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Author:

Hardwick, Jill; Graycar, Adam

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ORGANISATIONS IN AUSTRALIA :
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Jill Hardwick
and
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Social Welfare Research Centre
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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WELFARE ORGANISATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

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by

Jill Hardwick

and

Adam Graycar

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Social Welfare Research Centre
The University of New South Wales
P.O. Box 1, Kensington, N.S.W. 2033, Australia

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organised professionalised social welfare services are relatively recent developments. In the history of social welfare, organised services came long before professionalised services, and as welfare history has moved from one stage to the next there have been two common ingredients. First, there have been people unable to provide for themselves at a level of functioning deemed appropriate by the standards of the day, and second, there are people who freely give time and service to members of the community who do not form part of their kin network. These two ingredients long preceded social workers, income maintenance experts, government officials concerned with service organisation and management, and the host of other full time welfare operatives. The free giving of time and service has always been part of the functioning of primary and extended families, and has also been part of local community activity, usually through ecclesiastical auspices. It is with the advent of the modern Welfare State that the notion of volunteering, and the activities and characteristics of volunteers, as well as their organisational environment, takes on great importance.

One of the assumptions underpinning Welfare Statism is that Beveridge's five giants, Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness will be eliminated through concerted state activity. Health services, income maintenance services, housing services, education services and the personal social services have developed into intricate and sophisticated structures to deal with human need. Whether these services are the most appropriate responses to human need is part of a very different and much larger debate, but what is obvious is that poverty, uncertainty, inequality or vulnerability have not been eliminated and that life chances of the poorest and most vulnerable are comparatively limited. The 1980's started with uncertainty and exclusion facing many people and in the short term there seems to be little alternative to this outlook.

The modern Welfare State allocates both income and services, though controversy reigns on the nature and purposes of these allocations (Graycar 1979 Chap. 1). Part of the current controversy relates to issues of responsibility and capacity in providing allocations. Governments throughout the western world have accepted some degree of responsibility for their dependent citizens recognising that without cash support many people would not survive. Income maintenance systems work on the assumption that governments

accept a responsibility of providing income support - at a level which could not be provided by private philanthropy or family transfers. In the service arena it is acknowledged that formal services provide technological and professional methods of dealing with manifest needs - methods not available on an informal provision basis. In the service arena, however, there is no similar acceptance of responsibility as there is in income maintenance and consequently some services are bought and sold as market commodities, others are delivered free of charge on a universal basis, and others fit into the many positions in between. Formal services can vary from innovative and preventive infrastructure building to residual statutory and non-statutory maintenance services. Whatever the nature of the service, there is a strong likelihood that volunteers will somehow be involved. This involvement is likely to be found right across the spectrum.

Volunteers are defined in the Encyclopedia of Social Work (1977: 1582) as 'individuals who freely contribute their services, without remuneration, to public or voluntary organisations engaged in all types of social welfare activities'. This definition of volunteerism, like most, focuses on the unpaid nature of volunteer work and its performance within formal welfare organisations. Leat (1977) also emphasises the formal nature of voluntary work by claiming that 'the label "voluntary" does not cover all forms of unpaid work, only unpaid work that is not socially required as a duty or responsibility'. She cites the example of the daughter who visits her mother in hospital who is not usually described as a volunteer while the stranger who visits another stranger may be so described.

Social care has come to depend on volunteers and informal providers at all levels - to a minor degree at the statutory level, but to a greater degree in formal non-statutory services (through what are commonly called voluntary organisations) and in informal services (family supports, self-help groups, local community networks etc). Virtually no detailed work has been undertaken to identify the characteristics and activities of the many volunteers in Australia. It is important to have a good understanding of the volunteer population because current debates on our welfare futures place a great deal of emphasis on the real and potential contribution of volunteers.

As there is no generally accepted philosophy of state service provision within the Welfare State, the position of volunteers is far from clear. It could be argued, for example, that a commitment to Welfare State principles

would mean the allocation of sufficient resources to obviate the need to rely on unpaid labour in service provision. On the other hand there is the argument that it is an intrinsic part of human nature to provide assistance freely and happily to one's fellows and that greater financial allocation will not eliminate both the supply of and demand for volunteers.

The extent of volunteer activity throughout Australia is such that our welfare services could not continue without the input of volunteer activity, and the issue then becomes one of the degree to which we rely on volunteers for the continuation of welfare services and the degree to which service planning depends on the availability of volunteers. If the Welfare State were achieving its service goals this reliance would be minimal and volunteer activity would be of a fairly relaxed nature. This does not seem likely, for in current stringent times a retreat from Welfare State principles (and associated cost-cutting possibilities) finds expression in terms of the greater use of volunteers in the social services.

In his opening address to the 'Social Policy in the 1980's' Conference in Canberra on May 28 1982 the Minister for Social Security, Senator Chaney expressed his disappointment in an increasing dependence on the state to provide services, in a decline in personal responsibility and declining family interdependence. The suggestion was that greater family and voluntary activity would diminish dependence on government. The dependence has been reduced by service reductions and this has placed greater strains on family and non-government welfare organisation (NGWO) supports. In the latter context, volunteers are crucial for service provision.

At an Expert Meeting convened in 1980 by the European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research (Eurosocal 1981) fears were expressed by participants that in times of economic stringency governments and their statutory agencies may be tempted to try to replace paid staff with volunteers. This was seen to be more likely in social welfare where there has been less certainty about the need for and role of paid professional staff than in, say, health services. The meeting accepted, as a basic operating principle, that the work of volunteers should complement that of paid staff, not replace or substitute for it.

A similar point was made by Mr. Timothy Raison M.P., British Home Office Minister responsible for the Voluntary Service Unit, in his opening address to the 21st International Council of Social Welfare Conference in Brighton,

England on August 29, 1982. He stated quite firmly that he 'would like to put to rest any fears that we may be regarding the voluntary groups we help as cheap labour, or as a poor substitute for statutory services. Voluntary movements can and do enhance and complement existing statutory provision ...' and he went on to give a few examples. Volunteering, to the Minister, is 'a natural extension of the normal and creative human urge to help one's family, friends and neighbourhood. In our fragmented society, where our lives are all affected by changes and decisions often beyond our immediate control, many people find in volunteering a purpose and a commitment that gives wider meaning to their lives. They give up their time, their skills, their money - sometimes all three - to help others and to make the community in which they live a better place. We believe that volunteers and the voluntary groups to which they belong deserve all our encouragement and support'.

In the very considerable body of literature on volunteers that has developed in the last decade (elsewhere than in Australia) the focus is seldom on why people volunteer, what they do, or where it fits into our welfare politics, but rather it works from the assumption that volunteer work is good, that there should be more of it, and that the key issues are those of providing support and training for and co-ordination of volunteer activities. This working paper reports some Australian data on volunteers and offers some tentative explanations for the widespread phenomenon of volunteering in our society.

The data were gathered from a large sample survey of Australia's 37,000 non-government welfare organisations. The sample response consisted of 592 NGWOs, stratified by function and location throughout Australia. The survey was carried out as a joint effort between the Social Welfare Research Centre and the Australian Council of Social Service, and the overall findings will be published in 1983 in the SWRC Reports and Proceedings series. The definition of 'volunteer' in this survey was anyone performing unpaid work in formal voluntary welfare organisations. The data will be presented in the next chapter, and the remainder of this chapter will highlight some of the definitional and analytical complexities involved in studying volunteers and volunteer activity.

Most definitions of volunteers focus on the unpaid nature of their work within formal organisations. These definitions are limited because they understate the scope and extent of volunteer activity. They ignore the bulk

of welfare services which are provided, on an informal basis, usually by women, to family and friends. As a result such a definition confuses the inextricable relationship between volunteer labour and domestic labour.

Volunteer work has been described as an extension of domestic labour because it is unpaid, it is done primarily by women, it requires the nurturing skills acquired in the home (Gold, 1971) and it depends upon the compassion of women (Adams, 1971). Volunteer work, like domestic work may also be effective in keeping women isolated and non-threatening in a male dominated world. Cantor (1978: 20) captures the essence of this argument in her description of some American women's volunteer organisations which she claims are 'a form of warehousing, of keeping women safely busy at harmless tasks that do not threaten their husbands or challenge the other power relationships'. Furthermore, volunteer labour both in the formal voluntary organisations and in the family setting is increasingly called upon in times of economic recession to provide caring services for the young, the sick, the elderly, the disabled.

Women have always been more active than men in voluntary work. When this activity became significant in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century taking the form of friendly societies or visiting societies, women outnumbered men, two or three to one (Prochaska, 1980). These women from the middle or upper classes took it upon themselves to try to alleviate poverty by visiting and advising the poor on domestic matters. In this capacity they were seen as a humane alternative to Poor Law Relief. Their approach was individualistic as they saw the problem in self-contained terms and not in terms of the structure of wider society. They were often very religious and had no sense of class guilt. Rather they held 'a hierarchial view of society and assumed that distinctions between the rich and poor were God-given and likely to persist ... The opportunity to be charitable, after all, depended on social inequality' (Prochaska, 1980: 125).

During the industrial revolution employment changes for children and women were predicated on a belief that women's role was the socialisation of children in the home and the creation of a haven for the husband away from the turmoil of the commercial world. In the eyes of those who framed these changes the ideology of Mother/Wife was strong but it did have an internal contradiction in that this apparent leisure role conflicted with the work ethic. A new emphasis and importance had to be placed on domestic work. In addition it was seen as fitting that women of standing should interest

themselves in the poor and perform charitable work. Consequently, Wilson (1977: 23-4) argues, charitable work received a boost during the industrial revolution.

The work of women in charitable societies helped them acquire organisational skills and was fundamental to the movement towards women's emancipation at the end of the nineteenth century (Summers, 1979). State welfare services was based on this vast unpaid workforce and their approach represented the beginnings of social work (Parry and Parry, 1979; Wilson, 1977). On the one hand it was a liberating movement, giving women the impetus to break away and make certain demands; on the other hand it was ensuring the suppression of working class women by reinforcing the class structure and laying the blame for poverty on individuals, ignoring the wider structural problems. Summers reflects upon this dichotomy by questioning whether these early charity workers were early feminists in that they were trying to challenge the status quo, or whether they were really working to maintain a highly inequitable status quo.

This dichotomy between system challengers and system maintainers still characterises voluntary work today. It tends to be a function of the type of organisation within which these volunteers work, and the nature of the relationship of these organisations to the state. Kramer (1981) identifies four roles for voluntary organisations: first, he describes a pioneering, innovative role where the organisation is involved in experimental or demonstration projects; second, he describes an advocate role where the organisation acts as critic or watchdog, a pressure group on government; third, there is the value guardian role where the special interests of a particular group are promoted; fourth, there is the service provider role where the organisation primarily provides services which are either an alternative to government or a supplementary substitute. Murray (1969) suggests a similar classification for voluntary organisations: first, he describes caring organisations - organisations which provide services by one group of people for another. Second, there are the pressure groups, some of which combine pressure group activity with the provision of services. Finally there are the self help groups where distinction between provider and receiver is blurred. Murray's classification can be superimposed on Kramer's classification although he (Murray) includes an additional category - the self help groups.

Kramer found that the most pervasive role for NGWOs was that of service

provider. These services are usually a supplement or an extension of similar government services, not alternative services. This suggests that NGWOs are an extension of the state's activity (Mowbray, 1980; Yates and Graycar, 1983; Shaver, 1982). Mowbray (1980) argues that government funds for NGWOs represents endorsement of their activities in carrying out functions of the state. Yates and Graycar (1983) identify four ways in which NGWOs act to extend the role of the state - by extending the services of the state, by accepting the state's social welfare system framework, by acting as a communication network to identify issues and focus them on appropriate state institutions, by offering services which do not challenge the traditional social service system. It is generally difficult to see NGWOs as pioneering and innovative, a view commonly espoused in discussions about NGWOs.

Most NGWOs are not concerned with challenging the status quo and their primary function is one of service provision. Most volunteers are service oriented and they perform services which are largely extensions of the state's activities. In this respect, these volunteers can be seen to be maintaining existing service arrangements. Change oriented volunteers, who are a minority, attempt to do pioneering, innovative work. Women who have initiated and collectively administered alternative women's health centres, women's refuges, child care facilities are examples of change oriented volunteers. They have been responsible not only for alternative services but also for changing society's attitude towards the special needs of women.

These two types of women volunteers typify the chimerical, even contradictory, character of volunteer work. On the one hand volunteer activity has contributed to the maintenance of women's subservience; on the other it has been significant in facilitating social change towards equality for women. The National Organisation for Women (NOW), a large liberal reformist organisation for women in the United States has argued there is an exploitative nature to service oriented volunteerism and it passed a resolution in 1974 opposing women's involvement, advocating instead that women should only be 'change oriented' volunteers.

Finally we should turn to the self help groups. There are two sides to these groups. On the one hand they have proliferated in response to a number of factors including the de-personalised, bureaucratic nature of complex institutions, the pervasiveness of technology, and increased professionalisation. In this respect they have initiated changes both in terms of organisational

structures (co-operative or collective management, alternative institutions e.g. consumer co-ops, food co-ops, credit unions) and in terms of service delivery (relationship between provider and client is blurred and a two-way process; professionalism is de-mystified). On the other hand, however, these groups are encouraged and condoned by the current dominant belief which places emphasis on individual responsibility. This view has its own powerful, negative effects in that it legitimises the erosion of the Welfare State. Thus volunteers in self help groups may on the one hand be maintaining the status quo by not questioning the present welfare structures and placing the onus on themselves to alleviate problems; or on the other hand they may be very effective change agents providing real alternatives.

This brief introduction serves to illustrate the complexity of the 'volunteer' issue, to which we will return below, in the discussion of various explanations for the existence of volunteerism. First the findings of the survey will be reported and comparisons drawn with other Australian and overseas data where available.

2. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey on which these data are based was conducted in order to arrive at a broad classification and description of NGWOs. The prime aim was not to gather data on volunteers, and in fact material on volunteers was oriented, not to individual characteristics, but rather to organisational characteristics. In other words the respondents were not individual volunteers, but organisations which use volunteers. The data therefore are not specific but represent a useful starting point in estimating the total number of volunteers in NGWOs in Australia, in describing the welfare areas in which they work, the average number of hours worked per week, changes in numbers over the last ten years, training, the relationship between numbers of volunteers and numbers of paid staff, the activities of the volunteers within organisations, the relative proportion of men and women volunteers, the sex representation of volunteers, paid staff, management committee and membership of the organisation. There is no detailed information on the characteristics of volunteers (apart from their sex) i.e. the age, socio-economic status, or participation in the paid labour force. Nor is there information on why people volunteer, or on the nature of the specific tasks which they undertake. Collection of this material would require a much more extensive survey aimed specifically at the volunteers themselves, and will form the basis of the next step in this project.

Number and Distribution of Volunteers

Of the 592 responding organisations, 501 or 85 per cent claim to have volunteers. However only 467 organisations actually provide data on these volunteers. Table 1 shows that nearly half of these organisations have between 5 and 20 volunteers and that the median income for organisations with this number of volunteers is just under \$10,000 p.a.

The number of volunteers in 466 of these 467 organisations totalled 16,198 persons. The remaining organisation reported a total of 37,000 volunteers giving a combined total of 53,198. Two estimates were used to calculate the total number of non-government welfare organisations (NGWOs) in Australia. The first is an interval estimate which placed the total number of organisations somewhere between 25,397 and 48,537. The second estimate is a point estimate which is the mid-point of this interval and fixes the number of organisations at 36,967.

**TABLE 1 : VOLUNTEERS¹ WITHIN ORGANISATIONS
CLASSIFIED BY INCOME**

Number of Volunteers	Number and percentage of organisations with this number of volunteers (N=467/501) ²		Median income ³ of organisations (N=446/501)
	No.	%	\$
1 - 4	94	20.1	34,375
5 - 20	214	45.8	9,559
21 - 50	86	18.4	31,732
51 - 200	64	13.7	85,000
Over 200	9	1.9	Over 1 million
Total	467	100.0	29,656

- 1 Volunteers here and in subsequent tables mean volunteer places. Some individuals work for more than one organisation so the number of volunteers does not refer to different individuals.
- 2 N is the number of organisations who responded validly to the question out of the possible number of organisations for whom the question was relevant.
- 3 Median calculated from grouped data.

**TABLE 2 : ESTIMATION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
WITH VOLUNTEERS BY VOLUNTEER GROUP SIZE**

No. of Volunteers	No. of Organisations	% of Organisations	Minimum estimate of organisations with volunteers in sector	Maximum estimate of organisations with volunteers in sector
1 - 4	94	20.2	4,047	7,735
5 - 20	214	45.8	9,177	17,537
21 - 50	86	18.4	3,687	7,045
51 - 200	64	13.7	2,745	5,246
201 - 500	6	1.3	260	498
501 - 1000	2	.4	80	153
Total	466	100.0	19,996	38,214

These estimates can be used to determine the total number of volunteers in Australia. As 79 per cent of the surveyed organisations provide data on their volunteers, we can assume that the same proportion of organisations in the sector as a whole, have volunteers. Thus, between 19,996 and 38,214 organisations have volunteers (see Table 2).

Taking the mid-point of each volunteer category and multiplying by the minimum and maximum estimate of the number of organisations in each volunteer category, it is possible to estimate the total number of volunteers. In making these projections, one organisation with 37,000 volunteers was excluded because we are not able to assess the extent to which it is representative of large organisations. Nor do we know, from a sample of one, how many organisations could possibly have this number of volunteers.

On the basis of the interval estimate, the total number of volunteers lies somewhere between 751,388 and 1,436,398 which is between 7 and 13 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over. The point estimate fixes the total number of volunteers at 1,093,895 (or 10 per cent of the population 15 and over) (Table 3).

**TABLE 3 : ESTIMATION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF
VOLUNTEER PLACES**

No. of Volunteers	Midpoint	Minimum estimate of total no. of volunteers in sector	Point estimate of total no. of volunteers in sector	Maximum estimate of total no. of volunteers in sector
1 - 4	2.5	10,118	14,728	19,338
5 - 20	12.5	114,713	166,963	219,213
21 - 50	35.5	130,889	190,494	250,098
51 - 200	125.5	344,498	501,436	658,373
201 - 500	350.5	91,130	132,840	174,549
501 - 1000	750.5	60,040	87,434	114,827
Total		751,388	1,093,895	1,436,398

The survey also recorded that volunteers work, on average four hours per week (Table 5). If the number of volunteers and time spent is converted into full-time equivalent position, it would equal approximately 125,000 jobs (almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of Australia's official unemployed) and there would be a commensurate wage bill of some \$1.5 billion which is about 1.1 per cent of GDP. An estimate of the cost of volunteer labour in Canada revealed that the value of volunteer work to be between 1.1 and 3.0 per cent of GNP (Hawrylyshin, 1978).

However, there are a number of caveats which should be attached to these estimates. First, it cannot be assumed that the estimated number of volunteers are all different individuals. Some individuals do volunteer work in more than one organisation and the survey could not exclude double counting. However, the estimate of volunteer hours would reflect only the time spent by volunteers in each organisation. So even if the same individual is counted twice, the estimate of time spent in each organisation would only be counted once. Second, despite this problem of double counting of volunteers, these figures are still probably under-estimates of total volunteer places because the survey was a survey of 'formal' NGWOs, so it ignores the wide range of welfare services which are provided on an informal basis. Third, the survey did not include the unpaid overtime undertaken by paid welfare workers, a phenomenon which is increasingly important as funds dry up and welfare problems, such as unemployment, are exacerbated. The survey questions on paid staff revealed that over half (56 per cent) of paid staff work overtime and 72 per cent of these persons are never paid for this overtime. Projecting these data for the sector as a whole, it is estimated that there is somewhere between 203,176 and 388,296 persons working overtime and not being paid. Taking the midpoint of this interval estimate (295,736 persons) and assuming these paid staff work, on average, 4 hours per week in overtime, their labour is equivalent to the work of another 295,736 volunteers (defined in terms revealed by the survey) or another 2.7 per cent of the population over 15 years. Fourth, it appeared that the responding organisations held different conceptions of the meaning of the word 'volunteer', and we suspect that in many cases the survey only recorded the subordinate voluntary work performed under the direction of paid staff — it excluded the honorary members of management committees, whose services, it could be argued, are more costly because the members of management committees are often professional people.

Nevertheless the survey figures reveal a similar pattern of volunteering

as the one which exists in Britain. Wolfenden (1978) estimated that there are about 5 million volunteers in Britain – about 13 per cent of the British population over sixteen. However, this situation is different from the United States where it has been estimated that 24 per cent of the population aged fourteen years and over do volunteer work (ACTION, Office of Public Affairs, 1974). These figures cannot be taken at face value without examining the comparability between types of organisations surveyed.

Table 4 shows the mean and median number of volunteers according to the main goal area of the organisation. The mean number of volunteers in all organisations is 35 and there is no significant difference in the number of volunteers between organisations with different main goal areas. The median number of volunteers in all organisations is only 15, considerably less than the mean.

**TABLE 4 : VOLUNTEERS BY MAIN GOAL AREA
OF ORGANISATION**

Main Goal Area of Organisation	Volunteers per organisation	
	Mean ³ (N=466/501)	Median (N=467/501)
Employment and income	11	11
Health	32	14
Basic material needs	27	12
Education	17	10
Environment	23	7
Justice, protection	46	15
Family, personal well-being	44	15
Community organisation, action development	32 ¹	17
Other	78	36
Total	35 ²	15

- 1 One organisation with 37,000 volunteers, was removed to reduce undue impact this extreme case had on estimating the mean.
- 2 95% confidence interval is 29 to 41
- 3 Between group differences not significant at 0.05 level.

Volunteer Hours

The mean number of hours worked per week by volunteers is four. The average number of hours varied significantly according to the main goal area of the organisation – volunteers in organisations providing an education function worked 3.2 hours per week on average; in organisations whose main goal is basic material needs, the average number of hours per week for a volunteer was 6.8 (Table 5). Yet the median number of volunteers per organisation in each of these goal areas was very similar (Table 4).

**TABLE 5 : VOLUNTEER HOURS BY MAIN GOAL AREA
OF ORGANISATION**

Main Goal Area of Organisation	Mean number of hours worked per week by volunteers*
Employment and income	5.4
Health	3.8
Basic material needs	6.8
Education	3.2
Environment	7.3
Justice, protection	3.4
Family, personal well-being	3.6
Community organisation, action development	3.0
Other	7.6
Total	4.0

* Between group differences significant at 0.05 level.

A significant difference was found between number of hours worked by volunteers in organisations whose perceived goal area was religious development (average hours 7.3 per week) and organisations concerned with individual and family development (3.7 hours per week), community development (3.0 hours per week) and social and/or political development (4.6 hours per week) (significant at 0.05 level). No significant difference was found between hours worked by male and female volunteers.

In comparison with our average of 4 hours per week, Langley (1979, 1980a, 1980b) reported an average of 6.4 hours, 5.0 hours and 5.5 hours voluntary work per week in studies undertaken in three country towns in Australia – Bendigo, Shepparton and Leeton respectively. Wolfenden (1978:35) in Britain reported an average of six hours per week; in the United States the national estimate was an average of 9 hours voluntary work per week (ACTION, Office of Public Affairs, 1974).

Income of Organisations with Volunteers

One third of organisations have an income of less than \$5,000. The mean number of volunteers in these organisations is 18. There is a significant relationship between the income of the organisation and the number of volunteers. Thus organisations with an income of over \$1 million have an average of 97 volunteers (Table 6).

TABLE 6 : NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS BY INCOME OF ORGANISATION

Total income of organisation 1980 (in '000 dollars)	Mean number of volunteers*	% of total organ- isations in this income category (N=445/501)
≤ 5	18	32.8
5+ to 10	27	8.3
10+ to 25	31	7.0
25+ to 50	33	11.4
50+ to 100	27	12.4
100+ to 250	49	11.4
250+ to 500	52	7.0
500+ to 1000	31	4.5
Over 1000	97	5.2
All organisations	33	100.0

* Between group differences significant at 0.05 level

Half of the NGWOs (49.8 per cent) obtain the largest share of their income from their own sources (investments, fundraising and donations, membership i.e. subscriptions etc., fees for service, other). Another 41.6 per cent of organisations obtain the largest share of their income from government sources (parent organisation, private firms or trusts, other organisations) (Table 7). The distribution of volunteers in organisations does not vary markedly depending upon the major source of income for the organisation. For all three dominant income source categories, the distribution of volunteers within organisations mirrors the distribution of volunteers for the total of all organisations – the major proportion of organisations (45 per cent) have between 5 and 20 volunteers; another 20 per cent (approximately) have between 1 and 5 volunteers; 18 per cent have 21 to 50 volunteers; 14 per cent have 51 to 200 volunteers and 2 per cent have over 200 volunteers. Reliance on government funding therefore does not appear to diminish volunteer activity.

TABLE 7 : MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME OF ORGANISATION BY NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

No. of Volunteers	Largest proportion of income from					
	Government Sources		Own Sources		External Sources	
	No. of orgs. (N=175/179)	% of total	No. of orgs. (N=210/224)	% of total	No. of orgs. (N=36/38)	% of total
1 - 4	36	20.6	36	17.1	9	25.0
5 - 20	73	41.7	101	48.1	14	38.9
21 - 50	38	21.7	37	17.6	7	19.4
51 - 200	26	14.9	30	14.3	5	13.9
Over 200	2	1.1	6	2.9	1	2.8
Total	175	100.0	210	100.0	36	100.0
% of responding organisations in each income source group	41.6		49.8		8.6	

Volunteerism appears to be on the increase. Table 8 indicates that only 11.6 per cent of organisations reported fewer volunteers today than they had 10 years ago (or since the inception of the organisation). However, this may reflect the natural growth of the organisation and may not necessarily be an indication that the overall number of volunteers relative to organisational size has increased. We have no information on the demise of organisations during this period.

**TABLE 8 : CHANGES IN NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS
OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS***

Change in volunteers	No. of organisations (N=429/501)	% of total organisations
More	186	43.4
Fewer	50	11.6
About the same	193	45.0
Total	429	100.0

* Or since inception of the organisation if less than 10 years old.

Volunteer Training

One-third of NGWOs provide formal pre-service or in-service training for volunteers (Table 9). Given the increasing responsibility for service provision placed on the voluntary sector, one might expect the number to be higher. Organisational income may account for this low level, but even among high income (over \$1 million) organisations only one third provided training. This is the same as the average for all organisations (33.7). The organisations with the lowest incomes (less than \$5,000) provide less training than the average of all organisations (just over 25 per cent of these organisations provide training). However there is no obvious reason why it is the organisations in the income categories \$10,000 – \$25,000 and \$25,000 – \$50,000 which provide the most training (50 per cent and 45 per cent of organisations in each respective income category provide training). The organisations whose major source of income was from government (federal, state, local) were not more inclined to provide training for volunteers than

other organisations. Similarly organisations whose main source of income was from their own sources (investments, fundraising and donations, membership i.e. subscriptions, fees for service etc.) provided the average amount of training for volunteers. However the 8.6 per cent of organisations who obtain the largest share of their income from external sources (parent organisation, private firm or trusts, other organisations) provided relatively more training for volunteers than the other organisations. Over half (58 per cent) of these organisations, compared to the average of 33 per cent, provided some form of in-service training.

The Australian experience of volunteer training contrasts with the situation in the United States where recruitment and training programmes are very sophisticated and often geared to a 'voluntary career'. This is reflected in demands for reimbursement for expenses, tax deductions for volunteer time, insurance protection, and even a Volunteers Bill of Rights (Baldock, 1983). By comparison, about one-half of Australian organisations provide some form of in-service training for paid staff (Table 9).

TABLE 9 : IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Training	Volunteers (N=489/501)		Paid Staff (N=353/365)	
	No. of orgs.	% of orgs.	No. of orgs.	% of orgs.
For all	80	16.4	72	20.4
For most	34	7.0	44	12.5
For some	50	10.2	60	17.0
Not provided	325	66.5	177	50.1
Total	489	100.0	353	100.0

Provision of volunteer training does not vary markedly depending upon the main goal of the organisation. NGWOs concerned with community organisation, action development provide training in more than 40 per cent of these organisations. NGWOs whose main goal areas are physical and mental health, family and personal wellbeing and justice, protection and safety provide training in about one third of organisations. NGWOs whose main goal is basic material

needs provide training in about 25 per cent of organisations.

Volunteers and Paid Staff

Eighty-six per cent of all NGWOs have volunteers and 56.5 per cent have both volunteers and paid staff. It is of interest to note that of those organisations with paid staff, 88 per cent have both volunteers and paid staff (Table 10).

TABLE 10 : ORGANISATIONS WITH VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF
(N = 568/592)

		Volunteers		
		Yes	No	Total
Paid Staff	Yes	321	43	364
	%	(56.5)	(7.5)	(64.0)
	No	169	35*	204
	%	(29.8)	(6.2)	(36.0)
Total		490	78	568
		(86.3)	(13.7)	(100.0)

* probably includes organisations which are very small - one or two people who are not paid but do not see themselves as volunteers and did not respond in the survey as such.

In the majority of organisations (64 per cent) volunteer numbers represent over three quarters of total staff numbers (paid and volunteer). In 36 per cent of organisations there are no paid staff, so volunteers represent 100 per cent of total staff. Even excluding these organisations, there are another 29 per cent of organisations in which volunteers represent over 75 per cent of total staff (Table 11).

**TABLE 11 : VOLUNTEERS AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL STAFF
(FULL TIME PAID, PART TIME PAID AND
VOLUNTEER) BY ORGANISATION**

Proportion	Number of Organisations (N=459/501)	% of Total Organisations
$\leq 25\%$	53	11.5
26 - 50%	55	12.0
51 - 75%	56	12.2
76 - 99%	132	28.8
100%	163	35.5
		} 64.3
Total	459	100.0

It is somewhat misleading to consider volunteers as a proportion of total staff without taking account of the time spent by volunteers in relation to time spent by paid staff. Volunteers work for about 4 hours per week on average. Full-time paid staff work about nine times this amount per week. Thus we should compare volunteer time to paid staff time. Unfortunately, we do not know what amount of time is spent by part-time staff, so our comparison is confined to volunteer time and full-time paid staff time. Table 12 shows that in one-third of organisations volunteers represent over 75 per cent of total staff (paid full-time and volunteer). However volunteer hours as a percentage of total hours (full-time paid staff hours plus volunteer hours) represent less than 25 per cent of total staff hours in the majority of organisations (62.4 per cent). Only 4.6 per cent of organisations with full-time paid staff and volunteers depend on volunteer time for over 75 per cent of their total time.

TABLE 12 : VOLUNTEER NUMBERS AND VOLUNTEER HOURS AS PROPORTIONS
OF FULL TIME PAID STAFF NUMBERS AND FULL TIME PAID
STAFF HOURS

Proportion	Volunteer Numbers		Volunteer Hours	
	No. of organisations	% of organisations (N=218/257)	No. of organisations	% of organisations (N=218/257)
≤ 25%	46	21.1	136	62.4
26 - 50%	50	22.9	47	21.6
51 - 75%	48	22.0	25	11.5
Over 75%	74	33.9	10	4.6
Total	218	100.0	218	100.0

The most frequently occurring combinations of numbers of volunteers and numbers of paid staff in organisations are shown in Table 13. Of all organisations 20.7 per cent have no paid staff and between five and twenty volunteers. The median income for these organisations is \$3,125. Another 12.4 per cent of organisations have between one and five paid staff, between five and twenty volunteers and a median income of \$26,250. The third most common type of organisation has no paid staff and only one to four volunteers with a median income of \$2,900.

**TABLE 13 : COMBINATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF IN
ORGANISATIONS RANKED ACCORDING TO RELATIVE
FREQUENCY**

Volunteers and Paid Staff	No. of Organisations (N=459/501)	% of Total Organisations	Median Income ¹ of Organisations
5-20 Volunteers No paid staff	95	20.7	\$ 3,159
5-20 Volunteers 1-5 paid staff	57	12.4	26,250
1-4 Volunteers No paid staff	31	6.8	2,900
1-4 Volunteers 1-5 paid staff	28	6.1	29,167
21-50 Volunteers 1-5 paid staff	27	5.9	23,125
21-50 Volunteers No paid staff	26	5.7	4,333
5-20 Volunteers 6-10 paid staff	25	5.4	90,625
51-200 Volunteers 1-5 paid staff	21	4.6	37,500
5-20 Volunteers 21-50 paid staff	15	3.3	37,500
1-4 Volunteers 6-10 paid staff	12	2.6	100,000
Other	122 ²	26.5	N/A
Total	459	100.0	33,824

¹ Median income derived from grouped data.

² These 122 organisations are from combinations which, individually, represent less than 2.5 per cent of all organisations.

Activities of Volunteers and Paid Staff

The predominant activity for both volunteers and paid staff is direct service provision, occupying 36.3 per cent of volunteers' time and 48.5 per cent of paid staff time (Table 14).

**TABLE 14 : MEAN PROPORTION OF TIME SPENT BY VOLUNTEERS
AND PAID STAFF IN VARIOUS ORGANISATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Mean proportion (%) of time spent by			
	Volunteers	95% CI*	Paid Staff	95% CI*
Committees	18.8	16.5-21.4	4.8	4.1- 5.5
Administration	19.1	16.8-21.4	25.6	22.5-28.7
Fundraising	9.4	7.8-11.0	3.8	2.8- 4.8
Direct services	36.3	32.8-39.8	48.5	44.6-52.4
Wider community activity	8.0	6.5- 9.5	9.5	7.7-11.3
Other activities	7.4	5.4- 9.4	6.9	4.7- 9.1
Total	100.0		100.0	

* 95% confidence interval

Contrary to popular belief, volunteers spend only 9.4 per cent of their time on fundraising. This may reflect the fact that many non-government welfare organisations in Australia obtain a large proportion of their funds from government. However in organisations which receive no government funds, volunteers spend only 20 per cent of their time on direct service.

This pattern of activity reflects the findings of an American study (United Way of America, 1974) which revealed that the largest percentage of volunteers - 83 per cent - were in direct programmes, compared to fundraising (12 per cent) and policy setting through work on boards and committees (5 per cent). In Ireland, Griffiths et al (1978:33) reported the principal area in which volunteers contribute is provision of some form of direct service to clients. A relatively small number of organisations involve their volunteers in fundraising; an even smaller number have volunteers performing executive or clerical tasks. These findings differ markedly from the most frequently

reported use of volunteers in Kramer's study of voluntary agencies for the handicapped in four countries - England, United States, Israel, Netherlands. He reports fundraising, not direct service to clientele as the major activity of volunteers (Kramer, 1981:200). This may be explained by the more specialised nature of service activity in the disability area.

The amount of time spent by volunteers on direct service varies substantially depending on the main goal area of the organisation (Table 15). On average only 7.5 per cent of volunteers' time is spent on direct service in organisations dealing with the environment compared to 53.3 per cent of time spent by volunteers in justice and protection organisations. There is a similar disparity in time spent on direct services by paid staff. Eighteen per cent of paid staff time is spent on direct service in environment organisations; 59.6 per cent of paid staff time is spent on direct service in justice and protection organisations. There is a high rank order correlation between proportions of time spent on direct service by volunteers and paid staff in particular types of organisations.

TABLE 15 : MEAN PROPORTION OF TIME SPENT BY VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF ON DIRECT SERVICES ACCORDING TO THE MAIN GOAL AREA OF THE ORGANISATION

Main Goal Area of Organisation	Mean proportion of time spent on direct services by	
	Volunteers*	Paid staff*
Employment and income	19.3	52.3
Health	42.5	57.7
Basic Material Needs	33.3	50.8
Education	34.1	56.3
Environment	7.5	18.0
Justice, Protection	53.3	59.6
Family, Personal Well Being	40.5	51.9
Community Organisation, Action Dev.	25.8	26.9
Other	44.3	37.0
Total	36.3	48.5

* Significant between group differences at 0.05 level

The larger the number of volunteers in the organisation, the greater is the proportion of their time spent on direct service (Table 16). Volunteers in organisations with between one and four volunteers spend on average, 32.2 per cent of their time on direct service; in organisations with between 501 and 1,000 volunteers, they spend 78 per cent of their time on direct service. There is no significant difference between the amount of time spent by paid staff on direct service and the number of volunteers in the organisation. Paid staff in all organisations spend, on average, 48.5 per cent of their time on direct service.

**TABLE 16 : MEAN PROPORTION OF TIME SPENT BY VOLUNTEERS
AND PAID STAFF ON DIRECT SERVICES ACCORDING
TO THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE ORGANISATION**

Number of volunteers in Organisation	Mean proportion of time spent on direct services by	
	Volunteers ¹	Paid staff ²
1-4	32.2	53.3
5-20	31.0	48.7
21-50	39.2	49.2
51-200	53.3	43.6
201-500	48.5	31.3
501-1000	77.5	41.0
Total all organisations	36.3 ³	48.5 ⁴

¹ Between group differences significant at 0.05 level.

² Between group differences not significant at 0.05 level.

³ 95% confidence interval is 32.9 - 39.7.

⁴ 95% confidence interval is 44.6 - 52.4.

Sex of Volunteers

Nearly 60 per cent of all organisations have a volunteer component which is predominantly or all female; 12 per cent have predominantly or all male volunteers and 28 per cent have an equal number of males and females (Table 17).

TABLE 17 : SEX OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers used by organisation	% of Organisations (N = 427/501)	
All Male	3.5	} 11.7
Predominantly Male	8.2	
All Female	21.3	} 59.7
Predominantly Female	38.4	
Equal Male and Female	28.6	28.6
	<u>100.0</u>	

Other Australian studies (Horsburgh, 1972:28; Hamilton-Smith, 1973: 1958; Paterson, 1982:97) show this same trend. American data indicate higher rates of female than male participation in volunteer work (U.S. Department of Labour, 1969; ACTION, Office of Public Affairs, 1974). British data reveal little differences between the sexes (Wolfenden, 1978:68) except for small numbers of women who reported 10 hours or more voluntary work in the preceding week. These were women who were not in the paid labour force.

Our survey showed that the areas of work with which women were mainly associated were health, education and family and personal well being; for men the main areas of involvement were the environment, justice and protection (Table 18). American data reflect a similar pattern of affiliation - women outnumbered men two to one in the combined areas of health, education and social welfare; men volunteers outnumbered women by nearly two to one in the combined areas of justice, recreation, civic/community action (ACTION, Office

of Public Affairs, 1974). The evidence suggests that female participation in volunteer work is geared towards the needs of other household members or other families' needs. Male participation on the other hand is more self oriented or more broadly community oriented reflecting men's own work and leisure activities.

TABLE 18 : SEX OF VOLUNTEERS BY GOAL OF ORGANISATION

Main Goal Area	% of Organisations with all or predom- inantly male volunteers	% of Organisations with all or predom- inantly female volunteers	Total no. of Organisations
Employment and income	16.7	25.0	12
Physical and mental health	9.4	71.8	85
Basic material needs	24.3	43.2	37
Education	-	85.7	28
Environment	44.4	44.4	9
Justice, protection safety	29.4	23.6	17
Family and personal well being and development	8.9	63.0	135
Community organisation, action development	9.7	52.8	72
Other	-	71.4	7
Total No.	47	240	402
% of responding organisations in each group	11.7*	59.7*	100.0

* These percentages do not sum to 100 because there are 28.6 per cent of all organisations (not in table) which have equal numbers of male and female volunteers.

There are two characteristics of volunteers evident from other surveys which were not tested in our survey, but which are important to an analysis of volunteerism. They are, first, that women volunteers are not usually in the paid labour force. Paterson (1982:101) found a significant negative relationship between women's voluntary work and paid employment in Australia. Similarly in the United States, a national study by the Manpower Administration of the United States Department of Labor (1969) found that almost two-thirds of women volunteers were not in the labour force at the time of the survey. Men volunteers, on the other hand, are usually in the paid labour force. Paterson (1982:101) found a significant positive relationship between male voluntary work and paid employment. The United States Department of Labor (1969) found that 85 per cent of men volunteers were employed.

Second, volunteering, like the early forms of charitable work, is class based. The majority of women volunteers in formal organisations are from the middle and upper class (Smith, 1975) when class is measured in terms of husband's occupation or father's socio-economic status. Male volunteers are mainly professionals, managers and officials (Douglass, 1965, quoted in Smith, 1975). Data on income, education and occupational status is also positively related to membership, participation and leadership in voluntary organisations, suggesting that male volunteers are predominantly from the middle and upper class (Smith, 1975).

Sex of Volunteers, Paid Staff and Management Committees

It is of interest to note that while 60 per cent of organisations have volunteers who are all or predominantly female, and that 68.2 per cent have staff which are all or predominantly female, only 30.8 per cent of organisations have management committees which are all or predominantly female. If there is any sense of hierarchy in activities of management committees, paid staff and volunteers it seems that women are at the lower end of that hierarchy. Table 19 shows the sex and role breakdowns and it shows that more organisations have all or predominantly male management committees than either mixed or female management committees. This is notable only when comparing with other activities as one reads across the rows in Table 19.

TABLE 19 : SEX REPRESENTATION OF VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS IN ORGANISATIONS

	Volunteers	Staff	Management Committee	Members
All or predominantly Male	50 (11.7%)	41 (14.7%)	142 (38.4%)	62 (15.9%)
All or predominantly Female	255 (59.7%)	191 (68.2%)	114 (30.8%)	154 (39.5%)
Equal Male and Female	122 (28.6%)	48 (17.1%)	114 (30.8%)	174 (44.6%)
TOTAL	427 (100.0)	280 (100.0)	370 (100.0)	390 (100.0)
	N=427/501	N=280/501	N=370/501	N=390/501

Thus it appears the decision-makers of the organisations are mostly men, while the performers of services (paid and unpaid) are mostly women. This is borne out in the data. Of the 142 organisations (38.4 per cent) which have an all or predominantly male management committee, 59 (42 per cent) have all or predominantly female volunteers - 22 of them are health organisations, 19 are family and personal well being organisations. These 59 organisations also have high incomes. Thirty-six of the 59 (61 per cent) have an income of \$100,000 or over. This is a much higher proportion of organisations in this category than the average for all organisations taken as a whole (28.3 per cent). Thus the management committees which are predominantly male are primarily concerned with the large, well financed organisations.

Organisations with no Volunteers

A brief comment should be made on the organisations with no volunteers. Of the 592 responding organisations, 501 or 85 per cent claim to have volunteers; leaving 91 organisations with no volunteers. When specific details on the characteristics of organisations with no volunteers were sought

there were only 79 valid cases for which data were available. Of these 79 organisations, 35 had no paid staff and no volunteers. This confirms our belief, stated earlier, that organisations have different conceptions about the meaning of the word 'volunteer'. People attach connotations to the word and may only consider volunteers to be the subordinate, passive people who undertake tasks defined for them by others. Thus a small organisation with no paid staff, but organised and run by a small group of unpaid people, may not regard these people as volunteers.

This confusion about the definition of an organisation with no volunteers makes us wary of any data we have on the characteristics of these organisations. Also if there are only 44 remaining valid cases with paid staff and no volunteers, it is difficult for us to make generalisations from such a small sample.

3. A REVIEW OF SOME OF THE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN FOR THE PHENOMENON OF VOLUNTEERISM

While approximately 10 per cent of the adult population are involved in voluntary work, the phenomenon is rarely questioned or examined carefully. Given our social service futures, it is important to understand what explanations might be offered for volunteer activity. This final section reviews some common explanations of why people perform volunteer work. In accord with this being a working paper, the explanations suggested are offered as a basis for more careful probing and analysis. The nature of the survey reported in the previous chapter was such that explanations are not able to be derived from the data. Consequently the discussion which follows is not a discussion based on our research, but rather on the research of others, and is put together in an attempt to raise provocative questions and hypotheses from which further exploration might emerge. Four explanations are discussed, explanations based on altruism, participatory democracy, labour market segmentation, and women's position in the family.

Theory of Altruism

Altruism is often proposed as a major explanation for volunteer activity. In his famous work The Gift Relationship, Titmuss claims that helping has an innate basis and that 'if we accept that man has a social and biological need to help, then he should not be denied the chance to express this need by entering into a gift relationship' (Titmuss, 1971:125). His classic example, of course, was the voluntary giving of blood.

There is no doubt that many people are basically altruistic. The long history of volunteerism, (Manser and Cass, 1976) and the occurrence of gift giving in small, non-industrial as well as advanced industrial societies is evidence of this. However this cannot be used as a complete explanation, for if volunteerism is simply an expression of a human biological function, then why is volunteerism more common among certain groups of people? For instance, why do women comprise the majority of volunteers? Are women intrinsically more altruistic than men?

The limitations of this argument are obvious when couched in biological terms - especially the assumption of biological determinism. However the belief that women are more tender, compassionate, protective and nurturing is all too pervasive and has been very successful in convincing women that

performing service is their primary function. It reinforces the notion that women belong in the home and that all their work is a logical extension of this primary nurturing trait (Gold, 1971). Adams (1971) describes this as a 'compassion trap'.

This explanation of volunteerism is problematic because it looks only at the exchange relationship between individuals, and not at the effects of that exchange on groups or classes of individuals, i.e. the social causes and effects of the exchange. It ignores the issue of why certain groups of individuals are predominantly givers and other groups are predominantly receivers. It ignores any class relationship between groups of individuals.

Theory of Participatory Democracy

A second explanation for the existence of volunteerism in our society stems from the proposition that volunteerism is the 'cornerstone of democracy' or as Brian Dixon, former Victorian Minister for Social Welfare, put it in 1977: 'Volunteerism is to democracy what blood circulation is to an organism'. According to this view, volunteerism is an integral part of any democratic society because it is seen to limit the power of the state. It represents freedom of expression; it is the means by which the people can influence or participate in the decision making of government.

Participation may be at the heart of an ideal theory of democracy (Pateman, 1970) but in practice it does not involve people in the decision making process of government. As an explanation of volunteerism, participatory theory is not very satisfactory. First it ignores what volunteers actually do. Volunteers usually undertake tasks defined for them by the organisation in which they work, and volunteerism thus is based on a high degree of co-operation. The nature of participation is such that outcomes are rarely altered. According to our survey, tasks performed by volunteers are usually a form of service provision and they are not usually change oriented. Second and more importantly, volunteers are not usually involved in the decision making of their own organisation, let alone the decision making of government. Thus the meaning of participation is blurred - the distinction is not made between the two forms of participation - service oriented participation and participation in decision making processes. A general plea for citizen participation is ambiguous. It implies that such participation will keep the ideal of democracy (rule by the people) alive. However, in effect, it is a means by which citizens are

expected to perform unpaid public service (Eriksson-Joslyn, 1973-4: 160-1).

Theory of Labour Market Segmentation

A third explanation of volunteerism has been given in terms of dual labour market theory. The basic hypothesis is that the labour market is divided into two essentially different sectors: a primary and a secondary sector. The primary sector offers jobs with relatively high wages, good working conditions, career structure, employment stability. The secondary sector offers jobs which are low paying, have poorer working conditions, offer little chance of advancement, are unstable and have a high turnover (Piore, 1971).

A connection has been drawn between domestic labour, volunteer labour and paid labour using this theory. The link between domestic labour and paid labour is that the role of women in the home makes them unlikely candidates for entry into the primary labour market. This is so because the time spent at home reduces their marketable skills and their chances of competing with men in the primary labour market. Cora Baldock (1983) extends this analysis to the relationship between volunteer work and paid work. She suggests that volunteer work is an extension of the secondary labour market in that it is temporary, requires limited or no training, and has no recognised career path. She further hypothesises that there may be a relationship between the movement of volunteer labour into the paid labour market during times of economic expansion, signifying the existence of an industrial reserve army - a cheap expendable labour reserve which can be called on in times of economic growth and dispensed with in times of economic recession.

Unlike the previous two explanations for volunteerism, this approach does recognise the importance of class and gender in the analysis of volunteerism. The connection between volunteer labour, domestic labour and women's role in the secondary labour market provides a plausible explanation for why volunteers are mainly women.

The difficulty with the explanation is that it does not deal with class differences among women. According to this view women are seen as a segment of the working class because of their position or potential position in the secondary labour market, and as part of the industrial reserve army. This may represent an accurate general description of women in terms of their paid job

status, but it is not useful in the analysis of women volunteers, the majority of whom are not in the paid labour force. The class position of women not in the paid labour force is usually ascribed on the basis of father's socio-economic status or husband's occupation.

Empirical data of this nature show that women volunteers are predominantly middle or upper class (Smith, 1975; Johnson, 1981). This information is important in an explanation of volunteerism. It is critical to an understanding of the origins of philanthropy which was essentially a form of patronage to the poor by the middle and upper classes. It is also critical to an understanding of volunteerism today as it suggests that women from the middle or upper class today either have the choice to undertake paid work; or have the money to buy services to assist with their domestic labour if they do work; or have flexible jobs (part time) that are amenable to doing volunteer work in addition to their other work. Moreover, women from the middle or upper class may see volunteerism as an activity they should engage in for ideological reasons that have persisted from the past when charitable work attested to their class position. Working class women, who do not have these options and probably have to work to supplement the family income, albeit in the secondary labour market, probably do not have the time to undertake volunteer work. Their paid labour, together with their domestic labour precludes them from performing volunteer work.

Thus it seems that any explanation of volunteerism which assumes the homogeneity of women's position, is too simple. Labour market segmentation theory does this by ascribing women's class position on the basis of their actual or potential status in the paid labour market. However as the majority of women volunteers do not have paid work, it is important to look at characteristics that distinguish them from women who do. (Labour force participation rates in 1979 for unmarried women were 45 per cent; and for married women 41.3 per cent (ABS, 1980)).

Another problem with dual labour market theory is that it was developed in relation to the private industrial sector of the economy. Its applicability to the service sector and more specifically to the state sector has not yet been determined. It is in the services sector and in particular in the public sector that growth in women's employment has occurred. Between 1970 and 1980 for example the number of women employed in the public sector in Australia grew by 110%. Of every 100 working women, 30 worked in the public sector in 1980 compared with 16 in 1970 (Jamrozik and Hoey, 1981, 13). In his

examination of the NSW public service, Wilenski (1977) showed that the great majority of women are employed in health, education and community and social services. In the provision of services it is therefore difficult to draw a strong link between women's volunteer work and work in the secondary labour market. It is not clear whether the concepts and characteristics of the primary and secondary labour markets are applicable to the state service sector.

When dual labour market theory is adapted to explain female volunteer labour (Baldock, 1980, 1983) it focuses on women's position in the paid labour market. Baldock (1983) does acknowledge that a pool of volunteer female labour, attached to the secondary labour market, is dependent upon the sexual division of labour in the family and that both volunteer work and paid work depends upon the continuation of women's position in domestic labour. However, she defines the class of women volunteers in terms of their paid labour market status. This is implicit in the argument that female volunteers are part of a secondary labour market and it is central to the proposition that female volunteers are flexible and expendable pools of labour (an industrial reserve army) subject to fluctuations in the paid labour market. Thus the explanation for the position of female volunteer labour is given in terms of the internal dynamics of the labour market. This focus on women's position in the paid labour force, rather than on the origins of this position and its dependence on unpaid labour, limits its strength as a satisfactory explanation, but opens the way for further empirical investigation.

Women and the Family

The majority of services and policies of the Welfare State support the notion of a traditional family and a pattern of 'normal' relationships between the sexes and the different generations within the family. The wife is primarily the 'carer' and takes the responsibility for the sick, old, disabled and the young. Certain support services are regarded as legitimate and seen as a basic right. They are dispensed by the state on a universal basis, although in present times there is a concomitant implicit assumption that the state is unnecessarily taking over these service functions from the family.

Women, as we saw earlier, are often employed in 'caring' roles. Consequently a large number of women work in the welfare and community services fields, particularly in the public sector. With cuts in service provision many women are seeking and providing volunteer services, and to

support notions of 'reducing big government' 'cuts in public spending' 'taking greater personal responsibility', women are bearing the brunt. Not only are those who are not in the primary labour market the most vulnerable in the job market, they are the most likely to be providing those part time support services, and will probably continue to do so, on an unpaid basis because of our society's inbuilt dependence on the caring and support roles provided by women, whether paid or unpaid.

This comes about as a consequence of women's place in the family. A review of the extensive literature in this area reveals that the sexual division of labour originated and is perpetuated within the family unit, shaped by patriarchal authority and subsequently refined by industrialisation. This has resulted in women being primarily domestic, unpaid labourers though with industrial change over time, taking a place in the wage market as well.

Women's paid work is seen to be secondary (often by them) and is tailored to suit the needs of their family - children, husband, elderly parents, sick and disabled members. Women are dependent upon their husbands and their class position is determined by his occupation and the lifestyle his income can afford (Cass, 1977). The state upholds the structure of the traditional family through its welfare policies (Cass, 1982) and women's dependence is reinforced by inadequate child care facilities (Sweeney, 1982), and certain taxation provisions (Keens and Cass, 1982).

Women volunteers reflect their position in the family in that volunteering is an extension of their domestic labour - caring, tending, nursing. Volunteering, it can be argued, maintains the sexual division of labour by reducing the threat of bored housewives who may attempt to compete with men in the paid labour market (Cantor, 1978; Chesler and Goodman, 1976). It replaces parts of the Welfare State by picking up the pieces that the state neglects, absorbing more and more of the responsibility as cuts bite more deeply.

An explanation which recognises the position of women within a patriarchal social structure is more satisfactory than the theories of altruism and participatory democracy, and even more satisfactory than a theory of labour market segmentation because it focuses on the sexual division of labour as being the major variable determining the position of female labour in both the paid and unpaid labour force.

In conclusion it will be apparent that each of these attempts at an explanation is incomplete and even taken in varying combinations, do not explain satisfactorily, the complex phenomenon of volunteerism. For instance, even if we agree that the sexual division of labour, which has originated in the family, determines why women volunteer, it does not really explain why men volunteer. Moreover, a logical outcome from this explanation is that women should not undertake volunteer labour as it reinforces the sexual division of labour, and extends the amount of women's unpaid labour. However volunteerism is full of its own contradictions. Given the position of women in the family and the sexual division of labour, volunteerism represents an escape, an outlet for women. It can lead to the acquisition of skills that may be transferable to a paid labour position; it provides experience outside the home which may instill confidence and self esteem among women who would otherwise remain bored and isolated; it can mean the provision of services which would otherwise not be available; it has the potential for having a powerful politicising effect which has resulted in some of the past and present moves towards social change for women.

It would be naive to conclude that volunteerism is mostly exploitive for women and that there are no positive benefits. Women who undertake volunteer labour may be wholly self interested, whether it be to build their own self confidence or to avail themselves of services and be involved in activities which would otherwise not be available.

It is clear that any search for explanations is an onerous task, but an important one in the analysis of the contemporary Welfare State. To pursue further any of these partial explanations of volunteerism, requires considerable empirical work. This might be achieved by undertaking a systematic, detailed study of volunteers themselves. Interesting data would include details of volunteers' paid employment and its relationship to their unpaid work; class and status of women and their family; nature of tasks performed by volunteers and the overlap with tasks performed by paid workers, and the dependence of our service structures on volunteers.

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