

# Motivations for Volunteering with Women’s Organizations Pre-Analysis Plan

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## Overview

What drives individuals to volunteer with women’s organizations? Further, when choosing an organization to volunteer with, under what conditions do volunteers choose what kinds of issue-areas to spend their time on? Women’s organizations rely on volunteers to function and provide resources to the intended benefactors. Most of the literature focuses on the relationship between voluntary associational life, referred to as civic participation, and the composition of these groups and their effects on democratic citizenship and political engagement. However, existing research does not disaggregate what motivations drive that decision, the type of volunteer organizations citizens choose to engage with, or what issues within those organizations individuals are more likely to volunteer their time in supporting. Building on this work, we seek to analyze what specific motivations lead individuals to volunteer for women’s organizations and what types of women’s issues individuals are more likely to support.

This project begins to address this gap by examining the effects of individuals’ personal experiences, social networks, and political backgrounds have on their motivation to volunteer in the first place. Secondly, we analyze how these factors affect whether individuals will volunteer for a women’s organization. And finally, we develop a theory around preferences for the type of women’s issues individuals are more likely to volunteer their time. We expect that individuals’ preferences regarding the issues they volunteer for are related to their political activity, with more politically active and knowledgeable individuals more likely to prefer working with organizations that focus on structural issues as opposed to addressing individual needs. To evaluate this claim, we have conducted 41 interviews with women’s organizations in the Western, Finger Lakes, and Central regions of New York and will conduct a nationally representative survey experiment on CloudResearch.

## 1. Pre-Analysis Plan

In this pre-analysis plan we pre-register a set of primary analyses for our paper tentatively titled “Motivations for Volunteering for Women’s Organizations.” This study uses interview data and a survey experiment to determine what drives civic participation specifically for women’s organizations.

By reporting our design, coding choices and expectations before seeing the results, we hope to mitigate concerns about these subjective coding decisions and potential “p-hacking”, and therefore enhance the causal credibility of the study’s findings. We note that we are only pre-registering the paper’s main hypotheses, which we commit to reporting in the paper. Any deviations from the pre-analysis plan will be noted and explained in the paper.

This pre-analysis plan outlines the project’s motivation, the main hypotheses, the data collection procedures, data sources, and the research design to perform the statistical analysis. We attest that at

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the time this document was registered we have not conducted the survey experiment (we are still in the process of programming the conjoint in Qualtrics) and thus have not conducted any of the statistical analyses. The authors very much welcome any questions or comments from interested readers.

## 1.1 Theory and Hypotheses

What drives individuals to volunteer with organizations that focus on women's issues? The literature on motivations to volunteer has pointed to individual-level factors such as beliefs, career development, and egoism, as well as group-level factors such as group membership to explain individuals' drive to volunteer (Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan 2009; Butt et al. 2017). Moving beyond the initial decision to volunteer, how do 77.34 million adults choose the organizations to which they donate their time? This project aims to understand how individuals conceive of and make decisions about their volunteer labor by investigating both the substance and the structure of women's organizations. We focus on individuals who volunteer with women's organizations, defined as civil society organizations comprised primarily of women, with an overt focus on women's issue and/or gender equality and a feminist agenda (OECD 2016).

Most of the literature focuses on the relationship between voluntary associational life, referred to as civic participation, and the composition of these groups and their effects on democratic citizenship and political engagement (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005; Kloffstad 2016). But before we can make this association, it is important to understand what drives individuals to volunteer in the first place. In a study of women participants from the Center for American Women and Politics' leadership program, volunteers viewed their service as a "morally pure alternative" to participation in "the messy, dirty, compromise-filled world of politics" (Walker 2002). Yet, other research has established a link between volunteering and political efficacy, as well as a link between women's empowerment and political participation (Rai 1999; Moghadam and Senftova 2005; Cueva Beteta 2006; Kloffstad 2016). Women's organizations are often concerned with gender-based violence, reproductive health and justice, and gender equality—topics that have clear political and policy implications. Do volunteers see their work with women's organizations as political, or is service an "alternative" to politics?

Building on this work, we seek to analyze how individuals find volunteer opportunities and formulate preferences regarding the issues that organizations focus on and the framings they adopt. We expect that individuals' personal experiences, social networks, and professional backgrounds have important implications for the type of organizations to which they dedicate their time. Further, we hypothesize that individuals who are more politically active are more likely to link political motivations to their volunteer work and select organizations that address issues from a structural perspective. To investigate this claim, we have conducted 41 semi-structured interviews with individuals that volunteer for women's organizations in western and central New York over Zoom, and we plan to conduct a nationally representative survey to test whether our findings are generalizable to a national population and civil society beyond women-specific organizations.

Our second puzzle focuses on the structure of women's organizations. We compare the motivations of individuals who volunteer with different kinds of women's organizations. Organizations vary in terms of their issue-area focus (e.g., domestic violence, reproductive health, economic empowerment, etc.), as well as religious and political affiliations, and geographical focus. Further, organizations vary

in terms of the scope of their efforts. Some groups, such as the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, aim to pursue state or national policy changes that address social problems on a structural scale. Other groups, such as local domestic violence advocacy centers or Junior League chapters, organize volunteer efforts on a more localized basis to address individual or community needs. All of these organizations focus on women's issues, so how do individuals decide where to donate their time?

To complement our qualitative findings and address our second puzzle, we will administer a conjoint survey experiment that will test individuals' willingness to engage with hypothetical organizations that vary in terms of religious affiliation, political affiliation, level of operation, and issue focus, with some organizations addressing injustices on an individual basis (e.g. "Providing economic preparation and professional support") and others incorporating a more politicized, structural approach (e.g. "Addressing the gender pay gap"). This survey will complement and build from our initial findings from our qualitative component by collecting generalizable descriptive data on political awareness, organizational preferences, and motivations to volunteer. For example, in our interviews, we found that many individuals had a strong preference for volunteer organizations that did not have a political affiliation. Our conjoint experiment will provide quantitative data to confirm this preliminary finding and further investigate the link between politicization and volunteerism.

The goal of this project is to understand how individuals make decisions about volunteering, and why some choose to volunteer with women's organizations, specifically. A second goal is to focus specifically on whether individuals link their political views with their volunteering, and whether that link emerges in the types of issues— structural or individual—that those individuals are more likely to support. The insights generated from this research are valuable not only for civil society recruitment, but also for understanding what individuals see as worthy of their time and the most effective way of addressing gendered political and social issues.

We expect that individuals' preferences regarding the issues they volunteer for are related to their political views, with more politically active individuals more likely to prefer working with organizations that focus on structural issues as opposed to addressing individual needs. We also hypothesize that individuals' personal experiences, social networks, and professional backgrounds have important implications for the type of women's organization they will be volunteering for. Our hypotheses are below:

**H1: Individuals that find volunteering political are more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the macro-level.**

**H2: Individuals that identify as feminist are more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the macro-level.**

**H3: Individuals that identify as feminist are more likely to support women's organizations that have no religious affiliation.**

**H4: Individuals that volunteer with national organizations are more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the macro-level.**

**H5: Individuals that volunteer with local grassroots organizations are more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the micro-level.**

**H6: Individuals that volunteer with local grassroots organizations are more likely to support women's organizations that have no political affiliation.**

**H7: Individuals that have more political knowledge are more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the macro-level.**

**H8: Individuals that identify as religious are more likely to support women's organizations that have a religious affiliation.**

**H9: Individuals that identify as politically conservative more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the micro-level.**

**H10: Individuals that identify as politically liberal more likely to support women's organizations that address women's issues at the macro-level.**

## **1.2 Heterogenous Preferences**

Though we expect these preferences to exist at the aggregate level, we nevertheless anticipate there to be heterogenous trends across key sub-groups in the civilian population—specifically, age. We describe each below.

First, we expect age to influence individual's preferences for macro- versus micro-level issue areas. This expectation follows numerous studies that have identified variation in public spending preferences based on both life-cycle effects and cohort effects, with older individuals more likely to support increased education spending but also be ambivalent on spending for health and social security (Fullerton and Dixon 2010; Sørensen 2013; Street and Cossman 2006). The reason for this variation across age groups may be linked to lower levels of social capital, trust, and fear of social problems among younger generations, or older generations' preferences for less individual autonomy in decision-making (Reed and Mikels 2008; Schwadel and Stout 2012; Trzesniewski and Donnellan 2017). Following this logic, we expect that older individuals are more likely to have a preference to volunteer for women's organizations that address macro-level issues, and younger individuals are more likely have a preference to volunteer for women's organizations that address micro-level issues on an individual basis. Therefore, the macro- and micro-level issue preference may be moderated by age in these expected directions.

## **1.3 Research Design**

Building on existing qualitative data that we conducted through semi-structured interviews in the Western, Finger Lakes, and Central regions of New York, we are seeking to complement these efforts by conducting a nationally representative survey experiment. Our survey will gather descriptive data about whether respondents volunteer and their motivations for volunteering with distinct women's organizations based on issue-area focus. We will administer a conjoint survey experiment that will test individuals' willingness to engage with hypothetical organizations that vary in terms of religious affiliation, political affiliation, and issue area-focus. A quantitative component will allow us to make

broad generalizations about volunteerism across broad religious and political affiliations and distinct issues that affect women.

In order to understand individuals’ preferences for volunteer organizations, we conduct a conjoint experiment that is embedded in online, nationally-representative surveys that ask individuals about their volunteer status. Conjoint experiments are useful over other experiments because they allow us to directly control exposure to each independent variable of interest and test several causal relationships present across a number of hypotheses (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). The design of the conjoint experiment allow us to more accurately represent real-world decision-making than other experiments (Hauser 2007). The table below demonstrates our attributes, levels, and operationalization for our conjoint experiment.

	<b>Women’s Organization A</b>	<b>Women’s Organization B</b>
Religious affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious</li> <li>• Non-religious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious</li> <li>• Non-religious</li> </ul>
Political affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliated with a political party</li> <li>• Not affiliated with a political party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliated with a political party</li> <li>• Not affiliated with a political party</li> </ul>
Level of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across the country</li> <li>• In your community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across the country</li> <li>• In your community</li> </ul>
Issue area focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening justice and services to domestic violence victims</li> <li>• Providing support and resources for victims at domestic violence shelters</li> <li>• Improving women’s health policies</li> <li>• Providing accessible and affordable women’s health screenings</li> <li>• Addressing the gender pay gap</li> <li>• Providing economic preparation and professional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening justice and services to domestic violence victims</li> <li>• Providing support and resources for victims at domestic violence shelters</li> <li>• Improving women’s health policies</li> <li>• Providing accessible and affordable women’s health screenings</li> <li>• Addressing the gender pay gap</li> <li>• Providing economic preparation and professional support</li> </ul>

The conjoint experiment will be administered as part of an online survey conducted on Qualtrics administered by CloudResearch. A power analysis, described in detail in section 1.5, shows that the study is well-powered. The respondent pool is a nationally representative sample of US adults. The study has been approved by the Cornell University IRB.

Upon consenting to participation, recruited respondents will answer a set of background demographic questions followed by the conjoint experiment. Respondents will be presented with two pairs of hypothetical women’s organizations, thus completing four “choice tasks.” The profiles for the women’s organizations will be presented side-by-side, with each pair displayed on the same screen. Following Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014), the attributes will be presented in a randomized order that is fixed across the two pairings for each respondent to minimize cognitive burden and primacy and recency effects.

After selecting if they volunteer, respondents will be asked to view both profiles of the hypothetical women's organizations and asked two questions that will serve as the primary outcome measures for this study. They will first be asked to choose which women's organization they would prefer to volunteer their time and skills for (Outcome 1), and then asked an open-ended text question asking them to describe why they made that decision (Outcome 2). In the pilot, we will include after each round in the conjoint a follow-up question for further elaboration on why they chose the organization they did. Based on the utility of these results compared to the mental expenditures required of the respondents to answer them, we will include this question or, alternatively, a Likert Scale regarding organization favorability in the final survey.

Alongside this conjoint experiment, the survey includes standard demographic, pre-treatment questions to accurately place respondents into each of the previously identified subgroups for heterogeneous variation and to estimate baseline characteristics across other demographics such as the respondent's sex, socio-economic status, political party identification, religion, and prior volunteer status.

## 1.4 Analysis

We will conduct the main statistical analysis using the *joint: AMCE Estimator for Conjoint Experiments* package in R. This statistical function calculates the average, conditional, and interactive effects and assumes uniform randomization of attribute levels with no profile restrictions, which is the case for our study (Strezhnev et al. 2017). We will report estimates for four types of estimands, which are standard conjoint experiment analyses:

1. **Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE):** the marginal effect of each of our three randomized attributes, averaged over the joint distribution of the remaining attributes.
2. **Conditional AMCE:** the AMCE conditional on five respondent-varying characteristics of interest (respondent's gender identity, gender ideology, party identification, prior volunteer experience, and political knowledge) which are measured pretreatment.
3. **Average Component Interaction Effect (ACIE):** the AMCE for two randomized attributes varying on the different issue-area focuses of the volunteer organization.
4. **Conditional ACIE:** the AMCE for two randomized attributes varying on the different issue-area focuses of the volunteer organization, conditional on the respondent's gender identity, gender ideology, party identification, prior volunteer experience, and political knowledge.

We will report standard errors clustered at the level of the respondent for our estimates except in the case of the conditional AMCE where we will be examining effects conditional on respondent-varying attributes.

Following the structure of conjoint experimental design, we will construct a standard forced choice conjoint experiment design for our study using Schuessler and Freitag (2020)'s guidelines to calculate the appropriate sample size. With an AMCE value of 0.5 (conventional value), and a power value of (at least) 0.8 (conventional value), the Minimum Effective Sample Size (MESS) is equal to 9,371. We specify the following information:

- Number of attributes: 4

- Number of levels within each attribute: there are two levels within religious affiliation, two levels within political affiliation, two levels within level of operation, and six levels with issue-area focus
- Number of respondents: 1200
- Number of choice tasks per subject: 4

The details of the design declaration are included in Appendix 1. The results from 100,00 simulations of this conjoint experiment show that the study is well-powered (power is greater than 0.80) for the main estimand of interest (AMCE) for each attribute level. The minimum number of respondents (sample size) is equal to 1,171.

## 1.5 Sampling

Surveys will be administered via online using CloudResearch's Prime Panels. CloudResearch is a widely used academic and marketing survey firm that provides nationally representative samples for research. This online platform has access to millions of high-quality respondents across the United States and have a good reputation of succeeding a high response rate, ensuring inattentive users are not present in our study (CloudResearch, n.d.).

## 1.6 Research Ethics

Institutional review board (IRB) is the minimum requirement necessary to meet our institutions' ethical standards in order to conduct research. The surveys have undergone review from Cornell University's IRB. We do not expect there to be any contentious or sensitive reactions to the survey questions or conjoint experiment. We are also administering this survey online and do not expect the current pandemic to affect survey administration and completion.

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## Appendix 1

### Simulations and Power Analysis

#### R-code

```
#Power Analysis for PAP: Motivations for Volunteering with Women's
Organizations

# from https://github.com/m-freitag/cjpowR/blob/master/R/amce.R
# additional info: https://github.com/m-freitag/cjpowR

if(!require(devtools)) install.packages("devtools")
```



```

library(devtools)
devtools::install_github("m-freitag/cjpowR")
library(cjpowR)
library(cjoint)

# Calculate minimum EFFECTIVE sample size (MESS) for 3 attributes
# (Religious Affiliation, Political Affiliation, Issue Area Focus),
# 6 levels (maximum number of levels across any attribute = Issue A
# rea Focus), 2 profiles, and 3 tasks, amce effect of 0.03 - 0.05),
# and standard 0.8 power

df2 = cjpowr_amce(amce = 0.05, power = 0.8, levels = 6)

# MESS: n = 9371.562

# note: MESS != true sample size; MESS = the number of respondent
# s * the number of individually assessed profiles per task * the n
# umber of tasks.

# Thus, dividing MESS by (the number of profiles per task * numbe
# r of tasks) gets true number of respondents (n)

df2$n/(2*4)
## [1] 1171.445

# Result if 3 times per respondent: n = 1561.927 minimum number o
# f respondents

# If we know that the REAL sample size is 1200, then MESS = 1561.
# 927 x 2 x 3 = 9,371.562

# Result if 4 times per respondent: n = 1171.445

# If we know that the REAL sample size is 1200, then MESS = 1171.
# 445 x 2 x 4 = 9,371.562

# Confirm power of 0.8 by inputting MESS value into n for:
cjpowr_amce(amce = 0.05, n = 9371.562, levels = 6)
##           power           type_s exp_typeM amce           n alpha levels
delta0

```

```
## 1 0.8000009 1.200702e-06 1.124967 0.05 9371.562 0.05 6
0.5
```

```
# Power = 0.8000009
```

```
library(plotly)
```

```
#interactive plot (change amce amounts (currently at 0.05) and le
vels (current highest conjoint level for a single attribute is 6)
based on nature of conjoint)
```

```
cjpowr_amce_vec <- Vectorize(cjpowr_amce)
```

```
d <- expand.grid(amce = c(0.05), n = seq(from = 100, to = 50000,
length.out = 1000))
```

```
df <- t(cjpowr_amce_vec(amce = d$amce, n = d$n, sims = 100000, le
vels = 6, alpha = 0.05, delta0 = 0.5))
```

```
df <- data.frame(df)
```

```
df[] <- lapply(df, unlist)
```

```
#Plot
```

```
plot_ly(df, x = ~n, y = ~power, type = 'scatter', mode = 'lines',
linetype = ~amce) %>%
```

```
  layout(
```

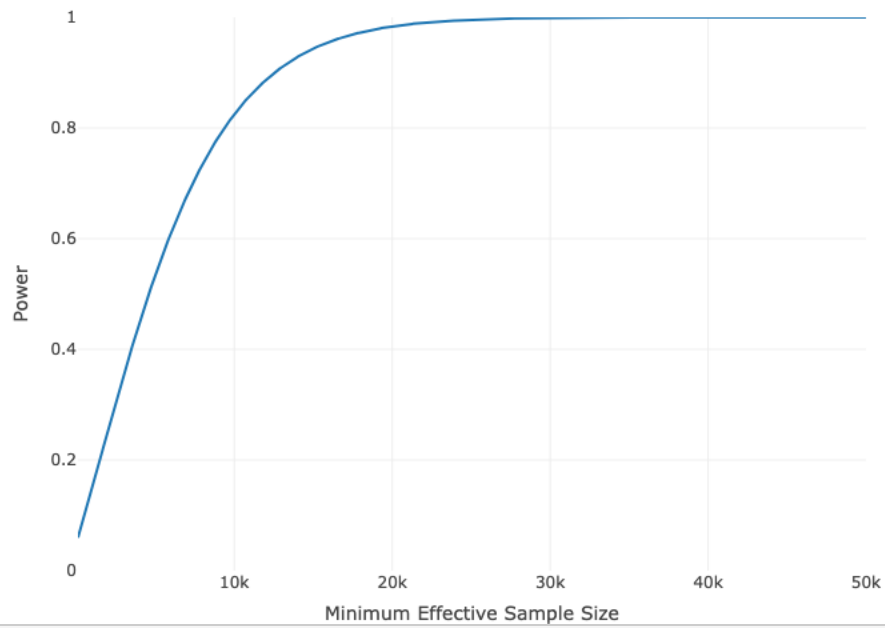
```
    xaxis = list(title = "Minimum Effective Sample Size",
                 zeroline = F,
                 hoverformat = '.0f'),
```

```
    yaxis = list(title = "Power",
                 range = c(0,1),
                 zeroline = F,
                 hoverformat = '.2f'),
```

```
    legend=list(title=list(text='<b> AMCE </b>')),
```

```
    hovermode = "x unified"
```

```
  )
```



*# Confirm:  $MESS = \text{total respondents} * \text{number of profiles} * \text{number of tasks}$ ; for amce of 0.03 and power of 0.8;  $MESS \sim 9371.562$ ; thus  $9371.562 / (2 \text{ profiles} * 4 \text{ tasks}) \sim 1200 \text{ respondents}$*