Original Article

Why give?: Exploring social exchange and organization identification theories in the promotion of philanthropic behaviors of African-American millennials at private-HBCUs

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ABSTRACT African Americans give a larger percentage of their disposable income to non-profits than any other racial group, including Whites. However, there is a lack of literature on Black giving to higher education. This lack of research is particularly acute in our current state of decreased funding to higher education. This case study of the United Negro College Fund's (UNCF) National Pre-Alumni Council (NPAC) explores how organizational identity and social exchange theories apply to African-American students and young alumni of the millennial generation at private-historically Black colleges and universities. The study includes 25 interviews of NPAC participants and advisors from 13 institutions, representing one-third of the UNCF. This research broadens our understanding of how African Americans in the millennial generation

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think about and choose to act philanthropically and the role that Black colleges play in the cultivation of these behaviors.

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INTRODUCTION

Questions of what motivates alumni donors to give to their alma mater are abundant among college and university advancement officers and researchers (Leslie and Ramey, 1988; Ostrander and Schervish, 1990/2008; Frank, 1996; Schervish, 1997/2008; Hodgkinson *et al*, 2002; Worth, 2002). Social psychologists contend that prosocial behavior, or voluntary actions toward others, can be learned and encouraged through external actions and situations (Eisenburg, 1982; Schroeder *et al*, 1995). Therefore, it is possible to enhance and encourage the likelihood of alumni donations. Prosocial behavior theory offers a conceptual foundation for exploring how colleges and universities might influence future philanthropy.

The future of philanthropic giving to higher education lies with an institution's young alumni and current students. Therefore, exploring how colleges and universities cultivate students and young alumni to be future donors is important. The millennial generation, those born between 1982–2001, approach college, philanthropic giving and engaging with others in many different ways from past generations (Oates, 2004).

Engaging students and young alumni early have myriad benefits for the future. Building on continuity theory (Atchley, 1989), which states that established patterns are more likely

to be followed, Okunade and Justice (1991) and Lindahl and Winship (1992) find that past donative behavior is correlated with current and future giving practices. Nancy Dysart (1989) suggested that all colleges encourage future alumni to participate in development campaigns to remain viable. Further, alumni giving major- and leadership-gifts later in life more often than not begin donating to their alma mater before their tenth reunion (Cascione, 2003).

This case study investigates how the National Pre-Alumni Council (NPAC) of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) helps foster students and young alumni's 'bond to alma mater' and commitment to racial uplift. Further, it examines how this organizational identity leads to philanthropic participation – both service and monetary – to their alma mater, the UNCF and larger community. In this article, I will first explore social exchange and organizational identity theories as they are currently constructed. Next, I will demonstrate how these theories fail to address the unique aspects of historically Black colleges and universities – more specifically the importance of racial uplift, or self-help within the Black community, in the cultivation of prosocial behaviors within the Black college alumni. I will then apply these theories and their promotion of prosocial behaviors of members

of the millennial generation at UNCF member institutions.

PHILANTHROPIC THEORIES – THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Beyond prosocial behavior and continuity theories, social exchange (Cook and Lasher, 1996; Kelly, 2002) and organization identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992) theories help explain the cultivation and relationship necessary for successful fundraising from alumni. However, current research fails to look at these theories within the African-American communities, or more specifically within the private historically Black college and universities (HBCUs) context. Exploring donor motivation theories within the African-American community is important as the growing body of philanthropic literature shows that philanthropy and fundraising in communities of color is approached differently than in the majority community (Smith *et al*, 1999; Petty, 2002; Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003) in which these motivation theories were initially explored. Further, the Council on Foundations (1999) found that additional philanthropic research was needed to investigate philanthropic theory within minority communities.

The focus of this study is the NPAC of the UNCF. NPAC is a student alumni association, in which participants fundraise and build alumni relationships for their institutions for their alma mater (Tipsord Todd, 1993). In this case, NPAC has an additional layer encouraging involvement in the UNCF beyond the students' alma maters. NPAC's

mission is to teach students about the importance of giving, and more specifically the needs of HBCUs. NPAC uses various techniques, including the use of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and racial uplift, through encouraging service within local African-American communities, in order to engage and cultivate their participants and the greater student population in prosocial behaviors (Drezner, 2008). This case study of the NPAC informs our knowledge on how prosocial and donative behaviors are instilled in African-American college students and young alumni using organization identity and social exchange theories.

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Relationship marketing and social exchange theory are often seen as the conceptual foundation of fundraising. The relationship fundraising model in development is derived from marketing theory (Burnett, 1992/2002; Kelly, 1998). Relationship marketing is defined as 'establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges' (Hunt and Morgan, 1994, p. 20); in other words, relationship marketing is the idea of establishing long-term relationships with alumni in order to maintain their loyalty, involvement and donations (McKenna, 1991; Kotler, 1997; Gamble *et al*, 1999). Relationship marketing is predicated on the benefit of customer retention and a customer's lifetime value to a company (Buttle, 1996; Sargeant and McKenzie, 1998). This idea is easily combined with continuity theory (Atchley, 1989) to suggest that those who have established

giving relationships are likely to give repeatedly (Piliavin and Charng, 1990; Okunade and Justice, 1991; Lindahl and Winship, 1992).

Building relationships between the institution and its current and prospective donors is arguably the most important aspect of successful solicitation of the largest gifts. In the past, fundraising offices relied on transaction-based marketing. Each year, donors were asked to give and a series of one-time transactions took place. Relationship marketing changes fundraising strategy from a series of one-time transactions to a focus on donor lifetime value (Sargeant and McKenzie, 1998).

Cook and Lasher (1996) and Kelly (2002) used social exchange theory to explain the interdependent relationship that exists between donor and alma mater. Under this model, alumni donate when they understand that their interests align with the needs and interests of the institution. Kelly (2002) finds that, 'based on social-exchange theory, the mixed motive model of giving describes two levels of donor motivation: (1) raising the amount of common good ... and (2) receiving some private good in return' (p. 46). These mixed motives, evident in social exchange theory, align with the intrinsic and extrinsic influences of prosocial behavior where donors and volunteers participate for various reasons (Harbaugh, 1998).

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AND ORGANIZATION IDENTIFICATION

Organization identification, a part of social identity theory, occurs when an individual defines himself or herself by

an organization. In the context of higher education, 'I am a student at ...' or 'I am an alumna of ...' are examples of organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggested that college alumni conceptualize organizational identification perfectly because:

- (1) College can be considered a 'holographic organization' (Albert and Whetten, 1985), that is, one where members share common organization-wide identity and are less likely to experience competing demands from, say, department-level or occupational identities, and
- (2) since alumni constitute a particularly critical source of support for colleges, alumni identification is likely to strongly affect the welfare of their respective alma maters. (p. 104)

Mael and Ashforth (1992) proposed correlates of organizational identification, in which aspects of both the institution and the individual feed into an alumnus' organizational identity, which then leads to an 'organizational consequence' of him/her supporting his/her alma mater (Figure 1). Using social identity theory as a basis, Mael and Ashforth (1992) predict that alumni identification with their alma mater corresponds to participation in gift campaigns, alumni relations events and encouraging others to attend the institution. They find that distinctive and prestigious institutions have positive effects on organizational identity. Institutional tradition and prestige were also found as factors that influence alumni contributions (Leslie and Ramey, 1988).

Figure 1: Proposed correlates of organizational identification (revised from Mael and Ashforth, 1992, p. 107).

Additionally, Mael and Ashforth (1992) identified individual characteristics that affect a person's organizational identity. They found that time spent at the institution, the existence of a mentor, overall satisfaction and perception of the alumnus/a's time at the college or university (sentimentality), all have positive effects. An alumnus/a's kinship with their alma mater is often an important motivator in giving. This connection between alumni and their alma mater is often used by development officers when soliciting donations. Mael and Ashforth's (1992) model predicts that having a positive institutional identification leads alumni to make a donation to their alma mater. However, not all alumni with positive feelings about their college or university choose to support the institution financially or through service after graduation.

Mael and Ashforth's organizational identity theory does not take into account the unique aspects and mission of HBCUs. HBCUs are

predicated on uplifting the race (Gasman, 2007). Black colleges perhaps have a better opportunity to create the personal and organizational identity that Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggest. Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) found that:

For many Black-college alumni, the bond to alma mater is formed long before they arrive on campus – especially in the case of legacies The college is 'alma mater' in the truest sense because it nurtured them much like a mother and gave them skills that they might not get elsewhere in a White-dominated society. If nurtured and re-kindled regularly, the surrogate parent image can be beneficial to institutional fund raising; if neglected, it can be devastating to alumni giving. (pp. 37–38)

Further, they noted Black college alumni's 'sentiments of honor, devotion, and duty' (p. 36). In their

study, Black alumni repeatedly used language such as ‘nurturing’ and ‘culturally uplifting’ to describe their college experiences (Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003, p. 36). According to their study, advancement officers at Black colleges recognize this ‘incredible bond’ and work to harness these emotions, directing students into alumni involvement as volunteers and donors (Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003). It is this ‘bond to alma mater’ and the UNCF that the NPAC wants to develop and enhance through stimulating the interest and participation of students enrolled at member institutions (Wanga, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODS, DATA COLLECTION AND MODES OF ANALYSIS

Qualitative methods allow for the investigation of emerging ideas and in the creation of new theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Creswell, 2003). Further, through qualitative methods we are able to understand the context of a situation and the influence of the environment or personal background on participants’ actions (Merriam, 1988; Maxwell, 1996). The vast majority of the philanthropic literature is based on large-scale quantitative surveys and does not focus on how individuals are encouraged to participate in donative and prosocial behaviors. The decisions to act in a prosocial way and to make gifts to one’s alma mater are complex phenomena.

Current theories on prosocial behavior do not take into account the unique nature of fundraising at HBCUs or the philanthropic traditions within the African-American

communities. Taking into account my interest in exploring social exchange and organizational identity theory with respect to African-American millennial giving, the lack of literature on philanthropy and specifically African-American giving, and the limitations of the current theories on prosocial behavior, I performed a case study to explore these questions.

Case study methodology allows for the exploration of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This method was appropriate given my interest in understanding the ‘contextual conditions’ that instill philanthropic and donative behavior among African-American college students (Yin, 2003b). The results of this case study are not generalizable to all institutions of higher education as the case is influenced by a number of specific and unique factors. In fact, case studies are not intended to be generalizable (Merriam, 1998). Rather, my goal was to identify strategies that may be particularly effective in imparting the importance of and a culture of giving to African-American college students at HBCUs (Merriam, 1998).

DATA COLLECTION

Multiple sources of data were gathered for this case study, including institutional documents, interviews with students and advisors, and observations (Stake, 1995; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Yin, 2003a). The primary and secondary source analysis included institutional documents (such as *The Torch*, the NPAC newsletter and NPAC fundraising manuals) and national fundraising reports (such as *Giving USA* and the Voluntary Support for Education annual studies).

Table 1: UNCF member colleges represented in the study

<i>Member college</i>	<i>Location</i>
Bennett College	Greensboro, NC
Bethune-Cookman College	Daytona Beach, FL
Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta, GA
Edward Waters College	Jacksonville, FL
Huston-Tillotson College	Austin, TX
Jarvis Christian College	Hawkins, TX
Johnson C. Smith College	Charlotte, NC
Lane College	Jackson, TN
Oakwood College	Huntsville, AL
Texas College	Tyler, TX
Tougaloo College	Tougaloo, MS
Wilberforce University	Wilberforce, OH
Wiley College	Marshall, TX

The primary and secondary source analysis along with informal conversations and observations added context to my study.

I used purposeful sampling to select those I interviewed. Maxwell (1996) defines purposeful sampling as a 'strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices' (p. 70). Purposeful sampling might be seen as a limitation; however, it was necessary here to study the unique aspects of NPAC's effect on students' prosocial and donative behaviors. While the students and their actions were the focus of this study, the other stakeholders were viewed as 'linked samples' that helped me gain further insight into the students' motivations as donors (Light *et al.*, 1990). Further, including the views of multiple shareholders helped me crosscheck information. Crosschecking was done by comparing interview transcripts and institutional documents with one

another. Interviewing multiple stakeholders ensured that my findings were 'adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population' (Maxwell, 1996, p. 71). This study included 25 1–1½ hour interviews including 21 students and four NPAC advisors from 13 institutions, representing one-third of the UNCF member colleges (see Table 1). I continued interviewing until saturation was achieved (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

FINDINGS

Understanding the mission and purpose of the organization

Students and advisors agreed that the original purpose of the NPAC stemmed from two goals: (1) creating a connection between students and the UNCF and institution, and (2) teaching students how to be supportive and active alumni upon graduation. All those interviewed commented that the aim of NPAC was to help establish and foster stronger ties between the students, the UNCF and the institution that would last long beyond their time on campus, with the ultimate goal being financial support of both the UNCF and their alma mater.

One way that NPAC accomplishes the first goal of creating a connection between students and the UNCF and institution is through programming. The campus pre-alumni councils and the national organization develop and manage programs that create and maintain student traditions. Examples of these programs on the campus-level are 'PAC Awareness Week', Miss UNCF pageants, fashion shows, community service projects and

homecoming. On the national level, the largest program is the annual joint National Alumni Council and National Pre-Alumni Council conference held in February. Each of these programs has become a tradition, in which students raise money from fellow students and the local community to support the UNCF. Through these programs there is often education as to how the UNCF supports the institution and thereby the students and how these funds are necessary to maintain the daily functions of the colleges.

Throughout my interviews, it was clear that participants understood the purpose of NPAC and how to communicate that purpose to others. One senior at Edward Waters College (Jacksonville, FL) described the primary purpose of NPAC as

to engage pre-alumni in the activities of the college, to introduce them to the type of alumni activities that will be involved in once they've graduated and really to inspire and motivate them to give back once they have graduated so that they will be active alumni once they have graduated from the institution. (Personal communication, 8 January 2008)

A former NPAC president and student at Bethune-Cookman College (Daytona Beach, FL) focused more on the fundraising aspect of the organization, noting the importance of teaching students about how the UNCF supports their education and therefore, the importance of supporting the College Fund. She notes:

The mission is to stimulate the interest of each institution,

meaning the historically Black colleges, to understand what UNCF does for our schools, for them to be active so they can fundraise for their school because United Negro College Fund gives back to our schools. For \$1 that we give them, they might give us \$2 back, so it's really important and not too many students know what UNCF does for the institution. A lot of the institutions wouldn't be opened if it wasn't for UNCF. (Personal communication, 19 January 2008)

Participants understood that giving and fundraising for the UNCF could be viewed as investing in their own and others' educations.

Understandably, pre-alumni council advisors, usually development officers at the institution, were more specific about the importance of engaging the students in fundraising and thinking about philanthropy as the main goal of the organization. A former advancement officer at Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte, NC) saw the NPAC as a way to 'make students aware of their soon to be responsibility as alumni of the institution' (Personal communication, 1 November 2005). He went on to say that his mission with regard to the PAC at Johnson C. Smith was:

to educate students about philanthropy and how important philanthropy is to higher education the role that philanthropy played in their own personal education even if they were a full paying or a full tuition paying student, philanthropy still played a role in them being able to get the

education that they were getting at Johnson C. Smith University. And then second to educating them about philanthropy, it was to really prepare them to become alumni and what would be expected of them as alumni in terms of giving back to their institutions. (Personal communication, 1 November 2005)

Other advisors share similar views of the mission of NPAC, emphasizing it is the responsibility of alumni to maintain the institution after they leave the campus walls.

Students interviewed showed a true understanding of the importance and the impact that philanthropy can have on the UNCF, their alma mater and the larger African-American communities. Many students – particularly those most heavily involved in the organization as either an executive board member on the national or institutional level – found the role of the Council not only to serve the UNCF and their institution, but also their community. One Tougaloo College senior spoke of the historical importance of HBCUs to their local communities and how the NPACs continue this strong symbiotic relationship:

The ultimate goal of [NPAC is] giving back to the *alma mater*, the UNCF, and the local community. HBCUs have a strong history of being very active in the communities in which they're placed in. That's a tradition that the UNCF has carried on, a tradition that HBCUs have carried on. So when we're talking about financial benefit, we want

the colleges to be financially strong, we want the UNCF to be financially strong, and we want the communities that the colleges are in to be financially strong and that the people in those communities feel supportive of the institutions that surround them. (Personal communication, 9 January 2008)

NPAC, on national and local levels, encourages students to participate in community service projects in the surrounding communities. Projects include facilitating pre-college programs at local high schools, repairing local churches and tutoring (personal communications, various dates). Specific examples include: (1) adopt-a-class, where participants work with a primary or secondary class and implement activities that have educational and/or historical component; (2) health disparities forums, where students choose a health issue that affects their community and invite experts to share information on the topic with fellow students and the local community; and (3) high school visitation days, in which local secondary students are invited to the campus for a college tour and information about the UNCF and other member institutions (Personal communications, 10 November 2005; 10 January 2008). The high school visitation days project grows out of the goal to 'assist [the National Alumni Council] in its aim to encourage young people to attend College Fund/UNCF member institutions' (Personal communication, 8 November 2005). All of the programs described by participants were within the local African-American

Figure 2: Former UNCF logo used from circa 1972–2007.

communities and predicated on racial uplift.

The strength and impact of NPAC

Students involved in the national executive board not only demonstrated a deep understanding of the mission and purpose of the organization, but also appreciated the impact of the student alumni association. Many used lofty language to explain the importance of NPAC within the UNCF. For example, a former NPAC president and student at Tougaloo College said ‘PACs [pre-alumni councils] are vital because they help to strengthen the “flame” one person at a time’ (Personal communication, 4 February 2008). The ‘flame’ refers to the torch logo of the UNCF (Figures 2 and 3). A vice-president and senior at Wilberforce College went further and said, ‘The PACs are the heart and soul of the UNCF; without the Pre-Alumni, the UNCF would not function at its best’ (Personal communication, 4 February 2008). Another former NPAC president looked at the organization as a means to effect the next generation of UNCF institution students, stating that, ‘It [NPAC] is an opportunity to hold the gate of opportunity open for all those that are coming after us, as someone held it open for us’

(Personal communication, 4 February 2008).

Other interviewed students focused on the day-to-day purposes of NPAC when speaking about its importance within the UNCF. A former regional director of the national executive board and senior at Huston-Tillotson University (Austin, TX) simply asserted that ‘Pre-Alumni Councils are a vital importance to UNCF. Pre-Alumni Councils are used to get students involved with UNCF’ (Personal communication, 4 February 2008). A former Miss UNCF and senior at Wiley College (Marshall, TX) noted ‘PACs establish a direct connection between the students and the organization that has helped their schools exist for many years’ (Personal communication, 8 January 2008).

Some students directly referenced giving in their responses, as did a junior from Oakwood University (Huntsville, AL): ‘PACs stimulate interest and fundraising for the UNCF member institutions in a way that no other entity can’ (Personal communication, 4 February 2008). Another student and former national secretary from Texas College (Tyler, TX) mentioned that NPAC ‘prepares students to smoothly transition from pre-alumni to alumni by teaching them the importance of giving back’ (Personal communication, 4 February

Figure 3: Current UNCF logo used from 2008 to the present.

2008). Another executive board member from Wiley College described how this was done through ‘preserve[ing] and further[ing] loyalty and fellowships between the colleges, their faculty and staff members, students and alumni’ (Personal communication, 4 February 2008).

Bond to alma mater and the UNCF

Student alumni associations, such as the UNCF’s NPAC, are able to harness that identification and successfully solicit their member’s support. Further, this organizational identification, or school spirit, is often a predicate to future alumni giving. One advisor from Edward Waters College (Jacksonville, FL) mentioned that ‘On a school level we’re attempting to get the students focused on supporting the institution before they graduate from the college. I see it as a vehicle and a means to really get them to fall in love and stay in love with the institution’ (Personal communication, 8 January 2008). Further, as a former president of NPAC from Clark Atlanta University stated, ‘If you’re involved with their institution and you generally have a love for your institution

then you’re going to be involved as an alum’ (Personal communication, 9 January 2008).

It is this school identity that NPAC seeks to build upon and cultivate through their programming (Personal communication, 10 November 2005). A former southwestern regional director of NPAC and a junior at Tougaloo College, who was not on a UNCF scholarship, identifies the ‘bond to alma mater’ and the UNCF as:

a lifetime of insurance for me. Owing to its support, I realize that education is the key to success, a bus to a brighter future for our people. Without education, there is little that a person can do – actually there is not a lot a person can do without an education. Through the UNCF I have been able to build my education, to strengthen it and to replenish it. We must continue to be knowledge seekers and we must strive for a better life through education and support of the United Negro College Fund. (Personal communication, 10 November 2005)

Another former executive board member, from Bennett College (Greensboro, NC), ties her bond to the UNCF and NPAC further to the African-American experience:

[The] Pre-Alumni [Council] is significant on so many levels because it plants the mental seed and serves as a gentle reminder that our academic achievements and educational advancements are possible only because of the blood, sweat,

and tears shed by our ancestors. We, as African-Americans, as descendants of slaves and sharecroppers, as a people that once were not allowed to attend 'other' institutions of higher learning, owe it to ourselves and one another to maintain and sustain our own; at one point, it was all we had! (Personal communication, 10 November 2005)

She continues, noting that her involvement in the NPAC is as a scholarship recipient, which is 'a financial blessing', and sees her participation as 'one of the only ways I am able to reinvest a mere portion of what the organization has been vested in me' (Personal communication, 10 November 2005).

This 'bond to alma mater' is often a message used to directly connect the students to the philanthropic needs – both monetary and service – of the institution and the UNCF. At one institution they have developed a campaign within in the student body called 'Being an Alum from Day One'. As described by the Pre-alumni Council advisor at Lane College (Jackson, TN):

We're sending out a message that before you graduate we want you to know that you need to support your institution because once you start supporting the institution now, you'll be more inclined to support us once you graduate. So we're just sending that message out, sending the message out that you're here for a purpose and you're very fortunate and blessed to be a part of this institution and to receive this type of

opportunity and education. So it's important that you support us now, not only financially but also with your talent, time and your resources. (Personal communication, 7 January 2008)

One NPAC participant and former national executive board member from Tougaloo College noted that this school spirit is evident in how young alumni still connect with their alma mater. He describes evidence of this organizational identification, stating that:

They're in graduate school or what not but whenever they're home for break they're visiting the campus and they're walking around and going to classrooms. Even if they're in graduate school, if they're in Pennsylvania in graduate school, if they have a day off and there's a college fair somewhere, they will request material and they will go and set up a booth themselves and represent [our] College. (Personal communication, 9 January 2008)

Returning to campus and volunteering their time on behalf of their alma mater are simple ways that many young alumni interviewed remained close to their institutions. These actions were also noticed by current students interviewed. Students mentioned seeing alumni return to campus, not only for a homecoming weekend, and heard of others volunteering for college fairs and mentioned that they expected to do the same. From some students you could get the sense that it was what was expected from an involved 'good' alumnus or alumna.

Interestingly, this devotion extended beyond their alma mater to other member colleges of the UNCF. One student from Bethune-Cookman acknowledged: 'I love my school but it's not for everyone. Each school has the different areas of interest that is strong in the school, so if I'm not going to promote my school, I'm going to promote another historically Black college that's affiliated with United Negro College Fund' (Personal communication, 19 January 2008).

DISCUSSION

As mentioned previously, this study was guided by the theory that prosocial behaviors can be learned and enhanced as a person develops (Eisenburg, 1982; Ruston, 1982; Schroeder *et al.*, 1995). Additionally, organizational development theories and relationship marketing theories, along with an understanding of philanthropy in the African-American community, were used as lenses to examine NPAC's ability to enhance future alumni giving. As suggested by Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Mael and Ashforth (1992), I found that NPAC's use of organizational identity, or school spirit, combined with social identity and the use of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations influences student participation in both fundraising and giving. However, the encouragement of participating in acts of racial uplift – helping the African-American communities – through service beyond that of their alma mater played a significant role in the socialization of the students interviewed.

Bond to alma mater and the UNCF
Successful fundraising involves the donor feeling a personal connection

to the organization to which he or she is giving (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggest that organizational identification is easier to develop while a student is directly connected to his/her institution than after an alumnus/na has already graduated. This notion was corroborated by James P. Brawley, former president of Clark College, in a 1981 interview:

If you are going to develop responsive alumni you don't do it by talking to them when they are in their caps and gowns ready to go, and then expect them to respond by giving handsome gifts to the college ... the need is to develop a systematic plan for the alumni to contribute and stimulate their interest through what is done while they are at the college for four years, and if you don't get a good response out of them during those four years, the chances are 99[per cent] that you won't get much of a response after they have gone. (Brawley, 1981)

Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) contend that HBCUs instill a strong school spirit and identity among their students and alumni. As indicated by the interview responses in this study, the advisors of the institutional level NPACs understand this idea. The organizational identity of students in NPAC is bi-level, just as the organization is structured. NPAC enhances student identity both with their alma mater and the College Fund. The findings indicate a specific school spirit – for the student's alma mater – and one for Black colleges in general. An example of this was when

one student mentioned that she recruited not only for her school, but also for other HBCUs, if she thought that the prospective freshman would benefit more from a Black college other than the one she attends.

Understanding the mission and purpose of the organization

Beyond a connection or bond with their colleges and the UNCF, NPAC participants understood the importance of the work that both the UNCF and their alma maters do on their behalf and for the large community. According to Worth (2002), part of successful fundraising is communicating an organization's mission, purpose and needs to its donors and volunteers. In this case, students' understanding of what the NPAC does for the UNCF is vital to successful fundraising and instilling a culture of giving in other students. NPAC officers interviewed in this study were able to easily articulate how the UNCF benefits from their organization in short 'sound bites'. The ability to do so makes it more likely that they can engage other students on campus who might not have time or interest in listening to a more detailed description of the importance of the organization. Further, students' understanding and ability to explain how UNCF dollars benefit all Black college students is crucial to garner future support. Those who believe that they have benefited from prior voluntary support, whether through scholarship or other donations, often have a greater likelihood to donate themselves (Friedmann, 2003).

According to Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003), there is a common misconception on the

part of many HBCU alumni that the institution does not need support. Many alumni simply believe that their alma mater is strongly funded by the federal government and supplemented by corporations and foundations, and therefore not in need of alumni donations (Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003). By engaging students in organizations – such as NPAC – that encourage philanthropy and educate them about the UNCF's needs, students are more likely to take part in annual giving campaigns. Education on the institution's financial needs leads to a greater understanding of the mission and purpose of the UNCF and the member colleges. This notion is supported by Anita Friedmann's (2003) research, which shows that members of student-alumni associations at predominantly White institutions give more than their fellow alumni who were not involved as students.

Racial uplift as a means of organizational identity

What is perhaps most unique and not addressed in previous work on social exchange and organizational identity theories is the importance of racial uplift within the African-American communities, more specifically the continued importance of this within the millennial generation. The organizational identity of NPAC participants included identification with the overall missions of the UNCF and historically Black colleges – to uplift the race. Students repeatedly mentioned helping others in the African-American community or future African-American students as a reason why they enjoyed participating in NPAC or would continue to give in

the future. While others (Carson, 1993, 2001; Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003) have shown that African-American giving was and continues to be predicated on racial uplift in previous generations, this study shows that this concept is still an important motivation for African Americans in the millennial generation.

Paul Schervish (1997/2008) contends that 'To understand giving behavior in the total population, it turns out one should focus on understanding the community of participation' (p. 129). Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) build upon Schervish's findings. According to their research:

The crux of racial uplift is the belief that hard work and faith will overcome oppression – not only for the individual but for the entire African American community. Thus messages of racial uplift are reflected in helping future generations, tradition, and the overall mission of Black colleges. More often than not these ideas do not stand alone but are interconnected. (Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003, p. 23)

As indicated by my interview responses, the importance of racial uplift as a motivating factor to act in a prosocial manner is evident with the NPAC.

Student NPAC participants repeatedly mentioned that giving to scholarships to provide other African-American students with the opportunity to attend a Black college was a major reason why they choose to be involved in the organization. Providing scholarships in this case is a means of racial uplift. Beyond

giving directly to scholarships, there were multiple references to the torch that they wanted to pass on to future generations. As mentioned previously, the torch is the part of the logo of the UNCF (Figures 2 and 3) and is the name of the NPAC newsletter.

Throughout the interviews, participants displayed a sense of being involved in NPAC and making financial contributions to the UNCF and their alma mater in effort to 'give back'. Notably, my findings show this feeling of reciprocity was conveyed by both scholarship recipients and those not directly benefiting from the College Fund. On one level, this sense of 'giving-back' is consistent with other student alumni associations in which students report a 'feeling of reciprocity, giving back to the [institution] that helped them' (Friedmann, 2003, p. 109). However, this rationale for involvement is even more interesting when examining the motivation as a statement of racial uplift. Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) bring forward historical evidence and current research that supports the notion that Black donors are motivated to give or give back in order to promulgate racial uplift. Further, Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) find that Black college alumni often give 'to continue the legacy of ... Black college[s]' (p. 38). Giving to secure the future existence of Black colleges was evident in responses to in this study as well.

Encouraging other forms of philanthropy

According to interview participants, the importance and actions of racial uplift extended beyond scholarships

into the local community. As discussed earlier, NPAC encourages other forms of philanthropy that lead to an increased likelihood of giving to the UNCF and the student's alma mater. Rushton (1982) found that according to social learning theory, students involved in a group that encourages various forms of philanthropy (monetary, service and so on) have an increased socialization to the organization and stronger identity. As a result, their prosocial behaviors are increased. Further, Kang (2005) suggests that participating in other forms of philanthropy, such as donating time through community service while a student, has a positive effect on future giving.

My study adds to the understanding that prosocial behaviors can be supported and further developed. Advisors and students alike asserted that NPAC creates an environment where prosocial behaviors are encouraged through service and giving. Schervish (1993) would consider this a community of participation. NPAC expands this community of participation beyond the organization. Traditionally, a community of participation within a philanthropic context is found where greater education and understanding of the organization promote greater contributions and support. The fact that the NPAC encourages service to external organizations – mostly within the African-American communities – while having the mission to enhance giving to the UNCF is significant. Most colleges and universities, like other non-profits, do not encourage external support of other organizations for fear that it might reduce their institution's donations.

NPAC participants interviewed mentioned their education about the UNCF's needs and their community service as reasons why they plan to remain involved with the College Fund and their alma mater after graduation. The local community service projects that NPAC participants create or participate in demonstrate a commitment to racial uplift. Examples of these efforts include Tougaloo College's 'Share our Waters' project, Black college recruitment in predominantly Black high schools and work with local elementary schools to encourage college attendance. Little is known about the millennial generation's giving patterns and tendencies. However, Oates (2004) observed that this generation volunteers at a greater rate than generation X – the generation that preceded them. Participants in my study certainly see the importance of and give generously of their time through volunteer service. This service is encouraged by NPAC through promotion of helping the larger African-American community.

CONCLUSION

'I'm great with fundraising. I love to raise money, I love to organize things, and I love to get out in the community.' Former NPAC President and senior at Bethune-Cookman College (Personal communication, 19 January 2008)

The NPAC instills a culture of giving among students, honing their school spirit, exploring their want to advance African-American communities, and teaching them the importance of

philanthropy to the UNCF and their institutions while providing them the skills to fundraise. The challenge for the UNCF and the member institutions is to develop strategies that encourage greater prosocial behavior among students, coupled with appropriate volunteer and fundraising opportunities that can lead to greater giving in the future. The UNCF and institutional advancement officers at member colleges understand that fundraising and relationship building are long-term processes. Those involved acknowledge that beginning these processes while their constituents are students is both easier and potentially more fruitful than after their alumni have departed campus. However, the UNCF and the individual institutions must remain committed to cultivating young alumni after graduation in order to realize the true investments of their efforts with NPAC.

This study explored the impact of students' participation in NPAC on their prosocial behaviors, and how the organization instills a culture of giving that can result in enhanced alumni donations. Although it does not directly benefit the UNCF or the institution, NPAC's efforts to engage students in the planning and service of projects that help communities may instill a culture of prosocial behavior that will likely result in an increase propensity to give time or money to the UNCF or their alma mater. During interviews, students' passion when speaking about these projects was remarkable; throughout this study, participants spoke about the need to do work within the community and how it added to their college experiences and encouraged them to be involved in the NPAC.

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