

Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis

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The title of the thesis: Young adults' engagement in volunteering: between own and others' welfare and present or future orientation

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Abstract:

Volunteering is a behavior that aims to support others. Young adults are a special group of volunteers – even though they have potentially more leisure time to spend on volunteering than other adults, they can be less loyal towards the causes and institutions for which they work. Finding correlates of engagement that can be important for volunteer retention is vital. Based on the integration of the volunteer process model with prosociality theories, social norms activation model, and theories of time perspectives and organizational commitment, there are two overarching aims of the presented research cycle. The first one is to discover the diversity of volunteers regarding their tendencies to care for others versus for oneself (social aspect) and their tendencies to care for the short- or long-term consequences of actions (temporal aspects), as well as the consequences of this diversity for volunteering motivations, nonprofit organizational commitment, and indicators of volunteer engagement. The second one is to determine predictors of the estimated probability of volunteer engagement in the future (thus, the willingness to engage further). In the thesis, three studies are presented: two quantitative (one pilot study – Study 1 – involving volunteers active in the last year and non-engaged

individuals, $N = 402$; and second, main study – Study 2 – involving only volunteers active in the last year; $N = 245$), as well as one qualitative study (Study 3; $N = 20$) involving volunteers working in unsafe and safe environments. In Study 1 and Study 2, two similar groups were found. The first one can be characterized with a high future time perspective and low present hedonistic time perspective, as well as at least average level of social value orientation, and the second – with a high present hedonistic time perspective and at least average level of empathy. Both of these groups had similar value motivation to volunteer and similar satisfaction from the volunteer role, higher than those volunteers who were low other-oriented and low on future and present hedonistic time perspective. Moreover, moderation analysis indicated that high future time perspective “blocks” the effect of altruistic social value orientation in estimating engagement in volunteering in the future. The longer the time horizon in which own engagement is estimated, the more the social value orientation effect vanishes. Additionally, data from Study 3 bring additional evidence, suggesting an essential role of benefits that can be taken by the volunteer from engagement and which benefits can help them remain active. Future orientation has also been related to task orientation in volunteering and helping oriented at the autonomy of the beneficiary. Volunteers who exhibit future orientation expect that they will not be needed after providing help and find it a success in their volunteering mission. Furthermore, future orientation is linked to the willingness to create reciprocity norms in the society and expect direct or indirect benefits to oneself and/or the society. In conclusion, the future- and benefit-orientation, although not being entirely altruistic, does not necessarily lead to lower quality of the social engagement of volunteers. In its final section, the thesis provides suggestions for nongovernmental organizations which can help them support volunteers in remaining active and inviting other people to join volunteering, including strategies to attract, motivate and create opportunities for volunteers within organizations.