The Methods and Metrics of the Boston Area Diary Study

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Conference on Research on Giving and Volunteering
Indiana University Center on Philanthropy
November 29, 2000
Indianapolis

Revised March 01, 2001

INTRODUCTION

During 1995 and 1996 we carried out the Boston Area Diary Study with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the T. B. Murphy Foundation Charitable Trust. To our knowledge, this was the first ever diary study focusing primarily on giving and volunteering. The diary study included questions that allowed a comparison with responses given on national surveys of giving and volunteering. But in addition to providing information parallel to such national surveys, it also inquired in detail about a wider array of formal and informal giving and volunteering carried out by people in their daily lives. Over the course of the 1995 calendar year we interviewed 44 respondents almost every week, resulting in a total of approximately 1800 interviews. Designed as one basis for evaluating the Independent Sector/Gallup Survey of Giving and Volunteering, the diary study is also a small-scale exploration of *caritas* in the lives of the 44 participants, chosen at random, in the Boston Metropolitan area.

In this paper we discuss the conceptual framework, methods and findings of the Boston Area Diary Study (BADS) in order to provide insights on the problems and prospects of survey research on philanthropy. We hope that the lessons we have learned may provide knowledge on giving and volunteering and suggest theoretical and practical implications for others conducting survey research in this field.

In section one of this paper we review the conceptual foundations of the Boston Area Diary Study and indicate how we operationalize them in the research. In section two we present the research design, methodology and give a brief summary of the findings of the study. In the next section we present two validity measures: first, a comparison of the BADS results to those obtained by Gallup from an interview with the BADS participants, and second, a study of possible Hawthorne effects. In sections four and five we make some specific recommendations from what we have learned for the operationalization and measurement of giving and volunteering, and for improvements in field procedures. In section six we present our final conclusions.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Gathering information concerning philanthropic behavior as part of a broader pattern of care-giving and care-receiving was one general goal of the Boston Area Diary Study. Its original purpose, however, was to gather information on giving and volunteering for a group of individuals and their families in the Boston area in order to obtain a sense of the validity of existing national and regional studies of philanthropic behavior.

Specifically, the goals of the study were to perform the following tasks:

- gather baseline information on giving and volunteering from a small sample of participants living in the Boston area, in order to compare it to similar information subsequently obtained retrospectively from the same participants on an annual basis by the Gallup Organization as part of the 1996 Survey of Giving and Volunteering in the United States;
- gather information from these same participants about money, goods, unpaid assistance, and emotional support given on an interpersonal basis to family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers;
- gather information from the participants about money, goods, unpaid assistance, and emotional support received from organizations and other individuals (family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers);
- gather information on household and family demographic characteristics, including income; on organizational affiliations; and on patterns of organizational giving;
- gather information on how giving and volunteering fit into the lives and life styles of the participants;
- gather information on the seasonal variation of giving and volunteering among the participants.[1]

CARE AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

Our research on giving and volunteering over the past decade has enabled us to develop two interconnected sets of findings and to specify their practical implications.

The first is what we call the *identification model of caritas*. The key to care and philanthropy, as we have written elsewhere (Schervish 1993, Schervish and Havens 1997), is not the absence of self but the presence of self-identification with others in their needs. Drawing on the writings of Thomas Aquinas (Gillemann 1959), Alexis de Tocqueville (1988), Jules Toner (1968), Michael Martin (1994), Stephen Pope (1991, 1992) and other thinkers, and on an analysis of intensive interviews with millionaires, we perceive the key to the practice of care to be how people link their destiny to the destiny of others. The practice of care derives from the disposition that meeting the needs of others fulfills one's own needs *and* connects one to the deeper dimensions of life, often experienced and expressed in religious terms as the unity of love of self, love of neighbor, and love of God.

Our second set of findings concerns the *associational dynamics of caritas*. Our empirical research demonstrates that the forces of identification are generated, nurtured, and manifested through the associational relations of individuals. Generosity of time and money derives not from one's level of income or wealth but from the physical and moral density of one's associational life and horizons of identification. As such, the study of *caritas* should be situated within the entire panoply of people's associational life, and not just within a single legally or sectorally defined segment of their relations of care.

The methods and metrics of the Boston Area Diary study were constructed in order to capture this fuller array of giving and volunteering, while at the same time preserving a separate measure of the narrow concept of philanthropy that is nested within the expanded notion. Therefore, in addition to inquiring about the narrowly defined forms of giving and volunteering, we also systematically used an expanded definition to measure two expanded categories of giving and volunteering by which individuals care for others on a direct interpersonal basis, without the auspices of any specific charitable organization.

Charitable giving is conventionally defined in virtually all research surveys as the gifts of money, assets (appreciated or otherwise), and property (e.g., used furnishings, clothes, automobiles) that people give to charitable entities legally defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), i.e. gifts that individuals may include among their itemized deductions for charity on Schedule A of the Federal income tax form. Other gifts, for example, to any individuals including relatives, friends and chance acquaintances on the street; political causes, candidates, and parties; and professional or union membership organizations are excluded.

Our first expanded category is the contributions of money, assets, and goods to people, organizations, and causes beyond the narrow legal definition depicted. Included in the expanded definition are contributions (money, assets, and goods) to (1) political candidates, causes, and parties; (2) informal social movements and causes; (3) to non-dependent relatives in need (excluding inheritances and other disbursements that were made without regard to need such as holiday, birthday, wedding gifts, etc.); and (4) to individuals, friends, and associates in need (again excluding inheritances and other disbursements that were made without regard to need such as holiday, birthday, wedding gifts, etc.).

The conventional definition of volunteering is less easily discerned. Minimally, it includes all voluntary assistance of time given through or in a nonprofit organization. However, there is ambiguity in many surveys about what additionally may be considered part of the narrow concept. This is because many surveys do not clearly state or remind respondents to exclude assistance offered in informal contexts, such as tutoring a kid in the neighborhood or helping to organize a petition drive. Moreover, most surveys in fact inquire about additional volunteering not done in or through organizations, such as assistance given directly to individuals. Sometimes this additional volunteering is simply presented as a residual category, i.e. by asking if there is any other assistance the respondent gives informally or in addition to what was previously mentioned. Finally, some surveys actually ask specific questions on various categories of informal giving, such as to neighbors, friends, and relatives not living in the household.

Thus, the second type of expanded philanthropic behavior we measured is the time that people spend giving practical help to other people on an unpaid basis. This practical help extends to performing tasks and services for other people. Usually these are tasks and services that the recipients would have had to pay a fee to have performed or foregone all together had the donor not provided them free of charge. In our study we refer to these activities as unpaid assistance.

A major finding of our year-long regime of weekly interviews is that the respondents did not segregate their consciousness along the lines of formal and informal philanthropy or into the various legal and sectoral segmentations with which philanthropy researchers and advocates are familiar. Rather, the respondents are more inclined to feel and forge a unified fabric of care. What matters to their sense and sensibility is not whether an act is narrowly defined as formal giving and volunteering, nor whether it takes place in and around the nonprofit sector; what matters is whether there is an intentional and voluntary decision to respond to the needs of others as they arise in daily life. Philanthropy is but one manifestation of the more spiritually and practically fundamental reality of care that pervades the daily human living experience. There are myriad ways that people express this care: some are relatively passive, such as praying for others and/or treating others with civility and respect; other ways involve direct action, such as taking care of an elderly relative, driving friends and acquaintances who are in need of transportation to a variety of appointments and activities, helping others take care of their children, and providing emotional support to those facing both common and extraordinary tribulations.

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, FINDINGS

The most important survey to which we planned to compare the BADS findings was the Gallup survey that was to be conducted for Independent Sector and scheduled for late Spring 1996. The Gallup survey, according to the usual approach in national surveys, was designed to interview respondents about their giving and volunteering activities during the previous calendar year, i.e. 1995. Our general methodology was to document this same giving and volunteering behavior for a small group of individuals and households very shortly after the behavior occurred and in a manner that would enable us to gather detailed information; clarify with respondents our questions and their responses; inquire and receive information about the caring behavior of other members of the family; and double check activities previously mentioned, new activities being undertaken, and activities respondents had previously forgotten and remembered during a later interview. We were then assisted by Independent Sector and Gallup in having these same individuals interviewed during late Spring 1996 by the Gallup organization with the same survey Gallup was using in its national survey.

A diary study approach to collecting the information in 1995 served our purposes well. It facilitated the collection of information very close to the time that the behavior took place. It permitted tracking of the information to investigate the seasonal variation of giving and volunteering, and it allowed the gathering of information about patterns of daily living and life-styles that portrayed the broader context of care and supported further analyses of the extensive relations of care in the lives and life-styles of the participants.

Mainly for reasons of efficient use of resources and to ensure respondent willingness, we chose a weekly reporting period and decided on telephone interviewing. We requested diary participants to keep track of their care-giving and care-receiving during each week and to transmit the results to our staff in weekly telephone interviews throughout 1995. At the end of the study, we planned to calculate their contributions and volunteer time (both narrow and expanded conceptualizations) for the year and to compare this with the corresponding information from the Gallup survey, in a repeated measures analysis.

In order to be able to compare our results with other studies, we asked the participants to keep track of contributions of money and goods made by and received by any members of their *families and households*. Again for comparability we asked the participants to keep track only of the time that they *personally* spent in volunteering, providing unpaid assistance, and receiving help and care from organizations and other individuals. To summarize, when inquiring about gifts of money, assets, and property we focused our questions on the family household; when inquiring about unpaid assistance, we focused our questions on the participant alone.

An important piece of information previously asked in the Gallup survey was whether the respondent being interviewed was one of the primary decision-makers regarding household contributions. An affirmative answer to that inquiry increased the probability that the respondent would know the level of family contributions and family income. In order to obtain more accurate data, we decided to select and then interview only those who were primary decision-makers concerning household contributions.

One drawback of selecting only decision-makers for household information is that the sample would exclude non-decision-making family members who may, nevertheless, have volunteered time during the year. This means that even a sample of participants that was representative of households (and consequently household contributions) in the Boston area would not necessarily be representative of adults within households (and consequently time volunteered) in the Boston area.

Ideally, we would have liked to carry out an additional sampling effort in order to obtain a more representative picture of the population of those who volunteer. However, since our major goals were (1) to collect giving and volunteering information to compare with the national estimates, (2) to begin to measure care-giving and care-receiving in a prototype study, and (3) *not* to develop a representative profile of care-giving and care-receiving in the Boston area, we decided to restrict our sample to one of the major decision-makers in the household.

SAMPLE

Details of the sample design can be found in Appendix A. The final sample consisted of 49 initial participants:[2] 38 chosen completely randomly, 6 chosen in an oversample of Black participants, and 5 chosen in an oversample of higher income households. After the first interview in which household income was more carefully obtained, it turned out that informants had a tendency to underestimate their household income in the screening call. In hindsight, the oversample of higher income households, was not necessary. The participants selected in this oversample were, nevertheless, included in the final sample represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics Boston Area Diary Study

Gender	n	Race	n	Marital Status	n	Age of Participant	n	Household Income	n	Age of youngest child living at home	n	Age of oldest child living at home	n
Male	17	White	41	Married or Living with Partner	25	18-29 years	6	Less than $15,000	4	No children	25	No children	25
Female	32	Black	8	Single	22	30-39 years	15	$15,000-$19,999	6	Under 12 years	13	Under 12 years	10
				Divorced	2	40-49 years	14	$30,000-$44,999	6	12-17 years	5	12-17 years	5
						50-59 years	9	$45,000-$59,999	12	18-21 years	1	18-21 years	2
						60 years or older	5	$60,000-$74,999	10	Over 21 years	5	Over 21 years	7
								$75,000-$99,000	2				
								$100,000 or more	9				

Source: Social Welfare Research Institute, Boston College 1996.

It should be noted that female participants outnumbered male participants nearly 2 to 1. One major reason for this is that in multiple-adult households females were more frequently identified as the adult who was primarily responsible for making the decisions concerning contributions to charitable causes. A second reason is that males (especially Black males) more frequently refused to participate as compared with females. A third reason is that females more frequently answered their telephones in person as compared with men; and people of either gender who answered their phone in person were more likely to commit to participate in the study for a year than those who systematically used their answering machines to screen their calls.

The under-representation of Black participants in the initial sample reflects a very high refusal rate among Blacks who were randomly contacted. Nearly every one of the Black males aged 50 or older who were initially contacted refused, sometimes angrily to participate. In addition, many of the Black females (30 or more) initially contacted expressed an interest in participating but eventually declined, indicating that their husband or boyfriend would disapprove if they did participate. The sample is thus biased against Black households with a male present and under-represents Black males.

In the screening calls, the informants had a tendency to underestimate their family and/or their own income. When the household income was more carefully collected in the initial interview, several households had higher incomes, often by several thousand dollars, than was initially reported. The distribution of family income in the sample, therefore, tends to be a few thousand dollars higher than in the Census reports, adjusted for inflation, for the Boston area. Later, during the BADS study participants often had to be prompted several times and allowed time to consult their records in order to report their unearned income (interest, rents, dividends, etc.). In some instances they had to call their accountant to find out the information. On this basis it appears that respondents are less certain of their unearned income than they are about their earned income.

By agreeing or refusing to participate, eligible individuals selected themselves into or out of the study. The extent to which this self-selection process biased the sample, if at all, is not clear. For example, people who are very active tend less frequently to be at home. A large fraction of the screening calls made were always busy or never answered. Moreover, when contacted, very active people may have been unwilling to add another item to their busy schedule. In fact, one potential participant stated she lived on a trust fund and as a feminist and community activist spent all her time in volunteer activities. In spite of our entreaties, she had no time for our study. On the other hand, there may be a tendency among very active people to be proud of their activities and to want to tell other people about them. It is not clear how all of this ultimately affected the composition of our sample and the findings derived from it.

FIELD PROCEDURES

Using a trained staff of interviewers, each participant was scheduled to be interviewed by appointment once per week. During the interview, information was obtained from participants concerning contributions of money and goods given to and received from both charitable organizations and other persons, except for spouses and dependent children. Likewise, information was systematically collected concerning time given and received in unpaid assistance, emotional support, and volunteer time both to and from organizations and other persons, except for spouses[3] and dependent children.

At various times during the year we also asked about demographic characteristics of the family and household, about income and its components for all members of the household, about organizational membership of the participant, and about reasons for giving and volunteering.

In addition to the information which we directly requested each week, participants often volunteered much information about themselves, their family, and their friends–some relevant to understanding their caring behavior, but some not so relevant. When volunteered, this additional information was noted on the interview schedules.

The Boston Area Diary Study interview period extended from the first week of January, 1995 through the last week of January, 1996.[4] While most participants were interviewed on a weekly basis most of the time, there were periods when participants were unavailable for several weeks, e.g. if they were on vacation, visiting distant relatives, or on a work-related trip. We asked the participants to try to keep careful records during these periods and interviewed them on their return.

Participants could re-schedule an appointment at any time prior to or even during an interview. If a participant missed an interview, it was rescheduled for their earliest convenience.

Interviewing took place from 7 a.m. through 9 p.m. every weekday, including holidays, some Saturday mornings, and most Sunday evenings. The interviews had been designed to last 5 minutes; in fact, they averaged nearly 20 minutes. Interviews with some participants routinely lasted an hour. The shortest interview was 4 minutes; the longest was 4 hours.

Approximately every three months we sent each participant a letter concerning the study, and expressed our appreciation for their continued participation. In addition we enclosed a gift certificate worth about $5 for specific items (i.e., ice cream, movies, and groceries). At the end of the interviewing phase of the study, each participant who completed the study was paid the $120 incentive which had been promised for their participation.

DATA PROCESSING

By the end of the study, we had completed 1,857 interviews. These interviews were edited, coded, and entered into a computerized relational data base for data cleaning and analysis. The data were completely verified (to identify and correct data entry mistakes) and corrected for wild codes and internal inconsistency. Extreme values were also double checked for validity. During this process, participants were contacted to clarify any ambiguities found in the data. Hundreds of errors were uncovered and corrected during this process.

Because corresponding interviews referred to different time spans for different participants (i.e., the third interview for the first participant might refer to the third week of January but the third interview of another participant might refer to the last week of January and the first week of February), they were mapped into a common set of 52 weeks. The data for the 52 weeks were grouped into 13 analytic periods of 4 weeks each and also aggregated to annual totals for 1995.

There is, of course, no average person who performs in accordance with the statistical averages. Instead, with respect to most categories of caring behavior, there are usually a few participants who perform a large amount of each type of caring activity, while most participants perform a considerably lesser amount of the relevant type of caring. Combining all the participants, as we do in the presentation of statistics, is misleading from the viewpoint of the individual participant, however, it is revealing at a societal level as a demonstration of the amount of care given by the group of participants as a whole. There was no single participant who exhibited the behavior pattern as described by the group averages.

FINDINGS ON THE FABRIC OF CARE

Table 2 summarizes the manifold ways that people use their time and resources to help others on a regular basis. Each of the 44 participants in the study had several stories about how they had helped others on both a formal and an informal basis. The statistical summary, even with examples, does not begin to capture the richness of the underlying stories.

When we look at the overall pattern, we are struck by four broad findings:

1. As a group, the participants spent a vast amount of money, goods, resources, time, and energy caring for people in addition to their spouses and dependent children. This care was most often provided directly on a one-on-one basis above and beyond the care they expressed through contributions of money, goods, and time to charitable organizations and causes.

2. The amounts of time and money devoted to caring directly for others were each more than 5 times the corresponding amounts devoted to caring for others indirectly through charitable organizations and causes. The organized non-profit institutions through which society provides various forms of service and care for its members represents merely the surface of the total amount of care that the members of society extend to each other on an informal basis.

3. If the participants in the Boston Area Diary Study are at all indicative of the population in general, most of the care that people provide for others, whether directly or through organizations, is self-related. This self-related pattern is evident in the amounts of money and time they give to others; in their choice of charitable causes to which they

give money, goods, and volunteer time; and in their philosophy concerning the provision of care for others.

4. The pattern of care-giving strongly supports and has begun to amplify the identification theory of caring behavior that we have been developing in recent years. The pattern is one of giving the largest amounts of care to those individuals and charitable causes with which the participant most closely identified and often was closely involved at some time in their lives. In this pattern, family and relatives generally took precedence over friends and acquaintances; and religious organizations generally took precedence over all other forms of organization for participants with a specific religious affiliation. Organizations that had helped the participant, their family, or their friends generally took precedent over organizations and causes that had not.[5]

We conclude that in order to get a complete picture of giving and volunteering it is first necessary to survey both formal and informal giving and volunteering as part of a larger tapestry of care in our society; and second, it is necessary that the survey be carried out with a methodology that allows researchers to inquire in detail and repeatedly about giving and volunteering.

Table 2: Average Contributions of Money, Goods and Time

Category of Organization or Person	Contributions of Money and Goods	Average Annual Contribution of Money and Goods	Contributions of Money and Goods as Percentage of Income	Volunteering/ Unpaid Assistance		Total Time Spent Volunteering/Unpaid Assistance (including emotional support)	
	Part. Rate			**Rate**	**Hours/Month**	**Rate**	**Hours/Month**
All Organizations	**100%**	**$1490**	**2.2%**	**84%**	**9.9**	**84%**	**9.9**
Religious	75%	$741	1.3%	36%	4.0	36%	6.0
Non-Religious	95%	$750	0.9%	79%	5.9	79%	5.9
All Interpersonal	**98%**	**$7779**	**7.4%**	**100%**	**28.5**	**100%**	**57.7**
Relatives	93%	$7092	6.1%	93%	20.9	100%	44.2
Adult Child/Grandchild	50%	$4834	3.8%	45%	4.4	59%	6.7
Parent	52%	$294	0.6%	50%	9.3	64%	15.7
Other Relative	93%	$1964	1.6%	89%	7.0	95%	10
Non-Relatives	98%	$687	1.3%	95%	7.7	100%	13.5
Total Money, Goods and Time	**100%**	**$9269**	**9.6%**	**100%**	**38.5**	**100%**	**67.7**

Source: Social Welfare Research Institute, Boston College, 1996

TWO VALIDITY CHECKS

Participants at the Conference on Research on Giving and Volunteering, at the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, November 29, 2000 at which this paper was first presented cited the necessity of incorporating validity checks to survey research as one of the ways of improving the quality of research data in the field of giving and volunteering. From the outset, one of the purposes of the Boston Area Diary Study was to create a way to validate in general, other survey research on giving and volunteering and in particular to validate the Gallup/IS Survey of Giving and Volunteering. In the course of the research we addressed two validity issues, first the extent to which a survey such as Gallup can accurately capture in a retrospective way actual behavior; and second, whether carrying out a diary study of itself created validity problems, that is whether it induced a Hawthorne effect.

DIARY STUDY AS A VALIDITY CHECK OF GALLUP/IS SURVEY OF GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

The Gallup organization interviewed 35 of the BADS participants in late spring of 1996, approximately 5 months after they had completed their weekly interviews for BADS and Gallup interviewed 4 more participants in late summer, approximately 8 months after they completed their weekly interviews for BADS. A comparison of the results from both studies, as well as observation of the Gallup interviewer in the field revealed a large number of discrepancies. Here we present some of those discrepancies and in the following section we integrate the lessons learned from the comparison to our list of considerations for the conceptualization, operationalization and measurement of giving and volunteering.

Among other items, the Gallup interview asked about family/household contributions made during 1995, family income for 1995, the number of hours volunteered in the week and month prior to the interview, and whether or not the respondent volunteered in the 12 months prior, the month prior, and the week prior to the interview. For each of the 38 participants[6] who completed both BADS and the Gallup interview, we compare (1) measures of giving, volunteering, and income as calculated by the Independent Sector based on data obtained by the Gallup organization with (2) corresponding measures of giving, volunteering, and income obtained by BADS from the same respondents.

Overall the 38 BADS participants who were reinterviewed by Gallup reported higher average family contributions, greater average numbers of hours of volunteer time, and lower average family incomes to Gallup than to BADS. This resulted in *large absolute differences* between Gallup and BADS figures for these same three items, averaged again over the 38 participants, all statistically significant at the .01 level, the first two at the .0005 level. The data therefore meet the usual statistical criteria for concluding that there are systematic differences between amounts reported to Gallup and amounts reported to BADS at the individual level for each of these three items. For some individuals the differences are positive while for others they are negative, therefore they tend to cancel when averaged over all individuals. The average absolute differences are statistically significant. Finding the sources of these discrepancies in results has enabled us to draw many conclusions about the relative advantages of the diary study format over the one-time interview and to make recommendations for the operationalization and field procedures of future surveys of giving and volunteering.

OVERALL AVERAGES FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

Table 3 presents average absolute differences for selected measures of giving, volunteering, and family income. The first column in the table presents values averaged over the 38 participants based on the Gallup survey. The second column in the table presents corresponding values averaged over the 38 participants based on BADS. The third column contains the absolute difference between the value obtained by Gallup and the corresponding value obtained by BADS, calculated for each individual and then averaged over all 38 participants. The table contains two participation rates for volunteering. The first is the annual rate and measures the proportion of the sample that volunteered at any time during the year (the 12 months prior to the interview for Gallup and the calendar year of 1995 for BADS). The second is the monthly rate and measures the proportion of the sample that volunteered at any time during the month (the month prior to the interview for Gallup and the average month for BADS).

Table 3
Comparison of Means for Giving, Volunteering, and Income[1] for Total Sample

	Gallup Survey	Boston Area Diary Study	Mean Absolute Difference[3]
Annual Contributions	$1,613	$1,442	$756**
Religious	$572	$621	$195**
Non-Religious	$1,041	$820	$677**
Giving Participation Rate	95%	100%	5%
Time Volunteered per Month	36 hrs.	33 hrs.	27 hrs.**
Formal	28 hrs.	11 hrs.	20 hrs.**
Informal	8 hrs.	22 hrs.	19 hrs.**
Annual Vol. Particip. Rate	83%	100%	17%
Monthly Vol. Particip. Rate	78%	98%	24%*
Family Income	$64,079	$82,857	$29,325*
Percentage of Income Contributed	2.13%	1.97%	1.40%**

Source: Social Welfare Research Institute, Boston College, 1996

Note 1: The data in the table are based on 38 participants, except for volunteer time which is based on the 36 cases which contained no missing data for the number of hours volunteered per month.

Note 2: A single asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant at least at the .01 level; a double asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant at least at the .0005 level.

In practical terms, there are large errors of measurement between the two surveys at the individual level for most of the measures of giving, volunteering, and income presented in Table 3. For each measure the errors at the individual level tend to cancel in the calculation of aggregates for the entire sample; and there is not sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that either of the two different methods of collecting the data resulted in biased estimates of average values for the group.

GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

The discrepancies between reports to Gallup and reports to BADS can be traced to multiple causes. Some hold across the board, others hold only for giving, for volunteering, or for reports of income. It is impossible to identify sources of discrepancy from our quantitative analysis alone. However, we interviewed the 38 participants in the BADS study almost weekly during the course of the year and during that time we obtained a good deal of information that helps to identify sources of discrepancy. In addition to our interviewing experience, we also were able to observe the Gallup interviewer in the field. This section has also been informed by this experience.

1. Unless allowed to seek out the information (from other people and/or from records), respondents reported information about themselves more accurately than about larger units, such as the family or household. This mostly affected reports of family contributions and to a lesser extent family income. Among multi-adult families/households, many respondents did not know or did not remember what their spouses, partners, or other adults contributed on their own and were often unclear on what their spouses, partners, or other adults had earned.

2. Regular activities (such as religious contributions) were more accurately reported (even for the family) than were contributions and activities that did not follow a regular weekly or monthly pattern.

3. Small amounts of money contributed, of time volunteered, or of income earned in the prior year were usually forgotten and not reported in the Gallup survey.

4. From our observation of the interviewers in the field we conclude that it is essential that the interviewer be given a field guide or interviewer manual for the survey, as well as training concerning the purpose of the interview, the purpose of the questions and the definition of organizational categories in order to better respond to queries by respondents for example, concerning the definition of terms or of categories.

5. After the interview is completed and while the data is processed and coded it is essential to ensure that data entry does not introduce error into the data. Such errors are difficult to locate afterwards. BADS recontacted participants in the data-cleaning process and hundreds of errors were corrected this way. It is important that the interviewer realize the importance of accurate data-entry.

METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS
SURROUNDING THE REPORTING OF CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Respondents were confused by the question in the Gallup interview which asks, "In which, if any, of the fields listed on this card have you and the members of your family or household contributed some money or other property in 1995?"

   Unless the respondent receives guidance from the interviewer, the respondent then decides whether to report about their family or about their household. This is why it is essential to provide interviewer training and give the interviewer sufficient time to complete the interview and respond to interviewee queries.

2. Respondents have a number of difficulties with in-kind gifts to charitable organizations in a one-time survey. First there is a problem of remembering that such gifts were made, and second, in addition to knowing what constitutes an in-kind gift, respondents have a problem placing a value on such gifts. The BADS was able to take time to address these issues such as by giving guidance on (a) the original cost of the item when it was new, (b) the value if one sold the item instead of contributing it, and (c) the value if one purchased the item in its current condition.

3. The BADS used a current account definition of giving money and goods; a contribution was counted only if the money and goods had actually been transferred to the charitable organization during the period in question. It did not count pledges to give at a future date, but did count the amounts pledged when they were actually transferred.

   The largest discrepancy between contributions reported to Gallup and contributions reported to BADS was due to this issue: the respondent reported to Gallup an estimate of contributions made in 1995 combined with pledges in 1995 for contributions to be made in 1996; the same respondent reported to BADS only the contributions actually made in 1995. This difference amounted to several thousand dollars.

4. There is a kind of reverse-telescoping among some respondents in answering the Gallup survey. In addition to their 1995 contributions some respondents included amounts that were actually contributed in the first few months of 1996, prior to the Gallup interview. Some of their reverse-telescoping may stem from the fact that they were asked to include this period in their response to a question on volunteering asked earlier in the interview and apparently the shift to a new period was not sufficiently emphasized during the Gallup interview, or their memory failed them, or both. The diary-study reduces reverse telescoping because of the period and frequency of the interviews and the opportunity to double check answers with the respondent and against records.

5. The inability of some respondents to properly categorize an organization leads them to misreport their contributions, either by skipping them altogether or by reporting the same contribution under separate categories. The diary-study method again has the advantage of time and opportunity to train respondents, as well as to confirm, clarify and double check answers

METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS SURROUNDING THE REPORTING OF VOLUNTEER TIME

1. While this report compares estimates of participation in volunteering and hours of time volunteered as reported to Gallup and reported to BADS, there is no real basis of comparison since the data from the two studies refer to different time periods. The Gallup interview asks about participation in volunteering for the 12 months prior to the interview

instead of the prior calendar year and asks for hours of volunteer time only for the month prior to the interview. The BADS study asked for volunteer participation and time in the period between interviews and obtained information for the calendar year of 1995.

Moreover, the BADS study revealed that average volunteer time varies seasonally. Late spring is a peak period. At the individual level there is a good deal of change in the pattern of volunteering over the course of the year and from year to year. It is therefore invalid to assume that volunteer time in the month prior to the interview is representative of volunteer time in an average month during the prior calendar year.

2. There were two instances in which respondents reported substantial amounts of volunteer time to formal organizations within the 12 month period prior to their Gallup interview, but reported no volunteer time to Gallup.

3. Respondents have trouble understanding the extent of activities covered by the category of informal volunteering, and in thinking of these activities as just normal daily living experiences in which they help others without pay, they thus reported much smaller amounts of these kinds of activities to Gallup than they reported to BADS.

REPORTING FAMILY INCOME:
METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

1. Top coding in the Gallup interview versus open coding in the BADS interviews is the single most important factor in accounting for discrepancies in the reporting of family income. Approximately 18 percent of the sample (7 of 38 participants) reported family incomes to BADS in excess of $125,000.

   If the BADS data were top coded at $125,000 the average difference in reported incomes would change from $18,778 more reported to BADS than to Gallup to $2,273 more reported to Gallup than to BADS. Moreover the average absolute difference would change from $29,325 to $8,285.

2. The discrepancy remaining after accounting for top coding is due primarily to BADS income falling into different Gallup income categories than income reported to Gallup: nearly 63 percent of the sample reported incomes to BADS in a different category than the one they reported to Gallup. The average difference was only $1,757 but the average absolute difference was $8,487. An average absolute difference of more than $8,000 is still moderately large, even though over-reports and under-reports tend to cancel each other in the calculation of summary statistics.

REPEATED INTERVIEWING AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A HAWTHORNE EFFECT

It is clear from our findings above that there is value in repeated and careful interviewing of respondents, for avoiding reverse telescoping, aiding and prompting recall, checking answers, allowing respondents and interviewers the time to resolve difficulties, etc., however, such repeated interviewing raises the issue of the Hawthorne effect: whether the act of frequent interviewing may have influenced (i.e., increased) the participants' giving and volunteering behavior. Did our interviewees became more charitably inclined as a result of being asked so frequently about their giving or did they falsely report prosocial behavior in order to impress the interviewer or portray themselves in a better light?

In order to test for this effect, we built a period of overlapping time into the design of the study. All 44 BADS participants were interviewed from the first week of January 1995 through the second week of January 1996. In addition, 36 participants were interviewed through the third week of January 1996, 20 were interviewed through the fourth week of January 1996. We can thus compare giving and volunteering behavior reported at the very beginning of the study in January 1995 with corresponding behavior reported at the very end of the study, exactly one year later in January 1996.

Although only the data for 1995 have been presented in papers and reports based on the BADS data, the additional information was collected specifically to investigate, on a gross level, the impact of the Hawthorne effect. As the following analysis indicates, there appears to have been small impact; moreover, if there is any trend in the impact on the levels of giving and volunteering to formal organizations it is negative - less giving and volunteering behavior rather than increased amounts.

In Table 4, we examine average values of giving and volunteering and their differences on a week by week basis (e.g., the first week of January 1995 and the first week of January 1996): the amounts of giving and volunteering refer to the week in question and the first column contains the number of participants who reported information for corresponding weeks at the beginning and at the end of the study.

In the sample, there are moderately large week-to-week variations in average contributions of money and time to people. There were declines in reported amounts of both money and time contributed to people in the first and fourth weeks of January 1995 as compared with the corresponding weeks of January 1996. There were, however, increases in reported amounts of both money and time contributed to people in the second and third weeks of January 1995 as compared with the corresponding weeks of January 1996. Over the four week period, however, there was an increase in contributions of money and a decrease in the contribution of time to people. None of these average changes was statistically significant at the .05 level.

The pattern of giving and volunteering to organizations is more stable on a week by week basis. In each of the four weeks of January 1996, as compared with corresponding weeks in January 1995, there was a decline in the average amount of contributions and average hours of time volunteered to formal organizations. If there is a trend to the Hawthorne effect among formal organizations, it would appear to be negative rather than positive. The differences are relatively small and not statistically significant at the .05 level.

For three out of the four weeks, there are large and statistically significant average absolute differences between giving and volunteering behavior in January, 1995 and January, 1996.

Table 4: Comparisons of Weekly Measures of Giving and Volunteering for Corresponding Weeks in January 1995 and January 1996

Measure of Giving/Volunteering	N	Jan 1995 Mean	Jan 1996 Mean	Average Change	Average Absolute Difference
Total Contributions					
First Week in January	44	$95	$86	-$9	$117*
Second Week in January	44	$99	$273	$174	$297
Third Week in January	36	$70	$91	$21	$87*
Fourth Week in January	20	$54	$43	-$11	$38**
Contributions to Organizations					
First Week in January	44	$20	$11	-$9	$14**
Second Week in January	44	$22	$20	-$2	$19**
Third Week in January	36	$21	$14	-$7	$13*
Fourth Week in January	20	$21	$14	-$7	$13
Volunteer Time to Organizations					
First Week in January	44	2.6 hr.	2.0 hr.	-.6 hr.	2.3 hr.**
Second Week in January	44	2.6 hr.	2.1 hr.	-.6 hr.	2.3 hr.**
Third Week in January	36	2.2 hr.	1.5 hr.	-.7 hr.	1.7 hr.**
Fourth Week in January	20	0.9 hr.	0.7 hr.	-.2 hr.	0.9 hr.**
Volunteer Time to Persons (Inf.)					
First Week in January	44	6.3 hr.	5.5 hr.	-.8 hr.	5.5 hr.**
Second Week in January	44	5.6 hr.	6.2 hr.	.6 hr.	5.9 hr.**
Third Week in January	36	5.3 hr.	6.3 hr.	1.0 hr.	6.4 hr.**
Fourth Week in January	20	5.8 hr.	2.3 hr.	-3.5 hr.	6.1 hr.**

Source: Social Welfare Research Institute, Boston College, 1996.
* Statistically significant with p<0.05
** Statistically significant with p<0.01

The relatively large changes in average absolute difference mean that individual participants were generally neither giving the same amount of money nor volunteering the same amount of time in the first few weeks of January at the beginning of the study as they were in the corresponding weeks of January at the end of the study. Some did more; some did less. From the individual interviews, we know that most of these changes were due to situational changes, e.g., change in working hours or in the kids' after-school activities.

The smaller "average changes" in Table 4 indicate that as a group the participants tended to contribute somewhat less and volunteer somewhat less time to formal organizations at the end of the study than at the beginning. These negative trends, however, are not statistically significant, in other words, there are no statistically significant changes in giving and volunteering behavior for the group as a whole due to the Hawthorne effect.[7]

In view of the findings and lessons that we learned from BADS we developed a series of recommendations first for the conceptualization and measurement of giving and volunteering and second for carrying out field procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

1. Unit of Analysis. Research on charitable giving distinguishes among annual inter vivos giving by individuals, giving by corporations, giving by foundations, and giving by individuals via charitable bequests. Although the term "individuals" is used, the usual, and in our view, the most appropriate unit of analysis is the family household, defined as all related or "partnered" individuals residing together. This includes all dependent children and adults including children who are away at college, as well as dependent parents and in-laws. Similarly, when obtaining information on income and wealth in order to obtain measures of giving by financial resources, the unit of analysis should also be the family household.

2. Object of Inquiry. In gathering information on the core and expanded definitions of charitable assistance, the goal is to obtain a total monetary value for all gifts of money, assets, in-kind property and assistance. In the Boston Area Diary Study, we asked the respondents to value in-kind contributions at current market value and if the respondent couldn't put a market value on an item, we asked the respondent to value it at the price they would accept at the end of the day at a yard sale, which we presume was a low estimate. Since we conducted BADS, others have written thoughtfully on assigning a monetary value to volunteer work and we refer the reader to Brown 1999.

3. Whom to Ask. There is great variety from survey to survey in designating who is to be interviewed in order to obtain the family household information. The goal is to obtain information on giving from a person who is knowledgeable about, and able to report on the giving of all the family's members. Usually this is the head of household, joint head of household, or spouse of head of household. But since the goal is not to interview heads of households as much as it is to obtain household information, then some filtering question might be used to inquire whether the respondent is knowledgeable about the giving of all members of the household family. In point of fact, many respondents who

claim to be knowledgeable are not aware of the entire range of activity done by other household members. This is true about formal charitable giving and even more so for formal and informal in-kind giving, gifts to individuals, and gifts to social and political causes. To counter these problems, some researchers have considered strategies—especially with intensive personal interviews and telephone interviews—to interview at least all adults within the household and mention what the first respondent has indicated and ask if there is anything to be added.

4. Period and Frequency. The period of the study and the frequency of interviews during the period are important for issues to do with recall, seasonal variations, and Hawthorne effects. The BADS study interviewed respondents once a week for 13 months. There were seasonal variations in both giving and volunteering. There appeared to be few problems with recall when the respondent was interviewed once a week; however, in those instances when the respondent missed an interview, the two-week recall period presented some difficulty for some of the respondents who did not keep records. The longer the hiatus between interviews, the more problems with recall. Moreover, an analysis comparing the first month with the thirteenth month indicated that there was some variation but no significant increases in the giving and volunteering behavior of the respondents between the two months.

The National Study of Daily Experiences (part of MIDUS) used a diary format to interview respondents daily for an 8-9 day period. Respondents were asked about family giving and their personal volunteering. The results for a given week projected to more than twice the annual figures for giving and volunteering that these same respondents had reported in an initial interview one year earlier, and to more than twice the average figures obtained by the BADS study and *Giving USA* for the same year. It appears that there were strong Hawthorne effects with respect to giving and volunteering in a study of this short length and high frequency. One presumes that being asked about giving and volunteering daily may have reminded respondents of some contributions or volunteer activities they had intended to do and may have influenced them to make the contribution or to volunteer time, perhaps on a one-time basis during the interview period, which projected to high annual totals. Most research on financial assistance attempts to obtain an annual figure. The desired annual figure is usually for the previous calendar year because income and charitable giving are most often thought of in that way. This is reinforced by the fact that the calendar year is the tax year and so recall is aided by making the survey period coincide with the tax year. Often surveys are conducted in the Spring soon after the tax filing date of April 15.

5. Obtaining Annual Estimates. Although the goal may be to obtain annual estimates, there are substantial problems of recall even for those who itemize their charitable deductions. Besides the fact that only about 30% of tax filers itemize their deductions, those that do itemize often do not properly recall the amount at the time of interview. Moreover, charitable itemizations for tax purposes do not assist in the recall of the

expanded forms of financial assistance made by most individuals. In order to obtain more accurate estimates, some surveys abandon the goal of obtaining annual figures and instead request figures from the previous week or month or from a typical week or month. Both of these alternatives, while shortening the period of recall, have their own problems. Figures for the most recent month or week suffer from the fact that there is substantial seasonal variation in giving. To counter this, it has been suggested that different households be interviewed at different times throughout the year and that a synthetic year be constructed for households of similar demographic background. The problem then is that it becomes impossible to link any additional behavioral and attitudinal information to an annual giving figure for individual family household cases. Obtaining giving data for a typical month still requires respondents to report on the spot in terms of categories in which they do not think and to calculate an estimate that in fact requires an informal review of yearly giving.

6. Aiding Yearly Recall by Repeated Interviews. One technique to obtain a reliable yearly total would be to re-interview respondents weekly, monthly, or quarterly about their giving. This is a time-consuming and expensive approach and risks respondent attrition. But if such re-interviews were conducted by phone, then costs and attrition would be reduced. The possibility of successfully carrying out a re-contact strategy was demonstrated by the Boston Area Diary Study (Havens and Schervish 1997 and Schervish and Havens, forthcoming 2001).

7. Aiding Recall by Via Survey Techniques. In addition to the problem of recall for annual figures, there is the problem of recall of charitable giving even for shorter periods. As summarized in the foregoing methodological propositions, the more carefully respondents are asked by interviewers and the more prompts given donors, the more accurately respondents recall their giving. Two techniques have been undertaken to construct surveys that assist respondent recall (see the survey instruments of *Giving and Volunteering in California*, *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), Indiana Gives*. One method is to ask respondents to designate how much they give in the form of money, assets, or in-kind property according to how they were contacted or how they give. For example how much they gave in response to mail appeals, telephone appeals, church pledges, front door solicitations, and work-place campaigns. A second more regularly used method is to ask about the amount respondents give to general areas of concern such as for health care, religion, arts, etc. It turns out that the more patiently the interviewer asks about each area and the more detail into which the general areas are broken down, the better the recall. For instance, instead of asking simply for contributions to health organizations, separate inquires could be made about giving to medical hospitals, clinics, mental hospitals; more specifically still people could be asked about the uses to which their health contributions are dedicated: research, operating expenses, inoculations, maternal health care, cancer treatments, hospice care, etc. Finally, should resources allow, researchers could pursue a combined approach in which respondents are asked

to indicate how much they gave to a detailed health activity—say, for nursing home care—by each method of contact—for instance, by mail appeal, telephone appeal, personal initiative, etc. In addition, care should be taken when asking about religious contributions as it was our finding that many respondents had a great deal of difficulty reporting contributions made to church, synagogue, or mosque as contributions at all. Some who tithed regarded tithing as a requirement of their faith and not at all as a contribution. Some Jewish respondents indicated that money paid to temple was in response to an assessment and was not to be considered a contribution. Thus we asked respondents specifically for any money, goods, services, or time they gave or paid to their church, temple, or mosque.

The Panel Study for Income Dynamics (PSID) also conducted a one-year project Calendar Methods Study to compare the data quality of retrospective reports on key social and economic variables with traditional standardized question-list interviewing methods versus those provided by event history calendar interviewing methods. A full report of the PSID Calendar Methods Study is provided by Belli, Shay, and Stafford (2000).

8. <u>Obtaining Findings from Upper-Income and High-Wealth Households</u>. In terms of income, the 3.37% of families with annual income of $150,000 or more contribute 42.51% of all charitable contributions. In terms of wealth, the 4.9% of families with net worth of $1 million or more contribute 41.6% of all charitable contributions. If national surveys are to describe the average amount of family household charitable giving, the percentage of income contributed by financial categories, and the proportion of contributions given to various charitable areas, and in order to explain whether and in what ways the motivational matrix explaining giving differs across income and wealth groups, then it is paramount that surveys gather findings from the upper financial strata. Failing to do so makes it impossible to produce valid findings on current giving and trends in giving.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED FIELD PROCEDURES

9. <u>Customized Interviewing</u>. One size does not fit all - participants have such varied backgrounds and vocabulary that no fixed wording in any interview schedule is likely to suffice and is likely to serve basically as a guide. In the BADS the interview schedule and questions required clarification and explanation to most respondents throughout the period of the study, and as a result, we therefore systematically used key phrases in the schedule rather than the exact wording of whole sentences and used the schedule as a guide to collect the information on care-giving and care-receiving in interviews that we otherwise conducted in a conversational mode.

10. Participant Materials. We spent several weeks designing and pre-testing a telephone interview schedule to record information from participants each week concerning their care-giving and care-receiving activities during the week. In the first week of the study we sent each participant a letter identifying the kind of information that we wanted them to report to us each week and a copy of the interview schedule (for their reference). In addition, within a few weeks from the beginning of the study, we also sent them a daily diary organizer that they could use to record this information for themselves and for us. None of these materials worked as we had first intended, although in combination they worked rather well as aides in obtaining the information on care-giving and care-receiving behavior. There were two major issues involved: first, some of our participants were highly organized themselves and kept track of relevant information in their own personal organizers; however, the majority of our participants were not this well organized and required the structure and the prompts of the weekly interviews to recall and record the information. Moreover, a few participants threatened to drop out of the study if they were required to record the information in the organizer we provided.

11. Respondent Training. In addition to interviewer training, there should be a period of respondent training concerning the meaning of the core set of questions/objectives/issues in a study. The interview schedule, operational definitions, and interviewer guide should be sent to the respondents so that they can familiarize themselves with the questions and concepts of the study and develop clarifying questions to ask the interviewer. During this training period, respondents can be counseled to act normally and not to change their behavior. It is recommended that if the study can afford it, data from the training period be ignored.

12. Senior Staff as Screeners/Interviewers. Potential respondents are in our experience most hesitant to participate during the initial screening contact and the first interview. It is important that the people making these contacts and conducting these initial interviews be very knowledgeable about the study and how it fits into the larger picture of research. Many of the potential respondents initially contacted in the Boston Area Diary Study wavered in their decision to participate and asked probing questions concerning the study. The ability to answer these queries immediately and with some authority converted nearly all the wavering contacts to participants. Despite standard practice, it is important that screening be conducted by very knowledgeable staff.

13. Appointment/Flexibility in Scheduling Weekly Interviews. Interviews should be scheduled by appointment at a specific time and date and at the end of an interview, the next interview should be scheduled. Changes in appointments should never be initiated by the interviewing staff, however, participants in the study may often reschedule interviews themselves. This requires the study to maintain sufficient staff to be flexible in both scheduling and rescheduling appointments. During their exit interview, several participants in the Boston Area Diary Study mentioned that they appreciated the

flexibility afforded them and many participants who were thinking of leaving the study indicated that this was a factor for their not doing so.

14. Respondent Sovereignty. Participants in a study should be accorded the status of "being always right," according to the adage "the customer is always right." Thus if the respondent wanted documentation about the study, it was immediately sent. If the respondent indicated they had never agreed to send some personal records to the study (even though they had agreed to do so), the staff apologized for the misunderstanding and asked if they would be willing to send the records at that time. If the respondent wanted to explain a gift in some detail, the staff did not cut off the explanation.

15. Supporting Negatives. It is important to offer respondents support to stay in the study. Some respondents gave little assistance to anyone during most weeks. They tended to get discouraged and repeatedly offered to leave the study. We generally told them (1) that the only wrong answer to our questions was an answer that was different from the facts and (2) that their participation in our study was as valuable as those who gave large amounts of time and money weekly in order to obtain an accurate picture of care in the Boston area. Once identified, the project director called them personally to assure them of their importance to our study, to thank them for their participation, and to assure them that there was no stigma attached to their reports.

16. Regular Patterns. A record should be kept of regular patterns of giving and volunteering. Most respondents gave regularly to some charitable causes (especially religion), assisted specific other persons, or volunteered to some organizations on a regular basis (once per week or once per month for some period of time). After the first few months of the study, we developed a sheet indicating these regular activities and asked specifically about them if the respondent did not mention them in the week they usually occurred. Of course this list was updated at least monthly, since even regular patterns changed over time.

17. Cues and Milestone Events. It is recommended that interviewers keep a log of milestone events in the respondents' lives. The respondents often volunteered information concerning ongoing or upcoming events. For example, they might indicate a son coming home from college or a marriage in the family or that their mother had been hospitalized or that they were pregnant. We had a special sheet to note these events. Interviewers were instructed to inquire about these events informally in subsequent interviews in order to reinforce the rapport with the respondent. These events also often shaped the giving or scheduling of the giving of time and money at the time of major events.

18. Week-to-Week Queries. Full information is not always available during an interview, as for example, "My husband gave some clothing to Good Will but I don't know exactly what or how much it was worth." In these instances we recommend that

the interviewer request the respondent to obtain the information and report it during the next interview. We developed a query sheet that was inserted in their file, tying the missing information to a specific week. Each subsequent week (usually only one) we would prompt the respondent for the information until it was obtained. The data was then transferred to the appropriate interview and noted that it came from the query sheet. Query sheets were filed and kept to assist in data cleaning and sometimes data interpretation.

19. One-on-One Interviewing. Assigning a single interviewer to each respondent, at least for several months, is conducive to the establishment and maintenance of a close rapport between interviewer and respondent. The Boston Area Diary Study had a completion rate of more than 90 percent which is still very high for a study that required weekly interviews for a year. More than any other factor, the rapport between interviewer and interviewee sustained the participants through the 13 months of the study. The rapport was so positive that nearly half the participants expressed a desire to continue the study beyond its end date.

20. Staff Meeting/Policy Book. Even though there is often a press of work, it is advisable that weekly staff meetings take place to discuss issues and problems that arise during interviewing. We entered decisions concerning these issues into a policy book which was available as a reference to interviewers.

21. Interviewer/Counselor. As a rapport develops between interviewer and respondent, the respondent will sometimes come to see the interviewer as a counselor. If the respondent begins to ask for advice, interviewers should explain that the study is focused on care given and received by the respondent, but that the interviewer has to remain a neutral observer. Our interviewers had the names of a variety of counseling services to which they could refer the respondent.

22. Tracking Interview Schedules. Extensive tracking and cross-tracking of interview schedules is very important for keeping track of the interview schedules, follow-up information, data not yet acquired, idiosyncratic questions not generally asked of everyone, data entry, and data-cleaning operations.

23. Periodic Contact with Director. The project director should conduct one interview with each of the participants and ask the respondent to evaluate the interviewer's performance and answer any queries (other than for findings) they might have concerning the interview.

24. Incentives. In the Boston Area Diary Study, the respondents were offered an incentive of $120 for completing the study. This incentive was offered during the screening phase of the study. For many, something more than half the potential respondents, the incentive made a difference in their initial decision to participate in the

study. After the first month, this incentive seemed to make little difference to nearly all the respondents. In addition to the initial incentive, moreover, the study gave the respondents “surprise” incentives at least once per quarter. Every three months, the project director drafted a letter to the respondents which thanked them for their continued participation in the study and reported operational (as opposed to substantive) progress in the study. We usually also enclosed a previously unannounced small token of our appreciation. These included a gift certificate for ice cream, a gift certificate for groceries, and movie tickets.

27. Liaison with Field Organization. If study staff are not conducting the fieldwork, at least one member of the staff should work closely with the field group, essentially becoming part of the field operation. Such close cooperation between study staff and field staff is of paramount importance and rarely achieved.

CONCLUSION

Both survey and interview case-study research face numerous problems of measurement revolving around operationalizing giving and volunteering and obtaining a consistent unit of analysis. From carrying out surveys on charitable giving and reviewing the methodology of other studies, the authors formulated the following methodological proposition:

> *the more carefully a survey samples the full range of households by income, interviews the knowledgeable decision-makers in a household, furthers respondent recall, contracts trained interviewers who ask complex questions patiently and accurately, and otherwise utilizes rigorous field practices, the greater the amount of reported charitable giving* (Havens and Schervish 1998).

We add now a second proposition regarding the accuracy of research findings:

> *the broader the range of voluntary giving to others in need about which surveys inquire, the more complete and more extensive will be the findings on the landscape of financial care.*

When the two foregoing methodological propositions are taken into account, the following specific research issues become important to the method and measurement of financial assistance: points 1-8 refer to issues of conceptualization and measurement; the remaining points are recommendations to improve field procedures. While this is a lengthy list we hope our readers will agree that many of these suggestions might improve the quality of data on giving and volunteering.

We believe that there is fundamentally an ethical issue at the heart of our work as survey researchers: that of producing reliable data for the public practitioners and researchers who depend upon it, namely to produce for non-profits, social and political scientists, and economists who depend on it. It is the aspiration of every survey researcher to produce the best data possible and to make those who use the data aware of any limitations of the data-set. For our part, it is our aspiration that the recommendations we have listed here and our experience with BADS and with Gallup will help other researchers in the field to improve survey techniques, data quality, and hence the quality of the findings.

We conclude that careful and repeated interviewing of people about their so-called formal and informal giving of time, money and goods is the best way to depict the intricate weave of the fabric of care in our society and that far from being a negligent society we are an intensely caring commonwealth. Our prevailing verdict is that the kind and degree of caring behavior we have uncovered in the course of our research through the Boston Area Diary Study is not atypical. The array of support, be it financial, emotional, practical, and spiritual is the daily bread of nourishment that we both give and receive from each other in our daily round. It is only when it is systematically measured and accumulated during the course of a year, that the magnitude of care can actually be discerned. The results that we have garnered indicate that far from being a negligent society, we are if anything an intensely caring commonwealth. Our conclusion that there is much more care, and that it is more intensive and extensive than is generally understood suggests that there is a durable foundation on which to build an even more caring society.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE DESIGN

The first decision concerning the sample design was the size of the sample. A sample of approximately 50 participants seemed sufficient to meet the requirements of the intended repeated measures analysis and practical given the resources available to conduct the study as well as its novel and experimental nature.

The second decision was to establish a definition of the Boston area. We decided to select the sample by random digit telephone dialing within a stratified sample design. Therefore, we defined the Boston area as the geographic location covered by telephone area code 617, Boston and the surrounding communities.

We decided we wanted to assure variability by household income and race. Based on data from the 1990 census, updated for inflation, the sample design was stratified by household income (i.e., under $30,000/$30,000 but less than $60,000/$60,000 or more) and race (i.e., Black and non-Black). A target of 14 participants was established for each of the non-Black income groups; a target of 4 participants for the lower and jointly for the upper two Black income groups.

This stratified design provided targets that were within 5 percent of being representative by household income in the Boston metropolitan area but constituted an oversample of more than 100 percent of the proportion of Black households in the same area.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

We decided to place minimum criteria on the eligibility of members of the household to be selected as participants for the study. To be eligible, a person would have to be an adult decision-maker who spoke English, was aged 18 or older, was not planning to leave the Boston area in 1995, and was not a full-time undergraduate college student.

The sampling universe, therefore, consisted of all households in the 617 telephone area code in which adult decision-makers spoke English, were aged 18 or older, were not planning to leave the Boston area, and were not full-time undergraduate college students. The sample frame consisted of all valid residential telephone numbers in area code 617 at the time that screening calls were placed in December 1994.

SAMPLE SELECTION

An initial sample of 1,000 random telephone numbers within the 617 area code was generated by computer. Each of these random samples was screened to eliminate business, computer, fax, telecommunication, and non-working numbers. There remained 504 numbers.

Each of the 504 screened numbers was called. Any nonresidential, non-personal numbers still remaining in the sample were eliminated as encountered. When answering machines answered, the telephone number was scheduled for a call back and a brief message was left describing the purpose of call and requesting the recipient to call back. No answers, busy numbers, and child-answered results were rescheduled for callbacks. After five call backs distributed among different days and different times of day without contacting a knowledgeable adult, the number was no longer called back. The disposition of the final call made to each number is summarized in Table 5.

The disposition of the final call made to each number is as follows:

Table 5: Final Disposition of Initial Telephone Contacts

Nonresidential Number	**168**
Busy/No Answer/Immediate Hang Up	**133**
Answering Machine	**71**
No Participant	65
Participant	6
Contact with Person	**132**
No-One Eligible	21
Refusal	79
Participant	32
Total Numbers	**504**

Source: Social Welfare Research Institute, Boston College, 1996

At the end of this process we had 38 participants in the study: 32 resulting from contact with a person and 6 resulting from messages left on answering machines.[8] The participation rate as a percentage of numbers that resulted in a contact with a person was 24 percent.[9] The participation rate as a percentage of messages left on answering machines was 8 percent. The 38 participants were disproportionately White as compared with the design, but proportionally White for the Boston metropolitan area, as a whole. However, their reported incomes were disproportionately in the lower two-thirds of the income distribution for the Boston area.

We therefore generated two random oversamples: one of Black participants and a second of participants from households with reported household incomes of $60,000 or more. In each case a list of random telephone numbers was drawn from exchanges within the 617 area code that had high concentrations of the desired respondents. Each number was called once until a sufficient number of participants was achieved to make the sample representative. The results were 11 new participants: 6 Black and 5 White; 5 with household incomes of less than $30,000, 1 with household income at least $30,000 but less than $60,000; and 5 with household incomes of $60,000 or more.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

When a household contained multiple adults, the eligible participant was chosen as follows:[10]

1. They had to be aged 18 or older; speak English; not be planning to leave the Boston area; and not be a full-time undergraduate student.
2. They had to be a major participant in decisions regarding household contributions.
3. In the case of multiple eligible decision-makers, each willing to participate, the male was chosen.
4. In the case of multiple eligible decision-makers, only one known to be willing to participate, that person was chosen.
5. There were no instances of multiple, willing-to-participate, decision-makers of the same sex.

During the screening process, potential participants were given general information concerning the study, the types of questions to be asked, and the weekly frequency of the interview. These individuals were also told that participants who completed the study would receive $120 at the end of the year.

ENDNOTES

[1] Those results are not presented here but will be published as "Temporal patterns in social responsibility," by Almeida, D. M., McDonald D. A., Havens, J. J. and Schervish P. G. In A. Rossi, (ed.), *Caring and Doing For Others: Social Responsibility in the Domains of Family, Work, and Community,* University of Chicago Press, New York. Forthcoming, July 2001.

[2] One other potential participant dropped out before the study actually began. They are not included in the description of the sample presented in this paper. A second participant dropped out during the initial interview; she is included in the description of the sample.

[3] We included time spent giving and receiving emotional support to and from spouses.

[4] Three of the participants were unavailable for their final interview until February and one was traveling in Europe and was unavailable until the first week of March.

[5] The complete findings of the Boston Area Diary Study will be published as Schervish and Havens, "A River Rises in Eden: Exploring the Moral Citizenship of Care," forthcoming 2001.

[6] One of the 35 Gallup interviews completed in the spring was lost by Gallup or one of its subcontractors prior to the data entry process. The remaining 34 interviews were coded, entered, and processed by Gallup in the same manner as the full Independent Sector sample. The four interviews completed in late summer were finished too late for standard data entry at Gallup and were coded and added to the computer file by project staff at Boston College. The final Gallup file thus contains the survey data for 38 of the 44 participants who completed the Boston Area Diary Study.

[7] Some of the individual changes could be due to a Hawthorne effect, but it does not appear to be systematic in that there are positive and negative differences that tend to cancel.

[8] There were actually 39 participants in the study but one dropped out and could not be persuaded to continue before the study period began on January 1, 1995.

[9] If we consider only calls that reached non-Black households and that were placed to areas without large percentages of Blacks, the participation rate is 30 out of 69 or 43 percent of such households when a person was actually contacted. Only 2 of 42 or 5 percent of Black households agreed to participate when a person was actually contacted.

[10] Obtaining information about the household from a single participant risks an under-count of contributions made by the household due to contributions made by other members of the household but not known by the participant. In addition, even if the participant knew about the

contributions, they may not have been sufficiently salient for them to recall and recount them to us during the interview. The problem of recall, however, should be less with weekly interviews than with an annual interview, as is conducted by the Gallup Organization.