

Community Service in the Transition

Shifts and Continuities in Participation from High School to College

Continuing a decade-long trend, findings from recent annual surveys of first-year college students have documented their participation in community service as high-school seniors at record high levels (Higher Education Research Institute, 1999, 2000, 2001). Eighty-one percent of the 2000 respondents reported volunteering during senior year, although only 24% expected to continue their volunteer work in college. Because other recent data indicate that 64% of undergraduates actually do volunteer (Levine & Cureton, 1998), the college experience may involve students in the community in ways they do not anticipate when they enter.

For the majority of students, these findings suggest, involvement in community service may be episodic and contextually driven—not so much a deeply motivated value-oriented choice as an occasional activity that personal circumstances may dictate, encourage, support, or deter. The responses of the first-year students to other survey items appear to support this claim. For example, while volunteering in high school is on the rise among the respondents, trends over the past decade indicate a simultaneous decline in both interest and participation in other forms of

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voluntary activity, including community action programs, social activism, political participation, and general civic engagement and altruism (HERI, 1999). Political engagement, according to the 2000 Freshman Survey, is at an all-time low, while becoming well-off is the most important of the measured goals (HERI, 2001).

Most strikingly, just 59% of first year students reported a personal commitment to "helping others in difficulty," the lowest response level in over a decade. Paradoxically, while more students are volunteering than ever before, they are not espousing the civic values that community service is intended to encourage. For some students, involvement in community service could be motivated less by caring than by other factors, such as personal interests, group norms, or the social benefits they derive from participation.

This study investigates the phenomenon of shifting patterns of community service participation during the transition between high school and college and, in so doing, seeks to arrive at greater understanding of the dynamics of social participation and involvement among young adults. The transition to college typically brings about change in students' lives as they move into new educational and social environments (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Upcraft & Gardner, 1990). While some research addresses college student motivation for involvement in community service (Fitch, 1987; Serow, 1991; Waterman, 1997; Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997), and other research suggests that high-school participation predisposes students to volunteer in college (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Berger & Milem, 2002), little empirical evidence exists to characterize the relationship between high school and college participation. Moreover, little is known about the factors that lead students either to drop or sustain their community service after high school or to begin to volunteer in college.

This investigation builds on an earlier study of community service participation among high-school students (Marks, 2002). That study employed Selznick's (1992) sociological theory of social participation to account for variation in patterns of students' community involvement. According to Selznick, individuals who involve themselves in the community do so on a *segmental* or *core* basis. Segmental participants, who volunteer from time to time, tend to be motivated by personal interests or extrinsic factors, including normative environments. Core participants are more likely to be motivated by values or deeply held beliefs. Applying the theory of social participation to students' participation in community service during the transition between high school and college, we expect to find similar patterns, a point we return to in a subsequent section.

However, because this study focuses on students in a time of change as they move from high school to college, we also draw on transition theory (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995) as an explanatory perspective to examine how the shifts that occur in students' personal circumstances at this juncture may affect their choice to volunteer. Transition theory suggests that various experiential, social, and psychological factors serve as resources to individuals in navigating transitions positively and efficaciously. To the extent such resources are available to students, we anticipate that they will be more likely to engage in community service in college whether on a continuing or newly initiated basis.

The analytic sample includes 6,491 members of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) cohort, who were enrolled in college during the third biennial follow-up, conducted in 1994, when they were two years out of high school. Data on these students and their community involvement come from all four waves of NELS:88. Thus, we can track the college-going members of the cohort through high school and into their early postsecondary careers. Supplementing the student-reported information, this study also incorporates data collected in 1988 from the students' parents.

Because the study reflects possible choices of college students to participate or not—i.e., to drop service after senior year in high school, to begin community service in college, or to continue to volunteer—the dependent variables represent binary or dichotomous choices, i.e., Yes or No. To investigate these choices, the study employs logistic regression as the primary analytic technique to estimate the probability that particular personal attributes, background characteristics, contextual factors, or experiences will influence students' choices.

Theoretical Framework

While studies of college students' participation in voluntary activities have not generally adopted an explanatory theoretical perspective, studies of adult participation have. These explanatory frameworks include process and functionalist theories in psychology, and dominant status, role identity, and resource theories in sociology (e.g., Clary et al., 1998; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Piliavin & Callero, 1990; Smith, 1994; Wilson & Musick, 1997). For the most part, these theories have focused on determinants of voluntary activity in itself, rather than on factors that differentially influence occasional and consistent participation. Selznick's (1992) theory of social participation concentrates on this distinction, one that is central to our investigation.

Social Participation Theory

According to Selznick's theory of social participation, individuals involve themselves in the community in core or segmental ways. Core participation, reflecting a deeply held personal commitment, derives from a moral sense and is integral to an individual's identity. Segmental participation, reflecting a limited and instrumentally motivated commitment, is contractual and definable in cost-benefit terms. Although segmental participation may be deeply involving as well as casual, it represents a limited commitment, often based on expediency and rational calculation.

The tendency of individuals toward segmental or core participation begins quite early in their development. Enduring values and dispositions begin to form through the primary socialization influences of family and other consistent caregivers. Secondary socialization, such as occurs within neighborhood, church, schools, and youth organizations, may sometimes dislodge the influence of primary socialization if it is intense and powerful (Berger & Luckmann, 1989). More generally, when secondary socialization conflicts with primary socialization, the individual will reject the secondary influence, respond only temporarily, or, if need be, simply go through the motions of conforming (Berger & Luckmann). If the norms of secondary socialization are congruent with the norms of primary socialization, they are likely to persist into and through adulthood (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987). When such persistence occurs, individuals have translated behavioral norms into enduring values.

Transition Theory

Transition theory, as developed by Schlossberg and colleagues (1995), takes a psychosocial perspective on change experiences in individuals' lives. To be considered a transition, according to this theory, the change must be recognized as a transition by the one experiencing it. In applying the theory to this investigation, therefore, we assume that students generally view their movement from high school to college as a transition, one that they anticipate and prepare for. To the extent that transitions alter the day-to-day routines of these students, they can be said to have impact on their lives. How successfully the students navigate these transitions depends on the resources they have to draw upon, specifically on the adequacy of the resources to their ability to manage the demands and challenges in the transition. Schlossberg et al. group these resources into four categories—*situation*, *self*, *support*, and *strategies*.

Situation refers to a constellation of experiential and perceptual factors that characterize the interface of the individual with the transition, in this case the recent high-school graduate moving on to college. Influ-

ential factors could include the control he or she has had over the transition, its desirability and timing, and the stresses that come with adjusting to the challenges of a new environment. *Self* comprises personal and demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race-ethnicity, SES) that may affect the ease with which the student enters into the college experience, as well as the psychological resources (e.g., values, commitment, optimism) that he or she has to draw upon. *Support* refers to the social resources available to the student, such as family and friends, close relationships, social networks, institutions, and communities that may assist her or him in the transition. *Strategies* include coping responses—such as the ability to manage stress, and coping modes—such as seeking information or taking action to improve a situation.

As high-school graduates make the transition to college, they simultaneously encounter new social, experiential, and normative contexts with possible implications for their involvement in community service. While primary and secondary socialization may have influenced precollegiate participation in community service, the college environment with its challenges to and opportunities for involvement may interact with prior socializing forces and mediate their effects. Students who capitalize on the resources that transition theory posits as beneficial to managing change—whether they find them in their situation, themselves, external supports, or in coping strategies—will be more likely to make choices consistent with their values and respond positively to new opportunities to volunteer.

Linking Social Participation and Transition Theories

In linking social participation and transition theories, we take a dual focus—one on the nature of social participation itself among a sample of young adults, the other on the contextual factors in the transition between high school and college that may affect participation. The theoretical perspectives are complementary. Social participation theory grounds a longitudinal view accounting for variation in the practice of voluntarism over time—in this case, from the early years of high school into the early years of college. The longitudinal perspective, as we indicated earlier, differentiates two distinct approaches to social participation—*core* or consistent participation, driven by values or commitment, that habitually involves one or more forms of contributing to the community; and *segmental* or episodic participation, contributing to the community occasionally as time, inclination, or circumstances might dictate or permit. Transition theory, takes a short-term perspective, focusing on the period of time during which a young adult leaves high

school and enters into the college experience. Transition theory highlights elements of the changed context—situation, self, setting, and support—that influence how individuals adjust and manage in a new environment and amid changing circumstances.

Previous Research

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND EARLY SOCIALIZATION. Because race, social class, and gender—the social circumstances into which individuals are born—are likely to affect their primary socialization (Allison & Takei, 1993), differences in participation may be a function of these background characteristics. Supporting that possibility, the Undergraduate Survey of 1993 found that participation in voluntary activity varied across social groups (Levine & Cureton, 1998).¹ Women were somewhat more likely than men to volunteer (66 vs 62%). While Black and white students participated at the same rate (65%), Hispanics and especially Asians were less likely to become involved (61 and 55% respectively).

Growing up within a socially active and involved family also predicted participation in community service during college (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Membership in youth groups and involvement with community institutions, such as libraries and museums, characterized the early experience of students who participated in community service consistently during high school, compared with their peers who volunteered episodically or not at all (Marks, 2002).

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT DURING HIGH SCHOOL. Experience with community service while in high school has influenced students' propensity to volunteer during college. Public schools have increasingly adopted community service and service learning in conjunction with their school reform efforts, while private schools, particularly Catholic schools, have had long traditions of promoting community service for altruistic and religious reasons (Boyer, 1983; Marks, 1994; Billig, 2000; Marks & Kuss, 2001). Public and private schools are alike in that they may require community service (or, more recently, service learning) as a condition of high-school graduation, maintain the expectation that students will volunteer, integrate service with curricular offerings, or simply encourage students to perform volunteer work. Volunteering during high school increases the probability that students will participate in community service activities during college (Astin and Sax, 1998; Berger & Milem, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997). However, requiring community service, although an increasingly common practice in school districts and schools, may actually undermine longer-term participation (Marks, 2001; Jones & Hill, in press).

The location of a high school (i.e., its geographic region or the nature of its surrounding population area) may lead a school to engage its students in community service or service learning. Civic participation varies substantially across states and regions, according to a recent study, with states in the Northeast and Midwest ranking particularly high (Putnam, 2000). Because of the participatory civic culture in these regions, local taxpayers may expect their schools to promote the civic involvement of new generations through community service. Moreover, because social problems and needs have high visibility in urban areas, schools located in cities have felt responsible for being “part of the solution” by engaging their students as community volunteers (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998).

Since precollegiate community service is for some students a by-product of their extracurricular interests and church activities rather than their high-school curricular program, an inclination to volunteer may carry over into college through similar means, although this does not inevitably occur (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999). For others, group norms during the high-school years may simply have had an immediate contextual effect, influencing social participation in the short term only—for example, to comply with organizational expectations or to win acceptance among peers (Rosenthal, Feiring, & Lewis, 1998; Jones & Hill, in press).

TRANSITION TO COLLEGE. Various personal circumstances, values, and interests may motivate college students’ involvement in community service. College student volunteering is positively associated with other pro-social values, including attending religious activities and regarding as important helping others in difficulty. Students who volunteer while in college are more likely to have leadership ability, attend graduate school, earn advanced degrees, and volunteer after college (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Most participants in service activities acknowledged that wanting to help others and the satisfaction of making a contribution motivated them to volunteer (Serow, 1991; Astin & Sax, 1998). Other students, however, expressed the benefit they derived from service in a more self-centered way—primarily as an opportunity to feel good about themselves (Serow, 1991).

While curricular and co-curricular activities such as participation in community service, fraternities, sororities, athletics, and student government all constitute arenas for student involvement, the most powerful forms of involvement are academically oriented activities and interactions with peers and faculty (Astin, 1984, 1996). Students tend to become involved if the activity is expected as a course assignment, for example, or as an expectation of a student organization (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

MODEL. Based on the theory of social participation that distinguishes segmental and core volunteers, we created an operational definition to reflect their mode of involvement. Core volunteers are those students who participated in community service at two measured time points—senior year in high school and while enrolled in college, two years out of high school. Episodic volunteers are students who participated at one of these two time points. Thus, we differentiated three participation groups among students in the transition from high school to college: (1) Students who volunteered in high school, but did not do so in college; (2) Students who began to volunteer in college; and (3) Students who volunteered at both time points. Drawing on elements that may have socialized individuals into participation prior to college as well as indicators of the resources transition theory identifies, we developed a conceptual model incorporating some of the major influences on the decision to participate in community service in college, i.e., influencing the probability of membership in one of the three participation groups.

We group these influences into precollege and college transition predictors, while recognizing that some precollege personal and experiential characteristics could also serve as resources in the transition. The precollege influences comprise five categories. *Personal background* captures fundamental attributes of the student, namely, gender, race, ethnicity, and family socioeconomic status. *Early socialization* indicates three sets of pre-high-school experiences that may influence one's orientation to social participation—parental involvement in the neighborhood; patronizing community institutions; and membership in scouts or other youth groups.

Ongoing socialization into community participation during the high-school years may be a function of the *characteristics of the high school* the student attends or of the *experiences of community service* the student has while in high school. The high-school characteristics posited to have a relation to participation include whether the high school is Catholic; independent private (i.e., National Association of Independent Schools—NAIS—member); urban; located in the Northeast; and located in the Midwest. *High-school community service experiences* include volunteering in Grade 10, having a community service mandate in Grade 12, and being encouraged to perform community service in Grade 12. Students' *values and attitudes in Grade 12*—specifically, social responsibility and optimism about one's place in the community as an adult may make participating in community service more likely.

The college transition influences tap the four categories of resources

identified in transition theory—situation, self, support, and strategies. *Situation* includes attributes of the student's college transition experience, such as student loan burden and curricular focus—science-math and liberal arts, but also characteristics of the college itself that influenced its selection by the student, in this case, the institution's placement record and its social environment. *Self* includes personal values as measured in college—religiosity (attending religious services weekly) and materialism (considering money very important); and commitment, measured as educational aspirations (i.e., expecting to attain a master's, PhD, or professional degree). *Support* is operational in residential status, i.e., living alone, and in co-curricular or extra-curricular activity, such as sorority or fraternity membership; varsity or intramural athletics; arts, campus communications, or student government participation. *Strategies*, how students may cope with the transition, include hours spent weekly working for pay, and hours spent weekly watching television.

HYPOTHESES. Based on social participation and transition theories, we propose six hypotheses:

Hypothesis One: Early socialization experiences as well as positive values and attitudes will distinguish the students who sustain their participation from high school to college from those who did not volunteer in high school or who stop volunteering in college.

Hypothesis Two: Because of their institutional and regional traditions of service, private schools (both Catholic and NAIS), urban schools, and schools located in the Northeast and Midwest will be more likely than their counterparts to socialize students into a continuing service orientation.

Hypothesis Three: Community service during the early years of high school (Grade 10) will have mixed effects. For core participants, community service during tenth grade suggests the probability of sustained participation in that early service may indicate the presence of a deeply held personal value. For episodic participants, however, if volunteering in Grade 10 resulted from normative environmental influences, dropping service becomes more likely.

Hypothesis Four: A high-school requirement to volunteer will increase the likelihood of students' dropping service in college, while being encouraged to volunteer will reduce the likelihood.

Hypothesis Five: Students whose involvement with community service begins or ends in college are likely to be influenced by the environmental factors they encounter as college students.

Hypothesis Six: Students with resources to draw upon in the transition—including personal and religious values, peer support, and academic focus—will continue to volunteer in college.

*Method**Data and Sample*

The NELS:88 database in its first, second, and third biennial follow-ups provides nationally representative data pertaining to the involvement of its cohort in community service during high school and their early postsecondary years. As a general purpose survey of American youth, the database incorporates a broad array of demographic, academic, social-psychological, and behavioral indicators, including data on community service participation. The database also includes survey data collected from parents (1988, 1992), teachers (1988–1992), and school administrators (1988–1992).

The third follow-up sample is a reduced sample of 14,915 students selected from the more than 20,000 students who completed questionnaires in the base year. Unlike the earlier waves of NELS:88, in which most students responded to a printed survey, participants in the third follow-up were interviewed on the telephone. While most of the sample followed a typical path through four years of high school and graduation, the sample also includes students who earned a GED and students who never completed high school (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). For this study, however, we limit the sample to the 6,491 members of the cohort who were enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, public or private, on a full- or part-time basis at the time of the third follow-up and who had data on the outcome measures of community service participation.

*Measures**Dependent Variables*

We constructed a four-level measure to categorize students according to their community service participation reported at two intervals—during senior year in high school and while enrolled in college two years out of high school. A second follow-up measure asked the NELS:88 seniors to report on a four-point scale the frequency of their community service: “rarely or never,” “less than once a week,” “once or twice a week,” or “everyday or almost everyday.” Because we were interested in comparing students who participated in community service with at least some frequency with their peers who were rarely or never involved, we dichotomized the dependent variable to reflect these two categories.² Students who reported service “rarely or never” were coded 0 for No service senior year; all others were coded 1 for Service during senior year. In a series of third follow-up items, respondents were asked to in-

dicate Yes or No to questions asking whether they did “unpaid volunteer or community service work” in youth organizations, unions or professional organizations, political clubs or organizations, church-related activities, organized volunteer work such as in hospitals, sports teams or clubs, educational organizations, or other groups. If the respondent answered Yes to one or more of the queries on volunteering, Service during college was coded 1; if a respondent answered No to all the queries, Service in college was coded 0.³

Based on the Service during senior year and Service in college indicators, we constructed a categorical variable for service participation in the transition from high school to college: (1) No community service at either time point; (2) Dropped community service after high school; (3) Began community service in college; (4) Sustained community service in the high school-college transition. We employ this measure of participation as the analytic variable in the descriptive analysis.

For the dependent variables in the multivariate logistic regression analyses we constructed dichotomous measures reflecting three patterns of participation: (1) Dropped service after high school, (2) Began service in college, or (3) Sustained service from high school into college. The dependent variables are coded: Dropped service = 1, 0 = No (i.e., all the other participation groups); Began service = 1, 0 = No; Sustained service = 1, 0 = No.

Independent Variables

PRECOLLEGIATE BACKGROUND. *Personal demographics.* Personal demographic variables indicate respondents’ gender, race, ethnicity, and social class. The measure for gender is dummy-coded, 1 = female, 0 = male. The dummy variables for race, African American or Asian, and ethnicity, Hispanic, are constructed from a NELS:88 categorical variable for race and ethnic identification: African American, American Indian/Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and White. African American is coded 1, all others coded 0; Asian coded 1, all others coded 0; and Hispanic coded 1, all others coded 0.⁴ The social class measure, a NELS:88-provided composite measure of parental education, income, and household effects, is standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$.

Early socialization. The model includes three measures of students pre-high-school socialization—membership in youth groups, participation in community institutions, and parents’ neighborhood involvement. At the first follow-up, the NELS:88 parents provided data for the construction of these measures. Reporting on their children’s membership in various organizations during elementary school, they responded Yes or No to a series of items indicating participation in boy or girl scouts,

brownie or cub scouts, campfire girls or blue birds, and boys and girls clubs. The measure of youth group participation represents membership in any one of these groups, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No.

Parents were asked about their involvement in the neighborhood. The two response options were recoded as 1 = Feels a part of it and 0 = Just lives there. Parents were asked in a series of five items about their child's participation during eighth grade in community institutions—the library, music or other concerts, art museums, science museums, or history museums. With the responses to these items coded as 1 = Participant, 0 = Nonparticipant, the measure of participation in community institutions represents the sum of participation activity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.67). The measure is standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$.

High school characteristics. The restricted use version of the second follow-up provides a variable indicating school sector—public, Catholic, NAIS (i.e., member schools of the National Association of Independent Schools), or other private schools. Based on this variable, the indicator for Catholic high school is coded 1 = Catholic, 0 = No; for NAIS, coded 1 = NAIS, 0 = No. Public schools and other private schools are the comparison group. A NELS measure locates the respondents' high schools in the Northeast, Midwest, South, or West census regions. The analysis includes dummy-coded variables for two of the regions with the other regions as the comparison group—Northeast, coded 1 = Yes; 0 = No; and Midwest, coded 1 = Yes; 0 = No. Another NELS variable indicates the Metropolitan Sampling Area in which the respondent's high school is located—urban, suburban, or rural. Based on this variable, an indicator for urban high school is coded 1 = Yes; 0 = No.

Community service experience in high school. Three measures tap other aspects of the students' precollegiate involvement in community service: whether the student (1) volunteered in Grade 10, (2) performed service in Grade 12 to fulfill a requirement, (3) performed service in Grade 12 at the encouragement of another. Service in Grade 10 is a dummy variable constructed from student reports of the frequency of their participation in community service during the sophomore year: (1) Rarely or never; (2) less than once a week; (3) once or twice a week; (4) every day or almost every day. Recoded to a dichotomous measure, service in Grade 10 is coded 0 for Rare or no service; otherwise, 1. At the second follow-up, the NELS:88 students were asked to respond to a number of items characterizing their service experience, such as whether it was completely voluntary, required for class, court-ordered, or encouraged by another. Required service as evaluated in this study refers to service that is required for class, school, or for some other non-court-ordered reason. The measure is dummy-coded, 1 = Yes (required), 0 = No.

Service encouraged by another is also dummy-coded, 1 = Yes (encouraged), 0 = No.

Values and attitudes. Social responsibility and optimism about one's place in the community over time are reported in Grade 12. Social responsibility is measured as the mean of two items: How important is it to you to help other people in the community, and How important is it to you to work to correct social and economic inequalities. The response options for these items are (1) Not at all important, (2) Somewhat important, and (3) Very important. Social responsibility (Cronbach's alpha = 0.55) is standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$.⁵

Optimism is a factor, constructed using principal components analysis with varimax rotation, assessing how positively the respondents at senior year in high school viewed their chances for having a positive place in the community as adults as measured by (1) being able to own a home, (2) having a happy family life, (3) staying in good health, (4) being able to live anywhere, (5) being respected in the community, (6) having friends to count on, and (7) providing one's children with a better life than one's own. The response options for the items include: (1) Very low, (2) Low, (3) Fifty-fifty, (4) High, (5) Very high. The measure of optimism (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82) is standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$.

COLLEGE TRANSITION EXPERIENCES. The college transition measures comprise a wide array of items that tap the student's situation and personal resources during the transition to college—student loan burden, curricular focus, factors influencing college selection, personal values, educational expectations suggesting their commitment to the college experience, co-curricular, and extracurricular choices, and their use of discretionary time as strategies for coping with the transition.

Situation. Financial sacrifice represents the amount of money the student has borrowed to finance his or her education. The extent of student financial sacrifice in attending college and whether the student lives alone may directly or indirectly affect participation in community service during college.

Two measures, one tapping the professional preparation potential of the college and the other its social environment, reflect the respondent's criteria for college choice. Professional preparation, the first of these, is a factor comprising five components: (1) the availability of specific courses, (2) a good record for job placement, (3) a good record for graduate school placement, (4) the strength of the school's academic reputation, (5) the importance of finding a job in the respondent's chosen field. College social environment, the second criterion, is a factor comprising three items: (1) the strong reputation of the college's athletic programs, (2) an active social life at the school, and (3) the chance to live away

from home. The response options for the items in both measures include: (1) Not very important, (2) Somewhat important, (3) Very important. Cronbach's alpha for the professional preparation measure is 0.77; for social environment, 0.57. The measures are standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$.

Self. Religious commitment (religiosity) is measured by a single third follow-up item—asking the respondents to reply Yes or No to the question, During an average week do you participate in religious activities one or more times? Religious commitment is recoded as a dummy variable, 1 = Yes, 0 = No. Materialism measures the importance to the respondent of “having lots of money.” The response options for this item are (1) Not at all important, (2) Somewhat important, and (3) Very important. Materialism is standardized, $M = 0$, $SD = 1$. Expected educational attainment is indicated by two dummy variables—for the master's degree, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No and for the PhD or professional degree, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No.

Support. The residential choice to live alone rather than with others is a dummy variable, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No. From a list of five possibilities, students indicated the curricular areas in which they had taken college courses—foreign languages, mathematics, biology, physics, and chemistry. Science-mathematics concentration is a dummy variable reflecting student enrollment in two or more courses in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No. Liberal arts concentration is a dummy variable indicating student enrollment in both foreign languages and biology, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No.

Students indicated their extra- or co-curricular involvements from a list including athletics (varsity, intramural, or other), arts, student government, and social groups. A dummy variable for participation in athletics is coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No. Participation in an extracurricular activity, specifically arts, media, or student government activities is coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No. Membership in a fraternity or sorority is a separate indicator, coded 1 = Yes, 0 = No.

Strategies. How students spend their discretionary time is operational in two measures—hours spent working for pay and hours spent watching television. To indicate how many hours each week they spend working, students were asked to respond to the following scale: (0) none, (1) 1–5 hours per week, (2) 6–10 hours per week, (3) 11–15 hours per week, (4) 21–25 hours per week, (5) 26–30 hours per week, (6) 31–35 hours per week, (7) 36–40 hours per week, (8) over 40 hours per week. To facilitate interpretation of the descriptive analyses, the temporal category responses were converted to represent average hours worked weekly (i.e., 0, 3, 8, 13, 23, 28, 33, 38, 42 hours). To indicate how much

time they spend each day watching television or video tapes, students were asked to respond to the following scale: (1) none; don't watch TV, (2) less than 1 hour per day, (3) 1–2 hours, (4) 2–3 hours, (5) 3–5 hours, (6) 5 or more hours. The temporal category responses were converted to average hours (i.e., 0, .5, 1.5, 2.5, 4, 6).

WEIGHTS. Because NELS:88 oversampled minority and private school students, the National Center for Education Statistics calculated weights to adjust for the unequal probabilities of students' selection into the sample. Use of the sample weight constructed for NELS:88 students who participated in the third follow-up permits projections to the cohort as college students in 1994. We apply this weight to the descriptive analyses reported here. However, because of the method of statistical estimation entailed in logistic regression, we are unable to apply sample weights for that analysis.

Analytic Techniques

Using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), we examine and test the significance of observed differences in students' precollegiate background and college-related experience among the four participation groups—no senior year service, dropped service after high school, began service in college, and sustained service. Using orthogonal contrasts, we test the significance of group differences on these measures between the students (1) who dropped and who began service; (2) who dropped and who sustained service; and (3) who began and who sustained service. The purpose of these descriptive analyses is to determine whether significant observed differences exist between one group as compared to another on the variables hypothesized to influence community service participation during college.

Because the dependent variables are dichotomous, we employ logistic regression for the multivariate analyses. Logistic regression employs the concept of odds, as follows:

Odds = $[(\Phi)/1 - \Phi]$, where Φ is the probability of a successful outcome.

The coefficients in the logistic regression models are expressed as the natural logs of the odds or logits:

$\ln(\text{Odds}) = z$, where $z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_{(n-1)} X_{(n-1)} + \beta_n X_n$ and the β s are logistic regression coefficients.

The sum of the logistic regression coefficients represents the natural log of the odds of success given values for all the predictors included in the model. The probability, Φ , of a successful trial for a particular student may be estimated from z as follows:

$$\Phi = (1/(1+e^{-z}))$$

*Results**Observed Differences*

COLLEGE SERVICE GROUPS COMPARED. Almost half (48%) of the NELS:88 college students reported volunteering in the year preceding the third follow-up (Table 1). Although most of these students (53%) began to volunteer during college, close to half (47%) were sustaining their practice of volunteering from senior year in high school. The largest group of college students comprised the non-volunteers (39%) who reported no volunteer work as high-school seniors or in college. How, if at all, do the students in these four groups differ according to their precollege backgrounds and their college transition experiences?

TABLE 1
Observed Differences in Community Service Participation—High-School Student Characteristics

Variables	No C.S. Gr.12–Coll. (N=2,526)	Dropped C.S. After Gr. 12. (N=825)	Began C.S. After Gr. 12 (N=1,676)	Sustained C.S. After Gr. 12. (N=1,464)	Sig. Level
<i>Personal Background</i>					
% Female ^{a,b,c}	52.6	54.3	49.5	58.7	***
% African American	10.2	12.4	10.0	10.3	ns
% Hispanic	7.8	8.5	6.2	6.8	ns
% Asian	5.1	6.3	4.5	4.7	ns
SES ^{b,c,d}	-0.14	0.12	0.08	0.29	***
<i>Early Socialization</i>					
% Neighborh'd Invol. ^{a,b}	80.5	85.8	82.3	86.4	***
Comm'ty Institut' ^{nsd}	-0.15	0.11	0.02	0.17	***
% Y'th Grp, Gr. 1–8 ^{b,c}	57.8	57.8	59.1	65.7	***
<i>H.-S. Characteristics</i>					
% Catholic H.S. ^{a,b}	6.4	12.1	6.7	12.1	***
% NAIS .H.S. ^{a,c}	5.8	4.6	7.7	7.0	**
% Urban H.S. ^{a,b,c}	27.3	39.2	24.8	30.9	***
% Northeast Region ^{b,c}	22.0	23.2	21.8	28.1	***
% Midwest Region ^{a,b}	24.7	25.7	29.3	24.0	***
<i>C.S. Experience in H.S.</i>					
% Service, Gr. 10 ^{a,b,c}	14.4	38.6	19.5	45.7	***
% Req. C.S., Gr. 12 ^{a,c}	33.7	42.4	31.5	32.9	***
% C.S. Enc'd, Gr.12	19.6	23.4	21.8	34.1	***
<i>Values/Attitudes, Gr. 12</i>					
Soc'l Responsibi'ty ^{a,b,c,d}	-0.25	0.26	-0.06	0.52	***
Comm. Optimism ^{a,b,c,d}	-0.14	-0.05	0.09	0.17	***

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

^aOrthogonal contrast for dropped service and service begun after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^bOrthogonal contrast for sustained service and service begun after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^cOrthogonal contrast for sustained service and service dropped after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^dMeasure standardized, $M=0$, $SD=1$.

PRECOLLEGE BACKGROUNDS. Beginning with the students' precollege backgrounds, we compared them on an array of attributes that could account for their college choice to volunteer or not—personal background, early socialization, high-school characteristics, community service experience during high school, and key values and attitudes during senior year.

Personal background and early socialization. Women (who constitute 53% of this college sample) are most represented in the ranks of the consistent volunteers. The proportions of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians do not differ significantly across the four participation groups. Students who sustained their senior year service rank highest, on average, in socioeconomic status; the non-volunteers rank lowest. Early experiences of socialization into community participation—sense of belonging in the neighborhood (as reported by parents), involvement with community institutions, and participation in scouts and other youth groups—differ significantly across the four groups. Such experiences are most characteristic of the sustained participants, least characteristic of those who did not volunteer at either time point.

High school characteristics. Catholic school students rank equally high within the “dropped service” and “sustained service” groups, while the proportion of NAIS private school students is highest in the group beginning service in college.⁷ Graduates of urban high schools are also overrepresented within the “dropped service” category. The “sustained service” group includes high representations of students from the Northeast (compared to the South, West, and Midwest), while the “beginning service” group includes more students from the Midwest compared to the other regions.

Community service experiences in high school, values, and attitudes. Continuing volunteers were more likely than any other group to have participated in community service in tenth grade. Students with no service during senior year and college were least likely to have volunteered early in high school. Tenth grade service was more common among students who dropped service in college than among those who began. Required service during senior year was particularly frequent among students who dropped service in college. Encouraged service occurred most often among students who sustained service in college, least often among students who did not volunteer.

Orientation toward social responsibility was highest among the continuing volunteers and lowest among the students with no service at the measured time points. Similarly, optimism about being a respected community member in adulthood was highest for the students who sustained service, lowest among those who report no service. Social responsibility

was stronger, on average, among students who dropped service in college than among those who began to volunteer; however, the opposite was true for community optimism.

COLLEGE TRANSITION EXPERIENCES. We examined aspects of the college transition in students' personal and social backgrounds—ranging from their residential preferences, religiosity, and financial indebtedness to their expected educational attainment—for the four participation groups. We also compared students' college selection criteria and curricular programs as well as their involvement in extra- and co-curricular activities and other uses of discretionary time (Table 2).

Situation. Students who dropped service owed the most money in student loans. Curricular concentrations in science or liberal arts were highest for the group that continued service in college. Students who never volunteered were least likely to be enrolled in such courses. Choosing a college based on its job and graduate school placement

TABLE 2
Observed Differences in Community Service Participation—College Student Characteristics

Variables	No C.S. Gr.12–Coll. (N=2,526)	Dropped C.S. After Gr. 12. (N=825)	Began C.S. After Gr. 12 (N=1,676)	Sustained C.S. After Gr. 12. (N=1,464)	Sig. Level
<i>Situation</i>					
Student Loans(\$) ^{b,c}	3,763	5,489	4,723	4,433	***
Placement Record	0.11	0.01	0.09	0.02	**
Social Environment ^{b,c}	.02	0.07	-0.04	-0.04	*
%Sci-Math Concentr ⁿ ^{b,c}	28.9	34.0	33.8	39.5	***
%Lib.Art Concentr ⁿ ^{b,c}	12.1	18.0	18.3	24.0	***
<i>Self</i>					
Religiosity ^{a,b,c,d}	-0.24	-0.05	0.08	0.32	***
Materialism ^{b,c,d}	0.07	-0.01	-0.06	-0.14	***
% Exp. M.A. Degree ^{a,c}	38.8	40.8	45.9	49.0	***
% Exp. Prof'l Degree ^{a,b}	11.8	17.0	19.2	27.9	***
<i>Support</i>					
% Live Alone	6.6	8.4	10.2	10.3	***
% Frater ^t y, Soror ^t y ^{a,b,c}	15.3	23.6	35.8	40.4	***
% Var., Intr. Athlete ^{a,c}	30.4	40.5	50.0	50.9	***
%Arts, Com., Gov. ^{b,c}	16.3	24.5	26.9	43.2	***
<i>Strategies</i>					
Hrs Worked Weekly ^{a,b}	24.0	20.7	22.6	20.4	***
Hrs TV Watched Daily ^{b,c}	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.1	***

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

^aOrthogonal contrast for dropped service and service begun after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^bOrthogonal contrast for sustained service and service begun after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^cOrthogonal contrast for sustained service and service dropped after high school significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

^dMeasure standardized, $M=0$, $SD=1$.

records was most common among students who did not volunteer either as seniors or in college, while social environment was important in choosing a college to the students who dropped service.

Self. Strong religiosity characterized students in sustained service, and it was least common among those with no service. Similarly, religiosity was stronger among students who began service in college compared to those who dropped service. Students reporting no service at either time point were most likely to consider it very important to make lots of money, while the continuing volunteers were the least likely. Expectations for earning a master's degree as well as a PhD or professional degree were most common among the continuing volunteers, least common among the students with no service. While the expectation of obtaining a master's degree was significantly greater for the students who sustained their volunteering compared to those who stopped, their expectation of earning a PhD or professional degree surpassed that of students in all other groups.

Support. Living alone was more common among those who sustained service and those who began service in college. Membership in fraternities and sororities was highest among students who continued to volunteer compared to all other groups. Participation in sports groups, as well as participation in arts, communications, and student government activities was highest among the continuing volunteers.

Strategies. The amount of time spent weekly in paid employment was greatest among the students who never volunteered, as was the amount of time spent watching television. Students who sustained their service in college spent less time working each week compared to the students who began to volunteer and less time watching television than all other participant groups.

*Dropping, Beginning, and Sustaining Community Service
in College: Adjusted Models*

The differences presented in the previous section were observed means, that is, they were not adjusted for other characteristics of students or their experiences that could account for their relationship to dropping, beginning, or continuing service in college. To test the conceptual model we have proposed, the results reported in this section are adjusted for all the other student attributes with hypothesized relationships to participation. Thus, the association of each predictor with participation is independent, net of the other modeled student characteristics. The comparison group for each model is the rest of the college sample. For the sake of clarity, Table 3A focuses on precollege factors linked to participation, while Table 3B attends to college-transition fac-

tors; however, the results in each instance are drawn from the same fully adjusted model.

WHO DROPPED SERVICE IN COLLEGE? Students' personal background—gender, race-ethnicity, and social class—were unrelated to the probability of dropping service in college. Although neighborhood orientation marginally related to dropping service—possibly reflecting students' removal from a context positively influential on service, other early socialization factors have no relationship. Students who attended Catholic high school or a high school located in an urban area were more likely to drop service in college—probably a function of their participation at greater rates in high school. Community service participation at Grade 10 or mandated service during senior year were positively related to dropping participation in college. However, students who were encouraged to volunteer as seniors were significantly less likely to stop volunteering in college. Strong social responsibility values at senior year made dropping service more probable. This counter-intuitive phenomenon suggests a change in the students' values or perhaps for some, a

TABLE 3A

Precollegiate Influences on the Probability of Participating in Community Service During the Early Years of College: A Logistic Regression Model

Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Dropped Service	Began Service	Sustained Service
Constant ^a	-2.2***	-0.99***	-3.5***
Female	0.07	-0.16*	0.26***
African American	-0.11	0.11	-0.02
Hispanic	-0.08	0.13	0.00
Asian	0.13	-0.04	-0.05
Socioeconomic Status ^b	0.01	0.06~	0.13***
Neighborhood Orientation ^b	0.18~	-0.10	0.19*
Youth Group Member, Gr. 1-8 ^b	-0.03	-0.04	0.18*
Community Institutions, Gr. 1-8 ^b	0.05	-0.03	-0.08*
Catholic H.S.	0.37**	-0.27*	0.20
NAIS H.S.	-0.28	0.34*	-0.07
H.-S. Location Northeast	0.12	-0.21**	0.20*
H.-S. Location Midwest	0.04	0.09	-0.13
H.-S. Location Urban	0.20*	-0.12~	0.12
Community Service, Gr. 10	0.60***	-0.54***	1.1***
Community Service Req., Gr. 12	0.39***	-0.37***	0.00
Community Service Enc., Gr. 12	-0.41***	-0.10	0.87***
Social Responsibility Orient'n, Gr. 12	0.29***	-0.12***	0.51***
Community Optimism, Gr. 12 ^b	-0.02	0.02	0.10*

~ $p \leq 0.10$, * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

^aModel adjusted for college effects (Table 3B).

^bMeasure standardized, $M=0$, $SD=1$

TABLE 3B

College Transition Influences on the Probability of Participating in Community Service During the Early Years of College: A Logistic Regression Model

Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Dropped Service	Began Service	Sustained Service
Constant ^a	-2.4***	-0.99***	-3.5***
Student Loans	0.48***	0.26***	-0.12*
College Placement Record	-0.06	0.02	-0.07~
College Social Environment	0.13**	-0.03	-0.00
Science Concentration	0.02	-0.09	0.31***
Liberal Arts	-0.02	0.09	0.19*
Religiosity	-0.14***	0.14***	0.27***
Materialism	0.08~	-0.04	-0.10**
Expects Master's Degree	-0.19*	0.17*	0.46***
Expects PhD, Profess'l Degree	-0.29**	0.17*	0.65***
Lives Alone	-0.00	0.23*	-0.07
Fraternity, Sorority Member	-0.51***	0.54**	0.59***
Varsity, Intramural Athletics Member	-0.04	0.29***	0.28***
Arts, Communic'n, Gov. Grp Member	-0.23*	0.08	0.60***
Hours Worked Weekly	-0.22***	0.03	-0.15**
Hours TV Watched Daily	-0.03	0.01	-0.14***
% Correctly Classified	87.2	73.9	81.6
-2 Log Likelihood	4624.7	7077.6	5393.3
X ²	319.3, df 33	337.3, df 33	1537.0, df 33

~ $p \leq 0.10$; * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

^aModel adjusted for high-school effects (Table 3A).

^bMeasure standardized, $M=0$, $SD=1$

change in their personal circumstances in the transition between high school and college.

Having large student loans also increased the likelihood of dropping service for some students, as did selecting a college because of its social environment. Although curricular aspects of the college experience may be related to whether students drop service in college in that some courses may include time-intensive lab components or be more academically challenging than others, the decision to drop service, according to our estimates, was independent of students' curricular choices. Students who attended religious services regularly were less likely to stop volunteering. Academic ambition—the desire to obtain a master's, PhD, or professional degree—also reduced the chances that students would abandon volunteering.

Co- or extra-curricular activities may support participation by the volunteer projects they sponsor, by the expectation that members will be active in the community, or by the requirement that students volunteer as a condition of membership. Perhaps indicative of that relationship, mem-

bership in fraternities and sororities reduced the probability of dropping service. Similarly, participating in co-curricular activities clustering in the areas of performing arts, communications, and student government reduced the chances of stopping volunteer activity, as did spending discretionary time working for pay. The model correctly classified 87% of the cases.

WHO BEGAN TO VOLUNTEER IN COLLEGE? While women were less likely than men to begin volunteering in college, other background characteristics and early socialization experiences were not influential. Having attended a Catholic high school, a high school in the Northeast, or, marginally, a high school located in an urban area reduced the chances that a student would begin to volunteer in college, while attending an NAIS private high school increased the chances of that happening.⁷

Volunteering during tenth grade and being required to volunteer during senior year reduced the likelihood of initiating service during college. Having strong social responsibility values as a high-school senior also reduced the probability that a student would begin to volunteer in college. Such students would probably be motivated earlier to become involved in community service.

While having student loans and dropping service were typical for some students, as we have seen, for others loans were linked with the probability of beginning to volunteer. The prospects of earning a master's degree or a PhD or professional degree also increased the chances of beginning service. Living alone enhanced the probability that a student would begin volunteering in college, as did religiosity. Belonging to a fraternity or sorority related positively to beginning to volunteer; so, too, did participating in varsity or intramural athletics. The model correctly classified 74% of the cases.

WHO CONTINUED TO VOLUNTEER IN COLLEGE? Women and students from privileged backgrounds tended to continue community service in college. Neighborhood orientation and youth group membership during elementary school were also positively related to sustained participation, attenuated somewhat by having patronized community institutions. Attending a high school located in the Northeast increased the probability of sustained service. A record of community service during tenth grade enhanced the likelihood of sustained service, as did encouraged service during senior year. Having a strong social responsibility orientation and/or optimism about their place in the community were positively associated with students' prospects for sustained service.

A student loan burden detracted somewhat from the probability of continuing to volunteer, but following a science or liberal arts curriculum increased the chances. Being non-materialistic or religious sug-

gested students would sustain service during college, as did academic ambition for a master's, PhD, or professional degree. Students active in performing arts, communications, or student government groups were more likely to have sustained volunteering. Belonging to a fraternity or sorority or participating on athletic teams also increased the likelihood of continuing service. Spending time in paid employment on a weekly basis and watching television on a daily basis tended to reduce the probability of sustained service. The model correctly classified 82% of the cases.

Revisiting the Hypotheses

Students who were socialized into community at an early age, as our *first hypothesis* proposed, continued to volunteer in the transition between high school and college. The results also confirmed the importance of values and positive attitudes—measured here as social responsibility, optimism, religiosity, and being non-materialistic—to sustained participation.

Except for the positive effect of attending a high school located in the Northeast on sustained participation, the results did not support the *second hypothesis*—namely, that the secondary socialization effects of private, urban, and Midwestern schools would promote sustained participation.

Community service during early high school (Grade 10), supporting the *third hypothesis*, had mixed effects on participation in the transition. Service early in high school strongly increased the probability of sustained participation, reinforcing the identity of this group as core volunteers. Others who volunteered in early high school, however, stopped volunteering in college. That decision might reflect emergence from a service-oriented normative environment in high school to which the student simply conformed or the desire to try other kinds of activities in college.

Students who performed required community service as high school seniors also tended to drop service in college, while peers who were encouraged to volunteer tended to continue to do so. The finding supports the *fourth hypothesis*. The negative relationship of required service to future participation is consistent with the results of other studies that suggest that required service ultimately undermines the inclination to volunteer (Marks, 2001b). Although the data do not provide information on required service at Grade 10, the adverse influence on future participation may be evidence, at least in some instances, of a mandate to volunteer. While requiring service suggests the necessity of coercing voluntarism, encouraged service seems to imply a positive impression of

students' good will while respecting their freedom to make choices for themselves.

The *fifth hypothesis*, focusing on beginning or ending community service in the transition to college, expected those decisions to be influenced primarily by transition factors. The results support the importance of transition factors pertaining to situation, self, and support, particularly for those who began to volunteer. For those who dropped service, their high-school experience was a salient factor, although transition factors also contributed.

Resources in the transition, the *sixth hypothesis* proposed, will support sustained participation in community service. The analysis confirmed the importance of positive elements both within students' selves and in various external supports to participation, as well as the absence of factors within their situations (e.g., student loan burden) and their strategies (e.g., other uses of discretionary time).

Discussion

Because of the longitudinal structure of the NELS:88 database, we were able to investigate changes over time in the patterns of volunteering among a large sample of the students in the NELS cohort who went on to college. As a national database developed to address an array of policy questions, NELS provides researchers with a substantial battery of survey items, many specifically geared to the changing educational and life-stage level of the cohort. Because these are general-purpose survey data, however, they have inherent limitations. The NELS surveys cover many areas—some in considerable depth, but more rather cursorily. Thus, while the data available for our study enabled us to examine the questions we posed, we recognize their limitations. Our measures of volunteering, for example, encompass vastly different experiences of service—both in terms of personal investment, time spent, and service activities. Yet, even in focusing on the single common denominator of “volunteering in the community,” as our dependent measures do, a strongly suggestive and theoretically consistent pattern of findings emerged.

The finding that 48% of the students in our sample were involved in community service, either as those who sustained their involvement from high school or those who initiated service in college, is significant. Considered in relation to the findings of the 2000 HERI report and the Levine and Cureton (1998) study that we counterposed at the outset of this investigation, this finding suggests that college may open the door to involvement in service for many students.

Selznick's theory of social participation and Schlossberg and colleagues' transition theory provided useful means for examining the shifts and continuities in students' volunteering during the transition from high school to college. Profiles emerged distinguishing the core participants who sustained their volunteering in the transition from those segmental participants who either dropped service after high school or initiated service after they enrolled in college. Aspects of the transition to college suggest that factors within the student's situation, self, systems of support, or even strategies for coping bore on the decision to volunteer or not.

Community Service during High School as a Socialization Experience

The fact that high-school experience with community service negatively influenced future volunteering is an important but disturbing finding. Results of surveys such as HERI and estimates of participation from the Corporation for National and Community Service have led to media reports of increased volunteering among the nation's youth. Little evidence exists, however, to indicate that the surge in volunteering is driven by personal values or that the volunteering will endure beyond high school for most students. Because of the lack of research in this area, we believe our inquiry makes a needed contribution.

Since the early 1990s, a national movement has promoted service as preparation for citizenship, directed toward countering self-centered individualism and connecting students with their communities. Policy-makers and educators have provided momentum to the movement through grants programs encouraging service initiatives and through school sponsorship of community service and service learning. Membership in honor societies, admission to top-tier colleges, scholarships and other awards made by schools and communities either require service or strongly emphasize it in their decision criteria. As a result, more students now engage in community service and service learning than ever before. As the HERI reports have indicated, however, the majority of students who have volunteered in high school say that they do not intend to continue to volunteer in college.

If the goal of the movement for community service and service learning is to encourage positive attitudes and the habit of volunteering, the movement may be falling short. Students who drop service in college after participating in senior year tend to come from Catholic schools where service is an explicit part of the curriculum, to have been involved in service as high-school sophomores, or to have performed service because they were required to. Rather than performing service because

they saw its importance, these students may have been conforming to group norms, responding to school expectations, or complying with graduation requirements for service—all extrinsic motivations. When volunteering is primarily a product of secondary socialization, it may be short-lived. Students who stop volunteering may lack the appreciation of its importance, a recognition that grows out of primary socialization and familial influence. In the case of these students, secondary socialization runs counter to values they internalized during childhood. These findings are consistent with both socialization theory and Selznick's theory of social participation.

Students who continue service in college, the core volunteers, had high-school experiences of service that appear to have been consistent with their personal values and commitment to service. Early socialization in their neighborhoods and in groups such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts or Boys and Girls Clubs increased the chances they would continue to volunteer. Parents may have encouraged their children to join such organizations during elementary school because they supported their family's values and primary socialization. Community service in early high school also increased the likelihood of continued volunteering for this group, as did being encouraged to volunteer by another.

Students who volunteered for the first time during college, according to our results, lacked the influence of early socialization and service experiences during high school. Moreover, they did not report pro-social values when surveyed during senior year.

The Transition into College

The transition from high school to college may affect students' inclination to volunteer based on factors such as the consistency in norms and expectations between past environments and new ones and how well prepared students are to navigate participation and involvement in a new environment (Tinto, 1993). Thus, while the normative environments in high school may have exerted a press toward participation in community service, integration into the college setting presents new challenges and an opportunity for students potentially to make new decisions about how to be involved in their college experience. Unfortunately, however, our data do not provide information about how students make decisions to continue to participate in service or not, nor about the meaning they attach to their experiences. A qualitative study, designed to complement this study, has inquired into these questions and provides support for the influence of early socialization experiences, peers, the negative influence of requiring service, and the relationship between sustained participation and identity development (Jones & Hill, in press).

Adjusting to the college environment may test the durability of primary and secondary socialization, as students leave the security of family, friends, and communities, such as school, church, and work (Tinto, 1987). Students are on their own in college to manage their time, coursework, and finances. Many may have to work long hours to support themselves, others may have leisure to explore new interests. Most students will meet a diverse group of new peers whose values may not match their own. Within this new setting, students make decisions about how to spend their time, with whom to spend it, and on what to focus their energies. These decisions, as they impinge on volunteering, are illuminated by insights from Transition Theory—specifically, the influence of aspects of the transition process—situation, self, support, and strategies.

Aspects of *situation*—measured here as student loan burden, criteria influencing choice of college, and curricular focus, did affect the choice to volunteer. While carrying student loans strongly increased the probability that students would drop service, it also increased the likelihood that students would begin. Our explanation for this paradox is that having loans may intensify some students' efforts to stay closely focused on academics and move expeditiously through college, while loans may allow other students a measure of freedom to spend time on their interests. Choosing a college because of its social environment also made dropping service more likely.

Particular academic concentrations were supportive environments for the core participants. Of course, this group of students, highly focused on education beyond the baccalaureate— aspiring to MA, PhD, or professional degrees—might have selected these concentrations because they are highly purposeful in terms of their career direction. Personal focus and commitment, as these aspirations suggest, are resources of *self* according to transition theory, as are the personal values that motivate the continuing participants. Although to a lesser degree, these same resources positively influenced beginning service in college and reduced the chances a student would stop participating.

Social *support* or the lack of it affected the decision to begin or drop service. For the continuing participants, more than any other group, co- or extra-curricular membership supported maintaining service involvement in college. While these types of activities may promote involvement, highly motivated, involved, and community-oriented students might self-select into them. Even if this is the case, however, the activities—like the academic concentrations—do not detract from participation, they strongly enhance it.

Students may have to work to pay for some or all of their expenses, if they are to make the transition to college. In that case, paid employment

could be considered a coping *strategy*. Spending discretionary time in paid employment negatively affected continued volunteering. These findings on the effect of working resemble Levine and Cureton's (1998) in that students' employment appears to work in at least two ways: Not working does not make students more likely to volunteer, however, long hours at work may reduce their inclination or ability to do so. Working may reduce the likelihood of dropping service, if students' work on campus incorporates them into the campus environment through greater contact with peers, faculty, and staff. Incorporation into the campus community may result in increased awareness of and involvement in campus activities such as community service.

Spending time watching television—perhaps as an escapist *strategy* for coping with the pressures of college, makes continuing to volunteer less likely. Because core participants may also be very involved in their coursework and co- or extra-curricular activities, their available time is likely to be limited. Spending that time on watching television, would reduce its availability for volunteering.

Alternative explanations for continuing or dropping community service are, of course, possible, but we do not focus on them in this study. The college environment may fail to support students potential community involvement by overlooking their motivation to volunteer (Berger & Milem, 2002), or leaving them on their own to seek out ways to be involved in service opportunities. Apart from such factors, students who do not sustain the community service they initiated in high school may be intentionally breaking past ties, behaviors, and patterns (Tinto, 1987). Other students may choose to take time out from the volunteer experience and decide to explore other areas of activity. Some may want to form new connections and bonds with new communities or seek new ways to be involved.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Do our findings imply that efforts to encourage service among high-school and college students are insignificant and developmentally futile? Are service experiences similar to field trips and other educational experiences that may be interesting—even memorable—but are not life-changing? Or is community service important—even if it is symbolic—simply because it honors communitarian and democratic values? Based on our fieldwork in which we interviewed high-school and college student volunteers (e.g., Marks, 1994; Jones & Hill, in press), we recognize differences in the quantity and quality of volunteering. Service experiences can be superficial or deep, ongoing commitments or one-time efforts, responsive to real social needs or superfluous, genuinely moti-

vated or perfunctory. If they are to be transformative, however, that is, of a caliber to create core volunteers, they would need to be powerful, profoundly human, ongoing, intellectually and emotionally compelling.

While the measure of social participation we employed in this study does not discriminate among the types of service experiences in which the volunteers engaged or the extent of the volunteers' personal investment, the results do suggest important implications for policy and practice. Although students entering college with strong values of social responsibility and for whom service is integral to their identities will most likely sustain their community service, higher education can enable them to continue their work in the community through service activities and service-learning courses. Campuses have an opportunity to tap the expertise and experiences of these students to take leadership roles in community service and service learning and to encourage their peers to become involved.

While volunteering may not transform the student, it could significantly benefit others. Painting classrooms in a public school building as part of an orientation program, for example, would make a huge difference in the lives of that school's students and teachers, but probably less of an impact on the volunteers themselves unless their experience led them to become conscious of inequities in school funding and aware of the need for reform. Tutoring or mentoring students over the course of a school year could be a more significant experience for the volunteer because of its duration and also because of the interpersonal nature of the service. If volunteers saw the need their service addressed as part of a bigger societal picture and engaged in political, economic, and social analysis to understand the forces underlying adverse conditions—perhaps as part of a class or a reflection group—their appreciation for the importance of service and their commitment to volunteering might deepen.

Requiring community service of college students is not a policy we would recommend based on the negative effects of mandated service among high-school students. While the requirement may also spark an interest in volunteering in some students who would not have otherwise considered service, we advocate efforts to develop positive norms for service among students. The initiation of policies and programs that encourage faculty, staff, and students to engage in community-based teaching, learning, and service are means to this end. The finding that encouragement was positively related to service participation and the requirement negatively is instructive. Students could be encouraged to become involved in community service through their academic curricula, student organizations, residence halls, campus employment, and advising. College and university faculty and staff can assist students in

understanding their commitments to service and the responsibilities of active citizenship through the inclusion of structured reflection and analysis associated with community service, an important aspect rarely integrated into high-school volunteer activities.

For those students likely to drop or initiate community service in college, the college environment plays a potentially influential role. Colleges and universities can develop a culture that supports the values of community, citizenship, and social responsibility. Both the curriculum and co-curriculum can reflect these values and provide many opportunities for student involvement. Specifically, these opportunities can link student readiness to participate with environmental stimuli to encourage and support such involvement (Berger & Milem, in press).

Because community service involvement is increasingly emphasized by both high schools and colleges and universities, understanding patterns of involvement may enable faculty and administrators to develop courses, policies, and programs to further enhance student development of social responsibility and civic engagement. To the extent that community service proves more efficacious for democratic attitudes and future civic involvement under some conditions rather than others, educators and policymakers have direction for practice.

Notes

¹The Undergraduate Survey of 1993, conducted by Levine and Cureton, randomly sampled students at postsecondary institutions stratified by Carnegie classification, achieving a response rate of 66%, comprising 9100 traditional and nontraditional students. Supported by a grant from the Lilly endowment, the survey was administered by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton.

²The distributional properties of the measure also warranted this change in that the proportion of students in the categories marked by the 3rd and particularly the 4th point on the scale was very small, 6.7 and 1.5%, respectively.

³In determining our choice for the high-school service variable, we had the option of constructing a measure parallel to the college measure based on several similarly specific NELS:88 items. A major difficulty with that option in our view was the scope of the measure. Because it focused on service during "the past two years," a respondent could answer in the affirmative if he or she had been involved in any service at all as far back as tenth grade. We chose the less specific measure because it focused exclusively on Grade 12 service. Our reasons for preferring the Grade 12 focus are threefold: (1) to address the findings of the HERI surveys of college freshmen, which queried students on their senior year service and noted the disjuncture between volunteering at that time point and the intention to volunteer in college; (2) to examine the implications for volunteering inherent in the transition between senior year in high school and college; and (3) given our interest in distinguishing between core and segmental volunteers, to investigate the influence on future volunteering of Grade 10 service.

⁴Because the number of American Indians and Alaskans in the sample is so small, we have not constructed a separate category for these students.

⁵The low Cronbach's alpha of 0.55 indicates that the reliability or internal consistency of the measure of Social Responsibility is weak. Low reliability may attenuate the

relationship of the independent variable to the dependent variable and, at the same time, it may enhance that relationship for another independent variable in the model (Osborne & Waters, 2002). In this instance, however, the component items of Social Responsibility do have face validity. Moreover, the relationship of the Social Responsibility measure to the three dependent variables is reasonable and consistent.

⁶Because the Cronbach's alpha of 0.57 for Social Environment is low (cf. Note 5), the hypothesized relationships may be affected somewhat by the limited internal consistency of the Social Environment measure.

⁷This finding is quite surprising given the emphasis NAIS schools have put on involving their students in community service (Marks, 1994). One possible explanation may be that these students completed requirements and school expectations for service early in high school. In that case, they may have dropped service during senior year in high school, but returned to it in college.

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