

Participation in volunteering: What helps and hinders

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ITSSOIN

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1. What we know from the academic literature

Outline. Research on participation in third sector organizations and on volunteering in particular has a long tradition in the social sciences. How participation relates to characteristics of volunteers themselves and of the organizations in which they participate continue to be important research questions in a variety of disciplines, including sociology, political science, organizational sciences, (behavioural) economics and psychology. In this section we give an overview of insights on what helps and hinders participation from academic research conducted in the past decades. We rely primarily on reviews of the literature published earlier in a variety of social science disciplines: in sociology (Musick and Wilson, 2008), organizational psychology (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014a), social psychology (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin & Schroeder, 2005), and philanthropic studies (Smith, 1994; Einolf & Chambré, 2011; Wilson, 2012; Studer & Von Schnurbein, 2013). While a systematic review of the literature in economics is not yet available we have also included key studies from this discipline. In addition, we have used reviews commissioned by volunteer policy institutes in the UK (Brodie, Cowling, Nissen, Paine, Jochum, & Warburton, 2009) and New Zealand (Smith & Cordery, 2011).

First we discuss the dimensions of participation in third sector organizations that have been distinguished in the academic literature on volunteering, focusing specifically on two dimensions: the intensity of participation and the societal goals served by third sector organizations. Next we distinguish four sources of variance in volunteer choices: the person, the organization, time, and the country. Then we explain the importance of looking at volunteering in a dynamic rather than a static way. We present a model distinguishing eight groups of volunteers, depending on their choices in processes of selection, mobility, and socialization in volunteering.

The core of our work is a discussion of the mechanisms that drive volunteering. Following a scheme developed to explain choices in philanthropy, we distinguish eight mechanisms that influence volunteer choices. We explain the nature of these mechanisms and how they affect volunteering. Next we discuss insights on characteristics of volunteers and third sector organizations that are related to attraction, retention and motivation of volunteers.

The final part of our work is a review of the 'grey' literature in the national languages from the ITSSOIN countries that is not published in regular academic journals or books. We discuss how volunteering is defined in these countries, what factors are mentioned as barriers and facilitators to volunteering, and how third sector organizations are perceived.

1.1. Dimensions of participation in third sector organizations

A large number of dimensions can be found in the literature on participation in third sector organizations and on volunteering in particular. Volunteering itself is often considered to be at the high end of the dimension of intensity of participation. Other dimensions refer to the societal goals that third sector organizations try to achieve, also called 'sectors' or areas of interest. In addition to these dimensions, many other dimensions are distinguished: the large variety of tasks that volunteers perform, the longevity of their participation (short – long), the frequency of participation (occasional – regular), the geographic location (local, national, international), whether it is online or offline, reactive or proactive, conservative or progressive, and whether it is instrumental or expressive. Hustinx & Lammertyn (2003) combine some of these dimensions into two styles of volunteering, labeled collective and reflexive. We limit our discussion to two dimensions, and keep it brief here.

1. Intensity of participation. Participation in third sector organizations can vary in intensity from a very low to a very high level. Common distinctions in the literature are between a) passive membership, signifying that citizens pay membership dues but do not participate in any activities of the organization; b) donorship, giving money supporting the activities of the organizations beyond the membership dues; c) active participation, signifying that citizens are involved in activities organized by others; d) volunteering, by providing unpaid labour to the organization. These varying levels of participation are often cumulative. More intensive forms of participation can be seen as more 'difficult' and hence less common than the less intensive forms. As a result third sector organizations often have more members than volunteers and it is more common for people who are volunteering for a third sector organization to also be members than to be non-members.

2. Goal categories of third sector organizations. Research on volunteering often distinguishes categories of sectors in which volunteers are active based on the societal goals that third sector organizations try to achieve. The sectors investigated in the ITSSOIN project are included in the categorizations of most surveys that ask questions about volunteering, along other categories such as religion and sports. In the typical analysis in the empirical literature on volunteering, however, volunteering for different categories of third sector organizations is often treated as essentially similar. Obviously volunteers for cultural heritage sites may have very different personalities and socio-demographic profiles than volunteers for churches or sports clubs. However, volunteers also share several key motivations and values, and changes in the incentives they face for volunteering will have similar effects on their volunteering choices. Our focus in the current literature review is on these commonalities.

1.2. Sources of variance in volunteering choices

It is important to keep in mind that differences in participation between people can result from at least three sources of variance. The first source of variance is the person: the personal characteristics of citizens that make them more or less likely to be involved in third sector organizations at a given point in time. This perspective is often taken in studies in economics, sociology, and in social and personality psychology. Also the social circumstances in which individuals live are investigated from this perspective. The second source of variance is the context of the organization: the same volunteer can be active in different organizations. How third sector organizations affect decisions and motivations to volunteer is a question investigated in organizational and social psychology as well as in some sociological studies. The third source of variance is time: the same person can be uninvolved at one point in time,

become a member by paying membership dues, start to give money in excess of the membership dues at some later point in time, and start volunteering. Not only can the involvement with a given organization over time, there is also time variance between organizations. The same organization can become more or less hierarchically organized over time, and can start to use different types of incentives to reward volunteers or abandon them. The influence of time has received relatively little attention and has not been studied specifically or exclusively in certain disciplines. Commenting on the influence of time at the individual level of citizens, Brodie et al. (2011) note: “there is a relative absence of explorations of participation practices across the life course of individuals. How and why people become involved in different activities and different forms of participation, and how and why they might move between them throughout their life time remains under-researched.” The variance over time can also be studied at the macro-level of societies. Smith (1994: p. 247) notes that changing gender roles (i.e., societal acceptance of paid work and careers for women) are likely to have increased volunteering activity by females.

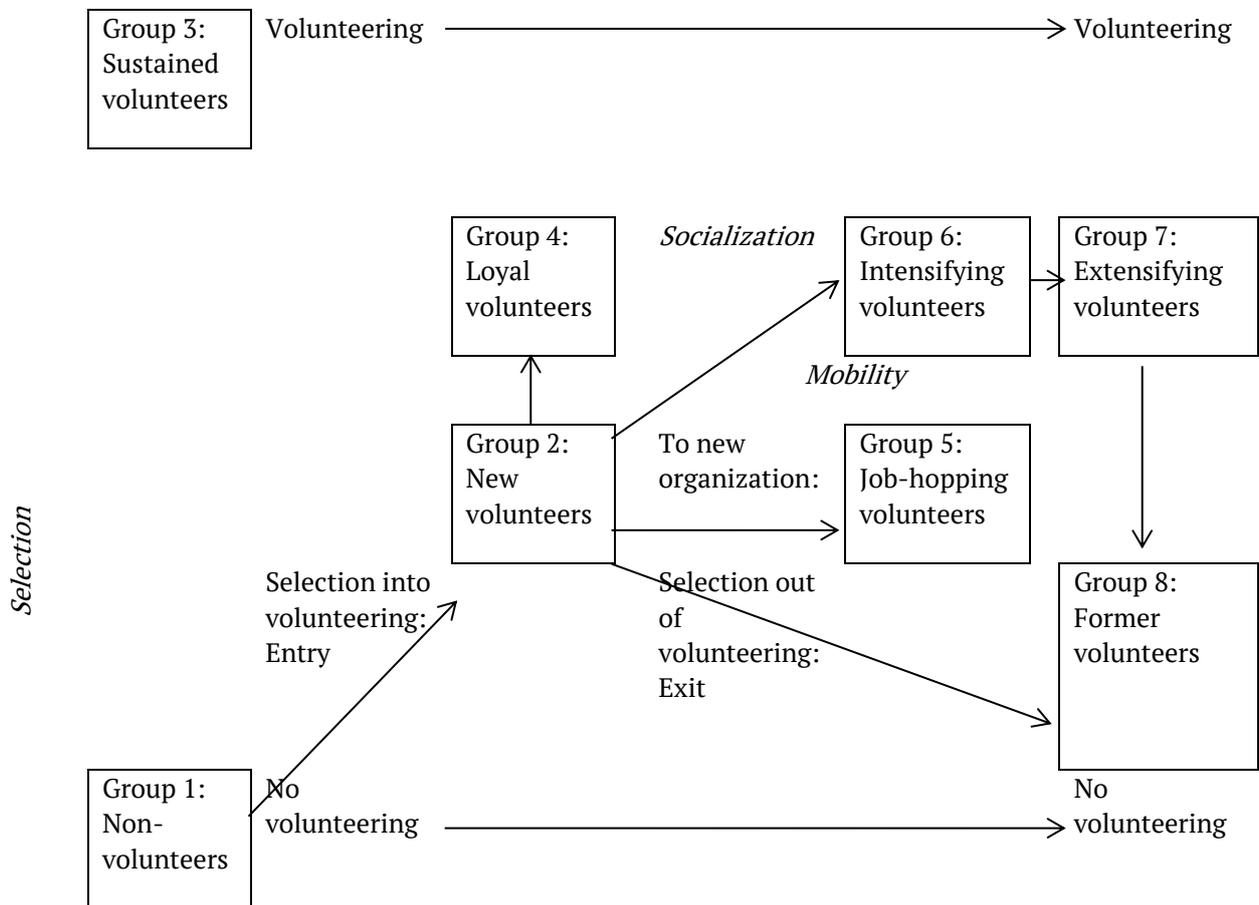
Following the classification scheme in the theory section of the ITSSOIN project, we add a fourth level of variance to the levels of the individual citizen, the third sector organization and time: the level of countries. Some countries have consistently higher levels of volunteering than other countries. In addition, these differences may change over time; macro-level societal changes in education, religiosity, government policy and democracy for instance may influence the types of third sector organizations that citizens volunteer for (see chapter 2 of Brodie et al. (2009) on the UK, for example). We review some of the factors that are associated with these differences.

Thus levels of participation can vary both between persons, organizations and countries (at one point in time) and within them (at different points in time). The typical study on participation relies on survey data to analyse cross-sectional variance in participation, collapsing all four sources of variance. Calls for research on leadership and management of volunteers in third sector organizations have been repeated by several scholars since the 1980s (Pearce, 1980, 1993; Riggio et al., 2004) but the assessment of Smith in 1994 (p. 256) that there is “paucity of research, especially research that relates contextual variables to variables from other realms” is still valid today. In the empirical part of this work package we will disentangle time from the other sources of variance to arrive at insights of how people change as their volunteering activity changes. Deliverable 3.2 will explain how we do this in more detail. In the current literature review we summarize the factors that are most likely to drive the most intensive form of participation: the decision to volunteer.

1.3. Dynamics in decisions to volunteer

By taking seriously time as a source of variance in volunteering, we find that the volunteer activity of the current volunteer work force is a result of processes of selection and mobility. Figure 1 displays these processes and distinguishes 8 groups of volunteers.

Figure 1. Eight groups of volunteers in the dynamics of volunteering



Selection refers to the movement into and out of the volunteer work force. Over time, some people who had not been volunteering before enter the volunteer work force, while others, who had previously been volunteering, drop out. Relative to the group of consistent non-volunteers who never do unpaid work (group 1), new volunteers are selected into the volunteer work force (group 2). When they move into a third sector organization, they join a group of sustained volunteers, who are already active as volunteers (group 3). The process of inclusion of new volunteers within a third sector organization is called *organizational socialization* (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009).

Mobility refers to the movement into different third sector organizations. Continuing to volunteer for the same organization over time can turn new volunteers into loyal volunteers (group 4). In contrast, when they leave the organization and continue to volunteer for a different organization, they are job-hopping volunteers (group 5). Increasing the level of one's commitment to an organization by increasing hours worked, taking up a higher number of tasks or more responsibility within the organization puts people into a group of intensifying volunteers (group 6). Conversely, those volunteers who become less active over time form a separate group who are still active, but on a path of decline (group 7). Finally, those who follow the path of decline and reduce their volunteering activity to zero after a period of more intense commitment form yet another group of former volunteers (group 8).

In the most common analysis of volunteer activity, all volunteers are contrasted with non-volunteers. Figure 1 shows that these two cages harbour very different animals: current non-volunteers may be former volunteers (group 8) as well as hard core non-volunteers (group 1), while current volunteers may be relatively new to all kinds of volunteering (group 2) or experienced volunteers (group 3); they may be familiar with the organization or new because they just came from a different organization (group 5) and they may have been increasing or rather decreasing their activities (groups 6 and 7).

The model in figure 1 merely identifies the groups in which volunteers may be classified; it does not assume that all volunteers follow a certain path. People may remain uninvolved their entire life; when they become involved in a third sector organization they may become loyal and attached to the organization or remain relatively uncommitted or decide to leave, depending on their personal situation, values and preferences, and organizational factors. In reality, some trajectories may be more common than others, as argued by Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) and Gaskin (2003). In her model of volunteer involvement, Gaskin (2003) distinguishes doubters, starters, doers, and stayers. The Volunteer Stages and Transition Model (VTSM) of Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) refines this typology, distinguishing a nominee phase, a newcomer phase, an emotional involvement phase, an established volunteer phase, and a retiring phase.

Research using repeated cross-sectional samples of the population such as the Current Population Survey in the US (analysed extensively by Musick and Wilson, 2008) or the 'Freiwilligen survey' in Germany conducted by the German centre for questions of old age (Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen) typically shows little aggregate level change in the proportion that does some form of volunteer work. Below that apparently stable surface, however, there is a lot of change in the composition of the volunteer work force. This pattern clearly emerges from longitudinal panel surveys such as the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) or Understanding Society as it is currently called, the Giving in the Netherlands Panel Survey (GINPS) or the Swiss Household Panel (SHP, Van Ingen and Bekkers, 2015).

Because the bulk of the literature on volunteering relies on cross-sectional survey data, it rarely distinguishes these groups. It is likely that new volunteers bring new ideas into existing groups of loyal volunteers. They will confront loyal volunteers with their customs and habits. Job-hopping volunteers who are highly mobile and move from one organization to the next are likely to harbour social innovators. They will set off a process of change in an organization and leave for the next organization in order to create change there. Unfortunately, however, the longitudinal panel surveys that could identify such job-hopping volunteers contain few indicators of social innovation. As a result, the current literature is ill-suited to inform research on social innovation.

1.4. Mechanisms that drive volunteering

The extensive literature on volunteering provides a large number of insights on the barriers and facilitators of volunteering activity. In table 2 we have organized these insights from these studies using a classification of mechanisms that drive charitable giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011).

While charitable giving and volunteering are different in the sense that they require the donation of different resources – money and time – they are similar in that they are both

formal prosocial behaviours. They involve a voluntary donation of resources to the benefit of others through an intermediary, i.e. a third sector organization. The insights on volunteering are formulated in the form of broad hypotheses. Following Clark & Wilson (2011) and Chinman, Wandersman & Goodman (2005) and extending Gidron (1978), the classification of the mechanisms is based on the source and the nature of the incentives that people face when making decisions on volunteering.

1. Awareness of need

The first mechanism is the awareness of need for contributions. When people become aware of the need for volunteers, i.e. through information from third sector organizations, they are more likely to volunteer. The need for contributions of time is an external factor arising ultimately from the prospective recipients of services provided by third sector organizations. We can see this mechanism at work in the increase of volunteering after natural disasters (Kalish, 2014) or after man-made disasters (Beyerlein & Sikkink, 2008). As social innovation is characterized by the use of new ideas and techniques to address existing social needs it is important for volunteers to be aware of these needs. A lack of awareness is likely to reduce volunteering and social innovation by third sector organizations. As Smith & Cordery (2011) note, however, advertising and publicizing information about volunteer opportunities is not a very effective strategy to recruit new volunteers.

Table 2. Mechanisms driving volunteering

Name	Nature	Source	Hypothesis
1. Awareness of need	Information	Third sector organizations and recipients of their services	Making people aware of the need for contributions increases volunteering
2. Solicitation	Social	Social networks of volunteers	Asking people directly increases volunteering
3. Costs and benefits	Material	Third sector organizations	Lower costs and higher benefits increase volunteering
4. Altruism	Material, social and psychological	Recipients of services by third sector organizations	The severity of needs increases volunteering
5. Reputation	Social	Third sector organizations and social networks of volunteers	Public recognition increases volunteering
6. Psychological costs and benefits	Psychological	Volunteers	Aversion of costs and expectations of self-rewards increases volunteering
7. Values	Social and psychological	Volunteers	a. Endorsement of prosocial values increases volunteering; b. Endorsement of specific social values increases volunteering for third sector organizations advocating these values
8. Efficacy	Psychological	Volunteers	More effective production of services to recipients increases volunteering

2. Solicitation

A second mechanism is the solicitation for contributions of volunteer time. It is a well-established fact that volunteers are typically asked by others to do volunteer work before they become active (Penner, 2004; Bekkers, 2005a; Rochester, 2006; Musick & Wilson, 2008). The mere fact of being asked to volunteer greatly increases the likelihood that people start to volunteer. Solicitation is an external factor arising from the social networks of prospective volunteers. The fact that a loss of a volunteer is typically solved by asking new potential volunteers to fill a vacancy implies that the agency in the selection into volunteering lies not with the volunteer but in her environment. This does not imply that individual characteristics of volunteers are irrelevant for the entry into volunteering. Some individuals may be more attractive or more easily accessible in an attempt to find new volunteers than others. The influence of solicitation does imply that the ‘decision’ to enter into volunteering is also made in part by others than the prospective volunteer.

3. Material costs and benefits

A third mechanism that drives decisions to volunteer is of a physical nature: the material costs and benefits associated with volunteering. People volunteer more when the material costs of doing so are lower and the benefits are higher. By definition volunteering is unpaid work, but this does not rule out that volunteers may get some material compensation for the time they spend volunteering. Insurance coverage for volunteers may reduce the financial risk of large unanticipated costs of volunteering. In addition to a small monetary compensation they may get access to services such as free parking (Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx & Handy, 2011) or small premiums such as t-shirts that non-volunteers do not get. Some volunteers accept and move into unpaid work trying to build their resumes and increase their chances on the paid labour market, although there is little evidence that this strategy works (Paine, McKay & Moro, 2013; Strauss, 2008). However, the material costs of volunteering typically exceed its benefits. Economists draw attention to the opportunity costs of volunteering: the earnings forgone by providing one's labour for free rather than at market prices (Freeman, 1997). While costs and benefits cannot explain why people volunteer at all, they may explain some of the variation in the types of volunteer work that people do or why they may increase or decrease their commitment to third sector organizations over time. Material incentives in the form of monetary compensation can also have negative consequences on the 'intrinsic' motivation to volunteer (Fiorello, 2011).

4. Altruism

A fourth mechanism that is apparent in volunteering concerns the welfare of others whose needs are addressed by third sector organizations. The hypothesis on altruism is that when the material, social or psychological needs of recipients are more severe, people will volunteer more. Altruism is evident in immediate volunteer work after natural disasters and in emergencies (Tierney, Lindell & Perry, 2001) such as hurricanes (Brants, 2014). The increase in social needs due to the economic crisis, however, has not resulted in a general increase in volunteering, but rather in a decrease (CAF, 2013). In many countries in Europe the economic crisis has redirected volunteer activities into addressing basic needs, for example by providing food and assistance to the needy. Whether altruism is pure, i.e. motivated by the needs of recipients alone and not by some form of self-benefit, remains a topic of fierce debate, often at a conceptual level (Smith, 1980; Haski-Leventhal, 2009). A large literature in social psychology has investigated why people often do *not* help people in need (Dovidio et al., 2006). Also recent experiments have shown that often people also respond to other incentives than the needs of recipients (Brown, Meer, & Williams, 2013; Lilley & Slonim, 2014). In the case of emergency and disasters for instance, volunteering is strongly related to direct solicitation (Rotolo & Berg, 2011), despite its altruistic nature. This example illustrates that volunteering is often driven by multiple mechanisms.

5. Reputation

A fifth mechanism that drives volunteering is the public recognition that people may get from others for their kindness. Reputation is a social incentive provided by others. Volunteering is generally regarded as a positive social behaviour and it is supported by social norms. Many studies show that volunteers are more strongly motivated when they receive public recognition from the organization (Studer & Von Schnurbein, 2013), even though this is not a popular motive to mention when asked directly in a survey (e.g., Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx & Handy, 2011). The influence of plaques, t-shirts and license plates saying 'I'm a volunteer' can be

interpreted as evidence for a reputation effect (Carpenter & Meyer, 2010). Inclusion in a group of volunteers and contacts with clients build and strengthen social ties to others, which make it more difficult to quit volunteering (Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan, 2009; Linardi & McConnell, 2011).

6. Psychological costs and benefits

A sixth mechanism driving volunteering behaviour concerns the psychological costs and benefits emerging from volunteers themselves and their environments. The regularity is that volunteering is more likely and sustainable when the psychological costs of doing so are lower and the benefits are higher. Aversion of psychological costs such as feelings of guilt and personal distress, expectations of self-rewards such as feelings of pride, an intrinsic value placed on conformation to personal norms and confirmation of a certain self-identity increases volunteering (Matsuba, Hart & Atkins, 2007; Schervish & Havens, 1997; Xiao & Houser, 2014). Clary, Snyder and Stukas (1996) distinguish several categories of psychological rewards that may motivate volunteers, such as understanding, self-protection, and enhancement. Respect from leaders of third sector organizations is also an important form of psychological support that motivates volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014a, 2014b). Also the prestige of an organization can be a factor that increases the psychological benefits of volunteering. Grube and Piliavin (2000) found that volunteers reported working more hours for organizations that were rated as more prestigious and that volunteers reported a lower intention to quit volunteering. One particular psychological cost that is very important in policy discussions is whether mandating unpaid work in third sector organizations, e.g. in education (high school service learning programs) or in exchange for welfare benefits may reduce subsequent volunteering. The evidence on this matter is mixed; some studies find a clearly negative effect of mandated volunteering (e.g., Yang, 2013; Stukas, Snyder & Clary, 1999), some find no effect (Planty, Bozick and Regnier, 2006), some find a positive effect (Metz & Youniss, 2003; Schmidt, Shumow & Kackar, 2007), and still others find a positive but waning effect (Henderson, Brown, Pancer and Ellis-Hale, 2007).

7. Values

Volunteering is driven to a large extent by the values of volunteers in two ways. The first is that citizens who endorse general prosocial values such as reciprocity (Manatschal & Freitag, 2014), social responsibility (Bekkers, 2007) and the principle of care (Ottoni-Wilhelm & Bekkers, 2010) are more likely to start volunteering and less likely to quit volunteering. This process of selection leads to the finding that volunteers more strongly endorse prosocial values than non-volunteers (Bekkers, 2007). The second is that endorsement of the specific values that third sector organizations advocate, represent and advertise as part of their mission is likely to lead people to volunteer for these organizations. This mechanism is what Clark and Wilson (1961) call 'purposive incentives' (Cook, 1984; Jenner, 1982). Support for the mission of third sector organizations is an important factor driving volunteer activity and identification with the organization (Brodie et al., 2009; Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). Citizens who are concerned about equality and social justice for example would be more likely to volunteer for grass roots organizations that defend and advocate such values.

8. Efficacy

The final mechanism driving volunteering is efficacy: the perception and evaluation of the usefulness of the output generated by volunteers. The hypothesis about efficacy is that third sector organizations that are more effectively producing services to recipients are more likely

to attract and retain volunteers. It should be noted, however, that one of the failures in ‘three failures theory’ on nonprofit organizations is voluntary failure, i.e. the underprovision, overexclusion and amateurism of services provided. There is very little research on the efficacy of volunteering. Several non-experimental studies report that a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of third sector organizations is a barrier for participation (Brodie et al., 2009). One experimental study showed that intentions to volunteer are more positive for volunteer activities that are more effectively supporting third sector organizations (Bekkers, 2010), but this study did not measure actual volunteering behaviour.

1.5. General discussion of mechanisms that drive volunteering

The eight mechanisms can be helpful for volunteer managers in designing interventions that change the conditions for volunteers in such a way that attraction, retention and motivation are enhanced. We do note, however, that the evidence supporting the eight mechanisms is not always plentiful or clear-cut. This goes especially for awareness of need, altruism, and efficacy. Also there are likely to be interactions between the mechanisms, such that the effect of one mechanism is likely to be moderated by the other. An example of a negative moderation is the attenuation of reputation by material rewards (Carpenter & Myers, 2010). In the expanding literature on blood donation such ‘crowding out’ effects have recently been examined, for example in Mellström & Johannesson (2010), Costa-Font, Jofre-Bonet & Yen (2013) and Lacetera, Macis & Slonim (2014). Positive moderation is also likely to exist between reputation and psychological rewards when the effect of public observability is reinforced by personal norms (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). Unfortunately, however, there are very few studies that actually measure – let alone manipulate – multiple mechanisms at once.

From a methodological perspective, the evidence emerging from the published research relying on correlational cross-sectional analyses lacks validity because reverse causality and omitted variable bias cannot be ruled out. From a substantive perspective, the validity of the evidence can also be disputed on theoretical grounds. It is likely that the effects of the eight mechanisms are moderated by other mechanisms. Also they can vary over time, and they can vary with characteristics of volunteers and organizations.

The eight mechanisms are also helpful in explaining some of the variance in volunteering behaviour between individuals and organizations. The mechanisms help us to understand why volunteering is more widespread in some social groups than in others, why citizens with specific personality characteristics are more or less likely to volunteer, and why volunteers in some organizations are more satisfied, committed and loyal than in others. While most studies have not specifically measured indicators of the eight mechanisms, some have included measures of solicitation (Bekkers, 2005a; Musick & Wilson, 2008) and values (Einolf & Chambré, 2011).

1.6. Characteristics of volunteers

Generally speaking, volunteering tends to be more common among individuals who are native citizens, who are older, who are married, have children, who have a higher level of education, who have paid employment (especially part-time), own their homes, who are more religious, who are children of volunteers and are in better health (Smith, 1994; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Brodie et al., 2011). Some surveys show that females volunteer more than males, but others show the reverse pattern, and still others show no significant difference. It is clear that males and females participate in third sector organizations of different categories: females are more

likely to engage in health and education, while males are more likely to engage in sports and recreation. Also there are clear differences in the tasks that females and males perform: males are more likely to have board and management positions than females. This pattern reflects the advantage of men in paid labor (Fyall & Gazley, 2013).

Einolf & Chambré (2011) classify theories explaining differences between individuals in volunteer activity into three categories: (1) social theories about the effects of context, roles, and integration; (2) individual characteristic theories about values, traits, and motivations; and (3) resource theories about skills and free time. Each of these theories includes arguments about multiple mechanisms that drive volunteering.

As most of the research on volunteering does not take a longitudinal approach, it is difficult to say whether differences between volunteers and non-volunteers result from entry or exit, i.e. selection into or out of volunteering. Thus the differences between individuals can be understood as the outcome of a series of decisions about volunteering in situations where the eight mechanisms make entry into volunteering more likely and exit out of volunteering less likely. Recent research using longitudinal data from the UK (Brookfield, Parry & Bolton, 2014) and the US (Butricia, Johnson, & Zedlewski, 2009) gives some support for the contention from a literature survey that “Leaving volunteering is often related to changes in personal circumstances: for example, moving location, getting a job, changing family commitments, or starting education” (Locke, Ellis & Davis Smith, 2003). Smith notes that social status gradients are especially apparent in decisions to enter the pool of potential participants (p. 247), and less so among members. This finding was confirmed in longitudinal analyses of participation across the life course both in the Netherlands and in the US (Bekkers & Ruiter, 2008). Three US studies show that the likelihood of quitting decreases with education, religion, prosocial values and social ties (Butricia, Johnson, & Zedlewski, 2009; Choi & Chou, 2010; Wilson & Musick, 1999). Research in Europe using longitudinal data on volunteering to date is scarce, however. In the empirical part of Work Package 3 of the ITSSOIN project we will reduce this gap.

Wilson & Musick (1997a, 1997b) consider education and income as resources, arguing that a higher level of education and income lower the material costs of volunteering (mechanism 3). In contrast, Florin, Jones, and Wandersman (1986) interpret the higher volunteering activity of higher social status citizens as the result of ‘rootedness’: they are more strongly embedded in their communities. In terms of the mechanisms, community ties may then produce invitations to become active in third sector organizations (solicitation), social pressure to participate (reputation) and inculcate civic responsibility (values). To date there is no study that has investigated which mechanisms create the association between education and volunteering.

While a higher level of income is sometimes found to be positively associated with volunteering (Musick & Wilson, 2008), other studies find no association (Einolf & Chambré, 2011) and still others find a negative association (Freeman, 1997). From a rational choice theory perspective, one would expect a negative association because the opportunity costs of time are higher for people earning higher incomes. The variance in the results obtained in previous studies can be explained by the use of different variables for income (personal, household) and the inclusion of different sets of variables in addition to income (such as the level of education, occupational status, employment, and wealth). Musick & Wilson (2008) find that household income loses its correlation with volunteering when solicitations are controlled.

The finding that people with paid work volunteer more also seems puzzling from a rational choice perspective. Spending time on paid work and unpaid work may seem substitutes when the available time budget is fixed at 24 hours. However, those without paid work are less likely to encounter opportunities to volunteer and to be asked to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008). The higher level of volunteering among people with part-time rather than full-time work is consistent with rational choice perspective.

The finding that members of racial minorities are less likely to volunteer can be explained to some extent by their lower likelihood of being asked to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

The finding that parents of school-aged children tend to volunteer more can be explained from the benefits of volunteer work for their children and their friends, from the likelihood of being asked, and social pressure to comply with requests.

The positive relationship between the personality characteristic of extraversion and volunteering can be explained by the greater involvement in social networks (Bekkers, 2005b; Okun, Pugliese & Rook, 2007), leading to solicitations, social pressure, and conformity to social norms.

1.7. Characteristics of third sector organizations

Studer and Von Schnurbein (2013) have summarized the literature on volunteer management and coordination, with conclusions that match with policy oriented reviews (Brodie et al., 2009; Smith & Cordery, 2011). Volunteers tend to be more satisfied with their volunteering experience when they receive training, support, and recognition from the organization, when they have more freedom of choice in their work and face less bureaucracy or at least when the expectations of the organization are clear. A match between volunteers' tasks and their preferences is related to higher satisfaction. Also equality and mutual respect between volunteers and paid workers are related to a positive volunteer experience. Cultivation of a volunteer role-identity by providing recognition items such as t-shirts and participation in decision-making are positively related to the level of identification with the organization.

In the interpretation of these findings it should be noted that the methodological quality of most studies on volunteer coordination is poor. Studies typically rely on one or a few cases, limiting the generalizability of the findings (Studer & Von Schnurbein, 2013). A minority of studies uses quantitative data. Most of these studies do not employ a longitudinal design. This is striking because a longitudinal design was clearly identified as an important condition of progress in the field (Smith, 1975) and some early studies have in fact used it (e.g., Gidron, 1984). Virtually none of the studies published thus far use an experimental design that allows for causal inferences (Mason, 2013). The few experimental studies published thus far (e.g., Fisher and Ackerman (1998); for a review see Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014b) vary one factor at a time between subjects in laboratory situations. The validity of these findings can be called into question because they are not generated in real third sector organizations. Field experiments are completely absent. In sum, the assessment by Locke, Ellis & Davis-Smith (2003) that "the evidence on the influence of the motivation, commitment and satisfaction of the individual volunteer on retention is as yet inconclusive" is still valid, leaving a tremendous scope for progress in the field of research on volunteer coordination. We hope that in the remainder of the ITSSOIN project we can make a modest contribution to this progress.

2. What we know from other sources in European countries

In this part of the literature review we focus on research that is not published in regular academic journals or books. This ‘grey literature’ is mostly written in languages other than English and consists of academic publications as well as non-academic publications like reports from government agencies or umbrella organisations. Although empirical work is scarce in some countries due to a lack of large-scale quantitative data, a review of these publications provides us with a broad overview of insights from all countries included in ITSSOIN.

Partners from each country in the ITSSOIN-project made a brief report on studies in their country that provide insights in answering four questions: (1) how is volunteering defined in your country, (2) which factors help and hinder volunteering, (3) what strategies do third sector organisations use to recruit and retain volunteers, and (4) how do people in your country perceive volunteering? The country reports were compiled and systematically compared by the researchers from VU University Amsterdam, who produced an overview describing factors that show up in different countries and highlighting notable exceptions. The overview was sent back to the partners in order to collect further additions on the way different factors were described throughout the text.

2.1. How volunteering is defined across Europe

The most common definition of volunteering in Europe is: “Unpaid work for a public goal in an organisation.” Different definitions are prevalent across countries, however.

While volunteering is generally seen as unpaid work, the legal status of volunteers in the Czech Republic and France allows for some financial compensation. In the Netherlands, volunteers can deduct the expenses from their income tax when the organization that benefited from their volunteer work confirms it did not provide a financial compensation.

Across Europe increasing attention is paid to civic engagement that happens outside the traditional third sector organisations. Voluntary engagement that is not carried out for an organisation is mostly referred to as ‘informal volunteering’ and is distinctively defined as such. In the UK volunteering describes all unpaid activities that are aimed to benefit (groups of) individuals or the environment but – in order to draw the boundary towards unpaid care - helping friends and family is not usually included. This holds for other countries, too. A recent report in Italy underlines how informal networks of friends and family members have been fundamental in facing the effects of the economic crisis: citizens’ perception of the wideness of their potential network of help and assistance is ameliorated in 2013 (ISTAT 2014a).

In general, volunteering can be carried out either on a regular or irregular or ‘episodic’ basis. Both forms are included in the concept of volunteering in most European countries.

An exception to this is Spain, where the Volunteering Law excludes volunteering that is undertaken in an isolated or episodic manner. Also volunteering in Spain is operationalised and defined by volunteering organizations as unpaid work for an organisation that is legally recognised as a non-profit, which includes social action organisations but excludes organisations with other public goals such as science, research or international cooperation.

This is stark contrast to the UK where a loose, largely unregulated definition of volunteering does not restrict the activity to an organisational form and instead is

defined by the purpose and motivation of the activity rather than the form in which it is provided. This might be explained by the long-standing politically important role of volunteering as a tool of democracy and citizenship. In the context of (un-) employment, with the Job Seekers Allowance Regulations 1996, the respective government bodies have, however, introduced more specific definitions that ensure that volunteering work cannot generate income or financial benefit.

For historical and political reasons there are two important concepts with a special connotation that are peculiar to Germany. First of all, the traditional *Ehrenamt* ('honorary office') stands for very formal positions in organisations (e.g. treasurer of an association) and underlines the relevance of membership as well as a certain level of commitment arising from being a member. By now, it is largely accepted that due to a change in personal values and organisational forms the concept of *Ehrenamt* alone is decreasingly suitable for capturing the whole range of activities within civil society and the third sector. Second, there is the concept of *Bürgerschaftliches Engagement* ('civic engagement') which accentuates the rights and responsibilities of citizens to care about and participate in their local environment.

In the Czech Republic the Volunteer Service Act of 2002 focuses on the formal aspect of volunteering. The essence of the law is to set clear, understandable, enforceable and legally-based rules for all stakeholders. Thanks to the Act, volunteers are provided by a legal status. Wording of the law may be perceived as restrictive or limiting, however, and that is probably the reason why not too many third sector organizations work in the certified mode. According to Lusková & Lusková (2012) only 16% of the organisations that work with volunteers have the above mentioned certification.

From 2015 onwards, local governments in the Netherlands are allowed to force people who receive a long-term unemployment grant to do unpaid community work in return. This 'mandatory volunteering' has evoked quite some public debate.

Voluntary engagement has a different role across countries and sectors. Historically, volunteering in Germany is closely linked to prosocial and charitable attitudes as represented by the churches and faith-based or ideology-driven welfare associations (*Wohlfahrtsverbände*) who are of considerable importance of the collective organisation of volunteerism at the local level. This can still be observed even today when comparing the fields of volunteer activities with the situation in the Scandinavian countries, for instance, and shows that religious and social service issues in a broader sense are among the most important fields, apart from sports and recreational activities (BMFSFJ, 2010). The third sector is of increasing importance in the field of social services and health. Budget cuts in the Netherlands are an example of increasing reliance on voluntary work in providing care. It is clear that volunteering happens in a wide range of sectors, its goals are very diverse, and voluntary activities can be everything from working on the board, boiling coffee for meetings, cutting the grass on the football field to working with homeless people.

2.2. Factors that help and hinder volunteering

The 'grey' literature we have gathered shows that resources like income, wealth, education and health as well as high levels of social and cultural capital enable volunteering, while low levels of resources and capital hinders it. Studies from Denmark and the Netherlands show that the number of hours that people work is negatively related to volunteering (Arts & Te Riele, 2010;

Faulk, 2009; Fridberg & Henriksen, 2014) while findings in the UK show that the sick, disabled and retired have the lowest volunteering rates (Low, Butt, Paine & Smith, 2007). Volunteering rates can be very unequal between regions. As a striking example, Northern Italy has far more volunteers than Central and Southern Italy – with the only exception of Tuscany and Umbria (CNEL & ISTAT, 2011).

Although helping other people or their surroundings is the most prevalent motive, another important reason to volunteer is to meet new people. In the German Volunteering Survey the most important factor still is the desire to shape (and change) society within the immediate living environment (in 2004 66% fully agreed; in 2009 it was 61%), whereas meeting people is the second important driver (60% in 2004 and 2009) (BMFSFJ, 2010). For Swedes the two most important or rewarding things with doing voluntary work is to help someone and to get nice friends (Svedberg et al., 2010, p. 29). In Italy, 62,1% of volunteers declare they carry out this activity because “they believe in the cause supported by the group”, while other reasons are “helping the community” (41,7%) and “pursue own beliefs or religious creed” (25,8%) (ISTAT 2014b, p.12). In the UK the most important reason to start volunteering is the desire to “improve things, help people”, followed by “The cause was important to me” and “I had time to spare” (Low, Butt, Paine & Smith, 2007).

Motives to volunteer differ between sectors and organisations. A survey from Denmark shows that in a social association volunteers are primarily motivated by helping other people and by learning from the voluntary work; in a sports association volunteers are mostly motivated by the case of the association, for example playing soccer; and in a patient association volunteers are primarily motivated by the case that they are working for and by helping other people (Haberman, 2007). Different motives are also found among people in German *Ehrenamt*. Parish volunteers have as primary motives to do something worthy and because it is fun (Diakonie, 2012), volunteers at an ecumenical social service organisation at train stations say they want to meet other people and help society (Bahnhofsmision, 2012), and volunteers at an ecumenical telephone counselling service mostly report motives related to personal development (TelefonSeelsorge, 2011).

As noted in different countries, personal motives become increasingly important while prosocial values are decreasingly important as a motive to volunteer. Bekkers (2013) shows that about one third of Dutch volunteers say that their voluntary work helps them to build a good CV. Unemployed volunteers with such a career motive are more likely to find a paid job than unemployed volunteers without this motive. About 65% of the unemployed volunteers quit volunteering after they find a paid job. This may help to explain why in Spain professional and business associations are the non-profit organizations where individuals remain involved for longer periods. However, Kampen (2014) finds that people in the Netherlands in general do not benefit from the 'mandatory volunteer work' that they do in return for their unemployment grant.

Studies in Italy have analysed the degree of satisfaction of volunteers, which appears to be positively correlated to four factors: the *willingness to help*, the perception of the effectiveness of individual actions, the perception of the effectiveness of organizational action, and the opportunity to grow, from a personal and a professional side. On the contrary, if the motivation to volunteer is connected to the future search for paid work and career opportunities, the degree of satisfaction appears to be lower (Barbaranelli et al. 2003).

The two most common reasons for Swedish people *not* to conduct voluntary work is that they do not have the time and that they have never been asked (Svedberg et al., 2010, p. 39). A lack of time is a widely named reason for non-volunteers, which has to be interpreted carefully because this might be a socially desirable answer.

Barriers are mostly found on the organisational level. Research from the Czech Republic identifies the most important barriers for volunteering as passivity of organisations in searching for new volunteers, limited interest in voluntary activity, insufficient management of volunteers, distrust to the motives of volunteers, lack of time of perspective volunteers, and generally low awareness of volunteering (Tošner & Sozanská, 2002). Some voluntary activities in the UK require some engagement with vulnerable populations which requires that the organisation or the person seeking to volunteer partakes in a series of training sessions which may or may not incur a cost, as well as other costs incurred. These checks can be time consuming, as are the insurance applications that may need to be taken out to cover the safety of and any liabilities brought on by the volunteer.

A lack of resources or social and cultural capital can also be associated with less frequent requests to volunteer. There is evidence that for the lower educated the main reason not to volunteer is that they were not asked to volunteer (Fridberg et al., 2006) and that people who possess more wealth, live in a smaller community and have a stronger religious affiliation are asked more often (Bekkers, 2004).

2.3. Organisational strategies

This brings us from the individual to the organisational level. What strategies do third sector organisations and umbrella organisations use in order to recruit and retain volunteers?

An important reason for people to volunteer is that they were asked to do so, and personal (face-to-face) recruitment is the most wide-spread way to recruit volunteers across Europe. People who are already member of an organisation are the primary target group (Svedberg et al., 2010). In the Czech Republic about 85% of volunteers claim that they were recruited by personal contact, through friends, family (47%), colleagues from work (12%) or by colleagues from the same third sector organization where the person is a member (38%) (Frič, 2010). A Spanish report shows that most organizations rely on talks, sensitizing conferences or family networks (43.4%) and face-to-face contact (26.3%) to recruit volunteers (Edis, 2012a). However the third sector itself recognizes, that new recruitment strategies should be envisaged to respond to current changes in volunteering trends (Plataforma de ONG de Acción Social, 2012). Parents often become volunteers in clubs or associations where their children are member of (Faulk, 2009).

Recruiting campaigns with traditional materials like posters, flyers and advertisements, mostly used by bigger organisations, are generally not the most popular way of recruiting volunteers. In the Czech Republic only 9% of the volunteers have been recruited by becoming targeted by advertising, flyers or internet (Frič, 2010). In the UK, word of mouth and print advertising campaigns continue to be the most widely used resources for recruitment, but there are some innovative campaigns which heavily use new media in particular to recruit young people or in which charities partner up with local schools. In different countries third sector organisations, especially the bigger ones or umbrella organisations, may organise volunteer days or speed-matching days where organisations are given the opportunity to sell themselves to potential volunteers.

Volunteer centres, managed by different actors, can serve as intermediary actors between volunteers and the third sector. These centres become increasingly popular in Germany¹, the Netherlands and Sweden. Volunteer centres are existent but not wide-spread in the Czech Republic.

Websites increasingly serve as databases that match supply and demand. Examples are the webpage dobrovolnik.cz in the Czech Republic, vrijwilligerswerk.nl in the Netherlands and websites of big welfare organisations in Germany.

Civic engagement can further be stimulated by schools and businesses through projects in which students and employees participate in volunteering projects.

Third sector organisations across Europe may offer material incentives, though not salary, to recruit and retain volunteers. Since 2002 third sector organisations in France are allowed, under certain conditions, to offer volunteers financial incentives. However, the financial issue is a burning issue, as it may have a disastrous impact in terms of image. To anticipate possible criticism or solve existent controversies, transparency is a critical lever of communication. In the United Kingdom, where certain volunteer tasks require costs e.g. for training programs, organisations may offer vouchers or fundraising assistance to cover this. The Czech law also recognises the right of certified volunteers to receive some compensation covering the necessary costs (travel, accommodation, etc.).

Material or non-material incentives are also means to retain volunteers. This could be some system of honour, as certificates that confirm the engagement of a person which is common in several federal states in Germany, and/or little presents like free entrance to special events or free courses (Batarilo-Henschen, Alscher, & Knobelsdorff, 2001). Young volunteers with the status of group leaders, implying they completed a special training, in Germany are especially institutionalised by a special form of 'membership cards', for example by JULEIKA (Jugendleiterkarte), a card that establishes the official status of a volunteer and offers some privileges such as entrance to museums or the use of public transport.

2.4. Perceptions of the third sector

The third sector is generally perceived as a positive and useful part of society, more trusted than the government and important in social service delivery that would not have been done by the state or the market.

Some findings suggest that people find it hard to recognise a distinguishable third sector with so much variety in organisational form, goals and size. Even in Spain, where the legal definition of a non-profit is quite clear, people find it hard to distinguish a set of organisations that have sufficient common elements as to be included in the same sector (López Pintor, 2004).

¹ According to the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Freiwilligenagenturen (BAGFA; Union syndicate of volunteer centres) in Germany, more than 500 volunteer centres exist. Retrieved from <http://www.bagfa.de/freiwilligenagenturen.html>, November 11, 2014.

In general, third sector organisations are more trusted than political institutions across Europe. In Sweden 40% have high trust in civil society organisations, compared with 25% for public authorities (Sektor3, 2012). Trust in Spanish NGOs has a level of 5.74 on a 1 to 10 scale, while governments score around 5 (CIS, 2009). Among Dutch respondents 30% has a lot of confidence in charitable organisations and 22% has a lot of confidence in the government (Bekkers & De Wit, 2013). Confidence levels in France are much higher for associations (67%) than for the state (39%) (Bazin, Malet, & Thierry, 2013).

How people perceive third sector organisations is strongly related to the services they deliver. Welfare associations are main social service providers in the German welfare state, for example, where they strategically interconnect professional services with the voluntary assistance of about 2.5–3 million volunteers (Fritsch et al., 2011; Merchel, 2010). Results from a Spanish survey suggest that the public image of the third sector is not defined through opposition against the public and the for-profit sector, but rather by the social functions that it accomplishes. Overall, citizens value services delivered by third sector organizations positively, but those devoted to social action obtain the highest trust (De la Torre, 2007). In Italy perceptions of volunteering have been boosted in the last decades by the emergence of new poverties and welfare configurations coupled with the request for higher social justice (Paoletti 2002). In the current context of the crisis, volunteering has also been perceived as a positive force which can contribute, both in the political and economic sphere, to promote the logic of fraternity, gratuity and a stronger ethical behaviour in organizations which serve the common good (Zamagni 2005).

Problems with the image of the third sector occur when volunteers are perceived as people who mainly pursue their own careers or as people who substitute paid jobs. On the organisational level, controversies around poor management can affect confidence.

A notable exception of the relatively positive image of third sector organisations comes from the Czech Republic, where perceptions of the third sector and volunteering stem partially from the post-socialist condition, and partially from the contemporary social and political transformations (Kavan & Dostál, 2012; Tošner & Sozanská, 2002). Although volunteering was a core aspect of many civic associations that existed before 1989 and in this sense had similar functions and connotations as in liberal democracies, the socialist regime used the notion of volunteering also for narrower political and economic purposes and related the concept of volunteering to the idea of “socialist personality”.

According to Tošner and Sozanská (2002) 70% of Czech population think that volunteering wouldn't be necessary if government worked properly. 75% of Czech population believe that problems of municipalities cannot be solved by means of volunteering and that it is necessary to find administrative political solution. However, the Czech perception of volunteering point of view has at least slightly changed recently. Frič (2010) claims that the citizens still most often agree that third sector should be active when there is a lack of activity from the part of the government, and their opinion on the dispensability of volunteering vis-a-vis the existing adequate public measures is still highly affirmative (59%), but the numbers are lower than they used to be.

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