

The Methods and Metrics of the Boston Area Diary Study

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The authors discuss the conceptual framework, methods, and findings of the Boston Area Diary Study (BADs) to provide insights into the problems and prospects of survey research on philanthropy. First, the conceptual foundations and the operationalization of the variables are discussed. Next, the research design and methodology are described, and the findings are briefly summarized. Next, two validity measures are presented: a comparison of the BADs results with those subsequently obtained by The Gallup Organization from interviews with the same participants and a study of possible Hawthorne effects produced by repeated interviewing. Next, some specific recommendations are made for the operationalization and measurement of giving and volunteering and for improvements to field procedures. In the conclusion, the authors reflect on the implications of careful research methodology for an adequate assessment of the range and level of care in society.

During 1995 and 1996, we carried out the Boston Area Diary Study (BADs) with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the T. B. Murphy Foundation Charitable Trust. To our knowledge, this was the first diary study focusing primarily on giving and volunteering. It included questions that allowed comparisons with responses given on national surveys of giving and volunteering. In addition to providing information paralleling such national surveys, the BADs 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 1,800 interviews. Designed as one basis for evaluating other survey research on giving and

Note: We are grateful to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the T. B. Murphy Foundation Charitable Trust for their support of this study. We are also grateful to Virginia A. Hodgkinson and The Gallup Organization for their gracious assistance in carrying out the research. In addition, we wish to thank Laura Leming, Annette Ball, Heather Batty, Elizabeth Fitzgibbons, Darcie Gagne, Julien Goulet, Jennifer Merolla, and Effimia Parpos for their dedicated and competent research assistance during the course of the diary study. We are especially grateful to Mary O'Herlihy for her extensive and competent editorial work on this article.

volunteering, particularly the Independent Sector/Gallup Survey of Giving and Volunteering, our diary study was also a small-scale exploration of *caritas* in the lives of 44 participants, chosen at random from the Boston metropolitan area.

In this article, we discuss the conceptual framework, methods, and findings of the BADS to provide insights into the problems and prospects of survey research on philanthropy. We hope that the lessons we have learned will provide knowledge on the fabric of care in our society and suggest theoretical and practical implications for others conducting survey research in this field.

In the first section, we review the conceptual foundations of the BADS and describe how we operationalized them in our research. In the second section, we describe the research design and methodology and give a brief summary of the findings. In the third section, we present two validity measures: a comparison of the BADS results with those subsequently obtained by The Gallup Organization from interviews with the same participants and a study of possible Hawthorne effects produced by repeated interviewing. In the fourth and fifth sections, we make some specific recommendations for survey research, both for the operationalization and measurement of giving and volunteering and for improvements to field procedures. In the conclusion, we reflect on the implications of careful research methodology for an adequate assessment of the range and level of care in society.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The original purpose of the BADS was to gather information on giving and volunteering among a group of individuals and their families in the Boston area to obtain a sense of the validity of existing national and regional studies of philanthropic behavior. An additional goal was to garner information concerning philanthropic behavior as part of a broader pattern of caregiving and care receiving to reveal the rich fabric of care in the lives of participants. Specifically, the goals of the study were to collect information

- to develop a baseline estimate of annual giving and volunteering from a small sample of participants living in the Boston area, which we would then compare with similar information subsequently obtained retrospectively from the same participants by Gallup as part of the 1996 Survey of Giving and Volunteering in the United States;
- on the money, goods, unpaid assistance, and emotional support given on an interpersonal basis by the participants to family members, friends, acquaintances, and strangers;
- on the money, goods, unpaid assistance, and emotional support received from organizations and other individuals (family members, friends, acquaintances, and strangers);

- on household and family demographic characteristics (including income), organizational affiliations, and patterns of organizational giving;
- on how giving and volunteering fit into the lives and lifestyles of the participants; and
- on the seasonal variations in giving and volunteering.¹

CARITAS 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. These findings, which revolve around what we call the identification model of *caritas* and the associational dynamics of *caritas*, were fundamental to the conception of the BADS.

First, as we have stated in previous writings, the key to care and philanthropy is not the absence of self but the presence of self-identification with others and their needs (Schervish & Havens, 1997). Drawing on the work of Thomas Aquinas (Gilleman, 1959), Alexis de Tocqueville (1840/1988), Jules Toner (1968), Michael Martin (1994), Stephen Pope (1991a, 1991b, 1992), and other thinkers, as well as on an analysis of intensive interviews with millionaires, we perceive that how people link their destinies to those of others is intrinsic to the practice of care. In other words, the practice of care derives from the disposition that in meeting the needs of others, one fulfills one's own needs and connects to the deeper dimensions of life, which are often experienced and expressed in religious terms as the unity of love of self, love of neighbor, and love of God.

Second, our empirical research demonstrates that identification is generated, nurtured, and manifested through the associational relations of individuals (see also Jackson, Bachmeier, Wood, & Craft, 1995). Generosity of time and money derives not from one's level of income or wealth but rather 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 lives, not just within a single legally or sectorally defined segment of their relations of care. The care that focuses on self, family members, friends, and associates is the school of care for the broader community, not its foe.

We constructed the methods and metrics of the BADS to capture that fuller array of care, at the same time, given the need to compare our results with those of other research, preserving a separate measure of the more limited concept of giving and volunteering that is nested within the expanded notion. In addition to inquiring about that limited concept, we also systematically inquired about two broader categories of giving and volunteering by which individuals care for others on a direct interpersonal basis outside the auspices of any specific charitable organization.

First, 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) by people to charitable entities as legally defined by the Internal Revenue Service, that is, gifts that individuals may include among their itemized deductions for charity on Schedule A of the federal income tax form. Other gifts (e.g., 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 expanded concept of giving takes into account the contributions of money, assets, and goods to people, organizations, and causes beyond this legal definition. Included in this broader interpretation are contributions (money, assets, and goods) to (a) nondependent relatives in need (excluding inheritances and other disbursements that were made without regard to need, such as holiday, birthday, and wedding gifts); (b) individuals, friends, and associates in need (again excluding inheritances and other disbursements that were made without regard to need); (c) political candidates, causes, and parties; and (d) informal social movements and causes.

Second, the conventional definition of volunteering is less easily discerned, but, minimally, it includes all voluntary assistance of time given to or through a nonprofit organization. However, there is ambiguity in many surveys about what additionally may be considered volunteering because many surveys neither clearly state a definition of volunteering nor prompt respondents to exclude assistance offered in informal contexts, such as tutoring a child in the neighborhood or helping organize a petition drive. In fact, most surveys do 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; in other words, respondents may be asked if they give any other assistance informally or in addition to what was previously mentioned. At other times, respondents may be asked specific questions on various categories of informal giving, such as to neighbors, friends, and relatives not living in the household. To capture these additional forms of assistance, we developed an expanded measure of voluntary assistance to measure the time that people spend giving practical help to others on an unpaid basis. Usually, these are tasks and services for which their recipients would have had to pay fees or foregone altogether had donors not provided them free of charge. In the BADS, we referred to these activities as "unpaid assistance."

Taken together, informal giving and unpaid assistance form parts of the jigsaw puzzle that had heretofore been missing. Merely asking people about how much they give to churches and charities, but not about how much time and money they give to support adult children, sick relatives, aging parents, or neighbors, does not provide a complete enough picture of their ranges and levels of care. To summarize, fundamental to the BADS was the idea that in addition to traditionally defined giving and volunteering, it is crucial to

discover and record the other kinds of care that people provide to others in their daily lives.

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND FINDINGS

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Independent Sector/Gallup Survey of Giving and Volunteering, which was scheduled for late spring 1996 and with which we hoped to compare the BADS results, asked respondents about the giving and volunteering they performed in 1995. This represents the usual approach in national surveys on giving and volunteering, which is to interview respondents about their giving during the previous calendar year and about their volunteering for the past year or perhaps for a recent month or week. Our goal was to document giving and volunteering behavior for calendar year 1995 among a small group of individuals and households and then compare these results with those obtained when Gallup reinterviewed those same respondents in spring and summer 1996, when it was in the field with its national survey. With the diary data and the Gallup data for the same families in hand, we would be in a position to determine whether and in what ways the diary study and the retrospective survey produced different findings.

The diary approach to collecting the information in 1995 differed from a one-time retrospective survey in a number of ways. First, it facilitated the collection of information very close to the time at which the behavior took place. Second, it allowed us to gather very detailed information; clarify with respondents our questions and their responses; inquire and receive information about the caring behavior of other members of families; and double-check activities previously mentioned, new activities being undertaken, and activities that respondents had forgotten or neglected to mention when they occurred but remembered during subsequent interviews. Third, it permitted us to investigate the seasonal variations in giving and volunteering. Finally, it enabled us to learn about the broader contexts of daily life in which caring activities are situated.

To avoid overburdening the respondents and to facilitate contact with them, we chose a weekly reporting period that would be inquired about over the telephone. We asked participants to keep track of their caregiving and care receiving during each week and to transmit the results to our staff in weekly telephone interviews throughout 1995. Following the usual conventions of studies on giving and volunteering, we focused our questions on the family household unit when inquiring about gifts of money, assets, and property and on the individual participant when inquiring about unpaid assistance.

To obtain more accurate data, we decided to select and then interview only those people who were primary or joint decision makers concerning

household contributions to charity. However, one drawback of selecting only decision makers for household information was that the sample would exclude the direct reporting of formal and informal volunteering by non-decision-making family members who might nevertheless have volunteered time during the year. This meant 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 to obtain a more representative picture of the population of volunteers. But, because our major goal was to compare two methods of estimating giving and volunteering rather than to develop a population estimate for the Boston area, we chose to limit our sample to those people who were the primary or joint decision makers about charitable giving.

SAMPLE

At the outset of the study, the sample consisted of 49 participants:² 38 chosen completely randomly, 6 chosen in an oversample of African Americans, and 5 chosen in an oversample of higher income households.³ After the first interview, in which household income was more carefully obtained, it turned out that informants had tended to underestimate their household incomes in the screening call. So, with 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.

It should be noted that female participants outnumbered male participants nearly two to one. One major reason for this is that in multiple-adult households, a woman was more frequently identified as the adult who was primarily responsible for making the decisions concerning contributions to charitable causes. Second, men, especially African Americans, more frequently refused to participate compared with women. A third reason is that women more frequently answered their telephones in person compared with men, so even in households where men and women shared the decision making about charitable giving, we ended up interviewing women. The underrepresentation of African American participants in the initial sample reflects a very high refusal rate among African Americans who were randomly contacted. Furthermore, the sample is biased against African American households with a man present and underrepresents African American men.⁴

During the initial screening, informants tended to underestimate their personal and/or family incomes. When data on family incomes were more carefully collected in the first interview, several families were revealed to have higher incomes, often by several thousand dollars, than they had initially reported. This was due mainly to the initial underestimation of unearned income such as interest, dividends, and rents. The distribution of family income in the sample, therefore, tends to be a few thousand dollars higher

Table 1. Sample Characteristics, Boston Area Diary Study

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>
Gender	
Male	17
Female	32
Race	
Non-African American	4 (1)
African American	8
Marital Status	
Married or living with partner	25
Single	22
Divorced	2
Age	
18 to 29 years	6
30 to 39 years	15
40 to 49 years	14
50 to 59 years	9
60 years or older	5
Household income	
Less than \$15,000	4
\$15,000 to \$19,999	6
\$30,000 to \$44,999	6
\$45,000 to \$59,999	12
\$60,000 to \$74,999	10
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2
\$100,000 or more	9
Age of youngest child living at home	
No children	25
Younger than 12 years	13
12 to 17 years	5
18 to 21 years	1
Older than 21 years	5
Age of oldest child living at home	
No children	25
Younger than 12 years	10
12 to 17 years	5
18 to 21 years	2
Older than 21 years	7

than reported by the census for the Boston area. By agreeing or refusing to participate, eligible individuals selected themselves into or out of the study, but the extent to which self-selection biased the sample, if at all, is not clear. For example, people who are very active (civically or workwise) tend to be at home less often, and, indeed, a large fraction of the screening calls made resulted in constant busy signals or were never answered. Moreover, when contacted, very active people may have been unwilling to add another item to their busy schedules. 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.

FIELD PROCEDURES

Each participant was scheduled to be interviewed by appointment once per week by a highly trained staff of interviewers. During the interview, information was obtained from participants concerning contributions of money and goods given to and received from charitable organizations and other persons, except for spouses and dependent children. Likewise, information was systematically collected about time given and received in unpaid assistance, emotional support, and volunteer time both to and from organizations and other persons, again excluding spouses⁵ and dependent children. At various times during the year, we also asked about the demographic characteristics of the family households, the amounts and components of income, the organizational associations of the participants, and the reasons for giving and volunteering.

The BADS interview period extended from the 1st week of January 1995 through the last week of January 1996.⁶ Although most participants were interviewed on a weekly basis most of the time, there were periods when participants were unavailable for several weeks, for example, when they were on vacation, visiting distant relatives, or on work-related trips. During these periods, we asked the participants to try to keep careful records so that we could record what occurred during their absences.

Interviewing took place from 7 a.m. through 9 p.m. every weekday, including holidays, on some Saturday mornings, and on most Sunday evenings. The interviews had been designed to last 5 minutes, but they averaged nearly 20 minutes; in fact, interviews with some participants routinely lasted 1 hour. The shortest interview was 4 minutes, and the longest was 4 hours. Every effort was made to accommodate the participants, who could reschedule appointments at any time prior to or even during interviews, and if participants missed interviews, they were rescheduled for their earliest convenience. Approximately every 3 months, we sent the participants a letter about the study expressing our appreciation for their continued participation and enclosing gift certificates from Boston vendors worth about \$5 for specific items (ice cream, movies, and groceries). At the end of the interviewing phase, each participant who completed the study was paid the \$120 incentive, as had been promised during the initial conversation 1 year before.

By the end of the study, we had completed 1,857 interviews. Because corresponding interviews referred to different time spans for different participants, the data for the 52 weeks were grouped into 13 analytic periods of 4 weeks each and also aggregated to annual totals for 1995. These were edited, coded, and entered into a computerized relational database for data cleaning and analysis.

FINDINGS ON THE FABRIC OF CARE

Table 2 summarizes the manifold ways in which people use their time and resources to help others on a regular basis. A major finding of the BADS 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 were more inclined to feel and forge a unified fabric of care. What mattered to their senses and sensibilities was not whether an act was narrowly defined as formal giving and volunteering, nor whether it took place in and around the nonprofit sector; what mattered was whether there was an intentional and voluntary decision to respond to the needs of others as these needs arose 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 in which people express this care: Some are relatively passive, such as praying for others 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.

All of the 44 participants in the study had several stories about how they had helped others on both a formal and an informal basis. A statistical summary, even with examples, does not begin to capture the richness of the underlying stories, but when we looked at the overall pattern, four broad findings emerged:

1. Above and beyond the care respondents expressed through contributions of money, goods, and time to and through charitable organizations, the participants spent a vast amount of money, goods, resources, time, and energy caring for individuals other than their spouses and dependent children.
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, nonprofit institutions through which society provides various forms of service and care for its members represent merely the surface of the total amount of care that the members of society extend to one another on an informal basis.
3. The pattern of caregiving confirms and amplifies our identification theory of care. Participants contributed the largest amounts of care to those individuals and charitable causes with which they most closely identified and were involved at some time in their lives. Family members and relatives generally took precedence over friends and acquaintances. For partici-

Table 2. Average Contributions of Money, Goods, and Time

<i>Category of Organization or Person</i>	<i>Contribution of Money and Goods (participation rate %)</i>	<i>Average Annual Contribution of Money and Goods</i>	<i>Contribution of Money and Goods as Percentage of Income</i>	<i>Volunteering or Unpaid Assistance</i>		<i>Total Time Spent in Volunteering or Unpaid Assistance (including emotional support)</i>	
				<i>Rate (%)</i>	<i>Hours/ Month</i>	<i>Rate (%)</i>	<i>Hours/ Month</i>
All organizations	100	\$1,490	2.2	84	9.9	84	9.9
Religious	75	\$741	1.3	36	4.0	36	6.0
Nonreligious	95	\$750	0.9	79	5.9	79	5.9
All interpersonal	98	\$7,779	7.4	100	28.5	100	57.7
Relative	93	\$7,092	6.1	93	20.9	100	44.2
Adult child or grandchild	50	\$4,834	3.8	45	4.4	59	6.7
Parent	52	\$294	0.6	50	9.3	64	15.7
Other relative	93	\$1,964	1.6	89	7.0	95	10.0
Nonrelative	98	\$687	1.3	95	7.7	100	13.5
Total money, goods, and time	100	\$9,269	9.6	100	38.5	100	67.7

pants with specific religious affiliations, religious organizations generally took precedence over all other forms of organization. And, organizations that had helped participants, their family members, or their friends generally took precedence over organizations and causes that had not.⁷

4. To obtain a complete picture of giving and volunteering, it is necessary to survey both formal and informal giving and volunteering and to use a methodology that allows researchers to obtain accurate, detailed information about such activities.

TWO VALIDITY CHECKS

The research raised two issues of validity: the extent to which a retrospective, one-time survey such as the Independent Sector/Gallup survey accurately captures the range, quantity, and quality of giving and volunteering in daily life; and whether carrying out a diary study itself creates validity problems in the form of the Hawthorne effect.

VALIDITY CHECK OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR/GALLUP SURVEY

Gallup interviewed 39 of the BADS participants in two waves. Thirty-five participants were interviewed in late spring 1996, approximately 5 months after they had completed their weekly interviews for the BADS; a further 4 participants were interviewed by Gallup in late summer, approximately 8 months after they had completed their BADS interviews.

For each of the 38 participants⁸ who completed both the BADS and the Gallup interviews, we compared the measures of giving, volunteering, and income calculated from the spring and summer 1996 retrospective Gallup interviews with the corresponding measures of giving, volunteering, and income obtained by the BADS from the same respondents. Overall, the 38 BADS participants who were reinterviewed by Gallup reported higher average family contributions, a greater average number of hours of volunteer time, and lower average family incomes to Gallup than to the BADS. This resulted in large absolute differences between Gallup and BADS figures for these same three items, which were 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 the amounts reported to Gallup and those reported to the BADS at the individual level for charitable contributions, volunteer time, and family income. Because for some individuals, the differences were positive, and for others, they were negative, they tend to cancel when averaged over all individuals.

Table 3. Comparison of Means for Giving, Volunteering, and Income for Total Sample

	<i>Independent Sector/ Gallup Survey</i>	<i>Boston Area Diary Study</i>	<i>Mean Absolute Difference^a</i>
Annual contributions	\$1,613	\$1,442	\$756***
Religious	\$572	\$621	\$195***
Nonreligious	\$1,041	\$820	\$677***
Giving participation rate (%)	95	100	5
Time volunteered per month (hours)	36	33	27***
Formal (hours)	28	11	20***
Informal (hours)	8	22	19***
Annual volunteering participation rate (%)	83	100	17
Monthly volunteering participation rate (%)	78	98	24**
Family income	\$64,079	\$82,857	\$29,325**
Percentage of income contributed	2.13	1.97	1.40***

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

a. Two asterisks indicate that the difference is statistically significant at least at the .01 level; three asterisks indicate that the difference is statistically significant at least at the .0005 level.

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, which are based on the Gallup survey. The second column in the table presents corresponding values averaged over the 38 participants based on the BADS. The third column contains the absolute difference between the value obtained by Gallup and the corresponding value obtained by the 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 who volunteered at any time during the year (the 12 months prior to the interview for Gallup and the calendar year of 1995 for the BADS); the second is the monthly rate and measures the proportion of the sample who volunteered at any time during the month (the month prior to the interview for Gallup and the average month for the BADS).

For most of the measures of giving, volunteering, and income presented in Table 3, there were large errors of measurement between the two surveys at the individual level. For each measure, the errors at the individual level tend to cancel in the calculation of aggregates for the entire sample, and there is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that either of the two data collection methods resulted in biased estimates of average values for the group as a whole.

GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

The differences between participants' reports to Gallup and to the BADS can be traced to multiple causes; some hold across the board, whereas others hold only for giving, volunteering, or reports of income. It is impossible to identify the sources of difference from our quantitative analysis alone, however, because in the BADS, we had interviewed the 38 participants almost weekly during the course of the year, and we had collected a good deal of information that enabled us to compare results. Additional knowledge was provided from observing the Gallup interviewers in the field.

1. Unless allowed to seek out the information (from other people and/or records), respondents report information about themselves more accurately than about their families. Respondents do not know or do not remember the charitable contributions and, to a lesser extent, the incomes of their spouses, partners, or other adults living with them.
2. Regular activities such as religious contributions are more accurately reported (even for families) than activities that do not follow regular weekly or monthly patterns.
3. Small amounts of money contributed, time volunteered, and income earned in the prior year are usually forgotten and not reported.
4. Interviewers must be provided with a field guide or interviewer manual and must be trained about the goal of the interview, the purpose of each question, and the meaning of every term and category in the interview. Without those aids, interviewers are not able to respond accurately to queries by respondents, for example, concerning the definitions of terms and the boundaries of categories.
5. It is essential to ensure that interviewers record data accurately and that data entry does not introduce errors into the data set. If feasible, participants should be recontacted to clarify ambiguous, inconsistent, or extreme responses.

THE REPORTING OF CONTRIBUTIONS:
METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

1. Respondents have an especially difficult time responding to queries about in-kind gifts. Respondents have trouble recognizing what constitutes an in-kind gift, recalling the number of such gifts, and estimating their value. Interviewers must be instructed about how to guide respondents in identifying in-kind gifts by offering a consistent method for evaluating them, for instance, on the basis of (a) the original cost of the item when it was new, (b) the value if they sold the item instead of contributing it, (c) the value if they purchased the item in its current condition from a thrift shop,

or, as we did in the BADS for used items, (d) the price they would accept at the end of the day at a yard sale.

2. Care must be taken to distinguish between the actual amounts of pledges actually given during a year and the outstanding amount to be given during the year(s) to come. The largest discrepancy between contributions reported to Gallup and those reported to the BADS for an individual participant was \$6,319. This discrepancy was primarily due to the fact the spouse of the respondent had pledged \$10,000 over 2 years to his alma mater but had paid only \$2,000 during 1995. Gallup included the entire \$10,000, whereas the BADS only included the \$2,000 that had actually been transferred during 1995.
3. In addition to wrongly including contributions planned for subsequent years, some respondents included amounts that were actually contributed in the first few months of 1996 as occurring in 1995. A diary study reduces such reverse telescoping because of the frequency of the interviews and the opportunity to double-check answers with respondents and against records.
4. The inability of some respondents to properly categorize an organization leads them to misclassify their contributions, either by skipping them altogether or by reporting the same contributions under separate categories. A diary study method provides sufficient interviewer training and interview time to confirm, clarify, and check answers.

THE REPORTING OF VOLUNTEER TIME: METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

1. The BADS study revealed that average volunteer time varies seasonally and that 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 a 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. Respondents had trouble understanding the extent of activities covered by the category of informal volunteering and reported much smaller amounts of these kinds of activities to Gallup than to the BADS, even though the Gallup survey inquired about such informal volunteering in a catchall question.

REPORTING FAMILY INCOME: METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

To accurately report all income, respondents need much prompting as well as time to consult records and other family members. Furthermore, income categories and the coding of income have not been standardized across survey research, making comparisons among findings difficult.

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

<i>Measure of Giving/Volunteering</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>January 1995 M</i>	<i>January 1996 M</i>	<i>Average Change</i>	<i>Average Absolute Difference</i>
Total contributions					
1st week in January	44	\$95	\$86	-\$9	\$117*
2nd week in January	44	\$99	\$273	\$174	\$297
3rd week in January	36	\$70	\$91	\$21	\$87*
4th week in January	20	\$54	\$43	-\$11	\$38**
Contributions to organizations					
1st week in January	44	\$20	\$11	-\$9	\$14**
2nd week in January	44	\$22	\$20	-\$2	\$19**
3rd week in January	36	\$21	\$14	-\$7	\$13*
4th week in January	20	\$21	\$14	-\$7	\$13
Volunteer time to organizations					
1st week in January	44	2.6 hours	2.0 hours	-0.6 hours	2.3 hours**
2nd week in January	44	2.6 hours	2.1 hours	-0.6 hours	2.3 hours**
3rd week in January	36	2.2 hours	1.5 hours	-0.7 hours	1.7 hours**
4th week in January	20	0.9 hours	0.7 hours	-0.2 hours	0.9 hours**
Volunteer time to persons (informal)					
1st week in January	44	6.3 hours	5.5 hours	-0.8 hours	5.5 hours**
2nd week in January	44	5.6 hours	6.2 hours	0.6 hours	5.9 hours**
3rd week in January	36	5.3 hours	6.3 hours	1.0 hours	6.4 hours**
4th week in January	20	5.8 hours	2.3 hours	-3.5 hours	6.1 hours**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

REPEATED INTERVIEWING AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A HAWTHORNE EFFECT

Although repeated interviewing has its advantages, it also opens the possibility for a behavioral or verbal Hawthorne effect. Repeated interviewing may influence (usually to increase) the participants to become more charitably inclined or falsely report prosocial behavior to portray themselves in a better light.

To test for these effects, we built a period of overlapping time into the design of the study. All 44 BADS participants were interviewed from the 1st week of January 1995 through the 2nd week of January 1996. Of these, 36 were interviewed through the 3rd week of January 1996, and 20 through the 4th week of January 1996. This strategy allowed us to compare the giving and volunteering reported at the very beginning of the study in January 1995 with the corresponding behavior reported exactly 1 year later in January 1996.

Table 4 presents average values of giving and volunteering and their differences on a week-by-week basis (e.g., the 1st week of January 1995 compared with the 1st week of January 1996). There were moderately large

week-to-week variations in average contributions of money and time to individuals. However, none of these average changes was statistically significant at the .05 level. The pattern of giving and volunteering to organizations was less variable and again relatively small and not statistically significant at the .05 level.⁹ If there is any trend in the levels of giving and volunteering to formal organizations, it is a negative one: One year later, giving and volunteering had decreased rather than increased. We conclude that when the period over which repeated interviewing takes place is lengthy and when respondents are coached to be accurate, the potential for a Hawthorne effect is dissipated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

What we learned from the BADS allows us to elaborate on a list of general research issues surrounding the conceptualization and measurement of giving and volunteering and the field procedures for carrying out survey research on these topics.

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 through charitable bequests. Although the term *individuals* is used, the usual and, in our view, 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, to obtain measures of giving by total financial resources, the unit of analysis of income and wealth should also be the family household.

Object of inquiry. We are now persuaded that the object of inquiry for research on giving and volunteering is the full panoply of formal and informal provision of care. In the interest of comparability, researchers should gather such information in a manner that enables them to disaggregate the data into whatever narrower categories of assistance are used in studies with more conventional definitions. In all cases, the goal is to obtain a total monetary value for all gifts of money, assets, in-kind property, and, more debatably, unpaid assistance. Recently, Brown (1999) wrote thoughtfully on assigning monetary value to volunteer work.

Choosing respondents. Respondents should be knowledgeable about and able to report on the giving of all the family's members. In point of fact, many respondents who claim to be knowledgeable are not aware of the entire range of activities performed by other household members. This is true for formal charitable giving and even more so for 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, of interviewing at least all adults within the household, mentioning what the first respondent indicated, and asking if there is anything to be added or subtracted.

Obtaining annual estimates. For the most part, researchers desire annual figures for the amounts of giving and volunteering, and, in the case of giving, the goal is almost always to obtain an estimate for the previous calendar year. This is particularly helpful for the 30% of tax filers who calculate their annual giving because they itemize their deductions. Even using the tax year, however, does not assist in the recall of the expanded forms of financial assistance made by most individuals. Therefore, 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. Such alternatives have their own problems: Obtaining giving data for a typical month still requires respondents to respond on the spot to inquiries phrased in categories in which the respondents do not normally think and to calculate crude estimates that in fact require more than a casual review of yearly involvements, whereas figures for the most recent month or week suffer from the fact that there are substantial seasonal variations in giving and volunteering (Almeida, McDonald, Havens, & Schervish, in press). One strategy to counter the latter problem without engaging in an expensive, yearlong diary study of a large sample would be to interview different households at different times throughout the year and from that information construct a synthetic year for households of similar demographic backgrounds. The major drawback of this approach, however, is that it becomes impossible to link any additional behavioral and attitudinal information to an annual giving figure for individual family household cases.

Period covered and frequency of interviews. We discovered during the BADS that there were few problems with recall when respondents were interviewed once a week. However, we found that any longer period of time reduced recall substantially, especially for those respondents who did not keep the daily records we suggested. Ideally, the longer the period about which researchers are inquiring, the greater should be the frequency of interviews over the course of the study.

Use of telephone interviews and other methods. Frequent interviewing of participants can be a time-consuming and expensive approach and risks respondent attrition. When follow-up interviews are conducted by telephone and accompanied by an appropriate level of financial incentive, costs and attrition are reduced. The possibility of successfully carrying out a recontact strategy has been demonstrated by the BADS (see also Schervish & Havens, in press) as well as the National Study of Daily Experiences (Almeida, 1997), the surveys of time use conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of

Michigan in 1975-1976 and 1981-1982 (Juster & Stafford, 1985), and the Americans' Use of Time Study conducted by the University of Maryland in 1985 (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

Aiding recall with detailed prompts. In addition to the more elaborate and costly diary techniques we used, various techniques have been undertaken to construct surveys that help single-interview surveys approach the same level of respondent recall. One method is to ask respondents to designate how much they give according to how they were contacted or how they give. For example, interviewers can ask how much respondents gave in response to mail appeals, telephone appeals, church pledges, door-to-door solicitations, and workplace campaigns (Hall et al., 1998; Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management, 2000). A second and more regularly used method is to ask about the amount respondents gave to general areas of concern, such as health care, religion, arts, and so forth (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, Crutchfield, Heffron, & Kirsch, 1996). This method can be improved by making separate inquiries about giving and volunteering to medical hospitals, clinics, and mental health facilities rather than simply to health organizations in general. More specifically still, people could be asked about the uses to which their health contributions and time are dedicated, for example, to research, operating expenses, inoculations, maternal health care, cancer treatments, hospice care, and so forth. 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 (e.g., nursing home care) by each method of contact (Rooney, Steinberg, & Schervish, 2001; see also Belli, Shay, and Stafford, 2000).

Obtaining findings from upper-income and high-wealth households. According to our analysis of the 1998 Survey of Consumer Finances, about 40% of all charitable giving is derived from families in the uppermost tiers of income and wealth. In terms of income, the 5% of families with annual incomes of \$125,000 or more made 40% of all charitable contributions. In terms of wealth, the 5% of families with net worths of \$1 million or more made 42% of all charitable contributions. For national surveys 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 to explain whether and in what ways the motivational matrix explaining giving differs across income and wealth groups, it is paramount that surveys gather findings from the upper financial strata. If the upper strata of givers are not sampled, those reporting results should make it clear to their readers that their findings apply to only the 60% of charitable giving performed by the bottom 95% of the financial spectrum. In addition, not interviewing respondents in the uppermost tiers of income and wealth creates bias in the estimates of volunteer time and even more bias in reporting the areas and roles in which volunteers offer unpaid assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED FIELD PROCEDURES

In addition to formulating the foregoing general recommendations, conducting the BADS research has led us to several specific recommendations for guiding survey field procedures.

Customized interviewing. Participants have such varied backgrounds and vocabularies that no fixed wording in any interview schedule is likely to suffice and will serve rather as a guide. It is worth training interviewers to know how to be flexible in asking questions and especially in rephrasing questions when respondents do not properly understand the original wording.

Participant materials. In the 1st 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 of beginning the study, we also sent them a daily diary organizer that they could use to record this information for themselves and for us. But, except for a few highly organized respondents, we were not successful in getting respondents to record events in their diaries. In fact, a few participants threatened to drop out of the study if they were required to record the information in the organizers we provided.

Respondent education. In addition to interviewer training, there should be a period of respondent education during which interviewers carefully remind the respondents about how to understand the core set of questions, objectives, and issues in a study. The interview schedule, operational definitions, and interviewer guides could 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 interviewers.

Senior staff members as screeners or interviewers. Potential respondents evince their greatest hesitancy to participate during the initial screening contact and the first interview. It is important that the researchers making these contacts and conducting these initial interviews be highly sensitive and very knowledgeable about the study and how it fits into the larger picture of research. Despite standard practice, it may be useful for the initial screening and interviewing to be conducted by the most experienced staff members.

Scheduling weekly interviews. Interviews should be scheduled by appointment for 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 members; however, participants should be allowed and even encouraged to reschedule interviews when necessary. This requires that the study maintain a sufficient number of staff members who are available to conduct rescheduled appointments. During their exit interviews, many participants in the BADS mentioned that they appreciated the flexibility

afforded them and indicated that this was a factor in their remaining in the study.

Respondent sovereignty. Participants in a study should be accorded the status of “being always right,” according to the adage “the customer is always right.” Whenever respondents requested documentation about the study, it was immediately sent. When respondents indicated that they had never agreed to send some personal records to the study (even though they had agreed to do so), staff members apologized for the misunderstanding and asked if they would now be willing to send the records. When respondents wanted to explain a gift or an event in detail, staff members were instructed to listen and take notes on the complete explanation.

Supporting negatives. Some respondents reported little assistance to anyone during most weeks, and they tended to get discouraged, repeatedly offering to leave the study. Interviewers told them that the only wrong answer to our questions was an answer that was different from the facts and took steps to assure respondents that their participation in the study was as valuable as that of those who gave large amounts of time and money. In some cases, the BADS project director called such respondents personally to reinforce that message.

Routine patterns. A record should be kept of routine patterns of giving and volunteering. Most respondents gave regularly to some charitable causes (especially religious causes), assisted specific other people, 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 an insert for the interviewer indicating these regular activities. If the respondent did not mention such regular activities in the week when they usually occurred, we inquired specifically about their occurrence. This list was updated whenever we were informed that a regular pattern had permanently changed.

Milestone events. Interviewers should keep a log of milestone events reported by respondents and even prompt for them when appropriate. Such milestone events include a son coming home from college, a marriage in the family, the hospitalization of a mother, or a pregnancy. Interviewers were instructed to note these events on a special form and to inquire casually about them in subsequent interviews to learn how these events shaped subsequent types and amounts of caring behavior.

Queries for additional information. Full information is not always immediately available during an interview. For example, one woman told us “My husband gave some clothing to Goodwill, but I don’t know exactly what or how much it was worth.” In such instances, we instructed interviewers to fill out a query form and to request that the respondent obtain the information

and report it in the next interview. We were careful to allocate the information we learned to the week when it actually occurred.

Consistent interviewer. Assigning a single interviewer to each respondent, at least for several months, is conducive to the establishment and maintenance of a close rapport with the respondent. We attribute a substantial part of the BADS completion rate of more than 90% to this emphasis on establishing a personal relationship. 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.

Staff meeting and policy book. Even though there is often a great deal of work to be done, 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 that was available as a reference to interviewers.

Interviewer boundaries. As a rapport develops between interviewers and respondents, respondents will sometimes come to see interviewers as counselors. We forewarned interviewers about issues of transference and advised them that if a respondent began to ask for advice, interviewers should reiterate the focus of the study and resist being pulled into an inappropriate role. However, to ethically assist respondents who pushed for advice or seemed in need, our interviewers had before them a list of various counseling services to which they could refer the respondents.

Periodic contact of respondents with the project director. The project director should conduct periodic interviews with the participants to evaluate the regular interviewers' performance and to answer any concerns the respondents might have.

Incentives. In the BADS, respondents were offered an incentive of \$120 to complete the study. This incentive was offered during the screening phase of the study. More than half of the respondents said the incentive influenced their initial decision to participate in the study, and it is likely that the incentive was at least a partial motivator for the rest. In addition, we sent "surprise" incentives. Every 3 months, the project director drafted a letter to the respondents thanking them for their continued participation in the study and reporting operational (as opposed to substantive) progress of the study. Enclosed with the letter was an unannounced gift certificate for ice cream, groceries, or the cinema.

Liaison with field organization. Although we did not use an independent field organization, it is clear that if an outside agency is contracted to conduct a

study, someone from the study staff should work closely with the field group, even to the point of becoming part of the field operation.

CONCLUSION

Both survey and interview case study research face numerous problems of measurement revolving around operationalizing giving and volunteering, determining a consistent unit of analysis, and overcoming obstacles to accurate recall. From carrying out surveys on charitable giving and reviewing the methodology of other studies, we 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 uses rigorous field practices, the greater the amount of reported charitable giving. (Havens & Schervish, 1998, p. 241).

We now add 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.

The aspiration at the heart of every survey researcher's work is to produce the best data possible for the public, practitioners, and researchers who depend on it and to make those who use the data aware of its limitations. For our part, it is our additional aspiration that the recommendations we have listed here and our experience with the BADS, the Gallup surveys, and other surveys we have conducted will help other researchers in the field improve the survey techniques, data quality, and hence validity of their findings.

Careful and repeated interviewing of people about their so-called formal and informal giving of time, money, and goods is the starting point for depicting the intricate crosshatch of care in our society. The array of support, be it financial, emotional, practical, or spiritual, is the daily bread of nourishment that we both give and receive from one another in our daily rounds. It is our prevailing verdict that the range and degree of caring behavior we have uncovered in the course of our research through the BADS is not atypical. Only by systematically measuring and compiling such caring behavior over the course of a year can we fully discern the magnitude of that care. The findings of our efforts to do so indicate that far from being a negligent society, we are, if anything, a keenly caring commonwealth. Care is more intensive and

extensive than is generally understood and as such furnishes a durable foundation on which to build an even more caring society. Researchers themselves can make a unique contribution to forging this more caring society. This is the care they put forth to capture and convey the full terrain of care fashioned by those they study.

Notes

1. Those results are not presented here but will be published in an article by Almeida, McDonald, Havens, and Schervish (in press).
2. One participant dropped out before the study began. He is not included in the description of the sample presented in this article. A second participant dropped out during the initial interview; she is included in the description of the sample.
3. A detailed report of the sample design, methodology, and problems can be obtained from the authors.
4. Nearly every one of the African American men aged 50 and over who were contacted refused, often angrily, to participate. African American women who initially expressed an interest in participating eventually declined because they thought their husbands or boyfriends would disapprove.
5. We included time spent giving and receiving emotional support to and from spouses.
6. Three of the participants were unavailable for their final interviews until February, and one was traveling in Europe and was unavailable until the 1st week of March.
7. The complete findings of the BADS will be published by Schervish and Havens (in press).
8. 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 staff members at Boston College. The final Gallup file thus contains the survey data for 38 of the 44 participants who completed the BADS.
9. Some of the individual changes could be due to a Hawthorne effect, but it does not appear to be systematic in that there were positive and negative differences that tend to cancel.

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