Knowledge in the Service of Whose Society?

The Ethics and Social Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions within the Realms of Civic Engagement and Labor Policies

Senior Thesis Submitted to the Department of Cultural Anthropology
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Abstract:

In this thesis I explore the ways in which social responsibility and ethics are defined within institutions of higher education. I question whether the ethics that universities portray through their civic engagement endeavors correlate with the ethics displayed by their labor policies. My field site is located at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. My method for collecting data involved interviewing students, faculty, general employees, and administrators from the campus. I draw on Karl Marx’s theories of labor division and capitalism to examine the social framework of labor at Duke. Furthermore, I analyze the ethical environment of Duke through the lens of Emile Durkheim and critique the presumed collective consciousness of the university. Through my research, I discovered that while the university deploys students into the world with the hopes of eradicating social injustices, it perpetuates these injustices within its walls. Despite their idealism, universities are not immune to issues of race, class, status and gender. Duke University is a business. As such, profit, public image, and self-sustainability often sway its moral compass. Yet, a critique of the university’s ethics is complicated. First, the term “ethical” is merely empty rhetoric. Second, universities are not just self-profiting institutions of privilege but they can also serve as a positive resource for society.
Preface

What Is It That I Want To Talk About:

“Knowledge in the service of society,” (President Brodhead).

Coming to terms with my thesis topic was not an easy process for me. As a student and a former employee of the university, my roles within the Duke community were often in conflict with one another. There were moments when I felt empowered by the social insight and awareness I gained by having the experience of a general employee, while other times I felt a sense of discomfort in my role as a student because the very act of being a student meant that I was in some form or another contributing to the ethical inequalities and contradictions on campus. But this sense of embarrassment (if one may call it this) is not to imply in anyway that I did not often feel a sense of pride and privilege associated with my status as Duke student. While my search for a thesis topic was directed by my desire to find a topic that permitted me to combine my interests in business and cultural anthropology, it was my inability to fully comprehend my four year experience at Duke that led me to explore my path through these two shifting identities. Taking this train of thought one step further, I decided to focus my analysis on ethics. This meant understanding Duke not only within its community service persona and labor policies, but comprehending the ways in which Duke performs and adheres to an idea of social responsibility. The institution promotes a certain
image of social responsibility, social awareness, and ethics. These three aspects are supposed to directly influence and shape the motives of the university and its members, but these components aren’t always successful at clearly portraying the ethical perspectives of the institution and thus many people question the ambiguously structured motives of Duke.

There are many social constructs within the university that may perpetuate the very injustices that the university is trying to stop in the outside world. The very methods that the university uses to fight various inequalities in society outside of the institution contribute to disparities within the campus walls. An institution as large as Duke is itself a community, a community that is continuously growing with an abundant amount of resources, talents, and cultural perspectives. Yet even with all of these positives, as with any lively social organism, there are subtle and not so subtle nuances that are pivotal to the collective consciousness of the campus. But these nuances are often overlooked within the bigger picture of the greater good.

While no entity of higher education is perfect or is expected to ever reach perfection, in order to adequately advance towards “learning in the service of society,” (President Brodhead) there has to be critical and continuous analysis of the foundations of this initiative. Just as all human/community problems can not only be found abroad in third world countries but also domestically in the United States, not all social issues are found outside of the institution but rather exist within the very constructs of a university’s mission.

How does one go about working in a field site, especially one in which you live? Most would say that it should be as simple as asking someone for their thoughts and merely translating their words to paper. But this is often easier said than done. Luckily I had gained some previous experience and confidence with conducting interviews in my fieldwork
methods course. I discovered that the process of contacting administrators for interviews was quite simple. A quick email explaining my thesis topic, and why I felt that their particular position on campus would be beneficial to my research, and before I knew it I had several faculty and administrator interviews lined up. But contacting and convincing students and general employees to participate proved to be extremely difficult. I was not able to conduct any student interviews with people that I did not regard as friends. Students who I knew indirectly either from class or through others often failed to respond to my emails, or I would see them in person and they would toss about broken promises of contacting me. I came to realize that some people are probably just uncomfortable with interviewing, and I also took into consideration that I was forced to conduct interviews during the week of finals which made it tougher for people to commit. When reflecting on my interview process, it became apparent that some people were taken aback when they heard the topic of my paper. When students heard the term ethical used in my topic summary, they often tried to talk their way out of participating in the interview. Student's responses ranged from, “oh I am not involved with civic engagement at all, so I am probably not the person to ask but maybe you would want to try this person” to “I don’t think I will be able to provide any useful information, I mean it sounds interesting, but I don’t know if my opinions will be helpful especially with labor policies.” On the other hand my contact with general employees was only limited by my personal restraints. Often I would walk by several maintenance men talking together in the corner of the library, or a housekeeping lady would come into the library around 5:30 am in the morning to clean around me as I sat at a table doing work. But my own insecurities of not wanting to come off as just another Duke student wanting to use him/her for my own
selfish purposes prevented me from asking them for any help. I felt that in order to accurately portray my true motivations for wanting to interview them, and in order for me to gain their trust (since I would be questioning the taboo topic of labor conditions), I needed to form a personal relationship with them first, and then I could feel more justified for using their time. After I proposed my thesis topic to IRB I realized that the questioning of labor policies on campus was a taboo action. IRB’s reactions to my questioning of labor practices on campus were rather unpleasant, and they seemed to not see the connection between ethics and labor policies. Their point of views seemed quite bazaar to me because labor policies have everything to do with ethics. Furthermore, most general employees could only be contacted by means of face to face contact rather than through email. The stress of connecting with administrators and students was lessened by their access to various forms of technology which many general employees lack. Due to these obstacles my interviews with general employees were restricted to only four people, all of whom were women. I don’t know why, but I could never gather myself to approach male general employees for my research. At the beginning of my research I had contemplated interviewing one male general employee whom I had conversed with on several occasions, but I soon became uncomfortable with the idea after he made what I felt were sexual comments towards me. Oddly enough, most of the administrators that I contacted were male. Not that I had any choice, seeing as how the vast majority of administrators on campus are men, I think it is still important to note how forms of comfort conform to social standards. By this I mean that society teaches people what levels of comfort they can feel with certain types of individuals. For instance it is acceptable to be afraid of a black man wearing baggy jeans walking down the street at night, but through
forms of media we are conditioned to not fear a white man wearing a business suit walking down the street at night.

I have many hopes for this thesis. For me the process of writing a thesis did not only give me the chance to tackle a challenging and thought provoking assignment, but will allow me to create a piece of work that isn't just a reflection of myself, but a reflection of all the professors, friends, classes, family, and Duke experiences that have influenced and shaped the person that I am today. It is my intention that this paper provide insight into the ways in which we must constantly keep questioning ourselves and the environment/community/society around us, for it is when we stop questioning that we stop learning. If I open only one person's eyes on campus to the ways in which the hidden ethical contradictions within higher education communities (and really societies in general) are directly and indirectly affecting people's lives, I will have accomplished my task.
Introduction:

It was about 1:00 pm in Durham during the summer and I was sitting at the front desk in a Duke office. In order to pay for my summer chemistry courses I had decided to work as a residential assistant for the American Dance Festival and as an office assistant for housing. Summers in North Carolina are extremely hot and humid, so I was particularly relieved to be in a building with air conditioning even though technically I was still at work. After several minutes the manager walked in, an unpleasant and possibly unhappy woman who demands an extreme amount of attention from those who work under her, and prides herself on the fear she believes she places in others. After a short greeting she headed to her private office and closed the door. Once her door was closed my two bosses who work under her simultaneously looked at each other and smirked from their fully open non-private offices. A few minutes later the other manager also came in with a burst of energy and greeted everyone with a smile and laughter, but she too returned to her private office and closed the door. Half an hour later two women around the age of 50, drenched in sweat, came quietly into the office and tiredly walked to a set of chairs. They shyly greeted everyone and then proceeded to sigh in a sign of relief from the heat. The women said that they had been working in the dorms all day cleaning in preparation for the new school year, but that there was not air conditioning in the majority of the dorms so it was over a hundred degrees in each building. They mentioned how the university didn’t provide any form of aid for them while working in the dorms, no water, no fans, and only a lunch break. Their only other response was that the university didn’t care about what conditions they worked in, it
only cared about whether or not the job was finished. I had walked through the dorms earlier and I remember being barely able to breathe as I cut through the thick heat, heat that was so intense that all the cold running water in the buildings had become hot water. As I looked at these women who had difficulty walking because they had worked on their feet for a good part of their lives and who were old enough to be some child’s grandparents, I had a difficult time imagining them walking up and down so many stairs and laboring in such unpleasant conditions. Once the women left the office, one of my bosses started to discuss some of the inequality issues she had noticed in this particular department. She insisted that the university was racially discriminatory when hiring people for certain positions. She also mentioned she and my other boss (both African American) who worked in the open up front part of the office conducted the majority of the work, while the women who worked in the private offices were both white and were not at work for a great deal of each day. She spoke of how the manager who always seemed unpleasant had always treated non-white employees with little respect and constantly belittled her as an individual even though she was a little older than the manager herself. She questioned why every person in a lower position was for the most part not white, and why the needs of these employees were ignored?

As I sat there listening to a woman who reminded me of my grandmother, it hurt me to see an elderly working lady still fighting to earn respect. Interesting enough though, this same woman had also been given an award by the university for her level of commitment to service in Durham and at Duke. On many occasions she had opened her home up to Duke students and the Durham community and prepared home cooked
meals. Beside her desk she kept the article with the oversized picture the university had printed of her receiving her honorable recognition. It was then that I realized how easily the morals of the university could be displaced on one person. At one point, this woman was being directly affected by the ethical issues of racism fostered within the walls of Duke and on the other hand she was also being influenced by the university’s desire to create an image of social responsibility. And I wondered if the ethics of the university could be intertwined and distorted into one single individual, how then was it being replicated into something as complicated as an entire campus.

**Background and Description of Problem:**

When I first tried to create a topic of study for my research paper I was unsure of where to place my focus. There were just so many various issues that one could cover and it seemed almost impossible to combine my interests in business along with my studies in cultural anthropology. It wasn’t until after speaking with my professor Diane Nelson that I became aware of the ways in which civic engagement and labor policies could both be tied to my areas of interest. Duke University can be considered a hub of community service oriented programs and simultaneously a machine that is run and operated by its laborers, and thus it would prove to be the perfect place for me to conduct research. By looking at the disconnections and connections surrounding the institution’s standards for civic engagement programs and labor policies I would gain a deeper understanding of how ethics is defined through the institution. I also realized
that I wanted to take my research one step further, I want to understand Duke outside of its public relations, and examine the ways in which Duke performs and adheres to an idea of social responsibility. This means looking at the social undertakings of the campus from a variety of viewpoints and categories. In order to make my fieldwork more comprehensive I have decided to investigate the ways in which civic engagement and labor issues are handled on campus. Issues facing labor conditions and policies have comprised a significant part of the historical foundation of the university and still continue to shape the culture of the campus today. The civic engagement focus of the university is not a newly developed focal point for the institution for it has been a significant part of the university’s platform since the 60’s. Thus as a student and a former employee of Duke University I have seen the campus from various perspectives, perspectives that have led to me question the moral compass of the university.

**Research Questions**

A university is an institution that fosters a community which produces socially responsible individuals who will hopefully be productive members of the world. In order to create such a community Duke has decided to focus a great deal of attention on initiatives that surround the topic of civic engagement. Programs such Duke Engage, and the Hart Leadership program provide students with various opportunities to build personal skills while simultaneously being involved in a service project. The university provides service learning courses and supports student run organizations such as Circle
K, and Alpha Phi Omega. Alternative spring breaks are offered through different organizations on campus, and the newly opened Duke center for civic engagement is the university’s latest initiative for providing service options on campus. The Kenan Institute for Ethics is a division of Duke that allows students to study and understand the ethical implications of their actions. It is here again that the university directly and publicly promotes its system of values creating a student body that reflects a certain image of moral. But Duke is much more than just academics and civic engagement, it also involves the labor of those who work to keep the university operating. General employees (such as bus drivers, cashiers, housekeeping, maintenance, etc), administrators, and faculty all are employed by Duke yet they are still members of separate communities within and outside of Duke. It is at the employee level that the university projects a different form of morals that pertain to labor policies. The standards of labor conditions at the university, though they vary with work positions, are also inevitably a reflection of Duke’s ethical beliefs.

So how is ethics defined at Duke University? How is the idea of social responsibility promoted through forms of civic engagement and labor policies? Is the university promoting a different set of ethics within its employee community and its student community? What exactly are the true motives of Duke for promoting civic engagement? Each year the university spends thousands of dollars in activities that connect students to service, but at the end of the year the university is also publicly recognized for its commitment to service through national award programs. Last year Duke won the Honor Roll’s Presidential Award, which is the highest federal
recognition a school can earn for its commitment to civic engagement. Awards such this one, which Duke inevitably accepts, connect a certain level of prestige to the university. Yet while the university is spending money to create these civic engagement programs, the school is also dealing with issues of labor. One does not have to be a scientist to walk around campus and see the racial inequality within the labor divisions of the campus. Inequality organized through problems of race, gender, relations, status, and qualifications are all issues which may be promoted through the labor system that the university has created. If such issues are the results of the university’s guidance, it becomes possible to question whether or not the university has contradicting practices of ethics. Is it possible for the university to promote issues of ethics and social responsibility through civic engagement while simultaneously promoting non-ethical standards in labor?

**Into the Field and My Form of Method**

In order to conduct this research I decided to study the various civic engagement programs on campus such as Duke Engage, and Alpha Phi Omega. From these organizations I interviewed student participants, and administrators. At the same time I also analyzed the labor system of the university, and identified the moral understandings of Duke through the eyes of its employees. Such employees included: general employees, faculty, and administrators. Along with this I also conducted interviews with students who were not involved in any civic engagement programs on campus so that I could access a broad spectrum of the Duke population. I found that the best way to define the ethics of a
community is to understand the perspective of the community’s members. By collecting information through interviews with students, and employees I gained a better sense of the degree to which Duke has created a collective consciousness of social responsibility.¹

After conducting research for previous papers, I have come to realize just how highly uncomfortable I become when I simply jot down every word that an interviewee is saying. I would often feel as though I was giving off the perception that I only wanted to talk to that individual because I needed their information (almost like a robot) without any emotional or human connection. I also remember feeling that the interviewees were more cautious of their wording when they were aware that their words were being printed in ink on paper. So I decided to switch my field method to audio recording my interview conversations with individuals so that we both will feel at more ease.

In further notes, I also struggled with the ways in which I would be able to compile all of my data into one paper. I didn’t know if I should just write about each interview individually or if I should simply create a story out of my findings. After some serious contemplation I have realized that the best way for me to organize my thoughts will be to divide my data into specific sections, allowing myself room to elaborate on all the details that I feel are critical points of my observations.

¹ All names of interview participants in this entire paper have been changed to protect their privacy.
Chapter Outline

Chapter 1.)

Chapter 1 explores the realm of ethics and moral understandings. I critique the dilemmas and challenges that the institution faces with its platform on ethics, and the ways in which interpretation can play a role in these understandings. It is here that I analyze the ways in which morality is transcended across campus and how the actions of students and other Duke community members can be translated into socially accepted ideas of right and wrong. I also try to understand to what degree student's ideas and beliefs are in sync with the projected image of the university and to what extent the university has influenced campus members.

Chapter 2.)

In this chapter I examine the role of civic engagement on Duke University's campus. Through the study of different service groups on campus such as Duke Engage and Alpha Phi Omega, I observe the ways in which concepts of language and social categorizations affect the outcomes of these initiatives. I also further critique the Duke and Durham relationship and question reasoning behind this partnership. In this chapter I give my analysis of civic engagement and report my findings.

Chapter 3.)

In this chapter I challenge the standard acceptance of the labor system at Duke. I bring in perceptions and experiences from administrators, general employees, and faculty members.
look at the ways in which hierarchy has divided the labor pool at Duke and the ways in which the university tries to come to terms with its inherent inequalities and simultaneous opportunities.
Chapter 1 - Ethics:

All humans live in a society that not only values acting in a socially defined "moral" manner but that also values immoral behavior. This constant flux between what is right and what is wrong has in many ways created a confused and conflicted global society in which varying ethical codes act as enforcers of social norms. Ethics is usually a topic that most individuals go out of their way to avoid. People are quick to blame the abstractness and biased context of morality as the primary barrier which prevents any two persons from coming to an absolute conclusion. One of the main questions that I asked my interviewees was how would they define the term ethical. As I sat at my desk trying to analyze their responses, it occurred to me that I myself did not have a definition for my own question. After listening to so many varied responses and perceptions on what it meant to be ethical, it became clear to me that I could not pick just one definition for such a complex term. Even though everyone answered my question differently, I found that I equally agreed with each person’s response. In fact I was often surprised that people were so willing to tackle such a contested question.

“Ethics is the exploration of what we ought to be about. People have an ethical framework of what ought to be accomplished with the right intentions,” (James, Duke Administrator, 2010).

It only seemed natural to examine ethics since it is difficult to separate social responsibility from the ethos of personal beliefs and values. When studying a community as large and diverse as Duke it becomes cumbersome to concretely define a specific characteristic such as morality. One must evaluate the ways in which students, faculty,
administrators, various social and civic groups, essentially all individual sectors of the university have grasped the idea of what it means to be ethical in order to determine the moral landscape of the institution. Rudolph Weingartner who studies the framework of academia states that “in truth, for ethics to be truly present, it must be present at all levels of a university, as a conscious effort rather than one that is assumed,”(Weingartner, 1999:6).

Yet what I discovered is that people usually do make assumptions about what define the moral goals of Duke. As my Professor Diane Nelson notes when you assume you make an ass out of u and me. This statement often times reflects the mentality of the university. No one, no matter how far up the administrator ladder they were, were able to clearly state the values of the university. The values of the institution appeared to be this mysterious entity that everyone knew existed or least should exist, but were unable to pin point.

Pam, an office employee, spoke of how the university is too eager to hire people for leadership positions. These hired individuals apparently have ideas that the university would like to implement, but these employees often create systems that clash with the integrity of the current operation of Duke. There is often a discord between these employee’s ideas and the operation of university because the ethical system of Duke is never clarified during their employee training. “The value a university adds flows down into the university’s operations and processes,” (Weingartner, 1999:6). Pam also mentioned that Duke gives its employees Christmas ornaments that are decorated with the university’s guiding principles.

“Duke does give out at Christmas ornaments with the guiding principles, but you don’t ever see these principles otherwise. I remember in places that I have worked in the past you would see if nothing else their mission statements and their guiding principles. But at Duke I haven’t seen them, not even on the website. I mean you really have to look in order to find that stuff,” (Pam, Duke Office Employee).
Approved by the Duke University Board of Trustees October 1, 1994, and revised February 23, 2001, the Mission Statement for Duke University reads as follows:

"James B. Duke's founding Indenture of Duke University directed the members of the University to 'provide real leadership in the educational world' by choosing individuals of 'outstanding character, ability, and vision' to serve as its officers, trustees and faculty; by carefully selecting students of 'character, determination and application;' and by pursuing those areas of teaching and scholarship that would 'most help to develop our resources, increase our wisdom, and promote human happiness.'

"To these ends, the mission of Duke University is to provide a superior liberal education to undergraduate students, attending not only to their intellectual growth but also to their development as adults committed to high ethical standards and full participation as leaders in their communities; to prepare future members of the learned professions for lives of skilled and ethical service by providing excellent graduate and professional education; to advance the frontiers of knowledge and contribute boldly to the international community of scholarship; to promote an intellectual environment built on a commitment to free and open inquiry; to help those who suffer, cure disease, and promote health, through sophisticated medical research and thoughtful patient care; to provide wide ranging educational opportunities, on and beyond our campuses, for traditional students, active professionals and life-long learners using the power of information technologies; and to promote a deep appreciation for the range of human difference and potential, a sense of the obligations and rewards of citizenship, and a commitment to learning, freedom and truth.

"By pursuing these objectives with vision and integrity, Duke University seeks to engage the mind, elevate the spirit, and stimulate the best effort of all who are associated with the University; to contribute in diverse ways to the local community, the state, the nation and the world; and to attain and maintain a place of real leadership in all that we do."

The need to assume is to partially blame for the elusiveness of the university’s mission statement. Mission statements are the strategically scripted code which defines the ethos, goals, and purpose of a university. Duke, as well as most institutions, has developed its mission statement in order to create a set of standards and guidelines that form order within the campus. After reading through Duke’s mission statement several times, I found that the word ethical appeared at least twice. Statements such as “committed to high ethical standards” and “ethical service” are used throughout the statement to depict the noble objectives of the university. But the term ethical can prove to be problematic in terms of interpretation. If ethics is predisposed to personal interpretation then the mission statement’s
selective lexicon is also left to individual interpretation leaving room for discrepancies. In fact many of my interviewees admitted to not being able to accurately or confidently define ethics in their own terms.

“I don’t have a definition, I really don’t and I am not good at that. I don’t even have a good definition of civic engagement and that’s what we do. Cause I really believe in letting a thousand flowers bloom. What I can tell you is that we are very committed to our students doing the program in an ethical way, whatever that means.” (John, Civic Engagement Administrator).

Here an administrator concludes that his job requires him to try to achieve a goal which he is unable to define. He coordinates student civic engagement programs but he can’t define civic engagement. He insists that the students involved in these service programs act in an ethical manner, but he can’t define what ethical means. Yet even with all of this uncertainty, he still manages to place behavioral and character expectations onto students involved in various service programs. It leaves one to question whether or not the moralistic structure of civic engagement programs such as Duke Engage are only constructed with 50 percent elaborate wording and 50 percent guessing. If a student does not act in an “ethical manner” can he or she really be held at fault if those in charge of these programs are not completely sure what those ethical mannerisms should include? Being stirred up by the topic of ethics, John began to discuss the ethical dilemma Duke faced by collaborating with the non-profit program called No More Deaths. No More Deaths is an organization in Tucson, Arizona that provides water to people who are trying to cross the Mexican border so that these individuals do not become dehydrated. He noted that some people on campus believe that the university should not be involved in such a politically charged event because it promotes illegal immigration. But to John the ethical question was whether or not it was
more important to worry about the law or someone’s life. From this statement it appears that John does indeed have his own ideas of what is ethical but rather he just doesn’t know how to articulate his understandings. This disconnection between the actual work that he is doing and his inability to effectively communicate what that work means is in many ways similar to the ways in which the institution promotes the concept of ethics but provides no concrete definition of what those ethics entail. Is it then justifiable to expect a certain form of conduct or performance from the university community if an understanding of the university’s goals are not clearly construed?

“The institution’s ethos serves as a kind of invisible hand that makes it possible for an academic institution’s many and varied professionals to accomplish the institution’s goals…” (Weingartner, 199:100).

It would appear that the ethos of Duke aren't invisible but rather nonexistent because there isn’t any structured documentation that explicitly states such values nor does there seem to be a collective understanding of the ethos among the Duke community. From observing the moralistic confusion within the walls of the university, I began to wonder whose responsibility it was in the first place to construct the consciousness of the institution. Does this role lie in the hands of President Brodhead, the board members, etc? Marsha, an administrator that has worked at Duke for over 20 years insisted that the president and other senior leaders were responsible for setting the tone of ethics on campus. To support her opinion she used the new football coach, David Cutcliffe as an example. David brought a new sense of leadership to the football team for he “walked the talk” and he always follows up on his word. Marsha believed that David was the most ethical coach she had ever met because he did not show any favoritism between the players. So it made no difference whether a
member was the quarterback or on the scrub team, for he would reward and punish them the same way. Due to his method of leadership, players knew what to expect and they understand how much their personal character plays into recruitment and the composition of the team.

“He’s just got you know them understanding and they have brought into that system. I don’t feel that necessarily with our senior leadership, that the tone is set and I’m not sure whose setting that tone right now. But I feel like if it can be done with a football team, it can be done with a university, and it can be just as successful. So I take great value in the actions and the messages of the senior leadership of this school. I look at that very carefully,” (Marsha, Duke Administrator, 2010).

While I think her example of a football team has some validity, I do not know whether it can be completely connected to something as large, and as complex as leading an entire university. Sometimes communities become so large that they take on a life of their own and where it was once easy to see the tangent lines of leadership and influence, now those lines of distinctions have become much more blurred and disconnected.

This question of leadership and responsibility made me reflect on the Duke Community Standard. As a freshman, Duke requires you to sign a form showing your commitment to adhere to the community standard’s values. In essence students only seem to relate the community standard to the idea of cheating. This is mostly attributed to the fact that the only time students see the community standard is when a professor attaches it to an assignment to remind the class to be honest when turning in their work.

“I am just thinking about the honor code and cheating and why that is unethical because it’s a violation of your own understanding, it’s a violation of your rights and its against duke and the community so you have to think about who you really are representing. So I guess its an idea of representation too. So not only when you violate ethics is It a violation of yourself but it effects other people,” (Tammy, Duke Student, 2010).
But on a campus that is as academically competitive as Duke, it is questionable how many students actually take the community standard to heart. While Duke is not the only campus where the need to compete affects student’s actions (I was informed that at John Hopkins the stress for getting into medical is so severe that students pull fire alarms in libraries so that they can still their fellow students text books and prevent others from having the required material to study), it should be noted that students tend to create their own ideas of what is ethical outside of the university’s guidelines.

“Academically I will admit if I struggle and I don’t understand homework I might ask my friend and I might get a couple of answers from them, but like I have just heard of people like cheating on tests or someone leaving the room and someone taking an exam in their place. And people steal the exams!. To me there is a very small percentage of students who observe the Duke Community Standard, and students who do try to observe it actually make life harder for themselves because the majority of duke students don’t. I know I have gone against it a couple of times, but not to the level I have seen my peers abuse it. But that is just academically speaking,” (Karen, Duke Student, 2010).

According to Karen following the Duke Community Standard means that one is limiting their ability to achieve academic success and to compete with their fellow students. In any functioning community there are always going to be those who defy the governed laws and those who obey it. Unfortunately, those who disobey the system (depending on their status) often times benefit from such unethical actions. But it would seem that the institution’s focus on the Duke Community Standard acts as a safety shield the university can hide behind. It more or less masks the reality of the standards instituted by the students themselves and the university.

I wanted to confront the issue of ethics head on, so I simply asked my interviewees if they thought that Duke was an ethical place and if they considered themselves to be ethical
beings. When reflecting on themselves, there was the need to appear modest, and so for the most part responses centered around the idea that they would like to consider themselves as ethical and that they hoped they were viewed as ethical individuals. But everyone was cautious not to say that they were a hundred percent ethical because they realized that their personal notions of ethics influenced their critique of themselves and would also vary from person to person. Yet when having to judge Duke, most people gave mixed views. Many administrators would say that they would like to think that Duke was ethical because if it wasn’t it would imply that they themselves as leaders on campus were contributing to the unethical standards. But even with this being said, many employees still were willing to question some of the ethical choices of the university. Students however were not afraid to reveal that their moral expectations of the campus were very low. Their judgment seemed to be placed on the actions of other students rather than on the choices of the university.

When examining the social culture of Duke, no one that I interviewed seemed to have a positive opinion. If there was one thing that Duke students and faculty alike could agree on, it would be that the social environment of the campus has some unethical undertones. Tammy a senior at Duke, told me that she went to Ohio State to visit some friends, and during her time there she came across some news about Duke that made her ashamed to be a Duke student. One of her friend’s roommate was a tri-delt and knowing the stigmas attached with this sorority at Duke’s campus, Tammy asked her how the tri-delts were perceived at her campus. The girl told her that at Ohio State the tri-delts are seen as being very ethical, and that the sorority made them read an article about the hook up culture of duke, and used it as an example of what their chapter should not be like.
“Of all schools and of all things they could have read they chose us, so that to me implies a lot,” (Tammy, Duke Student, 2010).

As I panned my way through this maze of ethical codes, perceptions, and contradictions, I struggled with determining the meaning of all this information. There is the idea that there is supposed to be ethics and that it is supposed to have a code a statement and or contract, but a focus on these structures just masks the fact that there are inherent contradictions at the core of morality. Institutions create an honor/ethical code because they assume that you are not ethical beings, and so therefore students need instructions on how to behave in an ethical manner. But why would you need a code when ethics by definition is supposed to be something that people inherently know? How can following a code of ethics limit one’s ability to succeed in school? Ethics is empty and these contradictions exist because it does not really deal with the issues of politics, but rather creates a standard based on idealism which is not founded on reality. Students today are even less engaged in politics and political activism because they have grown up with less confidence in the government’s ability to accomplish public efforts and concerns, thus in return students have focused their attention on actively making a change based off of their own ethical actions. But what many students fail to realize is that by relying on the principles of ethics and avoiding politics they are also not examining the concept of power and how it is distributed. For example, we assume that duke is a space of equality because to say otherwise would mean that we would have to point a finger at ourselves as members of the Duke community.

Ethics and politics are not water and oil, in fact they are actually dependent upon one another. Because “morality has the functioning of limiting” (Durkheim, 1972:173) it is
difficult to overcome and fight social inequalities and community issues when you only have your ethical beliefs to support you. Morality by itself is often only limited to its ability to effect the individual but when accompanied by other forces such as politics, its effects can be far reaching. Political power plays a crucial part in making one's voice heard and in enacting any sort of public change. One’s ethical ideals play an important role in shaping your political beliefs and in creating the passion that drives you to fight for certain political rights. In politics power comes in number, thus when your ethical ideals are made clear in your political agenda you are more likely to captured the empathy of others and gain more support. The civil rights movement was only successful because people were willing to take a political stand for their ethical beliefs. The institution’s inability to properly combine politics and ethics into their civic engagement initiatives is what often hinders the effectiveness of such programs.

So What about this Collective Consciousness?

If Durkheim were to categorize the culture of Duke University he would classify it as a organic society with some overtones of a mechanical structure. For him, campus life has produced a society in which students perform some heterogeneous tasks (such as study different majors and enroll in different student groups) and partially embraces individuality.

There are still however parts of campus that resemble a cohesive machine such as large swarms of girls that process across the main quad wearing the same outfits during rush season for sororities, hundreds of students jumping up and down drenched in Duke blue at basketball games, and the large number of students all wearing dark colored business suits competing for the same jobs during the career fairs. But unlike a mechanical society, people on campus are not directly punished or isolated for deviating from the majority. Yet it is important to note that those who do not fit the “norm” are noticed and known for being “different.” And being known for being different is not always a good thing when it comes to forming social alliances on campus. When analyzing the role that social responsibility plays on campus, I don’t know yet if can say that there is a collective consciousness of ethics/social responsibility as a whole on campus. Perhaps by the time I come to my conclusion section I will have a better idea and educated opinion on this matter. I do know that Durkheim would note that there are least three sets of collective consciousness on campus, those of the student body, general employees and one of administrators. There is this, unspoken and inherently known, shared within each of these three groups of what being ethical should mean and a recognition of what acts are and aren’t considered to be socially responsible. Even students
that come from foreign countries where ethics may be defined differently, often become aware of the ways in which the student population promotes ethics and how this contrasts with their own. Whether it is in Duke Engage, the Ethics Institute, or class discussions, the notion of ethics is always silently floating around the perimeters of such programs and circumstances. I do not think that social responsibility can be classified on campus as a social fact as much as it can be considered a moral maxim. It is not a social fact because ethics on campus doesn’t necessarily act as an external constraint (not everybody follows these codes of ethics but they are to some degree aware of them within their groups). Instead these moral maxims of ethics become internalized within the members of these three campus populations the more and more they spend time as a part of the Duke society.
Chapter 2 - Community Service

- Shadee: So why do you feel that the university has been on a path of service/trend for a few years?
- Lance: I think that it's a marketing ploy that Duke uses to make itself distinct among the Top Ten universities, and that it's very much a branding of universities. There's the idea that if you go to Princeton, there is a huge faculty commitment and everyone writes an honor thesis. Then there is Berkeley where you have the idea of real political activism, or something like that, and Duke is trying to find its niche in the world. And the best way it can do that is through civic engagement.

Contrary to popular belief, Duke's focus on civic engagement is not a recent phenomenon. During the 1960s, Duke and the North Carolina Fund worked together to create a statewide initiative to provide civic service and fight the war against poverty. Duke offered a three-day orientation to a large group of young college students from across the state. North Carolina Volunteers was created by Duke's former president Terry Sanford, and it allowed groups of racially integrated students to go out into poverty-stricken communities and teach citizens forms of political self-help. Duke served as an educational area in which students could be trained on how to initiate programs in various communities, reflect on their personal privilege in the world, and be exposed to the various forms of inequalities in the world. But even during the 1960s when there was a national movement towards social awareness, students were taken aback by the ways in which the seminars at Duke were taught. Students had conflicted feelings about the theology of the lectures and viewpoints shared by those in charge of the seminars. One source writes:

“Such exercises went a long way toward exposing the prejudices of race and class, but that was not the same as questioning the idea of a “culture of poverty,” which was the underlying premise of the Fund's work. Students noted that orientation speakers “constantly commented
about 'these people'” and kept a tight focus on the ways that poverty worked to “twist and deform the human spirit.” As one young woman wrote in 1964, "I was told that [the poor] were a people who needed to be given a sense of dignity and pride which was absent from their lives. . . . We, the Volunteers, were . . . to provide the atmosphere that could foster ambition, dissatisfactions, and ultimate change." She felt "resentful" of that attitude. "It was the way [the lecturers] separated one part of the world from the rest. I guess [the poor] were considered very much beneath them, and we were supposed to lift them up." Looking back on her experience years later, another volunteer made a similar point: "I think that perhaps the administrators of the program, even though they might have had good intentions, really didn't have that much empathy for the people that they were going to help," (Korstad, Leloudis, 2010).

As we can see here, Duke engage is not the first program on Duke's campus to want to send students out into the world to perform various act of service. Yet even these two programs (Duke Engage and The North Carolina Fund), which are separated by numerous years, are both surrounded by the same ethical concerns of whether or not students were being properly prepared to enter their fields of service and if the actual services in action were causing more harm than good. But these historical and ethical concerns have not reduced the pace at which universities across the nation are incorporating aid into their educational programs. More than ever there is currently a national trend towards civic engagement and international aid. Duke, along with many other universities within the U.S., has jumped head first into this socially responsible trend and carved out its own unique path in the name of service. Even Duke's famous motto of "knowledge in the service of society" by President Broadhead, highlights the way in which the university is trying to establish an identity which involves engagement and learning. A service engagement administrator that I spoke with gave me some insight into how he believed the government played a role in placing the responsibility of community service onto universities. It appears that over the past generation, the government has stepped back from directly helping the public aid sector. This
transition first started to take place under the Reagan administration when there was a focus on less government intervention, and thus there was not a public push for the government to step in and provide direct service to local communities. As the media began to scrutinize large, rich corporations for their various forms of privilege, wealthy institutions (outside of the state and federal government) such as universities started to feel the burden and pressure to take on responsibility for public aid. For example, universities are now playing a much more active role in the quality of secondary education than they did during the Baby Boom generation. But it has been the taking up of this responsibility, the idea of the white man's burden in relations to international aid, the structure of power and dominance in local communities, and the question of morality which have all made it critical that to constantly question the effects and intentions of university's actions.

**Defining Community Service and True Motives**

At Duke, on the news, at NGOs, companies, and various other institutions, everyone is talking about community service. But what is community service, and how do people define it? The dictionary version states that community service is "performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions," ([http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=community%20service](http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=community%20service)). I personally define it as giving of yourself to benefit others. In order to gather a better sense of what community service actually means, I asked my interviewees for their personal perceptions. For the most part, people's opinions of civic engagement varied depending on their own involvement. Some provided very concrete answers of what should and shouldn't
be considered service, while others felt that service could mean a wide a range of things. Most definitions that were from administrators and faculty centered around the idea that providing service meant providing aid that the community in need had requested, rather than acting on your preconceived notions. Both adults and students agreed that the concept of service was a very broad category and could encompass multiple actions. These actions ranged from working in a soup kitchen, to picking up trash on the side of the road, to creating a clean water system for a community. Yet the ways in which people chose to value different forms of service varied depending on the amount of engagement a particular service was believed to have. Some believed that certain forms of volunteering were more legit than others. Working with cancer patients at a hospital, for example, is seen as more legit than planting a garden at an elementary school because it involves direct human contact. If a volunteer is two steps removed from the person who is benefiting from the services, then the service act doesn’t hold as much emotional meaning or validity for the person providing the volunteering, compared to if the volunteer could directly interact with the person on the receiving end.

"I would say a lot of community service at Duke really isn’t about the community, it is about the student. They have no intention of having an effect. A lot of it is picking up trash. And I am happy for trash to be picked up. Somebody has to go to the Eno and pick up that trash but lets not pretend that is community engagement, lets not pretend that has anything to do with commitment or responsibility, that is trash picking up," (Luanne, Duke Administrator, 2010).

What did seem to go unnoticed by many people was the awareness that someone has to provide indirect service, because it is still a pivotal part of the aid process. This idea of legitimizing a project is also seen in student-initiated programs. If a student does a
volunteering program with a group outside of Duke’s campus or just merely by themselves, they often try to recruit other Duke students to participate in the program with them. The volunteering isn’t seen as valid if other Duke students do not want to join, and if other Duke students do not show interest in it. I couldn’t find any students anywhere on campus who volunteered with a program or did their own volunteering without trying to get Duke’s campus involved in one way or another. There is this need to have ones service experiences be incorporated into and made relevant by the standards of the Duke community even if many people from the Durham It is possible that these students truly want more people to be involved in the program for the sake of the people receiving service, but it could also be viewed as a personal motive that would give them rights and claims for starting their own service program on campus which wouldn’t look too shabby on a resume. This is a very difficult question to tackle because no one is going to be honest and say that they are involving other students for their own benefit.

Here is a list of the community service definitions that I received from students on Duke campus, some were involved in community service and others were not.

“ The desire to help people comes to mind when I hear service.” “ Expending your time and energy not just swiping your card, its an action.” “ Community service is defined by the people who do it on a regular basis, not those who do it every once in a great moon.” “ Giving freely of your time to those in the community who are in need. You have a service they feel you can provide.”

But even with these heartfelt definitions, often times there are other unglamorous motives to the act of volunteering especially on a college campus. For the most part, the students who I interviewed said that their perceptions of service definitely changed once they entered Duke. For some students their involvement in civic engagement had significantly increased since
their career at Duke, while others thought they had an easier time volunteering while they were in high school.

“I went to a Catholic high school so it was hard to get involved in activities that weren’t just offered on a one time basis. Doing something only once doesn’t allow you to get connected to those you are helping. But doing service at Duke is definitely more rewarding because you get connected to people and you see how grateful people are. It even helped me connect to my Latino roots and gain a new cultural experience, something that I would have never been allowed to do in high school,” (Duke APO Student, 2010).

This student is a fellow APO brother of mine, and she has been involved in many service based programs on campus including those outside of our fraternity. For her the most difficult part about service on campus was trying to keep people involved. The words that are often used as an excuse for the lack of civic engagement on campus is that Duke students are just too busy to have any time to do service. Their academics come first. Along with this frame of thought, one student who was not involved in any particular community program on campus said that, “I have definitely decreased my involvement in civic engagement programs since I’ve entered college, there just isn’t enough time in the day. In high school I volunteered to fulfill requirements, but at Duke I see service as actually focused on helping people. Since you have to take time out of your busy schedule to do service it makes your volunteering all that more worthwhile. I wish I had more time,” (Duke Student, 2010).

This person was not the only one who said that they volunteered in high school for the mere purpose of getting into college. Colleges want to see well rounded students, which means that students are academically gifted, involved in extra curricular activities such as sports and clubs, and that they show some forms of ethical awareness through community service. In many ways volunteering for high school students is a rite of passage for entering college.
Each student must go through this process in order to be worthy of obtaining a collegiate education. When one is being forced to volunteer is it still considered volunteering? If students in high school feel like they have to volunteer to get ahead in life then it can be argued that volunteering in high school is more or less a job than an act of kindness. Volunteering loses much of the emotional meaning because it becomes a forced routine and activity instead of a desired form of action and choice.

But whether or not students believe that they are involving others for their own personal benefits, at the end of the day, the service is provided. This realization helps transition to the question: How important is motivation? Stacey, an administrator, describes her conversation with a student on this topic:

"You know there is a Duke student that I about 20 years ago got into this huge debate with. He was a philosophy major and he was the head of the Presidents’ Honor Council. He had a favorite philosopher, Hobbes. And Hobbes states that we sort of carry around a brown bag of ulterior motives, that no matter what we do, it’s all kind of self-motivated, it’s all for us. It’s really not for anybody else, no matter what we do, we can never divorce ourselves of thinking about what’s in it for me. This student and I went at it, great debate! I think we stayed in the office until 2:00 in the morning because I was under the impression that it wasn’t all about ulterior motives. And the student was like, yes it is, Hobbes was right. And I guess my conclusion from all of this is that it doesn’t matter. If it is a win for the community and it is also a win for the individual engaged, so be it. What difference does it make what the motivation is?" (Stacy, Duke Administrator, 2010)

This statement seemed to represent the sentiments of most of the individuals that I interviewed. Idealistically, people believed that a person should have the “right motivation” when performing an act of service. The meaning of what it meant to have the "right motivation" was almost unanimously implied. By this I mean that people would never ever define what the right motivation was but would take it for granted that everyone inherently should have the same values and definition. I, too, was guilty of assuming that everyone
knew what having the right motivation meant and that everyone shared the same moral ideals of what would encompass this correct motivation. To me, having the right motivation means helping someone else just because you feel a desire to do so without worrying about whether or not it will benefit yourself. The majority of people I interviewed agreed that if a person was for some reason performing community service without the right motivation it wouldn't be the ideal situation, but it would be better than not performing the service at all because the most important part is that the person in need receives the aid. While most Duke community members agreed with this viewpoint, some also said the importance of having the right motivation depended upon the form of service being offered. Motivation wouldn't matter if you were building a house for Habitat for Humanity, but it would be more important if you were tutoring a student because your attitude would affect how responsive the child was to your tutoring. On the other hand, most of my interviewees felt that even those without the right motivation were bound to benefit from doing the service because they would inevitably be changed for the better through the experience:

"You will be changed whether you are doing this for the right reason or the wrong reason," said Derek, a community service administrator. “You will be humbled, you will understand a different culture, you will learn something, you will learn a new language, you will learn a skill, you will have a relationship.”

With all this talk about motivation, I began to question Duke's reasoning for making community service its focal point. I found myself questioning the true motives of Duke's public pushing of community based programs. Is Duke really just invested in helping others and creating socially conscious students or are there more business like motives shaping their focus? Although Duke is certainly not the only university that sees community service as a
duty, Duke is probably one of the only schools where 9 percent of student applicants chose to apply to Duke because of a civic engagement program. Duke's civic engagement interest is not merely about being selfless and helping others; there is also a self-interest component to the university's actions. Most businesses, companies and institutions feel a consumer and public demand to be socially responsible. Through media outlets, people are becoming more conscious of the ways in which their choices as consumers and as a society have moral and ethical affects, and in an effort to address this, people need to feel that they have the ability to make a change by supporting institutions that follow certain moral guidelines and codes. Because of this, there has been a rise in pro bono marketing and aid campaigns associated with various corporations. Duke, nonetheless, has not been able to escape the trend of using community service as a form of publicity. The construction of Duke's public image has been shaped by the university's push to put programs such as Duke Engage in the headlines as the university’s poster child. Other programs which focus on service, such as the Hart Fellowship Program and civic engagement clubs on campus, do not receive as much air time because they are not as sexy as Duke Engage. In conjunction with this, Duke has been the recipient of several national awards that recognize the institution’s commitment to service. For instance, in 2009 Duke won the Honor Roll's prestigious Presidential Award which is given to universities that make distinctive contributions to service in their communities. This national award reflects well on the status of the university and gives the school reason to try and receive it every year, creating a sort of record. Along with this, Duke invested quite a bit of money into making the Duke engage program known on a national scale and to the general public. The ethical question is whether or not volunteering is something that should be
advertised or should it just be something that you do? I recognize the universities need to attract students and maintain a certain status, but I also think that actions speak louder than words, and that the good deeds of the university would go noticed without them trying so hard to make these deeds marketable.

**Relationships and Language:**

Motivation isn’t the only complexity involved in shaping the contours of university-based civic engagement. Language and social classifications play an intricate part in how those involved in service come to understand their roles. The ways in which we perceive the various forms of being engaged and providing service are shaped by our experiences of being designated givers and receivers. Those who take on the role of givers by default inevitably "other" those whom are deemed receivers. According to Durkheim, “What is needed if social order is to reign is that the mass of men be content with their lot. But what is needed for them to be content, is not that they have more or less but that they be convinced they have no right to more,” (Durkheim, 1972:177). Durkheim’s concept helps to explain why the inequalities of the giver receiver dynamic continue to exist. When someone is put into the position of the receiver, he/she is often dependent on the giver for a particular need, and thus the receiver becomes powerless, voiceless and left with no choice but to feel that he/she must be content with what they receive. The giver on the other hand is content with his/her privilege and position to be in control of what the receiver can obtain and have access to. Thus the receiver is content because they do not feel they have the power to feel otherwise and the giver is content because they have control, and it is this imbalance in power and dependency that
creates the social order that Durkheim describes. On Duke's campus, the barriers perpetuated by this kind of role identification are apparent in many subtle ways. The university disconnects itself from Durham by titling its relations with the community as a partnership, implying that we are not all a part of the same community. In *Whose Development?: An Ethnography of Aid*, Emma Crewe and Elizabeth Harrison explore the problematic relationships between donors and the recipients of service who are classified as partners. The use of the term “partner” is supposed to be the humane way of implying that the givers and receivers are on equal terms. Partnership is meant to portray the belief that the community is capable of carrying out their own valid assistance and growth. But in actuality the use of the term partnership is "empty rhetoric, a form of political correctness without substance" (Crewe, Harrison, 1998:71). It doesn't actually change the dynamics of the giver and receiver status. Thus, at the end of the day, the community is still dependent upon the aid of the university, and this reliance will always form an imbalance between the two. Even students’ language revealed the estrangement of giver and receiver on campus. During my interviews and in casual conversations, students spoke of "going out into Durham." This implies that for students, Durham is *not* where they live, and their only relationship to the city is that they put it on their mailing address. Duke is seen as a separate entity surrounded by Durham. This positions Durham as the receiver and Duke as the giver. The wall around Duke’s East Campus is a selectively permeable membrane that separates the school from the city of Durham. Its selectivity comes from the fact that it’s fine for Duke students to go out into the Durham community, but not for Durham residents to cross the wall onto campus. As
in any charitable case, the givers do want to be associated with the vulnerable status of the receivers.

But what is usually overlooked is that the givers or donors are also receivers themselves. Crewe and Harrison write "For a start, donor-recipient categories overlap: almost all donors are also recipients" (Crewe, Harrison, 1998:88). Duke University is a non-profit institution that heavily relies on charitable donations and funds from various outside sources. Alumni of the university bring in a considerable amount of money for the institution, and Duke Engage was only made possible through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. So while students and the university try to distance themselves from those who are on the receiving end, in reality, their situation is not that different from their Durham peers. But when I asked people whether or not they had ever been the recipients of aid/service, many people were hesitant to say yes at first but then reconsidered it because they didn't want to feel like they were just completely privileged. Some said that people had helped them before but it wasn't service because they had paid for it, while others shied away from the topic.

_Shadee’_: Have you been the recipient of service before?
_Taryenne (Duke Student, 2010):_ umm……ummm…. I did a mentoring program when I was in third grade so that was like service. I think that was about it. I can’t think of explicit service, I mean I was having issues with something in school and some friends came over, I see that as most like support so in that sense. But service…..No."
The introduction of Duke Engage is a representation, and not a new one, of the ideology that the university has the obligation to create experts who are qualified to solve the world’s problems. Implying that one is an expert inadvertently “others” those who are not labeled as such. “An expert,” write Crewe and Harrison, “is not an equal. He or she is by definition better than non-experts in at least one respect, that is, having greater expertise” (Crewe, Harrison, 1998:92). When I would speak with students whom were involved in service, whether unintentionally or not, they would imply that the recipients of service needed their help because they as a student had the qualified knowledge to assist them. When social hierarchy labels come into play, it means that someone's opinion is not seen as valid, and usually the invalid opinions belong to those whom are the recipient of aid. In other words, "othering" recipients of aid is actually silencing them. Identifying as an expert means that you believe that only your kind of knowledge is of worth and thus are blind to values in other ways of thinking and perceiving. I too am guilty of identifying with the ideology of expertise, because as a thesis writer I am supposed to become an expert on

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3 Photo by Kaitlin Rogers: Through the Literacy Through Photography project in Arusha, Tanzania, DukeEngage students use photography to introduce visual learning into schools.
the problems surrounding employees on campus. After spending so much time doing research into this topic it would feel wonderful to give myself such recognition as an expert but I know that the only experts of any situation can be the people experiencing the situations. Emma and Crewe also try to depict the dangers surrounding power structures that are created solely with labels. The issue lies in the fact that donors who give money to aid programs are not usually knowledgeable about the people/circumstance that they are trying to help. So they will only give their money to people/groups that they feel they can trust to make logical decisions with the funds. These logical people are the ones whom we consider to be experts, and therefore these experts are the only ones who can obtain money to do aid work with, while the people living in a village without clean water who are experts of their own situation cannot get funding. A form of dependency and power imbalance is created between the receivers of aid who need the "experts" in order to get any funding. When we group participants of civic engagement into roles of funders, experts, beneficiaries, partners, recipients and so on, we collectively assign social biases to these terms.

Duke Engage was created with great intentions, but like many programs, it has grown so quickly and become so large that the original purpose of the program has become lost among the media and hype surrounding it. The university has worked so hard to make the Duke name identifiable with Duke Engage that no one is asking the obvious: What is the program actually doing and not doing? Is Duke Engage the Grameen Bank of Durham? The comparison to microfinance is apt in this case. Under the Grameen Bank, the microfinance movement received unprecedented attention on an international level from various governments and organizations. Microfinance was established with the desire to provide
credit to poor people with the hope that this would help jump-start their financial situation. Along with this, the founder of the Grameen Bank also labeled the program as an opportunity for woman’s empowerment. While all of these ideas have good intentions backing them, their intentions have not all been met since the program has expanded to numerous Third World countries. It has essentially lost control, and because it is so popular, people have stopped questioning the effects of the program. The Grameen Bank has turned into just another corporate feel-good effort. Why not just give the money to the people who need it instead of spending on the program?

**Tales from Duke Engage**

Lance is a senior at Duke who is intensely involved with various aspects of the Duke community. His roles on campus range from student government and feminist activism to participation in volunteer programs. As we sat in the living room of my apartment, Lance began to tell me his perceptions of and involvement with civic engagement. Lance listed at least eight different groups and programs in which he was an active participant, all of which he joined because they "logically fell within his interests." To him, his involvement in these programs allowed him to empower and help communities at Duke and in Durham that were classified as in-need communities. His culturally diverse background of Latino and Jewish ancestry, he believed, helped him determine which programs to work with. Since Latinos and Jews are both populations that have experienced and still continue to experience discrimination, Lance felt connected to other underprivileged cultures and demographics through feelings of sympathy and a felt obligation to help in whatever way he could. For
Lance, civic engagement was, in its truest form, “being a citizen, and being someone who cares about how their life impacts others.” His college experiences with community service appeared to be very unique when compared to most students at Duke. Not only was he a participant in Duke Engage, but he had also helped create a local service program in Durham. During his freshman year, he helped to create a service learning class that involved the local Latino community. The project, which was a collaboration with the Duke-Durham Partnership, sent students into Durham to collect stories of immigration and incorporate these stories into bilingual coloring books. Because there is a large Latino population in Durham, these coloring books, which were distributed to schools, allowed students to bring bilingual, culturally relevant materials home to help their parents learn English. The stories of immigration played an important role in provoking cross-cultural dialogue within elementary school classrooms. But Lance, who liked to dabble in a variety of opportunities, also found himself traveling to India as part of Duke Engage. My interest was piqued by this reference to Duke Engage, so I eagerly asked, "What did you do in India?" Lance sat back and began to speak reflectively. Lance had enrolled in the hydro-belt program in India. The program, prioritized around early childhood education, allowed eight Duke students to teach fifth graders at government schools. These schools were segregated by language, meaning that there was a combination of Muslim Urdu speakers and Hindu Tele speakers. It was the goal of the Indian government to create Muslim-Hindu bonds in hopes that it would end the cultural divide within the city. The Indian government was also trying to convert all schools into English-medium schools, but a lot of their teachers only knew English as their fourth or fifth language, limiting their abilities to teach with English materials. So while the teachers
were in training, Lance and his colleagues filled in. Through Duke Engage, these students
developed and tested English teaching materials, started a community service club,
established a student council, performed science demonstrations to help kids understand what
they were reading, and did multiple art projects. But Lance's critical take on the Duke Engage
program in general did not necessarily reflect his personal experience:

“I think the program is highly beneficial to Duke students, which I guess it’s designed to do.
It’s for Duke students, and not really for the community partner as far as its missions. Which
really bothered me because it’s something that tries to sell itself as being a community
service kind of deal, when really it’s just more so broader civic engagement and something
that benefits students directly. There is not always a firm focus on helping the actual
community partner in the actual community. But the idea that the program input is for
students and not others tends to send mixed messages because it tries to sell itself as a
service program, when really it is a personal benefit program with a volunteer side
emphasis,” (Lance, Duke Student, 2010).

By personal benefit, Lance was referring to the fact that the institution would rather spend
$7,000 to send him to India for eight weeks rather than sending that money directly to the
charity they were trying to help, because it would better benefit Lance in the long term. The
institution thought that it was important for "me to see that type of life. Having that kind of
cross-cultural connection and international experience which applies for domestic as well,
doing some kind of community-based research program primarily, dollar for dollar, benefits
the student more than it [does the] actual community." Even with this critical viewpoint on
Duke Engage, Lance was convinced that his eight weeks in India had a significant impact on
the foreign community. From his perspective, the students in India made significant
improvements in their grade level of reading within those eight weeks: “A lot of what the
Indian school was using for education was based off the test books of English England, so
they had all kinds of concepts that weren't really relevant and applicable to what they were
learning. But students were able to get a real understanding of the material that we used, and so we feel that was valuable." Lance also acknowledged how important sustainability was. The Duke Engage group had created a community service club that was still running. This, he said, "showed we made a lasting impact because it's still going without us being there." Lance also praised the emotional bond that was formed between the students and the Duke Engage group of young people.

"We really made connections with the kids, they still write letters to us. They were very emotionally attached to us, and I don’t know if that was a benefit to them as much as it was to us, but they did appreciate us being there," (Lance, Duke Student, 2010).

Lance's story demonstrates the conflicting ideologies that participants of Duke Engage have come across. At one level, Lance is aware of the impracticalities and limitations of the program, but because he himself was a participant, he sees his involvement as a positive outlier. While he would be willing to agree that eight weeks in not enough to make a significant change, he doesn't want to imagine that his own efforts that summer could have also been ineffective. Lance's case is similar to that of many Duke Engage students I interviewed, for all were willing to point out the inadequacy of other programs, but were often blind to the faults of their own participation. Often students evaluated the value of their service by whether or not their initiatives were still being put to use. As Lance implied, one could just assume that the Duke Engage program in India was successful because parts of it were still in use. But we must pay attention to what is not said. Just because Lance's program may still be running doesn't mean that it is being resourcefully used nor does it mean that it is being run with a certain level of quality when Duke students aren't there. In fact, he isn't able to clarify exactly how useful a community service center is to addressing the needs of the
students in India, or if the teachers were trained to build off the work he had done with the students over the summer.

I did, however, encounter one student who was willing to admit that her summer with Duke Engage was unproductive and resembled a vacation in the States. Elaine spent her summer in Seattle with a Duke Engage program that was focused on environmental issues. While this particular program was not her first choice, and she had no real interest in environmental policy, she decided to give it a try. To her dismay, the active role she was able to take was to dress as a crab and hand out flyers on environmental policies. But to her surprise, there were many other perks to being in Seattle, because it had a large Duke alumni base. After her unfulfilling day in the office doing paper work or handing out flyers in costume, she and other students would spend evenings or weekends as guests of Duke alumni, who were more than eager to have the chance to display their success. Sometimes there would be extravagant dinners or rides on yachts. To Elaine, the only reason why the program was situated in Seattle was because prominent alumni favored having a Duke Engage program within their proximity. In fact, she recalled not understanding why there was an environmental program located in this particular region, since it seemed that there were few immediate ecological concerns.

As part of my quest to further explore the ethical contours of the university, I decided to interview an administrator connected to the Kenan Ethics Institute, located at Duke. Surely of all places on campus, this institute would be able to convey an insightful perspective on ethical problems at Duke. But to my surprise, I found myself more perplexed by the university’s moral complexities after speaking with Luanne. Ethics, explained Luanne, was
not often considered at Duke. It had been her experience that the average person at Duke rarely thought about ethics and the language of ethics. To her, it was possible that students in the ethics certificate program or in philosophy courses might have pondered ethics, but usually talk of ethics sent students running, for they often viewed ethics as a form of *monitoring* rather than a community *structure of shared commitments*. "People think of it as the ethics police," she said. “Good people do this and bad people do that, and I think that is somewhat unfortunate." Luanne admitted that even the Kenan Institute itself had no definition of ethics. As a member of the Institute, she realized that no one there ever used the term morality, but instead would only speak in terms of norms and normative structures, patterns and belief systems. One of the most interesting parts of our conversation centered on the topic of Duke Engage. Luanne was in charge of a Duke Engage program, and she had decided to take on this task out of pure skepticism. She wanted to see if the Duke Engage concept would work. As a recipient of aid herself, it only made sense that she connected her Duke Engage program with the form of service that she had received herself. When she was young, she came to the U.S. as a refugee from Northern Ireland with the assistance of a refugee program. Even though she was taken in by a new family in the U.S., she admitted that it was uncomfortable to consider herself as an object of service because she had never thought of herself in that perspective. Because of this connection to Ireland, Luanne was running her program for the third year in Dublin. In this eight-week program, students work with refugees and immigrants, sometimes dealing with issues of female genital mutilation. For Luanne, the most important thing that she tells her twelve students each summer is that making a change is very difficult and any change that you are able to make is likely to be
incremental. But students should not return to campus feeling good about themselves as personally transformed, if they haven't also in some way transformed the organization. The main point of this program, in her eyes, is to establish a relationship with the foreign community in a way that is respectful and basically do what they ask in terms of assistance. She believes that her Duke Engage program works because she and her husband are continually working with this community even when Duke Engage is not in session, and because she had been working with the same people for the past fifteen years. It is this "commitment and continuity outside" of the Duke Engage program that provides a sustainable structure for Duke students to participate in. Even with her doubts about the short length of Duke Engage programs, she found herself to be amazed by what her students had been able to accomplish when they worked immensely hard. In fact, all of the students from her first summer returned to Ireland to do further work on various projects. She reflected:

"We work with immigrants and refugees, they [students] don't change international refugee law, but they can have a profound effect on a group of young refugees. They can design programs for women dealing with female genital mutilation and thus work with victims of trauma in a way that provides comfort to those victims. Do they change the fact that someone was tortured? No! Do they change the fact that that person is going to suffer trauma the rest of their life? No. But they can provide comfort to someone who really needs it and that is important. And so in that sense, I do think they are effective. And I do think it changes them. A lot of students come here thinking, I am fabulous, I am here to be fabulous and bring my fabulousness to you. But these students soon realize that they are more changed by the people in the community, and that it is really the community that gives them much more than they give the community. I think this is a profoundly humbling moment for them, and that is a great moment to have. To kind of know that, yeah, you exist in relationship to other people, and you can be really smart and have a great idea and you are still not going to change refugee law, but that doesn't mean that you are not consequential in other ways. And so I think that is a good thing,"(Luanne, Duke Faculty, 2010).

Yet even with her successful experience in the program, Luanne still has reservations about Duke Engage in general. She believes that there isn't enough ethical inquiry about the
program as a whole or about the circumstance of sending 350 students into the world "to do stuff" as she puts it. Another step that the program should take is to create a better system of mentoring that really allows students to prepare for their upcoming experiences. Along with this, Luanne confronted criticism that students choose to go abroad rather than do domestic service. To her, the problem isn't that students want to go abroad, because after all, who wouldn't want a free trip overseas? But that these international experiences didn't have legs in the communities to which students returned. Thus, there were few tools for students at the university to really build upon the skills and insights they established overseas when they return to campus. "It is kind of inevitable that students will look away before they look down partly because it’s human nature, so trying to force people to work in Durham is not the way,” she insisted:

"What we need to do is make the Duke Engage program the best program, it has to be the sexiest, the one where the student feels like they are making the greatest contribution, where there is the greatest excitement. And what I think is unfortunate is that many of the opportunities we have in Durham just aren't this way. We need to make it exciting and attractive and as adventurous as going anywhere in the world because it is," (Luanne, Duke Faculty, 2010).

**Alpha Phi Omega**

Getting off the bus and walking to my Alpha Phi Omega meeting, I remember thinking to myself, “Oh, this is going to be terribly difficult finding people to tell me about their perceptions of civic engagement and labor issues on campus.” Up to that point, for some reason I had only been considering asking students involved in Duke Engage to tell me about their experiences. Then as I was sitting in the meeting, it hit me like a ton of bricks: I was sitting in my field site at that very moment! I don’t know how I didn’t realize it sooner,
but APO was one of my best sources of information. Kath Weston came to my mind when I
started studying APO and community service in general. An anthropologist herself, Weston
often contemplated the ways in which her being a lesbian would affect her field research on
lesbianism, just as I wondered if my involvement in community service on campus would
affect my own research. Weston describes being questioned on this point by one of her
students: “‘Do you think you could have done this study if you weren’t a lesbian?’ asks a
student from the back of the classroom. ‘No doubt,’ I reply, ‘but then again, it wouldn’t have
been the same study’” (Watson, 1997:13).
Kath Watson also realized that her identity as a lesbian allowed her to more easily access
information from other lesbians, but at the same time limited her because they assumed that
she should automatically know things without them telling her. I realized that since I was a
part of APO and took part in community service myself, I could unwittingly let my insight
intervene with my ability to make honest and non-biased observations. But the fact that I was
aware of my inherent biases meant that I would be aware of how they affected me.

APO is not like any of the other social group on campus, and it’s most definitely not similar to
any of the fraternities. This is a group of people who won’t make time to go to the APO socials
because they are too busy, but

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4 Photo: Alpha Phi Community Service Project
they will spend their Saturdays cleaning a park or rebuilding a school. Yet even though it’s understood that the only people who join APO are those who really enjoy community service (many people that I’ve talked who weren’t members said they’d thought about joining before realizing that they didn’t love doing service that much), there is still something to be observed in the fact that members are required to do a certain amount of hours of service each semester. Why join something that forces you to do service if you already enjoy doing service? Should volunteering be something that should be regulated? I myself joined because I thought it would allow me to interact with students who shared similar interests with me, and with whom I could participate in activities that I enjoyed. But I don’t always meet the service requirements each semester -- sometimes a total of 18 hours is just too much to do. Because this organization’s main focus is civic engagement, paradoxically, even on a campus that says it values civic engagement, a certain stigma comes along with being a part of such a group, and this stigma is even more so realized by the members of APO itself:

“This is an APO semi-formal no one actually brings dates.” “No she wouldn’t join, we are not cool enough for her.” Yeah we are mostly Asian.” “I think that if a homeless person went to an APO meeting he would join because that is just how welcoming and warm APO is.” “Our organization is the epitome of diversity, I mean just look at us!” (Various Responses from APO Students, 2010).

These are just some of the self stigmatizing quotes I have heard during my time with the organization. Yet when I ask people outside of APO what they think of the fraternity, they rarely seem to have an opinion. A typical response would be, “Isn’t APO the community service fraternity? Is it an actual fraternity? I mean there seems like a lot of nice people in it.” This show that for the most part, outsiders are not aware of what Alpha Phi Omega actually does and of any stigma associated with it. Members in fact create their own stigma. What I
found is that within APO and other groups on campus who are involved in service, there was definitely a collective consciousness of social responsibility. If students did not feel like their volunteering was directly helping someone, they would often complain about the actual form of service. For instance, during the APO executive officer elections, the main point that candidates brought up was the issue of doing more meaningful work, and not only doing mulching or gardening at locations. A collective consciousness of social responsibility is often what brings members of these service organizations together. They have a strong desire to be around others who share the same passions and thus create a community of common thoughts, understandings, and ideals.

**Engagement as Service**

One of the biggest programs that received a noticeably high level of critiquing during my interviews was Duke engage. Duke engage is one of Duke’s most honored and recognized programs on campus. Since Duke engage started several years ago, the university more than ever has created a set focus on making this institution a civically aware environment. President Broadhead said during his speech at the introduction of the Duke engage program that

“Duke has always placed a special emphasis on using knowledge for the greater social good. Today we’re committing ourselves to making this opportunity a part of every Duke undergraduate’s experience.” (President Brodhead, 2008)

While going to foreign countries or even places within the united states to perform service sounds exciting and would seem to be extremely ethical, there are actually many
issues that could arise from such an initiative. Some of the students that I interviewed said that they thought Duke engage had good intentions backing it up but that the regulation of the program has allowed those good intentions to go the way side.

“Duke engage is a waste of money. To think that you can change lives in simply three months is just naive and stupid.” (Duke Student, 2010).

This student along with many others, claims that the time allotment of the program brings false hope to students who are going to these places to help. Most of these students have never been to any of the areas in which they are working in and there is a clear realization that no significant amount of work can be finished in just three months. According to one Duke professor that I interviewed, students can leave lasting negative damage on some of the villages in which they volunteer within developing countries. If you help one village this might cause competition between that village and another village near by whom did not receive any aid. Or if you help only certain people within a community then it might cause inter competition between citizens. Along with this there is often no way of sustaining the aid programs that students start in the villages after the students have left, thus the area being helped is only being teased by the idea of hope for a three month period. Duke engage doesn’t seem to consider long term benefits but rather short term temporary issues. This leads me to ask cui bono (who benefits)? It often seems that the student, particularly those who travel abroad to theses so called exotic lands, actually take more from the Duke Engage experience than the people whom the students are supposed to be helping. Students get a chance to take a fully funded trip, obtain a self-satisfying experience by knowing they are supposedly being socially responsible, and then adding their experience to their resume to
make them appear well rounded and adaptable. While on the other hand, the recipients of the service are sometimes left in turmoil and forgotten.

There also seems to be issues with the way in which Duke Engage stipends are issued. One student I interviewed commented that

"My friend did a duke engage program in china, but when he finished he had 500 dollars left, all of which he used to just buy duke apparel for himself." (Duke Student, 2010).

There is a fear that the university is just throwing money at students and telling them to go do whatever they like with it as long as it makes the university look good to the general public. What was really interesting was the fact that even the students who I interviewed who had been involved in Duke engage themselves agreed with all the negative effects of the program. But most of them seem to have an easier time pointing fingers at other individuals who participated in the program while insisting that their own duke engage project was different and did not leave any negative undertones at the places they visited. No one wants to take the blame.

There is also this idea that most people pick places to volunteer abroad because it is a free way to travel to somewhere exotic. Very few people choose to stay in the United States where there are just as many people in need as there are in other countries. How is it so easy to turn a blind eye at the poverty that is occurring 10 minutes from campus but go out of your way to help someone 10,000 miles away? An administrator of the Duke Engage program seemed offended when mentioned the concept of going abroad versus domestic. His response was to ask if I knew that Duke Engage in Durham was the largest Duke Engage program. When I told him no, he seemed satisfied and felt that he had made a valid argument in defense of the program. But what he did not say was that Duke in Durham was the last
program to fill up every year, and that most students took it as their last choice when they
could not get into other abroad programs. I will say however, that the students who were
actual citizens of countries that they did work in were the ones who seemed to do the most
significant and efficient forms of service during their three month periods. Being from those
areas allowed them to know what certain communities really needed and understand the
ways in which they could create long lasting positive effects for those areas. A Duke Engage
student from Taiwan insisted that he felt really connected to his civic engagement project in
his own country because it would be something that he would continue to work on for
however long he was needed.

“Doing duke engage in my own village allowed me to meet some of the most pressing needs
of my home community. Needs which have existed in this area since I was a child. It felt good
to be able to create a project that would help everyone from my home.” (Duke Engage
Student, 2010).

Students who participate in Duke Engage realize that they cannot always make a huge
impact within a community for the amount of time that they are involved in their projects,
but they believe some service is better than none at all. As young academics, these students
feel that their service lies in providing some form of knowledge to those who are in need.
Crewe and Harrison describe this as “the gift of knowledge [that] makes them free” (Crewe,
Harrison, 1998:33). The two main issues with this concept are the assumptions that we have
knowledge to give, and that those whom we have identified as being in need actually need to
be set free. Duke Engage was created with great intentions, but like many programs, it has
grown so quickly and become so large that the original purpose of the program has become
lost among the media and hype surrounding it. The university has worked so hard to make
the Duke name identifiable with Duke Engage that no one is asking the obvious: What is the
program actually doing and not doing? Is Duke Engage the Grameen Bank of Durham? The comparison of the Grameen Bank and microfinance is applicable to Duke Engage because they both were founded on principles of ethical choices but have somehow turn out to have more critiques of morality than moral implementation. Under the Grameen Bank, the microfinance movement received unprecedented attention on an international level from various governments and organizations. Microfinance was established with the desire to provide credit to poor people with the hope that this would help end their financial problems and provide a means for entrepreneurship. Along with this, the founder of the Grameen Bank also labeled the program as an opportunity for woman’s empowerment. Thus the vast majority of borrowers under the Grameen bank in Bangladesh are women, but the people providing the loans and with the jobs are still men. Aminur Rahman, an anthropologist who studied the microfinance situation of Bangladesh states

"The research findings suggest that women become the primary target of the microcredit program because of their sociocultural vulnerability, that is, the requirements of regular attendance by borrowers in weekly meetings at the loan center and the rigid repayment schedule of loans. The program extends credit to women, but in the household women often pass on their loans to men, men take control over women’s loans, or loans are used to meet the emergency consumption needs of the household. In this system, women borrowers often lose control over their loans but bear the consequences of the debt burden in their households and loan centers," (Rahman, 1999:ix).

Duke Engage was created with the intentions of giving students an outlet to provide service to those in need, but it seems that now the ones who are truly benefiting are the students themselves. While both of these programs have good intentions backing them, their intentions have not all been met since the programs have expanded so quickly. To a degree they have essentially lost control, and because they are so popular, people have stopped
questioning the effects of the programs. The Grameen Bank has turned into just another
corporate feel-good effort and Duke engage into another privileged student feel good
initiative. Why not just give the money to the people who need it instead of spending on
these programs?

All of the issues previously discussed in this section could possibly be handled if the
Duke Engage program coordinators perhaps did a better job of regulating the student’s
activities with the funds spent in Duke Engage, and if the coordinators themselves better
understood what the consequences of students actions would be in these different countries.
Chapter 3-Labor

Through the lenses of those outside Duke, Duke is seen and known as a university with top notch educational and research opportunities and facilities. When I first arrived at Duke I too shared this same impression, but as time went by I became aware of the ways in which the identity of the university was complicated as a result of its varying roles. From a racial context Duke was known as a plantation for privileged wealthy whites. From a lucrative standpoint the university had taken on the identity of a corporation or large business. And from an educational perspective the university was a hub for innovation, intellectual stimulation and moral accomplishments through activities such as civic engagement. All of these characteristics are pivotal parts of the jigsaw puzzle that is Duke, but the difficulty of trying to put these tiny pieces together in order to create a nice and completed picture is what makes the university a unique and abstract community. It is these identities that I will explore and struggle with as I navigate my way through the labor section of my work.

In order to better understand how the university is perceived in contrast to Durham I needed to get the raw opinions of the inhabitants of the campus. In order to accomplish this I asked my interviewees to tell me what words came to mind off the top of their heads when they heard the words Duke or Durham. Here are some of the responses.
Duke Traits:

Student Perspectives-"Intelligent, cocky, preppy, athletic, fratty, diverse, not service, basketball, academic rigor, far reaching effects, poor, crime, blackwall street, 28 year old medium build black man, civil rights,

Administrators/Faculty Perspectives- blue, service, excellence, ambitious, wealthy, elite, great, work, limitless learning, innovative, ambitious, incredibly friendly place, obscene privilege, physical beauty, spirit, liveliness, entrepreneurial, fresh,

General Employees- smart, not diverse, plantation, education, established, profound, expensive, blows a lot of money, research, lots of families working here, big, girls with wrong organ, mistakes, forced retirement,

Durham Traits:

Student Perspectives- "sketchy, historical, warm and inviting people,

Administrators/Faculty Perspective-" happening, emerging, sleepy, diverse, progressive, best city in the country, strong black middle class, schools aren't the best, warm, friendly, creative pockets, constant unfolding, laid back, hard transitions, scrappy, understated, sleeping giant, incredible culture, rich history, confused, great place to live,

General Employees- small, dirt, divided, poor, doesn't give back to community members, family, country,

As you can see from the descriptions above, due to different experiences and social positions, specific groups have different opinions about the ways in which they have come to know the city and the university. But it is the shared experience of living in Durham and being connected to the university that also creates an overlap in their perceptions of their surrounding communities. It is this shared experience, which is often overlooked, that needs to be embraced and nurtured so that social discrepancies do not act as a total and complete barrier to everyone's ability to find a common goal.

"If I could change one thing about the university it would be to create an environment where there is a greater sense of shared purpose and equality. I think a shared purpose is something that we need to have with students, faculty, administration, and staff that make
this place run on a daily basis need to share some since of purpose for us to feel more like a community. The point is that we don't have a shared purpose. I think we are all here for profoundly different reasons and as long as we don't think about it, then it’s ok. We benefit by coming up with a shared sense of what our goals are, what we are all working towards so that we feel like we are all contributing. Cause it is hard for people to figure out what is really going on and why I am bothering doing this, a sense of collective purpose gives people a sense of community and those are things that give you a sense of purpose in life." (Luanne, Duke Administrator, 2010).

But deriving such a state of being is not an easy thing to achieve and in order to begin to take on such a task we must first be open and perceptive to examining the realities that divide, exploit, perpetuate and blind us to the inequalities that exist.

**Working Stories of Labor:**

While doing my research on labor issues on campus I wanted to consider a broad scope of opinions, but at some point I realized that I had become very focused on the perspective of one particular individual named Sarah. I did not mean to become focused on Sarah but her story was very captivating. Sarah who has been working at an office on Duke’s campus for about 14 years described Duke as

“*a business, feeding and nurturing off its own heart.*”

I would like to focus on Sarah for a little while because I believe that I had the most interesting conversation with her of all the employees that I met, not too mention the fact that she also had 14 years of insight into the ways in which Duke had developed over the years. As she described her experience on campus she casually mentioned that she had only stayed at Duke because it provided her with mental security.

“*You have to do a lot of bad things in order to be terminated.*”
Along with this Duke also offered a large bundle of benefits that suited her lifestyle. She has two children and by working at Duke, the university will help pay for her children to go to college. Besides the usual benefits such as health care, and other forms of security there was also an up side to the reaction that people would give her when she would say that she worked at Duke.

“When I say, well I work at Duke, people are like oh really wow that’s really impressive. But that is definitely not a reason for why I have stayed here.”

Although it seemed like Sarah for the most part enjoyed her job she still held some very critical opinions of the campus. She stayed on east campus because it was less chaotic than west, but she most definitely was not pleased with the parking provided for employees on campus. She thought that freshmen should not be allowed to drive to campus, and if they did that employees should have a special parking area. She also thought that it was ridiculous that she had to pay for parking at the place that she worked. I completely agreed with her because I also thought that it was crazy for students to pay for parking, especially since the fee is so large.

“There are a lot of things that Duke doesn’t care about or even think about when it comes to taking care of the simple things for its employees,” she said.

She told me about her friend who worked in housekeeping downstairs. Apparently Sarah went downstairs from her office one day when she noticed this terrible smell. She saw her friend and asked her what the smell was, and her friend replied that it was the enormous trash
bags that she had to drag down the hallway to put outside in the dumpster. The school had not provided this lady of about 50 years of age with any type of carrying utensil to help her transport enormously heavy trash bags. It seemed that these employees were given the minimum needed materials to complete their work. I told Sarah that I understood what she was saying. When I worked at housing a couple of summers ago, I noticed that the maintenance and housekeeping employees were forced to work in the east campus dorms without any air conditioning. The temperature often reached over a hundred in the dorms, and some of the older employees had to climb the stairs and work all eight hours in these conditions without any relief except lunch. There could have at least been fans and water provided but at last no one seemed to care. Another thing that Sarah mentioned was the idea that African Americans don’t get along with their African American bosses. She herself was an African American and she did not get along with her boss, whom she had been working for a couple of years.

“It’s like they get a management position, and they act like they aren’t use to having anything, they get power hungry because they have never had the chance to be in control before. It’s really quite embarrassing.”

I myself have often heard this being said in the

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black community so it did not come across as a surprise. It goes along with the idea that blacks are always trying to hold other blacks back like crabs in a bucket. The one thing that she did not really like about Duke’s campus is its lack of representation on campus of “us” in higher positioned jobs. The word “us” was used over and over again as she became more comfortable with the conversation. Us was used in place of African American, referring to the connection that she and I held in common. But it was not only she who insisted on referring to “us” when speaking to me. Almost all of the black employees that I spoke to used this word to imply that I would understand where they were coming from and what they were talking about. But the most interesting part was the reaction the interviewees would have when they used the terms us, white, and black. These words almost seemed like a taboo to announce, for every time an employee used one of these terms the person would whisper while saying it and kind of look around. I found this to be strange for most of the time during an interview we weren’t around other people and no one would have heard them. It came to my understanding that this was a habit that many general employees had formed from when they would talk to their other black colleagues at work about issues of race. Possibly they were afraid of being heard by their bosses who for the most part were white. Getting back to Sarah, she continued to talk about Duke employee relationships. Being incorporated into the category of "us" made me feel accepted and more comfortable with my interviewees. But this idea of "us" is not always as solid, simple or transferable as most people would think. Within the concept of "us" are also realms of not only inclusion but also exclusion. For example, Thomas Hocutt was a head waiter at the Washington Duke in the 1930's. At the age of 24 he was a B student at North Carolina College for Negros (now North Carolina Central) and he
wanted to pursue a degree in pharmacy for grad school but his college did not offer a pharmaceutical degree. So he applied to UNC Chapel Hill’s school of pharmacy where he was directly rejected and told to attend one of the five black colleges in North Carolina, all of which didn't offer the degree he wanted. With the help of two black lawyers Thomas confronted the problem of segregation by applying the issue of separate but equal to graduate schools. Forced to comply with the idea of separate but equal, North Carolina would either have to admit Thomas or create a black college with a pharmacy degree. Of course the state chose to create a pharmacy program at a black college, but this was not the point of the story. The point is that Thomas who was fighting for the rights of "us" blacks was also being targeted by black leaders in the community whom did not want him to be admitted to UNC because they saw this as a chance to expand their own political agendas and the black institution.

"Older, more prominent black leaders were certainly not opposed to racial progress, but they held personal and political agendas that conflicted with the efforts of the young legal activists. The most prominent black educator in the state directly undermined the entire case. James Shepard, founder and then president of North Carolina College for Negroes, generally opposed legal and political activism as a means of improving blacks’ positions. Shepard was especially concerned that Hocutt’s action could potentially subvert his plans of securing graduate programs for his college, chiefly a school of pharmacy," (Smith, 2008:63).

And so even though Thomas and the leaders were all black and could be labeled under "us", Thomas was nevertheless excluded from the black educated community and while at the same time fighting for that very community. It is also interesting to point out how the idea of social barriers and privilege were connected in this story. Because of his status as a worker and a black man at Duke, no one even questioned if Thomas wanted to attend school at Duke, it wasn't even an option. Three places, such as UNC, NCCU, and Duke which are all
geographically close to each make it difficult for certain people to shift between the defined barriers of these colleges whom ideally all have the same goal in mind as institutions of higher education. As Thomas tried to shift between each of these schools his status and label changed with each move. He was only able to be seen as a waiter and service worker at Duke, he was only a black man at UNC, and a student at NCCU.

Back to the story of Sarah. She had actually just a few weeks earlier attended a workshop given by Duke for building relationship skills in the workplace. Most people there were sent by their bosses but she just went on her own to check out the scene. There was one man having difficulties with his boss and so his boss sent him to the meeting to work on their relationship, but the boss himself did not attend. In fact there weren’t any bosses there at all. She was extremely upset at this, for she couldn’t see how the bosses would expect any changes to occur if they themselves did not attend the program also.

“It’s as if they are saying the only person who needs to change is you the employee, myself as the boss has the right to treat you however I like. I mean you can’t only have the wife going to marriage counseling without the husband and expect the relationship to grow stronger.” (Sarah, Duke Employee, 2010).

When Sarah was asked to comment on the Duke and Durham connection she stated that she did not see one. Hearing the words Duke and Durham together made her think of Duke as a plantation. She spoke of the ways in which citizens from the Durham community only walked around the outskirts of campus, and how they couldn’t penetrate the Duke bubble. To Sarah if there were such a concrete connection then why hasn’t Duke collaborated with the mayor of Durham? She had never seen the mayor associated with Duke in any form and he himself is the face of Durham.
Furthermore, Sarah insisted that there isn’t even a connection with NC Central University either, a college in rather close proximity to Duke. She had heard about duke trying to form relations with this university but she had never seen anything really come of it. I told her that I knew of plenty of Duke students that attended parties and programs at Central but Central students never attended Duke activities. I think this might be because there tends to be a difficult barrier of acceptance to get through on our campus, while at other schools people are a little more accepting of outsiders and maybe aren’t so clicky. On the terms of community service, she thought that it was great that Duke students were doing service, but she wasn’t really sure how much of an impact it was having on Durham. In her opinion there could be much more done by duke to aid in the rebuilding of the town. She felt that students here had so much to offer that could essentially help those who are less fortunate who live literally on the other side of the wall, and not 10,000 miles away in another country. When asked what she thought about Duke as a socially responsible campus her answer was simple and straight to the point,

“it is only as socially responsible as the people who walk around campus are.” (Sarah, Duke Employee, 2010).

While this answer kind of went around the question, it made me realize that the things that really make Duke what it is are the people who live and work here. Duke is only as good as the people who encompass it. The people in charge of the institution are only going to do things, at least for the most part, that cater to the people that they want to stay on campus and to those who provide the institution with funding. So in many ways myself and other students
are directly responsible for the reputation of the campus and the civic/social awareness of the Duke community. So maybe I should be researching myself!

**Analysis of Labor**

While I really enjoyed Sarah’s opinions, I did find other useful information relating to labor issues on campus. Last summer a Duke employee by the name of Rayford Cofer, age 63 died while working at the LSRC building. It happened after a steam line exploded in the basement of the building killing the master steamfitter. Apparently the university had been only asking him to do the bare minimum of repairing in the steam room over and over again, and eventually the pipes couldn’t withstand the pressure any longer and exploded. The university was not claiming responsibility for the accident but insisted that it would do more investigation as time went along. I couldn’t find any more information on the finished investigation and there didn’t seem to be much else said about the story at all. But I do know that Rayford was quickly replaced by another worker, and his absence nor his life was made an issue. From Marx’s point of view, this man was simply a form of a commodity. Not much was heard about this man, nor did Duke do much to recognize him. He was merely replaced by another employee, as if he was never there from the beginning. Marx would say that “with the increase in value of the world of things arises in direct proportion the decrease of value of human beings.” The Duke employee seemed to become inhuman, and yet just another source of revenue for the institution. I also felt that this would also be the case if a student were to die. It would get quickly brushed underneath the rug and not mentioned so as not to tarnish the reputation of the university. As one general employee told me,
“you have to realize that you are part of something that is bigger than yourself. And no matter how much you to try and tell yourself when you wake up in the morning and go to work, that you are doing something that is really going to make a difference, the truth is that society/Duke doesn’t mind sacrificing you because the little difference that you make is really just a tiny spec in a bigger picture, in something bigger than you can control.” (Duke Food Employee, 2010)

None of the employees that I interviewed had heard any news about the employee who had died, but they were not surprised by the reaction of the university. One food service employee told me that

“the university handled it in the manner that they felt was appropriate, I can’t really say if I agree with it or not, but they did what they could. I mean they handled it to the point where it would not bring to much negative lime light to the campus which is their responsibility, they have an institution to protect.” (Duke Food Employee, 2010)

While some employees tried to be open with me, there was still this underlying fear that something they would say could be used against them and cause them to lose their job. I specifically remember one civic engagement administrator being particularly nervous, upset, and a little frantic at the beginning of our interview. He kept repeating that he hoped he could help me, but I didn't give him much material or time to prepare with. What he didn't realize was that my goal was to not give too much information about my interview process to my interviewees so that they would tell me what was from their hearts and not something that was scripted. Some of the higher level administrators did not seem to be nervous about expressing opinions that were not always in favor the university. One upper level administrator asked me after our interview if I was surprised by how open and truthful she was with her responses. And honestly, I was very surprised by her responses but also very appreciative of her integrity. Even though she shared with me many things that showed the
university in a negative light, I left her interview having more respect for Duke because she was a part of the university's operations.

With most of the general employees there was also this unsaid feeling of trust because I was black, and a female, who because of my skin tone and gender, should understand their point of view, and would not betray them. And oddly enough I did feel this connection with the workers, and I even felt more comfortable asking them for an interview if they were African American and or female, simply because they seemed the easiest to talk to. In fact I felt a form of privilege to be accepted and incorporated into their world, as if there was something special about me which made them open up to me and not other students.

Truthfully because of my skin tone and gender I was different from most of the students at Duke, and sometimes this difference had its perks. For instance, it is known that on occasion bus drivers will pull the bus door right up to you if you are a black student (although I have been left by the bus way too many times for this to be completely true). Once, while I was the only person on the bus, a bus driver decided to wait for these two girls who were running to the bus. He told me that he wouldn't have waited for them if they hadn't been black. There is this sense that because we are all labeled as black in society that we must have endured similar struggles and discrimination whether or not we are a student at an elite institution or a bus driver for the same institution. Thus this belief led to a form of reciprocity between students of the black community and general employees. Interesting enough, if I was interviewing a student or administrator I felt comfortable with anyone no matter what their background was. I’m not sure how to explain why these different levels of comfort occurred
but it is inevitably connected to the ways in which I myself have subconsciously let social stereotypes affect my actions and opinions of others.

Often when I would sit in the library on the upper floors of Perkins and Bostock, I would overhear the housekeeping employees talking in the different areas where they would gather during their breaks. They were always a group of black employees laughing, gossiping, and working on the computers with each other. I think they gathered on the upper floors because there was a less chance of them being caught by their bosses, but I was not sure. Anyway, they would talk about the issues surrounding the new Duke policy of trying to force people to go into retirement. If not enough people accepted the new retirement plan then the university would start laying off employees. For the employees this seemed like betrayal to the workers whom had been servicing Duke for years. Duke was getting rid of its older employees and keeping the younger ones. According to the employees that I saw in the library, the school should keep its older workers because they knew the ins and outs of their field, if the school only had young people who had no experience and didn’t know how things were handled in different departments then the workforce on campus would fall apart. I kind of felt nosey listening to the employees conversations from a far, but they were speaking loud enough for me to hear them across the other side of the room so I did not feel that bad. I am not sure if it is acceptable or ethical to write about people who do not know that they are being observed but I did anyway. If I keep my sources anonymous then it seems to me that this form of data collecting is ok.
Shadee’ Marshall

*Shadee*: How do you think the university values you as worker?

*Pam (Duke Office Employee, 2010)*: “Now with all the changes, umm I believe that I am just a number, I am just a person. The university as a whole starting probably from Broadhead to the provost, even to my vice president probably don’t even know what I do. So even the retirement changes that are going on through Duke, and the ways that I sit back and see how they eliminate people that I think are the core of Duke, that I don’t feel like I am exempt. I just believe that I am blessed. I am favored to God, in that my name has not been called. But I understand the situation that Duke is in, so it is what it is. In the past I have seen some stuff, Duke has been the first place that I have seen I guess racial issues through more of the employees. I have never seen it with students. But I don’t really know if that is Duke or if that is the supervisor. I was really disappointed to see how you know they (Duke Supervisors, 2010) can play their part and allow stuff like that to happen. To see people forced out of work, or even to have people stressed out. I have seen where stress with the race thing has even made someone sick, like permanently disability and having strokes.”

6 From what I gathered there seems to be different communities of employees formed on campus based on their race and their work position. There isn’t any room to shift between these communities and one wouldn’t want to for fear of being fired or judged. Could this inability to shift between communities also be seen as a reflection of the Duke community itself? There are definitely groups of students formed on campus that are based off of race and or social economic standards. Yet, I do think that it is easier for students to move in and out of these groups than it is for employees, for students do not have the fear of being kicked out of school based off of

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who they socialize with. This idea of organized labor communities led me to analyze the social hierarchy that makes up the labor structure of Duke. According to Marx, "every man sees others in accordance with the standard and the relationship in which he finds himself as a worker." (Marx, 1983:141). When I first started to conduct my research I had no idea how socially constructed the divisions of labor were on campus. I was aware of the labor divides based on gender and race but not of the divides based solely off of work title. From my interviews and observations it became clear that there was a strict social divide which derived from how employees viewed their position in comparison to others. Many times, administrators were taken by surprise when I would classify them as employees or workers of the university. To them, they did not consider their jobs to be work. Their roles as deans, faculty, and program administrators were all positions that they loved, and positions where they had freedom to plan their own schedules and pursue their own interest. From their perspectives their jobs were too easy to be considered work. But when they reflected on the "workers" (as faculty members often classified them), they seemed clueless to the actual experiences of these employees. It was their belief that general employees worked harder and probably did not have the same luxuries and benefits as they themselves did, and so they could imagine how this category of employment could lead one to have problems with the values of the institution. Oddly enough, non-general employees felt so disconnected from the status of a worker that none of them had educated opinions or knew anything about the labor policies of Duke. To them the term "labor policies" did not apply to their positions.

Another example of labor inequality that stood out the most was the constant discrepancies between employee and manager. Literally every general employee that I have
spoken to has reported a series of incidents that involved confrontation with managers and supervisors. While managers are supposed to be leaders and provide a sense of control within the work environment, the overall arching theme seems to be that their title affects their effectiveness to communicate. Yet I also must consider that my data may be limited by the fact that all of my interviews were with female general employees, and thus their issues with managers could also be a gender issue.

**Habitat for Who?**

Browsing through the Duke Office of News and Communication webpage I came across a surprising article titled the "A Piece of the American Dream." I was startled by the article because it glorified a situation that the university should have been ashamed of. During the time of this article Robin, a Duke employee, was working as a phlebotomist drawing blood from patients. At the age of 41 she had never been able to afford her own home and thus has spent the last several years sharing a small apartment room with her daughter (the article actually said she had a son, but after further research I was informed that she actually had a daughter). Her 62 year old mother lived in the other room of the apartment. But Robin would now finally have her own home thanks to the program called Duke/Self-Help and collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. After working 45 hours to help build her home she and her daughter will be moving into a new three bedroom, two bath house.

Betty Foster was an information accounting specialist for vendor registration in Duke's Accounts Payable department. Betty had been an employee at Duke for 20 years and had not been able to afford housing, thus she was living with a friend. During her drive
through Walltown she came across a Self-Help for sale sign and further inquired about the program in hopes of finally being able to have a home of her own. With help from Duke and Duke's partnership with habitat she is now the owner of her own home.

While both of these stories seem idealistic and heartwarming, they ultimately fail to ask the real question which is why aren't these employees able to afford housing? Within the Duke labor standard is a commitment to provide a living wage to its employees. A living wage "means workers should be compensated based on the local costs of living such that nobody working a full-time job should be living in poverty," (http://www.livingwageaction.org/campaigns_index.htm). What this article is not saying is even more revealing than what it does. Not once does it ask the employees whether or not they felt that the university was living up to its wage standards which should enable them to have housing in the first place. By not fully exploring the ways in which the work experience of these women has assisted in their unfortunate predicament the voices of these general employees were being silenced. It was not the story of the employees being told but rather the story of the university’s heroic actions. Just as it is questionable whether or not it would be more beneficial to simply give the money directly to the charitable programs that Duke Engage helps rather than spend it on student participants, it is also questionable as to whether or not it would be more beneficial for the university to merely pay these employees more rather than help provide subsidized housing. It is also important to point out that most universities have low income employees who probably can not afford housing but these same universities are not providing subsidized housing to accommodate their lack of pay as Duke is doing. Thus is it better that Duke is doing something rather than nothing? The answer to
this question is that Duke isn't actually doing anything. Habitat for humanity is a non-profit organization that is largely operated by volunteers who help build homes for those in need. These volunteers are comprised of individuals from the community and other public areas such as Duke students. Similar to the way in which the government passed on the responsibility of public aid to universities, Duke rather than providing suitable wages is placing the welfare of its employees into the hands of the public. I spoke to a Duke community service coordinator about the idea of Duke students providing aid services to Duke employees whom live in Durham. I wanted to know what he thought about the power dynamic of general employees having to serve students at school and then at the end of the day also be dependent on Duke students for practical aid. The coordinator said that he had never considered that before. During the time of the interview, I had not heard about any real examples of Duke employees receiving Habitat homes, but I used it as a hypothetical example. The coordinator said if employees couldn't afford housing then that meant that there was a problem with the university's wage standards, but then he asked me again if I had for sure heard about employees having habitat homes. While at that moment I hadn't heard about it for sure, it was still evident that the coordinator was troubled by this idea because it meant that he as the Duke community service coordinator was inevitably contributing to this programming which allowed Duke to work with subsidized housing organizations. At that moment he was forced to question the ethics of his role.
**Janice's Story**

Janice is a bus driver on campus. In fact she is one of the friendliness transportation workers that I know. Driving a bus around the same small path for hours on end carrying a bunch of sometimes drunk, impolite, and unaware students is not always a picnic in the park. But Janice has managed to find some joy in her work and built some meaningful relationships with students. My friends and I always chat with her during our bus rides and we distinguish her from other drivers by designating her as “the nice bus driver.” We even once ran into her at her second job in a hardware store, where we were thrilled that she remembered our faces. Because of Janice’s demeanor I felt completely comfortable asking her for an interview. When I met her for my interview she was on her hour long dinner break. We ended up conducting the interview at Panda Express just so it would be a casual atmosphere. During the whole interview process she insisted how much she loved her job as a bus driver, and that she had switched from her previous job of bus dispatcher back to a bus driver because she missed interacting with students. To her she saw Duke student’s as her children. Now this wasn’t to say that she did not have any kids of her own, in fact her son worked at the parking garage on campus. But placing herself in a mother like role, she had taken some students to the mall before to get their computers fixed, she had even purchased a bracelet as a graduation gift for a student. During our interview I felt her motherly presence as she gave me advice on how to prepare for my future and as she stubbornly paid for my meal. The most interesting part of Janice’s conversation was her account of her interactions with her manager.
“To be honest with you I don’t think the upper people at Duke care about the service people. I think they care more about the higher management. I can give you an example. I was voted the excellence the team award, my boss never acknowledged it, and I had no supervisor to come with me to the banquet. I came back to work to get ready to go on my shift and I had my leftovers from the banquet wit me. My boss said where did you get that from? I said my banquet. He said what banquet? I said the team excellence banquet. He said that was today? And I said yeah. And then he said how much did you pay them to pick you? He thought it was real cute and said it in front of everybody. I said they paid me nothing. I said you know a congratulation would be really nice from you. And so I even sent a letter to chuck (Duke Upper Management, 2010) and told him about the way my manager had acted. The excellence program had hand delivered their invitation to me, and I never got it. But one of the students did send me an email. You know that whole situation was absolutely uncalled for. And I thought I can’t believe that. And then a guy had gotten it the year before and the manager put all kinds of papers up on the board about it. It was really weird. And I said you know I was honored to get that and it might not have been a lot to him but it was a lot to me. I said it hurt my feelings and then it made me mad. I had this little Asian girl, you know she rode the c4 every night and she was sitting there when I got to the dinner and she came and held my hand and said I come to be with you (Janice, Bus Driver, 2010).

When speaking of the labor policies on campus Janice revealed her discontent with the inequalities that came with her job title. As a bus driver she was considered as a permanent part time seasonal worker, which meant that if she was low on the seniority list she wouldn't be guaranteed work during the summer. Not only was not being guaranteed a job a problem but if she couldn't get work during the summer she was also not allowed to apply for unemployment because of the title of her job. "That's why everybody works two jobs here. And I have worked a part time job for 7 years," (Janice, Bus Driver, 2010). Janice was not the only worker who spoke of working part time, many non-office based general employees worked more than one job. I remember riding in the safe rides vehicle and the driver just randomly started speaking of how he and his wife both had to have work two jobs just to keep afloat, and they both worked at Duke.
**Personal Realization:**

Further along in my research and interaction with employees I found myself making a connection to my parents. My mother who works in the service industry as a waitress is also categorized as a general employee at her two jobs. I found myself becoming emotionally upset by the fact that the women cleaning up the vomit in halls or serving students at the Faculty Commons could very easily be my mother. My father who is a mechanic could similarly fit the profile of a maintenance person, except for the fact that most mechanics on campus are white. As a child I too had, at least in a very broad sense, worked as a housekeeper. My older sister and I would go along with my grandparents and two aunts at night to clean various doctor offices during the after hours. While my sister and I spent half of the time reading the medicine magazines, we would spend the other half helping our grandparents and aunts clean. It is funny because up until now I had never really considered that childhood experience as a moment when I and my entire family was dependent upon this employer for job security. For me it had always been an exciting time when I would get to choose from a plethora of scientific magazines that I would have never had the chance to be exposed to otherwise. What is even more disturbing is that some of my close friends would probably treat or unconsciously view my parents in a different light if my parents were just to magically one day become a general employee at Duke. I wondered if any of my friends would even notice that the woman scrubbing their toilet was my mother, or would they not even take the time to notice because a black woman fulfilling this role was nothing out of the ordinary. Or if my friends would be afraid of my father because he is was one of the deemed "sketchy/creepy maintenance" men that wave to you and or fix your clogged toilets. No
matter what job position that my parents take I will always be proud of their work, but I would never in a million years want my parents to work at Duke or any university for that matter as general employee.

**Pictures in Alpine and the Refractory**

Have you ever walked into the Refractory restaurant at Duke and noticed the pictures over the dining tables. They are photographs of workers that are surviving based off of the social conscious food that Duke University purchases. Some pictures show illegal immigrants while others show farmers, all of whom are quoted as saying how content they are to be in the position that they are in, and thus implying that students are bringing these individuals freedom by supporting Duke’s purchases of their products. The same thing is seen in the Alpine restaurant of Duke where there are collogues of pictures that say by buying joe coffee, students are supporting a culture, a better lifestyle, happiness, and a sense of hope. While I believe that fee trade products have good intensions, I’m not really sure that students actually think about ethics when they are purchasing these items. From what I observed, these forms of media are placed around campus in order to make students feel better about the large amounts of commodities that they consume. Every student that I interviewed told me that they feel better when they know they are buying free trade products at these restaurants, and that when they see they have the choice of buying a coffee at McDonalds or Alpine they go to Alpine because at least they know that their money will be put to good use. I have to say, I believe most students gave this answer because my
questioning forced them to think about the ethical underlying of their purchases. I have never heard any student say while we are deciding where to eat,

“oh lets go to Alpine or the refractory because their food is socially ethical.”

It’s more along the lines of let’s go to the Refractory because the line is probably short.

About 80 percent of the students I spoke with said that they had actually never paid the photographs in Alpine any attention at all. So I think there has to be a line drawn between trying to make people feel ethical from an indirect source, and actually making people understand ethics through direct interaction. I mean most people learn from doing not reading. If there were possibly programs that allowed students to work with the people who are supposedly benefiting from these free trade products or if somehow the presence of free trade benefits was bigger on campus then students would take more than just a passing understanding of the ways in which their actions are affecting the lifestyles of others.

A Case of Identity:

While I was conducting some historical research on the labor policies of the university I came across a very interesting court case. James Hodgson, secretary of labor/United States versus Duke University. The Secretary of Labor was suing Duke for violating sections of the Fair Labor Standard Act and for withholding minimum wages and overtime compensation due under the act. The most intriguing part of the case was that Duke defended its actions by claiming that the university was in fact a retail establishment, and in fact that all higher education institutions had undertone of retailing. Taking on the role of a retail establishment meant that the university would have to deny its role as a service based
establishment and define itself as a profit driven institution. Duke lost the case because it was obvious that as a university it needed to be legally classified as a service based organization. It seems difficult to imagine that a university which places so much attention and emphasis on service could ever be in the position of denying that focus. Yet the crucial part of this case is not that Duke lost, but the that it sheds light on the complex and often hidden motives of the university. “Milton Freedman states the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits,” (Weingartner, 1999:1). Through the distracting headlines, slogans, and ground breaking programs /research there is always a bottom line, and that bottom line is to create sustainability through profit. While no one can blame the university for trying to obtain a certain level of wealth in order to maintain a certain status, the actions the university took to meet those standards can, however, be critiqued. Over the years there has been a constant fluctuation within the university's identity as it adopts various beliefs, forms, standards, and models in order to conform to its present needs and desires. This shifting of identity has often been a side effect of the university's need to sustain itself through profits. Whether it is a shift from desegregation, to the globalized citizen to civic engagement, all of these initiatives are used as marketing strategies to create a certain face for the university.

This court case also demonstrates that when pushed into a corner, the university is willing to compromise its ethical standards in order to justify themselves and there becomes this discrete line between justice, and ethics. While the operation of a university is often very similar to that of a corporation, there is one significant difference between the two. Colleges are exempt from state taxes unlike corporations. This law has been the root of a lot of animosity between colleges and their surrounding local communities because often the
construction of a university causes tax property and real estate prices to increase in surrounding neighborhoods. The Durham community, just like many college areas, loses quite a bit of tax money from Duke and they lose the valuable land that the campus owns. This in itself creates another form of separation between the university and the outside community.

**Closer Analysis of Marx:**

My research on the problematic labor system of Duke University can in many ways be connected to the theories of Karl Marx. By analyzing the conduct of labor on campus from Marx’s point of view I will be able to gain a deeper insight into the relationships between the university’s workers, wages, and commodities. According to Marx,

“*A commodity is an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another,*” *(Marx, 1983:437).*

If Marx were to examine the structure of the Duke employment system he would consider the Duke employee to be a commodity in itself. I think it is safe to assume that to the Duke student the general Duke employee is just another form of commodity that satisfies his or hers needs. On LDOC (the last day of classes) students leave a horrendous amount of disposable filth on the main quad, but when the students wake up in the morning all of the trash magically disappears and everything is cleaned. But it is in fact the Duke janitor and sanitation staff who have to clean up this unnecessary waste. Students wear a veil of ignorance, allowing them to only see the ways in which they benefit from their own actions
and not the ways in which other people may suffer from these same actions. As the saying goes, the world is often invisible to people that it is for (the privileged student). The Duke student is receiving the message that he or she doesn’t have to take any responsibility or suffer any consequences for their actions because there will always be someone there to clean up after their messes. The worker is taken for granted by the student and is only noticed as an abundant source that satisfies their wants (to be cleaned up after, to be fed, to taught, to be served). The employee who was killed on campus was easily replaced by another worker, because Duke employees become as plentiful and valueless as the commodity of paper.

“*We have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity and indeed of the most miserable commodity, (Marx, 1983: 131).*

Outside of faculty members and university administrators, it is quite easy to replace other ranks of Duke employees with little difficulty. This could be because the skill sets and credentials needed for positions in housekeeping, food service, transportation, and etc. are more abundant and easier to find in the general population than those needed for holding a position with more power. The idea of power being associated with the form of work with which one does for a living is something that also captured Marx’s interest.

“*Every man sees others in accordance with the standard and the relationship in which he finds himself as a worker,”*(Marx, 1983:141).

According to Marx, the way in which we view individuals is directly influenced by the status and position associated with their job. Often times the more dangerous, dirty, tiring, physically demanding, dehumanizing, and unattractive a job the less power the worker is thought to have. The more educational based, cleaner, civilized and less physically
demanding a job is the more authority the worker usually has. On campus it is safe to assume that when many students see a janitor sweeping their floor they quickly connect the janitor to this idea of a lower class, lower income, individual whom probably has less education and ultimately less authority. This power dilemma can be found in many facets of campus life. A housekeeping lady that works 8 hours a day in the summer time cleaning dorms without any air conditioning is paid significantly less than a Dean who sits in a office with air conditioning for maybe 6 hours a day because the Dean has more authority and a higher social status than the housekeeping worker. Marx would believe that there is a direct inequality between the wages of these two workers ( the housekeeper and the Dean) for he would say

“the more intelligent the work, the more witless the worker. The more values he creates, the less value, the less dignity he has,” (Marx, 1983:135).

For Marx the person who is working the hardest ( in this case he would say the housekeeper) is actually the one who has a job of the most value ( for sanitation is needed for health purposes) but because their job is so valuable the worker ultimately maintains less respect. Marx also focuses on the issues of alienated labor. The hostility that a lot of Duke Employees feel towards the university may actually derive from this phenomenon known as alienation from labor. Alienated labor refers to the idea that the worker doesn’t hold a knowledgeable connection to his work or to what he produces. What he produces holds no significant meaning to himself. On campus, I think a lot of employees ( it is important to notice that the majority of the time when I am referring to Duke employees I am excluding faculty and administration) harbor this ill will towards the university because they do not find
any personal significance or connections to their jobs. When an Alpine worker is preparing food, the meal that he/she produces is simply being consumed by somebody else, and the majority of the money he produces by making and selling this food is not going directly into his pocket. He himself is not benefiting the most from providing a student with a meal, it is the student, the university and the restaurant that is winning. The relationship goes as this: the alpine worker is putting in the labor for something that he/she is not personally benefiting from, while the school is benefiting from the alpine worker’s labor but not giving back much to the worker. If there was a way for the Alpine worker to feel more connected to their job, for the food they produced to somehow hold a significant meaning to them, and for the worker to feel that he/she was receiving benefits from the university that were proportionate to their labor, maybe then the alienation of labor would not exist and employees would have a better outlook on the university. Yet, according to Marx the only real way to get rid of alienated labor would be to discard of private property and with no alienated labor there would be no wages. My only question would be, could jobs still exist if there were no form of wages (including bartering)? Marx said that with the emancipation of private property comes the emancipation of workers. Thus if private property didn’t exist, I would probably not have to write a paper about Duke labor issues because labor issues themselves would also cease to exist.
**Conclusion**

I realize that my work may come across as fragmented, pieces here and there, but this disorganization and chaos reflects the messiness and unpleasant process of analyzing (1) a field site that I am myself a part of and (2) critiquing something as convoluted as ethics. As I referenced earlier, the complex structure of a university makes it difficult to singularly categorize the various roles that it plays within society and within its internal community. For me, I spent most of my time trying to put together the puzzle pieces of labor policies, ethics, social responsibility, and civic engagement into one completed puzzle that would ultimately produce a work of art which displayed the collective consciousness of the university. But from my observations it has become apparent that there is no pretty and finished picture to be found. Duke, just like many universities and societies, operates by its ability to give and take. At the end of the day when the donations have been made, the students sent abroad to provide aid, vomit cleaned by house keepers, habitat homes built for workers, classes taught by faculty, and a thesis written by a student, the question from the university's perspective isn't cui bono, but rather how has the institution benefited. This consistent self-motivated interest isn't completely the institution's fault, and a great deal of the blame can be placed on the capitalist society in which we live. Unlike the utilitarianism which focuses on benefiting the greater good of society, capitalism can be a very individualistic system that bases power off of one’s ability to make a profit. And in order to have some clout in the world, make its presence known and respected, while also being competitive the university has to participate in this system. But being a participant of the system doesn't mean that the institution doesn't
have the ability to make its own choices or take responsibility for those choices. Even in a capitalist society one can still make ethical decisions and be socially conscious.

During my research I became aware of the inherent paradox that existed within Duke. The institution by and large works hard to create a public image that portrays a socially responsible persona to the public domain. Duke has invested in numerous programs that allow students to actively participate and engage in service oriented fields within Durham and abroad. The university itself spends large amounts of funds on service based programs such as Duke Engage and the Duke Durham partnership, and has often won national awards for these deeds. It is the hope of the university that these actions are able to reflect the institution's desire to give back and contribute to society. These programs are presented as solutions to some of the worldly problems that contaminate society, such as gender inequalities, poverty, class inequalities, and racial discrimination. But the paradox that existed can be found in the discrete dualism within the social construction of the university. While these socially responsible initiatives are being performed for the world that exist outside of the university, the university is perpetuating these same worldly problems within its own structure. There is a very visible racial stratification of general employees on campus, such as the large population of black and Latino workers employed in service positions. Gender disparity is apparent throughout the campus staffing, with a small portion of high ranking administrators being female and/or of color. The fact some Duke employees cannot afford housing indicates that the university is in some fashion promoting the poverty that they are trying to eradicate. Class and status, whether it is within the student body or among employees is often not readily apparent but can be the most debilitating inequality of all.
because it encompasses all other forms of disparity. Yet at the same time, many employees want to work at Duke, they want to feel as if they have been incorporated into this large community. Many general employees spoke of how they actually liked their jobs, they just did not enjoy the exclusion and belittlement that comes along with their roles. Thus it is this lack of equal acceptance which comes off as humility and disrespect and ultimately invokes feelings of discontent and alienation in the workers relationship to the university. These employee’s arguments of wage inadequacy and managerial issues are just proxies for a larger sense of being excluded and larger desire to be accepted as equals.

Due to my double consciousness as a student and employee at Duke, I have to question whether or not I am contributing to this dualism. While I am a student who benefits from the services of Duke employees I am also simultaneously aware of the ways in which Duke employees are treated by the university and how this affects their perceptions of the institution. By writing this thesis, I realize that I am adding to the categorization and objectification of the those workers who are vulnerable and less powerful on campus. But by giving these individuals a voice in my paper, I hope to do my part as a prior Duke employee and what I would consider an "ethical person". Furthermore, I am aware that I myself believe in the good of volunteering and being civically engaged for I too am a active participant of the civic engagement community on campus. So while I see the obstacles created by the university's approach to social responsibility I also see the benefits that come with the creation of civic engagement initiatives and the push for such a focus. I like to think that when I tutor a student with APO that I am not just doing it for my own self-interest but that the child is gaining something significant from the experience as well.
Is there a collective consciousness of ethics at Duke? Durkheim's view of a collective consciousness in an organic society is that it is “regulated to the normative sphere of shared common values” (Ritzer, George). From my observations, I have come to the conclusion that ethics is far too ambiguous, biased, and elaborate to be able to make such a large generalization in reference to the moral compass of the entire university. For the most part I do not even know if the institution itself knows if it is ethical, and I don't believe that its aim is to necessarily be ethical. Rather the university's goals are formed by concepts of maximizing opportunities and integrating logic. And morality isn't always in order to accomplish these things. More than anything, I have concluded that university needs to reflect, critique and question its own systematic values before it looks to correcting other community’s issues. The biggest challenge of all is fixing your own problems because those are often the most difficult to see and to accept. Through the guidance of the university social and worldly problems are only visible to students when they pertain to places abroad or even in various U.S. states, but not locally in Durham, and definitely not inside of Duke. The world is often blind to those for whom it is for.

Whether we are discussing labor issues or community service awareness on campus, it is important to realize that these issues are not just characteristic of Duke but are also significant traits of many higher education institutions across the country. I hope that I have brought varying views to my area of study because as Donna Harraway would say “one (opinion/idea) is never enough.”
Photo by Shadee’ Marshall: Displays myself and friends showing school spirit with President Brodhead and Mrs. Brodhead
Bibliography:


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