

The Politics of Archiving

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ABSTRACT

Archives serve as representations of our collective historical voice. They are one of the most important sources of original materials that create the story of our past. Given this, it is critical to understand what makes up a collection and how the items, both present and not, impact our social consciousness of an event or time period.

METHODS

- The archives at the University of Southern Mississippi and Queens College were selected, among many Civil Rights collections, for this study because of their focuses on specific events within the Civil Rights Movement, similarities that each possesses in terms of providing access to information, and because of their geographic distance from one another.
- Using the theories of four political theorists, the author set up a framework to determine who gets to speak, about what, and why.
- This framework became the basis for how to look at the Freedom Summer collections and determine the narrative being told in each.



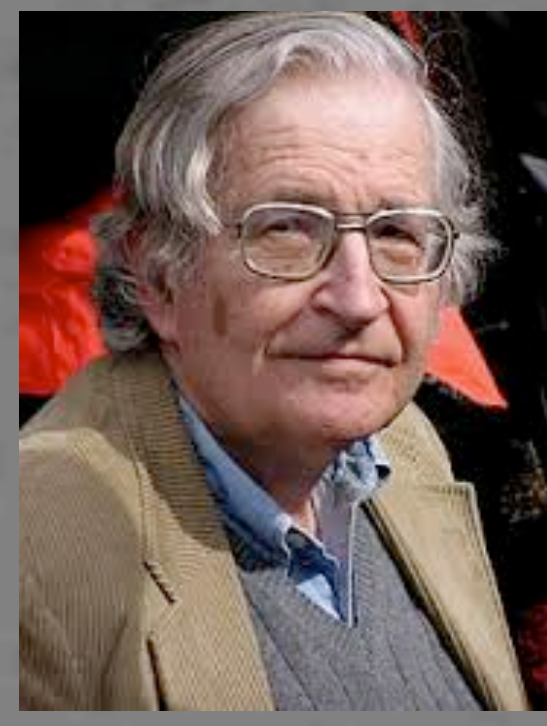
Jacques Derrida
Of grammatology
Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression



Michel Foucault
The Archaeology of knowledge: And the discourse on language



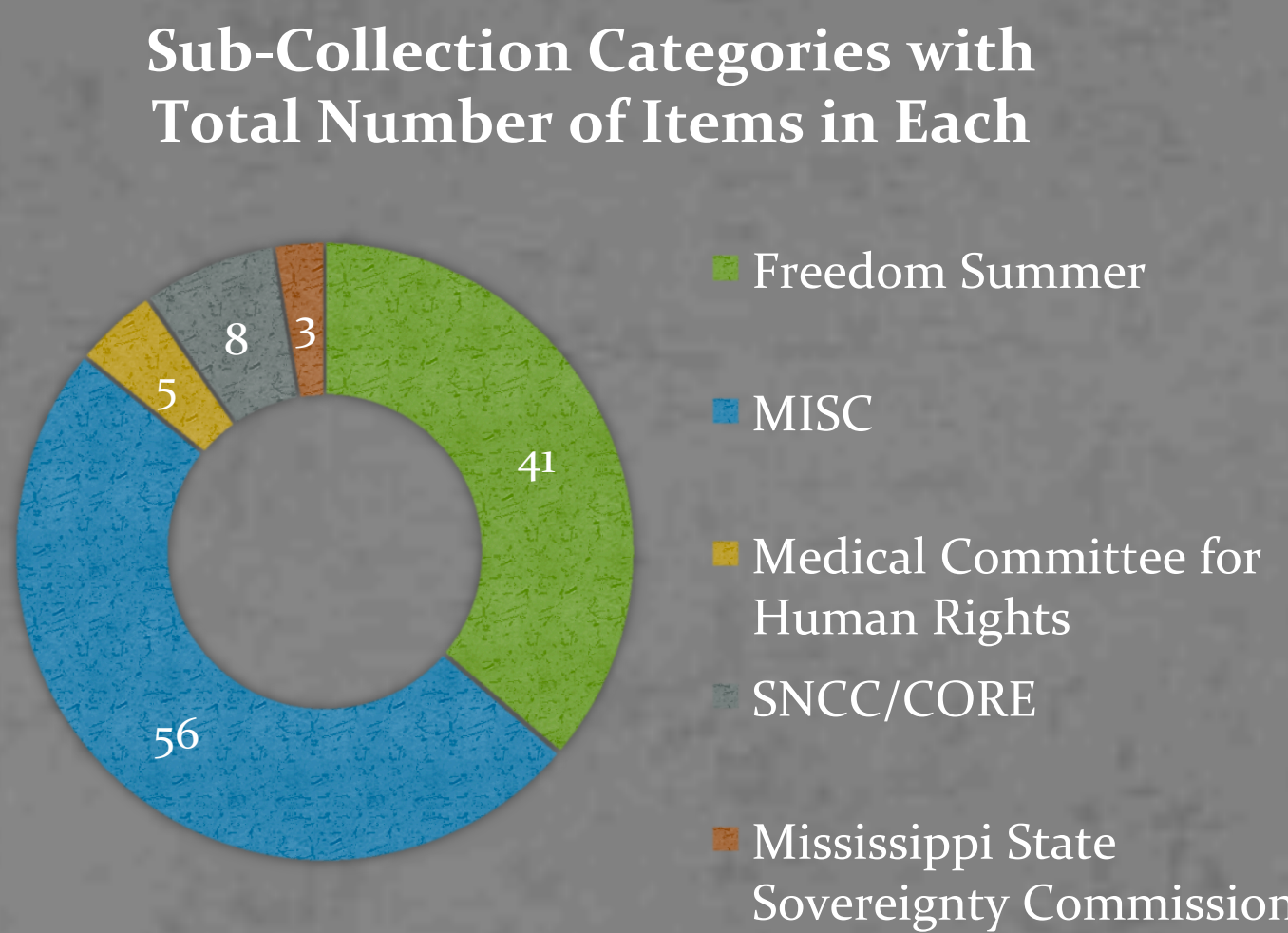
John Searle
Mind, language and society: Philosophy in the real world



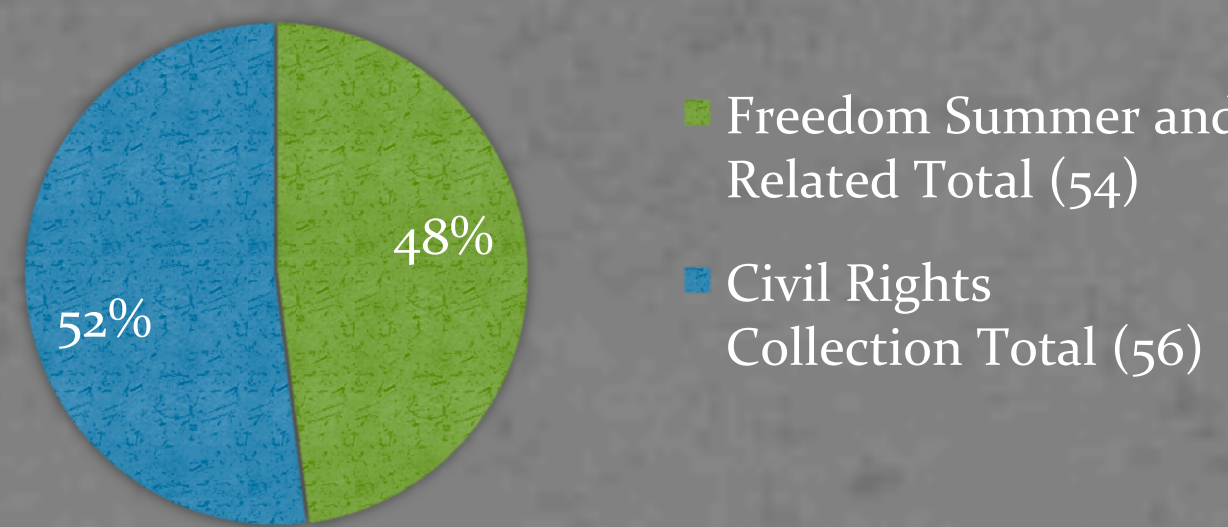
Noam Chomsky
Powers and prospects: Reflections on human nature and the social order

RESULTS

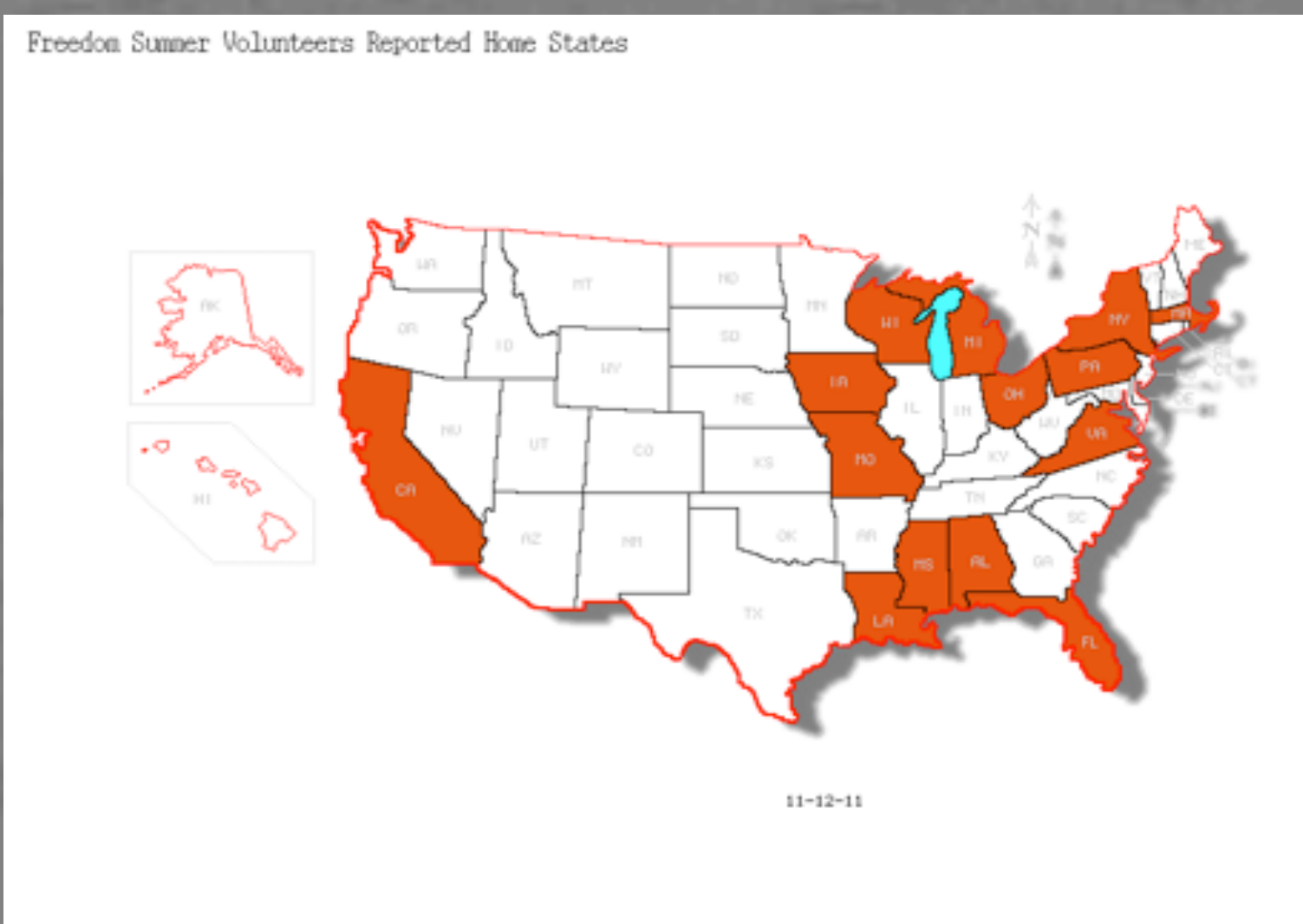
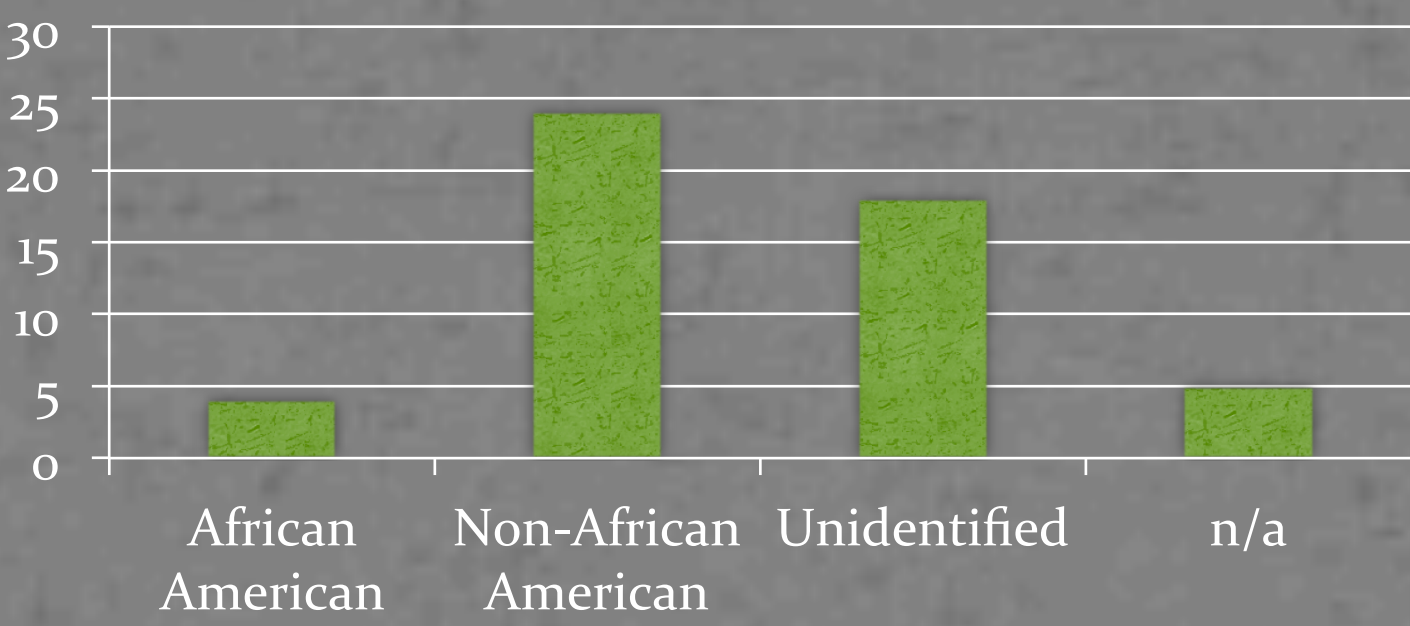
University of Southern Mississippi



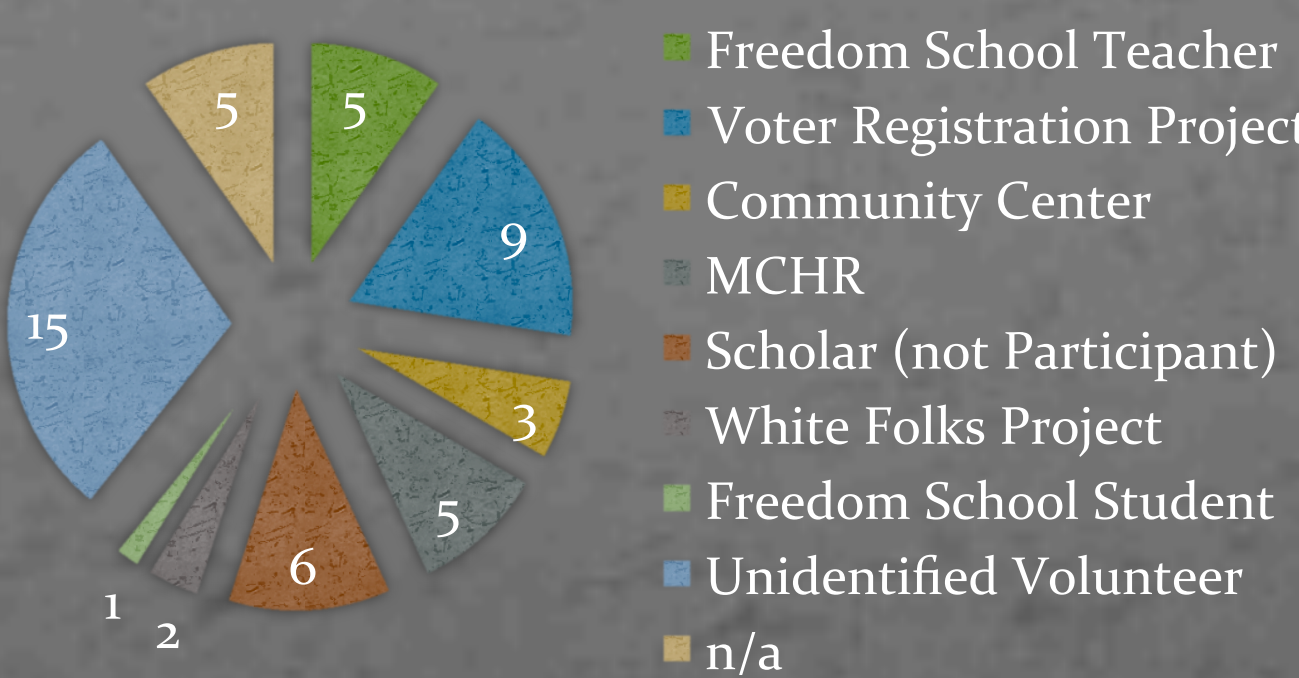
Percentage of Freedom Summer Sub-Collections



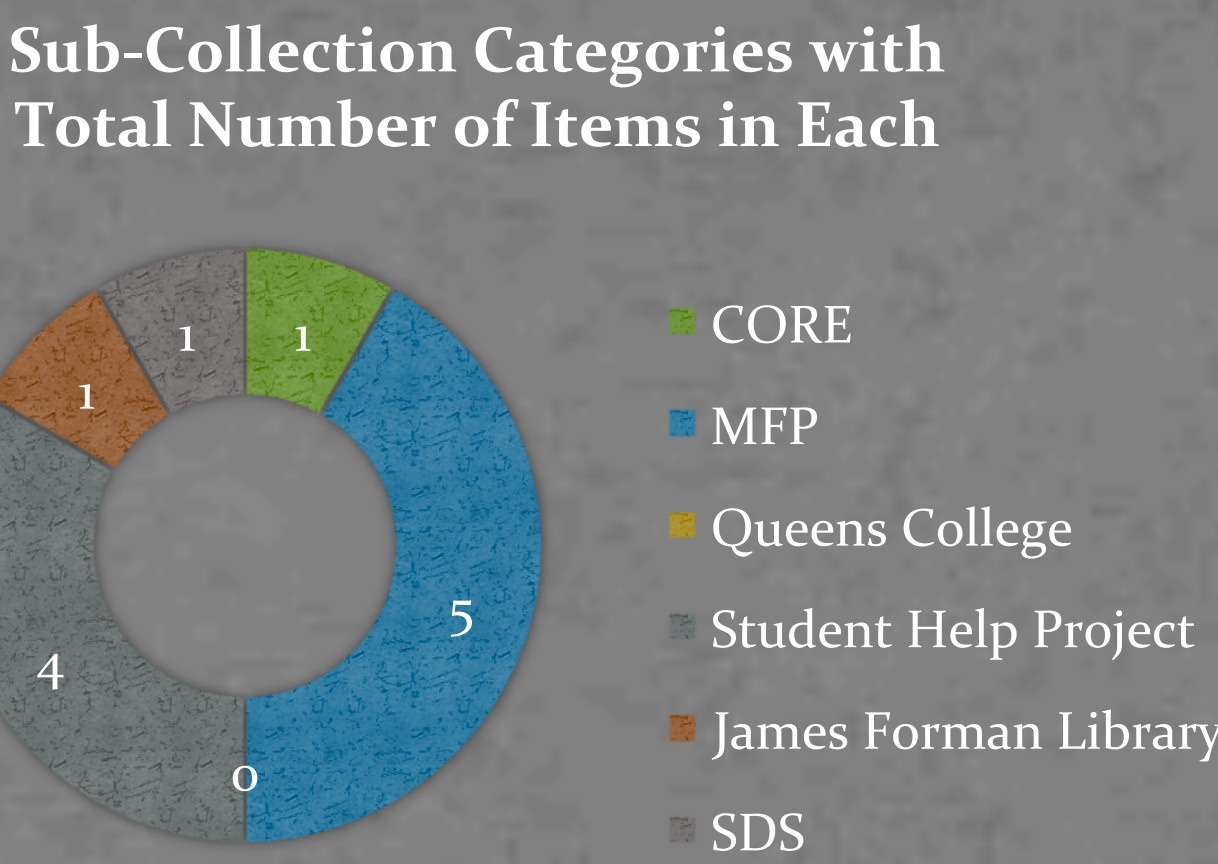
Who is Donating to the Freedom Summer Collection?



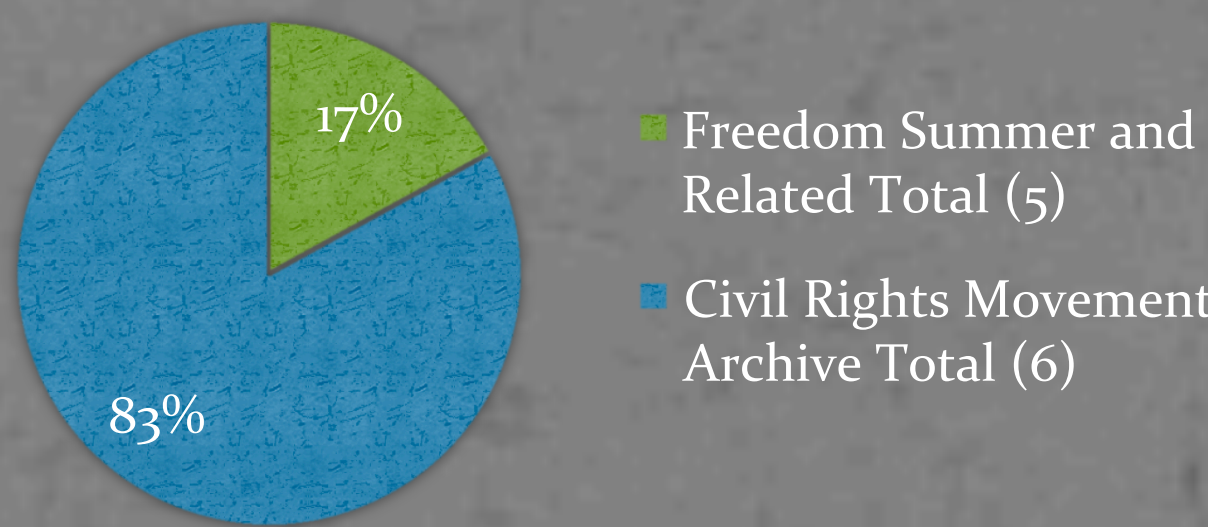
Role Donor Played in Freedom Summer



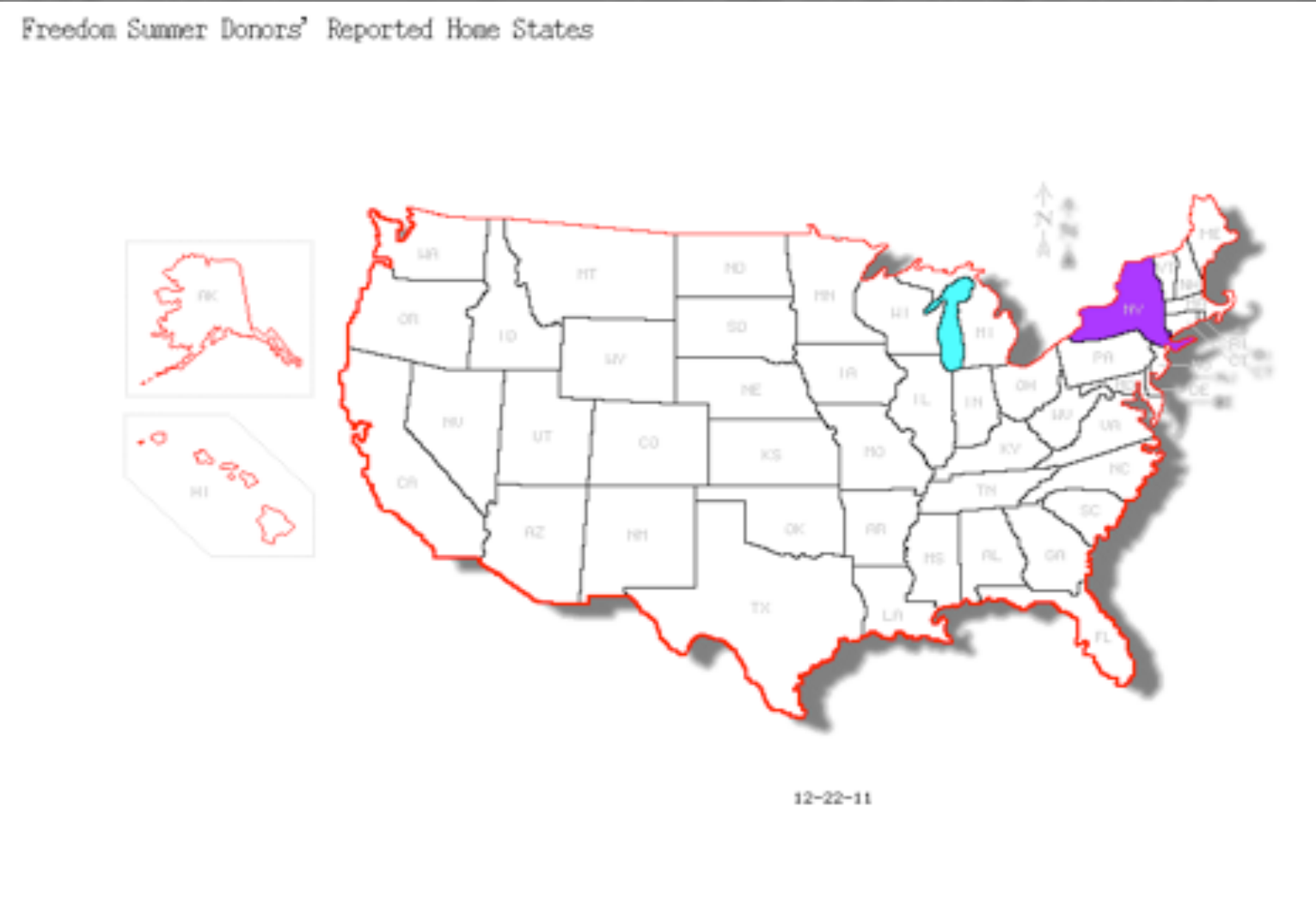
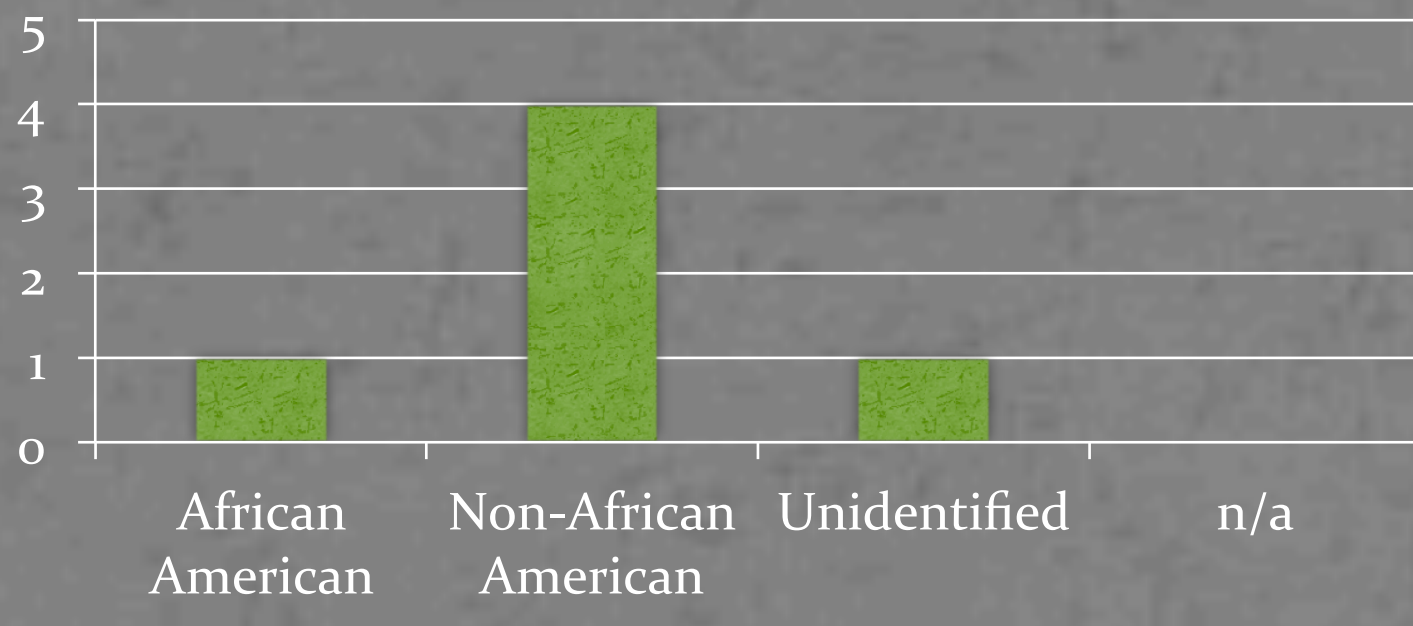
Queens College



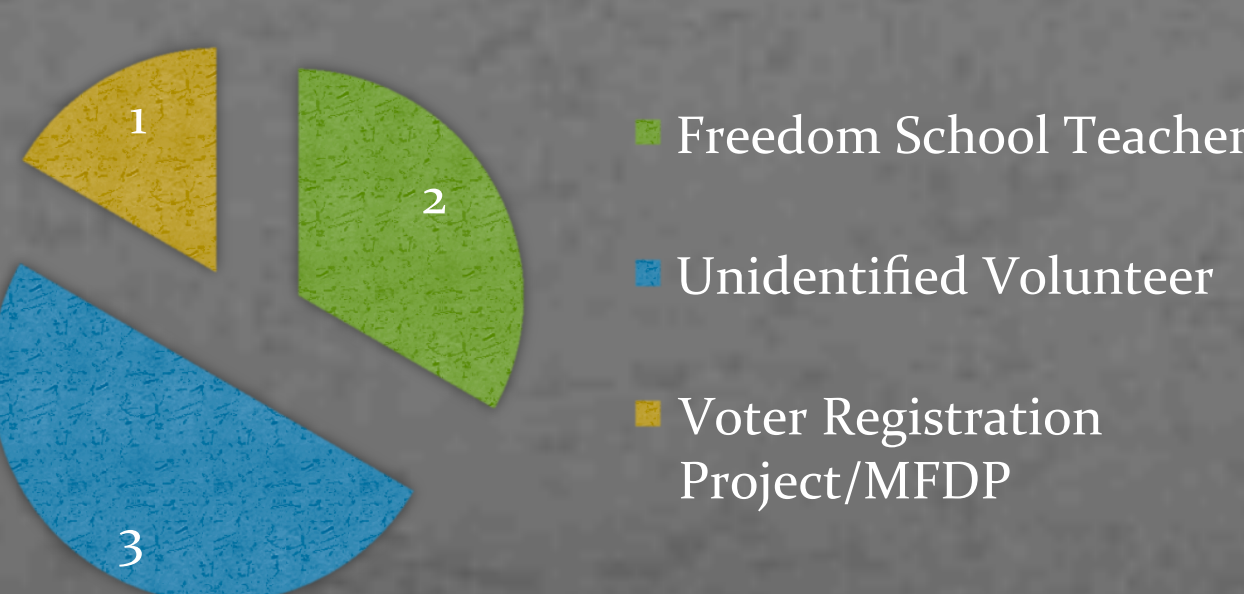
Percentage of Freedom Summer Sub-Collections



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Role Donor Played in Freedom Summer



CONCLUSIONS

- Biases in Archival Collection Development
 - Native Southerners
 - African Americans
- Mission of the Collection
 - Mississippi History
 - Perspective of Northerners
- Location of the Archives
 - Mississippi
 - New York

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Political Capital = Power
- Discourses are Owned by Those Who Write Them (Foucault)
- Archives are Inherently Inaccurate and Devoid of Lasting Meaning (Derrida)

REFERENCES

This poster is based on the research conducted for the Masters Thesis: *Speaking for Others: A Political Analysis of Civil Rights Archives* by Erin Wimmer

Works cited available upon request

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