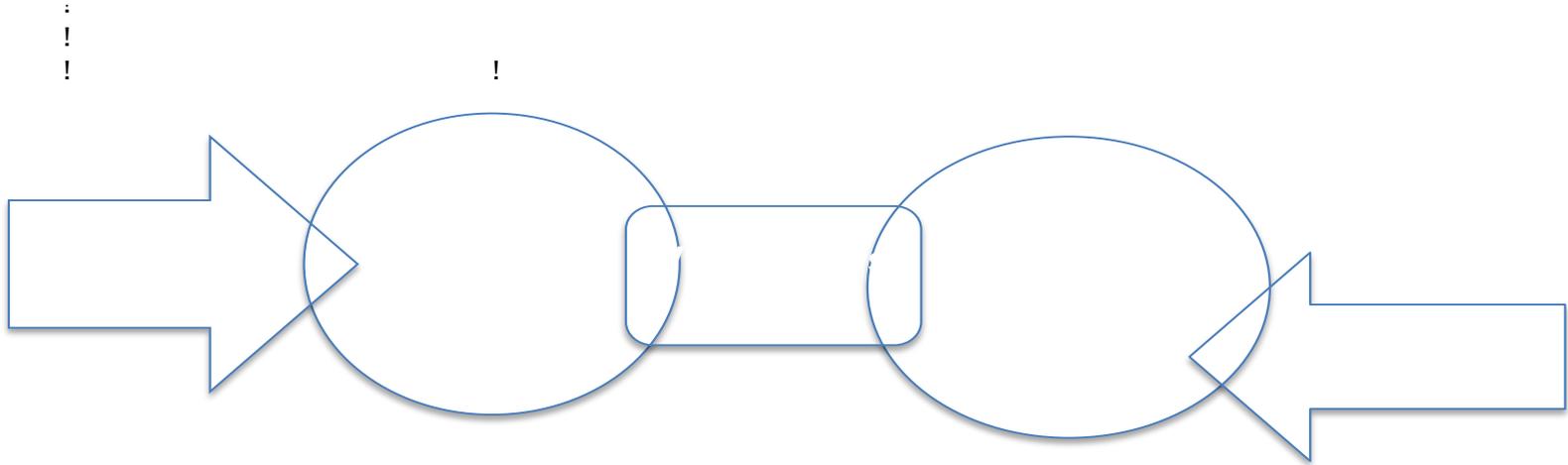


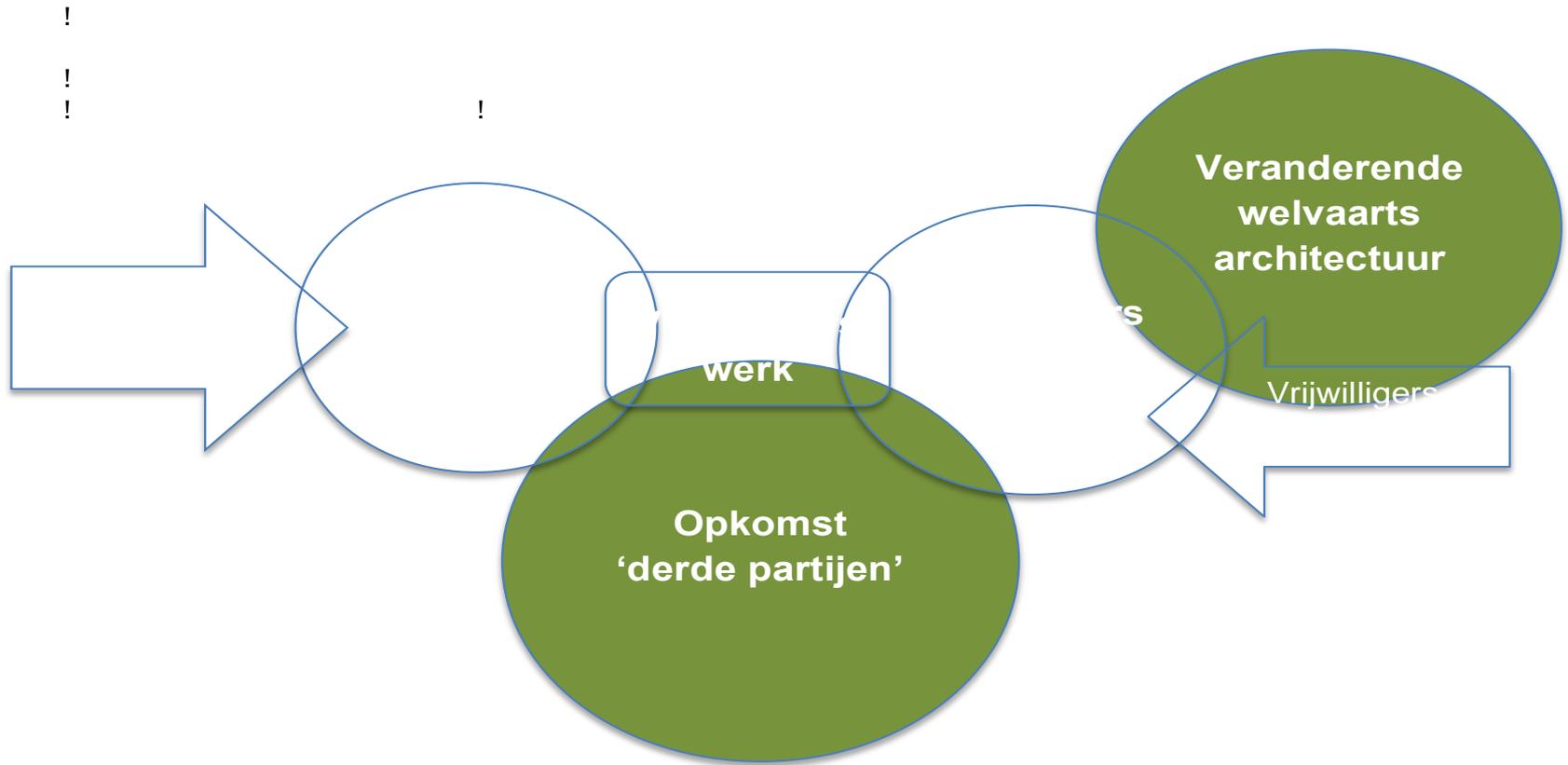
Volunteering in Hybrid Organizations: An Emerging Research Agenda

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Traditional model for grasping volunteering dynamics



Recent changes in the environment of volunteering



Shifting policy environment

- Changing welfare mix
 - From ‘organized’ to ‘disorganized’ welfare mix (Bode 2006)
 - ‘Mixes in the welfare mix’ (Evers, 1993)
- ‘Marketization’
 - Market as a new actor and competitor
 - Market-logic *inside* government and nonprofits
- Devolution of public responsibility
 - ‘The silent surrender of public responsibility’ (Gilbert, 2002)
 - ‘Community government’ (Ilcan & Basok, 2004)

Community as a means of government

What we prefer to call *community government*, has become an ever expanding political project wherein target communities have been identified (...) as potential sites of virtue, democracy, and efficiency....

Community government refers to the ways in which the contemporary politics of government have come to define, shape, and orient communities (for example, volunteer communities) such that they engage in activities that attempt to responsabilise certain groups of citizens for particular purposes and ends.

(Ilcan & Basok, 2004, p.130)

Consequence: 'Hybridization'

'A new era of welfare hybridity' (Billis, 2010)

What?

- Traditional boundaries between the sectors (state, market, nonprofit) are blurring
- Also emergence of a new type of 'hybrid organizations'
 - Intermingling of logics from different sectors *inside* organizations (eg 'social enterprises')
 - Third party volunteering (eg 'corporate volunteering')

Hybrid organizations

‘The notion of “the mixed economy of welfare” does not entirely capture what is happening: what we are facing are fundamental changes in the nature of the organizations that are financing, planning and delivering welfare – it is not just the economy, but also the organizations themselves that have become “mixed” (Billis, 2010: 11–12)

An exploration of consequences of hybridization in the Flemish context

Research conducted:

- Quantitative survey of 255 nonprofits in Flanders (Hustinx, Verschuere & De Corte, 2014)
- 25 semi-structured interviews with representatives from the Flemish third sector (2011-2012) (Hustinx, De Waele & Delcour, 2015)
- Ethnographic study of everyday practices and interactions in an 'entrepreneurial nonprofit' (Hustinx & De Waele, 2015)

‘Responsibilized autonomy’

Government calls for ‘participation’ in complex social issues, for ‘sharing’ responsibility, and praises third sector for its expertise in working with vulnerable groups

→ ‘subtle instrumentalization’ and decreased responsibility

Respondents pointed to:

- the risk of mission creep;
- the strategic use of subsidies in (re-)orienting TSOs’ activities;
- the increasing use of volunteer labour to replace paid work;
- a more strict regulation at the local level

'Associations that give voice to the poor are increasingly called upon to provide social services. Their core business is not sufficiently known by government. These associations aim to empower people and to incrementally change the social structures that cause poverty, but they don't provide individual assistance to people in poverty.' (TSO, poverty reduction)

'Dan wordt er de laatste jaren vanuit de ministers toch wel veel aandacht gegeven aan de maatschappelijke rol van sportclubs. Dus wordt er daar ook de sportclub of de sport gezien als een vorm van integratie in de samenleving (...) Ja, dat is op termijn, dat is niet houdbaar. Dat is ook niet de rol van die sportclubs. Daar zijn massaal veel andere organisaties die professioneel, dat die dat dan doen he zeg.' (Sport)

'And what is also very effective is to cut the supply of government subsidies. That also is a form of interference. If I think of [name of association for adult education], they are for 25% [they are confronted with a cut in public subsidies of 25%] ... they now have job vacancies for free instructors. I mean, that is a form of government interference, which creates the effect that you are obliged to work with volunteers.' (TSO, clearinghouse)

'... is that a task for volunteers? Thus, you can start asking the question: aren't municipalities silently looking for ways to work more efficiently with less personnel and ... how can we let volunteers do part of that work. That is a trend we definitely need to guard against.' (TSO, clearinghouse)

Sometimes local governments profile themselves as societal midfield [Flemish term for civil society]. They organise their own volunteer work and thus unintentionally stifle grassroots volunteering. For example, a city sets up a project with social counsellors who on a voluntarily basis give lectures in families and associations. They receive a fee for this voluntary work. Now, who are the people who are willing to do this? These are the leaders and founders of the associations. Associations heavily depend on them. As these founders shift their priorities, because they get paid for their engagement, the original association is in danger of collapsing. (TSO, minority sector)

Accountability

- Increasing emphasis on planning and measurement
 - Quantitative book-keeping
 - ‘planning burden’ that leaves little room for experimentation or emphasis on processes instead of targets
- Detrimental effects of the administrative burden for TSOs that to a considerable extent rely on volunteers
 - competitive disadvantage in comparison with TSOs that can rely on paid professionals
 - volunteers become demotivated because of the amount and complexity of these administrative tasks

- *'Volunteers have to be acquainted with much more and there are many more little rules....Volunteers no longer find their way.They no longer find their way.'* (TSO, family)
- *'We often get the reaction that indeed as a result of all that government regulation they have to focus more on administration and paperwork than on the real volunteer work as they call it.... Because that [care for heritage] still is their most important motivation to volunteer.The administration is added, compulsory, and they cannot get out of it. But the real heritage care is what they actually want to do.That is a change you can notice.'* (TSO, heritage)

Volunteers as 'responsibilised service providers'

- Increasing appeal in terms of the amount and quality of services made to the 'regular' volunteers
 - Further professionalization of volunteering
 - Rising mutual expectations:
Volunteers increasingly delegate administrative tasks to paid workers, and they consider well-developed, professional support as self-evident

- ‘The high expectations regarding volunteers’ technical, administrative and community-building skills are no longer sustainable.’ (TSO, sports)
- ‘Thus I support providing courses, but on the other hand it worries me in the sense that, oh, people also need to be able to volunteer without training.... It all isn’t like that anymore. Everything has to be, yes, professionalised, it seems.’ (TSO, clearinghouse)

- ‘Many local immigrant organisations consider it as self-evident that they can rely on a paid worker to coordinate their operations, and to write up their reports. That attitude in fact clashes with the philosophy of associational life that pursues an autonomously functioning voluntary base.’ (TSO, black and minority ethnic sector)
- ‘Volunteers indeed expect that a paid worker comes with a finished product, is present, that everything is settled, that they [paid workers] have to make coffee and make reservations for the meeting room. Is that different from the past? Yes, I think it is. Because there was much less professional support in the past. Yes, I think there is a greater demand for practical support.’ (Policy, sociocultural sector)

Inclusion of vulnerable groups in volunteering

- Increasing demand from ‘third parties’ (Haski-Leventhal et al, 2010) – such as psychiatric institutions, public centres for social welfare, the Public Employment Centre (VDAB), ... – to include vulnerable candidate-volunteers in TSOs
→ volunteering as an instrument to ‘responsibilise’ vulnerable groups
- NPOs stress importance of more inclusive volunteering policies.
 - Yet organisational barriers in realising this goal
 - Critical of the more explicit instrumentalisation of volunteering by third parties

Bifurcation between 'strong' and 'weak' volunteers

- 'Strong', middle-class citizens are encouraged to take up volunteering to help solve complex societal problems and to support vulnerable groups of people → 'responsibilized service providers'
- 'Vulnerable', lower-class citizens are strongly appealed to take responsibility into their own hands and are mobilised through third party volunteering → 'conditional volunteering'

'Believers' and 'non-believers'

- 'Some organisations push it a bit further by actually reaching out to those specific target groups, which are more vulnerable.... I, for example, know here in [name of the city], in the botanical garden, one is prepared to admit volunteers that can function at a very low level, ... they open their door for people with a disability, for psychiatric patients. And some organisations also do this out of a societal consciousness – like, we do not want to exclude volunteers. Thus, also that is an evolution where we notice that organisations include this in their policy, their vision, to have a broad scope when it comes to target groups.' (TSO, clearinghouse)
- 'And unfortunately enough, there are also those volunteer organisations that say yes, we want to do our thing. We want to do that as efficiently as possible. Thus, everything that would hamper that efficiency, throw that overboard. It is cutting to say, but in fact it is like that. And we have to reach our targets. And oh, with this one you maybe cannot come outside and with this person, you really first have to work on him.' (TSO, clearinghouse)
- 'We shouldn't associate volunteering with an activation discourse. If you encourage people to volunteer in return for unemployment benefits or income support, this clearly doesn't apply as volunteering.' (TSO, welfare)

Also a matter of resources

- ‘And there we ask in a very explicit way that if those are people that are in some sort of counselling situation, that there is guidance towards the volunteer work....That should be done by the psychiatric services; because our organisations cannot do this.That is something that we have to state very explicitly each time. Our organisations cannot provide guidance to people [vulnerable people who come to volunteer]. They need volunteers; they need hands – hands that can work fairly independently.’ (TSO, clearinghouse)
- ‘[People who want to volunteer] present themselves and who in fact are still in psychiatry or ... they are welcome to the extent that we say:“volunteering isn’t therapy” ... the volunteers in fact come to help us in our facilities to make it better for the residents or patients.... And there we want to invest time and effort, and the employees who support those volunteers, are not employees who ... have time and education to do therapy.And in that sense, people sometimes are refused because that is not possible.’ (TSO, health)

Bifurcation between 'strong' and 'weak' volunteers

- Latent categorization based on perceived skills, and based on this, different task assignment
 - Participants who already had the necessary skills to perform certain tasks in a successful and efficient way were granted 'full' participation opportunities (e.g., more autonomy, opportunities for personal development), whereas the 'weak' participants were treated in a more directive way and were mostly involved in such a way that they would not endanger the efficient functioning of the social grocery

Linda [the staff member responsible for the social grocery] tabs my shoulder and says: 'Come with me.' We enter the social grocery. At two o'clock she has a meeting and she asks me to monitor the activities in the social grocery a bit; whether I 'can be Linda?' I joke that's hard to match up to. With monitoring the grocery, she means coming to a decision when there is confusion concerning the portions, refill empty shelves with stock, etc. She goes on: 'Kurt and Luc aren't very bright. They often think they are right, but you have to do what you think is best.' (...) She continues that I have to keep Roger out of the hallway. About Roger she also says: 'He isn't very bright either, but he likes to keep an eye on things.'

Bifurcation between 'strong' and 'weak' volunteers

- Pragmatic, rational in- and exclusion of volunteers depending on organizational needs
- Managerial logic <-> inclusive volunteering policy

Linda opens the grocery's meeting by saying that she finds that the grocery starts to function well: the shelves are organized in a good way and the customers are served smoothly. (...) She says: 'Now that the grocery has two TGEs, we don't need as much volunteers anymore.' She announces that Sofie won't be helping in the grocery anymore. After the meeting she will call her, which raises the suspicion that the discontinuation isn't Sofie's decision. Then she speaks to Mary and Luc. She says that, because they have to travel the farthest to come to PfC, they don't have to help as fixed volunteers on Tuesday anymore.

→ Negative impact on basic resources of vulnerable volunteers (no free lunch anymore)

Bifurcation between 'strong' and 'weak' volunteers

- NPOs working with vulnerable groups, attempts to realise 'inclusive' volunteering risk as an unintended and unrecognised consequence the *re-exclusion* of vulnerable individuals
- While first, vulnerable groups by and large were excluded from volunteering anyhow, they now risk being excluded from full participation either in TSOs with limited resources or expertise, or in TSOs that put their organisational priorities first

Thank you for your attention!

Publications:

- Hustinx, Lesley, Bram Verschuere, and Joris De Corte. “Organisational Hybridity in a Post Corporatist Welfare Mix: The Case of the Third Sector in Belgium.” *JOURNAL OF SOCIAL POLICY* 43.2 (2014): 391–411.
- Hustinx, Lesley, Els De Waele, and Chloë Delcour. “Hybridization in a Corporatist Third Sector Regime: Paradoxes of ‘Responsibilized Autonomy’.” *VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW* 6.1 (2015): 115–134.
- Hustinx, Lesley, and Els De Waele. “Managing Hybridity in a Changing Welfare Mix: Everyday Practices in an Entrepreneurial Nonprofit in Belgium.” *VOLUNTAS* 26.5 (2015): 1666–1689.