular donation amounts.

### Discussion and Implications for Nonprofit Organizations

#### *Summary of Findings*

This study found that an individual's level of education was a consistent predictor of time volunteering, religious giving, and secular giving, supporting H1. Household income was also a consistent predictor of time volunteering and both types of charitable giving, supporting H2, although it was inversely correlated with the number of hours of time volunteering. The latter finding suggests that substitution may have been a factor, with high-wage/-income persons volunteering more money and less time than low-wage/-income persons (see Duncan, 1999; Freeman, 1997). In support of H3 and H4, self-reported generative qualities were significantly positively associated with the extent of time volunteering and secular giving, while religious identification was positively associated with religious giving only. Interestingly, self-reported generative qualities were significantly negatively associated with religious giving. The finding that religious identification was significantly associated only with the amount of religious giving appears to provide support for there being different motivations for religious versus secular giving. The lack of relationship between religious identification and time volunteering and secular giving also confirms the previous study finding that theological belief affects the level and type of donations and that those with more conservative theological beliefs give more to religious groups (Lunn et al., 2001). Although religiosity and religious orientation are considered cultural capital, it appears that those who identify with narrowly focused and overly strict religious values are more open to helping those

within their religious circles than those who may not subscribe to the same religious values. Controlling for all other variables, the number of meetings attended was a significant correlate of all three volunteering activities. Perceived social integration was also a significant predictor of time volunteering and religious giving, but not secular giving, partially supporting H5.

#### *Implications for Nonprofit Organizations*

The findings of the present study have important implications for nonprofit organizations in terms of identifying and targeting those most likely to volunteer their time and/or money as well as encouraging new pools of volunteers and donors to volunteer and/or give. Volunteer/donor recruitment and retention is an important strategy to continue service provision and capacity building, especially for those nonprofit organizations facing reduced funding but increased demand for services (Brudney, 2000; Hager & Brudney, 2004).

*Human capital approach.* Across the board, individuals with higher levels of education volunteered more time and gave more money to religious and secular organizations. Although the implications of this finding may be obvious for charitable organizations seeking to increase donations by targeting potential donors who are well-educated, and maintaining relationships with those who have already contributed, it has important implications for those seeking more volunteers. While those with higher education are likely to have exposure to volunteering opportunities through their jobs and professional/social networks, a targeted approach is necessary to recruit those who may lack exposure to volunteering opportunities. Given that only 45% of the study's sample volunteered their time, there is a vast potential pool of individuals who might be prompted to volunteer if their awareness of volunteer opportunities was expanded. While general appeals for volunteers through the media may be useful, staff and volunteers (including board members) of nonprofit organizations should personally contact potential volunteers, especially those who may not have previously participated in volunteer activities, and invite them to attend organization functions and meetings of volunteers as well as clients in need of volunteer services (when possible).

Household income also predicted time volunteering and charitable giving, although not in a consistent way. Higher income was positively correlated with both religious and secular giving, but it was inversely correlated with the number of volunteer hours. These findings suggest that substitution may have occurred, with higher-income persons volunteering more money and less time than lower-income persons (see Duncan, 1999; Freeman, 1997). Perhaps more important for volunteer recruitment, it suggests that organizations' focus should not be solely devoted to recruiting higher income individuals as volunteers. In fact, charitable organizations that have not done so before may benefit from reaching out to previously untapped communities that differ widely in socioeconomic status and other characteristics in order to recruit volunteers who more closely resemble the clients served and who may better understand the situations an agency's client may be facing.

*Cultural capital approach.* Our findings also show that self-reported generativity as cultural capital is significantly positively associated with the extent of time volunteering and secular giving. While items on the LGS used in this study generally measure people's confidence in their abilities, this finding suggests that nonprofit organizations can ask potential volunteers to engage in volunteer activities based on their specific skills. For example, having raised well-adjusted children, sewing, making home repairs, and being a good listener are skills that people may take for granted in their everyday lives and may not recognize as the skills they can contribute in volunteer capacities. Asking people to volunteer was found to increase the likelihood of their doing so (Bryant, et al. 2003; Freeman, 1997; Independent Sector, 2001), but recruiting volunteers based on knowledge of their individual abilities to perform specific tasks may be more successful than general appeals for volunteers.

Though generative qualities increased the likelihood of volunteering and secular giving, they were negatively associated with religious giving. The inverse association between generative qualities and religious giving suggests that the motivations for the latter may not always be *overall* communal and self-agentic desires and commitment. In this study, higher religious identification scores (i.e., on these questions: How

much do you prefer to be with other people who are the same religion as you? how important do you think it is for people of your religion to marry other people who are the same religion?) suggest a more conservative, closed, and exclusionary rather than communal, open, and inclusionary religious orientation. Lunn et al. (2001) found that theologically conservative Presbyterians gave more to their local church and other religious groups than did theologically liberal Presbyterians, while liberal Presbyterians gave more to secular charities than did conservative Presbyterians. Wang and Graddy (2008) also found that religiosity was a significant factor for religious giving but not for secular giving. A little more than one-third of Americans volunteer primarily through their religious group (CNCS, 2006).

Connecting religious motivations for giving or volunteering to the missions of secular agencies may be one way to encourage secular giving among those who have previously given only or predominately to religious organizations. Secular organizations that provide food, clothing, shelter, protection, education, counseling, and other services may appeal to volunteers on religious grounds. Another way to facilitate secular giving among those who tend to contribute only to religious organizations is for secular organizations to partner with faith-based organizations for the common good. Secular nonprofits that partnered with faith-based organizations reported greater benefits in terms of volunteer use and retention (CNCS, 2009). Such partnerships are likely to expose volunteers/donors with religious groups to secular agency missions and may encourage those individuals to also volunteer for and/or donate to secular organizations.

*Social capital approach.* Social capital variables are also important for volunteering and giving. Perceived social integration significantly predicted time volunteering and religious giving, but not secular giving. Both time volunteering and charitable giving activities are indicators of social involvement. The extent of such involvement is likely to depend on individuals' social embeddedness and trust in others and their community. The significant positive relationship between the number of meetings individuals attended and the amount of their secular giving shows that those who gave to secular

groups/causes were socially embedded. However, it appears that the level of trust in others and community may not be an important factor for secular giving. We speculate on two possible reasons for why this relationship was not significant. First, *community* means different things to different people. Most people consider their community as the geographic area where they live. However, perceived community or neighborhood integration may have little to do with people's secular giving behaviors, especially when donations can be made through the mail or online (COP, 2007), while most volunteering is done close to home. Second, in this study secular giving included contributions to many different types of organizations and causes. Donors to different groups/causes may have varying levels of trust in others and their community, as different value orientations determine individuals' donations to different types of organizations (Bennett, 2000). For example, a sense of alienation and indignation rather than social integration can be a motivation for making contributions to a groups or causes that advocates for social or political change. Nonprofit organizations seeking volunteers may need to find innovative ways to identify individuals who wish to increase their social embeddedness or have generative motives. They should also be mindful that community and social embeddedness may be defined based on shared interests and values rather than geography.

The number of meetings attended was one of the strongest predictors of time volunteering, religious giving, and secular giving. This finding provide further support for our earlier statement that to attract more volunteers and/or donors, nonprofit organizations should provide an increasing array of opportunities for potential and current volunteers and donors to come together and build a sense of connection to the organization and other volunteers/donors and prospective volunteers/donors. For example, public recognition of volunteers and donors, especially in the form of communal events, may go a long way in retaining volunteers and in making them enthusiastic recruiters of potential volunteers (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers). Cultivating social capital resources by promoting the sense of connection and building social networks among potential volunteers/donors is also

likely to help increase self-perceived generative qualities in people.

### *Study Limitations*

The study had several limitations. First, because it relied on cross-sectional data, correlational, rather than causal, relationships were analyzed. Some “predictors,” such as perceived social integration and the number of meetings attended, may in fact have been outcomes of volunteering or these variables may have reciprocal effects. Second, secular giving was the total amount of money contributed to many different groups/causes. Although we could have separated contributions to political organizations and causes from those to other organizations and causes, the small sample size for political donors did not make this feasible. Further research is needed to examine the determinants of donations to different types of organizations and causes if a more accurate picture is to be drawn. Third, the MIDUS data does not separate out religious from other types of time volunteering, although, as mentioned, more than one-third of volunteers donate their time primarily through religious organizations. To develop a more accurate picture of volunteering and giving, further research is needed to examine the determinants of donations to different types of organizations and causes. Fourth, the sample is predominately white and more affluent than the U.S. population in general. Since racial/ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the MIDUS data, and because the sample size for each racial/ethnic minority group is so small, all minorities were grouped together in the analyses. Given differences that studies have found in volunteering and giving by racial and ethnic groups, future research that allows examination of specific racial or ethnic groups is needed. Fifth, since the MIDUS data were collected using self-reported surveys, recall and social desirability biases related to helping behaviors may have affected the data on volunteer hours and gift amounts. Sixth, giving by gender could not be thoroughly analyzed because in married couple households it was not clear whether the husband, wife, or both jointly made decisions about donations.



## Conclusions

Despite these limitations, some interesting study implications emerged that nonprofit organizations may wish to consider, especially those facing reduced funding but increased demand for services. Gifts of time and money constitute important resources for nonprofit organizations during economic recessions when demand for services increases. Effective strategies for targeting, recruiting, and retaining volunteers and donors are especially important for nonprofit social service agencies that tend to experience shortages of financial resources and human resources (staff and staff time). This paper offered some practical approaches for recruiting and retaining volunteers and donors who aid nonprofit organizations in realizing their missions.

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